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CASE STUDY

LEGAL INDUSTRY

GCL Solicitors

eCopy unlocks the potential of Microsoft® SharePoint®

CHALLENGE

- Needed an easy and fast method for making paper documents available to clients over the Internet
- Required online archival of large documents for varying amounts of time, leading to high off site storage costs
- Needed to reduce the volume of paper generated and shared in the office and with clients

STRATEGY

- eCopy ShareScan® on multifunction devices (MFDs) in the IT department and in the main office
- eCopy Connector for Microsoft SharePoint to allow for collaborative sharing of paper documents over the Internet

RESULTS

- Any employee can now easily scan documents directly into SharePoint
- Full navigation of SharePoint sites from the MFD eliminates the multi-step process of scanning documents to users' desktops and then uploading them to SharePoint, saving time
- Costs associated with photocopying, faxing, and mailing paper documents to clients have been reduced

ABOUT GCL SOLICITORS

One of the UK's leading law firms, GCL is a customer focused organization specializing in residential property development. GCL employs 75 professionals and is based in Guildford, Surrey.

"If it wasn't for the ability to scan documents to individual SharePoint sites through eCopy, we wouldn't be using SharePoint in a full capacity."

— **David Powe**
IT Manager
GCL Solicitors

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY IS PAPER INTENSIVE...

Information collected during development stages -- including leases, contracts, site inspections, plans, construction reports, and glossaries of terms must all be gathered, reviewed, modified, stored, and shared with each party involved. Almost all of this information makes its way to GCL in paper form.

GCL shares this project information with its clients in large documents known as reservation packs. These reservation packs consist of heavy volumes of paper documents, which are expensive both to produce and send, and time consuming to amend. In addition, copies have to be stored for varying amounts of time, leading to high off-site storage and retrieval costs for GCL.

GCL WANTED TO MAKE PLOT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO ITS CLIENTS ONLINE...

They were assisted by Tony Axelrod of E-syscare Ltd, a specialist consultancy in case management and IT infrastructure support for law firms. After reviewing its options, GCL determined that Microsoft SharePoint was a solution that was well-suited for this new process and would also provide the company with an archiving, collaboration, and workflow improvement solution.

Using Windows SharePoint Server 2007, E-syscare Limited and the GCL IT department developed a client portal that enables secure online access to files. The portal allows clients to view reports on the status of a plot in real-time and also download, view, and print any documents relating to the plot or development.

GCL had been using eCopy ShareScan for four years to scan paper documents to shared files or e-mail. eCopy had become a valuable tool throughout by improving the way that documents flowed both inside and outside the office. Through the use of eCopy, GCL has moved from printing and faxing or mailing documents to predominantly scanning and e-mailing. They are now scanning upwards of 1,000 documents each month. David Powe, IT Manager at GCL, notes that eCopy is such a valuable tool that, "if I were to take eCopy out of the office there would be an uproar among the staff."

Through GCL's office equipment dealer, David learned about an eCopy product that would enable users to scan documents directly into matter sites within SharePoint from eCopy ShareScan at GCL's MFDs. After seeing eCopy's tight integration with SharePoint, he knew it was the key to getting the most out of the SharePoint investment. With eCopy, navigating SharePoint at the MFD is the same as storing an electronic document (e.g., an MS word document) to SharePoint at the desktop. This makes it much simpler for users to upload documents into SharePoint than the multi-step process of sending the document back to their desktop and then uploading it.

ECOPY IS CRITICAL TO THE FULL USE OF ITS SHAREPOINT SOLUTION...

It provides advantages such as providing a common office-wide structure for document collaboration and electronic archiving, which helps reduce strain on IT resources and offers significant disaster recovery advantages over paper storage as documents can

be quickly retrieved if systems fail. Without the ability to scan documents from any MFD directly into the relevant SharePoint matter sites, the process for converting paper to electronic documents would need dedicated staff, more resources, and would create delays in the availability of information within SharePoint.

The eCopy/Sharepoint system also enables clients to remotely view progress on their developments in a secure, customized portal. This provides GCL with a stronger service offering to their clients, a key differentiator in a competitive industry. Converting its document workflow to SharePoint, with the help of E-syscare Limited and eCopy, is also preparing GCL for the pending Home Information Packs (HIPs) legislation that is due to become law in June 2007. This regulation requires that HIPs be made available to any potential property buyer during the sales process. HIPs will contain an enormous amount of documentation and will need to be developed by GCL at a significant cost.

As any potential buyer can request these packs, costs can escalate quickly if they redeveloped, printed, and shipped in paper form. With SharePoint and eCopy, GCL can make HIPs available online as PDF files, leading to a much more convenient and less costly solution to meet this regulation.

When the SharePoint portal is fully rolled out, David hopes that communication to outside parties will be done through SharePoint or on a CD, with paper as the least desirable method. "The more paper that we can convert to electronic form, the better it is for us," added David.

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