

# Government Focus



## Enterprise Government Case Study

Loudoun County, VA

# **Enterprise Government Case Study**

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# Executive Overview

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## ■ ORGANIZATION PROFILE

Part of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, Loudoun County is one of the fastest growing counties in the U.S., with residents who enjoy the nation's highest median household income.

## ■ SITUATION

The rapid growth of the population, high expectations of high-income residents and recession-related budget cuts put pressure on the county to enhance its ability to efficiently deliver services.

## ■ SOLUTION

After one department started looking for a replacement for its old document imaging system, the IT department realized that implementing a true enterprise content management (ECM) system—one that could be used in all county departments—would allow the IT department to build the deep expertise necessary to support employees across the county with the ability to digitize their content and automate their business processes.

## ■ BENEFITS

- Service delivery to citizens is faster thanks to the speed of search and retrieval.
- Cost savings on paper, file folders and other office supplies average \$51,000 a year in Family Services alone.
- By automating A/P and payroll processing, the Controller's Office saves 5-6 hours of staff time per week.
- Rural Environmental Health staff use Laserfiche on their Panasonic Toughbooks to gain access to permits and other documents from the field.
- The Assessor's Office uses Laserfiche to automatically populate online appeal forms with property owners' data, jumpstarting the appeal process for citizens and saving the department time and money.
- Building and Development has set up public computer terminals where citizens can search the Laserfiche repository for the information they need without taking up staff time.
- Tapping into the county's work-release program has allowed the county to save more than half a million dollars on scanning since 2008.

## ■ AT A GLANCE

- **Governance:** Auditing, Business Continuity, Enterprise Risk Management, Enterprise Search and Retrieval, Information Life Cycle Management, Records Management
- **Planned Integrations:** Assessor's Software, Tax Software, Oracle ERP
- **Processes:** Accounts Payable, Payroll, Case Management, Property Assessment Appeals, Records Management

## Overview

For Loudoun County, VA, keeping up with the demands of a rapidly expanding population is a challenge. Part of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, Loudoun County is known for its rich history, diverse business opportunities and excellent public services. Between 2000 and 2010, its population grew by roughly 84%, making it one of the fastest growing counties in the U.S.

Many new residents move to Loudoun County to take advantage of its healthy economy. In fact, residents of Loudoun County enjoy the nation's

highest median household income at well over \$100,000 a year. In addition, Loudoun County ranked in the top 3% of all counties nationwide for per capita income.

The rapid growth of the population—coupled with the high expectations of high-income residents—has led to an increasingly high demand for public services. As a result, the county must constantly look for new and innovative ways to support high priority initiatives.

## The IT Perspective

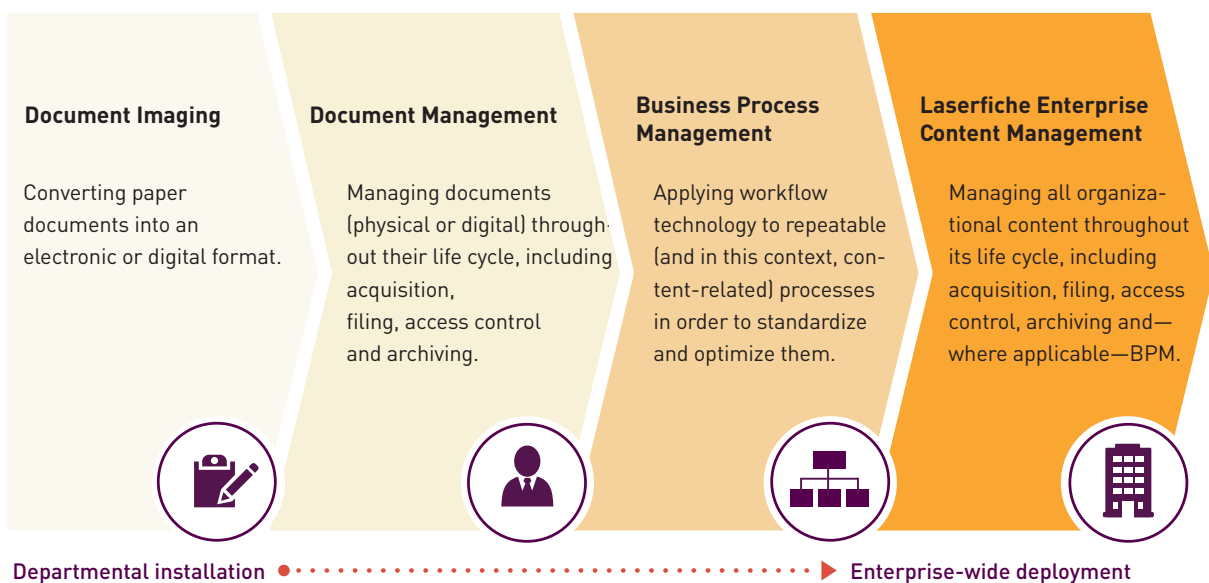
Loudoun County's IT department is in charge of the efficient implementation of technology to improve county services to its citizens. Comprised of more than 90 IT professionals serving over 3,000 government employees across 32 departments, the IT department determines information system needs and provides equipment, software, maintenance, repair, training and other services for the entire enterprise.

Bill McIntyre, Division Manager of Enterprise IT, leads the team responsible for the software and systems that serve employees across the county,

including the internet and intranet, e-mail, Webcasting and customer relationship management (CRM). "We take care of the technology that every user can take advantage of," McIntyre says. "Our Laserfiche enterprise content management (ECM) system definitely falls into that category."

However, ECM wasn't always viewed as an enterprise system. Before implementing Laserfiche in 2007, Loudoun County had three departments using different document imaging systems.

## The Evolution of ECM



## Going Enterprise

When the Controller's Office started looking for a replacement for its old document imaging system, the IT department realized that implementing a true enterprise content management (ECM) system—one that could be used in all county departments—would cut down on the need for support and enable employees across the county to benefit from the ability to digitize their content and automate their business processes.

"In the past, there were a lot of overlapping systems. From a support, maintenance and cost perspective, we knew that standardizing on one ECM system was our best move," explains McIntyre. "With only one system to oversee, we could develop the deep expertise that would enable the county to make the most out of its investment in ECM."

After working with Unity Business Systems, a Laserfiche reseller, to implement Laserfiche in the Controller's Office as well as Building & Development, Loudoun County's IT department realized that it needed someone in-house to run point on the Laserfiche project. The department hired Gopal Kanneganti, Senior Imaging Systems Analyst, to join McIntyre's enterprise team.

"It was important to us to ensure that we had someone on our team who would be responsible for Laserfiche. If you tried to add that task to people's existing responsibilities, it could be easily pushed to the side," McIntyre says.

## Managing Change

McIntyre and Kanneganti then set out to educate their colleagues across different departments about the value of Laserfiche ECM. Although McIntyre claims that he and his team "are just a bunch of geeks and nerds who don't know anything about marketing," they took a picture-perfect approach to promoting the value of the new system across Loudoun County.

He explains, "We started by attending leadership meetings and presenting the capabilities of Laserfiche to department leaders. In particular, we targeted departments that were very paper-based and that would see the benefits of digitizing the paper right away."

Two departments that sprang immediately to mind included Environmental Health and Family Services, both of which had records rooms that were so full of paper the floors were buckling.

"The need for ECM was there," says McIntyre. "After we attended their staff meetings and they heard about what Laserfiche could do, they knew that this system would give them a way out of their predicament."

The enterprise team's strategy was to get Laserfiche into these departments quickly, so they'd see immediate value. This approach paid off, and today McIntyre says the team "no longer needs to sell Laserfiche internally. Everyone wants it."

In fact, Loudoun County is looking to bring on a second Laserfiche administrator to assist Kanneganti and accelerate deployment across the enterprise. "When we looked at a reasonable pace for one person to roll out Laserfiche to the rest of the county, we realized that it would take 24 years!" McIntyre says. "We're getting funding for the second position starting in fiscal 2013, and the new systems analyst will be coming on board in July."

McIntyre notes that the IT department will be busy rolling out three new systems over the next year:

- Enterprise-wide: An Oracle ERP system.
- Assessor's Office: iasWorld appraisal software from Tyler Technologies.
- Tax: A new tax software system from PCI Systems.

“When we were searching for these new systems, we made it a mandatory requirement that they would all be able to integrate with Laserfiche,” says McIntyre. “Laserfiche is our enterprise solution for document and content management. We’re not going to move forward with any system that is incompatible with it.”

“There are 30 departments across Loudoun County, so we’re just getting started,” McIntyre says.

To date, Loudoun County has implemented Laserfiche in ten departments, including:

- Assessor’s Office
- Building & Development
- Management & Financial Services (Controller’s Office)
- Environmental Health
- Family Services

## Implementation Timeline

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<b>Late 2006</b>	RFP issued
<b>March 2007</b>	Laserfiche purchased
<b>July 2007</b>	Controller’s Office implementation
<b>September 2007</b>	Construction & Waste Management implementation
<b>May 2008</b>	Gopal Kanneganti hired as Laserfiche administrator
<b>June 2008</b>	Building & Development implementation
<b>July 2008</b>	County Administration implementation
<b>October 2008</b>	Department of IT implementation
<b>November 2008</b>	Environmental Health implementation
<b>June 2010</b>	Family Services implementation
<b>November 2010</b>	Environmental Health implementation
<b>February 2011</b>	Commissioner of Revenue implementation
<b>May 2011</b>	Sherriff’s Office implementation
<b>April 2012</b>	Integration with Tyler iasWorld
<b>July 2012</b>	Second Laserfiche administrator hired
<b>Late 2012</b>	Integration with tax software system
<b>2013</b>	Integration with Oracle ERP system

## Controller's Office

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Loudoun County's Controller's Office manages internal auditing and compliance, capital financing and debt management, financial accounting, financial and budgetary reporting, internal control, payroll and accounts payable. It ensures that the county's financial management and accounting systems are maintained appropriately and that county agencies and the public receive information in a timely and effective manner.

According to Lisa Cockrell, Accounting Operations Manager, her office is "always watching costs. We're tasked with being as efficient as possible, streamlining as much as possible."

She explains that the Controller's Office had an imaging system prior to Laserfiche, but it was old and failed frequently—which wasn't exactly a recipe for efficiency.

"The more paper we can digitize and the more tasks we can automate, the better," Cockrell says. "With Laserfiche, we save at least 5-6 hours a week on filing, and we save even more by automating our accounts payable and payroll processes."

The automated accounts payable process works as follows:

- Administrative staff from a department such as Family Services scans an invoice into Laserfiche.
- Laserfiche Workflow, a business process management tool included in the Laserfiche suite, automatically moves the invoice to the folder of the A/P technician assigned to the originating department.
- Technicians respond to e-mails from the accounts payable systems letting them know that there are items that need review.
- The technician validates the payment request to the invoice in Laserfiche and posts the payment request in the accounts payable system, then changes a metadata field in Laserfiche to send the record to Records Management.

- Once the payment has posted, Laserfiche Quick Fields, a high-volume capture and processing tool, fills in additional metadata fields such as vendor name, check number and check date that can later be used for searching records.
- After the metadata fields are filled in, Laserfiche Records Management Edition automatically establishes the record's retention schedule, ensuring that the Controller's Office complies with state regulations.

Cockrell notes that the payroll process is similar, with Laserfiche Quick Fields doing a look-up of employee data to fill in payroll metadata fields.

"Having all of the metadata available is a big benefit of the Laserfiche system," she says. "If you ever have to look something up, it's so easy!"

Cockrell says that using Laserfiche helps the Controller's Office comply with the Virginia Prompt Payment Act. "The Prompt Payment Act requires that we pay for delivered goods and services by the due dates established in our contracts. Because Virginia law requires 100% prompt payment compliance, this is an important metric for us. By automating the A/P process, we've eliminated a lot of manual data entry, reduced the amount of time it takes to find information and reduced the lag time between invoice receipt and invoice processing."

She also appreciates how much easier annual financial audits have become as a result of having Laserfiche in place. "In the past, auditors would come in with a list of documents they wanted to see, and we'd have to search through filing cabinets to find them," Cockrell explains. "Today, we can sit them down in front of a computer and they can look everything up for themselves!"

The Controller's Office also uses Laserfiche for:

- Vendor management purposes, storing W-9 forms that have been validated through IRS systems, along with any vendor communications.
- Backup journal entries for transactions posted into FAMIS, the county's core financial system.
- Reports from other systems that have been fed into FAMIS (and are pulled into Laserfiche via Laserfiche Workflow).

## Assessor's Office

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Loudoun County's Assessor's Office is responsible for establishing the value of real property for taxation purposes. Along with that responsibility, says Jennifer Sanderson, Operations Manager for the Assessor's Office, comes a great deal of paperwork.

"We maintain appraisal and property records for all of the properties in Loudoun County, which number approximately 120,000," she explains. "Ensuring that the property data is accurate—and that the general public, public officials and staff receive information in a timely and effective manner—is extremely important to us."

Sanderson notes that, prior to implementing Laserfiche in September 2009, the Assessor's Office was scanning its paperwork into a legacy system, but that "Laserfiche is so much faster."

She specifies that Laserfiche manages all of the department's paperwork, including:

- Field forms.
- Property photos.
- Maps.
- Sketches.
- Appeal information.
- Hearing documents.
- Incoming mail.

"Everyone in the Controller's Office has access to Laserfiche because it's so helpful to have information at your fingertips," explains Cockrell. "With Laserfiche, we no longer have to dig and dig and dig and still not find what we need. It makes our jobs much easier."

"Each appraiser in the Loudoun County Assessor's Office is responsible for assessing an average of 7,000 properties, and having all the relevant information at their fingertips has increased productivity tremendously," Sanderson says.

Furthermore, the Assessor's Office has automated the appeals process, making it easier for citizens to challenge the Assessor's Office estimate of their property value while simultaneously streamlining the process for staff. "The assessment appeal process allows property owners to alert us when they believe their property is not assessed at its current market value," explains Sanderson.

After receiving an assessment notice from the county, a home owner can appeal by submitting an application for review. The Loudoun County Assessor's Office online appeal application is easy to complete and submit. After the home owner enters his or her parcel ID, the form calls the office's Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system to automatically populate additional information about the property, such as tax map number, acreage and owner information. Applicants may also submit supporting documents such as comps from recent sales of properties similar to theirs directly to Laserfiche.

"By automatically populating the appeal form with metadata from our CAMA system, our online application form makes it easy for property owners to jumpstart the appeal process," Sanderson says. "On our end, the electronic form and supporting documents go directly into Laserfiche, making the process paperless and saving us time and money."



The Assessor's Office is currently in the process of implementing Tyler Technologies' iasWorld, a property assessment and taxation software system, and it plans to integrate the new system with Laserfiche to further automate the assessment process. According to Sanderson, "The integration will allow us to attach documents directly into the Tyler system without going to the in-house appeal system separately. It should also reduce keying errors by loading documents to the right ID."

"We've received tremendous benefits from using Laserfiche," she concludes, "and we're looking forward to the benefits we'll get through integrating it with Tyler's iasWorld."

## Rural Environmental Health

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When the floor in Loudoun County's Rural Environmental Health Division's filing room began to crack under the weight of its files, staff knew there was a problem.

"Under state law, we're required to retain our records for 75 years," explains Jeff Barr, Environmental Health Technical Specialist at Loudoun County. "To maintain compliance, we had a filing room full of rolling file cabinets holding thousands and thousands of records related to the septic systems and wells located throughout the county.

"About four years ago, we noticed that the file cabinets were all rolling to the center of the filing room. When we pulled back the carpet, we saw the cracks. County Maintenance reconfigured the room for better support, but even so, we had to take a number of our files out of the room."

Although the division was given another room for housing the excess files, employees had to go downstairs to get to it. "It wasn't convenient," Barr says. "It made finding and filing even more of a hassle than it had been previously."

He notes that even before the move, finding files was a problem, with a high number of lost or misplaced documents.

In 2010, Loudoun County implemented Laserfiche in Barr's division. "We've currently got about 25% of our files digitized, and it's made a big difference in terms of information accessibility," he says. "We're slowly working our way through our back-scanning, but we're also digitizing permits on a day-forward basis so that the information we need to review now is available in Laserfiche."

In terms of benefits, he says, "Everybody likes the fact that they can find things like permits, catch-all sheets and regulations from their desks. Our field workers also appreciate the ability to look up information in Laserfiche on their Panasonic Toughbooks when they're in the field."

In the future, Barr hopes to use Laserfiche WebLink to create a public portal to give citizens easier access to the information they need.

## Family Services

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Loudoun County's Department of Family Services aids individuals and families in functioning better together. It provides adult related services, housing services, foster care and adoption assistance, a Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), financial assistance, a host of juvenile/child related programs and investigates cases of abuse and neglect.

"Basically, we're responsible for meeting the social welfare needs of Loudoun County residents," says Susan Pratt, Fiscal Manager for the Department of Family Services.

Like the Rural Environmental Health Division, Family Services had an overflowing records room. "We literally ran out of space in our records room," explains Heike Thompson, Family Services Records Clerk. "If we hadn't started using Laserfiche in 2010, we would have had to reinforce the floor."

In addition to the records in the central filing room, each case worker had two filing cabinets in his/her cubicle to make it easier to access paperwork for active cases. But with the average benefits case worker handling 750-900 cases, two filing cabinets per worker simply weren't enough: paperwork was housed not just inside the filing cabinets, but oftentimes, on top of them, too.

"It wasn't a great situation from a security perspective," says Lorraine Dolan, Benefits Program Manager, "and it was also difficult for people to find the information they needed."

According to Pratt, "A lot of times, we're left with no choice but to use technology. Although reducing the need for paper storage was a significant factor in our adoption of Laserfiche, it has also allowed us to simplify case management and ease the burden on our overworked staff."

Dolan adds, "Because of the tough economy, county case loads have doubled since 2007. Our case workers are overwhelmed. With all the budget cuts, however, we know we're not getting any more staff. We look for technology like Laserfiche that allows our existing workers to process more benefits."

The three women explain that applications from clients are digitized upon receipt. After a benefits case is assigned to a worker, that worker:

- Looks up the client's record in SPIDeR (Systems Partnering in a Demographic Repository), a Web-based system developed by the Virginia Department of Social Services to enable data sharing between government agencies at state, local and federal levels.
- Imports the client's record into Laserfiche using Laserfiche Snapshot, a tool that converts electronic files into TIFF images and archives them in the Laserfiche repository. (In the past, workers printed out the record from SPIDeR.)

Dolan notes that having electronic case files makes it much easier to find information pertaining to any given case. "When clients call with questions, we now have the ability to immediately find their records in Laserfiche and answer their questions on the spot. If a case worker is out of the office, supervisors can see their files and provide feedback to their clients," she explains, adding that Laserfiche has eliminated lost and misplaced files.

Kanneganti notes that he automated a variety of tasks for the department using Laserfiche Workflow. For example, after a new application has been scanned into the system, Laserfiche Workflow automatically routes it to the folder of the assigned case worker.

Furthermore, once a case is closed, cutoff and eligibility dates are automatically calculated and assigned by a combination of Laserfiche Workflow and Laserfiche Records Management Edition, a DoD 5015.2-certified records management solution.

"In the past," Thompson explains, "workers would hand me a paper file with a sticky note on the cover listing the date the case closed. But sticky notes tend to fall off, so we'd frequently end up keeping closed case files for more than the required three years' retention period 'just to be safe.'"

However, with 40,000 – 50,000 records on the filing room shelves, this imperfect records retention strategy didn't help matters with the failing floor.

Thompson notes that, because Family Services started scanning on a day-forward basis, there are still old files associated with benefits cases in the record room. "Once we reach that three-year point, disposal is going to become a lot easier," she says.

Pratt, meanwhile, adds, "It's great to know that we can be compliant without Heike tearing up her hands on paper records."

Audits, too, are much simpler these days. Rather than sifting through paper files and making photocopies, the department burns requested cases onto CDs for the auditors—a faster and more cost-effective practice.

Although the records room isn't yet empty, Dolan explains that the department has removed the filing cabinets from benefits workers' cubicles. "Instead of being overrun with paper, our workers have space for plants. One even brought in a rocking chair!" she says. "They're thrilled to have space to move around."

In terms of the rollout, Thompson worked with the IT department to learn to use and administer the system. She wrote the department's user manual and trained staff members. With all the benefits case workers using Laserfiche, 100 out of 194 Family Services staff members currently have access to the system.

"We're planning to give Employment Services and Adult Protective Services read-only access to Laserfiche so that they can see Benefits cases and start to get familiar with the way the system works," says Dolan. In this way, visibility will increase across units, as well as between supervisors and case workers.

"From a cost perspective, we're saving approximately \$51,000 a year on office supplies alone," says Pratt. Dolan explains that from a customer service perspective, being able to quickly find information and answer questions for clients is a great benefit.

"I went to a disaster recovery conference a few months ago and was showing Laserfiche to some of the other attendees," Dolan adds. "They loved it. Laserfiche is something we'd like to see the entire State of Virginia adopt."

## Building and Development

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The Department of Building and Development is responsible for protecting the health and safety of county citizens by establishing and enforcing the regulations that ensure that new structures are “placed and built right,” explains Scot Ferris, Customer Service Team Manager/Senior Planner.

As such, the Land Development Division of the department deals with a large number of documents, including:

- Deeds
- Permits
- Plats
- Engineering Files
- Surveys
- Manuals
- Applications
- Ordinances
- Erosion and Sediment Control Documents
- Site Plans
- Inspections
- Code Enforcement Documents

Prior to implementing Laserfiche in 2008, the Land Development Division was scanning some items into its project management system, but that system wasn’t designed to accommodate large-scale plats and multi-page files.

“We wanted to digitize our documents because we knew it would have a huge impact on customer service, but we were limited by the fact that we didn’t have a true content management system in place,” says Ferris.

He notes that, in the past, people had to come to the Building and Development office to request files. Once there, staff members would spend time looking for the appropriate file, and then looking through the file to find specific pieces of information for the requestors.

“Sometimes I’d have to sit down with someone and look through a 300-page file to find the nugget of information they were looking for,” Ferris says.

Since implementing Laserfiche, searching for information has become much faster and easier. “Today, we have two public terminals set up where people can search for the information they need within Laserfiche,” he explains. “But people don’t even have to come into the office anymore. They can make a request from the comfort of their office and we will either e-mail the file to them straight out of Laserfiche or, for files that are too large for e-mail, burn them onto a CD and send them to the requestor.”

Ferris explains that, in order to scan its hardcopy files into Laserfiche, the Land Development Division got agile and creative. “We didn’t have funding to back-scan our existing library, so we tapped into a work-release program offered by Loudoun County Corrections.”

Jakub Jedrzejczak, an enterprise IT team member, came up with the idea of using work-release participants to scan records, which provides Building and Development with an inexpensive source of labor while helping non-violent, minimum-security inmates learn new skills that help them find jobs once they return to the community.

The Land Development Division sends boxes of records to the Work Release Facility, where they are scanned into Laserfiche. Gopal Kanneganti, who currently manages this program, estimates that the division has “easily saved more than half a million dollars over the years” by taking advantage of the work-release program.

Ferris estimates that the Land Development Division has digitized about one-third of its paper files so far. “Laserfiche is definitely a time-saving tool, and the more files it holds, the better,” he says. “Ultimately, my goal is to get Laserfiche integrated with our GIS system so that people can click on a parcel of land and see all the related documents in Laserfiche. We’ve got some internal challenges to overcome first, but that would be a dream come true.”

## Best Practices

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Since purchasing Laserfiche more than five years ago, Enterprise IT has learned a lot about how to transition a large organization away from paper records and paper-based processes. Kanneganti explains that people tend to be fearful about losing their paper when the topic of ECM first comes up. “Showing them a demo of Laserfiche at the very first meeting always eases their concerns,” he says.

He also notes that starting small and building momentum across the enterprise worked well for Loudoun County. “We initially rolled Laserfiche out to smaller groups, basically as a proof of concept. Now, other county departments can’t wait to get on board.” As interest picked up, the team discovered that it needed a minimum of one dedicated FTE along with VAR support to successfully roll out Laserfiche county-wide. It hired accordingly.

In addition to starting small, the enterprise team made a point of involving the user community in each department during different phases of the rollout—including repository design, template creation, business process automation and so on. “When people have a say in how Laserfiche is set up, they’re more confident that the right work will get done the right way at the right time,” says Kanneganti. “This makes it easier for them to accept the system and use it.”

He explains that back scanning is a major concern for many departments. They want to get rid of the need to store paper copies of old records, but they often don’t have the resources to outsource the back scanning or hire dedicated scanning staff. Many departments in this situation start with day-forward scanning and back scan when they have a few spare moments. Kanneganti recommends looking for help in unusual places. “For information that’s not sensitive, we’ve back scanned with the help of work-release participants.” Other possibilities include interns and volunteers.

Finally, Kanneganti recommends keeping things simple by using Laserfiche as integrative middleware—software that ties multiple applications together by virtue of an open API and support for industry-standard platforms. A key benefit of using Laserfiche as integrative middleware is that it enables organizations to standardize the central system while customizing the delivery of information based on departmental needs, providing consistency, security and transparency to users through the familiar applications they use every day.

Kanneganti notes that the technicians from Tyler Technologies who used the Laserfiche API to build an integration with iasWorld found it very straightforward and easy to do. “Laserfiche can be the ultimate document repository for your enterprise,” he says. “Use the Laserfiche API to build simple interfaces to upload, search and retrieve content from your legacy line-of-business applications so that users can be more productive.

“This is the approach we’re taking at Loudoun County, and it’s been working well so far!”

# **Laserfiche®**

## ***Institute*®**

The Laserfiche Institute teaches staff, resellers, and current and prospective clients how to use Laserfiche most effectively. As part of this mission, the Institute conducts more than 500 Webinars each year, covering a variety of topics. The Institute also hosts an annual conference where members of the Laserfiche community attend presentations and network to share ideas and learn best practices. Additionally, the Institute conducts a number of regional training sessions and provides resellers with content for more than 100 user conferences each year.

The Institute also develops and distributes educational material through the Laserfiche Support Site. On this Website, clients can access training videos, participate in online forums and download technical papers and presentations that help them become savvier ECM users.

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