

U.S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES IMPLEMENTS LIVELINK-BASED CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO STREAMLINE PROCESSES, BE MORE EFFICIENT, AND GO PAPERLESS

Description of Challenge

The Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), is responsible for enforcing a variety of Federal Civil Rights laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, disability and under certain circumstances, sex and religion, from entities receive Federal financial assistance. To protect the civil rights of these individuals, OCR conducts extensive investigations and engages in voluntary dispute resolution, enforcement, technical assistance, policy development and information services.

OCR processes over 2,100 complaints a year. Case workers were required to keep paper copies of all documents, as well as enter information into an unsecured Access DB (no permissions required.) The system did not audit or track who entered or deleted data.

In addition, collaboration of work was not easily accomplished between offices. Paper copies were sometimes hard to find, misplaced, or constantly needing to be faxed or shipped to offices around the country. There was no central repository where all case documents were kept or accessible. Reporting, searching, and status tracking were difficult tasks and often, if attempted, were inaccurate. There was also no easy way to track staff workload.

The Government's overarching goal was to become paperless and to have an end-to-end document and case management system. OCR's specific goal was to improve the efficiency of its system for controlling and tracking the correspondence related to these civil rights cases, and to do it by way of a COTS solution.

The Solution

OCR purchased Open Text Livelink and life-cycle services from Momentum Systems as a way to achieve these goals, implementing a new system called Program Information Management System, or PIMS. For PIMS, Momentum Systems set out to design a single, unified "portal" interface and build an integrated system which would:

- Simplify OCR's data entry needs and process
- Facilitate document scanning for reduced data entry
- Provide stronger data validations
- Document rules so as to promote consistency of work methods and uniformity of results reporting
- Deliver a means for generating and tracking correspondence
- Build a robust repository of reference information
- Replace the legacy systems
- Provide real-time web access to information
- Support a collaborative work environment

- Deliver robust search capabilities
- Provide a robust yet nimble reporting capability

Momentum Systems initiated a life-cycle development effort to design and build the solution, using Cold Fusion, Open Text Livelink, Oracle Reports, Oracle RDBMS, Cardiff Teleforms and Adobe Acrobat. Momentum combined the COTS features of Livelink with the case tracking data from the newly custom designed Oracle database application.

The Program Information Management System integrates OCR's business processes, correspondence, and compliance information to allow for real time access and results reporting. The system helps users find the information they need, when they need it, reducing the time wasted in searching for information or in "reinventing the wheel". It enables them to share in a community of knowledge with other HHS employees and to work collaboratively with one another. In addition, PIMS provides a structure that makes it easier for staff to find information about OCR processes, standards, policies and best practices. PIMS has allowed OCR to improve the quality of service it provides customers and to enhance the interaction between OCR staff and customers.

Reporting and Resource Management - OCR has achieved its first objective, in which all users have integrated PIMS into their business processes, and the PIMS case management data is used to provide annual budget and performance reporting. OCR's next objective is clear: turn the PIMS data into accessible, organizational knowledge. Thus, Momentum Systems is now expanding the promise of PIMS to integrate a robust reporting system with the existing system. Via a "Wizard" interface and the creation of intelligent database "views," OCR users (who may or may not be tech-savvy) can shape PIMS data to their reporting needs using top-tier reporting applications like Oracle Discoverer and Oracle Reports. OCR is utilizing the Wizard interface with excellent results and anticipates a successful completion of the initiative, wherein all existing and newly-developed reports will be accessed via the Wizard/Livelink navigation method.

Another well-known benefit to process automation is increased accountability. This is of particular interest to OCR because it is recognized that PIMS can deliver greater process efficiency in tandem with a means to measure personnel productivity. The PIMS "Resource Entry Module" (REM) provides the answer. REM is a personnel time and resource reporting interface, fully integrated into the PIMS environment. Currently in a pilot phase, REM is a user-friendly solution which provides management with reports that integrate case with resource allocation. As REM matures and resource data accumulates, OCR's leadership will have quantifiable knowledge of case workloads and will be able to see where efficiencies might best be introduced. This merger of case data and productivity knowledge will propel OCR toward an end state of total organizational awareness via PIMS automation and integration.