Medway Council migrates 6 million files using Robotic Process Automation

"Do I have a message to organisations thinking of using SX? Just go for it, honestly. NDL was unbelievably accommodating"

Patrick Knight
Head of Revenues and Benefits, Medway Council

50-70,000 hours of administrative time saved

A substantial cost saving

Improved data integrity and accuracy

Medway COUNCIL

What challenge was Medway Council facing?

Medway is a vibrant cultural hub at the heart of the Thames Gateway in Kent. Medway Council covers a large area including the towns of Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Strood – providing a range of services, including education, social care, and Council Tax and benefits to just under 280,000 people.

In late 2018, the Council's Revenues and Benefits team were in a period of transition. Upon the expiration of a contract with one of its computer systems suppliers, it was immediately obvious that whichever new supplier it opted for, a large-scale data migration was needed. Early investigations showed that an API was not an option, and alternative solutions would come at a premium.

After conducting an audit on the data, and after following newly introduced GDPR regulations, Medway Council realised that of the 10 million files in its previous system, only 6 million needed to be retained and migrated. Even with this reduced number of files, it was still far too large of a task to contemplate undergoing manually.

Each document was encrypted and could contain anywhere from one to 40 pages. It was also estimated that each document would have taken between 30-40 seconds to action on average. Therefore, a manual process would have taken approximately 50-70,000 man-hours to complete; or a single worker, working consistently at maximum efficiency for over 30 years.

What was its solution?

As Medway Council was a current customer of NDL and was already utilising SX, our Robotic Process Automation toolkit, for other migration and integration projects, they could fashion a solution from tools they already had at their disposal.

With the help of NDL's Development and Professional Services teams, a robotic process was constructed to replicate the behaviour of a human workforce. At the heart of the process was a control file that was programmed to run each document through a layer of rules to determine if it needed migrating. In view of GDPR regulations it was decided that documents older than 6 years needed to be disposed of, unless they were required for an ongoing case. It then only took a few weeks to get the robots up and running, and after around 2 months there was a network of 40 robots working to complete the migration.

New documents continued to come in as the process was being developed, which further solidified the need for an agile and adaptable solution. To aid with the project, and to avoid any potential technical access issues, a member of NDL's team would also periodically work alongside the Council in their offices during the development phase.

What benefits has it seen?

Following the implementation of robotic process automation, Medway Council was able to migrate all 6 million files in approximately 2 months. Due to the agile nature of SX, the Council was also able to dynamically scale the size of the robotic workforce to fit around its system and network workloads. Once the migration had been completed, the following had been achieved:

- A substantial cost saving was made based on quotes received for alternative solutions. The Council was also able to achieve a greater return on investment by utilising software it was already using elsewhere in the organisation

- An equivalent saving of 50,000-70,000 man-hours

- In undertaking such a huge project, the Council was able to identify and challenge all of its data and systems. This deep clean improved both data quality and accuracy

- The project won an internal innovation award within Medway Council

- The organisation's IT staff were given an opportunity to hone, and even learn, new skills which may not have been otherwise possible

- In choosing an RPA solution with an open architecture such as SX, Medway Council faced no restrictions when choosing its next systems supplier

What's next?

Following the completion of this project, Patrick Knight, Head of Revenues and Benefits at Medway Council has recommended SX to other colleagues both internally and externally. He is now also looking at other service areas that could benefit from Robotic Process Automation.

"Now I've seen it done, this was without a shadow of a doubt the most successful part of the entire project of moving across to a new system".

Patrick Knight
Head of Revenues and Benefits, Medway Council

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For more information, visit **www.ndl.co.uk** or email **info@ndl.co.uk**