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NHS trust moves toward paperless office thanks to Canon & eCopy

When archives became a problem for Gloucestershire NHS Trust's busy Estates Department, Business Manager Jennifer Alcock decided it was time to take the situation in hand. With Canon's help she and Information Utilities and Energy Manager, Colman Herron, implemented a solution which enabled them to capture documents electronically into Microsoft SharePoint, uniting paper and electronic filing systems to become far more efficient and free up valuable space.

We now scan paperwork directly
into SharePoint and send the
originals for shredding - There is
a sense of "wow - if it can do
this what else can it do?"

Jeremy Burgess Jeremy Burgess is our Solutions consultant for the Gloucester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust...

"Like many large organisations this NHS Trust was faced with the challenge of managing a combination of electronic and paper-based documents on an enormous scale."

"With a combination of Canon MFD's and eCopy software it has been possible for them to unite their storage within a single system, in this case Microsoft SharePoint, saving space, time and ultimately, considerable expenditure."

If you are interested or have questions concerning Canon's document management solutions - please give us a call at the number below:

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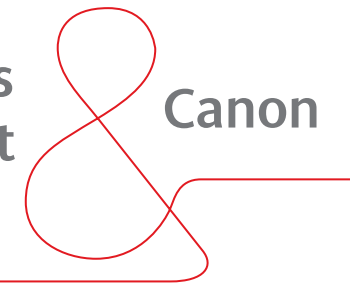


Jennifer Alcock, Business Manager
Property and Medical Engineering Department
Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Uniting electronic and paper-based systems in SharePoint

Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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.

The Trust had adopted Microsoft SharePoint as the basis for sharing electronic documents but had not yet developed a method for incorporating paper-based documents into the same system.

Tackling a paper mountain

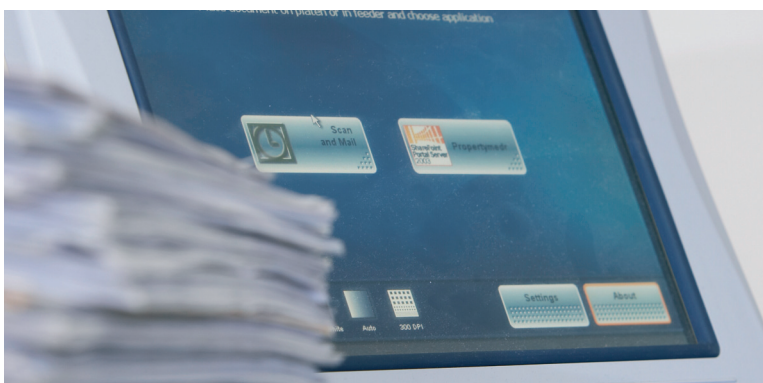
The Property and Medical Engineering section, which manages the maintenance of the buildings including energy and utility services, was becoming overwhelmed with paper-based information.

"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 - we were simply running out of space."

What's more, the team handles 300 maintenance jobs on average each week. For each job, tradesmen are issued 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," Jennifer continues. "if we had needed to find one - it would have taken quite some time to locate."

They 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.



The simple solution

At this stage Colman Herron, Information Utilities and Energy Manager began to investigate possible solutions.

"I originally considered using stand-alone scanners but I was concerned about their ability to connect to SharePoint," Colman explains.

Meanwhile The Trust's Procurement Department had come across a solution. Canon had been providing them with copying devices for many years under an OGC agreement and were currently working with them to develop a print strategy, replacing many stand-alone printers with multifunctional devices (MFDs) that print, copy, fax and, crucially for Colman and Jennifer, scan.

"Because we were already a customer I knew that Canon could be relied upon in terms of quality and service, so we started to explore the connectivity issue," Colman continues.

The answer lay in eCopy ShareScan software, an application that either resides in a ScanStation™ - a keyboard and monitor - connected to the MFD, or can be embedded into the MFD itself and operated through its existing touch screen.

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 within a document management system by pressing a single 'Scan to SharePoint' button. It also allows you to scan directly to email and, within eCopy Desktop software, to combine paper and electronic files into a single document.

Ultimately seven MFDs were installed across the four offices at the two sites, each with eCopy software. With the configuration prepared beforehand the installation was unobtrusive.

Canon trained several local users but expensive ongoing training was unnecessary, as Colman points out, due to the intuitive design of the software.

"Basically, the system is so simple that if you can use a photocopier you can use eCopy to scan into SharePoint."

Space, productivity and cost savings

The Canon MFD and eCopy solution means at last it is possible to combine paper with electronic documents in one place. What's more this has saved expenditure on stand-alone scanners and the service, maintenance and consumables costs associated with desktop printers.

Jennifer's team is now enjoying a far 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. Within two weeks we had emptied two enormous, floor to ceiling filing cabinets, freeing up space."

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

Productivity has improved too: "We are no longer wasting time looking for information and it has freed up those who were doing a lot of filing to do other, more interesting work."

And Jennifer 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 and called up based on the job number.

"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."

The Way Ahead

"The Canon and eCopy solution means that, for the first time paper-based documentation and electronic files can be stored within one cohesive system," explains Canon Solutions Account Manager, Jeremy Burgess. "Its application within the Estates Department has been very exciting as a pilot scheme and as The Trust continues to develop its print strategy we hope many other departments will choose to enjoy the extensive benefits Jennifer's team is already experiencing. Now, for the first time, the Trust can really unlock the potential they have in Microsoft SharePoint."



- Space savings
- Improved productivity
- Single document storage system
- Reduced postage and fax costs
- Easy to use
- Information shared instantly across sites

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