



● Managing vital information to promote collaborative working ●

The Background

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is an independent government department responsible for food safety and hygiene, working with businesses to help them produce safe food, and, local authorities to enforce food safety regulations.

The Requirement

Due to expansion, the FSA reached a point where it had no controlled and accessible space to store and share important information. This had a direct impact on collaboration, promoting 'silo' style working, with email boxes used as personal storage, and causing issues with capturing information in a controlled environment.

As the FSA's strategy is to be 'the most trusted source of information on safety for food', it needed a better solution. A set of processes ensuring everyone knew what information was available, where it was stored and how to make the best use of it to advise and inform the public and organisations. Their key aims were to:

- Create a 'corporate memory'
- Enable and promote collaborative working
- Provide better information sharing
- Promote informed decision-making
- Reduce duplication of documents

The FSA wanted each business unit to improve its own processes – including use of case files, version history and read-only access to core documents across the organisation. It was also important to increase clarity about the information held and where it was stored – aiming to achieve a 'culture change' within the organisation, so that information was no longer seen as belonging to individuals.

The Challenge

The solution needed to be highly reliable and simple to use, with the ability to adjust easily if required. An easy link to Outlook for filing emails was essential, as was the ability to access documents from different locations, including home. The FSA also needed to be confident that it provided the right levels of security for the organisation.

Other key requirements included the ability to capture records, and provide a flexible granular system where administrators could choose who was able to do what, e.g. Internal Auditing works in a very different way to Commercial, so the solution needed to suit all departments.



The Solution

The implementation of an Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) solution was a company-wide initiative, and the first step in realising the FSA’s ambitious information strategy. It wanted more than a collaboration tool, a true EDRM solution – one which would support a functional file plan and be easy to use ‘straight out of the box’, as it needed to be delivered quickly.

The FSA created a requirements document based on MoReq standards. Various solutions were reviewed and Wisdom was selected as the best for the organisation’s requirements. The management team were also impressed with the very strong references and the high degree of satisfaction from existing Wisdom users. They felt that the Daisy team were honest and informative about the solution, and gave them confidence in what the solution would deliver, and how the two businesses would work together.

Wisdom supports four different locations and a wide variety of users – including specialist policy developers, scientists, field based staff, corporate services staff, procurement, finance, HR, organisation development and IT. It also supports the Private Office, which oversees all of the documents relating to the FSA, and the Board – who are key users.

As part of the implementation Daisy also provided file planning workshops, support for the configuration of the file plans, and full training for administrators and users.

The Results

Feedback shows that users particularly like the file plans, the facility to share information, the version control capability and search functions. Everybody now has access to the same documents, with better structure of information and the ability for this information to be circulated via links in emails, rather than as attachments.

The Wisdom solution is an overall success, with 90% of people in every directorate using it actively. Key benefits include:

- Ability to file emails as records
- Ability to enforce better email governance
- Ability to email links to documents, to cut down on duplication and data volumes
- Making key documents read-only, with open access to everybody, so staff do not keep their own versions
- Uploading of past information so all staff have access to relevant documentation
- Creating templates so all projects follow the same process
- Enabling the use of case files to manage and structure information

With Wisdom in place, the FSA can now have a thorough re-think about how it uses its information. Everyone within the organisation can see the functional file plan and understand what is available, even if some of the lower levels are restricted access. Wisdom also helps with FOI requests and makes it easier for the FSA to comply with the Public Records Act.

As Jenny Desira, Acting Information and Knowledge Management Team Leader, states:

“The key aim for this project was not cost efficiency, but to remove the creation of new paper records. This has certainly been a success, with Wisdom now being the default for storing business documents and emails, adopted and owned by the users. Introducing Wisdom has raised the profile and importance of Information Management within in the FSA, with buy-in and approval from the CEO down.”

About Wisdom

Wisdom EDRM provides complete lifecycle management of documents and records, both electronic and paper using a contemporary technology platform that seamlessly and invisibly integrates with line of business systems throughout the organisation. Wisdom has been accredited by the UK National Archives since 1999.