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Protecting human health and the environment for future generations

Human Interest Story

Security, Risk & Governance

Contents

At a glance

Industry: Government

Customer: Department of Energy—Office of Legacy Management

Implementation Partner: Information First

Location: Colorado, USA

Context: Support environmental reuse and community engagement in World War II and Cold War legacy sites

Our Response: OpenText™ Content Manager

Impact:

- Faster access to compensation by health-affected workers and their families
- Closer collaboration with local communities
- Targeted records management preserves historic value
- User-friendly interface promotes successful adoption

Focus Area: Security, Risk & Governance

Department of Energy

The US Department of Energy (DOE) is committed to managing its responsibilities associated with the legacy of World War II and the Cold War. This legacy includes radioactive and chemical waste, environmental contamination, and hazardous material at over 100 sites across the USA. DOE has taken major steps toward fulfilling commitments to clean up this environmental legacy by successfully implementing an accelerated environmental remediation program. This includes long-term surveillance and maintenance, records management, work force restructuring and benefits continuity, property management, land use planning, and community assistance.

The Office of Legacy Management was formally established as a new DOE element on December 15, 2003. This office is responsible for ensuring that DOE's post-closure responsibilities are met and for providing DOE programs for long-term surveillance and maintenance, records management, work force restructuring and benefits continuity, property management, land use planning, and community assistance.

Protecting human health and the environment for future generations

Introduction

Keeping records to protect human health, the environment, and workers' rights

The Records and Information group under Legacy Management's (LM) Archives and Information Management (AIM) team is responsible for managing LM's vast records holdings from legacy Cold War nuclear weapons production programs as well as current business records. These records are vital in understanding how legacy sites can be used for the good of the community.

Recently, LM hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Atomic Legacy Cabin, a new interpretive center located at the Grand Junction, Colorado, office. The original log cabin located on this site later became the base of operations for the US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) Colorado Raw Materials Office, which was the regional epicenter of uranium mining and processing that defined the nuclear arms race between the USA and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

During the aftermath of the Cold War, former uranium-processing sites were remediated and repurposed. In 2001, DOE transferred ownership of 46 acres of the original 55-acre Grand Junction site to the Riverview Technology Corporation (RTC), a business development nonprofit. The site is now home to the awardwinning Business Incubator Center, a nonprofit that supports the launch and growth of businesses by local entrepreneurs.

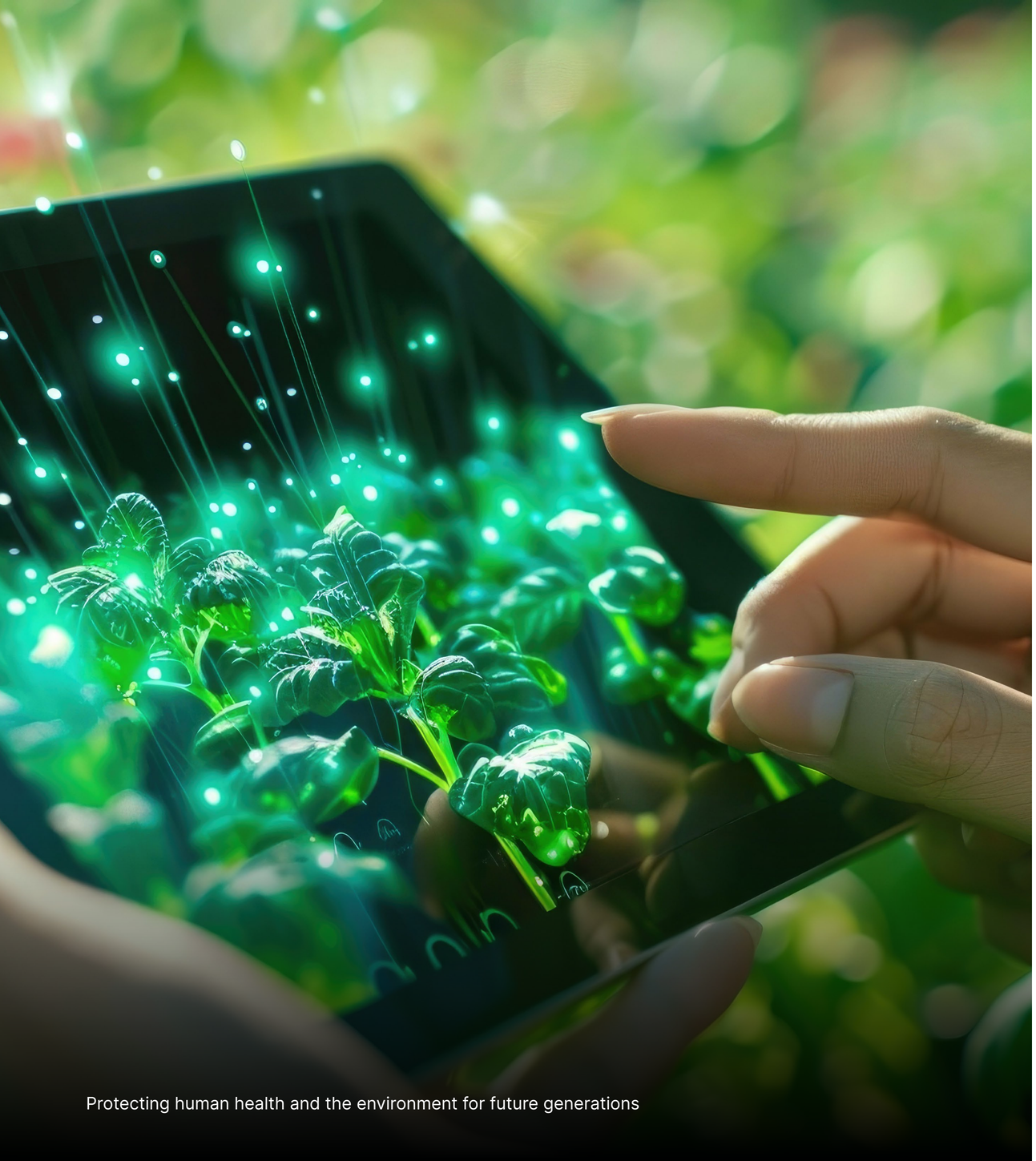
At the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Atomic Legacy Cabin, Peter O'Konski, Deputy Director of LM said: "In addition to being stewards of the environment, LM strives to be stewards of history—and this is history coming to life."

LM records are also the basis for providing compensation to workers on the sites who may have suffered ill health as a consequence of their exposure under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA), managed by the U.S. Department of Labor.

After a site or major DOE program has closed, records should be maintained for epidemiological reasons, environmental monitoring, pension administration, etc. Most of these records have retention periods of 75+ years, and often need to be kept permanently.

4 million+ records

LM currently maintains over four million records in an electronic content management system. As legacy sites continue to transfer into LM's custody, records team members are responsible for indexing incoming records, capturing the electronic information into the content management system, and ensuring the proper physical storage in the record storage facility for the entire lifecycle.



Context

Support adoption of user-friendly records solution

The records team responds to approximately 1,800 stakeholder requests each year, including Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act requests, litigation, and other general information.

The previous electronic content management system was overly complex to manage and accessed only by key records staff. The previous process involved emailing records to a records mailbox, where it would then be captured and added to the system and tagged with one of 1,500 record codes. This process resulted in significant labor hours to manage records.

To increase adoption of a central electronic records solution, LM made the decision that a replacement system would be accessed by all staff, be light on administration and would not require IT configuration for simple tasks such as adding users or creating new folders.

Simple requests such as changing a permission, or adding a new record, could take up to three days in the old system. They’re now completed in minutes by the records managers themselves.

Our response

Empowering records managers with OpenText Content Manager

OpenText™ Content Manager was already in use at a DOE Laboratory and had a great user adoption experience. As part of the integration, all content from the existing system was migrated into OpenText Content Manager and OpenText's implementation partner, Information First, introduced workflows to manage records disposition approval and other records management processes. Simple requests such as changing a permission, or adding a new record, could take up to three days in the old system. Currently they're completed in minutes by the records managers themselves. This frees critical IT staff to manage other more complex applications and provide needed support across LM and reduces the time spent managing the system.

OpenText Content Manager allows staff to respond to DOL inquiries in a more timely and secure manner, helping to reduce the claim response time for those who may be suffering.

Impact

Preserving historic value

Having relevant information readily accessible helps site managers interact with the public to explain the remediation activities and reassure local communities. A great example of collaboration is the recent BONUS project. LM and the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA) have been working jointly to recover, digitize, and manage records for the decommissioned Boiling Nuclear Superheater (BONUS) site for long-term stewardship. LM and PREPA are jointly responsible for ensuring that the BONUS site continues to be protective of human health and the environment, while preserving historical site information.

394 boxes of the BONUS records collection were shipped to LM, where they would be indexed and archived. The contents of the boxes are important site records as evidence of communication, decisions, actions, and history. Some of the records discovered in the collection included specification drawings for the design of the reactor facility and purchase orders and vendor information material for operating components dating back to the 1960s.

Protecting human health and the environment for future generations

Through an integrated approach, PREPA and LM, supported by modern technology such as OpenText Content Manager, determined that only 17 percent of the original records were needed for historical significance and long-term stewardship. This significantly reduced the forecast cost to digitize the collection of records.

Supporting workers and their families in their hour of need

In partnership with the Department of Labor (DOL), DOE is responsible for responding to record keeping requests to support the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA). This compensates for occupational illnesses that are linked to toxic exposures in the legacy DOE or mining work environment.

Structured records management helps this cause by supporting the timely, appropriate and accurate decisions on claims submitted to the Department of Labor (DOL) by former workers through the EEOICPA program. OpenText Content Manager allows staff to respond to DOL inquiries in a more timely and secure manner, helping to reduce the claim response time for those who may be suffering.

About OpenText

OpenText, The Information Company, enables organizations to gain insight through market leading information management solutions, on premises or in the cloud. For more information about OpenText (NASDAQ: OTEX, TSX: OTEX) visit opentext.com.

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