

Quality Associates Builds Digital Archives for Anne Arundel County Maryland

Challenges

Reliance on print records placed the Anne Arundel County government offices at a disadvantage. For example, the archives primarily consisted of hard-copy documents, which put decades of County Legislative records at risk in the event of a disaster. Locating essential documentation, such as specific bills and resolutions, for County Council members and constituents was time consuming. To find documents, staff manually searched numerous print indexes and bound volumes of legislative records—a process that could take several hours.

Aging archives presented another major concern. Many documents, such as meeting minutes dating back to the 1920s, were very fragile and required handling with the utmost care. Anne Arundel County needed to preserve decades of information to ensure the availability of its content for years to come.

Solution

The County turned to Quality Associates Inc. (QAI), a systems integrator with extensive experience in developing customized electronic document management (ECM) systems for numerous counties and government agencies. QAI worked closely with Anne Arundel County staff to understand their requirement and goals.

Implementation included the following elements:

- **Solution:** QAI implemented a data-hosting environment that supported secure network-based access for authorized County staff.
- **Services:** QAI staff performed document preparation and scanning on site at the County's offices. Indexing, validation, verification and PDF conversion took place at Quality Associates' production facility, where QAI staff reviewed all images to ensure quality and readability. QAI then converted all of the images into searchable PDFs and uploaded the electronic documentation to the County's new ECM application.
- **Training:** QAI thoroughly trained the County staff on the day-to-day use and routine maintenance of the digital archiving system.



The government offices of Anne Arundel County, Maryland are located in the state capital of Annapolis. With print archives dating back nearly 100 years, Anne Arundel County's offices include storage rooms filled with more than 300 boxes containing nearly 1 million pages of County Council Legislative documents including bills, resolutions, supporting documentation and zoning maps – essentially, all of the records dealing with the regular operations of a county government.



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Results *"QAI is extremely pleased to have successfully completed Anne Arundel County's new digital legislative archives. With this system, Anne Arundel County will continue to set a high standard that counties across the nation will likely look to follow in the future."*

Scott Swidersky, Director, Information Systems Division, Quality Associates



Anne Arundel County has a comprehensive, searchable digital archive, which makes County Council documentation available to select staff via a direct desktop link. Staff can now search for specific keywords and perform "fuzzy" searches that produce more general results. Staff can also search by keywords and within seconds see a list of relevant results. Clicking any item on the list opens the PDF of the original document. For added convenience, highlighted keywords within each document further facilitate the search process.

JoAnne Gray, Assistant Administrative Officer to the County Council, Anne Arundel County, said, "Quality Associates did its job in making information accessible and worked quickly to meet our tight timeline. Working with Quality Associates also made our transition to digital archiving easier, because they were right here in the building to answer our questions. Now, the County has a very convenient system that makes it possible to find documents and directly email pages to Council Members and constituents as needed."

Further, County documentation is no longer at risk of being damaged, misplaced or lost. Staff can also do their jobs more efficiently, which in turn has improved the County's ability to serve both employees and the general public. Now that the system is in place, County employees will be able to continuously add new documentation to the digital archive as needed.

About Quality Associates, Inc.

Quality Associates, Inc. (QAI) offers customized document and knowledge management solutions that enable organizations to maximize productivity by ensuring that information is captured, converted, and accessible. As a value-added reseller (VAR) that partners with the industry's leading electronic content management (ECM) hardware and software providers, QAI offers a wide range of services and solutions that include scanning and imaging; document and media conversion; storage and electronic archiving; and full systems integration and support with customized training programs. QAI also provides strategic quality assurance consulting and auditing services. QAI's broad client base includes federal, state and local government agencies; chemical and manufacturing companies; financial, accounting, and law firms; and medical research facilities.

For more information, call (800) 488-3547 or visit www.QualityAssociatesInc.com.

Summary

Background:

- County government office
- Storage rooms contained about 300 boxes with 1 million pages
- Documents, such as bills, resolutions and zoning maps, existed only in hard-copy form

Challenges:

- Decades of documents at risk in the event of a disaster
- Accessing print archives was time consuming
- Fragile loose and hardbound documents in danger of decaying
- Print files could be misplaced or lost

Solution:

- Quality Associates worked directly with County staff
- On-site services: Quality Associates' prepared and scanned documents

Solution: (continued)

- Off-site services: Quality Associates indexed, validated and converted PDFs at its headquarters
- Data hosting and secure Internet-based access
- Quality Associates trained County staff

Results:

- Comprehensive, searchable digital archives
- Password-protected archive access
- Risk mitigation
- Increased staff efficiency
- Improved ability to serve
- Scalable