PHILADELPHIA, PA (Laserfiche)—October 18, 2011—Laserfiche (booth #1619) today announced that it will showcase how Laserfiche enterprise content management (ECM) solutions can streamline the admissions, financial aid and accounts payable processes at colleges and universities around the country, including Texas A&M, USC and Oklahoma Christian University.

“In this volatile economy, Laserfiche is committed to providing stress-free ECM solutions that are easy to implement, easy to administer and easy to use,” said Brian LaPointe, Vice President of Strategic Solutions at Laserfiche. “As such, we’re offering free massages for EDUCAUSE attendees to reflect our commitment to making life easier for IT and administrative decision makers at colleges and universities.”

Laserfiche solves business problems across campus, facilitating everything from student records management to facilities management, HR onboarding and disaster recovery planning. “Laserfiche takes a synchronized approach to content management, easing the burden on IT staff while eliminating departmental information silos,” said LaPointe.

Laserfiche will be on hand at booth #1619 throughout the event to demonstrate its software solutions for higher education, provide free massages and distribute copies of customer success stories featuring USC and Texas A&M. Laserfiche will also host a reception on Wednesday, October 19, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm ET at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown.

During the reception, Laserfiche will present John Hermes, CTO and Vice President of IT at Oklahoma Christian University, with a Visionary Award for using Laserfiche to streamline processes across campus. Hermes kicked off the Laserfiche project by enabling students to complete and submit financial aid documents through a student portal; next, he’ll implement the system in Admissions and the Business Office. In 2012, he plans to bring the Registrar’s Office and the Office of Student Life onboard.

“From a leadership perspective, implementing a product like Laserfiche and having an entire office up and running proficiently on the system within just a few days speaks volumes,” said Hermes. “IT staff was very impressed with the ease of administration and how smoothly the implementation has gone.”

(cont’d on next page)
About Laserfiche
Since 1987, Laserfiche® has used its Run Smarter® philosophy to create simple and elegant enterprise content management (ECM) solutions. Since 1987, more than 30,000 organizations worldwide—including federal, state and local government agencies and institutions of higher education—have used Laserfiche software to streamline document, records and business process management.

Laserfiche provides colleges and universities with an ECM solution that can be centrally regulated by the IT department and easily configured for each department’s unique business processes. Schools such as Texas A&M, the University of Southern California (USC) and the University of Utah use Laserfiche to increase collaboration and information sharing between departments, automate core business processes and minimize ongoing maintenance demands for IT personnel.

Laserfiche®, Run Smarter® and Compulink® are registered trademarks of Compulink Management Center, Inc.

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About Laserfiche

Laserfiche Founder and CEO Nien-Ling Wacker began her career as a systems analyst and programmer before founding Compulink Management Center in 1974. Recognizing a need to store digital versions of paper documents in a secure and searchable manner, Wacker developed the first version of Laserfiche in 1987, long before the terms “paperless office” and “document management” were invented.

Since 1987, more than 30,000 organizations worldwide—including federal, state, and local government agencies and Fortune 500 companies—have used Laserfiche enterprise content management (ECM) software to streamline document, records and business process management (BPM).

Today, IDC notes that “Laserfiche is in an enviable position... It provides a robust ECM offering in a simple yet elegant way... Both its end-user functionality and its administrative capabilities can help organizations address the majority of their document and records management issues effectively and within a shorter time frame than other large enterprise content management providers.”

Laserfiche’s agile ECM systems are designed to give IT managers central control over their information infrastructure, including standards, security and auditing, while still offering business units the flexibility to respond quickly to changing conditions.

The Laserfiche product suite is built upon Microsoft® technologies to simplify system administration. It supports Microsoft SQL and Oracle® platforms and features a seamless integration with Microsoft Office® applications, as well as a two-way integration with SharePoint®. Laserfiche software is available in Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), English, French, Italian, Portuguese (Brazilian), Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese versions.

A division of Compulink Management Center, Inc., Laserfiche is a privately owned corporation headquartered in Long Beach, CA, with offices in Washington, DC, and Fort Lauderdale, FL. Its international headquarters are located in Hong Kong, and it has international offices in Shanghai, China; Ottawa, Canada; London, UK; and Panama City, Panama.

Products

Laserfiche offers two flagship products:

• **Laserfiche Rio**®, which is specifically designed for enterprise deployment. Rio includes:
  - Powerful Web-based content management.
  - Tiered pricing with significant volume discounts.
  - Flexible business process management (workflow).
  - Complete auditing and security controls.
  - Fully integrated DoD 5015.2-certified records management.
  - Intuitive capture and distribution tools.
  - Windows and Web-based interfaces.
  - Unlimited servers to support back-ups, failover clustering and testing.

• **Laserfiche Avante**®, which brings together document management and workflow capabilities for small and mid-sized organizations.

For more information, please visit [www.laserfiche.com/avante](http://www.laserfiche.com/avante) and [www.laserfiche.com/rio](http://www.laserfiche.com/rio).

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Markets

- **Government.** Laserfiche is the industry standard in the municipal government market and is used in thousands of cities, counties and towns worldwide. Federal government agencies also embrace Laserfiche, including the U.S. Treasury, CIA, FBI and all four branches of the military.

- **Financial services.** Community banks, financial advisors and independent broker-dealers choose Laserfiche to help facilitate compliance and improve productivity.

- **Healthcare.** Hospitals, medical billing companies and medical groups accelerate collections, facilitate HIPAA compliance and improve patient care with Laserfiche.

- **Education.** Leading educational institutions of all types and sizes—including schools and school districts, two-and four-year colleges, and public and private universities—choose Laserfiche to improve information access and optimize business processes institution-wide.

Laserfiche Programs

- **The Professional Developer Partnership (PDP) Program.** From comprehensive development tools to ongoing sales support, the PDP program provides software developers, resellers and integrators with the resources they need to successfully develop, complete and market integrations with Laserfiche. Visit [www.laserfiche.com/pdp](http://www.laserfiche.com/pdp) for more information.

- **The Systems Integrator Program** helps SIs grow their business by generating better opportunities and winning more bids. Visit [www.laserfiche.com/si](http://www.laserfiche.com/si) for more information.

- **The Certified Professional Program** is designed to provide highly accessible training to Laserfiche users and resellers seeking to increase their content management expertise. More information is available at [www.laserfiche.com/cpp](http://www.laserfiche.com/cpp).

- **The ACE Program** provides analysts, consultants and experts with the insight they need to educate clients and facilitate recommendations. Please visit [www.laserfiche.com/ace](http://www.laserfiche.com/ace) for more information.

People

- Laserfiche directly employs more than 250 executives, software developers, engineers and support staff.

- Laserfiche distributes its software through a worldwide network of more than 1,200 value-added resellers (VARs), who tailor solutions to clients’ individual needs. The Laserfiche VAR Program has received a Five-Star Rating from [Computer Reseller News/VARBusiness](http://www.computerresellernews.com).

Corporate Citizenship

Laserfiche promotes community respect, collaboration and responsibility. The company is an avid supporter of the local community and has sponsored the local symphony, local schools and local youth programs. Laserfiche is especially committed to helping students build a strong foundation in the critical educational disciplines of math, science and technology.

About Laserfiche

Since 1987, Laserfiche® has used its Run Smarter® philosophy to create simple and elegant enterprise content management (ECM) solutions. More than 30,000 organizations worldwide—including federal, state and local government agencies—use Laserfiche software to streamline document, records and business process management.

Your Next Step

Please call (800) 985-8533 or e-mail info@laserfiche.com for more information.
Summary Notes from the Chronicle of Higher Education Webinar:

**Align ECM with Institutional Goals and Departmental Needs**

**September 29, 2011**

**Speakers:**
- **John Parker**
  Chief Technology Officer, USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences
- **Don Barwick**
  Manager, HUB & Procurement, Texas A&M University System (TAMUS)

**John Parker** – CTO, USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences

**Summary:**
The College initiated a Laserfiche ECM project in 2007 with the goal of automating business processes and making information more accessible for faculty and staff. Through a high-volume and automated scanning process, 1.5 million College documents have been digitized, indexed, and archived securely in a Laserfiche repository. Laserfiche is now implemented in multiple capacities, from managing faculty records and research proposals at the Dean’s Office and staff documents at the Business Office, to integrating with the College’s main business application – MyUscCollege T-Log. Moving forward, Parker will implement more seamless user authentication among the applications, automated records retention, and the Laserfiche Mobile iPhone/iPad application for more mobile access to the College information.

**Don Barwick** – Manager, HUB & Procurement, Texas A&M University System (TAMUS)

**Summary:**
Being one of the largest systems of higher education in the nation, TAMUS faces unique challenges in terms of cutting down the amount of paperwork and sharing information more efficiently across the constituents. Laserfiche was first implemented in 2007 to eliminate printing monthly accounting reports from a legacy system, to streamline records retention and to improve processing time. Today, many University System members are able to customize Laserfiche to meet their unique operational requirements.

From a TAMUS IT perspective, Laserfiche creates a platform for managing institutional data in a safe and secure manner. It also promotes flexibility for agency-wide commonality of business processes. From the perspective of an end user, Laserfiche allows the sharing of data among departments, and makes records retention cost effective. Other notable benefits include easy access to electronic documents both internally and externally through a web-based application; simplified procedures for adhering to the records retention requirements of state agency records; and the transformation of legacy system reports into a more accessible format for storage and retrieval through automated workflow.

Moving forward, Barwick shared that more legacy software outputs will be sent directly to the Laserfiche ECM repository for easier information access and reduced processing cost. In addition, University System members will be encouraged to move to Laserfiche ECM so TAMUS take full advantage of economies of scale on licensing. Laserfiche will continue to be the core method by which the University System achieves compliance.

**Q&A:**

**How do you go about implementing an institution-wide ECM solution?**

**Barwick** – Most importantly, it needs to begin with executive and senior administrative buy-in and directives on institutional information management strategy. We also put in a lot of work in communicating the strategy throughout the process with end users and administration. We established protocols and best practices early in implementation, including types of folders and workflows. It’s also recommended to begin implementation with one or two departments to “fine-tune” training.
During the implementation of Laserfiche, how do you deal with training for both IT staff and end users?

Parker – We worked very closely with Laserfiche and developed online and in-person training sessions. Laserfiche is really easy to use, so training the users doesn’t take much time. For the IT staff, the training is focused on how Laserfiche works within our existing architecture for security and upgrades.

Barwick – We only have a small training team at TAMUS, and they were able to use the existing Laserfiche training manuals to provide lab-based training from department to department.

Do you need to create new positions to manage administer and future expansion of Laserfiche?

Parker – No, we worked with Laserfiche on a temporary consulting basis for the initial implementation. But for an ongoing basis, we don’t need to hire new people. My IT staff handles responsibilities like the repository backup, security and updates. From both an IT and administrative perspective, Laserfiche runs on its own, and there’s minimal burden to IT.

What is the process of integrating Laserfiche with legacy systems?

Barwick – Most of the staff understood the benefits of Laserfiche ECM pretty quickly, and they were also able to come up with ideas on how to streamline the business processes by integrating Laserfiche with the existing legacy systems. The IT then developed the integration internally. Now I can retrieve the legacy reports directly from the Laserfiche repository.

Parker – Prior to Laserfiche, we had developed an internal web application, T-Log, that tracks all college business transactions. Once we implemented Laserfiche, we thought “why don’t we integrate the two systems, so that the staff members can not only see the core data of each transaction, they can also have the direct access to the documents associated with the transaction.” So we created a simple “document” link in the T-Log, which, when clicked on, conducts an automatic search in the Laserfiche repository to retrieve all the documents that are tied to the transaction. For incoming documents, staff members can simply create a bar-coded cover sheet for all transactions logged in the T-Log, and then hand the documents to the scan station for automated indexing and archiving in Laserfiche.

Can Laserfiche ECM allow each individual service unit to customize the solution according to their own needs?

Parker – Yes, every department has its own business processes and its own indexing requirements; Laserfiche ECM is customized according to each department’s needs. Because there are usually many departments involved, an ECM implementation requires one to go through this needs analysis process. This ensures that many if not all departmental needs can be met by the ECM solution. Laserfiche’s flexibility makes implementation of such a cross-departmental solution very straightforward. But I would still recommend that IT maintain any behind-the-scenes customization to ensure standardization.

Barwick – I concur. That’s why we provided training department by department. One of the benefits of Laserfiche is the ability to easily customize the application to each department’s needs. The critical part is to figure out what specifically each department wants, even down to the folder structure and metadata information.

How does Laserfiche help you achieve security within the existing environment?

Barwick – Laserfiche allows for stringent user authentication. For example, I can access everything within my department, but I can’t access the general counsel’s folder without prior approval.

How do you see Laserfiche helping to achieve compliance requirements?

Parker – Having all the documents in a central and secure location definitely helps for faster searching and retrieving of important information, and makes meeting compliance requirements easier.

How has your ECM use evolved over time?

Parker – We definitely have evolved from our first project of simply scanning faculty documents into an integrated solution between T-Log and Laserfiche. The Laserfiche implementation has even evolved beyond that core functionality. For example, we now allow faculty members to create their own sub-folders and store their own documents.

Barwick – Our legacy system doesn’t allow us to conduct keyword searches, and now the auditors can just conduct keyword searches themselves and find anything they would need. Laserfiche definitely makes the auditing process much easier. As more processes are identified for an automated solution, we will gradually implement Laserfiche for these processes, too. Eventually, we would like to encourage the rest of the University System to adopt Laserfiche, because it is easier to maintain one system than multiple systems. Also, we have already determined the optimum platform for compliant records retention, which other institutions could replicate and avoid the costly process of trial and error in developing their own systems.
Meeting institutional goals relies on accurate information, but accessing that information is often time-consuming and difficult. From the Provost’s Office, Buildings and Grounds, and Institutional Development to Financial Aid, Student Services and academic departments, the sheer quantity of your institution’s records is an obstacle to productivity.

Simplify information sharing and increase institutional efficiency. An enterprise content management (ECM) solution from Laserfiche is the rapidly deployable, cost-effective answer to the challenges of academic recordkeeping.

Learn More Inside

- Improve administrative efficiency
- Automate business processes—including records management
- Protect records security
- Streamline integration and deployment
- Enhance student services

Protect the Past, Secure the Future

Improve information access, protect records and promote strategic planning
A Solution to Manage Information Enterprise-Wide

Managing and maintaining paper archives and dealing with paper-based business processes while struggling to comply with local, state and federal regulations is a headache for any administrator. That’s why leading colleges and universities worldwide are turning to Laserfiche ECM to combat the inefficiency and expense of paper records, with tools to quickly and reliably collect, store, search and share information campus-wide.

The Laserfiche system includes content management, document imaging and DoD 5015.2-certified records management, Windows® and Web-based interfaces, a customizable Web publishing portal, integrated workflow management and high-volume document capture and processing tools.

And Laserfiche scales to meet the needs of colleges and universities of all sizes, from small private institutions to state-wide university systems with multiple campuses.

Laserfiche Advantages Summary

- Eliminate the need to copy, transport and store paper documents.
- Answer information inquiries faster, with direct access to transcripts, memoranda and reports.
- Maximize space available for faculty offices and classrooms.
- Safeguard confidential information with comprehensive security features.
- Optimize business processes and simplify strategic planning.

Manage the Costs of Academic Record Keeping

Get information to the people who need it—without increasing administrative demands.

“...The more folks you have using Laserfiche, the more benefits you realize from it. Although most departments act independently when it comes to their software decisions, in fact, we’re all interconnected. A unified Laserfiche system is a great thing for any university.”

Robson Agnew
Records Manager
University of British Columbia
Laserfiche at Work on Campus

From the Provost’s and Controller’s offices to Buildings and Grounds and academic departments, Laserfiche helps automate and streamline work processes campus-wide.

With Laserfiche, administrative assistants scan records—such as applications, research articles, transcripts, personnel records, invoices, blueprints and more—into single or multiple Laserfiche repositories. Electronic documents, including e-mails, Microsoft Word® documents, Excel® spreadsheets, Adobe® PDF documents, digital photos and audio and video files, can be imported and stored in their native file formats.

Each department can customize capture and image processing for its own forms, documents and data, eliminating repetitive manual tasks and unlocking an impressive ROI. Integrated business process management translates even the most complex processes into a series of precise steps, each involving the users and activities you specify. Nearly any event can trigger a workflow—even events that take place in third-party applications like your ERP package, your student information system or your accounting application—and you can configure the system to perform a number of activities on a document as a part of the workflow process, from moving it to a new location to changing its security access to assigning new metadata to it.

With Laserfiche, it’s simple to instantly fulfill data-driven, specialized queries of records. And best of all, by eliminating the time spent locating misfiled documents, distributing information and making the copies required for meetings, you protect your bottom line—without reducing service and without hiring additional staff.

The benefits are clear:

- Eliminate manual document capture, indexing and processing.
- Retrieve information from mainframe databases to automatically populate template fields, validate data entry and check metadata capture.
- Automate repetitive document-based business processes involving single or multiple departments to provide faster service and cut costs.
- Eliminate the costs of pulling and transporting records from off-site storage.
- Instantly fulfill records requests without having to copy and collate large numbers of documents.
- View, print and e-mail documents right from your desktop computer.
- Archive documents to DVD, CD or portable media, or publish them to the Web.

“With Laserfiche, our entire operation is smoother and more transparent, and we’ve saved money, space and personnel time. It’s completely changed the way we do business. In fact, our department is now a model for agency offices both on campus and across the state of Texas.”

Roberta Priesmeyer,
Business Administrator
Department of Entomology,
Texas A&M University
# Precision Tools for a Productive Campus

## Cost-Effectively Deploy Enterprise-Wide

Laserfiche solutions deploy in days, not months, so you achieve a rapid return on your investment. The Laserfiche product suite’s modular design gives you the flexibility to choose just the options you need, enabling you to design the ideal content management solution for your requirements.

Universities with multiple locations or a large number of users will appreciate the flexibility of Laserfiche Rio, a turnkey solution for enterprise demands.

**Rio includes:**
- Enterprise content management.
- Document imaging and DoD 5015.2-certified records management functionality.
- Windows and Web-based interfaces.
- A customizable public Web portal.
- Integrated workflow management.
- High-volume document capture and processing.

Named-user licensing simplifies purchasing—just count the number of users you’ll need. Rio also provides the flexibility of unlimited retrieval licensing for public users, simplifying access for students, parents and adjunct faculty.

## Meet the Needs of Multiple Departments

Departments across campus need assistance managing vast quantities of documents and records, but they all work differently. With Laserfiche, you implement a single solution that meets the needs of multiple departments while still retaining central control over information security.

- Simplify faculty records management, so Provost’s Office staff can spend their time more productively.
- Enable Buildings and Grounds staff to retrieve blueprints, maps and E-sized drawings onsite from wireless-enabled laptops.
- Cut costs in Accounting, Finance and Human Resources.
- Manage contracts, case files and correspondence, so legal staff spend time using information instead of searching for it.
- Organize architectural drawings, schematics and operations manuals by school.

## Guarantee Records Security

Administering records access under FERPA consumes staff time. Laserfiche’s granular security system helps you design and implement a security policy that works within your existing environment so you balance document security and accessibility.

- Control confidential records, and prevent them from showing up in a repository search.
- Guarantee security all the way down to individual words with blackout and whiteout redactions.
- Eliminate misplaced files, files lost in transit from off-site storage facilities and inappropriately accessed files.
- Log system activity to demonstrate compliance with regulations.
- Implement DoD 5015.2-certified records management to automate life cycle management.

## Automate Work Processes

Laserfiche helps you automate and streamline work processes wherever possible, from bringing information into the system to speeding labor-intensive, paper-based processes.

- Dramatically reduce time spent digitizing and indexing scanned paper and electronic files.
- Capture student ID numbers to automate filing and records processing.
- Trigger workflow activities from third-party applications.
- Identify productivity gains or bottlenecks with real-time reporting.
- Use information extracted from documents, reports and outside data sources to automate indexing and processing.
- Scan in files with barcoded header sheets or minimize data entry by pulling information from mainframes or other third-party applications.
Precision Tools for a Productive Campus

Integrate with Existing Applications

With Laserfiche, you support the applications you already use to manage student records, accounting and resource planning.

Laserfiche’s open architecture speeds image-enabling your existing applications—while programming tools and pre-packaged modules limit costs and minimize the burden on IT staff. Laserfiche is built with a highly flexible COM-based API, so Websites, scripts, Windows applications or anything else built using COM, including all .NET languages, can easily communicate with the Laserfiche server.

- Retrieve information from back-office systems to automatically populate template fields, validate data entry and check metadata capture.
- Trigger Workflow activities from third-party applications.
- Provide Laserfiche ECM capabilities from Web portals—including Microsoft SharePoint® sites—to improve information organization and access enterprise-wide.

Simplify Administration

Laserfiche systems use Microsoft®-standard administration tools almost exclusively, including MMC snap-ins, WMI compatibility and Windows-integrated error logging and tracing, ensuring that our software complies with standards that make it widely interoperable, extensible and easy to administer.

- Manage all the components of a Laserfiche repository—fields, templates, users, groups and volumes, among others—through an easy-to-use graphical interface.
- Customize your system without outside consulting or on-site programming.
- Limit the load on existing servers, networks and applications with minimal bandwidth requirements.
- Support industry-standard Microsoft and Oracle® database platforms to maximize the value of your current IT investments.

“Laserfiche is ideally suited to a higher education enterprise environment. It’s easy to install, it’s scalable and it’s easy to support—so it continues to meet our needs, even as they change.”

John Parker,
Chief Technology Officer
College of Letters, Arts and Sciences,
University of Southern California (USC)
About Laserfiche Solutions

Laserfiche creates simple and elegant enterprise content management (ECM) solutions that help organizations run smarter. Since 1987, more than 27,000 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.

The Laserfiche ECM system is designed to give IT managers central control over their information infrastructure, including standards, security and auditing, while still offering business units the flexibility to react quickly to changing conditions. The Laserfiche product suite is built on top of Microsoft® technologies to simplify system administration, supports Microsoft SQL and Oracle® platforms and features a seamless integration with Microsoft Office® applications and a two-way integration with SharePoint®.

Laserfiche Product Suite

The Laserfiche system is designed to be straightforward to purchase, deploy, extend, administer and support. Laserfiche solutions deploy quickly and easily scale to accommodate both an increasing number of users and high-volume repository growth.

Rio™

laserfiche.com/rio

- Enterprise content management
- Document imaging
- DoD 5015.2-certified records management
- Business process management
- Complete auditing and security controls
- Production-level document capture and processing
- Unlimited Laserfiche servers to support backups, failover clusters and testing environments

Avante™

laserfiche.com/avante

- Document management
- Business process management
- Optional Web client and Audit Trail tracking
- Optional DoD 5015.2-certified records management
Texas A&M University (TAMU) is one of the largest universities in the U.S., both in terms of enrollment and physical size. With nine system schools and two campuses, as well as a main campus with over 100 buildings on over 5,200 acres, TAMU faces a unique challenge in sharing information.

Relying on paper was an inefficient use of TAMU’s monetary and staff resources. In addition, board requirements frequently limit the amount of office space to conserve space for classroom and labs, so space used for paper storage was at a premium. What little space was available could have been better used for professors’ offices.

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 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 Health Sciences Center (HSC) reaches across Texas to educate health professionals and researchers through its seven components: the Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas; the College of Medicine in College Station, Round Rock and Houston; the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences; the Institute of Biosciences and Technology in Houston; the School of Rural Public Health in College Station and McAllen; the Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy in Kingsville; and the College of Nursing in College Station.

When the HSC was planning to build its 200-acre new central campus, it wasn’t planning on using space that could house students and labs to house file cabinets. Add to that a system that spanned the state and often required costly overnight delivery of paperwork to its central office, then a need to duplicate and store copies of that paperwork, and Laserfiche was just the cure Project Manager Kristin Nace was looking for.

Nace, the director for fiscal services, was formerly in the HSC accounts payable division. While working in that department, she scanned documents into a basic system that used a centralized network drive. In 2007, the HSC formed a committee to find an alternative system and a vendor to provide it.

Because of Laserfiche’s successful implementation in the Texas A&M AgriLife program, it was considered for the HSC, and was ultimately chosen due to ease of use. Nace says that Laserfiche’s interface is simple and self-explanatory, and the system’s ability to import and export Microsoft Office documents was critical to its ultimate selection.

As in other departments, the HSC’s implementation committee chose to implement Laserfiche in stages. The implementation began in the Finance Department, which includes accounts payable, payroll, human resources and the contracts and grants division and has 180 users. The Finance Department was chosen for the initial implementation because it is the number one paper consumer in the entire HSC.

The HSC’s Laserfiche ECM system was implemented on February 1, 2008, and was completed by May 31, 2008. During the implementation, staff were trained and the department established scanning requirements for their component offices. Nace was surprised at how easily staff embraced Laserfiche, and how easily the implementation went. “Adoption was extremely easy,” she says. “When it comes to Laserfiche, I don’t have to make anyone do anything.”

In fact, potential users approach Nace nearly every day and ask when they will get to use Laserfiche. Nace is also impressed by how her colleagues are constantly approaching her with new ways they can use Laserfiche to streamline their workflow. In fact, there is even competition between component offices over scanners, because everyone wants one.
The HSC implementation took place without IT support; in fact, IT staff only perform standard server maintenance. “Besides file structure and security, we’re really using Laserfiche straight out of the box,” Nace comments.

Since implementing Laserfiche, the finance office has quit accepting paper documents, and instead requires all internal documents, such as invoices, payroll documents and contracts, to be submitted electronically. They have been able to eliminate most of their 69 file cabinets, which cost $2,100 annually to maintain. And they have been able to adhere to their records retention schedule much more easily.

Even better, the department has eliminated nearly all their overnight shipments from regional locations. Previously, regional offices would overnight documents to the finance department on a daily basis. Because 95% of these overnight shipments were internal, they are now handled electronically through Laserfiche—eliminating nearly $55,000 spent in shipping costs.

“We’ve already seen a cost savings by reducing our overnight delivery charges for sending documents, which also translates into a smoother more efficient business process,” Nace explains. “Utilizing Laserfiche security, we’ve moved to only having one copy of the document and are allowing our departments access to many of those folders—which they love because they no longer have to keep their own copy, which of course means fewer files in their offices.”

Nace says an intangible benefit of Laserfiche is its ability to eliminate clutter from offices. She believes that employees are happier now because their offices are free from file cabinets and paper.

In the future, HSC plans to expand Laserfiche into Student Business Services (SBS). After the SBS implementation, stage three will be to implement Laserfiche in the medical records department (MR). MR stores performance review files for doctors practicing medicine in the state of Texas, which are reviewed by other doctors to determine if they have the potential to become a malpractice case. Nace plans to use Laserfiche to redact sensitive information, and also plans to segregate them on a separate Laserfiche repository, to maintain security. She would then be able to give non-departmental users, such as doctors from across the State, access to only the specific documents they need to review cases.

Also, HSC has just received a land grant from the neighboring city of Bryan, and the state has approved construction of two buildings. One of the stipulations is that these buildings be used mainly for classrooms and research, so offices located on the new campus will have to be extremely small. In an effort to maximize available office space, the department head has already made Laserfiche mandatory for document storage.

In addition, the board has also approved the establishment of a campus in Round Rock. Like the Bryan campus, storage and office space will be limited, so a Laserfiche implementation is planned for this campus as well.

Nace has recently created a position to manage the expansion of Laserfiche into new HSC departments. Eventually, every department in the HSC will be using Laserfiche.

“Our largest unexpected benefit came in realizing how popular Laserfiche has become within our organization,” she says. “I’m regularly getting requests from our departments to set up additional folders, processes, or even repositories. I knew people would love the product, I just didn’t expect they would love it this much.”

“In the planning stages I remember wondering what I was going to do if our departments didn’t buy into Laserfiche,” she adds. “How was I going to get them to use it? I’m so pleased to say they bought in after the first training class. As a matter of fact, I’ve not had to convince anyone to use it, if anything I cannot keep up with all of their requests to bring more documents into the system. We are excited it has taken off as quickly and easily as it has.”

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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Texas A&M University Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) is known as “the island university” because it’s surrounded by Corpus Christi Bay and the Oso Bay. But before implementing Laserfiche, the nickname could have just as easily have been applied because TAMU-CC was surrounded by a sea of paper.

Dennis Raulie, Manager of Administrative Computing Technology Services, recognized that the university had outgrown its existing document management system. He realized that what staff really needed was an enterprise content management solution that would comply with the university’s records management retention schedules, better secure documents and decrease the cost of handling paper.

Raulie saw a demo by Laserfiche reseller SMARTfiles and was impressed. “Some document management systems didn’t fulfill our needs very well, while others just seemed rudimentary,” he recalls.

Raulie also listened to what his users had to say about Laserfiche. “They liked the simplicity and speed. They also liked the ease of use and how powerful it was in being able to find information. Laserfiche was also much more intuitive than what they were used to,” he remembers.

With his users’ approval and confidence in Laserfiche’s robust functionality, TAMU-CC chose Laserfiche. Says Raulie, “With Laserfiche’s direct, accomplished and ingenious approach, we knew we’d be able to provide state-of-the-art service to our client base.”

After reviewing the areas that could be most improved in the shortest amount of time, Raulie focused first on development of a system to streamline the University’s BPP/FAMIS report distribution – a process that generates a lot of information, and, in some cases, a lot of unnecessary paper. “The BPP/FAMIS feeds are mainframe listings that consist of several small ‘reportlets’ that are bundled into one file,” explains Programmer III Michael Williamson. These reportlets, Raulie adds, contain information that must be stored in Laserfiche as well as several pages of less useful information, such as security listings that are in some cases blank. “Some of these reports need to be seen, but don’t need to be kept,” he adds. “However, to the printer, it’s all the same. All the reports would be printed when they came in, sometimes 60 data forms a day.”

Some of these reports were thousands of pages long, requiring a ream or two of paper a day to print. This system, Raulie says, didn’t just consume time, it also consumed money. “The paper-driven report distribution system is very expensive when you add up the costs of printers, fax machines, paper, toner, storage for these supplies and storage for printed archived reports,” he says. “These paper reports are often copied and saved by individuals along the paper trail, which duplicates the expenses, too. So we knew if we could move the existing paper-driven report system into a digital form that would reap huge benefits.”

To filter the important information from the non-essential information, Raulie, Williamson, and Systems Support Specialist I Bobby Martinez took inspiration from Rube Goldberg’s legacy of creating seemingly complex machines to achieve simple tasks. They created their own “Report Upload Bifurcation Engine” (R.U.B.E.), which processes continuous BFF/FAMIS report files, and splits them into individual reportlets as it does so. R.U.B.E. then distributes the resulting reports and data into a virtual staging area where Quick Fields reads the data, Zone OCRs the documents and distributes the information into the proper folders within Laserfiche.
This is significant, notes Raulie, because R.U.B.E filters out the information that only needs to be seen but not stored. R.U.B.E. recognizes what data needs to be kept according to records retention demands and sends that information to Laserfiche, then sends the rest to Windows Share. The information is still available for viewing, but the reports do not need to be printed, thus saving more paper.

After R.U.B.E.’s initial success, Williamson turned to converting TAMU-CC’s legacy imaging data from its legacy document management database into Laserfiche through the “Legacy Image Translation Engine,” the L.I.T.E. R.U.B.E., naturally. Williamson wrote a custom process that accessed the University’s outdated document management system and pulled the stored data and metadata, processing it through Import Agent and sending it into the corresponding folders in Laserfiche. “The old system was flat, with lots of template fields,” Williamson explains. “It was not always useful and many end users did not know why these fields were being used.” The actual process of converting all the old information into Laserfiche allowed Raulie and his team to collaborate with end users to reevaluate what fields were needed, determine which fields were most useful, and eventually add those to Laserfiche templates. In fact, Raulie says, this conversion process occasioned the same kind of useful re-evaluation and determination of template fields with each of the University’s business units and their respective document types.

Change, of course, can be hard, no matter what kind of progress it promises. Raulie offers this advice deploying Laserfiche: aim for small victories at first to win internal champions to inspire organic adoption – not just demand it. Raulie targeted TAMU-CC’s Accounting Department, where hundreds of data forms a day were printed, scanned and manually indexed by student workers, as a process ripe for improvement. Before Laserfiche, Raulie notes, it was considered acceptable to be a month behind in the filing because there was so much that needed to be done. Since implementing Laserfiche and R.U.B.E., Raulie says, reportlets can be separated, converted, uploaded and placed into Laserfiche within minutes. Not surprisingly, Accounting is no longer a month behind in its filing – instead, it is now working in real time. Even better, the department is now one of Laserfiche’s biggest champions. “Get people like that comfortably productive and enthusiastic,” advises Raulie. “They talk about the success and the word spreads.”

Adds Williamson, “When they see the light at the end of the tunnel, and they see their associates’ success and what they can do, that speaks volumes.”

Raulie also advises creating a test environment where users learning Laserfiche can experience the software at their own pace. “Build a ‘sandbox’ repository for users to play in and let them learn the controls,” he says. “You can’t learn to ride a bike unless you get on it, right?” Raulie also suggests obtaining administrative buy-in with regular progress updates. Soliciting department and unit managers for their input is also invaluable, he says, to increase group ownership of the project. “These are the team members who ‘know the flow.’ Their input is crucial.” Updating administrators with reports of the success and progress of the implementation is also a key component. “It’s not bragging if it’s true,” says Raulie. “After a while, it begins to take on a life of its own, and individuals talk about the ease of use and time savings.” Lastly, Raulie advises developing a strong working relationship with your reseller like the university did with SMARTfiles. “SMARTfiles offers training videos and other training materials that we make available to our users,” says Raulie. “Offer continuous training opportunities for your clients. If you think the price of training is too high, consider the price of ignorance.”

For other IT developers interested in creating their own R.U.B.E. using the Laserfiche Software Developer’s Kit (SDK), Raulie says that with prior knowledge of Visual Basic, developers shouldn’t have any problems at all. “In the hands of someone who knows VB, it should be a snap,” he says. Williamson adds that it is easy to write code that formats legacy imaging data into the components required to drive Import Agent, so it can then distribute converted data into the appropriate folder.

TAMU-CC’s future plans include automating and streamlining business process management using Work-flow, with Bobby Martinez acting as project manager. It will bring its challenges and its success, but perhaps most importantly, it will continue to make end users happy users – like Payroll Manager Melissa Wright. When asks to sum up her success using Laserfiche, Wright simply replied, “Laserfiche is easy to use. I LOVE LASERFICHE!”
“We consider our faculty to be our greatest asset,” says David Haugland, Associate Vice Provost of the University of Southern California (USC). Trouble was, spread out as USC faculty were among its 17 schools and colleges, for the Office of the Provost, faculty records were increasingly the university’s greatest pain in that asset.

By 2005, serving the more than 3,100 full-time and 1,300 part-time faculty USC employs meant the Provost’s Office was straddling a campus-wide legacy payroll system and individual colleges’ respective personnel records. This brought an endemic degree of inefficiency and confusion—and a mountain of paperwork that took up space, required constant copying and re-filing. Personnel files that might be housed centrally were used individually by schools spread out across USC’s six-mile-wide campus. “Each of our academic centers are independent,” Haugland explains. “At bigger institutions, especially research institutions like USC, you’re going to find that a lot of control is parcelled out simply because of the scale.” Factor in constantly changing status with faculty sabbaticals and retirement, and navigating between systems became as labor-intensive as it was inconsistent.

Important documentation was often, as Desiree Brown, Faculty Services Coordinator, puts it, “floating out there.” Factor in the potential for breach of confidentiality for sensitive and confidential faculty personnel files, and it was clear that a new solution was in order.

The need for greater speed and efficiency became more pronounced when Provost Marty Levine starting making increasingly specialized queries of faculty records that emphasized the need for more data-driven accessibility. “He’d want to see, say for instance, what female faculty members had been promoted in the last five years,” Haugland explains.

Laserfiche was chosen both for its ease-of-use, but also its ease of customization, which was essential to an office working with 17 different schools campus-wide. Initially, adoption was sluggish until a former Dean of the Engineering School became the high-level administrator, which underscored the need to have buy-in from the top down. “We were very fortunate in terms of having management on the project that was very IT-friendly,” says Haugland.

Brown notes that the Provost’s Office was a perfect pilot office for Laserfiche implementation, owing to the fact that her office had already been scanning all incoming mail for a year before installing Laserfiche. “We had a cultural acceptance in our office—no one was afraid of going electronic,” she says.

For her part, Brown kept initial implementation manageable and recognizable, beginning with just one school’s set of records, and “looking at them like they were in a file cabinet, only on my desk.”

Owing to the volume of files their office was required to keep as the university’s custodian of faculty records, Brown already had a working knowledge of what document management could do—and pretty soon she’d found out how much better Laserfiche could do it. “In the hard files we had a cheat sheet already that kind of summarized what information we’d usually need to see right away. But some of these files could be 300 pages, so if we needed to find something specific it was still a lot of work,” she says. “We had been using something in-house to scan in records, but you could only retrieve them in three categories. Laserfiche just gave us so many more options, especially when you want to search for one particular thing in a hundred page document.”

But trying to come up with a system that was as centrally controllable as it was locally accessible—the classic ECM paradox—presented its own challenges. On an IT level and user level, this active document management technology had to reconcile the Provost’s needs to centralize and standardize records while simultaneously accommodating the individual schools’ unique filing systems and primary applications. Payroll, for instance, was centralized, but not personnel records, which were left to individual departments.
Ease of use was a major factor, Haugland says, for two reasons: First, the system would be needed for multiple and continuous access. Secondly, staff members using the system ranged from Ph.D’s to administrative assistants, and even within those parameters, computer savvy varied wildly from gadget-philes to technophobes. “Believe it or not, we have people at USC who don’t even read e-mail,” laughs Haugland.

Key to resolving both issues was establishing what Brown refers to as “the gold files”—a master set of faculty records that would serve as the gold standard for all schools, eliminating the inefficiencies and redundancies of duplication.

“I call them ‘the gold files’ because they are gold to me,” Brown explains with a laugh. What gives them their shine is their standardized field template, which Brown helped design based on the naming conventions and filing habits of each of the respective schools and colleges. “That’s the beauty of Laserfiche, you can customize it,” she says. This helped allow a thorough application of Quick Fields to index and file incoming paperwork. “We were able to do all our own scanning in-house,” she adds. The custom template, for instance, allows Brown to update faculty status say, from on sabbatical to active, instantly.

It didn’t take long for Brown to all but eliminate paper from her desk. “Anything that comes in, I scan it, then pass it along as an e-mail,” she says. “The great thing is that I have a record on my desktop.”

The benefits, say Haugland and Brown, range from the simple (cutting down on inter-office mail, reducing storage and processing costs) to the profound (disaster recovery, transparency and compliance).

When she’s asked about ROI, Brown hesitates to limit her response to just a number because so many of the benefits are as qualitative as they are quantitative. “I like this question because I want to laugh—in a good way,” she says. “Something that used to take me ten minutes to find, now it’s a matter of seconds. The time saving is substantial. A lot of the benefits are subjective, but turnaround times, compliance – we know we’re better than we were.”

So do the other schools and offices, who’ve had positive experience interacting with the gold files. “Our office is the custodian for all faculty records. We have to ‘mirror’ all the files, so we have all 17 schools’ personnel records in our office,” Haugland explains. “Now they’re checking their files against our ‘gold files.’”

“In 2007, we started with the faculty records in our office, and scanned and indexed 160 feet of files. In 2008, for schools that had other records that needed to be preserved, we made our ‘gold files’ comprehensive. In 2009, we’re exploring what we call faculty career management, where we’re able to keep files current and active, even after retirement.”

David Haugland, USC Vice Provost

Many now use Laserfiche themselves, including Marshall School of Business, Keck School of Medicine, Career and Protective Services, and Facility Management.

“People that were afraid of the scanner saw that we were green and more secure and we weren’t losing anything,” Brown offers.

“Disaster recovery has really been the catalyst for enterprise-wide adoption of Laserfiche,” says Haugland. “All institutions of higher education – especially when it comes to stimulus funding – are facing higher compliance issues. We’re able to report accurately and quickly, and that affects everybody.”

About Laserfiche

A resource for more than 27,000 public- and private-sector organizations around the world since 1987, Laserfiche creates simple, elegant document management solutions that help organizations run smarter. From streamlining digital records management to automating business processes, Laserfiche helps improve efficiency while integrating easily within any environment.

Your Next Step

Visit www.laserfiche.com or call (800) 985-8533 to learn more about how Laserfiche helps higher education institutions ensure compliance and improve records management.

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With their focus on fostering understanding and creating consensus among faculty, staff and stakeholders, colleges and universities have not traditionally been known for their ability to react quickly and flexibly to changing conditions.

According to the 2010 EDUCAUSE Current IT Issues Survey, however, this is changing. In fact, this year’s survey shows that the issue of “Agility, Adaptability and Responsiveness” has become even more important to institutions of higher learning in 2010 than it was in 2009, pointing to the value of technology that enables institutional agility. It also points to the increasingly strategic role of IT professionals within academic institutions, since they are responsible not only for evaluating and implementing agile technology, but are now becoming more and more responsible for identifying the departments and processes that can most benefit from it as well.

In its Top 10 IT Issues of 2009 Survey, EDUCAUSE notes, “Being agile during times of relative calm is challenging enough, but doing so in a rapidly changing environment requires IT leaders to be aware of the challenges facing the institution at large and of how their services help meet those needs.” In other words, knowledge of technology is no longer enough. Today’s IT professionals must also be well-versed in the business, goals and missions of their academic institutions in order to drive the adoption of the most appropriate, most agile technology.

It’s no surprise, then, that in 2010, EDUCAUSE’s discussion evolved beyond “awareness” to “strategic partnership.” This year’s survey notes that “now more than ever, IT leaders need to be an integral part of campus-wide discussions,” and highlights the fact that “when departments plan as silos... inevitable conflicts arise.”

**The Big Picture**

- To succeed in today’s competitive and rapidly changing educational environment, the ability to be agile, adaptable and responsive is becoming increasingly important at colleges and universities around the world.

- To enable organizational agility, the IT department must become a strategic partner with a clear vision of the institution’s future—and a plan for how technology can pave the way.

- When departments plan as silos, conflicts arise. Therefore, the IT department should encourage standardization of systems wherever possible.

- Institutions that use an agile enterprise content management (ECM) system to standardize their approach to information management increase collaboration and information sharing between departments, automate core business processes and minimize ongoing maintenance demands for IT personnel.

- An agile ECM system offers individual departments and campuses the flexibility to adapt their work processes to changing conditions, increasing organizational efficiency and responsiveness.
To mitigate these conflicts and demonstrate their strategic value, IT professionals should encourage standardization of systems wherever possible. However, they must ensure that the systems they choose are agile enough to meet the needs of many different departments, and flexible enough to adapt quickly and cost-effectively to changing conditions.

This is where enterprise content management (ECM) comes into play, specifically agile ECM. Agile ECM systems allow organizations to centrally and securely manage all their content—and make it available via a wide range of third-party applications such as SIS, ERP, billing and more—while still offering individual departments and locations the flexibility to adapt their work processes to changing conditions. And in comparison with traditional ECM systems that demand extensive domain expertise from expensive programmers, analysts and consultants, agile ECM systems can be configured locally by in-house line-of-business experts, cutting costs while simultaneously increasing adaptability and responsiveness.

Kristin Nace, fiscal services director for Texas A&M’s Health Science Center, notes that ECM “provides an enterprise architecture that has eliminated information silos across multiple campuses by creating a central point of control for our records…. I regularly get requests from our departments to set up additional folders, processes or even repositories. I knew people would love the product, I just didn’t expect they would love it this much.”

Leading colleges and universities of all sizes are turning to ECM to dramatically improve the productivity and responsiveness of the entire institution. Pressured by regulations and driven by a clear need to streamline operations, these institutions are harnessing the power of ECM to:

- Anchor their information management infrastructures, eliminating departmental information silos and providing timely access to all relevant content through the applications users know best.
- Automate core business processes, improving staff productivity and the level of student service.
- Ease administration and maintenance demands on the IT department by standardizing on an extensible, interoperable and rapidly deployable solution.

This white paper outlines the benefits associated with implementing ECM for individual departments, the IT department and the institution as a whole.
As more and more content flows in and out of colleges and universities—and as regulatory and compliance mandates increase—the need to control unstructured content and improve data governance is increasing.

Enterprise content management has moved way beyond the old finding-and-filing days to become a foundational component of data governance. Best-in-class ECM is integrative middleware that expands organically throughout the institution, crossing departmental boundaries and integrating with other applications and legacy systems to manage and process information—eliminating data silos along the way.

The Dangers of Data Silos

Managing multiple departmental systems is expensive and complicated for IT staff, who have to keep track of information that’s spread over multiple locations. More often than not, these siloed systems end up compounding the problems they were supposed to solve.

The agile institution values technology that allows it to be quick, resourceful and adaptable, rapidly and consistently delivering results in the face of uncertainty and change. It recognizes that data silos prevent key stakeholders from gaining a holistic view of the institution’s priorities and performance. Therefore, it seeks ECM that is built on an open architecture—maximizing interoperability and simplifying integration with existing systems in multiple departments and locations. For example, ECM that is built on the Windows Workflow Foundation (WF) allows IT professionals to integrate primary applications and existing workflows into ECM workflows using WF and the .NET framework.

Eliminating information silos sometimes raises concerns about data security, but data silos do not protect confidential information. On the contrary, they complicate information security by requiring IT staff to manage data in multiple systems. Agile ECM systems have robust, role-based security features that prevent unauthorized departments and employees from accessing protected information. And by centralizing control of records spread across disparate content repositories, institutions ensure that data is consistent, reliable, useful and available, simplifying enterprise risk management and compliance.

By standardizing on an agile ECM system, academic institutions boost performance by increasing information accessibility and security across campus, eliminating data silos and enabling key stakeholders to make better-informed decisions.

Robson Agnew, former records manager at the University of British Columbia, notes that when it comes to standardization, “The more folks you have using [your ECM system], the more benefits you realize from it. Although most departments act independently when it comes to their software decisions, in fact, we’re all interconnected. A unified ECM system is a great thing for any university.”
ECM at Work on Campus

ECM has many benefits beyond those described in this white paper. The following diagram provides a quick overview of how ECM can help specific departments on campus.

**ADMINISTRATION**

**Advancement**
- Streamline donation processing
- Integrate with donor management applications
- Protect donor privacy with powerful security features

**Business Office**
- Automate the HR onboarding process
- Organize payroll documentation for easy storage and retrieval

**Chancellor/President**
- Scan incoming mail for electronic distribution
- Manage meeting agendas
- Improve staff efficiency by eliminating paper-based processes

**Finance**
- Automate AP/AR processing
- Accelerate the procurement process
- Simplify audits of financial records

**Legal**
- Manage contracts
- Simplify litigation preparation
- Rapidly respond to e-discovery requests

**Provost**
- Create a faculty records management standard
- Secure sensitive and confidential personnel files
- Accommodate individual schools’ unique filing systems and primary applications

**Public Affairs**
- Automate press release approval
- Create a searchable press release portal
- Organize and store records related to community events

**Research Administration**
- Organize proposal templates
- Facilitate auditing and compliance
- Automate grant and contract management

**ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS**

- Manage faculty records
- Store and route reprints for peer-review articles
- Centrally and securely track student grades

**ADMISSIONS**

- Accelerate admission processing
- Automate financial aid processing and disbursement
- Automate transcript processing

**FACILITIES / PHYSICAL PLANT**

- Organize building plans and schematics
- Grant tradesmen remote access to documents
- Automate project approval process

**OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

- Manage and distribute case knowledge
- Control access to reports and evidentiary records
- Deliver building plans, HAZMAT reports and other intelligence to first responders via the Web

**STUDENT SERVICES**

- Guarantee student record security
- Accelerate housing assignment
- Organize and store assessment test results
Standardizing on ECM doesn’t just provide a consistent way of viewing, storing and accessing information, it also gives the institution a centralized, flexible and secure way to create automated, repeatable processes in every department.

With ECM, user rights and privileges can be configured so that individual schools, departments and even individual users retain control over their own filing structures and business processes, while the IT department retains central control over information storage, disposition and security. Not only does this speed and simplify collaboration by automating content-related activities, it offers centralized control of records and ensures that data is consistent, reliable, useful and available. In this way, standards and security are enforced, but no one is compelled to adopt an aggravating or time-consuming new practice that does not make sense for a particular situation.

Agile, intuitive ECM that balances central control with local flexibility helps institutions of higher learning provide better service and respond rapidly and flexibly to changing conditions. More specifically, ECM enables colleges and universities to:

- Facilitate disaster recovery.
- Enhance business office efficiency.
- Quickly disburse financial aid.
- Centrally manage faculty records.
- Guarantee student record security.
- Automate accounts payable processing.
- Facilitate facilities management.

Facilitate Disaster Recovery

It’s crucial for colleges and universities to plan and prepare for operational interruptions. Agile ECM plays a key part in disaster recovery planning, securing records and limiting the cost and effort of salvage and restoration.

- Ensure that administrators, maintenance employees and local police and fire departments can instantly access critical documents—including building plans, E-sized drawings and maintenance forms—via the Web in case of an emergency.
- Protect against file loss and damage in the case of a fire, flood, theft or other disaster.
- Organize architectural drawings, schematics and operations manuals by school so they’re easily accessible in times of crisis.
- Instantly reconstruct damaged or destroyed repositories and provide immediate access to authorized personnel.

Monica Baccardax, IT project manager for the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University Medical School, notes that it was a huge relief to staff “when they realized that our ECM system serves as a backup should documents be destroyed. They no longer [had to] worry about losing paper documents.”

Meanwhile, David Haugland, associate vice provost at the University of Southern California (USC), explains that “Disaster recovery has really been the catalyst for enterprise-wide adoption of ECM.”
**Enhance Business Office Efficiency**

The business office—responsible for recruiting new faculty and staff, administering payroll, managing contracts and grants and dealing with correspondence—must deal with a large volume of documents every day. Using agile ECM increases efficiency and cuts costs by eliminating paper-based processes, improving information accessibility and decreasing the need to store paper documents.

- Automate key business processes such as accounts payable processing, agenda management and contract management, among others.
- Improve staff productivity by removing the need for time-consuming manual filing.
- Increase transparency by providing a secure public portal that grants vendors, reporters and other interested parties with access to information.
- Digitize and barcode timesheets for easy storage and retrieval.
- Free up space for faculty offices or classrooms by eliminating the need for file cabinets.
- Cut costs by decreasing the need for overnight shipping and mailing.

The Chancellor’s Office at a large university in Southern California scans, indexes and distributes the university’s incoming mail using an agile ECM system, giving approximately 150 staff and faculty members across campus instant access to relevant items. The university’s communications coordinator notes that mail gets to recipients much faster than it did when people had to deliver hard copies around campus by hand. She also appreciates the fact that the ECM system allows readers to annotate documents so that other recipients can quickly see if there is any follow-up action that needs to be taken.

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**Spotlight on Accounts Payable Processing**

In the Chancellor’s Office at California State University, the accounting department uses the business process management (BPM) tools in its agile ECM suite to automate accounts payable processing as follows:

- An invoice is scanned into the system.
- Laserfiche Workflow automatically routes it to an approver, who receives notification via e-mail.
- Approvers access the invoice by clicking on the link in the e-mail, opening their Approver Folders in Laserfiche and double clicking on the invoice.
- After reviewing the invoice, approvers provide payment information (or explain why payment is denied) by inserting sticky notes with purchase order and/or chartfield information.
- Using a drop-down menu, approvers either approve or deny payment.
- Workflow then automatically routes the invoice back to the A/P technicians.
- Laserfiche Quick Fields extracts index field data from the invoice. An integration with the university’s A/P system allows Laserfiche to autopopulate additional fields, eliminating the need for manual data entry into Laserfiche.

“Laserfiche is very user friendly, and the automation saves our staff a lot of time,” says Terry Hamilton, the former A/P manager who served as the project lead in USC’s Chancellor’s Office.

“One huge advantage of Laserfiche over other ECM systems,” Hamilton adds, “is that it is very easy for system administrators to add template fields, which adds a lot of flexibility to adapt to changes in the way we process our invoices. Laserfiche also tracks changes to documents and keeps a record of who has seen or worked on any given invoice, increasing the level of control we have over document security.”
Quickly Disburse Financial Aid

Every day, students submit applications, promissory notes and copies of birth certificates, passports, tax returns and more to the financial aid department. An agile ECM system enables the team to quickly and easily capture, organize and process the paper and electronic documents required to disburse financial aid to qualified candidates.

Agile ECM can help the financial aid department:

- Streamline the collection of financial aid materials by scanning them into the electronic content repository.
- Capture metadata such as name and student identification number so that staff can easily search the repository and quickly retrieve needed content, improving student service.
- Eliminate the need for manual data entry by auto-populating template fields.
- Automatically route documents to the correct financial aid counselor for review and approval, accelerating processing time.
- Grant simultaneous access to financial aid files, eliminating the need to copy and transport documents.

For example, when the University of Utah’s financial aid office receives a document, staff scans it into the ECM repository, where it’s stored as an archival-quality TIFF file. They then apply a digital template to the document and enter key metadata, including the student’s name, ID number and social security number. Finally, they use the template’s Status field to instantly route the document to data entry personnel.

IT staffer Jeramy Berry says, “In the past, it would take us at least six weeks to process a student’s paperwork. Now we can process the documents in two weeks... We can disburse money to students a lot more quickly.”

Centrally Manage Faculty Records

Whether your institution is a small, private college or a statewide university system, Agile ECM offers a central point of control over all your information assets. With it, the institution establishes enterprise-wide standards and security policies for faculty records while at the same time giving individual schools the ability to store information and configure business processes according to their specialized needs.

- Easily meet recordkeeping requirements with DoD 5015.2-certified records management functionality.
- Ensure consistency of information with custom templates.
- Improve staff productivity by automatically indexing and filing incoming paperwork.
- Instantly fulfill data-driven, specialized queries of records.
- Protect confidential personnel files with granular, role-based security.
- Streamline the faculty credentialing process.

Owing to the volume of files the University of California’s (USC) Provost’s Office was required to keep as the custodian of faculty records, it needed an agile solution that could centralize and standardize records while simultaneously accommodating the unique filing systems and primary applications of 17 different schools spread out across the university’s six-mile-wide campus.

The Provost’s Office purchased an agile ECM system and—using a standardized field template based on the naming conventions and filing habits of each of USC’s respective schools and colleges—Faculty Services Coordinator Desiree Brown helped to design a master set of faculty records that serves as the gold standard for all schools, eliminating the inefficiencies and redundancies of duplication.
“I call them ‘the gold files’ because they’re such gold to me,” says Brown. “Something that used to take ten minutes to find, now it’s a matter of seconds.”

Many other schools and departments within USC have adopted Laserfiche as a result of the Provost Office’s success, including Marshall School of Business, Keck School of Medicine, the College of Letters, Arts & Sciences, Career and Protective Services and Facility Management, among others.

**Guarantee Student Record Security**

Administering records access under FERPA consumes staff time. An agile ECM system with granular security functionality helps you design and implement a security policy that works within your existing environment to balance document compliance, security and accessibility.

- Implement DoD 5015.2-certified records management to simplify compliance with recordkeeping requirements.
- Eliminate misplaced files, files lost in transit from off-site records storage facilities and inappropriately accessed files.
- Control confidential records, and prevent them from showing up in a repository search.
- Guarantee security all the way down to individual words with blackout and whiteout redactions.
- Log system activity to demonstrate compliance with regulations.

The Dalhousie University Medical School discovered that an agile ECM system enables staff to quickly and reliably access student records without burdening them with complicated and time-consuming new ways of working with files. The system was structured to mirror the filing hierarchy and classification codes that were already in place.

Dalhousie’s Baccardax notes that when it comes to student records and federal regulations, “certain types of information cannot be shared unless approved by an authorized person. Our ECM system enables us to set the access rights so that information is available only to authorized staff.”

**Facilitate Facilities Management**

Whether you work at a small, private college or a statewide university system, managing the institution’s facilities is a big job. Responsible for ensuring the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of all buildings and grounds, this department benefits from using an agile ECM system that:

- Organizes architectural drawings, schematics, safety documents, sustainability reports and operations manuals by school so they’re easily accessible.
- Enables staff to retrieve blueprints, maps and E-sized drawings onsite from wireless-enabled laptops.
- Automates the project approval process, allowing supervisors to easily prioritize work requests according to urgency.
- Uses audit trails to monitor and report system activity to administrators.
- Assigns security rights and privileges by group or individual user.

According to former Records Manager Robson Agnew, the land and buildings department at the University of British Columbia uses Laserfiche WebLink to grant its tradespeople read-only access to documents: “Our tradespeople access manuals and plans from the system using WebLink, while our ‘power users’ have the security rights to retrieve pretty much whatever they need.”
Agile ECM Administration: What the IT Department Needs to Know

Long deployment schedules and a lack of systems interoperability present two key challenges to the successful implementation of technology on college and university campuses. Unfortunately, the ECM marketplace is rife with solutions that are difficult to deploy, confusing to configure and complex to administer. This is why it is essential to stay away from vendors that have cobbled together a set of complicated tools that require major investments in programming or professional services.

By selecting agile ECM tools that can be configured locally yet controlled centrally, the institution gives individual departments the ability to configure local solutions and avoids using consultants, programmers and in-house IT staff for all but the most strategic ECM tasks.

Agile ECM solutions are engineered for maximum scalability, interoperability and ease of administration. Maintenance is simple because agile ECM systems provide extensive support for standard Windows administrative tools such as MMC, Event Tracing for Windows, WMI and the Windows Event Log. Flexible configuration allows departmental databases to reside in separate locations with individualized security settings.

Furthermore, agile ECM systems offer rapid deployment, streamlined development and easy integration with a wide range of applications such as:

- Accounting.
- Enterprise resource planning.
- Student information systems.
- Mainframe/database applications.
Advice on ECM Adoption from an IT Manager

Dennis Raulie, manager of the administrative computing technology services department at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi, has had great success streamlining his institution’s business processes and reducing its paper consumption with Laserfiche. He has a few words of wisdom to share with other IT managers looking to implement an agile ECM system:

• **Don’t forget about end users when you’re evaluating systems.** No matter how many business benefits an ECM system can deliver, if end users don’t buy into the new solution, it will sit on the shelf collecting dust. To help staff get up to speed quickly, look for an ECM system that includes familiar Windows features, such as right-click menus and flexible folder structures. “Our users liked the simplicity and speed of Laserfiche. They also liked the ease of use. It was a much more intuitive ECM system than they were used to,” Raulie states.

• **Change can be hard, so aim first for small victories that win internal champions and inspire organic adoption—not just demand it.** For Raulie’s first project, he targeted the institution’s accounting department, where hundreds of data forms a day were printed, scanned and manually indexed by student workers. In the past, staff were often a month behind in the filing. Since implementing Laserfiche, however, the department is now working in real time. “Get people like that comfortably productive and enthusiastic,” advises Raulie. “They talk about the success and the word spreads.”

• **Solicit input from department and unit managers to increase group ownership of the project, and obtain administrative buy-in with regular progress updates.** “Department managers are the team members who ‘know the flow.’ Their input is crucial.” Updating administrators with reports of the success and progress of the implementation is also a key component. “It’s not bragging if it’s true,” Raulie notes.

• **Create a test environment where users can experience the software at their own pace.** “Build a ‘sandbox’ repository for users to play in and let them learn the controls,” he says.

• **Offer continuous training opportunities for your users.** “If you think the price of training is too high, consider the price of ignorance,” he warns. Raulie recommends taking advantage of training videos, technical white papers, forums and other training materials available on the Laserfiche Support Site.

• **Customize the ECM system to fit your specific needs.** Using the Laserfiche Software Developer’s Kit (SDK), Raulie and his team created a “Report Upload Bifurcation Engine” that processes continuous BFF/FAMIS report files, and splits them into individual reportlets that are uploaded into Laserfiche. “In the hands of someone who knows Visual Basic, [creating processes like this] should be a snap,” he says.
The ECM Shared Services Model

Many academic institutions have concluded that if ECM functionality is to be offered to the enterprise, it makes sense to offer that functionality as a shared service—a way to cost-effectively meet the content management needs of large user bases with diverse requirements for various components of ECM functionality. After all, enterprise information management is literally that: information shared across departments or functions.

The shared services model is particularly attractive to IT departments because it allows them to develop business processes that can be repeated across the enterprise, enabling optimal resource efficiency, cost and service performance.

When using ECM to deliver shared services, information capture and retrieval are just the beginning. The most common processes used as part of the ECM Shared Services model in academic institutions are HR Onboarding, Contract Management and Grant Management.
A Simple Shared Services Maturity Model

When setting up shared services delivery with your ECM system, it’s critical to know where to start, where you want to go and how you are going to get there. This can be done using a maturity model, which offers a pathway of best-practice milestones. Here is an example of a simple shared services maturity model:

• **Localize your best practices.** Analyze the processes conducted by different departments and calculate their lowest common denominator. Figure out which process is most efficient—and then make it repeatable so you can roll it out to the entire organization. Many colleges and universities start with processes conducted by multiple departments such as hiring or contracts.

• **Thoughtfully standardize across the institution.** Although standardization can have a utopian veneer, it’s best to be ruthlessly practical. Look at your metadata models, and consider implementing a master model like the Dublin Core Set. On the delivery side, develop a standardized skill set for your staff. This allows you to bundle competencies and refine your service culture.

• **Consolidate.** A very wise technology deployment expert once explained that the key to excellence in information delivery is to standardize the central system and customize the delivery. This allows information access to be dynamic. Deployment-wise this means consolidating all of your content into one ECM system and integrating to allow the users to access content through any application. The interfaces through which staff accesses the ECM system are customized based on their needs or departmental roles.

• **Cost benefits.** This is where the economies of scale kick in. You’ve developed your service level agreements and are rolling out a menu of ECM functions in terms of head-count. At this stage your focus is no longer just internal optimization. You are actually creating value for the institution through your service offerings.

• **Continuous review.** Now that you’ve optimized your processes and developed your skill set, you must constantly refine your menu of offerings. Auditing is continuous and proactive. Quality improvements are implemented using formalized change management processes like Six Sigma.
Business Agility: Balancing Flexibility and Control

Colleges and universities have always struggled to balance centralized control with departmental autonomy. On one side lie the back-office policies and support systems that govern how work is done. These systems are designed to make the institution more efficient and may be mandated by leadership or required by law. On the other side sit knowledge workers, equipped with skills and expertise developed through years of experience. These managers and frontline employees understand the importance of process, but they bristle under too much top-down discipline. They want the freedom and flexibility to create their own processes—and study after study shows that the more employees feel empowered, the more productive they tend to be.

According to recent research conducted by The Economist Intelligence Unit, 80% of the organizations that have implemented formal initiatives to improve business processes over the past three years have faced employee resistance. Three major causes of this reluctance to change were:

- The new process added more work (31%).
- Employees had little or no say in determining the new process (31%).
- The new process didn’t map to the way employees thought their jobs should be done (28%).

By granting individual facilities, departments and users control over their own filing structures and business processes, agile ECM solutions enable colleges and universities to neutralize these objections to change. A central committee establishes templates and standards for managing content, and then local decision makers determine the best ways to work with it within their individual groups.

In this way, filing structures and automated workflows can readily be configured to mirror existing processes and procedures, guaranteeing swift system acceptance and enthusiastic use. Local decision makers are also able to easily make changes to their processes and filing structures midstream in order to meet changing business or market conditions, all without sacrificing the institution’s control over its information infrastructure—or having to possess deep technical expertise.

Business Benefits

In addition to the benefits that accrue to the various departments that use the agile ECM system, the institution as a whole will also gain:

- **Elimination of data silos.** Data silos are dangerous for many reasons, but primarily because they prevent key stakeholders from gaining a holistic view of the institution’s priorities and performance. Best-in-class ECM systems are built on an open architecture to maximize interoperability and simplify integration with existing systems in multiple departments and locations. By increasing information accessibility and collaboration throughout the institution, colleges and universities boost performance by enabling key stakeholders to make better-informed decisions.

- **Increased security.** Stringent privacy laws dictate that colleges and universities protect student and faculty information. ECM stores this information in a secure repository that limits access by user, folder, document and/or data field. Agnew notes that Laserfiche allows “different folks to have different levels of access. Laserfiche makes it easy to set up, whether we’re determining security by user—say by an individual staff member—or by group.”
- **Enhanced productivity.** Instant search and retrieval eliminates time spent looking for missing documents. In addition, workflow functionality automates collaborative business processes, eliminating redundancy by reducing the need for manual data entry and automatically routing documents to the appropriate people for review. Tina Livingston, director of budgets at Texas A&M Kingsville, says, “Our new electronic filing process has greatly reduced the time required to respond to inquiries. Previously, we had to go to the filing cabinets, pull folders and make copies. Now, we look them up in Laserfiche and e-mail them to the customer. No paper, no file cabinets and no hassle.”

- **Cost savings.** “We’ve saved an estimated $1 million in real estate costs—and that’s annual—because the space we previously used to store files can be used for other things,” says the manager of logistics and sustainability at a large Canadian university. “We also estimate that we save 500 staff hours every year, simply by eliminating manual processing.” Roberta Priesmeyer, retired business administrator at Texas A&M’s Department of Entomology reported that the department expected to receive an initial ROI of $54,000, but actually achieved an ROI of $272,000 within one year of implementing its agile ECM system.

- **Support for sustainability initiatives.** Students today are not merely comfortable with the digital world, they demand it. “Students are already living in a paperless world, and we have a responsibility to live up to their expectations. The students are our customers. We serve them and this is what they are asking for,” says the Canadian manager of logistics and sustainability. Paperless practices are environmentally friendly, and they speed up student service in two ways:
  - Giving staff immediate access to student information, so that inquiries can be answered faster.
  - Giving students direct access to their information via a secure Web portal, so that they don’t even have to make inquiries with staff.

**Conclusion**

In sum, if agility is something your institution strives for, standardizing on an agile ECM platform can help you achieve your goals. By leveraging enterprise content management, colleges and universities enhance their information management strategy without hampering the productivity of the IT group or departmental employees.
The Laserfiche Institute teaches staff, resellers, and current and prospective clients how to use Laserfiche most effectively. As part of this mission, the Institute conducts more than 500 Webinars each year, covering a variety of topics. The Institute also hosts an annual conference where members of the Laserfiche community attend presentations and network to share ideas and learn best practices. Additionally, the Institute conducts a number of regional training sessions and provides resellers with content for more than 100 user conferences each year.

The Institute also develops and distributes educational material through the Laserfiche Support Site. On this Website, clients can access training videos, participate in online forums and download technical papers and presentations that help them become savvier ECM users.

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Once upon a time, many IT departments were strictly maintainers of networks, sentinels of security and custodians of technology. We were guardians of the information order. We kept the lights on, the data locked down and the systems humming. Some departments within our organizations used to think of us as the department of “no.” “No, you can’t put that on my network.” “No, we can’t get to that project for six months to a year.” “No, that integration you want isn’t possible.” Frankly, it was no fun being the “no” department. We wanted to enable the business and improve the bottom line.

So we changed our mindset. We became more strategic and defined our value proposition in new ways. As information technology executives, we shifted our priorities from providing technology to leading the business by using technology to deliver services. We began to enable—even empower—the business units.

We started schooling ourselves in enterprise information management. We adopted an information governance framework. By optimizing the use of information within our organizations, we saw that we could support decision making and day-to-day operational processes. We knew that we could overcome the traditional barriers to making information available to the enterprise. How—you ask? By making enterprise content management available as component of shared services.
Let’s take a moment to look at the history of enterprise content management (ECM). In its early days, content management was deployed to meet departmental needs in certain niches within the organization. It is now recognized as an enterprise-wide need: an infrastructure investment rather than a niche application. Making information available to the enterprise empowers the enterprise.

Many organizations have concluded that if ECM functionality is to be offered to the enterprise, it makes sense to offer that functionality as a shared service—a way to cost-effectively meet the content management needs of large user bases with diverse requirements for various components of ECM functionality. Access to the ECM system is given to newly hired staff members in the same way they are given a computer, a phone and a system log-in.

When we consider the capabilities inherent in ECM in terms of shared service offerings, an initial deployment might include:

- **Content Management.** It’s easy for a shared service to be suffocated in content: emails, IMs, paper documents and electronic forms contain information that drive or support business processes and transactions. Content spans multiple departments and software applications, and it needs to be managed and stored in a manner that makes it accessible to multiple systems and staff.

- **Capture.** The concept of information has changed significantly. Think of it as a launch pad for process. It’s not just about scanners and image processing anymore—but about ETL and workflow. In fact, information capture often launches a workflow. Capture also means handling multiple content sources—and can be used to sort, classify and authenticate complex document sets according to pre-defined sets of business rules. In the ECM world, capture strategies have moved toward capturing content at the point of creation. But the actual information processing is done centrally. This works well if you are considering delivering shared services via ECM—fewer hands need to touch the content, greatly minimizing errors and exceptions. Capture is often the first component of viewing ECM as a shared service.

- **Storage.** Information both drives process and is produced as a result of process. Once information has been produced, it must be properly indexed and securely stored—typically in an ECM system—for later processing or retrieval.
The Journey: Maturity Models

Like many technology endeavors, setting up shared services delivery with your ECM system is evolutionary. It’s critical to know where to start, where you want to go and how you are going to get there. Try developing a maturity model. Like any model, this is an abstraction of current best practices. Maturity models offer a pathway of milestones that will allow you to graph successes achieved by delivering shared services via ECM. A simple ECM shared service maturity model might look like this:

**Localize your best practices**

The first step is almost always the most difficult. You’ve got to analyze the processes conducted by your business units. Calculate their lowest common denominator. Figure out which process is most efficient—and then make it repeatable so you can roll it out to the entire organization. Many organizations start with processes conducted by multiple departments like hiring or contracts; many are also finding success with simple variations on case management.

**Consolidate**

A very wise technology deployment expert once explained that the key to excellence in information delivery is to standardize the central system and customize the delivery. This allows your information access to be dynamic. Deployment-wise this means consolidating all of your content into one ECM system and integrating to allow the users to access content through any application. The interfaces through which staff accesses the ECM system are customized based on their needs or organizational roles.

**Cost benefits**

This is where the economies of scale kick in. You’ve developed your service level agreements and are rolling out a menu of ECM functions in terms of head-count. It’s as simple as counting noses. At this stage your focus is no longer just internal optimization. You are actually creating value for the organization through your service offerings.

**Thoughtfully standardize across business units**

Although standardization can have a utopian veneer, it’s best to be ruthlessly practical. Look at your metadata models. Consider implementing a master model like the Dublin Core Set. On the delivery side, develop a standardized skill set for your staff. This allows you to bundle competencies and refine your service culture.

**Continuous review**

Now that your processes have been optimized and your skill set developed, you must constantly refine your menu of offerings. Auditing is continuous and proactive. Quality improvements are implemented using formalized change management processes like Six Sigma.
ECM and Shared Services for Experts

We’ve discussed information capture and retrieval as shared services, but that’s just the beginning. Once you’ve got that in place, it’s time to start thinking about transactions and processes. The question is: Which processes built on your ECM system should be offered as part of your shared service menu? Consider both the scope and the purpose of the activity. What are the common patterns? Does the activity generate or protect revenue streams? Does it manage valuable resources? Does it mitigate risk? Does it involve multiple departments and information sources? Is the process repeatable?

The most common processes used as part of the ECM Shared Services model are: HR Onboarding, Client Onboarding, Case Management, Customer Management and Contract Management.

Does It All End Up in the Cloud?

We all know that the main advantage to cloud computing is that companies can reduce IT capital and operating expenses and align their technology spending more directly with utilization. These advantages are strikingly similar to those achieved by implementing shared services. The disadvantages to the cloud—which aren’t necessarily common to shared services—include data ownership, niche integration requirements and agreeable separation. If moving to the cloud makes sense for your organization, consider the ECM Shared Service model as an initial step in the transition.