

Hydro-Québec Generates Improved Employee Communications with OpenText Solutions

OpenText Web Site Management Delivery Server native integration to OpenText Content Server ensures company knowledge is accessible in a dynamic and contextual environment

Industry

Public Sector

Customer

Hydro-Québec

Business Challenges

- Inability to easily find, view, and publish corporate knowledge contained in separate repositories
- Multiple business units managed content and user access to different content repositories specific to their needs
- Local control of presentation and content editing was seen as necessary but raised branding, training, and communication issues

Business Solutions

- OpenText Content Server
- OpenText Web Site Management Delivery Server
- OpenText Web Site Management Generic Bridge

Business Benefits

- Company knowledge accessible in a dynamic and contextual environment
- Authoring capabilities leveraged to provide easy access to documents
- Compliance needs are met

Hydro-Québec is a government-owned public utility established in 1944 by the Government of Quebec. Operating under four main divisions, Hydro-Québec generates, transmits, and distributes electricity, mainly from renewable energy sources. It has 59 hydroelectric plants, one nuclear generating station, and four thermal power plants, making Hydro-Québec North America's largest hydroelectric generating company.

Business challenge

Hydro-Québec's intranet comprises over 300 sites spread throughout the organization. These sites were built using several in-house Web applications and contain over 200,000 active documents and 35 news bulletins. The public utility uses OpenText Content Server for its Document Management (DM) repository and is deploying eight separate instances across their different divisions with approximately 12,000 Content Server contributors.

With all of these separate DM repositories, there was no easy way for the hundreds of intranet site editors to query documents for publishing into a Web page. Users needed to log in and out of the different repositories and there was no capability to search across the multiple instances in a single query.

Hydro-Québec wanted to redesign the intranet to improve usability. The redesign was aimed at giving the publishers and editors quick and easy access to the information they require and offer effective navigation and searching capabilities.

The primary goal was to eliminate silos of data so content could be managed and delivered to the intranet from any repository through a single Web-based client, enabling site owners to easily create, manage, and update the content and maintain their sites.

Solution

In 2004, Hydro-Québec decided to leverage its existing IT platform and selected OpenText Web Site Management to support its new Web strategy. Web Site Management enables anyone in an organization to author and edit content on their own, without knowledge of HTML or other Web skills. The solution provides a dynamic intranet with up-to-date content and advanced search functionality to ensure that relevant information and applications are available to all employees in a personalized view.





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Stéphane Ritchot,
IT solutions designer at Hydro-Québec

Following the purchase of Web Site Management, the Hydro-Québec Content Server development team integrated the two OpenText systems so site contributors would have seamless, cross-system access to documents. “Our development team customized the search functionalities in a really creative way to simplify how users could query those documents or folders. Later, we added OpenText Web Site Management Generic Bridge to offer users another easy way of creating dynamic queries of the documents and folders that live in Content Server,” says Stéphane Ritchot, IT solutions designer at Hydro-Québec.

The Delivery Server native integration to Content Server ensures that company knowledge is accessible in a dynamic and contextual environment. Users are offered a single sign-on function, which means multiple logons to the different document repositories is no longer necessary. Advanced search capabilities aggregate content from the diverse repositories to provide a single source of information for over 20,000 Hydro-Québec employees. Compliance needs are being met with secure links to documents used across various internal and external Web properties.

“One of the driving factors for adding Web Site Management was to enable contributors to consume the documents stored in Content Server without having to leave the Web Site Management environment. Simultaneous searching across our multiple repositories was a key feature,” says Ritchot. “With Web Site Management, we have improved the ROI of our existing Content Server implementation by expanding document access throughout the organization, using a single-sign-on function and a user-friendly Web interface.”

Simplifying processes

The development team personalized the basic Content Server functionalities for Fetch (object query), XML Export (folder query), and Search (within all Content Server repositories) by placing an HQ in front of each function, so users see HQ Fetch, HQ XML Export, and HQ Search.

“Web Site Management provides us with an easy way to make those queries. An employee can grab those documents or folders anonymously and do not need to log into Content Server,” states Ritchot. “We were really stringent about ensuring that even a non-technical user would be able to write those queries.”

Ritchot continues, “Even though our Web Site Management implementation is centralized, we have multiple Content Server instances distributed throughout the company, so it was really important to us that the different queries or interactions between Web Site Management and Content Server would be easily achievable. We strove to make those queries very generic in the sense that our content contributor would simply need to click on a drop-down menu, choose the Content Server where the objects are stored, enter the ID of that object, and the results will appear on the page. It is a fast and easy way to build queries. The object type must be public. If it's not public, it will never be exposed through these functions.”

Once a document is selected, the system takes the author, signs them into the Content Server repository, and allows them to navigate the Content Server as they normally would, with the credentials that they have as a user to that system.

“We also provide other search options, for example, by date, document type, and the weight of the document, so a visitor will know how big the document is beforehand and if it's going to take a long time to download,” says Ritchot.

Today, OpenText offers Hydro-Québec a seamless integration out-of-the-box with Delivery Server and Content Server. As the author navigates to a document that they want to draw to the Web and selects the drop-down functions, there are a couple of choices that are unique to the Web Site Management integration: the document can be selected as a Current Snapshot or a Secured Link. The Current Snapshot option is best suited for a public-facing Web site whereby the site visitors wouldn't have login credentials to the company's Content Server. In this case, the author would take a copy of the document from Content Server and publish it to the Web.



The Secured Link option is more suited to an intranet or possibly an extranet setting where the user would most likely have credentials to log into Content Server. At the time of publishing, Web Site Management will publish a secured link to the production environment, be it a Web site, intranet, or extranet, and the original document would always reside in Content Server. "This way we are only storing one version of the document and not many different versions. People know that it's always the most up-to-date document that is served up," says Ritchot.

When an editor wants to conduct an XML export, the query serves up folders and documents from any of the Hydro-Québec multiple Content Server instances. "As with the HQ Fetch query, the folder needs to be public. The XML export query is much easier with the Web Site Management forms," says Ritchot. "Our end-user simply needs to choose the server and the type of display that they want. We have given them different options on how the XML export will look, either with the date or the size of the document, or they can include a summary of the document or the folder itself. This is the visual way to look at the folder."

Site authors use the HQ Search query to search objects from all Content Server repositories and display all results.

Ritchot adds, "Since we're syndicated in four divisions, we customized those searches for the different servers. It's a simple query to search public objects in all Content Server repositories and display all the results. The content contributor can set up how the search result will be served up, for example, how many results will show up on one page. It's a great and simple way to search documents within our different Content Server instances at Hydro-Québec."

Ritchot recommends that you always keep the end-user in mind when planning the Web Site Management implementation and integration with Content Server. "You need to make sure that it's an easy way to work, because some of your content contributors may only need to access the system once a week or once every few months. You need to keep it really simple for them."

Implementation strategy

Production roll-out for Web Site Management began in 2004 as the company began migrating the various sites to Web Site Management. In 2009, the site migrations are still underway. "It is taking longer than a normal implementation because we have over 300 sites to migrate," explains Ritchot. "The deployment has gone smoothly because of our approach to ensuring end-user adoption. We created an in-house training curriculum for the different users. So, for the site builders, news-builder editors, or content contributors, we made sure that we trained these people before they started using the system. Of course, we also have an IT Web Site Management and Content Server help desk available. In 2006, we evolved the content classes so people who do not work with Web Site Management can use templates to create those sites."



Ritchot adds, "Back in 2004, we created a master project that contained all of our templates and content classes, so when we have to do some modifications, either structural or visual, we just need to modify the master project and it gets replicated throughout all the projects within our server, just by doing a simple update."

Since there are approximately 490 Web Site Management users, Hydro-Québec settled on a distributed architecture. This type of environment is ideal for offloading various processes from one server to another and enables the steady flow of information. The infrastructure consists of one database server and two Web Site Management servers: one is dedicated to publication and the other server is for the editorial environment. When an editor logs into this environment, they can make changes, manage workflows, etcetera, and when publication is triggered, the changes are published to the live site. By having two Web Site Management servers, a publication event will not interfere with the other authors who may be revising documents in the editorial or staging environment.

Conclusion

Creating the ultimate intranet for employees is a key requirement of all employee communications plans. Web Site Management offers Hydro-Québec a centralized way to ensure that the layout, branding, and page structure are up to their corporate standards. The Delivery Server, Content Server integration has made it easier to access content, simplified the Content Server queries, and streamlined the work for their content contributors. Hydro-Québec has launched a brand new redesign of its intranet with improved accessibility that is usable and attainable for all employee groups.

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