



Success story

European Court of Human Rights

Industry

- Legal/Government

Solutions

- OpenText™ Document Management, eDOCS Edition
- OpenText™ eDOCS SharePoint Integration
- OpenText™ eDOCS Search Connector for Microsoft® FAST

Results



Increased productivity by 60%



Improved capacity and scalability to handle growing case and document volumes



Enhanced enterprise-wide court documentation search



Eliminated costly, time-consuming paper-based records and processes



European Court of Human Rights manages growing case load with OpenText

Enterprise-wide OpenText™ eDOCS deployment drives court's digital document management strategy

"Overall, we've significantly improved productivity at the court since the introduction of CMIS with OpenText eDOCS at the core."

John Hunter
Head of IT Division
European Court of Human Rights

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), based in Strasbourg, France, employs around 800 staff and handles more than 64,000 case applications each year. The court is responsible for making case law and other documentation publically available and receives more than 4.6 million visitors to their website each year. A longtime OpenText eDOCS user, ECHR upgraded to the latest release to support their continued innovation and growing workload, with at least 80 different document types, over 3,000 document templates and multiple languages to contend with.

“Overall, we’ve significantly improved productivity at the court since the introduction of CMIS with OpenText eDOCS at the core. For example, last year alone, through our document template solution, we produced more than 500,000 letters. Compared with the old manual system, this enhanced the process by 60 percent. As a result, we’re now a much more streamlined organization,” commented John Hunter, head of IT Division, ECHR.

Document management is central to ECHR’s information strategy. By capturing all types of inbound and outbound documents, case notes, emails and more, the court has a complete view of any case, application or other interaction. The solution not only manages documents related to the court’s core activity, but also personnel, finance and other administration documentation.

Email is one of the most commonly used communication formats, and consequently volumes have increased considerably. ECHR uses OpenText email archiving to archive, index and retrieve email in the same way as any other content type. This alleviates burden on the email system, ensures long term storage and provides the same powerful search capabilities as regular documents.

All documents are categorized and, when required, are fed into the case management system. Public documents, such as case histories for case law, are made available through a public knowledge base. Documentation is also created in the PDF/A format for long term digital preservation.

Document approval plays an important role at ECHR. All approvals are now handled via a centralized workflow system based on Microsoft® SharePoint®. All users can instantly check on the status of any tasks, and leverage eDOCS to call up any related documentation.

“OpenText eDOCS has given us truly enterprise-wide search capability in conjunction with Microsoft SharePoint and FAST. Users report that they can find what they need and quickly, further enhancing the productivity gains the solution is providing,” added Hunter.

The ECHR system, HUDOC, leverages the intuitive interface of eDOCS to allow users to easily find the case law they are looking for. HUDOC also offers users many new features, including the ability to leverage search refiners to easily locate the judgments they are looking for or focus their search on cases selected for the Court’s Official Reports. New content has also been added, such as legal summaries of more significant cases. Documents can be downloaded in both Word and PDF format and users can create their own RSS feeds.

The search capability extends beyond the court staff. With more than 4.6 million visitors to the public website, downloading around 196 million documents last year, the ability to find the right document quickly is central to providing a good user experience.

“This new version will help legal professionals throughout the Council of Europe States search the court’s case law more rapidly and more efficiently.”

Sir Nicolas Bratza

President

European Court of Human Rights



The President of the court, Sir Nicolas Bratza stated, ***“The court attaches great importance to the effective dissemination of its case law and we believe that this new version of HUDOC will help legal professionals throughout the Council of Europe States to search the court’s case law more rapidly and more efficiently. This makes a major contribution to better domestic implementation of the Convention.”***

With all cases and associated documentation now managed electronically, management reporting has become practical, speedy and reliable. Statistics are now simpler to produce and trends can be spotted and action taken accordingly. ECHR staff can now be confident that when they access a case, they have access to all related documentation.

The court has also introduced electronic signatures into their workflow processes, significantly reducing cost and time needed to print, sign and scan documents requiring signature. A full audit trail is retained, aiding internal compliance.

ECHR undertakes extensive communication with various government departments and agencies throughout Europe and beyond. They can now securely transmit or make available for download a complete case or a single document. With more than 25 governments already using this approach, ECHR is moving toward an entirely digital document management strategy, eliminating the wasteful and costly production of paper copies of documents.

The court’s IT system constantly evolves with their growth in users, the implementation of new working methods and the acquisition of new software.

“Information technology is crucial to the survival of the court. Dealing with the ever-increasing volumes of documents and cases is central to our IT policy. This latest upgrade paves the way for future growth and cements our long standing and successful relationship with OpenText,” added Hunter.



About OpenText

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