Scottish Funding Council Moves to the Top of the Class with OpenText

OpenText Content Server 10 upgrade delivers performance improvement, integration to latest desktop tools and extranets, enhanced information management, and faceted search

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is the national, strategic body responsible for funding Scotland's 42 colleges and 19 universities. SFC's mission is to invest in the development of a college and university system which, through enhanced learning, research, and knowledge exchange, leads to improved economic, educational, social, and cultural outcomes for the people of Scotland.

SFC funding contributes to the costs of teaching, research, and other activities—including costs related to staff, infrastructure, buildings, and equipment. In 2011-2012, the Council distributed over £1.5 billion and supported the education of over half a million college and university students.

Managing the documentation and recording of the complex processes involved in funding allocations has long been key to the operational success of SFC. To meet these needs, SFC first implemented a solution from OpenText in 2003. The system continued to grow over the years to meet the evolving needs of SFC and, in 2011, SFC embarked on a project to upgrade its entire workforce to Microsoft® Office 2010, Outlook® 2010, and OpenText Content Server 10.

Mapping out a vision for today and tomorrow

SFC took a staged approach to bringing its IT infrastructure and applications up to date to provide a solid platform for the future. With impending reductions to its operational budgets, the organisation knew it had to refresh its IT landscape whilst the necessary resources were still available.

So, in June 2011, the first step was taken—updating the desktop to Microsoft Office 2010 from 2003, but not yet Outlook 2010, at this stage. SFC had been a long-time user of GroupWise® for email, and the move to Microsoft Exchange and Outlook would have more far-reaching implications.

"By breaking down the upgrade process into smaller pieces, we were able to prepare our staff for the changes ahead in more manageable chunks. Getting them used to the look and feel of Office 2010 would pave the way for significant changes later on," says Tim Cain, Senior IT Projects Officer and Programme Manager at SFC.

SFC makes extensive use of email both internally and externally. Many emails form part of the audit trail and are, therefore, required to be stored and retained along with the necessary metadata to ensure

INDUSTRY

Public Sector - Education

CUSTOMER

Scottish Funding Council

CHALLENGES

- Impact on content management from pending replacement of GroupWise® with Outlook® 2010
- Ability to declare records directly from Outlook without development of custom code
- Flexibility in user interface design and search
- Impending budget cuts reducing IT support and future upgrade capacity

SOLUTIONS

- OpenText Content Server 10
- OpenText Enterprise Connect

BENEFITS

- Faster searching with customisable column display and faceted search capability
- Seamless integration with OpenText Content Server 10 and Microsoft® Office tools such as Outlook 2010
- Eliminated custom code previously requiring support and maintenance
- Little training required for users due to intuitive user interface and use of standard desktop tools

they can be easily retrieved at a later date. In the existing system, this had been accomplished with a specific GroupWise integration, requiring custom code. SFC wanted to move away from its reliance on such code in the future.

Planning the move to Content Server 10

With thorough and careful planning, SFC mapped out how they would make the transition from GroupWise and Livelink 9.7.1 to Outlook 2010 and Content Server 10. With Office 2010 now rolled out across the organisation, the next major milestone involved moving users to the latest version of Content Server.

"Users would spend a half day receiving training on Outlook 2010," adds Cain. "When they were away from their desks, we would migrate their email to Outlook and upgrade the desktop to Content Server 10. That way, we were able to implement the upgrade without any disruption to the business."

With help and assistance from OpenText Global Services both onsite and remotely, SFC was able to make a smooth transition, completing the move to the latest versions of its desktop productivity tools, including the OpenText solutions.

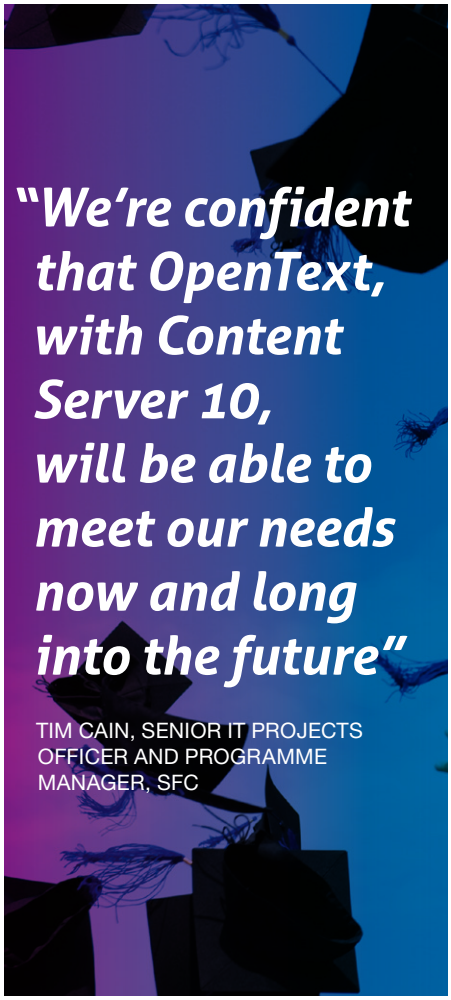
Cain explains, "Users received little or no training on the OpenText solutions, as they found them so intuitive to use that formal training was deemed unnecessary."

Reaping the benefits without feeling pain

With the rollout of Content Server 10 now complete—without any negative impact on the business users—SFC is now considering how to best benefit from the new capabilities that Content Server 10 could bring them.

"Users immediately noticed the improvements in the look and feel and the performance of Content Server 10. That's not to say that Livelink 9.7.1 was slow, but the difference was both noticeable and welcome. Users have observed that it is now quicker and easier to get to the content they need," Cain says.

Content Server 10 has brought additional multi-threading capability, allowing organisations to deploy with less hardware and even in a virtualised environment—as SFC is doing—in addition to clustering and load balancing for additional reliability.



As a part of the upgrade to Content Server 10, SFC implemented OpenText Enterprise Connect. Cain had seen a demonstration of Enterprise Connect at an OpenText Customer Event and could immediately see how this could benefit SFC.

"Enterprise Connect allows our users to open and edit documents directly from familiar day-to-day applications such as Outlook. This has contributed massively to the rapid deployment and positive user feedback—no new complicated interfaces to master, no jumping from application to application," Cain says.

A springboard for the future

With Content Server 10 now installed, operational, and providing a positive impact, focus is moving to other areas where the capabilities of Content Server 10 can be brought into play.

SFC has looked closely at how it can further streamline processes using the Business Process Management (BPM) capabilities within Content Server 10 and has been able to improve areas such as records management.

The benefits don't end there; Content Server 10 is allowing the introduction of new extranets that can pull content from the OpenText solution, further improving the interaction and collaboration of SFC with other partners and agencies.

"OpenText has clearly made a commitment to continue to develop Content Server in response to the ever-changing needs of the market; not least of all in the area of mobile. Like many organisations, we're looking at how our staff can be more efficient when on the move and we're confident that OpenText, with Content Server 10, will be able to meet our needs now and long into the future," concludes Cain. ■

Copyright © 2012 Open Text Corporation. OpenText and Open Text are trademarks or registered trademarks of Open Text Corporation. This list is not exhaustive. All other trademarks or registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved. For more information, visit: http://www.opentext.com/2/global/site-copyright.html (09/2012)00184EN