



CASE STUDY

Bonita Springs Utilities Controls the Flood of Information with Alchemy

"The time saved has been tremendous."

Industry	Public Sector, Utilities
Challenge	Overwhelmed by paper documents; disaster recovery preparedness
Solution	Alchemy Document Management solution
Results	Reclaimed hundreds of square feet of office space; document retrieval time cut from hours to seconds; disaster recovery preparedness for the next hurricane.

BACKGROUND

The paperless office—everyone talks about it, touts its benefits and wishes it existed in their organization. It has great potential for saving space and providing faster access to documents, all the while improving customer service and reducing costs.

Bonita Springs Utilities (BSU) does more than just talk about the paperless office. The organization is implementing it. BSU provides potable water, irrigation water and wastewater treatment services to 16,000 homes and business in and around the Southwest Florida city of Bonita Springs. The 50-square-mile service area stretches from the Gulf of Mexico to beyond Interstate 75.

THE CHALLENGE

Running the business at BSU generates a tremendous amount of paperwork. Engineering drawings, surveys, contracts and correspondence stored in file cabinets, plan files and boxes take up valuable floor space in the engineering department. Mary Ritter, project administrator, estimates that storage boxes had already filled a 35 by 10-foot room, in addition to approximately seventy scan racks containing 6,492 sheets of plans.

THE SOLUTION

BSU selected Captaris Alchemy Document Management software to enable the paperless office. With Alchemy, BSU has realized significant savings in space, time and money. BSU purchased Alchemy Server with the Scan imaging and DataGrabber COLD extensions and has been able to use the software with their two high-speed Fujitsu scanners and one Ideal large-format scanner for blueprints.

BSU builds new service areas in new neighborhoods. Each project contains legal documents about the property, contracts with suppliers and engineering companies, drawings mapping out all work to be done, invoices, communications with everyone involved, and the list goes on and on. Using Alchemy, staff members easily organize documents first by departments and then projects. The intuitive, in-depth indexing of the documents, allow untrained

staff members to easily locate files and, more importantly, locate relevant documents or paragraphs within documents containing the specific, needed information. Employees then are able to scan everything into several Alchemy repositories at a rate of about 2,000 pages per day. BSU's engineering department scanned and electronically filed all the documents that used to fill the racks, and staffers have begun the process of scanning the documents in the storage room. The paperless office is becoming more of a reality.

THE RESULTS

With Alchemy, instead of going to the storage room and shuffling through thousands of files trying to find the right documents, BSU employees search the repositories right from their computers with ease similar to searching for information on the Internet. They can then quickly forward that information to consultants and other outsiders, speeding the business process.

"I cannot tell you how much time it has saved us," Ritter says. "We no longer have to go to the plan racks or dig in the storage rooms to find information that we provide to various agencies and consultants."

Alchemy has saved BSU from other potential document headaches. Bonita Springs is on the southwestern coast of Florida, right in the heart of hurricane country. The scanned pages are stored on a computer system with daily backups, and the backups are stored in a remote location. If a hurricane, fire or other disaster were to hit BSU's offices, the company is prepared to access its vital material without interruption.

"Everyone talks about going paperless, and everyone has fears about it," Ritter says. "But with Alchemy, we're quite confident we won't have problems."

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