



Success story

Metropolitan Utilities District

Industry

- Utilities

Solution

- OpenText™ Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions

Results



Digitized paper assets help streamline processes for improved productivity and savings



Valuable content is preserved and protected from disaster and loss



Integration of content with SAP® and GIS platforms for enterprise-wide efficiency



Estimated \$300,000 in total savings



METROPOLITAN
UTILITIES DISTRICT

Public utility embarks on digital transformation journey, realizes significant time and cost savings

Metropolitan Utilities District captures, preserves and delivers content with OpenText™ Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions

"The integration between OpenText and SAP allows us to have transparency through single point of access and a single source of the truth. The productivity gains through the user interface have been both immediate and substantial."

Ron Schell
Director of Asset Management
Metropolitan Utilities District





Public utility embarks on digital transformation journey, realizes significant time and cost savings

As the fifth-largest public gas utility in the United States, Metropolitan Utilities District provides natural gas and water services to more than 200,000 customers in Omaha, Nebraska and surrounding communities. The Metropolitan Utilities District is proud to be customer-owned and strives to provide safe and reliable natural gas and water services to the community at rates that are among the lowest in the Midwest.

For more than 100 years, Metropolitan Utilities District has been serving the population of Omaha and, as a public utility, the company is committed to saving its customers money. In an effort to streamline operations and become more mobile, the company recently launched a digital transformation initiative to digitize its three million legacy paper documents.

Challenges

Legacy paper archive was cumbersome and vulnerable to loss

With more than 100 years of content to manage and protect, Metropolitan Utilities District realized it was time to digitize its paper assets. The fear of losing valuable documents to fire or natural disaster made digitization a high priority to ensure data retention, accuracy and availability. Ron Schell, director of asset management at Metropolitan Utilities District, explained, ***“We were very concerned about what might happen if there were a fire. Documents more than 100 years old would be lost and there’d be no way to recover them.”***

Moreover, the paper documents were a barrier to streamlining business operations and cutting costs. Accessing archived paper documents was a cumbersome, time-consuming process, especially for field personnel who would have to call the dispatch office to find information from design drawings. Schell described the manual process, ***“Field technicians need***

specific information before they start digging, whether it be for a leak, a repair, an addition, or a relocation. They would have to call in to the engineering department. Somebody from engineering would then have to physically find the drawing, pull the drawing and then try to explain it over the phone.”

All of the utility’s documents needed to be scanned, linked to a geographic information system (GIS), integrated with SAP and made accessible using an enterprise content management (ECM) system. Schell summed up the challenge: ***“We were looking at scanning about 3 million legacy documents. We are a 100-year old company with documents dating back to the early 1900s, some even to the late 1800s. Our main challenge was to scan it all and get it into a document management system that could be used throughout the company.”***

Solution

A digital solution for a paper problem

Schell and his team embarked on a search for an ECM system with an easy-to-use interface, the ability to integrate with its SAP and GIS systems and that also offered future add-on capabilities. The company evaluated demos from three vendors before selecting OpenText. ***“We let the business decide what was needed, and all the things that OpenText offers really put it ahead of everybody else,”*** Schell said. ***“From an IT standpoint, the integration with SAP and with GIS by Esri™ made it a product that we knew we could use in the future. Other considerations were future product expansions, for example, OpenText™ Vendor Invoice Management for SAP® Solutions to better automate our accounts payable process. We know we want to eventually move away from paper-driven processes to more streamlined digital processes that we can utilize throughout the company.”***

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Integration of core systems a key driver

OpenText Extended ECM for SAP Solutions unites enterprise content and enterprise applications with a complete, enterprise-grade ECM solution that uniquely integrates with SAP, offering data and document archiving, imaging, document management, collaboration and records management. Schell discussed the importance of the solution's ability to integrate, **"One of the big reasons that we chose OpenText was its integration to our core systems. We knew we needed a product like OpenText that could integrate to SAP easily. We also have a GIS product, Esri. Now, I've got my three biggest things in the company: OpenText, my document management system; SAP, my ERP system; and then GIS, which is my operational system, all integrated together to make one big happy family. This will make it easier for my employees to see the information they need in an easy and timely manner."**

The integration of OpenText and SAP is a critical piece for Metropolitan Utilities District. **"We want to be digital. We want to be more mobile and more streamlined. We want our processes to be quicker and better. We want our processes to save our customers and our company money. That's the biggest reason that we've got OpenText and SAP—to keep driving us to streamline everything we do in order to make it better,"** said Schell.

Implementation

Scan, load, empower, repeat

For the first phase of the initiative, hundreds of thousands of paper engineering design documents, as well as gas and water service cards, were scanned by partner Scanning America, loaded into the OpenText Extended ECM solution and linked to the GIS. The team loaded roughly 335,000 engineering documents and 460,000 service cards to the ECM system. **"We started off with the engineering operations' documents**


because those were the oldest and the most time-consuming to find information," Schell said. The documents are used by many groups in the organization, including engineering, field services, gas distribution, water distribution, construction, locators, meter readers, measurement and IT.

The new solution has simplified processes at the utility. Field personnel are now empowered with tablets that are integrated with the Esri GIS system. The user can zoom in to a location on the map and link to information housed in the OpenText ECM environment. **"Field staff can find an address and see a hydrant or a gas or water valve and they can actually click on that gas valve, water valve or hydrant,"** said Schell. **"We've got a link embedded in there so they can click on it and that brings up the OpenText product. They can see all the information they need via the full OpenText front-end."**

Benefits

Accessible digital content saves time, space and empowers staff

With only the first phase complete, Metropolitan Utilities District has already seen significant savings in time and money. The documents scanned into the OpenText system are available simultaneously on multiple devices, including mobile, so that technicians no longer have to call in to dispatch teams to get information. Instead, that information is accessible in the field using the GIS and is only one click away. This has made the technicians faster, self-sufficient and empowered, giving them the information necessary to make quick, accurate decisions in the field. Schell described the benefits, **"No longer does the district have to have multiple personnel listening to radios or expecting to be called away from their day-to-day processes to look up drawings or service cards to help a mobile user. It has really saved us money and time because when we added it up it wasn't just one person's time but actually about three people's time that was wasted each week."**



"They know if they need that information tonight, tomorrow, yesterday, it's available. That is more beneficial to my company than any amount of money that we might save."

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Eliminating so many paper records also provided a secondary benefit—space savings. The company can now repurpose the physical space that was required for paper. Schell estimates roughly \$100,000 in savings since the space can now be used for personnel and other business use. Schell added up the total savings gained by the new solution so far, ***“The savings is about \$200,000 for personnel and time management and another \$100,000 in space. So that’s \$300,000 total that we can look at and say, ‘That’s what we save a year just by scanning content into OpenText and making it available to our people in the field.’”***

Valuable content is protected from disaster

Above all else, Metropolitan Utilities District has achieved peace of mind, knowing that its documents are safely stored in the new system, protected from disaster or loss. ***“The security provided by OpenText and the ability to put those documents in a safe place means that I no longer have to worry about that paper,”*** Schell said. ***“It has made senior management feel much better knowing that all those documents are now scanned and in the OpenText system. They know if they need that information tonight, tomorrow, yesterday, it’s available. That is more beneficial to my company than any amount of money that we might save.”***

Future

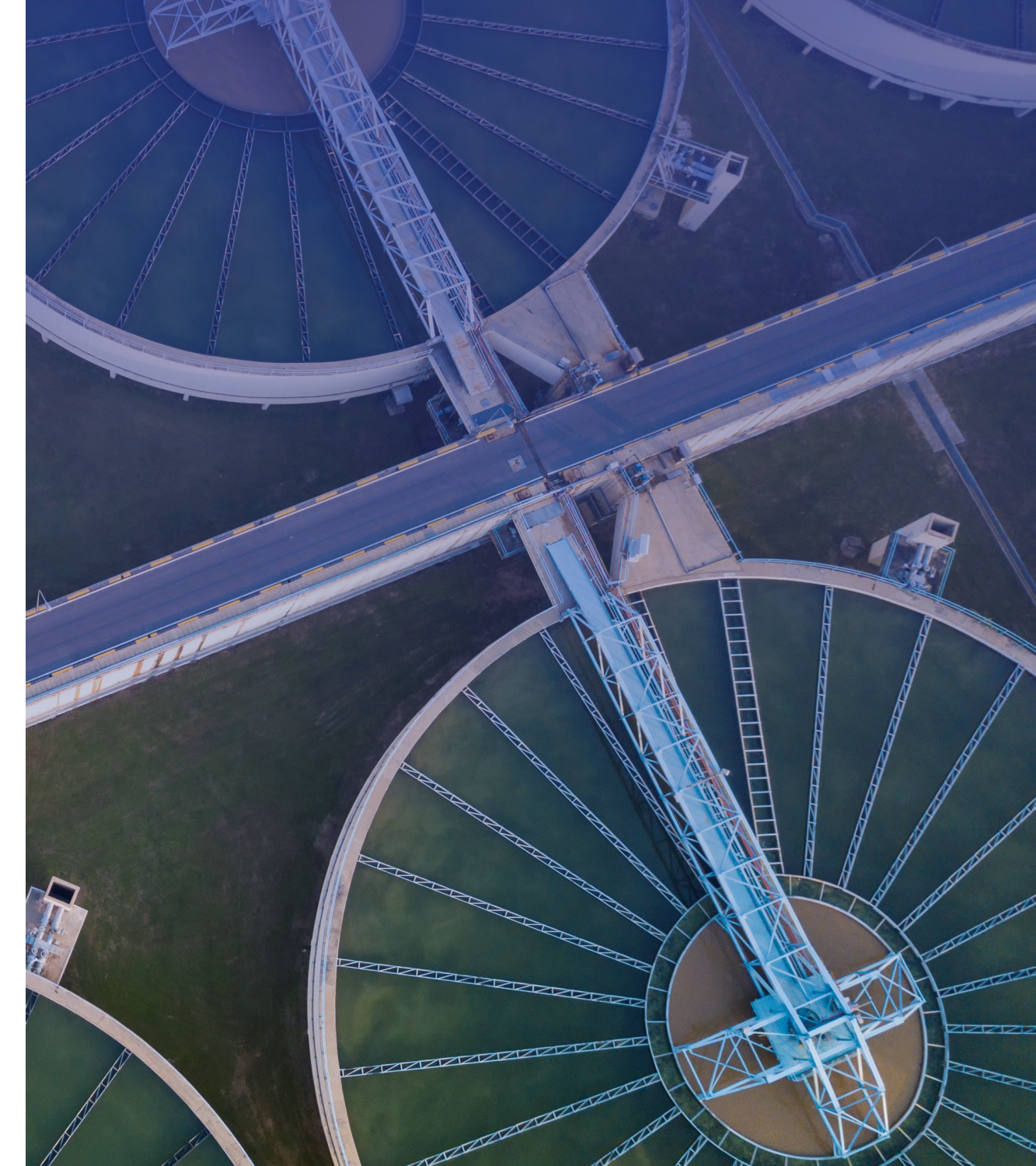
Serving the community with a digital transformation

The immediate future at Metropolitan Utilities District includes continued scanning of roughly 1.5 million documents still in the queue—HR, Accounting and Legal are next in line, followed by the water treatment

and gas plants, which also have a long history of documentation. ***“We’re looking at completing the scanning process and having everything in OpenText by 2020,”*** said Schell. ***“Ultimately, we want to eliminate the paper. Because when a customer signs a piece of paper, it’s got to go back to a truck, which then has to go back to the main building. Then it has to get scanned and get in to OpenText. We want to eliminate that. We want to make sure all those documents are started in SAP, go into OpenText, are utilized in SAP and in OpenText and kept there so that we can be more efficient.”***

The team is looking at improving its vendor invoice management process in the next year, using OpenText Vendor Invoice Management for SAP Solutions. Schell explained, ***“We want to streamline that process to make it easier for our accounting personnel and for the whole company.”*** The utility also has plans to improve its customer statements using OpenText™ Document Presentment for SAP® Solutions.

Schell is certain the company is on the right path toward meeting its commitment to customers. ***“We are always striving to become more innovative, streamlined and mobile,”*** Schell said. ***“Our applications and processes must be agile and responsive while reducing costs to our rate payers. The integration between OpenText and SAP allows us to have transparency through single point of access and a single source of the truth. The productivity gains through the user interface have been both immediate and substantial.”***



About OpenText

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