GOVERNMENT

Utah State Tax Commission

The iN side Story

Each business day the Utah State Tax Commission, in Salt Lake City, receives 700 to 1,000 requests for copies of microfilmed documents from various internal departments. Each request is for multiple pages of tax return forms, supporting documents, payments, correspondence and so on. In the past, these documents were printed from microfilm reader/printers, then hand delivered to the requesters. With the end of support and parts for existing equipment, Brent Burningham, Records Manager, had a vision of improved features and productivity that he wanted from a new system. With support from Division Director, Dennis Ritz, the Utah State Tax Commission turned to ACS and Kodak to create it.

Following the normal request and bid process, Ritz and Burningham called on (Authorized Imaging Reseller of *Kodak* Document Imaging Products) ACS to provide an in-house demo of the *Kodak Digital Science* Intelligent Microimage Scanner, which was part of the recommended Reference Archive solution. "This live capability allowed me to use our facility, personnel and microfilmed records to demonstrate and verify that an answer featuring the IMS would work," says Burningham. "This success gave Director Ritz the leverage to acquire the needed funds to purchase the IMS units." Subsequently, the Utah Tax Commission has bought six IMS units.

***Kodak** Intelligent Microimage Scanner*

After installation of the IMS devices, Burningham set out to show employees how the IMS would reduce the amount of time they spent receiving and managing records. The new workflow operated in this manner – the customers, or requesters, use the microfilm request system to ask for documents. This is done electronically, and requests are automatically sorted by microfilm roll number, then by document number. Microfilm frames are then located and captured by an operator using an IMS, and quality enhancements are made, including improved contrast, sizing, and readability.

The multi-page documents are bundled together, given a file name, and placed in a designated file folder on a shared directory. Now the requesters can access them when they're ready to do so.

"Today, people don't have to wait for their record requests to be processed, printed, labeled, sorted and hand delivered," Burningham notes. "Requests received via our microfilm request system are placed in the queue and the images are created quickly, thus making the records available much more efficiently to the end users, compared to our old paper process."

Thanks to this new electronic record sharing, other areas within the Tax Commission have

Situation

The Utah State Tax Commission's Record Center had outdated microfilm reader/printers but made do with them because of budget constraints, until they were notified that parts and service would no longer be available. Suddenly, a new solution was needed.

Objective

Reduce operational expenses for equipment and consumables. Cut employee operating time. Find a solution that could produce electronic images from any of 32,000 rolls of microfilm. Transmit images by e-mail. Make images available to internal customers via PCs, through shared directories and folders.

Solution

Existing microfilm request system, augmented with Kodak Intelligent Microimage Scanners (IMS).

Comments

"The most important feature of this system's success is the ability of the IMS to capture and bundle multi-page documents into one electronic file. No other provider offered this feature."

~Brent Burningham, Records Manager, Processing Division, Utah State Tax Commission

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taken a hard look at their paper-based processes and reevaluated, finding better ways to share images and digital information through new workflow approaches. Work groups in Auditing, Tax Payer Services and Processing have created and implemented a process using shared folders on their PCs. Now they can click and drag images from one PC to another – virtually – and instantly pass files to the next person in the workflow. And once the information needed is gleaned from the image, it can be deleted with another click. Now paper records don't have to be carried, filed, accessed, stored and (even) destroyed, resulting in greater productivity and bottom-line savings.

"I can definitely say that this solution – utilizing the IMS – has decreased our dependence and costs associated with relying on paper copies of documents," says Burningham. "Our equipment and maintenance costs are less, and equipment downtime has been cut. And it's obvious that our response time on requests has significantly improved." He also notes savings on consumables, like paper and toner. In 2002, the Record Center printed 1,205,027 pages of tax returns and documents for Tax Commission employees, and that number will be slashed in 2003.

To date, over 200 employees have received the necessary training and acquired access to the IMS system via their PCs. Plans are underway to expand the IMS system to all Tax Commission employees who normally request records through the microfilm request system.

In conclusion, Burningham says that one key advantage that swung the solution towards the *Kodak* IMS units was part of his initial vision. "The most important feature of this system's success is the ability of the IMS to capture and bundle multi-page documents into one electronic file. No other provider offered this feature, and it was something I believed was a crucial requirement." And without it, this vision wouldn't have become a cost-saving, efficiency-enhancing, productivity-driving success.

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