



CASE STUDY

Texas Dept. of Transportation Solves Information Delivery and Archive Problems with Alchemy

Industry	Government, State
Challenge	Information delivery of paper documents to 1,500+ contractors and 15,000 employees; controlling millions of pieces of unstructured data throughout the lifecycle
Solution	Captaris Alchemy Document Management suite
Results	Reduced printing costs by 50 percent; received more competitive bids that will save money for the state; eliminated hundreds of square feet of storage; provided online information access for employees and contractors.

BACKGROUND

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) maintains over 77,000 miles of state and federal highways, bridges, and the largest state airport system in the nation with over 400 airports. TxDOT manages hundreds of construction projects with thousands of miles of roads to maintain and millions of pieces of information to organize, track and retain.

THE CHALLENGE

TxDOT administers more than 1,000 in progress construction and maintenance projects every day, and issues approximately 1,400 contracts annually that require work from over 1,500 certified contractors. Project bids exceed three billion dollars each year. For example, the Aviation Division alone accepts bids on approximately 100 airport contracts annually with awards totaling over forty-eight million dollars.

In order to support this enormous operation, millions of pieces of unstructured data must be organized, published for quick access, and managed by the General Services Division (GSD) and the Records Management unit. GSD supports TxDOT with numerous services, including managing information and documentation for TxDOT's road, bridge and building construction projects. The Records Management unit is responsible for archiving the project documentation such as engineering plan sets, shop drawings, proposals and test results for completed projects that must be permanently retained, as well as records of bids received for each project.

Prior to Alchemy, the GSD team had to collect the data, then collate, print and ship hundreds of thick binders containing the documents that supported each project bid. When projects were completed, GSD archived the documentation to microfilm. This manual process was difficult to support, labor-intensive and time-consuming, and TxDOT incurred heavy shipping costs as well.

THE SOLUTION

TxDOT selected the Captaris Alchemy Document Management suite to streamline the work of the GSD Reprographics and Records Management units. The agency has deployed Alchemy Gold, Alchemy Web, Alchemy Server and the DataGrabber COLD and Scan imaging extensions. Project and bid documents and unstructured information are now digitized, archived and published online, and managed within the Alchemy product suite making them easily accessible to internal and external users.

With Alchemy at the foundation of the TxDOT system, GSD has been able to better service a broad audience, including the contracting community and the public, who can now access the Web for updated information, TxDOT employees have the advantage of immediate information sharing from their company intranet that includes links to Alchemy repositories. For example, employees are able to search for specific engineering plans or test results, locate the exact document or part of a document they need, and collaborate with other employees immediately rather than requiring employees to look for hard copies of manually filed data in three-ring binders. The GSD headquarters in Austin makes the archived information available to their twenty-five district offices across the state and to additional division offices located in Austin by publishing the electronic repositories via their company intranet, as well as creates CDs that district offices can use for backup or as stand-alone archives on their laptops for field employees.

"Nearly all of our 15,000 employees have access to the intranet," says Sandy Nichols, systems analyst for TxDOT's General Services Division. The intranet speeds up information delivery to our field offices so they can better serve contractors as well as the public."

TxDOT recently launched the **Plans Online** Web site to more efficiently deliver information to the contracting community. With the help of the Alchemy Web Server, and Alchemy Web based repositories, contractors can now browse, view and retrieve plans from TxDOT over the Internet. Bid information remains on the site for three months after the bid opening (letting), providing a five-month rolling window of current information for public access. This unrestricted Web site also acts as a public site where individuals such as land developers and school districts can obtain details on planned road development.

THE RESULTS

GSD has eliminated as much as fifty percent of its plan printing budget with the help of Plans Online and the Alchemy Web client. Knowledge sharing via the intranet and supplying information on CD to its contractors also provide considerable cost savings to the state. "We used to receive requests for as many as 21 copies of construction plans that can be as large as 100 pages," says Nichols. "We've been able to cut that in half. That's a phenomenal cost savings for us."

"Plans Online has also streamlined our records management practices, and the Alchemy repository allows us to retrieve, organize and retain data in a format most useful to our growing number of diverse users," notes Nichols. "We're saving time and money while also procuring more competitive bids from our contractors. With Plans Online and the Alchemy repository, we have improved the quality of the data we record, and we have made it available to a larger audience."

Additionally, Captaris has helped TxDOT reduce storage costs. Alchemy provides the ability to archive information to CDs, therefore eliminating hundreds of square feet in warehouse storage space.

"Alchemy gave us the foundation on which to build," concludes Nichols. "Over the past three years we've added the bells and whistles to make our offices and our contractors even more productive. TxDOT is working smarter by making the best use of our resources, and that's important to us."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Captaris Business Information Delivery solutions help organizations of all sizes automate the information and document flow throughout the information lifecycle (capture, process, deliver, manage and archive). 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 or call 1.800.443.0806.

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