



CUSTOMER PROFILE

INDUSTRY Manufacturing; aerospace

EMPLOYEES 210

LOCATIONS South Windsor, Conn.

COMPANY Private; established in 1965

WEB SITE www.electro-methods.com

SOLUTION SNAPSHOT

CHALLENGE Filing cabinets full of documents took up needed office space; retrieving documents could take up to one hour; multiple copies lacked version control and were often misplaced

SOLUTION Captaris® Alchemy® with DataGrabber Module

INTEGRATION KIP and Ricoh scanners

RESULTS Achieved Return on Investment (ROI) within six months; replaced 33 file cabinets and reclaimed floor space; reduced document retrieval times from one hour to seconds

Airplane Parts Manufacturer Manages Critical Documents with Captaris Alchemy

Electro-Methods Replaces 33 Filing Cabinets with a Digital Archive and Complies with FAA

Electro-Methods, Inc. manufactures close tolerance flight safety components. It serves major aircraft engine manufacturers as well as the United States and foreign governments.

The Challenge

Altitude: more than 1,700 feet—not for planes, but the height of stacks of documents related to aircraft. To meet FAA guidelines, Electro-Methods must retain some records for 25 years and others for as long as an airplane part is in service. The company continually filled filing cabinets with quality and inspection records, blueprints, certifications and more. In fact, if it stacked its 33 four-drawer cabinets one on top of the other, the files would have stretched more than 1,700 feet into the sky. Instead, they were taking up too much space on the ground.

“We were running out of room,” said Michael Salwa, data processing manager for Electro-Methods. Though the company maintains four buildings totaling more than 109,000 square feet, it needed to repurpose storage space for new machines and manufacturing use. “We didn’t have a lot of space to put more filing cabinets, but we need to keep the files.”

Employees from various departments rely on records to fulfill job responsibilities. Engineers often view blueprints; accountants work on invoices and payroll; and, everyone from the sales department to the shop floor references job folders and manuals. Locating and retrieving a file in the administration building or the warehouse where previous years’ files were stored could take up to an hour, pulling employees away from other tasks. If the controller or president wanted to check payroll records, they had to go to the HR department. Engineers sent all file requests to a secretary who pulled job folders and blueprints from file cabinets. “She probably spent half of her day just pulling documents,” Salwa said. “Because it took so much effort to get a new set of blueprints, engineers would sometimes just keep the outdated set they had.” Version control was a challenge across the company. When new technical manuals arrived, the quality department made multiple copies to distribute and update the resource for other groups. Documents could pile up on desks and not get filed back to the cabinets. “We had high-priced people like engineers walking from desk to desk looking for job folders,” Salwa said. “Quite often we had to request certification documents from the vendors, because we couldn’t find the paperwork here.”

“Alchemy is very reasonably priced for what it does.”

The Solution

Electro-Methods searched for a digital storage solution. “One vendor spent a few days with us, but then said our application was too complex for its product,” Salwa said. Another potential solution proved too cumbersome. Then, Salwa came in contact with CD Dimensions, a Captaris solutions provider in Connecticut, who recommended Alchemy for document management. “We gave them a job folder and they scanned it to CD. Alchemy was easy to use and completed searches faster than other products,” Salwa said. Electro-Methods also visited the CD Dimensions office where the provider uses Alchemy to manage its own accounts payable documents, an operation Salwa described as “very smooth.”

Soon, Electro-Methods was loading cabinets full of documents into its own Alchemy digital archive using a KIP wide format scanner/printer and Ricoh scanners. It started with stored job folders. Scanning was so fast and intuitive, the team looked for other files to be added, including blueprints, certifications, inspection records, payroll, other accounting documents and more. Thus far, Electro-Methods has scanned more than a million pages into Alchemy.

Around 60 people in several departments use Alchemy on a daily basis to search and retrieve documents right at their computers. Electro-Methods also uses Alchemy DataGrabber to automatically gather and import data from TIF images of aperture cards which are a combination of IBM punch cards and microfilm. The company had accumulated more than 200,000 aperture cards containing blueprints and specifications from the US government. “We use DataGrabber whenever we have a large number of drawings to import into Alchemy,” said Dee Ouellette, programmer with Electro-Methods. “DataGrabber automatically fills in the profile card for each document (instead of people doing it); that saves a lot of time.” New blueprints are easy to add to Alchemy using simple drag-and-drop features since they are emailed to the company as attachments or may be downloaded from a secure government Web site.

The Results

Salwa estimated Electro-Methods achieved ROI in Alchemy within six months. “Alchemy is very reasonably priced for what it does,” he noted. Old filing cabinets were removed from the administrative and inspection areas and replaced with office or manufacturing equipment. Instead of waiting up to an hour for paper copies or hunting for missing files, engineers and other employees enjoy immediate access to the latest versions from their desktop computers. “There are no more lost papers or multiple copies. Managers love it,” Salwa said.

Direct access saves time for everyone. For instance, Alchemy frees up almost four hours every day for the engineering secretary since she

no longer has to distribute blueprint hard copies. “We’re doing higher volumes of business with the same amount of people,” Salwa said. Electro-Methods maintains more than 200 archive databases within Alchemy. Now, employees in accounts payable or other areas can search and find current documents while they are talking with customers on the phone. Also, when customers tour the Electro-Methods facility Alchemy becomes “another feather in our cap to show we have an online imaging system instead of volumes of paper,” Salwa said.

Alchemy also supports disaster recovery efforts. Previously, Electro-Methods did not have a convenient backup for paper files. Now, files are stored on a hard drive on-site and backed up on tape off-site. Salwa explained, “Even if our server crashed, we could still get our records.” Noticing the dependability and scalability of Alchemy, he has also investigated other Captaris technologies, including RightFax® and Captaris Workflow™. “It’s a big advantage to have all of them available from one vendor,” Salwa said. “Then, you wouldn’t have the nightmare of piecing together software from different vendors with every new version.”

For More Information

Captaris, Inc. is a leading provider of software products that automate business processes, manage documents electronically and provide efficient information delivery. Our product suite of Captaris RightFax, Captaris Workflow and Captaris Alchemy is distributed through a global network of leading technology partners. We have customers in financial services, healthcare, government and many other industries, and our products are installed in all of the Fortune 100 and many Global 2000 companies. Headquartered in Bellevue, Washington, Captaris was founded in 1982 and is publicly traded on the NASDAQ National Market under the symbol CAPA. For more information, visit www.Captaris.com.

CD Dimensions, Inc., founded in 1995 and headquartered in Old Saybrook, Conn., is a technical services and direct marketing organization. CD Dimensions carries its own line of CD and DVD duplicators and is an authorized reseller for the leading manufacturers in the CD and DVD duplication equipment and media arena. The Digital Asset Storage division, www.digitalassetstorage.com, focuses on the solutions and development of document management systems for all types of businesses, with an emphasis on document imaging, and mass storage devices. For more information, visit www.cddimensions.com.

©2007 All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted, transcribed, stored in a retrieval system, or translated into any language in any form by any means without the written permission of Captaris. The following are registered trademarks and trademarks of Captaris: Captaris, Alchemy, RightFax and Captaris Workflow. All other brand names and trademarks are the property of their respective owners.