

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Uniting electronic
and paper-based
systems

About Gloucestershire Hospitals

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust delivers acute health services to the communities in Gloucestershire and surrounding counties. The Trust's Property and Medical Engineering Department provides Estates and medical engineering services to some 160 properties, including two hospitals; the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital and Cheltenham General Hospital. Comprising a team of about 100 staff they operate from two offices based in each of the hospitals.

“ Paper-based documentation and electronic files can now be stored within one cohesive system. For the first time, the Trust can really unlock the potential they have in Microsoft SharePoint. ”

Colman Herron

*Information Utilities and
Energy Manager, Property
and Medical Engineering
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Executive summary

THE PROBLEMS

- Paper archives of utility bills and maintenance records took up valuable space and were difficult to locate and retrieve
- Inability to capture paper-based information into the Trust's Microsoft SharePoint system
- Sharing paper information between two locations through interoffice mail and maintaining multiple files was inefficient

THE SOLUTION

- Seven multifunction devices (MFDs) were installed across two sites with eCopy software to enable scanning
- eCopy Connector for Microsoft® SharePoint® allows documents to be scanned at the MFD and routed directly to the relevant site and folder in SharePoint

THE BENEFITS OF THE eCopy SOLUTION

- Single document storage system for paper and electronic documents
- Two floor-to-ceiling file cabinets were emptied in the first two weeks and no forward-looking storage costs are anticipated
- Cost avoidance of standalone scanners to handle paper document capture
- Productivity gains by easily storing, finding and sharing information via e-mail or SharePoint



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Full details

PAPER BASED INFORMATION WAS STARTING TO CAUSE A PROBLEM...

for the Operations and Maintenance section, which manages the maintenance of the buildings, including energy and utility services. While the Trust had adopted Microsoft SharePoint as the basis for sharing electronic documents, they were unable to capture paper-based documents into the system.

"Quarterly gas, water and electricity bills would have provided a mountain of paper alone," explains Business Manager, Jennifer Alcock. "But the hospital's utilities are billed monthly and we were simply running out of space."

What's more, the team handles 300 maintenance jobs on average each week and, for each, tradesmen are issued with a paper job card to record their time, details of the work and the customer's sign off. These were stored for 15 years, for legal reasons, at three different sites, making it nearly impossible to locate one if needed.

The Trust needed to be able to store paper documents within Microsoft SharePoint and to retrieve and access them across the two sites, not only dealing with the immediate storage problem by archiving, but preventing it from recurring in the long term.

BEGAN TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS...

and originally considered using stand-alone scanners but was concerned about their ability to connect to SharePoint. Colman Herron, Information, Utilities and Energy Manager, found the SharePoint answer lay with eCopy ShareScan® software. eCopy allows the user to scan in a paper document, index it for easy retrieval, and using the eCopy Connector for Microsoft SharePoint, automatically store it by pressing a single 'Scan to SharePoint' button. eCopy ShareScan also allows users to scan directly to e-mail and, within eCopy Desktop™ software, to combine paper and electronic files into a single electronic document.

Ultimately seven MFDs were installed across the four offices at the two sites, each with eCopy software. Staff login to eCopy with a user name and password and - based on privileges pre-assigned in SharePoint - gain access to specified sites within SharePoint depending on their department and role. The same login also authenticates the user against Microsoft Exchange, providing the ability to scan and e-mail paper documents from the MFD with the same characteristics of e-mailing from the desktop.

EMPLOYEES CAN ENJOY A MUCH MORE SPACIOUS ENVIRONMENT...

"We set up folders in SharePoint for different areas: waste management, water rates, leases and so on and scanned in the existing papers using keywords and dates as reference," said Jennifer Alcock. "Within two weeks we had emptied two enormous, floor to ceiling filing cabinets, freeing up valuable space."

Now information is being shared instantly via SharePoint or by scanning to e-mail:

"You can travel between sites and access and print your documents wherever you are, and the MFD picks up the hospital e-mail addresses from the network so you can even scan and e-mail a document directly – instead of people having to collect documents or waiting for it in internal mail," says Jennifer Alcock. "We will always need some paper-based documents but we are saving considerably on postage and fax charges."

Productivity has improved too, as there is no longer wasted time looking for information and it has freed up staff who were doing a lot of filing to do other, more productive work.

And Jennifer Alcock is confident they have found the long term solution to the utility bills and job cards piling up: "We now scan paperwork directly into the system and send the originals for shredding. In terms of the job cards we've designed a front page including a specific job number and now the job cards can easily be stored into the correct files."

"There is a sense of 'wow – if it can do this what else can it do?' and I'm looking forward to exploring the possibilities further," added Jennifer Alcock.

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