

Digitisation a matter of record at City of Bunbury

The real value of local councils lies in their ability to shape their residents' neighbourhood and the environment in which they live.

It also lies in their extensive archives of documents, records of events, infrastructure, residential development and community amenities that are kept for perpetuity and provide a rare glimpse into the growth of local communities.

However, keeping those records up-to-date, accurate and available is a monumental task. At the City of Bunbury, on the picturesque coastline south of Perth, this has become the catalyst for a major project to bring all of its records into the 21st century by digitising as many as possible.

Business challenge

Mike Fletcher, the Manager of Information Technology at the City of Bunbury, wanted to pursue this project further and establish a digital system that would future proof the City's management of all records and documents. There are many advantages in doing so, such as reducing the costs associated with running the records department and improving its environmental performance.

"Local Government is an extremely complex and diverse industry, and by its nature generates an enormous volume of information," said Mike Fletcher. "Circulating and storing this information in an efficient and intelligent way is essential in order for Local Governments to provide their ratepayers with the services they need.

"Like many local governments, the City of Bunbury is keen to adopt smarter and more efficient operations that reduce its carbon footprint," he added. "Digital records management and archiving achieve this by reducing both the environmental and financial costs associated with producing, transporting and storing paper based records. By minimising the paper shuffling within the organisation and utilising a transparent and easily manageable digitised system, the City can continue to improve its efficiency and provide better service to the community."

The City was in the process of changing its document management system from Trim to SharePoint 2010 and needed to improve its scanning capabilities to speed up the process of storing hard copy documents. This required new hardware, along with a management system that could handle both the volume and the complexity of the City's records.



Challenges

- The City wanted to establish a digital system that would future proof the management of all records and documents, helping to reduce the costs associated with running the records department, and also to improve its environmental performance.
- It was essential that the solution integrated seamlessly into their document management system, SharePoint.

Solution

- The City installed a Fuji Xerox ApeosPort-IV C5580 multifunction device equipped with EzeScan, a scanning solution with optical character recognition capabilities which connected directly into SharePoint 2010.

Benefits

- Saving time and effort using a simple document retrieval process.
- Reduced paper usage via an electronic document management system.
- Ease of use with system integration.
- Satisfying customers with an automated process.

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– Mike Fletcher
Manager of Information Services
City of Bunbury

The City of Bunbury went to tender to find the most effective means to achieve those goals.

“The City’s policy is to invite all suppliers to offer us the best solution to meet our needs at the time. We contacted three local office equipment providers and gave them an overview of what we wanted to achieve as an organisation, then asked each of them to provide demonstrations of their copier and scanning software solutions,” said Mike.

Solution

“Over a three month period the team worked with each supplier to test sample batches of documents of varying shapes and sizes, evaluate the supplier relationship with the software vendor and their ability to provide local support for their solutions. In the end we went with a Fuji Xerox solution.”

Local authorised dealer for Fuji Xerox Australia, SOS Office Equipment, installed a Fuji Xerox ApeosPort-IV C5580 multifunction device equipped with EzeScan, and an OCR connector which enabled the council to scan documents directly into SharePoint 2010, which was supplied by Bluebox Solutions.

“Before we embarked on the implementation of new technology, the records department dealt with paper documents in a traditional record keeping system,” explained Mike Fletcher. “Large

volumes of information were also being sent via email, making it difficult to merge all of the corporate information. Now that we have started to digitise all the incoming mail into SharePoint, our staff are able to find information with one global search.

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Benefit: Saving time and effort using a simple document retrieval process

The new document system installed at the City of Bunbury has been integrated seamlessly and provides council staff with a simple, yet failsafe method of recording and storing documents.

Just as importantly, it makes retrieving documents quick and straightforward, saving staff a lot of time looking for paper documents.

Benefit: Reduced paper usage using electronic document management

“The EzeScan functionality in conjunction with a tailored Electronic Document Management System, delivers a comprehensive electronic document management solution that will minimise the ongoing need to generate and manage paper based content,” said Mike Fletcher.

SOS sales manager, Quintin Whitcher, is delighted with the results of the installation, and the savings in time and effort.

Benefit: Ease of use with system integration

“Our solution has achieved everything they wanted, and more, for the first stage, including integrating well with SharePoint,” he said. “Since they’ve had our solution on board they’ve found numerous ways to make the whole system more automated and make

it even easier to use, with even less intervention from people.

“What we’ve achieved for the Records Department will cascade down through the whole City of Bunbury Council, and integrate with all the various hardware and software solutions they have on board at the moment, from multiple vendors.”

Benefit: Satisfying customers with an automated process

Local Bunbury residents will also be pleased with the City’s more timely response, whether it’s regarding development approvals or paying rates.

“Although it is early days, we are already seeing time saving benefits,” said Mike Fletcher. “The automated process of scanning incoming mail and delivering it to the appropriate office will significantly reduce enquiry response time. The overall cost savings and benefits will be in having all of our corporate information digitised and located centrally in one place.”

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