

IBM® DB2® gives Sydney water scalable, flexible and secure document management

Overview

■ The Challenge

Like many large organisations, Sydney Water had documents of many kinds stored in multiple file servers distributed around its offices. Staff at times had trouble locating the most recent versions of files.

■ The Solution

IBM Business Partner[†] The BPA Group helped Sydney Water implement a highly scalable document management system using IBM DB2 Document Manager as the front-end application and IBM DB2 Content Manager as the back-end repository.

■ The Benefits

The new installation is designed to provide seamless management of images, email, digital assets, web content and documents and enables workflows to ensure correct approval processes are followed. It meets Sydney Water's compliance requirements under the NSW State Records Act. It will provide a scalable platform for the organisation to manage an increasing variety and volume of documents.



About Sydney Water

Sydney Water provides drinking water, recycled water, wastewater services and some stormwater services to more than 4 million people in Sydney, Illawarra and the Blue Mountains.

The corporation employs more than 3,300 staff, has assets worth over \$12 billion and an annual capital works program valued in excess of \$500 million.

Documents, documents everywhere

Sydney Water needed to address a situation typical of large organisations. The corporation's document handling system consisted of islands of information. Files vital to the running of the organisation including documents, images, spreadsheets, CAD, audio and video were distributed over more than 50 file servers.

As is usually the case in such situations, different versions of files were stored on multiple servers. Compounding this problem, staff could only access certain file servers depending on their location. As a result, finding the most current version of important documents was difficult at times, and still is.

“The original impetus for change came back in 2001 when the New South Wales Government mandated all its authorities to comply with the State Records Act which includes statutory storage periods for certain types of documents.”

Geoff Moss, Sydney Water Senior Solution Architect

Any new document storage system would need the flexibility to handle images, CAD diagrams and engineering diagrams as easily as documents and spreadsheets. It would also need to ensure that staff would have the current procedure manuals or information about the site they were visiting.

“We wanted something that would protect our confidential information and link to our existing authentication systems.”

Thus the need for a new scalable, secure and more flexible distributed document storage and handling solution.

“We wanted something that could handle unstructured files,” said Moss.

“A proven technology that could scale to enormous size and acts as a repository for all our documents. A system that would allow us to find things more easily and help us comply with the records legislation.”

IBM DB2: powerful document and content solutions

To seamlessly integrate the corporation's multiple platforms, access multiple file servers and work with varying software versions, Sydney Water chose IBM DB2 Document Manager as its front-end application with IBM DB2 Content Manager to handle back end repository functions.

The solution was initially rolled out over six weeks by both IBM Business Partner† The BPA Group & Sydney Water IT, and went live in December 2004. BPA, a long time IBM associate, has expertise in IBM DB2 product and extensive experience with utility and engineering companies. Its tasks included process design, architecture development, set up, and roll out.

“Sydney Water took the smart approach of rolling out the new system on a small pilot project to begin with,” said Liam McNamara, Professional Services Manager. “That allowed the implementation to go live in a controlled fashion and get some quick wins. Sydney Water could get it up and running, sort out glitches and experiment with adding other initiatives.

"In our experience, that's a great way to ensure successful enterprise implementation. They weren't too ambitious, which can sometimes be very challenging. They took a sensible approach and it has paid off."

The multi-tier, distributed architecture melds IBM's DB2 Content and Document Manager packages. IBM DB2 Document Manager provides a secure and robust platform that allows end users to manage the complete lifecycle of business documents using pre-defined business rules. It integrates into common desktop applications such as office software and email clients and supports a wide variety of file formats including engineering files.

IBM DB2 Content Manager provides record management integration and workflow of all types of digitised content including HTML and XML web content, document images, electronic office documents, printed output, audio and video. It provides the content infrastructure for applications including records management, document lifecycle management, email management for IBM Lotus® Domino® and Microsoft® Exchange and web content management.

The benefits keep flowing

This configuration is designed to provide Sydney Water with seamless content management and improved internal communication and document flow across the organisation.

DB2 Content Manager gives the corporation the scalability to grow its document management from a single department to a geographically dispersed enterprise. It provides a secure environment and a single source of access to multiple operating systems (including Windows®, Solaris, Linux™), databases, applications and resources.

The new installation's functionality provides seamless image, email and messaging management, digital asset management, web content management and content integration. It meets Sydney Water's compliance requirements under the NSW State Records Act.

The system's workflow features can book documents in for peer review, approval and release.

"Document routing functionality allows management to specify the path through departments and ensure those staff members who need to see and approve documents receive them in the correct order," said Moss.

The new system is highly configurable and extendable.

"The implementation is still in its early days, but we already have much better control of our documentation," said Geoff Moss. "Its very powerful search capabilities allow staff to search by author, document type, date or other metadata and save their most commonly used searches. In short, they can find documents much more easily and it ensures they can access the most recent version.

"We can now manage documents through their entire lifecycle, from creation to destruction. Information is accessible from anywhere within the enterprise. We can even view documents remotely over the Internet, comfortable that the system features tight security."

Geoff Moss, Sydney Water Senior Solution Architect

For more information

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