

Southern California Edison Lights Up with Hummingbird

“One of the biggest improvements is that our clients were able to thoroughly search their own department’s data. That might not seem so important, but a lot of times people don’t know the exact name of a document they’re looking for. They can find it with the Hummingbird document management solution.”

— Christian Garcia, Information Management Supervisor, Southern California Edison

Business Profile

Industry

Utility

Organizations

Southern California Edison (SCE)

The Challenge

- > Finding a way to utilize the intellectual assets represented by documents at SCE to their fullest potential
- > Mainframe document management system slow, outdated, and frustrating to use
- > Document search often required human operator assistance
- > Escalating scanning, management costs for engineering drawings

Hummingbird Solution

- > Hummingbird Enterprise™ DM
- > Imaging

Key Benefits

- > The document management system significantly reduces the time it takes to complete the creation, review, and approval cycle
- > Amount of time taken to search for and retrieve a document reduced by as much as 75%
- > Reduced scanning and mainframe administration costs
- > Reduction of documents retained in hard copy by 50% over a three-year period

As one of California’s largest utilities, Southern California Edison (SCE) is well acquainted with the speed of light. But when it came to document management systems, until recently the utility often moved at a leisurely stroll.

Saddled with a legacy mainframe and VAX-based system that provided numerous hurdles to efficiency — including the occasional need to print out electronic documents from one system, only to scan them into another, incompatible system — SCE decided to give its document management operations a boost of power. To speed things up, Southern California Edison picked the Hummingbird suite of document management tools.

Christian Garcia, information management supervisor for Southern California Edison’s business resources department, says the utility was getting along “OK” with its legacy document system until management noticed that users were spending an inordinate amount of time managing data, rather than utilizing the information contained within the numbers.

Selecting the Solution to Fit the Need

“Management noticed that people were spending a lot of time scanning files,” says Garcia, whose group supports numerous internal divisions in the utility, including engineering, procurement, employee records, corporate real estate, market regulations, environmental affairs, and customer service. “We also wanted to cut down on the amount of time we needed to index the files in the mainframe systems,” which Garcia says was an especially cumbersome task for the many drawings produced by the utility’s engineering department.

Southern California Edison put together a list of qualifications for an electronic document management system to ensure that the solution selected met the company’s needs. SCE had a long list of requirements, some of which included the ability to manage a wide variety of document types, compatibility with standard SQL databases, adherence to published industry standards, ability for cross-library searches of multiple document repositories, and an open architecture to allow integration with desktop, database, imaging, and workflow applications.

Other requirements included user-determined version control, audit trails, custom security down to the document level, multiple forms, remote access to libraries, and the ability to search on the text of a document. According to Garcia, the Hummingbird document management solution, with its powerful imaging and search and retrieval capabilities was the hands-down winner.

Hummingbird worked with integrator General Networks Corporation of Glendale California to plan and implement the system as well as build a customized solution for drawing management, specifically designed to meet Southern California Edison’s requirements.

“The Hummingbird open architecture and intuitive design utilities made it possible for Edison to build a wide variety of business specific applications quickly,” said David Horwatt, VP for Professional Services at General Networks Corporation. “During the initial phase of the project,

we deployed more than 30 libraries throughout the company. Once the system was fully operational, we were able to transfer most development and support tasks to SCE's own IT staff."

The Hummingbird solution is now used within departments such as Corporate Real Estate, Procurement and Material Management, Nuclear Generation, Legal, and Transmission, and Distribution. Along with desktop and Web clients of Hummingbird Enterprise™ DM, the imaging capability of Hummingbird is used for desktop scanning and image viewing. Kofax Ascent Capture is integrated into the system for production scanning.

Flipping the Switch

With a document management package that included the Hummingbird Imaging component, Southern California Edison noticed immediate improvement in data retrieval, thanks in no small part to the document management system's feature-rich searching capabilities that can parse data by relevancy, and date, simply by using natural-language words and phrases.

With General Networks Corporation's support, Southern California Edison users were quickly and easily able to search their various repositories of over 600,000 engineering drawings and documents as well as information about document review and approval status. With the solution from Hummingbird, Garcia points out that any system user can tap into a document's inherent knowledge.

"One of the biggest improvements is that our clients were able to thoroughly search their own department's data," Garcia says. "That might not seem so important, but a lot of times people don't know the exact name of a document they're looking for. But they can find it with the Hummingbird document management solution."

Garcia says that the document management software's ability to find a wide range of documents that are relevant to the search topic lets users tap into the knowledge embedded in a document by its creator.

"Previously, a lot of information (about a document) might have been in the person's head who created it," Garcia says. Without a standard method for indexing or filing, document entry could become a very subjective process with different people entering different types of information about different documents.

"In the past, our users often had to call the research department to help them search for a particular piece of data," Garcia says. "It was time-consuming, and also subjective. Your search might only be as good as I was at finding something." So it became necessary, Garcia points out, to find a program with a full-text search option in order to cut through all the inconsistent types of data entry.

Southern California Edison Reduces Costs

Garcia reports that since the Hummingbird document management software supports all types of files and images, there was no longer a need for Southern California Edison to print out documents from one system and scan them into another system. In fact, after the Hummingbird software was up and running, Southern California Edison was able to unplug its mainframes — producing savings both on reduced scanning costs and mainframe administration, according to Garcia.

On the document-creation front, Garcia says that the document management system's ability to support customization has allowed the engineering team to design a series of templates that eliminates the time wasted creating the same data over and over again.

"We have more than 400 engineers, and all of them create a multitude of documents," Garcia says. "There's a lot of 'soft costs' saved by automating the process." A report prepared by SCE cites such savings as up to 75% reduction in the search times for documents, a 50% reduction in documents retained in hard copy, and a significant reduction in the number of copies of a document floating around.

Previously, the engineers had to jump through a bunch of administrative hoops just to store a document. Garcia says, "Now, the engineering drawings are integrated into the document management system. It's much more efficient."

Faster All-Round

In the procurement department, Garcia says that the Hummingbird document management solution has reduced administrative delays from a period of days to one of just a few moments.

"It's absolutely important for the procurement department to have the data they need on their desktops as quickly as possible," Garcia says. "So now instead of waiting for days for purchase orders to come in — like we used to under the old system — they have the data they need in seconds. There's lots of time saved."

Administratively, Garcia likes the fact that the document management system allows him to create customized libraries for each department, an obvious need for an operation as widespread and varied as Southern California Edison. And with approximately 1,000 users and close to one million documents in the system, Southern California Edison clients no longer have to wait around, trying to find data. Thanks to Hummingbird, the utility now has the power to move quickly when it comes to document management.



Corporate Headquarters

1 Sparks Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M2H 2W1 Canada

Toll Free Canada/USA: 1 877 FLY HUMM (359 4866)

Tel: +1 416 496 2200

Fax: +1 416 496 2207

E-mail: getinfo@hummingbird.com

For more information, visit www.hummingbird.com/us/sce

North American Sales Offices

Boston • Chicago • Dallas • Los Angeles • Mountain View

New York • Ottawa • Toronto • Washington DC

International Sales Offices

Amsterdam • Brussels • Frankfurt • Geneva • London

Milan • Munich • Paris • Rome • Seoul • Singapore

Stockholm • Sydney • Tokyo • Wokingham • Zurich