



Bugged By Inefficiency

Texas A&M University's Department of Entomology exterminates paper-based processes—and realizes a rapid ROI—with Laserfiche

One of the top entomology departments in the U.S., Texas A&M University (TAMU)'s Department of Entomology offers outstanding academic programs for undergraduate and graduate student preparation for careers in research, extension, business or industry. In fact, in May 2007, the department began offering a new degree in Forensic and Investigative Sciences, accredited by the American Academy of Forensic Science – the only accredited program in Texas and the Southwest.

But with state facilities in College Station, TX, a major USDA entomology research laboratory, and members of the department's graduate faculty stationed in nine major agricultural areas in the state, sharing information efficiently had become problematic for department staff.

Beginning in 2004, different programs and departments within TAMU began investigating document management solutions in order to more efficiently and cost-effectively share information—not to mention save space. Ultimately, they chose a Laserfiche enterprise content management (ECM) solution to securely store paper, implement business process management and eliminate file cabinets.

Currently, nearly 1,200 staff in 10 departments and divisions within TAMU use Laserfiche.

The Department of Entomology was introduced to ECM by Business Administrator Roberta Priesmeyer, who had read an article on document imaging during a business trip. She thought that a ECM system could help the department with administrative functions, and after learning about Laserfiche, she says that she couldn't conceivably consider any other competitor due to the enormous difference in cost.

Organization Profile

One of the top entomology departments in the U.S., Texas A&M University's Department of Entomology has state facilities in College Station, TX, and faculty members stationed in nine major agricultural areas across the state.

Situation

The Department of Entomology needed help efficiently and cost-effectively sharing information and managing administrative functions, so Business Administrator Roberta Priesmeyer began investigating ECM solutions.

Solution

Currently, nearly 1,200 staff in 10 departments and divisions within TAMU use Laserfiche. The Department of Entomology chose to implement Laserfiche for its ease of use and affordability.

Benefits

- Instead of spending 30-45 minutes searching for information, accounting staff can now answer vendors' questions in 30 seconds or less.
- The department has removed almost 40 file cabinets, creating enough space for a new office and laboratory.
- While staff expected an initial ROI of \$54,000, they actually achieved an ROI of \$272,000, in areas as varied as staff costs, the cost of lost files, consumables, storage and lease tax savings.
- With savings on storage space, printing and distribution costs, the department realizes a monthly savings of \$22,000.
- In five years, the department estimates they will save nearly \$1.4 million from their Laserfiche implementation.

Processes

- Accounts payable
- Faculty research and reprint management
- Printing and distribution
- Records management
- Risk management

Laserfiche's ease of use was a major selling point for the department; Priesmeyer reports that its user interface is simple to master, which increases staff adoption.

Once the system was installed, staff created a digital filing structure which replicated the department's paper-based system. Before Laserfiche, department staff had difficulty finding documents if employees were unavailable, on vacation or had left. With Laserfiche, filing is standardized, so information retrieval is simple. Kathy Seaton, a staff member in the accounting department, previously had to return a vendor's call after manually searching cabinets and folders. **What previously took 30-45 minutes and several phone calls now takes 30 seconds and a single phone call.**

IT Director Dr. Mark Wright believes that Laserfiche hasn't just made life easier on the department head, but also for staff. **"Staff really are happier as a result of their ability to increase productivity without expending more effort,"** he says.

In addition, Laserfiche enables the department to adhere to their records retention schedule much more easily, something that was nearly impossible with paper. "It really helps us keep the auditors happy," adds Wright.

With Laserfiche, researchers can easily access reprints that previously required them to spend up to half a day spent sifting through files to retrieve a single document. Laserfiche's optical character recognition (OCR) capability and unified metadata model have allowed the department to virtually eliminate this necessary but inefficient use of time. Since 2007, peer review articles have increased by 11.7%, with total faculty publications increasing by 22.4%. In fact, Department of Entomology tenured and tenure track faculty rank #1 in term of peer-review publication output in the US (from data published by the *Chronicles of Higher Education*).

To further conserve space, the department plans to eventually add accounts for faculty members who each

use 4-5 file cabinets to store their publications, to make researching even easier.

Due to the University's Vision 2020 plan, the Department has been hiring more professors, and Laserfiche is indirectly helping them reach this goal by freeing up office space formerly used for storage. Since implementing Laserfiche, the department has removed almost 40 file cabinets, creating enough space for a new office and laboratory.

"I love Laserfiche. Choosing it is literally the best decision I've ever made."

Roberta Priesmeyer
Business Administrator

The department expected to receive an initial ROI of \$54,000, but actually achieved an ROI of \$272,000. ROI is tracked in areas as varied as staff costs, the cost of lost files, consumables, storage, current and proposed purchases, and lease tax savings.

ROI mainly derives from savings on accounting staff (\$7,385), professional staff (\$4,865) and management positions (\$10,597). The department also reclaimed nearly \$1,000 in storage space and nearly \$1,000 in monthly printing and distribution costs, for **a total monthly savings of over \$22,000.**

In five years, the department estimates they will save nearly \$1.4 million from their Laserfiche implementation.

"I love Laserfiche," Priesmeyer says. "I'd fight anyone who tried to take it away from me. Choosing it is literally the best decision I've ever made."

About Laserfiche

Laserfiche creates simple and elegant agile enterprise content management solutions that help organizations run smarter. Since 1987, more than 28,000 organizations worldwide—including federal, state and local government agencies and Fortune 1000 companies—have used Laserfiche software to streamline document, records and business process management.

Your Next Step

For more information on Laserfiche solutions for education, visit laserfiche.com/education.

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