ADLIB ®

think efficiency

Intelligent PDF Services Help
the U.S. Department of State get SMART

SUMMARY

Challenge

- Need to modernize inefficient legacy cable-based communication system used by over 270 worldwide locations
- Enable sharing and easily provide access to information in a controlled fashion
- Archive all communications in accordance with NARA

Solution

- Implemented 20+ Adlib servers that process anywhere from 3000-5000 cables per day
- Incoming cables are automatically converted to PDF/A (PDF for Archiving) and their associated attachments then stored in SharePoint®

Benefits

- Efficiencies gained through automated back office PDF transformation versus desktop
- Reduced errors via standardized document naming conventions, metadata, and routing
- NARA compliance achieved in an automated fashion
- Digital content is searchable and accessible in real time
- Employees focus on their jobs, not document conversion

OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of State is the lead institution for the conduct of American diplomacy facilitating the promotion and protection of interests for US citizens globally. The Department currently operates more than 270 embassies, consulates, and other posts worldwide. These provide policy guidance, program management, administrative support, and in-depth expertise in matters such as law enforcement, economics, the environment, arms control, human rights, counter narcotics, public diplomacy, security, consular services and more. To collaborate, one of the primary communication methods between these bureaus for government to government communication was a primitive black and white ASCII-based cable system established circa World War II.

CHALLENGE

The restrictions associated with the legacy cable-based communication system limited the department's responsiveness and did little to control the human capital costs associated with the need to scale up the number of employees to address the manual effort required to appropriately process the cables in a timely fashion. In addition, the U.S. Department of State was required to become compliant with NARA. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the nation's record keeper that archives important business, legal and historical documents forever. The U.S. Department of State like many other organizations are required to submit their files to NARA in PDF/A (the PDF format for Archiving). So the decision was made to look into technology that could revolutionize their antiquated cable system and provide a reliable, yet scalable solution that would store and archive their cables, enable sharing and improve information accessibility through search, while providing protected access to information by employee clearance level. A secondary, but nice-to-have requirement was the capability to enhance communication by including support for rich media options such as fonts, attachments (like images) and support for Microsoft® Outlook® to easily draft cables.

THE SOLUTION

After doing their research, the U.S. Department of State determined they needed reliable and feature-rich, server-based PDF technology. The two recommended vendors were Adobe and Adlib. Adlib was ultimately chosen based on ease of installation, the responsiveness of Adlib's sales and services professionals and competitive pricing. Adlib's PDF transformation technology became a key element to the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset (SMART) system. A system designed to combine diplomatic text cables, email, and memos in a single messaging system for classified and unclassified networks. SMART also provides collaboration tools, such as instant messaging, document management, document search and improved record keeping.

"For years, automated PDF transformation from Adlib has enabled us to reduce our costs associated with the delays and errors of manual intervention within business processes."

"With this new offering, Adlib enables us to leverage their capability on a broader scale which will further assist the department with its diplomatic mission."

David Compton
IT PROJECT MANAGER

The Adlib solution is now processing anywhere from 3000-5000 cables per day. Those incoming cables and their associated attachments are automatically converted to PDF/A (PDF for Archiving), then stored in Microsoft® SharePoint®. Once the solution was fully implemented it assumed the role of an official Archive. Some value added functionally was leveraged by enabling content "tags" which associates the newly generated PDF/A files to a set of rules that determines the length for which that PDF/A file gets stored for (i.e.: Store file for 2 years to 50 years). In addition, roles-based access control through Microsoft® BizTalk® was established to determine who can and cannot access specific documents. Roles-based access allows SMART users based on their profile (by citizenship, classification, location, topic and clearance) to have controlled access to documents. In addition, document access controls were implemented through DRM (Digital Rights Management) to control document open and print capabilities.

THE BENEFITS

The U.S. Department of State is able to recognize new found efficiencies through server-based document-to-PDF/A process automation in the back office versus their former method of manually processing documents at the desktop operation level. The newly automated process enables U.S. Department of State employees to better focus on their day jobs, therefore saving time and money by not wasting time with error-prone manual document processing and PDF/A conversions. In addition, it was easy to implement an accurate process for standardizing document naming conventions, the application of document metadata and ensuring the PDF/A documents end up in the right place. Costly and inefficient paper storage and information look-up processes was replaced by an efficient system to store and provide controlled access to digital assets. All of these efficiency benefits were achieved in parallel while also enabling the U.S. Department of State to seamlessly share documents and be in compliance with NARA.

ADLIB® Adlib is the leading expert in document-to-PDF transformation, enabling the world's largest organizations to improve the efficiency, quality and control of document-intensive business processes to optimize productivity, mitigate risk and reduce costs.