County with 4th 'Smartest City in the U.S.' saves $400k by replacing IBM/FileNet with OnBase

"By going with OnBase instead of upgrading to FileNet P8 we instantly saved $400,000...and continue to evolve the system ourselves at a much lower cost. For instance, developing our current workflow in P8 would have cost $200,000 more."

– Kimberly Wraight, ECM Coordinator
Washtenaw County

The Challenges
- FileNet administration required costly integrator services and scripting
- Needed to replace UNIX® infrastructure with Microsoft®
- FileNet workflow costly, complex

The Results
- 100% conversion success
- Tripled its ECM solution, workflow included, for the price of upgrading
- Continue to save $50,000 yearly consultant fee

The Customer

Located just west of Detroit, about 350,000 very smart people call Washtenaw County home. Its county seat is Ann Arbor, home to the University of Michigan and a hotbed of high-tech research and development. In 2008, Forbes.com named Ann Arbor the 4th "Smartest City in the U.S." and *US News* put it in the top 10 "Brainiest Places to Retire." To keep the brain power running, the county employs nearly 1,300 workers in 22 departments.

The Challenges

Wanting to better manage and store county documents, Washtenaw put in a FileNet enterprise content management (ECM) solution in 2000. Starting small, five departments were on the system, including Environmental Health and Building Inspections. County leaders expected process efficiency and service to improve with better document access.

By 2005, Washtenaw was looking to upgrade or replace FileNet due to problems on at least three levels. First, FileNet needed custom coding and integrator consultant services for just about any change, from day-to-day administration, to evolving the system, to growing it to meet changing needs. This meant IT staff did not have full control of their ECM system. It also meant long wait times for even simple changes and a high total cost of ECM ownership. Second, the ECM hardware was at the end of its life and the county faced $100,000 just to replace the legacy UNIX-based servers. Finally, many departments needed process improvement workflows, but the county was only using ECM for scanning, storing and retrieving documents. Technical complexities and cost hurdles to deploy workflow in FileNet prohibited leveraging their investment any deeper. So despite its expense and its well-known name in the ECM market, only 20 users in a select number of county departments were even using ECM.

The Journey

With the five-year old FileNet solution in need of an upgrade in order to meet the expanding business requirements (including workflow and other valuable ECM technologies), the UNIX hardware needing to be replaced and looming budget cuts, the IT department decided to see what other high-value, proven ECM solutions were out there. They wanted a solution that could be maintained in-house and deliver a more complete ECM ownership experience at a lower total cost. So they started an RFP process to find ECM built on the Microsoft platform that would enable them to maintain and expand the solution as needed by the county, without constant consultant services. All in all, they evaluated 11 different ECM vendors.

OnBase
a Hyland Software solution

The Solution

Washtenaw chose OnBase for ECM, offered by Authorized OnBase Solution Provider, ImageSoft. For the same price IBM proposed to merely migrate/upgrade its existing 20-user FileNet system, Washtenaw converted to OnBase, replaced its UNIX servers with more efficient and less expensive Microsoft servers and put in more than 100 process improvement workflows across 15 departments.

Savings for services, servers, solution – $400k; having in-house control – priceless

With OnBase came an immediate return on investment. At half of the price it would have cost to fully expand the FileNet solution to 15 departments and hundreds of users, Washtenaw not only got a lot more user licenses and functionality, it got an ECM system that staff can expand and maintain completely in-house. Before the OnBase switch from FileNet, they were only able to integrate ECM with one line-of-business application. It took weeks of VB scripting to get up and running, and from then on required someone to maintain the scripts. So far with OnBase, IT staff has integrated ECM with more than 50 line-of-business applications without custom code or scripting. And as part of the ECM conversion, even the county's home-grown, VB-scripted and Kofax scanning solutions were all converted to OnBase solutions, eliminating the cost and maintenance of custom coded solutions and disparate legacy systems.

With complete control over its ECM system, IT can provide much better service. And when they do need help, the ImageSoft support is like night and day compared with their old integrator. "We used to have to go through the sales department and open up a project ticket for every single call," recalls Dave Wilson, OnBase Administrator. "Now, we get answers to most questions in minutes. We love working with an integrator who treats us as a partner, not just a paycheck."

Five months to convert from FileNet to OnBase; 15 to triple the solution

In five months, not only was all FileNet data converted – without losing any images – but also the five departments that had been using FileNet were up and running and fully trained in OnBase. And then the new solution just took off. From five departments to 15; from 20 users to more than 300 users; from simply scanning, storing and retrieving documents to more than 100 automated workflows. Start to finish, this took only 15 months. Departments using OnBase include: Human Resources, Finance, Procurement, Building Inspection, Sheriff, Courts and Children's Services.

Why OnBase?

Converting from FileNet to OnBase not only saves you money at implementation, it empowers you to administer, evolve and expand your system as you need to without custom coding. So your return on investment never ends. We have more FileNet conversion success stories to share. We'd be happy to show you how organizations of all shapes and sizes can count on OnBase.

"Deploying FileNet to new departments usually took 2-3 months and required a service integrator. With OnBase, we do it ourselves at a fraction of the time and cost. Really, the two ECM systems are not comparable in any way."

– Dave Wilson, OnBase Administrator
Washtenaw County

time to make a difference.

Get more information out of existing business applications. Reduce, even eliminate, wasteful, redundant tasks. Now you can spend your time on the things that really matter. That's effective document and process management.

That's the OnBase difference.

Learn more at OnBase.com

OnBase
a Hyland Software solution