

Document Manager to protect law enforcement investigation files



Organization: Walton County Sheriff's Office

Country: USA

Industry: Law Enforcement

Profile: Public Service Organization servicing a population of 80,000 across 330 sq. miles. Manned by 110 officers and 30 support staff, Walton County provides key community services.

Key Drivers: Minimize manual processes, store multiple documents types, eliminate inefficient paper system and create additional office space by eliminating shelving system.

With an area of 330 sq. miles and a population of 80,000, Walton County Sheriff's Office is positioned between two of the state of Georgia's largest cities, Atlanta and Athens. The Sheriff's Office is divided into four divisions: Operations, Investigations, Administration and Corrections. Altogether, there are 110 officers and 30 support staff based at a single office.

Immediate access to documents

Prior to Document Manager, Walton County spent \$40,000 on a mechanical filing system of shelves mounted on rails to maximize space. To retrieve a case file, the row location had to be known and then a walkway created.

Adding extensive, significant functionality to Walton County's previous text-only investigative case file system, Document Manager was able to consolidate digital and paper documents into a single file. All material was indexed for full-text searching. Files were available for immediate, secure access. Critical information was now available to authorized personnel and other agencies

"Text was no problem but the system's limited capability meant that we'd have separate manual files for photographs and other images, including handwritten documents and a variety of other forms", says Major Travis Brown of the Walton County Sheriff's Office.

Choosing Document Manager

Before implementing Document Manager, when the manual files were being accessed by an individual, they were unavailable to others, including those possibly working on the same case. There was also the risk of the file material getting lost, or being placed in the right file but not easily accessible to anyone else – and there was always the risk of destruction in the event of a fire.

Since Document Manager's installation, there has been a dramatic improvement to the existing system. End-users are able to securely access critical information yet retain a familiar process environment with minimal training, and ensure that the Walton Office preserves its existing IT investment.

CASE STUDY: Document Manager™ – Walton County Sheriff's Office



“Now, the District Attorney or investigators can look up anything associated with the case file from a PC via a county Wide Area Network”

Major Travis Brown
Walton County Sheriff's Office

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Benefits of Document Manager

- Ease of access to documents
- The ability to retrieve any type of data on a single screen
- Central management and storage of documents
- Improved staff efficiency and productivity
- Secure access of documents for authorized users
- Reduced use of paper
- Recovered office space due to removal of filing cabinets

The Document Manager Solution

Previously, access to case file information was difficult. “These were held at several locations in the office, which meant unproductive use of time for officers and prosecuting attorneys to physically get hold of them. The Walton County District Attorney's Office is located in another part of the county. Before Document Manager, if someone wanted information on a case, such as a booking report, crime scene photos, etc., then that person had to make a trip of several miles to the Sheriff's Office. Once there, they had to manually look up the case file in a large file room, and then make copies of whatever it was they were looking for, because the Sheriff's Office would not allow the case file to leave the premises.”

“We now have a single investigative case file. And it contains everything”, says Major Brown. All photographs, images and documents can be scanned or entered via digital copiers. Rapid retrieval of case information is available.”

Productivity was significantly improved. “We can share information with other agencies from a single location in a single file – containing everything relevant to a particular investigation,” says Major Brown. “The search capability means that individual files or documents can be tracked down quickly and there is multiple access to folders.”

“Now, the District Attorney or investigators can look up anything associated with the case file from a PC via a county Wide Area Network. They also receive much higher quality copies of information because they are now dealing with digitally saved data instead of photocopies.”

In addition, the audit feature of Document Manager enabled the Walton County Sheriff's Office to enforce appropriate access to files. Case files can contain very sensitive data. Previously, if the paper data was mishandled, there was no way of identifying the breach. Now an administrator can view every query and every change made to the file by viewing the audit log.