

# Atlanta Department of Watershed Management Uses Open Text for \$4B Clean Water Atlanta Program

Industry  
Government

Customer



## Business Challenges

- No central repository to store and retain documents to meet the requirements of the EPA and EPD consent decrees
- No audit trail and limited document version control throughout document and records lifecycles
- Soaring physical storage costs
- Slow collaboration among bureaus on document creation and review
- Limited accountability and transparency
- Inefficiency due to manual business processes

## Business Solution

Open Text ECM Suite:

- Document Management
- Records Management
- Workflow

## Business Benefits

- Content secured and centrally managed throughout its lifecycle
- Easy access to information resulting in improved efficiencies
- Consistency of information through document version control
- Increased departmental efficiencies
- Enhanced customer service
- Improved compliance with government regulations
- Improved records management of all vital documents

Open Text ECM Suite improves efficiencies, enables compliance, and ensures retained and accessible documents

The Department of Watershed Management (DWM) is dedicated to providing the highest quality drinking water and wastewater services to City of Atlanta businesses and residents and to its wholesale customers at the lowest possible cost. Its mission is to protect urban waterways, conserve natural resources, and provide clean, safe water for Atlantans and their downstream neighbors. DWM is currently in the middle of the largest infrastructure overhaul ever for the City's water and sewer systems—the \$4 billion Clean Water Atlanta Program.

In addition to managing documents created in support of the Clean Water Atlanta Program in response to both federal and state mandates, DWM must also manage the growing administrative demands of its existing paper-based system, which includes documents for its constituency as well as over 1,400 internal staff. DWM is responsible for managing more than 1.35 million paper documents annually, which exceeds five million sheets of paper per year.

## Situation

Under consent decrees negotiated in 1998 and 1999 with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), the City of Atlanta was mandated to complete an aggressive Capital Improvement Program (CIP) by 2014. The CIP calls for a \$4 billion investment in drinking water, sanitary sewer and wastewater treatment improvements. In January 2002, Mayor Shirley Franklin recognized the seriousness of the situation and charged a task force headed by former Georgia Tech President Wayne Clough with determining a plan that would allow the City to meet its obligations as quickly and inexpensively as possible. That plan ultimately became the Clean Water Atlanta Program.

The consent decrees require a document repository in which all documents resulting from the Clean Water Atlanta initiative would be stored and retained based on the State of Georgia's Records Retention Schedule. Since the ambitious program began, there has been an avalanche of paper in just about every format including correspondence, plans, studies, drawings, maps, progress reports, pre-design documents, design documents, operations documents, and maintenance documents, as well as legal, financial, and purchasing documents.

## Keeping Pace with the Changing Demands

When Keith Toomer, Director of Information Technology at DWM, developed his strategic plan in 2002, he identified the need for an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system to help the department meet the requirements of the EPA and EPD consent decrees. "We needed a tool that would allow us to be more efficient in terms of the way we manage and retrieve information and would enable us to report, submit, and retain documents for the EPA and EPD," says Toomer.





***“Before, documents were stored in boxes, and we didn’t do a very good job of managing those documents from a records management standpoint. For most of our regular everyday users, the key benefit of Open Text ECM is being able to retrieve documents quickly and easily.”***

Keith Toomer,  
Director of Information Technology,  
Atlanta Department of Watershed Management

Prior to implementing an ECM system, locating and retrieving information was difficult. Version control was also an issue explains Toomer, “If we had a group of people working on a document, we set up a public folder on our network where the document could be saved and then gave that group permission to access it. This gave them a central place to find the document, but it didn’t really manage version control. Once the document was completed, it more or less went back to hardcopy. Someone would print it and stick it in a file. Months or even years later if the document needed to be retrieved it could be a difficult undertaking. If the original owner didn’t maintain a good filing system it would add to the time and effort to find that document.” DWM recognized that it could no longer operate with a paper-based system and needed a technology solution that would help keep pace with its changing demands. Internal inefficiencies included duplication of documents and records, soaring physical storage costs, loss of knowledge transfer due to retiring employees, slow collaboration between bureaus on document creation and review, limited accountability and transparency, and inefficiency due to manual business processes.

### **Open Text Integrated Solution Drives Significant Productivity Improvements**

In 2007, DWM conducted a feasibility study for an ECM system and hired a consultant to work with it to develop workflows for different business processes and determine the main issues that the various bureaus had in terms of gaining access to data. “Based on the criteria they received from the different groups, the consultant identified a short list of four enterprise-level systems, and we went through a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process,” says Toomer. “In the end, we selected the Open Text ECM Suite, and we engaged Stellar Services to provide project and program management support.”

Stellar, an Open Text partner, offers ECM services and IT infrastructure services to federal, state, and local government agencies as well as small, medium, and large companies throughout the U.S. The company analyzes, designs, deploys, and maintains solutions and technologies to help its customers successfully manage their business information.

Stellar began implementation at DWM in September 2007 starting with a workflow pilot with the master planning group. “Our annual master plan project happened to be under way, and our external vendors were delivering those documents to us, so we utilized the master plan documents as the first pilot in terms of setting up and configuring the ECM file structure and standards,” says Toomer. “We worked with the group and encouraged them to start storing the documents related to the master plan in the Open Text Document Management (DM) repository, and we gave all the stakeholders within the department access to those documents in the master plan.”

Stellar created workflows for the external vendors so they could submit their plans and specifications to the appropriate stakeholders within the department. The users could log in to DM to review the documentation and could easily see the status of all workflows at any point in time. In order to reduce bottlenecks, Stellar set time limits for document review and approval. “This was an important pilot from a change management perspective in that the stakeholders were very visible and involved in the implementation. If someone said they were going to email them a document, they said, ‘no, it should be in Open Text DM,’” says Pyper Johnson, Project Manager at Stellar Services.

Open Text ECM enables master planning of projects and rapid project completion. This provides DWM with new capabilities to plan, as well as the ability to control a wide range of business processes.

Next, Stellar initiated a pilot program with the Bureau of Engineering Services. The engineering bureau is responsible for overall management of the department’s CIP, including design and construction projects to comply with the City’s consent decrees and administrative orders, as well as other improvements to the City’s water and sewer systems. “We chose Engineering because we felt that if we were able to satisfy the needs of that bureau—including the records retention requirements—we would be able to primarily satisfy the needs of all the other bureaus. Engineering has the greatest cross-section of document types that need to be managed,” explains Toomer. “All of the data associated with the various projects is collected within the DM repository, and then reports are generated and sent off to the EPA and EPD on a regular basis.”



## Smooth Integration with Third-Party Applications

As with every large organization, DWM uses many third-party applications. These include Oracle's Primavera for project management; Primavera Contract Manager (formerly Primavera Expedition®) for contract management; Oracle Financial Services Software, Kronos® for timekeeping; and IBM Maximo® asset management software. As part of the implementation, Stellar was tasked with integrating Open Text DM with these applications so end users could access and interact with all their business content and applications and work more productively. "Because of the nature of what DWM does, we have everything from major contract documents, which are hundreds of pages, to drawings that require us to exercise all of the functions and features within the Open Text system," says Toomer.

For many of their third-party applications such as Oracle Financial Services Software, Kronos, and Maximo, Stellar built one-way links to the Open Text repository. "This way, if someone creates some information in Oracle Financials, they can stay in the same space in Windows and save it right into DM. They do not have to leave the application. This is also true for Kronos and Maximo. Stellar built an interface so people can extract information from those systems and save it right into the Open Text repository. The reason it's only a one-way link is because these are City-wide enterprise systems, and it wouldn't be appropriate for data to move back and forth out of DM. We built the links specifically for our department. However, for all the Microsoft products, we have a two-way integration with Open Text," says Toomer.

PDF versions of maps created in ArcView GIS from ESRI® are also saved in DM. "It could be a map that shows all of our council districts or a map that shows water distribution systems. These maps can be found in the DM repository for easy access," says Toomer.

Other third-party systems that Stellar integrated with Open Text DM include Hansen®, Oracle's Primavera P6 Enterprise Project Portfolio Management, AutoCAD®, Laboratory Information Management, enQuesta, Backflow Management, and Lynx Photo Client.

External users including consultants and contractors working on projects with the City can access documentation stored in DM via a secure Web-based account with the City. "There are tremendous benefits here because of the cost of transporting documents back and forth," says Toomer. "With some of these projects, we have hundreds of pages of drawings that would have to be transported. Whenever there are changes, they'd have to repeat the process all over again. That is no longer necessary. And at the end of the process, once a drawing or a document is finalized, it is stored in Open Text DM."

Storing documents in the DM repository is particularly helpful for managers who need to track the progress of a project but do not necessarily have access to the other systems. "For instance, they may not have AutoCAD or MicroStation® on their desktop. If they want to look at a document or a drawing in order to make a management decision, they can easily access them from the DM system," explains Toomer.



## Setting Records Retention Policies

Following the success of the pilots, Stellar went to work to address the state retention policies for both hardcopy and electronic documents. "We worked with the City's Records Management (RM) Director and a team of people from each bureau for the RM pilot. Now, before a user can save a document into the DM repository, they must select a document type based on questions that pop up in a drop-down menu. Once the document type is identified, the system automatically applies the retention rules. With Open Text RM, we are notified when it's time to retire a document," says Toomer.

## Multiple Benefits

DWM went live in October 2008. Open Text ECM enables the DWM to gain departmental efficiencies, enhance customer service, better comply with government regulations, manage risk, and improve records management of all its vital client documents. "Before documents were stored in boxes, and we didn't do a very good job of managing those documents from a records management standpoint. For most of our regular everyday users, the key benefit is being able to retrieve documents quickly and easily." Seven bureaus with a total of more than 1,400 employees are benefiting from full lifecycle document management through automated workflows, routing, and version control of all document types. DWM is expected to enable more than 200 workflows annually and streamline its diverse business processes. To date, the department has over one million documents stored in the DM repository. Inventory records and other documents are filed, retrieved, shared and processed with ease. System accessibility and availability across many regions and disciplines greatly increases collaboration and knowledge transfer.

## Measuring success

Toomer has been pleased with the implementation, including the integration with their other software applications. "The fact that we did the pilots helped a lot because we were able to resolve most of the issues during the pilot period," he says. "Then, as we branched out to the rest of the bureaus, it became a much smoother implementation."

For Toomer, though, success is measured by the number of employees using the tools now available to them. "Early in the project, we established a rule that success did not mean that we got the tool







in on time and that it was properly configured,” he says. “It was whether or not our users actually utilize the technology. If not, it doesn’t matter how well everything works.”

To encourage use, Stellar devoted considerable time to training. “We wanted to make sure that all of our users received everything they needed in terms of training and understanding the product,” says Toomer. “Over 700 users were trained including System Administrators, Records Officers and Managers, all seven Deputy Commissioners, as well as the Commissioner.”

Toomer adds, “Equally important to the success of the project was the buy-in we received from upper management. Our Commissioner was one of the champions of the project, and it trickled down to the Deputy Commissioners of each of the bureaus who also got excited about the product. The Deputy Commissioners established certain policies and rules that made it necessary for information to flow to them through the ECM system so the employees were obliged to use the application in order to satisfy the requirements. On the back end, we gave them the necessary training so they would be comfortable utilizing the product.”

“As in any organization, most people are resistant to change,” Toomer continues. “At the time we were implementing it, we were also implementing a lot of other new applications across the board. So the ECM system was one more package that they had to learn. However, once they saw the benefits and that it would make their lives easier, they came around. Today, I get comments like, ‘Oh, wow, this is a great tool’—especially when they go to retrieve documents that they were accustomed to spending two or three days trying to find. I hear, ‘I used the DM system the other day. It really helped.’”

## Looking ahead

Toomer plans to scan all DWM hardcopy documents into the DM repository using Kofax Capture®. “We have hundreds of thousands of drawings and maps that we want to scan, some that are 75 years old and made from onion skin and crumble when you touch them. We want to make sure that we have a process by which we can catalog all of these documents for each bureau.”

Working with Stellar, DWM also plans to add Open Text Email Archiving. Stellar will provide guidance in the creation of an archiving plan to ensure that only emails required by internal policies will be archived. According to Toomer, email archiving is very important for the agency from a legal perspective. “Since Microsoft Exchange is integrated with Open Text, employee emails will be automatically archived, even before the user opens them. So even if someone deletes an email, it will still be saved, and we will have a means of easily retrieving it. This is important because if we are sued, any email correspondence between the parties could become evidence, and we could potentially lose lawsuits if we cannot provide copies. With email archiving from Open Text, we will be able to get that email back very, very easily,” he says.

Following DWM’s successful deployment, there has been a lot of interest in the ECM system on the part of a number of other municipalities as well as its own City government. “We are just one department in the City. After hearing about our deployment, there is a desire to expand the system City-wide. Our airport also functions independently, and we have been in contact with them about our implementation and selection of the Open Text system,” states Toomer. “In addition, a neighboring county has shown a lot of interest in implementing a similar project.” DWM is frequently called on to discuss its experiences and best practices regarding the Open Text ECM solution with other departments, authorities, and large companies.

**www.opentext.com**

sales@opentext.com

800 499 6544