

Success Story: Oregon Department of Justice



STATE OF OREGON



The Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ), led by the state's Attorney General, is responsible for general counsel and supervision of all civil actions and legal proceedings in which the state is a part or has an interest. Headquartered in Salem, the DOJ operates several program areas designated by the legislature, such as child support, district attorney assistance, crime victim compensation, charitable activity enforcement and consumer protection services.

With legal oversight for a variety of activities, DOJ was a paper-rich environment, logging hundreds of documents a day resulting in thousands of pages that had to be reviewed, acted upon by numerous people, and finally stored in a secure repository.

Looking to better manage its paper processes, inter-agency collaboration, ease of document retrieval, and to meet electronic filing compliance for the court system, DOJ looked to Dan Ramos, Enterprise Technology Services Manager and Karen Yakis, Customer Support Analyst, to identify challenges and create a best practices environment that would bring greater efficiencies, save tax payer dollars, and enhance services to the citizens of Oregon.

Enterprise Scanning Initiative & New PDF Software

According to Ramos, the initial focus was a two-pronged approach. First was the need to create a consistent, cost efficient and secure way to create PDFs. And the second was an enterprise scanning initiative leveraging a mixed fleet of high speed scanners and multi-function devices (MFDs) with a software solution that could easily be utilized on all hardware devices and that would create searchable PDFs that could be securely delivered to the court system or the Agency's document repository.

The search for a solution would take DOJ about six months. Ultimately DOJ choose NSi™ AutoStore® from Notable Solutions (NSi) and the Enterprise Service Delivery group from Ricoh to fill the need for managing its workflows. "We especially liked the flexibility AutoStore offered with our mixed fleet," said Ramos. "Because of its flexibility we were able to easily integrate the software into all our hardware devices – even the older models – and we weren't forced to immediately upgrade equipment that still had life."

Another important aspect of the NSi solution was its robust optical character recognition (OCR) ability. "Because we are dealing with so much paper that needs to be searchable, especially the PDFs that are sent to the court system, we are now able to have multiple OCR engines on one server," he added. Other aspects that led to the selection included AutoStore's fee and licensing structure, its ability to plug in to the backend document management repository and the fact that it needed little or no customization. "It was basically an out of the box solution so we were able to fire up a workflow with AutoStore and get up and running without excessive customization," Yakis added.

"Not only are our response times much better with NSi, we are also anticipating a significant savings in storage space by eliminating boxes of paper files. We've also been able to re-engage some of our staff and allow them to work smarter by reducing the more mundane tasks of searching through file cabinets and boxes for random documents."

- Dan Ramos

Enterprise Technology Services Manager, Oregon
Department of Justice

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Working to Support Charitable Activities & Consumer Protection

The Charitable Activities area at DOJ monitors charitable organizations throughout the state. There are certain documents that each organization files annually in order to maintain their tax exempt status. There are thousands of charities in Oregon generating many thousands of pages of compliance documents.

As part of the implementation, Yakis and Ricoh, visited directly with the Charitable Activities section. "They showed us their processes including how they got paper in, where they stored it, how they opened files, how they worked those files and what they did when the files were ready to be put to rest in the archive. With AutoStore, we then created an electronic workflow that closely mimics the manual process. Paper is scanned and a form pops up on the user's computer. The fields that are required can be quickly filled out – and those fields are the same as in the document management system. This creates a naming consistency. The scanning and OCR occurs to create a case file. When additional documents come in for that case, users simply scan and add them to the existing case file in the document management repository," said Yakis.

The agency had little or no electronic means for tracking or sharing files, and the section was literally running out of storage space in their file room. "Today those same files can be shared electronically and quickly retrieved from the repository without the physical labor required to go fishing through file cabinets, shelves, or boxes of hard copy documents," Ramos noted. "And when the public requires information, we can respond faster via email with an electronic file attachment."

The Consumer Protection section handles financial fraud. There can be up to 100 complaints received a day and each of those complaints is required to have an initial response within a set timeframe. "This was also a manual process," said Yakis. "We put in a workflow similar to the one created for the charitable group. Now when files come in, they are digitized and available immediately to the enforcement officer

or to the public and eventually transferred to the document management repository where they are held for a minimum period of five years or longer as required by the State Archivist. In most cases, files are now available to enforcement officers, investigators, attorneys and staff within 24 hours of receipt, and as a result Oregon consumers receive more timely responses and thus faster resolutions to complaints."

Benefits Gained Immediately & Plans are for Future Expansion

Currently six of the DOJ's nine divisions are currently using AutoStore and others are in line for developing workflows and additional OCR capabilities that will meet their individual specifications. As the project progresses, it's likely each division will have at least two different workflows feeding into the document management repository and it will be easy to create additional workflows, if necessary. "The real consistency of the system comes into play when users fill out the initial AutoStore form. When users have a document on the scanner, the scanner brings up NSi's QuickCapture Pro which directs the AutoStore server to bring up an electronic form on the computer that's part of the electronic workflow. The user fills out the required fields on the form, submits the form and scanned document to the AutoStore server where it's OCR'ed and sent to the document management repository," said Yakis.

Along with the DOJ's new conformity with their PDF files, it has also gained consistency using electronic workflows with routing and standard file naming conventions making it very easy to collaborate, view and retrieve documents. "Previously there was inconsistency in file names which made it extremely difficult to access files from the share drive. With the NSi solution, we gained a consistent naming convention upfront that was created by the users. Today, there's a number of ways you can find a document," Yakis added.

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In terms of specific dollar returns, DOJ indicates that they are currently spending about \$135,000 a year to maintain storage facilities. While these costs will not likely be reduced, they won't be increased due to the savings gained from electronic file storage. "We're practicing cost avoidance with this system," Ramos said. "And that's a very good thing in an environment that is focused on creating best practices to reduce spending and better serve our state's taxpayers."



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