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Birkenfeld rural district: Everything under control

Improved service for citizens



“By introducing ELOprofessional, we can also ensure that the district’s small paper archive need no longer be extended in the future.”

Martin Hehner,
IT Project Manager for ELO for the
Birkenfeld rural district

The Birkenfeld rural district is modernising its administrative processes with ELOprofessional. The electronic ELO archive enables significantly shorter circulation times for internal documents and much improved access to information as regards queries from citizens. Costs are also being saved on paper and archive space.

The Birkenfeld rural district is in western Rhineland-Palatinate on the border with Saarland. It covers four municipalities and the town of Idar-Oberstein with a total of around 90,000 inhabitants. The rural district’s administration, with around 170 employees, is distributed across several locations in the administrative centre of Birkenfeld and the town of Idar-Oberstein. As a communal regional authority, the district provides services for its citizens in the social, economic, health and ecological field.



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Cost-effective, efficient and secure archiving

Overview

Country: Germany
Industry: Municipal administration

The company

The Birkenfeld rural district is in western Rhineland-Palatinate on the border with Saarland. It covers four municipalities and the town of Idar-Oberstein with a total of around 90,000 inhabitants. The district's administration, with around 170 employees, is distributed across several locations in the administrative centre of Birkenfeld and the town of Idar-Oberstein.

Challenge

Replacing the paper archive with an electronic archive. Information should be available more quickly. Finding documents regardless of location.

Solution

- Implementation of **ELOprofessional**
- Transfer of documents to the electronic archive
- Use of the **ELO** Internet gateway for cross-departmental access to documents

Benefits

- Shorter circulation times for internal documents and much improved access to information as regards queries from citizens.
- Cost savings in terms of paper and archive rooms

The benefits of electronic archive systems

Archiving continually growing document repositories cost-effectively, efficiently and securely is one of the main challenges for all public authorities over the next few years. Long retention periods and thus continually growing stocks of files combined with limited space available for paper archives (due to the expense) are the initial factors for introducing electronic archiving or extensive electronic document management. Here the DOMEA-compliant DMS/archiving system **ELOprofessional** offers an ideal system platform adapted to the authority's requirements.

The positive "side-effects" of converting classic paper filing into an electronic system are revealed very quickly after its introduction (in addition to the cost savings in terms of paper and storage space) and include significantly shorter circulation times for internal documents and much improved access to information as regards queries from citizens.



District media archive pilot project

After a strategic decision to introduce the ELO DMS/ archiving system, a start was made in the media and image archive in July 2001. Within a few months, the entire recording of press releases and publications as well as the district's image archive had been converted from a hanging storage system to electronic archiving. The new easy-to-use system, the logical structure of which was set up in a similar way to the previous paper filing, together with the combined search facilities using index data and a fulltext database, very quickly demonstrated the huge potential for use in other administrative areas.

Reduction in archive space needed

Afterwards, by extending the system to administrative areas with rapidly growing stocks of files, it was possible to avoid the otherwise inevitable expansion of the existing paper archive. In the driver and vehicle licensing authority area, for example, all application documents are recorded via a scanner and automatically archived using an OCR analysis. In the construction department, after introducing electronic archiving, several shelving units with hundreds of paper folders which previously documented the construction statistics for all new buildings subject to authorisation since the end of the 1960s could be cleared away.

Linking to C.I.P. Kommunal in the Finance Department

Karl Heinz Müller (Head of the Finance Department) is extremely satisfied with the results: "By using *ELOprofessional* we were largely able to phase out traditional archiving in the district's road construction department." Furthermore, in his department, upon conversion to the double-entry budget management system (DOPPIK), all documentation is being carried out with the ELO system. To this end, ELO was linked to the financial solution used in house, C.I.P. Kommunal. The request documents are now provided with a barcode and scanned into ELO at a central location. The complete keywording and archiving including all accompanying posting documents are fully automated. ELO uses the barcode to extract all the associated metadata from the database of the financial software. The archive structure in ELO is defined by the administrative structure breakdown and is filled in automatically. In parallel to this structure, the DMS generates a second view along the same lines as the current budget plan using a „dynamic index“.



The DMS will be adapted to future changes to the structure of the budget plans automatically. Both the scope of the archived metadata and the search modes of the metadata items (starts with, contains, phonetic search etc.) are adapted to the requirements when the system is set up. This does not require a change of method for the administrator; he can continue to work in his usual user interface. The documents are filed in a legally compliant manner in **ELO**; any changes or deletions are documented by the system. And a sophisticated rights system protects the documents against unauthorised access.

Optimisation of internal workflows

By incorporating office management, the District Authority Office and the meeting service, an integrated communications platform for the administration authority's management has now been set up. With the help of MS Office integration, including direct Outlook e-mail and task integration, the employees of the district council are processing all document-related workflows via the **ELO** system.

*“By using **ELO**professional we were largely able to phase out traditional archiving in the district's road construction department.”*

Karl Heinz Müller, Head of the Finance Department
for the Birkenfeld rural district



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Reducing archive space

Pilot project: Electronic approval of signing processes

For the future, the Birkenfeld district administration is planning an approval procedure that is free from manual interfaces and is entirely controlled and processed electronically. For this purpose, the signing process was digitised at the beginning of 2009. The requests are now successively forwarded by the administrator or the relevant authorised signatory to the cash office, through to asset accounting in the Finance Department.

It is also planned for the relevant administrator to be able to add irreversible electronic stamp objects to the documents, which will make it possible for individual comments to be entered along with the user data (user name, date and time). It is of course also possible to give the individual workflow steps a qualified electronic signature. This would considerably speed up the process flows and would also make it possible for processing statuses to be retrieved transparently and securely.



Reference

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Summary and outlook

Based on the high level of user acceptance, expansion of the **ELOprofessional** archive system will be gradually extended to other areas of administration. Starting with the pilot phase, which was still based on **ELOoffice** technology, the archive platforms has been very quickly transferred over to **ELOprofessional** (currently with around 50 active archive workstations).

Using the **ELO** Internet gateway module has since enabled all departments (via a link on the administrative authority's intranet site) to quickly access relevant documents in the archive. Martin Hehner, IT Project Manager for **ELO** is certain: "[...] that by introducing **ELOprofessional**, the district's small paper archive need no longer be extended in the future." The integration of the **ELO** system in the Internet portal of the local administrative authority is planned for future use (beyond the internal administrative demands). In the medium-term, direct access by citizens (keyword: "virtual administration") could also be implemented.