

SUCCESS!

Industry	Utility
Critical Issue	Compliance with CalRIM, California's records management regulations for entities receiving public funding, as well as greater control and security over digital files.
Solution	A Windows-based, secure document management system with full-text indexing and audit trail that resolved compliance issues.
Result	A CalRIM-compliant system with dramatic cost savings, higher productivity, and improved customer service.

Document management technology enables El Dorado Irrigation District to slash paper records, improve employee efficiency, and meet records management requirements.

El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) serves nearly 100,000 people in northern California's geographically diverse El Dorado County. It provides a unique combination of water-based services including drinking water, wastewater treatment, recycled water for landscape irrigation, hydropower generation, and recreation areas.

Records management out of control

The utility's headquarters are located on a 40-acre campus with one large building and several outlying smaller buildings. Walking among the buildings to find documents was time-consuming and inefficient. Therefore, multiple copies of most paper documents existed, with little records management discipline applied.

EID's digital processes also lacked controls. File server contents grew from 500,000 files to 775,000 files in less than two years, but no naming or organization discipline was adopted. Users arbitrarily moved folders, other users could not find folders, and security was loose.

In addition to its massive paper archive and uncontrolled file server use, EID was soon required to meet new government standards. In 2002, the State of California established records management regulations ("CalRIM") that mandated retention rules and other practices for entities that receive public funding.



“ Document Locator is so easy to use that I can train a new user to navigate and manage records in only 10 or 15 minutes. ”

Glenn Purkett

IT Technician
El Dorado Irrigation District
California

Microsoft
GOLD CERTIFIED
Partner

Seamless
Windows
Integration

The search for a solution

New management at EID arrived with previous experience with computer-based document management systems and initiated the search for a solution. Business administrators started the search and soon involved experts from the Information Technology division. The first proposed solution was a paper-based filing system with color-coded files and large moving cabinets. The initial projected cost was \$300,000, and the system would have continued the “paper culture.” That solution was deemed unacceptable. When IT became involved, Glenn Purkett, IT Technician, investigated dedicated records management systems, but he found that the cost of training all 280-plus employees in formal records management concepts and discipline would cost \$70,000—again, not acceptable. In addition, many long-time employees would have been faced with significant changes in their daily work processes.

Windows compatibility crucial

Glenn then focused on the idea of using an integrated document management system to gradually transform the use of paper documents into digital documents and to organize and manage the growing file server problem. EID had previously outsourced the scanning of paper documents from one large acquisition project, but the resulting proprietary file and repository formats were a barrier to effective use of the scanned files. Therefore, strict Windows compatibility was now a mandatory requirement for any solution. Document Locator met the technical demands for scanning and file management, and it actually proved to cost less than the records

management training alone. The intuitive user interface and deep integration with Microsoft Windows would support introduction of document management practices with minimal user training.

From boxes of paper to DVDs

After an initial investment in Document Locator and a Canon scanner, EID scanned 87 boxes of paper, using a part-time employee to help. The records included 79 years of board minutes and resolutions, three years of accounts payable information, and 30,000 employee time sheets spanning two years.

For initial use of the system, Glenn put the entire record of board activity onto DVDs, and developed a process to supply board members with upcoming agenda items and enable them to review material. With board members now able to review and mark up pending items based upon complete access to historical reference material, Glenn won approval for the full project.

Document Locator and the digital repository of information were initially deployed into the finance department—determined to be the “path of least resistance.” Internal and external customers often need accounts payable information, and the department was frequently burdened with requests for information that required manual searching through stacks of paper, an estimated 55,000 pages per year. Also, the payroll clerk was overloaded with requests to search through employee timesheets in response to questions like “How much time was spent last quarter on Project x?” At a minimum, by scanning accounts payable documents and timesheets into a

searchable repository, finance department workers and other parties could eliminate the overhead incurred through manual searches, and EID managers could directly search their employees’ timesheets for immediate results. Two years of accounts payable and timesheet documents have been scanned to date, and scanning has almost caught up to current records. The next scanning task will move the complete set of administrative documents online.

Document Locator met the technical demands for scanning and file management, and it actually proved to cost less than the records management training alone.

As previously noted, thousands of digital documents were stored on shared file servers, in duplicated form, having little organization and, thus, being subject to loss. The existing folder structure actually contributed to document management problems. In a fresh approach, Glenn created a new folder structure designed to meet CalRIM requirements within Document Locator. The solution allows documents to be moved into a permanent records management structure, with duplication and ownership issues resolved. Today, a selected group of 30 users are moving documents from the file server into Document Locator and are taking advantage of the intuitive Windows user interface to capture, manage, and share their records within a secure repository.

Results: savings, productivity, and compliance

To some extent, EID continues to have parallel paper and digital business processes. Glenn made a conscious choice to preserve some paper processes during the initial Document Locator deployment because it allowed potentially skeptical users to continue with familiar work tasks while gradually introducing the benefits of a document management system. Even so, the initial benefits have been significant.

The finance department had been using an outside service to retroactively microfilm their records

at a cost of \$9,000 a year plus three months of internal work to prepare the documents for filming. And once the records were available on film, searching for and copying microfilmed records continued to consume significant time. With the addition of a dedicated Canon scanner, the department can now ensure that all records are immediately on-line and retrievable, regardless of whether they originate on paper or in a computer. The board of directors is now more efficient. They are able to preview upcoming issues, electronically review relevant historical material, and deal on-line with resolution documents and minutes. The

payroll clerk has been completely relieved of requests for timesheet information, freeing time for other tasks.

Perhaps most important, EID is well on the way to meeting CalRIM requirements, ensuring access to future public funds that might otherwise be withheld. And Document Locator is now the foundation for ongoing improvements in business processes, resulting in lower costs, higher productivity, and better service to customers within and outside EID