

A common problem required an innovative solution: In August 2013 the Department of Education was storing more than 15,000 hard copy HR files at their Mount Nelson office. This included the files of current department staff as well as former staff less than 75 years of age.

The department was finding that their hard copy records management system made sharing this information within the state wide school network increasingly difficult. The information sharing process required Mount Nelson staff to physically locate requested records in an over-crowded storage facility before photocopying and posting the relevant pages, or faxing them. This tedious process was costing the department time, money and storage space. As an organisation valuing excellence and innovation in their programs and resources, the department decided to improve their information management systems through digitisation.

Options available to the department: The options open to the department boiled down to; digitising in-house; or outsourcing to a digital conversion provider.

Originally the department outsourced, but soon found that the high cost they were quoted would not match their budget.

They then embarked on an in-house solution. However, it was calculated that with four staff each scanning four files per day - in between performing their normal duties - the task would take 4.3 years to complete. Only by reshuffling their human resources to form a devoted digitisation team could this timeframe be shortened. However, without the equipment, expertise and workflow this would be very inefficient.

What the department needed was a service provider who could digitise their records according to their specific requirements, within the department's budget.

A serendipitous partnership: A relationship between the Department of Education and Acrodata was born when the department's Support Service Manager, Lisa Baker and Acrodata CEO John Groom crossed paths at an industry event. The conversation quickly fell upon digitisation and it became evident to Lisa that Acrodata could meet her organisation's



"The team at Acrodata were fantastic. They collected batches of files regularly and when we needed access to a file that was in their possession, it was prioritised, scanned and transferred to us within minutes."

Lisa Baker
Manager – Information
Support Service
Department of Education

information management needs – they provided a top quality digitisation service and it wouldn't break the bank.

Digitisation solution: Initially the DoE were looking to run the project over 24 months, however working closely with the department's staff, Acrodata formulated a six month digitisation strategy that would work around the DoE's priorities and at the same time enable production efficiencies that would allow for the best pricing outcome.

The process included transportation of 545 cartons of documents from the Mount Nelson site to Acrodata's head office in Hobart; document preparation and sorting; digitisation of 1,056,535 captured images and; post-processing services such as Quality Assurance, file indexing and optical character recognition (OCR) to enable text searchability. Ultimately the files were provided to the client ready for upload to TRIM.

Throughout the process Acrodata was also able to accommodate the department's urgent need for information, as well as add newly produced records into the scanning project scope.

Outcomes: Adopting a digital strategy has allowed the department to access its information quickly and easily share it between various sites across the state.

Under the old hard copy information sharing method an employee would be tied up on the phone; navigating the storage area; photocopying files; and sending them via post. Under the new digital system, records and information can be accessed directly by staff at various sites.

The human resources department has found the streamlined workflow provides benefits across the board as there are fewer delays in handling information, allowing staff to focus on their other tasks. For the management staff, their directives are also being met. They are remaining innovative, adopting best practice initiatives and allocating resources more effectively.

About the Department of Education

The Department of Education provide educational services to all Tasmanians through child and family centres, primary and high schools and, at the tertiary and vocational level, through colleges and the Tasmanian Polytechnic. The department's key drivers are to create successful learners, a skilled workforce, facilitate empowered leadership, create positive learning environments and engage community partnerships.

About Acrodata

Acrodata is a national provider of Records & Information Management (RIM) solutions. Established in 2006, we are focused on assisting organisations access, store and protect their critical corporate data. Our aim is to reduce overhead, increase productivity and mitigate risk.

Our services include:

- document digitisation;
- RIM consulting around electronic document & records management systems (EDRMS), digital workflow, compliance with the Archives Act, business classification schemes (BCS), retention and disposal schedules (RDS) and records sentencing; and
- software applications, including a.k.a.® Information Governance Software and cloud-based EDRMS.

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