

# NEW YORK CITY POLICE PENSION FUND (NYCPPF)

## 2005 COMPUTERWORLD HONORS CASE STUDY

### GOVERNMENT & NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

THE NATION'S LARGEST POLICE FORCE FOUND A SOLUTION FOR MOVING ITS HUGE BACKLOG OF PAPER DOCUMENTS ON-LINE IN 6 MONTHS – CUTTING COSTS, MAKING FILES AVAILABLE WITH A QUICK SEARCH AT THE DESKTOP, AND ENABLING A DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN, SIMULTANEOUSLY CREATING AN INTERNAL PORTAL FOR ALL EMPLOYEES, IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS AND TEAMWORK, AND MORE EFFICIENTLY SERVING ITS CUSTOMERS. [20055404]



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## SUMMARY

The New York City Police Pension Fund (NYCPPF) has leveraged technology innovations to serve its 75,500 police members by adopting new technology for use on its public website and on-line services, as well as its internal administration. In a savvy and resource-efficient move, NYCPPF found a solution for moving its huge backlog of paper documents on-line in 6 months – cutting costs, making files available with a quick search at the desktop, and enabling a disaster recovery plan. Simultaneously, NYCPPF used the technology to create an internal portal for all employees, improving communications and teamwork, and more efficiently serving its customers.

## APPLICATION

The New York City Police Pension Fund (NYCPPF) provides retirement, disability and pension loan benefit services to 37,500 active and 38,000 retired police officers. A quick view of the agency's public website reveals that in the last three years it has had a mission to leverage technology innovation, to keep up with growing requests from its 75,500 members. The new website offers a range of online services, and posts the latest policies, newsletters, FAQs, and employee forms ([www.nyc.gov/html/nycppf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycppf)). What's not as evident, but still vitally important, is that the NYCPPF is leveraging technology internally as well, to replace outdated administrative processes, and improve the efficiency of its member services.

Two and a half years ago, NYCPPF became a separate agency from the New York Police Department (NYPD) and, with this new status, had an opportunity to re-evaluate its systems and select new technology.

Since part of NYCPPF's charter was to foster an atmosphere of teamwork and customer service, the organization was motivated to help its 130 employees access and share information by creating an internal portal. And more immediately pressing was the fact that it was dealing with a legacy paper overload, and still relied heavily on paper processes—costing lots of time and money just to store, find and deliver information.

Most critically, the organization had a 15-year microfilm backlog of member's personnel documents in over 75,000 folders stored in file cabinets. Each time employees needed to find a file, they spent valuable time traveling to the file room, searching through the cabinets, and sometimes discovering that someone else had the file. In that case, workers would have to return to their desks and send e-mail to their office co-workers asking who had that particular file, waiting to hear back before proceeding with the task at hand. Sometimes it could take a person several hours to locate a single file.

Paper processes slowed down executive meetings as well. Each month, the 12-member NYCPPF Board of Trustees meets to go over issues such as disability cases. In order to prepare for a meeting, a staff person was previously responsible for printing 15 packets of information, each 15,000 pages or more, for all trustees. When it was time for the meeting, board members would enter the boardroom wheeling entire carts of paper. NYCPPF estimated it was spending more than \$10,000 per year just on paper for the monthly meeting, let alone the cost of several staff members responsible for printing and copying.

Clearly, NYCPPF was wasting time and money and needed a solution that would help them cut down on unnecessary paper, and allow them to have all documents easily stored and managed, but just as easily accessible.

NYCPPF's first effort was to transfer some of the more than 75,000 folders from the last 20 years over to microfilm. They found this to be a long and tedious process that could potentially take several years to complete. The organization decided to seek a better technology solution.

The NYCPPF wanted a system that could simplify its information sharing processes. They investigated various document management products, such as FileNet. Because they were already using Xerox multifunction products, and were happy with them, it was logical to consider DocuShare, Xerox's Web-based enterprise content management system. In comparison to other solutions considered, the product was less expensive to implement and offered excellent performance. The NYCPPF chose DocuShare because of its ability to easily store, share and manage information. It could act as a file system, and more broadly as an employee portal – all at a less expensive price than its competitors. For the organization's needs, DocuShare was a perfect fit.

Deployment of DocuShare was simple, with most of the implementation done internally by the NYCPPF's staff, with the help of Xerox software consultants and Scanning America, a document-scanning firm.

Xerox consultants customized the DocuShare homepage and search interface, and provided the ability to update folder attributes with member data from the NYPD Access database, using a batch program. Additionally, NYCPPF hired Scanning America to convert the bulk of the 75,500 member folders into PDF format. The files were scanned and stored in an NT directory named after the member's identification number, and moved into DocuShare using drag-and-drop functionality in the DocuShare Windows Explorer client. (A Xerox integrator, Polgroup Corp., is now further automating the solution to route scanned documents directly to a location based on their identification numbers.)

As a result of the imaging solution, all member folders are now online, and documents are quickly searchable and accessible electronically – cutting the time it takes to find a member's folder or other document to just seconds.

Critically, by digitizing critical hardcopy files and storing them on DocuShare, NYCPPF has been able to implement a disaster recovery solution that involves two forms of ongoing backup. Documents stored in DocuShare are backed up nightly to tape and archived at a secure off-site repository for quick restoration in case of service interruption – eliminating delays due to lost documents and information. Additionally, real-time replication has now been implemented using NSI's DoubleTake® data replication software, so that whenever content is uploaded to DocuShare its automatically replicated to an offsite disaster recovery (DR) site. (Looking ahead, NYCPPF may transition to using the disaster recovery 'hot site' capability in DocuShare 4.0, which integrates tightly with the agency's current Oracle tools.) DocuShare runs on Windows 2003, with a 1.2 terabytes storage area network (SAN) assigned to hold DocuShare content, making both the real-time and nightly backup possible, as well as a straightforward recovery plan.

For daily imaging NYCPPF uses a total of seven Document Centre 360s, 370s, and 380s to scan hardcopy documents, converting them to PDFs and then storing the files electronically within DocuShare. DocuShare is designed so that when combined with a scan-enabled Xerox Document Centre™ or WorkCentre Pro™, organizations can get a direct scan-to-Web solution that runs on Windows NT 2000, Solaris or Linux.

Finally, following up on the initial plan to create a central information portal, NYCPPF has used the portal capability to promote internal access to information. Today, all employees are utilizing the DocuShare system for business processes including:

- Retrieving and filling out human resource forms
- Reviewing and studying computer-based training materials
- Creating and posting Board of Trustees meeting calendar items and documents
- Accessing Oracle data
- Accessing personal or team websites
- Publishing and viewing "fun" communications such as team photos
- Altering, accessing and sharing information in 75,000+ member folders

Once information has been uploaded to DocuShare, users can retrieve it through their Web browser without additional client software. Optionally, they can also access DocuShare from within Microsoft Outlook, Windows Explorer or a Mac desktop, or directly from hundreds of desktop applications. For example in the case of NYCPPF, DocuShare is used to store all employee forms in PDF format. Adobe Acrobat is installed on every user's desktop, and users simply open a DocuShare-stored form in Acrobat 5, fill it out, and then print it.

In the case where there may be confidential documents that not all employees should be able to access, DocuShare offers multiple levels of security to protect content right down to the document level through its own permission controls and Secure Socket Layer (SSL) encryption. Access rights can be defined by roles in an organization, with three distinct levels of administrator site control.

## **BENEFITS**

The major benefits of the solution at NYCPPF have been good return on investment (ROI), with just one example being the \$10,000 saved annually in paper for processing Board documents, plus savings in reduced labor. The solution has also increased internal efficiency, improving employee access to member information, forms, legal documents, and other materials; and has established a storage system that enables nightly backup and offsite duplication.

Most notably, the NYCPPF was able to add functionality for its employees without requiring additional IT staff. Of the 10 IT members at NYCPPF, just two are responsible for DocuShare, performing only part-time maintenance tasks.

## **IMPORTANCE**

The key application not possible before the solution is a disaster recovery system. The NYCPPF now has the security of a reliable recovery plan, so that administration can continue even in the wake of events that may otherwise interrupt processes and prevent police officers from gaining access to information in a timely way – of key importance to a major metropolitan police force.

Significantly, the NYCPPF was also able to adopt a modern, “paperless” solution within budgetary constraints. The solution has improved employee communication, and accelerated employee access to materials in order to answer member questions and requests quickly, without high cost or additional staffing – allowing the agency to re-allocate internal resources that were previously devoted to cumbersome paper processes.

## **ORIGINALITY**

The NYCPPF has embraced a policy of leveraging technology innovation, in this case taking a creative approach that leveraged existing resources. It also bypassed established but more expensive products – where competitive products started at \$200,000, the current solution addressed the NYCPPF’s requirements at a fraction of the cost. The imaging solution itself has been customized to integrate with internal databases so that when documents are scanned, they can be automatically routed according to member’s data.

Initially, the NYCPPF saw DocuShare as a solution that could act not just as a digital “filing cabinet” for specialized users, but a place where every employee can go for common access to the many kinds of materials they need. By leveraging both capabilities, the Pension Fund has successfully built two solutions in one.

## **SUCCESS**

The solution has been successful in a number of key areas.

- The most dramatic accomplishment has been in digitizing a 15-year microfilm backlog of hard copy pension fund documents, making them readily accessible and easy to administer. The 75,500 NYCPPF member folders in DocuShare hold about 110,000 documents - representing about 10 million pieces of paper. (The microfilm process would have taken an estimated 15 years at minimum to transfer all documents, as opposed to the 6 months it took to outsource scanning of the documents.)
- As a digital file system, DocuShare has enabled the NYCPPF to complete its office disaster recovery system. Previously, with all documents in file cabinets, the organization only had one hard copy of each file. With DocuShare, not only are files also available on-line for nightly backup, but all backups are secured off-site in case of a catastrophe.
- The 15 copies of files that needed to be printed each month for the Board of Trustees meeting are now downloaded from DocuShare onto two CDs. The IT staff provides the CDs and laptops, and the Board of Trustees is able to efficiently review the materials. As a result, the NYCPPF has saved more than \$10,000 a year in paper alone. On top of that, they have been able to reallocate staff who were spending numerous hours making copies to other areas of the organization, allowing them to focus on other important tasks.
- At the same time, NYCPPF uses DocuShare as an internal, central information portal that gives employees fast access to information like computer-based training, Oracle data, HR forms and policies, and individual websites. Users can also manage collaborative spaces like bulletin boards, project folders, or calendars.
- Finally, the solution has enabled better employee communications at the NYCPPF. The HR department has found DocuShare to be a helpful aide in orienting new employees and keeping current employees informed. HR uses Xerox Flowport scanning software to scan HR forms like payroll fliers, medical forms and company announcements directly into DocuShare, so these documents can be easily available to all staff members.

Due to the success the NYCPPF has had with DocuShare, other city agencies within New York City have implemented or are looking to employ the system as well.

## **DIFFICULTY**

Both the confidential nature of documents handled by NYCPPF and the volume of files to be stored on-line raised special requirements. To guarantee security, the agency brought in a partner, Scanning America, and required that all scanning be done on-site. Once stored in DocuShare, access to the documents is tightly controlled so that only those people with special login privileges can view confidential documents.

The NYCPPF was also faced with storing and managing a large volume of image files. To accommodate the capacity it expected and plan for future growth, the NYCPPF added the DocuShare High Capacity Kit add-on module, which delivers advanced performance features and allows for integration with a SQL Server database. DocuShare content is stored on a 1.2-terabyte storage area network (SAN) that is regularly backed up and then duplicated offsite.

With its backlog imaging completed, NYCPPF now scans in documents as part of its daily business process. With the rate of incoming documents sometimes up to 800 scanned PDF files per day, the NYCPPF's two IT administrators who manage DocuShare periodically perform manual re-indexing to make the latest input documents immediately available for searching - the only regular maintenance of DocuShare required.