

QAI Builds Compliant, Automated Document Management System for the U.S. Geological Survey

Challenges

The Office of Accounting and Financial Management at the USGS receives and processes over 10,000 invoices, employee travel vouchers, and financial statements every year. The agency's existing solution relied on an optical disk jukebox for image storage and proprietary third-party software for image access.

Over time, this outdated system proved challenging to maintain and upgrade. For example, whenever a drive in the aging optical disk jukebox failed, IT staff had to take the system offline before rebooting. Replacement parts were also expensive, as were the agency's existing service contracts. Additionally, the system did not support the latest network and government security requirements, including HIPPA, and therefore could not pass regular control and access security audits performed on all servers and applications. USGS required a new scanning, storage and retrieval system that would enable staff to handle the high number of paper statements, expedite the workflow process, and comply with the latest security requirements.

Solution

The USGS turned to Quality Associates Inc. (QAI), a GSA Federal Supply Service (FSS) contractor. Founded in 1986, QAI has developed a strong track record in providing data conversion and archival services and systems for local, state, and federal government agencies.

Scott Swidersky, Director, Information Systems Division, Quality Associates, said, "Like many government agencies relying on older systems, the USGS knew that a technology change was in order. After consulting with the agency and performing a complete review of their existing procedures and infrastructure, we proposed a completely new technology approach that would bring them up-to-date with the latest advancements in document management.

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The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) was created by an act of Congress in 1879 as the sole science agency for the Department of the Interior. The USGS provides reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and enhance and protect our quality of life. The agency is based in Reston, Virginia.



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Solution *(continued)*

Further, the USGS could continue to conduct business while QAI performed all aspects of the work behind the scenes, which would minimize any downtime and help ensure a smooth transition.”

QAI designed a comprehensive state-of-the-art document imaging and management system. The system incorporated high-tech imaging equipment, including a high-capacity server, and advanced content management business software from Kofax and Captaris.

For the implementation, QAI worked on-site at the USGS headquarters to convert and transfer more than 1.3 million stored images to an optical disk array. After successful testing, QAI introduced the USGS staff to its new system and worked with the agency to perform emergency data recovery drills so that staff would be prepared in the event of unexpected data loss.

Results

Now, USGS staff easily converts paper and e-mail invoices into PDFs for placement into a central electronic archive. After scanning, all incoming invoices, vouchers, and financial statements—in addition to all kinds of electronic documents—are automatically converted into searchable PDFs, which are then saved to a designated network server capable of holding millions of images.

Authorized staff can now securely log-in and search for images by keyword, or by fields such as date or invoice number, from their computers. When needed, files can be retrieved and saved onto CD, DVD, and USB for reporting or auditing purposes.

Most importantly, the USGS is now compliant with network and government security and data standards. Information is also protected in the event of a disaster. Looking ahead, the USGS can add or change users, applications, and functionality in a secure environment, and can rely on a system that meets their needs now and into the future.



“Like any major enterprise, federal agencies must keep track of what can ultimately add up to thousands or more pages of financial invoices and payment information. What these organizations are quickly discovering is that, in a 24/7 connected world in which business never stops, reliance on printed documents is no longer an effective way to do business. An electronic content management infrastructure enables secure access to critical data and makes it possible to find and retrieve vital documents in just a few seconds.”

– Scott Swidersky, Director, Information System Division, Quality Associates

Summary

Challenges

- Agency relied on outdated technology that was difficult and costly to maintain
- Information was not readily available for auditing and reporting
- New auditing procedures required an innovative approach

Solution

- QAI provided technical consultation, software, equipment, training, and support
- Software included Kofax Ascent Capture and Captaris Alchemy EDMS
- QAI provided on-site staff to transfer over 1.3 million images to the new system

Results

- Information is readily available for auditing and reporting
- System is flexible, making it possible to add users and applications as needed
- Authorized staff can search for documents by keyword