



**CAPTARIS CUSTOMER CASE STUDY**

CUSTOMER PROFILE

**INDUSTRY** Nonprofit

**WEB SITE** [www.nsarchive.org](http://www.nsarchive.org)

**LOCATION** George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

SOLUTION SNAPSHOT

**CHALLENGE** Unreliable paper-based archiving system caused delayed collections and responses to requests

**SOLUTION** Captaris Alchemy Document Management with Scan and DataGrabber modules

**RESULTS** Cut typical retrieval time by 50 percent; digital searches deliver in seconds what could take months

## National Security Archive Speeds Information Delivery to Public with Captaris Alchemy

### *Digital Document Management Aids Freedom of Information Act Initiative*

The National Security Archive is an independent, nongovernmental research institute and library located at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Founded in 1985 by journalists and scholars, the Archive collects and publishes declassified documents acquired through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Current collections total more than one million documents with close to an additional 50,000 added on an annual basis.

The Archive has received numerous recognitions, including the Special George Polk Award in 2000 “for serving as an essential journalistic resource and for expanding access to previously classified documents,” and an Emmy Award in 2005 for outstanding achievement in news and documentary research. Since its inception, the Archive has used the most advanced electronic tools to collect and catalog documents; however, the growing influx of documents and the advent of the digital era demanded a step forward.

#### The Challenge

As an analyst, director of the Southern Cone Documentation Project, and information systems manager with the National Security Archive, Carlos Osorio described a keen sense of purpose for his work. “Our goal is to make information available to the public. It strengthens democracy,” he said. Such passion serves him well given the intense efforts to review, file, store and retrieve multipage documents—especially if digital archiving were not available. Previously, when analysts set out to create a briefing book—a grouping of 10 to 150 documents related to a specific issue—they relied partly upon the availability and recollection of other analysts. All files were delivered to the Archive addressed to different analysts heading specific projects. When projects were closed, papers were assigned general headings and stored in boxes off-site. “You may retrieve 30 to 50 boxes trying to find past documents relevant to a current project,” Osorio explained. Otherwise, the researcher inquired of other analysts. “If you were lucky, the analyst had reviewed the material and directed you to pertinent documents.”

In addition to creating and managing document collections, analysts receive information requests from constituents such as journalists, historians, investigators, congresspeople and university students. To fulfill the requests, analysts could spend weeks or months searching through documents. "An issue could be dropped because we just didn't come across anything," Osorio said.

## The Solution

Since installing Captaris Alchemy Document Management in 2004, the National Security Archive has streamlined archiving efforts, reduced turnaround for requests and realized other efficiencies. "The Archive is like a memory of what U.S. officials are doing," Osorio summarized. "Captaris Alchemy helps make that memory sharper."

While it still maintains paper files in the library for historical purposes, the Archive now scans new documents into Captaris Alchemy for digital filing, searching and retrieval before the hard copies are stored. More than 500,000 documents were added the first year in 350 archive databases. The number includes new domestic materials and special collections from other countries that arrive already digitized.

"Before, we would receive something like 300 CDs from another country's agency, and we didn't have a way to integrate them," Osorio said. Now, using OCR technology and the Captaris Alchemy search engine, Osorio and other analysts easily search and browse on key words or phrases. Plans are set to scan the most used archived collections to expand research and cataloging capabilities. "Alchemy is like a hyper-fast, accurate archivist," Osorio often says in his conversations with industry professionals both in the United States and abroad. "You can count on it. Most of the time it's even more accurate than a human archivist."

In its search for a document management solution, the Archive investigated several options. Osorio described other products as huge and inflexible. Visits with vendors involved extensive back-and-forth discus-

sions regarding requirements. Then, he found Captaris Alchemy. "It fits everything we needed and is well-organized," Osorio said. "It even includes features we didn't know we needed until we saw them." Osorio likened the purchase of Captaris Alchemy to working with building blocks; it offers capabilities and adaptability others do not.

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Being a nonprofit organization, the Archive depends largely on contributions from foundations. Osorio feels the progress made with digitization will positively impact potential funding. "Alchemy allows us to work better and faster," he said. "Foundations like to hear that we're moving information at the speed of light. They get excited about that."

## The Results

**Briefing Books** Previously, Osorio reported retrieving hundreds, even thousands, of documents and spending the day reading through the material to come up with a handful of relevant files for a collection. Now, analysts are able to quickly locate any document in less than half the usual time, "I search through files with key words, transfer the documents to digital folders and export all the data attached to them," he said. In addition, the reports are easy to post online along with source records. Analysts have more time to focus on research and analysis rather than paperwork.

**Requests** When constituents call with requests, the reply is now almost immediate, according to Osorio. "Within the hour, we can respond with dozens of documents related to their subject." New data is also available sooner thanks to 80-page-per-minute scanning capacity and Captaris Alchemy organization. "We've found we can go as fast as it is humanly possible, because Alchemy can just swallow it," Osorio said. Analysts put this to the test recently when high-interest transcripts were released. Several people, including the Archive director, went to the library and worked in the trenches. A top analyst became "scanner-man." After processing and filing close to 15,000 pages on CD, they called The New York Times contacts who were amazed by the fast turnaround. The Times then wrote a front-page story for the next day based on the Archive's findings in the transcripts.

## For More Information

Captaris Business Information Delivery solutions help organizations automate the information and document flow throughout the information lifecycle (capture, process, manage, deliver). With a comprehensive suite of software and services, Captaris helps organizations to grow revenues and increase profits while meeting compliance goals. Through a global distribution network of leading enterprise technology partners, Captaris has installed more than 90,000 systems in 95 countries in companies of all sizes, including the entire Fortune 100. For more information, visit [www.Captaris.com](http://www.Captaris.com) or call 1.800.443.0806.

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