

Laserfiche ECM Blogs

Leading the Way Forward

Written by Melissa Henley

As one of the fastest growing counties in the nation, Collin County, TX, faced the challenge of managing an increasingly-large number of records generated by a growing population.

According to Records Manager Margaret Anderson, staff in the county's courts had difficulty finding information, due to disparate systems implemented by each department. "We also had over 15,000 reels of microfilm and 18,450 boxes of paper stored throughout the county," she says. "Files were everywhere and we couldn't keep up with the demand. We had to ensure that staff did not unintentionally destroy records that needed to be retained, and we wanted to implement a case management system (CMS). But we also had to manage all the paper.

"Our first step was to select and implement a new case management system for the county court system," Anderson continues. "The records management system (RMS) we chose needed to interface with this system and provide records management control for closed and disposed case files, as well as support documents."

Anderson found the ideal solution in Laserfiche Records Management Edition (RME), which centralizes scanned paper and electronic records while automating records retention and destruction. "What I like about Laserfiche is that I can manage electronic documents, paper, microfilm and audio and video files enterprise-wide," Anderson says.

Collin County's journey to provide order to their paper-based legal system began with a two-year project in the district court clerk's office, converting paper case files from 1846-2000 into archival images—a total of over ten million images.

Anderson then expanded the plan to manage archiving, retention and management of case files for the county court, integrating RME with the county's CMS. RME provides back-end records retention for closed and inactive case files. "It's very easy to use, and it helps us meet our goal of providing quality, cost-effective public service," she notes.

Laserfiche also helps the district attorney's office operate more efficiently. "We've scanned felony case files into Laserfiche, which has been great," Anderson says. "Our old content manager didn't have full-text search capability, and it didn't manage

records retention. With RME, it's easy to manage retention periods, which can range from 25–50 years, and it's simple to locate information.”

Anderson realized the value of the county's Laserfiche system when a flood in May 2007 damaged nearly 1,000 boxes of records—many of them with no backup. “It's clear how important Laserfiche is for business continuity,” she says. “Had those files been stored in Laserfiche, we wouldn't have needed to worry when the flood waters started rising. People worry about computers crashing, but in reality, paper documents are much more likely to be destroyed than digital ones.”

Laserfiche also offers the flexibility Collin County needs to expand enterprise-wide—while still meeting each department's unique needs. The county is implementing Laserfiche in the property tax department to digitally store copies of checks, stubs and letters received as part of the annual property tax receipting process. Planning for the next budget cycle includes integrating Laserfiche with SunGard® HTE in the auditor's office to manage accounts payable documents. The development department also plans to integrate Laserfiche with its existing GIS application to manage septic system records. Eventually, most county records will be stored in Laserfiche and will be viewable over the Internet.

“I've been really pleased with the system,” Anderson says. “But what I'm most looking forward to is expanding our records retention plan to include electronic records—which will make us better prepared to comply with e-discovery orders.”

Anderson isn't the only one who's pleased. County staff have been so delighted that they're spreading the word to other departments. “The response to Laserfiche has been so positive, that it's been difficult to keep up with demand for new installations,” she says. “I've just had to start saying ‘No’ nicely—and tell them ‘You'll just have to learn to wait your turn.’”



Melissa Henley Melissa is Director of Marketing Communications. She loves all things Laserfiche – especially the color orange! See what she's up to at @ECM_marketeter.