

Project Profile

CAPITA SYMONDS

Data Management

Communico Docs

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Improving Project Email Management

The Requirement

Capita Symonds required a simpler method for users to more effectively manage important emails within a Microsoft SharePoint environment. In particular they needed a solution which users would choose to use and which would help ensure project emails were correctly filed and could be rapidly searched for and recalled.

The Solution

Excitech, one of their suppliers, was asked to suggest potential solutions and shared with Capita Symonds that their requirement was one of the goals of a new software development for Practise Management. As a result Capita Symonds became a pilot site for what became Communico Docs. Excitech worked closely with Capita Symonds to refine the software features in, developed the complete package, then installed and supported pilot and subsequently released version of the software.

The Result

From around 80 users during the pilot, to hundreds since full release and with users choosing to install the software themselves from their own intranet, user adoption accelerated rapidly. Capita Symonds have seen more consistent and reliable email (and other document) storage, faster search, less demands on their server capacity, greater efficiency and reduced risk. They have also been able to extend this to portable users - an unexpected benefit.

Capita Symonds, a division of Capita Group plc, is a large multidisciplinary consultancy providing design, infrastructure, real estate and outsourcing solutions across the UK and internationally.

As an organisation it chose Microsoft SharePoint as a platform for development and delivering improvement to internal communication,

collaboration and management. SharePoint was to become the environment for most IT projects including data storage/retrieval and their Intranet.

During implementation and planning there was significant focus on ensuring the solutions provided on SharePoint would be easy to deploy and use; without this they knew user adoption could be low and the goals put at risk. Email has now become the most used method of business communication between people, with crucial - even contractual - information exchanged as part of the email content or attachments. Ensuring email was easy and reliably stored and rapidly shared, searched and retrieved was fundamental. However, both Microsoft Outlook (the chosen email application) and Microsoft SharePoint lacked key features for such a critical area.

Capita Symonds looked for additional software which could complete the solution and among other suppliers asked Excitech, who already provide them with design and management software and services, what it would recommend. At that time Excitech's Data Management Systems team was defining and building new software tools for Practice/Project Management; email and document handling was one key area under development. Capita Symonds was quickly added to the steering committee to refine the software features and subsequently as a pilot site while they also continued to evaluate alternatives.

Sandra Seal, Project Manager at Capita Symonds, was impressed by Excitech's plans based on the issues customers faced. "We found Excitech understood our expectations and were committed to delivering a quality product", she says. Capita Symonds found the Excitech solution Communico Docs provided all the benefits they were looking for, both for users and for the organisation and IT department. As a result, Capita moved from a trial involving 80 users to the trial software being used by hundreds.



Capita Symonds found that Communico has enabled them to:

- Provide a solution which is easy to deploy and that users want to install and use
- Make it easy for users to quickly drag-and-drop documents into project folders
- Improve collaboration through shared folders and selection of personal favourites
- Rapidly search for and retrieve documents
- Preview within Outlook not just emails but a wide range of documents including drawings
- Reduce overall data storage needs
- Enable consistent data access with reduced duplication
- Improve data storage security
- Provide improved project data access for users working away from the office

Capita Symonds now intend to roll out Communico Docs across the company and it is a key part of their future information system strategy. According to Sandra, "we are now upgrading SharePoint to the next release and using that as a foundation for new staff systems including a new Intranet; without Communico Docs and its widespread acceptance and powerful features, this whole development would have been delayed or less beneficial".

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