



KiwiRail Develops Virtualized Fax Environment with Open Text

New Zealand transportation organization relies on Open Text Fax Server and Document Server for enhanced productivity

Industry

Transportation

Customer

KiwiRail 

Open Text Partner

faxflow

Business Challenge

Employees spent hours manually faxing and archiving paper-based confirmations and scheduling sheets

Business Solution

- Open Text Fax Server, RightFax Edition
- Open Text Document Server, Alchemy Edition

Business Benefits

- Business documents delivered and archived within minutes
- Effective integration with enterprise applications
- Virtualized Fax over IP environment supports disaster recovery, high availability

Kiwi Rail is one of New Zealand's biggest freight movers, operating services over New Zealand's national rail network. It provides line-haul service for the movement of bulk commodities or containerized freight, including dry or temperature-controlled goods as well as loads for the import and export markets. In 2008, Toll NZ became owned by the New Zealand government and was renamed KiwiRail.

The Challenge

A lot can change over the course of a decade, and businesses face transformations with an added challenge: maintaining technologies that support best business practices at every stage. For KiwiRail, one thing that hasn't changed in over 10 years is its reliance on Open Text Fax Server, RightFax Edition electronic document delivery. Based partly on Fax Server's reliability, the company also later decided to add Open Text Document Server, Alchemy Edition.

KiwiRail directs critical operations via fax, relying on the technology as a main source of communication. Among other procedures, the company's head office, including the help desk and accounting department, depends on fax to plan and confirm freight booking as well as crew scheduling. Orders, invoices, and other financial documents are also sent and received via fax.

According to Jono Armstrong, network consultant with KiwiRail, previous operations were largely manual. For freight booking, employees took orders, then printed confirmations to be delivered via fax machines. While overall fax volume varied, confirmations alone generally totaled 300 to 400 per day. "It would take employees most of the night to fax the sheets manually," Armstrong says, "and even longer during Christmas season when daily booking confirmations numbered in the thousands." Unfortunately, paper-based processing led to reporting delays and challenges for help desk personnel who lacked an easy way to access the latest files.

Like faxing, annotating and storing other scheduling or financial documents by hand also led to inefficiencies. Handling documents pulled employees away from their desks to machines and filing cabinets. Also, notes or updates were often written on a fax before it was filed. "Unfortunately, there could be important comments that were essentially lost. Some documents weren't captured, and it would be impossible to find them again," Armstrong notes.





The Solution

KiwiRail first installed Open Text Fax Server, RightFax Edition in 1998 for electronic document delivery. Now, rather than standing by fax machines, employees send and receive time-sensitive faxes from the desktop. Since its initial installation, Open Text Fax Server has seamlessly adapted to KiwiRail's changing technology and the business needs for providing line-haul service. Most recently, Open Text Fax over IP is conducted via effective integration with KiwiRail's Cisco Voice over IP infrastructure, ESX VMware, and "boardless" Fax over IP capabilities. "One of the biggest benefits of Open Text Fax Server over the competition is its reliable server integrated with the Brooktrout SR 140 T.38 Fax over IP platform," Armstrong says. "From a technical perspective, Open Text Fax over IP is a very simple set-up and helps you get going without any flaws." KiwiRail purchased SR-140 software to replace its TR114 analog boards. While Fax Server supports the pure IP fax solution, the server also supports hybrid environments for businesses that are transitioning from traditional PSTN to VoIP.

In addition to a virtualized Fax over IP solution, KiwiRail turned to Fax Server for integration with other critical business applications, even as these solutions were expanded or replaced over time. Following initial installation, KiwiRail added the Open Text Fax Server Connector for Lotus Notes to fax-enable its email solution. Within a few years, the company switched to Microsoft Exchange® to simplify administration. Fax Server easily adapted with the Open Text Fax Server Connector for Microsoft Exchange, which permits fax sending, receiving, and management through Microsoft Exchange and Microsoft Outlook®.

Another add-on, the Open Text Fax Server Connector for SAP, enables KiwiRail to automatically track and deliver purchase orders and invoices directly from its SAP Financial application. KiwiRail

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Jono Armstrong, Network Consultant, KiwiRail

also installed the Open Text Fax Server PDF module to convert PDF and PostScript files to fax format. As IP faxing is extended across the KiwiRail enterprise, the company is investigating the integration of Open Text Fax Server and Open Text Document Server, Alchemy Edition to fax-enable its existing HP and Konica-Minolta multi-function devices and to store faxed images for easy retrieval. "More than anything, we're trying to stop documents from being printed at all," Armstrong says, "so users can manage faxing and documents at the desktop."

Rather than facing a daily manual process of several hours to fax confirmations, KiwiRail processes and delivers the documents electronically via its custom freight booking system, FBS Builder, integrated with Open Text. The time-sensitive files are not printed; instead, outbound fax confirmations are delivered to customers via an SMTP/POP3 email gateway. Copies of the messages are then automatically stored within Alchemy, and FBS Builder presents a view of the Alchemy database. Document profile fields are updated manually or via a look-up function.

In 2002, KiwiRail worked with Amtel—a New Zealand-based solutions provider and member of the Open Text Fax and Document Distribution Group Developer Program—to implement and support Alchemy for document management. For the FBS Builder application, Amtel ensured support for Alchemy, ODBC connectivity, and .NET programming. "Alchemy supports our business processes and records everything that goes out from our applications as well as incoming faxes," Armstrong says.

For automated processing, KiwiRail also handles train crew scheduling via a Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet with embedded scripts for automatic "printing" to Open Text Fax Server. Rosters are delivered via internal phone links and arrive on fax machines at distant train stations.



The Results

"The automation of our business processes and related time-savings are definitely the biggest benefits of our use of Fax Server and Alchemy," Armstrong says. As an example, he points to integrated freight booking procedures, which deliver and archive confirmations within minutes, without touching paper. "We believe it even creates a better experience for our customers," he adds.

KiwiRail has already replaced several fax machines at the head office, and additional units will be eliminated with time. "IP telephony will help roll out Fax Server as our primary fax solution for most sites throughout the country," Armstrong says. He also explains that KiwiRail's interest in Fax over IP is driven by virtualization: "As a strategy going forward, virtualization makes it easier for disaster recovery and high availability...with no physical board, the advantage is that you can fax through many gateways without a single point of failure."

Open Text Fax Server, RightFax Edition is a proven market leader. Compared to other Fax over IP solutions, Fax Server offers the most integrations with MFPs and third-party enterprise software solutions, including Microsoft SharePoint®, Oracle®, FileNet®, and others. It also provides enhanced features (such as SMS and AutoReply), more configuration options, and more dynamic Least-cost Routing and dialing rules.

Using Alchemy, KiwiRail maintains quick and easy access to information while avoiding filing cabinets. For instance, the FBS application produces only digital output; all data is archived solely to tape. For company buy-outs, renaming, and other changes, KiwiRail continues to rely on Open Text solutions. "One of the reasons KiwiRail has remained loyal is the support that has been offered up at every occasion," Armstrong explains. "When it came time to upgrade, we didn't even look at anything else."

About Open Text

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