CUSTOMER STORY

How Cardiff Council delivered budget savings with an improved information management strategy on SharePoint.

How can councils improve the experience of their constituents by providing a constantly evolving digital service, whilst also delivering huge budgetary savings, year on year?

This is the question facing many councils across the United Kingdom - a seemingly impossible task.

Cardiff Council used this challenge as a business case to overhaul its offering by developing an ambitious 'Organisational Development Programme'.

The programme highlighted that digital services were a key component to delivering improvement and efficiencies. Taking time to develop a strong digital infrastructure has allowed the Council to establish new and innovative ways of managing the city, as well as working with citizens and businesses.

Cardiff Council

The governing body for the City of Cardiff, one of the Principal Areas of Wales.

› 75 councillors
› 29 electoral wards

The Challenge

Cardiff Council had the challenge to deliver £50 million in savings, whilst improving the digital services accessed by staff and the public. They also wanted to encourage collaboration between different departments, enabling them to work better together.

The council staff, often working in multiple locations, needed to be agile and have access to information on the move.

The Goal

Like many organisations, the Council's information was stored in a variety of ways with only a basic information management framework in place. This arrangement was no longer fit for purpose and did not support the Council's vision to become more cost-effective and efficient in the running of its business operations.

When the Council began to look at how to improve its information management processes, it became clear that there were key issues that needed to be addressed. These included:

› **Refreshing out of date processes:** The information and document retention process needed to be streamlined.

› **Making Data easier to access:** Information retrieval was complex and manual. This meant information requests could not be dealt with efficiently.

› **Automating record management:** Having to manage records manually was driving ineffective Records Management.

› **Encouraging Knowledge Share within the Council:** Information was generally kept within teams and areas, limiting the ability to knowledge share, creating data silos.

› **Ensuring Data Protection:** Most documents were stored in file shares. This made it more complicated to ensure information policies were in line, particularly with the independent authority for data protection and freedom of information, the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

› **Collaboration:** The ability to collaborate across teams, whilst maintaining confidentiality, needed to be improved.

To address these challenges, the Council decided to implement an Electronic Document and Record Management Solution.

The Story So Far...

The Council viewed organising its information as a key component in the success of its Organisational Development Programme. As an organisation, handling millions of documents each year, it was important for the Council to implement an Information Management system which could save time and money, while simplifying processes.

After reviewing various products and vendors, the Council selected a solution from Automated Intelligence which would complement its existing Microsoft software investment. By opting for solutions from Automated Intelligence, the Council enhanced the existing SharePoint platform and increased user adoption.

AI solutions work in sync with Microsoft technology, allowing a seamless transfer of data and mitigating the costs of implementing a new system. The extended features in the Council's SharePoint system also ensure that the platform can support business change.

A Solution to enhance data protection and give better data insights:

AI.DATAPOINT enabled the Connect to Cardiff team to identify the amount of ROT (Redundant, Obsolete and Trivial) and duplicate files lurking in file shares. An initial drive analysis identified over 50,000 files on the file share. However, after a data analysis and cleanse took place, just 2,112 files were identified as crucial and were transferred in the final migration to SharePoint.

Crucial Files

Total Files
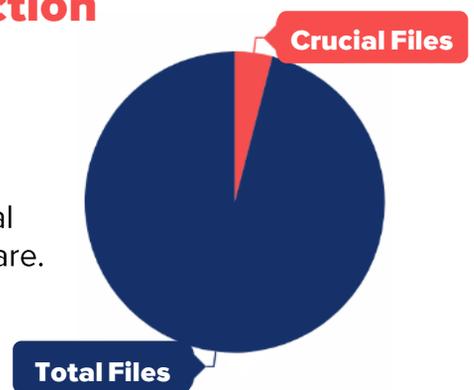
Mal Perry, Statistical Support Officer, said "Sorting out our files required a lot of work but completing the exercise meant we were able to clear a lot of unneeded files. Some teams reported that **up to 60% of their data was duplicate or redundant**."

"Carrying out the data cleanse has made us more compliant with data protection policies and means we have reduced, and more accurate data."

Using a SharePoint EDRMS, alongside AI.COMPLIANCE EXTENDER, has given the team added assurance that they are managing records correctly and retaining them for the appropriate time.

"I now have peace of mind that we are compliant with Records Management requirements which was something that caused me concern in the past. In future, I plan to create designated areas in SharePoint where we can better share information and collaborate on documents with colleagues in other service areas in one location, which will eradicate confusion over document versions. I am also looking at creating workflows so that I can assign tasks for my team which will also assist me in achieving my business improvement objectives."

A Solution to Support Automated Record Management and Refreshed Processes:

"From the start of this process it was clear that SharePoint would provide a far better way of working, with greater control of our information, such as pre-set retention times automatically archiving/destroying out of date or obsolete information. SharePoint also provides the Council with improved document management processes including editing, version control and alerts when documents are changed. A really big improvement is the interface with Outlook via AI.SYNCPOINT."

— Denise Fowler, Project, Resource & Quality Officer, Projects, Design and Development team
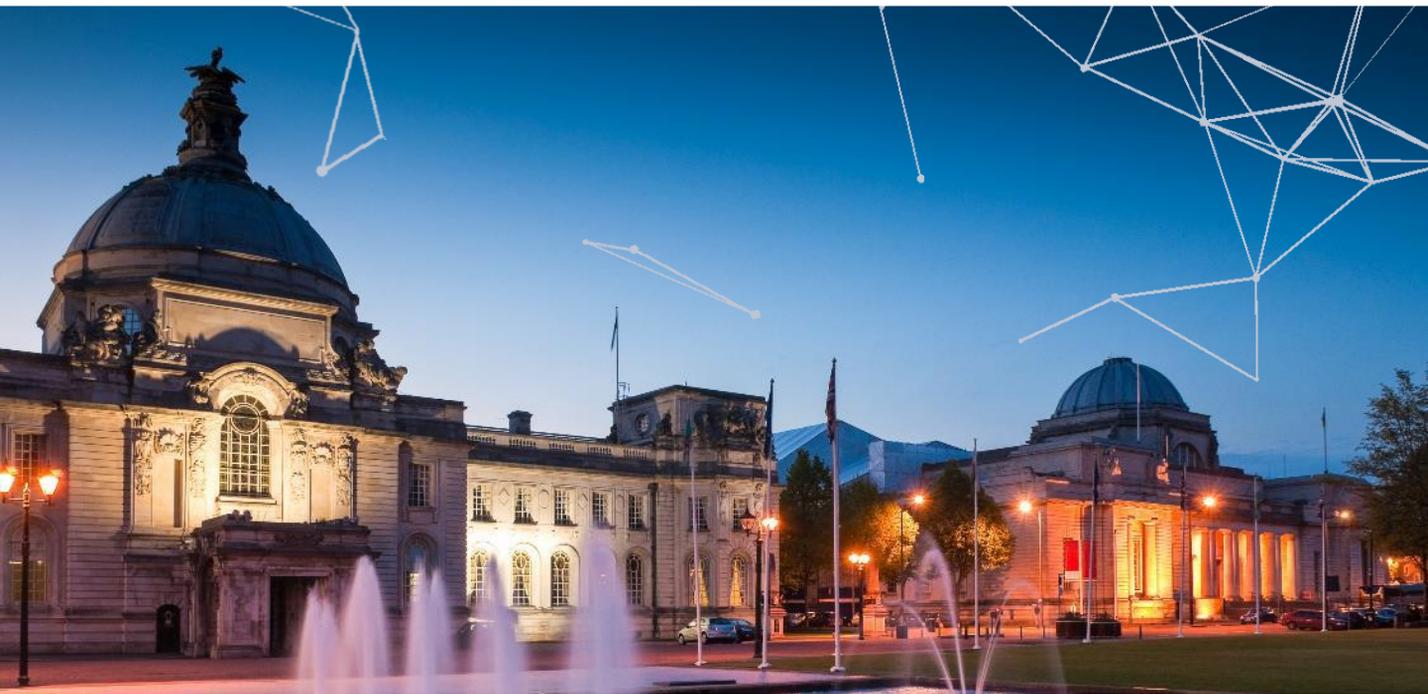
A Solution to Make Data Easier to Access, and Encourage Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration:

Mal Perry, Statistical Support Manager and C2C's nominated liaison officer for the SharePoint take on played an integral part in liaising with the SharePoint Project Team:

"By committing the time and resources needed to work closely with the SharePoint project team from the offset, we have really taken ownership of our site. Our understanding of the business and feedback from our agents has been crucial in informing how the site should be designed and managed to ensure it meets the business needs of C2C and to make sure information is quicker and easier for our agents to find, resulting in a better service for our customers.

We have designed the site so that it is visual and intuitive, using images for links to key information and utilising lists, views and filters to make information easier and faster for our agents to find in order to assist our customers."

Impact and Going Forward

From the beginning, the Council had a clear vision for improving its information management. This meant that by developing the existing SharePoint system to incorporate new tools and features, it developed a robust records management system which is adaptable and supports business change. The benefits of this approach include:

Improved Information Management Capability:

› Improves quality, accuracy and relevancy of information stored in documents and records

› Enables the implementation of the new protective markings scheme, as part of the Government Classification Scheme

› Mitigates risk to the Authority regarding compliance with a range of government legislation and internal policies

› Manages the lawful destruction or transfer of records

› Effective email management.

› Reduces the risk of digital information being inappropriately accessed, altered or deleted by providing greater security and access control features

Increased Business Efficiency:

› Enables efficient Freedom of Information (FOI) Request response

› Facilitates better retrieval of, and access to, information with consistent naming, titling and metadata management

› Enables staff to view, read or share information simultaneously from their desktops, through a collaborative working system

› Increases efficiency and effectiveness in job performance in respect of record and document management

› Reduces duplication by capturing information only once

› Streamlines and automates work practices and business processes

› Incorporates the ability to manage and search for relevant paper files

› Enables paper storage savings both onsite and off-site

Supports Organisational Development Programme:

› Simplifies the underlying infrastructure. A central store is provided for staff to capture their digital documents and information, replacing uncontrolled shared drives, email folders and network drives

› Supports the Council's SharePoint Strategy for other improvement projects, such as the paperless office and customer self-service account strategies

› Allows the Council to be more open and transparent. The EDRMs allows managers to approve records for public dissemination, making them available via an external SharePoint site

› Provides the opportunity to make technical data storage savings of 40% by only storing relevant information

"I now have peace of mind that we are compliant with Records Management requirements which was something that caused me concern in the past."

Mal Perry
Statistical Support Officer

AI Automated
Intelligence