

Challenges

- The council needed to automate processing of invoices to improve workflow measures, approval processes, timely payment and record keeping.
- Requirement to improve manual form submission and approval processes that generate so much paperwork.

Solution

- EzeScan drives dedicated production scanners to batch scan incoming hard copy invoices and also polls dedicated email accounts and imports attached invoices for processing.
- EzeScan captures invoice metadata automatically using the DISCOVERY module, validates and registers invoice data.
- Data captured is automatically uploaded as a record into Content Manager and prepared for importing into TechnologyOne.

Results

 Use of data based logic built into the scanning process enables linking together of common data out of Content Manager and the finance system. Sydney's Marrickville Council implements a new workflow automation platform using EzeScan Data Capture Software and TechnologyOne Workflows. Here's how it works...

With the help of EzeScan, Marrickville Council has implemented a solution for automated processing of invoices that arrive either on paper or via email as PDF documents. EzeScan Workstation software drives the dedicated production Canon desktop scanners to batch scan incoming hard copy invoices. EzeScan also polls a dedicated email account and imports attached invoices for processing.

EzeScan captures invoice metadata automatically using the EzeScan smart template DISCOVERY module, and provides the operator a QA interface to validate and register the invoice details. Once the data is captured, EzeScan automatically uploads the invoice as a record into Content Manager (formally known as TRIM) and prepares the invoice data for importing into TechnologyOne.

EzeScan creates the document file transaction in TechnologyOne which contains the invoice data combined with a link back to the document record in Content Manager. Marrickville use TechnologyOne workflows to route the document around the organisation for approval.



A major driver behind implementing the new solution is to remove the need for paper to flow around council offices. Using EzeScan and TechnologyOne, the council records the invoices as soon as they arrive. Prior to this solution, invoices would stay on staff desks until approved and made their way to finance for payment. Now the council is able to track their progress from the day it arrives until payment.

Peter Johnston, Business Analyst at Marrickville Council

While the invoice automation has delivered efficiencies, it required a review of existing business processes.

Johnston stated that "Re-engineering people's processes to embrace Council's purchasing policies has been the biggest challenge more so than the technology aspect of it. In the first few weeks of implementation the number of invoices that arrive by email has already grown to 25% of all received."

The flexibility of the software has helped the council increase efficiency by reducing the need for manual data entry and improved accuracy across workflows.

Invoice registration was just the start, the council are using EzeScan to help automate procedures.

Manager of Information System, Carlos Loureiro explained "We've actually built logic in the finance system that says this supplier must have a purchase order, and when the invoice comes in and they validate the supplier it's from, the system will go behind the scenes, look up some key pieces of information and then say, I know this supplier must have a purchase order so I'm going to force it down a path in the finance system that means it must have a purchase order."

"There's a lot of decision based logic that we built into the scanning process that once the operator goes through validating the invoice, it then retrieves some important pieces of information out of the finance system to determine how to register that document in the finance system. It also uses that to put it into Content Manager."

"So we're actually using the EzeScan product to link together common data out of Content Manager and the finance system and other areas such as the parking permits and saving the operator entering things into a second system manually."

The council is also looking to automate other processes using EzeScan. "Now we have implemented invoice processing, the goal of council is to embark upon more environmentally sensitive processes and ideally remove more of the paper out of the equation. Less paper also means less storage" said Loureiro.



It's a fantastic solution in the flexibility it offers us. Now that we know the detail on the configuration, we can utilise the tools that we already purchased to implement automation processes across any other types of forms.

Carlos Loureiro, Manager of Information Systems

"We did go to the market and look at other systems, but what we found is that with this solution, for lower upfront cost and a small contribution to training, we are able to utilise the tool set to go forth and multiply across all different processes. Whereas with other vendor solutions you had to call their consultants in to apply it to other processes."

Marrickville council is now in the process of putting barcodes on various hard copy forms so that EzeScan can interpret the barcode and initiate an approval workflow and automatically register it in Content Manager.

"We see this as just a door opener for lots of other legislative and procedural matters that need to be dealt with using forms. For instance, currently there is double handling of data when undertaking processes such as the registration of parking permits."

"At the moment, you've still got to physically furnish that form. There are office procedures where staff validate your information on your form and then they record that into the parking permit registration and issuing system. Later, that form is recorded in Content Manager by records staff against the property address, your name and the application details."

"The plan is that we are going to take away the manual entry of that data into Content Manager by linking EzeScan through the right procedures and processes to the behind the scene parking permit issuing system" said Johnston.



EzeScan is the first visible entry across an internal procedure of moving away from people having to print out a form, fill it out and send it into council. EzeScan is helping us by taking the manual data entry out of document processing.

Peter Johnston, Business Analyst at Marrickville Council

"Typically, to register that document in Content Manager, the Content Manager administrator has to key your details into Content Manager or search for you in Content Manager. They also have to search for the property associated in Content Manager and then link you against that. If you're a new person they actually have to manually key it in."

"However, somebody in the customer services section that issued the permit has already done the same thing in the permit application. We are building an EzeScan process so that once the scans been done, the operator can key in the parking permit number, it will validate that number against the parking permit system, bring back the address, the operators says, "yep, I've got the right one".

"And then behind the scenes we'll get all the pre-entered information out of the parking permit system and automatically register that document into Content Manager against you and the address without the operator having to rekey it."

The Council is embarking upon a number of new initiatives that will enable them to provide more of an on-line presence where their customers can interact directly via the web.

About EzeScan

EzeScan provides fast, cost effective business process automation solutions including simplified document back scanning, accounts payable, data robotic process automation, forms data extraction, mailroom/correspondence automation and highly integrated EDRMS capture. With thousands of installations in Australasia, North America and the UK, EzeScan is your ideal digital transformation provider.

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