

Seamless sharing of information drives flexibility

Wherever staff are based, ensure that they can view and edit information in easy collaboration

What if you could give your people access to information in a flexible way that reduced time wasted searching through data and eliminated paper-based, manually intensive and static processes? Modern software can maximise your employees' effectiveness wherever they are, as well as generally reducing costs, eliminating unnecessary duplication of effort and raising both productivity and customer service levels.

By having ready access to the information they need to do their day-to-day jobs, regardless of whether they're in the office or not, your people can collaborate and share knowledge more efficiently.

Indeed, every organisation is looking to innovate, drive productivity gains, consolidate spending on areas like IT and achieve a sustainable competitive advantage through workforce efficiency and agility. But only those supported by a comprehensive and flexible technology platform that extends beyond traditional fileshare and email-based collaboration systems, offering self-service collaborative workspaces, portals and social computing tools that reflect the way we work today, will be able to harness these benefits fully.

This is why the latest Microsoft productivity, collaboration and mobility solutions have been designed with simplified management and user-friendliness as their key deliverables. The likes of Office, SharePoint, Exchange, Live Meeting and Windows Mobile work seamlessly together to help access and share accurate and up-to-date information faster and more effectively.

For example, using Office Groove 2007 or SharePoint Online allows multiple people to view and edit the same document, as well as co-ordinate task lists and share research, wherever its participants are based.

Simon Bullement of accountancy firm haysmacintyre (*see opposite*) explains how a recent IT project to electronically organise its information and day-to-day tasks has given both the business and IT peace of mind, while also supporting its complex compliance requirements. "The overall impact on productivity and service levels was key," he says, "but the disaster recovery and business continuity benefits mean we can securely store documents for the regulated amount of time. And, if there's a fire, we don't have to trundle down the road with lots of discs, as we can also securely access backed-up files wherever we are."



Modern communication made easy: Simon Bullement, CIO, and Bernadette Pritchard, partner, of haysmacintyre

CASE STUDY HAYSMACINTYRE FILES BIG TIME-SAVINGS WITH DOCUMENTS SYSTEM

Successful businesses provide a more fertile environment for people to share information and get organised, which can foster improved service levels, a culture of innovation, increased business agility and speed to market.

One such firm that has already discovered these benefits for itself is haysmacintyre, a leading London-based accountancy firm that has used new technology systems to eliminate paper trails, collaborate more effectively and provide a more responsive client service, regardless of where its people are based.

Much of haysmacintyre's essential communication with clients is, nowadays, carried out electronically, which speeds response times and improves data-retention processes. But, without a system to organise the management and retrieval of client files, haysmacintyre staff found it hard to track and share such electronic documents, spreadsheets, reports and publications. Says haysmacintyre partner Bernadette Pritchard: "The system we developed means I don't have to trawl through files or paper copies to find certain working documents. And it cuts down on staff running around to different floors to locate them. We're saving time, doing it all from our desk."

The firm created its eDocs system on top of Microsoft Office Professional 2007 and SharePoint Server 2007. Explains Simon Bullement, haysmacintyre chief information officer: "We wanted to automate the document storage-and-retrieval procedure to help make staff more efficient."

Adds Pritchard: "I can respond in real-time to clients who may phone me up with a query. I am more efficient with my time, so now instead of telling them to 'just bear with me', I can pull up the relevant document on the screen in front of me to answer their query there and then."

Catherine Darcy works as a secretary to Pritchard and one other partner, managing their day-to-day tasks. "With eDocs, I know everything has been filed correctly," she says, "so I can find documents easily and know that it is the most up-to-date version available." The integration with Outlook calendars and other Office systems is also a useful time-saving organisation tool, she adds. "There's no hunting through, looking for client codes, names or addresses - it's all in there."

"When I have to type up a new document, the templates are all there for me to use. eDocs saves everything centrally, so individuals must have authorisation to delete anything, which also prevents different people duplicating the same document. By using the calendar, I always know where Bernadette is," she adds.