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"The EDRM system developed by Fujitsu and Meridio has broken the back of a huge information management challenge"

Steve Cardus – Departmental Records Officer, Department for Children, Schools and Families

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation
The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), formerly part of the Department for Education & Skills (DfES)

Service/s delivered
An Electronic Document & Records Management (EDRM) solution compliant with prevailing legislation and standards

Key Metrics
- 3,500 employees in four locations
- 1.4 million items

Benefits
- **Compliance** – meets The National Archive (TNA) standard for records management and supports the Data Protection and Freedom of Information requirements

- **Effective information management** – information is not duplicated and there is full control of its lifecycle and quality

- **Improved collaboration** – facilitates collaborative working and information sharing within and between workgroups

- **Increased productivity** – it is much easier and faster to find relevant information when it is needed

- **Better resource usage** – has reduced the time, space and cost needed to house and manage paper files and improved the capacity utilisation of IT systems and networks

Customer's Challenge

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) is responsible for all policy affecting children and young people, as part of the Government's aim to deliver educational excellence. The DCSF is one of three new government departments formed in June 2007 from the former Department for Education & Skills (DfES), the others being the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR).

Like all government departments, the DfES had to comply with the Government's e-business targets for the electronic storage and retrieval of documents, as well as accountability directives and Records Management legislation. However, a substantial amount of its media, documents and records were held in paper files. In addition, electronic files were spread across shared file servers and a variety of other repositories, such as the departmental Intranet and public and private e-mail folders.

In order to comply with e-government targets, the DfES recognised the importance of implementing a corporate information management solution that would enable it to access and share information quickly and easily.

Steve Cardus, Departmental Records Officer, DCSF, says, *"Essentially, everything that we had previously done on our paper-based systems to ensure accountability we had to transfer onto an electronic system, and the starting point for that was a complete information management audit in order to develop a skeleton of a new corporate file plan and size the new system."*

Fujitsu Solution

Following a comprehensive audit of its information management needs, the DfES chose Fujitsu, working with Microsoft and Meridio, to deliver an Electronic Document & Records Management (EDRM) solution that would meet both its functional requirements and the targets and timescales of e-government.

The system is based on Meridio EDRM technology, which provides a secure, scalable high performance solution for the management and control of documents, records and other electronically held content for organisations using Microsoft technology for their IT infrastructure. Its sophisticated functionality not only meets the standards requirements of government, but also allows the inclusion of web pages, emails, paper and other physical information assets as records, bringing all of an organisation's data under the control of one system.

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Explaining the decision Steve Cardus says, *"We wanted to use the Meridio system, and Meridio recommended that Fujitsu design, build and implement the system and supporting infrastructure, in partnership with our in-house IT experts and Dell Computers, so that it could provide a single focal point and ensure the overall quality of the service. Fujitsu was also tasked with providing consultancy on problem areas like how to migrate our information over to the Meridio system."*

The EDRM system is now used in four locations and by 3,500 users in the DSCF. It has a capacity to store 10 Terabytes of data and currently contains 1.4 million items. Steve Cardus continues, *"In 2006 the department created 28,000 paper records, but in the first six months of using the Meridio system we captured 30,000 records, which indicates that more people are saving information centrally, because it's easier to do. The system is also now integrated with our Correspondence Handling System, so everything, including documents and e-mails, is now searchable."*

"Over the last three years, Fujitsu and its consultants have shown that they understand what we are trying to achieve and why," says Dave Gordon, Infrastructure Manager, DSCF, *"and this, combined with their skills and expertise, has helped us establish an excellent working relationship. We now have a mutual trust and respect that has enabled difficult and testing issues to be resolved in a sensible and productive way."*

Steve Cardus agrees, *"While Fujitsu obviously needs to make money, it still has the department's interests at heart and was determined to make things work. It struck a nice balance as it felt like we were all in it together and Fujitsu was obviously as interested as we were in making the project a success."*

Benefits to our Customer

The EDRM system developed by Fujitsu's is enabling:

- **Compliance** – meets The National Archive (TNA) standard for records management and enables the rapid retrieval of information needed to respond to enquiries made under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- **Effective information management** – information is no longer duplicated in different locations, so there is "one version of the truth", and there is full control over the life cycle and quality of information consolidated from different sources
- **Improved collaboration** – facilitates collaborative working and the sharing of information within and between workgroups
- **Increased productivity** – it is much easier and faster to find relevant information when it is needed, so less time is wasted searching and "reinventing the wheel"
- **Better resource usage** – centralised electronic storage has reduced the time, space and cost needed to house and manage paper files and improved the capacity utilisation of existing IT systems and networks.

"It's been a long hard slog," comments Steve Cardus, *"but the EDRM system developed by Fujitsu and Meridio has broken the back of a huge information management challenge. There's still a long way to go in terms of the cultural change as a minority of people remain resistant to sharing information, so it's a slow burner and the benefits will only*

be fully realised in 2-3 years. But as the department is reorganised and rationalised we will rely even more on technology to do our jobs effectively and the EDRM system is now a key part of that."

Our Approach

To evaluate the functionality and integrity of the new EDRM system, Fujitsu helped the DfES conduct a pilot involving 10% of the entire department, which included a proof of concept for the migration process.

"The pilot was a complete microcosm of the entire system and was run for six months," explains Steve Cardus. *"While not everyone used the system, it was a very useful exercise because it highlighted why people didn't! The lessons that we learnt as a result we were able to carry forward into the full implementation. It also showed the quality of the support that we could expect."*

The solution has a full Disaster Recovery system to ensure business continuity, including processes and procedures developed by Fujitsu to meet specific DSCF and regulatory requirements for Electronic Content Management (ECM). However, the effectiveness of Fujitsu's approach to the design and testing process is demonstrated by the fact that since going live the infrastructure supporting the EDRM system has never malfunctioned.

Steve Cardus continues, *"We've had very close to 100% reliability. Fujitsu was a key player in helping us achieve that by designing a super-resilient information management facility and that's something that we've been able to share with other government departments as it's a tough nut to crack. The very solid stability and quality of the system is providing the foundation for cultural change."*

Our Expertise

With over 30 years experience of supporting the needs of the public sector and businesses around the world, Fujitsu has a proven track record in providing complex systems integration and management services that reduce costs, improve productivity and customer services and deliver a compelling return on investment.

Dave Gordon comments, *"Fujitsu has shown a willingness to go the extra mile to help us reach our objectives - with at times people working above and beyond what could have been reasonably expected of them. I recognise the value of the knowledge, dedication and tenacity of those Fujitsu staff that have worked with us and I look forward to continuing this relationship with Fujitsu in the future."*

"The partnership that we developed with Fujitsu when building the EDRM infrastructure and the quality of its consultancy on all aspects of the technical implementation was very good," adds Steve Cardus. *"The people that we were dealing with were very professional and easy to work with, which can't be said for all suppliers."*

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