

## Open Text Helps the State of Connecticut Streamline Management of Employee Retirement Records

Integrated document management capabilities helps agency to capture, retrieve, and store information by automating manual business processes

### Industry

Public Sector

### Customer

Office of the Connecticut  
State Comptroller

### Business Challenges

- Limited storage for volumes of paper and electronic information generated during daily operations
- Burden of processing the capture, retrieval, and storage of information
- Records not easily accessible

### Business Solutions

- Open Text Integrated Document Management (formerly Vignette IDM)

### Business Benefits

- Inefficient manual processes now automated
- Information consolidated in a single, secure, managed repository
- Documents needed for legal or regulatory compliance are collected, filed, and stored in the repository
- Complete case folders containing various document types can be easily located, retrieved quickly from a single repository, and displayed in a single universal viewer
- The RSD can get more work done faster, with fewer people, better accuracy, and less paper.

The State of Connecticut's Retirement Services Division (RSD) and a separate Health Benefits division manages assets of \$37 billion and administers the retirement benefits for 85,000 Connecticut State employees. As the agent of the State Employees Retirement Commission, the RSD administers all state pension plans except the Teachers Retirement System, and provides a comprehensive package of services ranging from pre-retirement counseling to post-mortem accounting. The Health Benefits division also administers state employee benefits and manages the state-deferred compensation plan. More specifically, it provides direction for plan design, benefit administration and interpretation, and policy for all state insurance benefits including medical, surgical, hospital, and life insurance.

The tasks involved in storing, managing, and retrieving hundreds of thousands of state employee records were beginning to overwhelm the RSD's limited IT staff resources. Seeking a flexible technology system that could handle existing records as well as efficiently store newly created information, the RSD chose integrated document processing functionality from the former Vignette Corporation, today an Open Text integrated document management system.

### Record-keeping requirements outgrow old file system

Many years ago, the RSD implemented a microfiche system to capture and store all retirement records. The microfiche system had 600,000 records that RSD employees frequently needed to consult. The RSD recognized that replacing this outdated microfiche system, which frequently broke down and was no longer supported by its original vendor, was an absolute necessity in order to enable the division to operate more efficiently.

"We had 25 years in microfiche backlog," says David Wemett, Technical Analyst at the Office of the Connecticut State Comptroller. "We have roughly 60,000 to 80,000 current state employees at any given time depending upon seasonal and academic year hiring, and about 45,000 retirees and their nearly 20,000 beneficiaries over a 40-year span. This is a lot of people. And, of course, many are deceased and/or not in state service anymore, but we're mandated to keep their records essentially forever."

Lacking enough storage space on site, the paper records had to be shipped off to a state warehouse. Although most of the records are for internal use only, occasionally a divorce or a probate court seeking to prove the validity of a will would require RSD staff to produce documents for legal purposes. Trying to locate a paper file stored off site could take weeks to find, if at all. A printout of a microfiche image was not always reliable as some older images were not legible.

The RSD needed instantaneous access to records, if required.



## Document processing tools rise to the top

The RSD organized a team led by Wemett to define the project's requirements and conduct a search for suitable vendors and solutions. Once the team assessed the RSD's requirements, it issued a detailed request for proposal and received a strong response. "More than 25 vendors attended the bidder's conference," says Wemett, "though it was obvious from the question-and-answer session that only a handful of vendors knew what they were talking about. We were impressed with Vignette [now Open Text] from that first day. Its representatives understood the microfiche problems we had been struggling with, and the company's Web-enabled technology was precisely what we needed in order to make a dramatic improvement in our document and records management practices. Those advantages, coupled with the company's very satisfied references, made our choice an easy one."

## New system deployed quickly and smoothly

Soon after the RSD began deploying the Open Text document processing system and enterprise-scalable repository, nearly all microfiche records were converted to the new system. All new incoming paperwork, from new applicant forms to changes in marital status or beneficiaries, is now immediately captured in the employee's individual retirement case folder and stored in the Open Text repository. The 150 authorized users of the RSD now have easier access to the electronic records. Employee records can be searched by last name, by employee number, or by their social insurance number.

The Open Text solution has been integrated with Kofax® Capture, which is used to scan the new information into the document management system.

"Once you become a state employee, one of the first things you do is fill out your retirement election form, which is a legal, signed document that indicates what benefit plan you choose, the contribution level, and your beneficiaries. It is scanned into the system at around the same time that your first paycheck arrives," explains Wemett. "They're tied together. Your paycheck is tied into contribution accounting, which is tied into the Open Text Integrated Document Management (IDM) system. It's all linked together. We also store healthcare plan elections for retirees, address and beneficiary changes for retirees, birth and death certificates, and proof of citizenship."

The RSD uses a mainframe IBM® 3090 Customer Information Control System (CICS) to handle contributory accounting tasks such as the tracking of retirement purchases, refunds, and biweekly balancing to the state's payroll and accounting systems. This mainframe host application has been "image-enabled" so that RSD users working in the application can click a button and instantly retrieve a list of all documents for that member. All substantiating documentation, such as birth certificates, proof of citizenship, and marriage certificates, is stored in and easily accessible from the IDM



system. Integration with the host application in this way made for easy deployment, with virtually no employee retraining needed. Users throughout the organization rapidly accepted the new document management and content processing technology.

The Open Text repository contains a separate folder for each retiree for easy search ability. Each folder contains around 70 or 80 pieces of documentation relating to the individual. All documents are stored by type, "so if you happen to be looking for only qualified domestic relations orders certificates, it's easy enough to find one," explains Wemett.

The Open Text system is also used by the Auditors of Public Accounts, an oversight board that audits the RSD accounts. "Retirement auditors actually access the system the most," notes Wemett. "We're starting to take the completed audit and check it directly into the system rather than printing it on paper and scanning it in. It's done on an Excel® spreadsheet, and once the final audit is done, your benefit amount for your retirement is calculated, and that audit is checked into the system where it can't be changed."

The Open Text solution also integrates with an IBM mainframe to validate each member's identification number and auto-fill additional



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David Wemett,  
Technical Analyst, State of Connecticut

indexing information to the document repository. These technologies also integrate with a Mekel scanner to convert microfiche to images. In the early stages, the scanner also performed the back file conversion and fulfilled ad-hoc requests for images still on microfiche. The entire project was completed from start to finish, including hardware installation, in six weeks.

### **IDM system manages larger workloads with ease**

Open Text has enabled the RSD to handle increased workloads without adding incremental staff. When early-retirement incentives are issued by the state, applications typically increase dramatically. The efficiency of the IDM system allows the RSD to easily manage the peak volumes.

“There used to be a crew of perhaps eight to a dozen people here, whose sole job was filing and retrieving files and putting together manila folders to prepare someone to retire. They would have to retrieve documents from a series of filing cabinets and retrieve documents from a warehouse in another city. Now we have two people scanning documents as they arrive. It’s all in IDM.”

Even though the state still stores hard copies off site for regulatory purposes, since the system has been in place, the RSD has not had to retrieve a single piece of paper. “No one has ever said to me, ‘Get me this piece of paper.’ Everything is available online and we have 24/7/365 up time. I mean, it’s literally down maybe five minutes a month just for me to reboot it,” says Wemett. “It’s a super stable system.”

### **System passes with flying colors**

The project has been a success from the outset, and the State of Connecticut is on track to meet its goal of getting six million images online. The records of nearly all active state employees have already been converted, and the RSD is making steady progress toward converting roughly 300,000 microfiche files pertaining to former employees.

“This project has been so successful that the state employees are happy to demonstrate the system to other agencies and organizations,” says Wemett. “That’s completely unheard of in state government.”

“The long-term commitment and stability of Open Text service professionals, plus the experience and knowledge they bring, are very impressive,” he adds. “But the best part about their support team is that we rarely ever need them.”

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