



customer success story

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Debra Jones
Project Manager
Natural Resources Wales



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repstor 
inspiring ECM adoption



Project Overview

As part of the transition of the 3 legacy bodies into the NRW IT infrastructure, a requirement to provide an organisation wide electronic document management system (EDRMS) was established. SharePoint® 2013 on Office 365 was adopted as the DMS solution for NRW, but this system lacked the ability for users to store emails with metadata in an easy, quick and compliant manner.

Over a four month period, NRW completed a comprehensive review of products available under the G-Cloud programme that could potentially allow this requirement to be met with Office 365. This resulted in the selection of Repstor affinity and its rapid roll out to all users of the NRW Office 365 systems.

Client Background

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is the largest Welsh Government Sponsored Body - employing 1,900 staff across Wales with a budget of £180 million. It was formed in April 2013, largely taking over the functions of the Countryside Council for Wales, Forestry Commission Wales and the Environment Agency in Wales, as well as certain Welsh Government functions.

Learn more at
www.naturalresources.wales

Natural Resources Wales benefits from easy filing, better collaboration and compliance in Microsoft Office 365 with Repstor affinity.

We achieved this by...

Natural Resources Wales has deployed Repstor affinity to enable users across their widely dispersed Microsoft® Office™ 365 deployment to meet regulatory needs for records management and compliance. Users can easily find, utilise and file key information and records including email without the need for large scale change management.

- Users have a familiar environment that required no additional training over and above training on policy
- Users can easily locate and file information that is key to the success of the organisation and important for compliance
- Users have access to the content on and offline enabling them to work at a time convenient to them
- Despite having large hierarchies and large volumes of content, filing and retrieval is fast and efficient

Motivation

As a new organisation one of the first tasks that faced Natural Resources Wales was to unite the various government agencies and functions which now formed part of their organisation. Bringing together 1900 staff from a number of different government agencies and functions across a range of locations and with many different policies, existing EDRM Systems and File Shares posed a challenge for the new organisation. It was important to NRW that its business solutions would meet regulatory and compliance requirements for records keeping and encourage collaboration and joined up working across the new organisation.

The existing systems deployed in the previous separate organisations included a number of different repositories from different vendors including both document and records repositories, and records only repositories, with a number of different UI's, different policies and different ways of working.

One of the key commitments for NRW, and in keeping with Central Government strategies, was to deliver secure, accessible, effective, easy to use, online services to its customers. Where possible, and appropriate, NRW has committed to using cloud services, existing solutions and shared services. Office 365 is at the heart of NRW's strategy and was chosen as it would support the early days of the new organisation by providing cost effective browser based functionality to staff, who at that time were operating on three separate systems. The core functionality was email, intranet and DMS.

Challenge

In selecting Office 365 NRW knew that it wouldn't meet all of their business needs and that additional tools would be required. One requirement was to support the management of email content as part of formal records management.

User adoption of any new system was a critical factor. Staff were facing significant changes and it was important that any new tools could be deployed with minimum impact.

'Repstor affinity is a key part of our Office 365 deployment. Its quick deployment and ease of use has meant that users have adopted the system without the need for any special training enabling us to seamlessly bring users on board, focusing on ensuring that our policies are effectively implemented. The ease of use particularly around filing and retrieval has been an essential part of rolling out this project without the need for a large change management effort on our part around the use of the software.'

Debra Jones, Project Manager, NRW.



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The Solution

NRW had already deployed Office 365 to its users with the records management team working with the business to create the file structure so that staff could save work related documents.

Training was provided on how to use the DMS in Office 365; at this stage staff were asked not to save emails because on its own Office 365 retains very little of the email metadata. This meant not only would it be difficult to search and find emails but that the records management obligations would be compromised. NRW needed improved functionality before it could advise staff to save emails.

NRW produced a set of requirements for an email solution and followed the G-Cloud procurement process. NRW selected to deploy Repstor across the organisation.

Deploying the Repstor affinity product involved a small number of simple steps. The first of these was to engage in a Repstor configuration workshop, where the various configuration options were discussed and a set of default and enforced configuration options were decided for the various user roles and departments/units. This configuration was then packaged using Group Policy for roll out with the NRW technical team to automate the roll out of the client.

Following the automated roll out of the client users can access their content directly from the familiar Microsoft Outlook® interface and full offline working is provided for those users working and travelling outside of their offices. Users are also provided with the ability to easily add or import content from other legacy content sources such as File Shares or existing systems.

The installation was completely standard, users were able to connect to the appropriate content on the Office 365 system and start working immediately.

The familiarity and ease of use provided by Repstor affinity through the Outlook user interface meant that no training was required other than ensuring users understood the NRW policies.

www.repstor.com

Results

The key benefits that NRW have seen since roll out can be categorised into a number of general areas:

✓ User adoption

The addition of Repstor affinity to the NRW Office 365 deployment has ensured that all users can quickly and easily find, and file content through the familiar Outlook client without any need for training on new UI's. The result is that the users find affinity easy to use and have embraced filing and saving of content on a daily basis. There was special praise for affinity from those users requiring assisted technology such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking because the tight integration with Outlook allows users to use Outlook functionality rather than the browser features of the DMS.

✓ Compliance

Users can now more easily comply with NRW records policies.

✓ Productivity

Users now file email content as it is received/generated and individual users have extremely fast access to their content wherever they work, on or offline. Email and other content are consistently and accurately filed, users can find it easily using the search tool in Outlook. Email retains its attributes so that users can still reply/forward and utilise Outlook functions as they would normally do with the other email content in their Outlook environment.

✓ Accuracy of Information

Users now have confidence that all of the latest and relevant information is available to them as early as possible making collaborative working faster, easier and more effective.

✓ Easy Filing

Filing time has been significantly reduced; users find information quickly and have consistent access to their content when travelling allowing more effective working for remote users. In particular the send and file feature has reduced the need to manage sent items separately and therefore encourages good practice.

Why Repstor?

The NRW G-Cloud procurement included comprehensive presentations and demonstrations of the products alongside subsequent evaluation of the software on the Natural Resources Wales Office 365 system.

Repstor affinity was chosen following evaluation against other products in G-Cloud; Repstor affinity provided the best value for money including meeting all of the functional and non-functional requirements. Critical to this was the depth of integration with Outlook for ease of use, adoption and configurability of the product to meet the very specific requirements without any customisation.

Other key areas that were important in the evaluation included:

- High performance access to large amounts of content for all users across the distributed network
- Intuitive access to SharePoint content (and other content) from within Microsoft Outlook
- Loading information quickly and effectively without waiting for uploads/downloads to complete
- Quick and easy filing of email content to the appropriate folder location in SharePoint
- Keeping email that has been filed easily accessible
- Works effectively with large File Plans
- Ability to centrally manage repositories so users have access to the right content
- Handles large volumes of information and folders without slowing down the performance of Outlook
- Works effectively when offline, including filing email and other content with full offline access to key content
- Gives granular control of configuration using Group Policy

Repstor products were seen as being the best performing, most tightly integrated and most feature rich option while being the easiest for users to adopt, meaning that users are more productive and are able to take advantage of the software with zero training requirements.



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