AvePoint®

ICHIHARA CITY

Customer Location
Japan

Industry
Public Sector

Platform
SharePoint Server 2013
Windows Server 2012
SQL Server 2014

Critical Needs

- Implementation of SharePoint document management functionality to increase information findability and overall productivity
- Creation of new employee search system based on employee profile information using SharePoint's People Search
- Improved operational design to accelerate SharePoint end user adoption

Solution
DocAve Administrator
DocAve Report Center
DocAve Storage Manager
DocAve Content Manager
DocAve Backup & Restore
DocAve Replicator
AvePoint Meetings

"AvePoint stepped in and filled in the missing piece of the puzzle to make our collaboration vision complete."

- Daisuke Koda,
Information System Group Lead,
Ichihara City

Ichihara City Simplifies Microsoft® SharePoint® Permissions Management for 2,250 Users with DocAve®

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

- Automated permissions management for 2,250 users with the ability to implement changes in bulk, reducing the burden on IT
- Ensured organizational governance policies were met, with the ability to automatically revert out-of-policy changes in real time
- Generated usage reports to monitor performance and make informed decisions

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Located in Chiba Prefecture, Ichihara City has a population of approximately 280,000. With one of the biggest petrochemical complexes in coastal Japan, the city is the top shipper of manufactured goods throughout the Chiba Prefecture. The city also has rich historical, natural, and cultural heritages, such as the Kominato Line and Yōrō Keikoku Okukiyosumi Prefectural Natural Park. It is also the proud home town of JEF United Ichihara Chiba, a professional football club in the Japanese professional soccer league, J-League.

CUSTOMER INTERVIEW

In 2009, Ichihara City implemented Microsoft products such as Microsoft Exchange Server 2007, Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS) 2007, and Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2007 to accelerate information sharing amongst employees and increase productivity. In 2014, the city decided to restructure its information sharing system.

What kind of changes did SharePoint bring to your organization? Also, what was the challenge you faced after implementing it?

Mr. Daisuke Koda, Information System Group Lead, Information Management Team, Ichihara City:
We tried Lotus Notes before, but we had difficulty customizing it. SharePoint is relatively easy to use, even for people without an IT background. We believe part of the reason for this is that many people are familiar with Office products. For example, even employees from non-IT departments were able to build a SharePoint site after attending a few training sessions. This led to each project having a project web site, and it helped workers share information with one another. However, we were not able to spend enough time preparing for the deployment due to time restrictions, so we were not using SharePoint to its full potential.
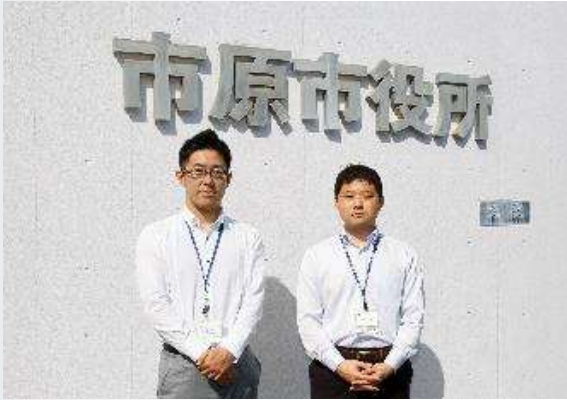
You decided to restructure the city's employee information system in 2014. Why did you decide to continue using Microsoft products for this?

Mr. Koda:
The biggest reasons were Exchange and Skype for Business (formerly Lync) and how well the two products work together. We like Exchange and Lync so much that we cannot imagine doing our jobs without them. As for SharePoint, we decided to upgrade to SharePoint 2013 without hesitation. Unlike other collaborative software platforms, SharePoint 2013 offers enough flexibility to accommodate the different needs of each department. We learned a lot about SharePoint since implementing it for the first time in 2009, so it felt like a natural choice for us. Also, we liked how the platform's functions developed between the 2007, 2010, and 2013 versions, along with the increased number of use cases it could meet.

When Ichihara City started to plan its SharePoint restructuring project, the city needed to find solutions for the following three challenges:

・ Implementation of SharePoint document management functionality to increase information findability and overall productivity. Relying on file servers for document management made search slower and frequently caused the backup system to fail.

・ Creation of a new employee search system based on employee profile information using SharePoint's People Search feature, offering employees an improved search system to better find people and content through SharePoint.

・ Improved operational design to accelerate SharePoint end user adoption. Employees failed to take advantage of

previously created SharePoint sites, so important information was scattered throughout emails and file servers, making it difficult to find and utilize.

The city decided to use SharePoint for information management throughout the organization. Why were file servers alone not meeting the city's information sharing needs?

Mr. Koda:
There were three problems we encountered: insufficient governance over documents, lowered findability, and inability to recover files. We tried our best to let employees know about the document management rules for our file server, but files still ended up scattered all over the place. Then when you wanted to find certain information, you had no idea where to find it and you ended up searching for a long time. You could use the "Search Files" function, which is a native function for Windows File Server, but the accuracy and length of time it took left a lot to be desired. "Full Text Search" also took too long, so you ended up relying on your memory alone to find the files you needed. This lack of a reliable search functionality caused a huge dent in productivity.

When it came to recovering files, we used to get quite a few data restore requests from employees who accidentally deleted files they needed. However, it was neither simple nor easy to do this. Due to the restrictions in the file server's capacity, we could only restore file versions from up to 3 to 4 days prior. We could not, for example, restore the file back to the state it was one hour ago. In that case, the employee needed to start the document from scratch all over again, which was ultimately a waste of time and resources.

What kind of changes did you see when you switched from the file server to SharePoint?

Mr. Koda:
First, we took advantage of the enterprise search functionality in SharePoint. The user can narrow down the search by modified time, creator, type of file, or location. They can also search a wider scope of information – from documents to lists. SharePoint shortened the time it took to search for the files, and the findability of information improved. As for file recovery, the employees themselves can restore files thanks to the recycling bin function in SharePoint. Each department site has a document library, and users store files for the department

sites they own. When deleted, the file goes into the recycling bin. The file will disappear after a certain period of time, but users who want their file back right after realizing they accidentally deleted it can now restore it themselves, which saves time for all of us.

Is using SharePoint's native functionality enough to ensure proper governance of documents?

Mr. Yoshifumi Ando, Information System Group Lead, Information Management Team, Ichihara City:
The city had a specific rule for our document management system: Users who have view-only permissions cannot create files/folders or change file names from the top layer to the third layer. From the fourth layer, users are allowed to do so. This rule was created and used for the file server because we did not want users to make up their own classifications. We wanted to bring this rule into SharePoint.

It is possible to implement this rule with SharePoint's native functionality by assigning user-specific permissions to each folder in which we allow documents to be created. However, this would cause a serious slowdown in SharePoint's response time. Many Systems Integrators told us that it would be very difficult for us to keep the rule for that reason. However, AvePoint made it possible. With DocAve Administrator from AvePoint, we can easily prevent users from changing names or creating files/folders that inherit these permissions. We are pleased that we can keep this important rule in our new SharePoint system without requiring much time from administrators due to automation.

DocAve prevents users from creating files/folders from the top layer to the third layer
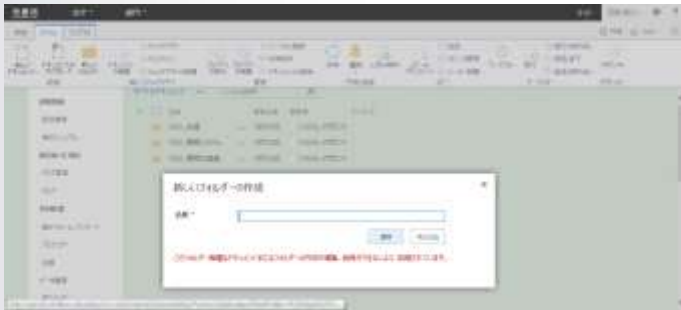
In order to create an environment in which people from different divisions or teams can share information and collaborate with each other, the city required a system that

enables users to search information by department and employee skills by importing employee profile information from the HR database into SharePoint.

Can you please describe the employee search system the city used previously?

Mr. Koda:
The system, which was developed by a city employee, worked with our HR database (SQL Server), which managed employee information and showed pages dynamically. It also showed information about employee presence from Skype for Business, with statuses including "available", "away", "busy", or "do not disturb". Based on that information, employees could choose to contact their colleagues by calling, emailing, or instant messaging.

Mr. Ando:
The main issue we had with the previous employee search system was that it lacked the expansiveness of SharePoint's enterprise search functionality as well as integration with the platform. Employees could only search based on matching letters. What we wanted from SharePoint was to be able to show the related results for searches for employee names or departments. For example, the search results for the word "network" would also show my name, documents I have created, and people who are connected to me. If you find an employee in the search result, it also shows his or her status through Skype for Business so you can start talking immediately via the instant messaging service.

Ichihara City gained this functionality by importing the information from the HR database and Active Directory into user profiles in SharePoint. The imported information included department, Employee ID number, name, extension number, email address, transfer record, training record, tasks, and certification.

What did you want to accomplish with the People Search function of SharePoint?

Mr. Ando:
In Japan's local government, employees frequently transfer to other departments. For newly transferred employees searching existing documents, we wanted them to also be able to learn who has the most knowledge on a given topic by showing the information about the employees who created the related

documents. For example, Mr. Koda is the most knowledgeable person about the portal system in our office. If an employee searches the word "network", he or she will find a document created by Mr. Koda last year and the search result will indicate that he is the person to contact about this topic. This was impossible using the file server. SharePoint gives us a much more powerful and effective employee search function.

By searching the word "network", the result will show users the names of employees who have the most knowledge on that topic along with their profiles and documents they created.

When the city built its collaboration system in 2009, more than 100 SharePoint sites were created for departments and teams. However, end users rarely used those sites. Since the city did not have an administration tool, it was also impossible for the Information Management team to correct and maintain permissions for all of the sites. To improve that experience, the city needed to build a thorough plan for improved SharePoint site design, library configuration, and overall system functionality for the next six years. In order to achieve this, the city divided sites into five categories: office, department, team, project, and personal. Each category was configured to have a distinct design.

What did you do to encourage end users to use their SharePoint sites more often?

Mr. Koda:
For team portal sites, we divided them into two categories: internal and external use. These categories were created by employee request. The employees wanted to separate information shared within their department from that which was shared with those outside of it. "For external use" sites are equipped with online forms and questionnaires for external users. Also, a web part is placed on the top of the page that lists members of the department and their roles so users know who belongs to the department.

Are these sites constructed to maximize the findability of information in SharePoint?

Mr. Koda:
Yes. For instance, we created a document library as a template to save manuals within the "For external use" and "For internal use" sites. When users save the manuals in this location, the document gets tagged as a "manual" automatically. By default, SharePoint allows users to tag documents as "manuals" by

choosing it from the drop-down list when saving, but we made it even easier through auto-tagging.

The top of the "For external use" site, which lists the personnel on the team.

Mr. Ando:
We don't allow users to tag their documents on their own. This rule is applied to all items that can be searched using SharePoint, including discussion board posts. If a user is looking for a manual on budgeting, for instance, they can type keywords like "manual" and "budget" and then filter by modified time and date. The search result will lead them to the right manual and save them significant time looking for the document.

Users can save manuals using the template in the internal site for their department. The documents are tagged automatically.

How has the overall design of your portal changed?

Mr. Ando:
We placed icons on the top of the portal site to lead users to the frequently accessed content and encourage them to use SharePoint more often. For example, we have icons which lead to our help page and software center (download site). We also have a web part displaying the number of unfinished tasks, which is linked to other document management systems outside of SharePoint. The portal has a single sign on (SSO) system, so it also works well with other systems. When employees come into the office and start their laptops, the portal site is automatically displayed on their screens, ensuring it is seen by all users at least once daily.

Mr. Koda:
When designing our new portal on SharePoint 2013, we thought, "What can we do to help users reach the document they are looking for with fewer clicks?" That question drove us to work with AvePoint to come up with a streamlined design for the portal. Another example of this redesign is an icon that says "Go to My Team Site", which enables users to go directly from the portal site to their own team site.

What are some others ways your users benefit from the new system on SharePoint 2013?

Mr. Koda:
In SharePoint 2013, users who belong to the same team can edit each others' posts on the discussion boards, allowing more seamless social collaboration. This function was not available in MOSS 2007.

AvePoint supported the city throughout the requirement definition, construction, operations, and management phases of its SharePoint project. Now that the project is in its maintenance and support phase, what is your opinion about AvePoint so far?

Mr. Koda:
AvePoint, with many offices all over the world, made its proposal based on various compelling customer case studies from both Japan and abroad. We explained what we wanted for the organization and AvePoint brought back ideas about how to implement the SharePoint functionality we needed to support each case. AvePoint stepped in and filled in the missing piece of the puzzle to make our collaboration vision complete.

The main page of the portal site. Icons for frequently used content are placed on the right side, which makes navigating within portals easier and faster.

Mr. Ando:
We also appreciate how fast AvePoint resolves any issues we face. Even when we encounter a complex issue, AvePoint resolves it quickly, often working closely with Microsoft Japan.

Ichihara City's upgraded SharePoint portal was launched for end users in March 2015. What is your plan for accelerating the adoption on the new platform?

Mr. Koda:
Compared to the construction of our previous SharePoint environment in 2009, we had more time, so we were able to design a system to fit the organization's vision for the next six years. Having said that, SharePoint needs to be continually maintained, even after deployment. After deployment, we would like to take advantage of the usage analysis service offered by AvePoint to make our portal more flexible as it develops throughout the organization. We would like to offer end user training on the useful functions of SharePoint, such as People Search and file search.

Mr. Ando:
Now that we have a system to collect information in SharePoint, we would like to improve the accuracy of search. Combined with Exchange and Skype for Business, we hope this

will maximize platform efficiency and promote SharePoint among users.

Ichihara City is also planning to implement AvePoint Meetings, which is a SharePoint app designed to provide a real-time, synchronized collaboration space for streamlined meeting discussions, decisions, and related content, consolidated into one easily searchable format. How do you plan to use that?

Mr. Koda:
There are many ongoing projects throughout our office, and these often require numerous meetings. City staff running projects are often extremely busy and do not want to perform searches to get the documents they need because it would cost time. AvePoint Meetings would enable us to keep meeting-related documents such as minutes within in a central repository. The app integrates with Microsoft Outlook, so users can easily run and keep records of meetings through a program they already use every day. AvePoint Meetings will help busy departments manage their tasks much better and enhance productivity.

ABOUT AVEPOINT

AvePoint is the established leader in enabling enterprise collaboration across platforms and devices. Focusing on helping enterprises in their digitization journey to enable their information workers to collaborate with confidence, AvePoint is first to market with a unique solution that centralizes access and control of information assets residing in disparate collaboration and document management systems on-premises and in the cloud. AvePoint, Inc. is headquartered and maintains its principal operational center in Jersey City, NJ, with wholly owned operational centers in the USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Japan, Singapore, and China. AvePoint is a Depth Managed Microsoft Gold Certified Application Development Partner and Gold Certified Collaboration and Content Partner as well as a US Government GSA provider via strategic partnerships.

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