

Frustrated by the inability to easily scale their ECM deployment, North Idaho College migrated to Etrieve for a true enterprise-level approach that would grow with their institution.

“There was a culture on campus that our previous content management system was just not the right fit. In Etrieve by Softdocs, we’ve found a solution that finally feels right.”

KEN WARDINSKY

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

QUICK FACTS

- ▶ A desire to maximize ROI drove NIC’s search for a new ECM solution that could easily be adopted by additional offices, including financial aid and the business office.
- ▶ Simplifying integration to their ERP system, Ellucian Colleague®, was key for NIC. As a result, the institution’s search was narrowed to Ellucian’s partner network.

KEY PLAYERS

- ▶ Ken Wardinsky, Chief Information Officer

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Exorbitant costs limited the scalability of their initial ECM deployment
- ▶ Users could not access ECM and ERP systems through the same browser

SOLUTIONS

- ▶ Etrieve by Softdocs™

ERP

- ▶ Ellucian Colleague

**NORTH IDAHO COLLEGE**

COEUR D’ALENE, ID

North Idaho College, located in Coeur d’Alene, is a community college serving five counties throughout the Idaho panhandle. Offering both credit and non-credit programs, NIC serves students interested in obtaining certificates and degrees in a range of academic transfer and career & technical education programs. Outside of their main campus near Lake Coeur d’Alene, NIC’s services can also be found at a number of outreach centers and regional locations that include Adult Education, Head Start and Workforce Training Centers.



As costly implementation fees restricted further expansion of a deployed document imaging system, North Idaho College implemented an enterprise content management solution which boosted the institution's ROI.



North Idaho College's first foray into content management was far from an enterprise-level approach. As paper-heavy processes and piles of records inundated their department, human resources employees

opted to digitize records by implementing a document imaging system. After implementation was complete, two other departments quickly approached IT with a desire to introduce the same system within their own departments and processes. In response, IT grew the institution's deployment of this imaging system to include the registrar and admissions offices, expanding a one-off solution across campus with mixed results.

Ken Wardinsky, Chief Information Officer at NIC, spoke on some of the challenges NIC experienced expanding their deployment to additional offices, "To bring another office onto our previous imaging solution, ImageNow, an overwhelming amount of preparation and labor was required, not to mention the costly implementation fees which all but restricted further expansion."

"We knew we needed to revisit the entire system in general."

With additional departments wanting to embrace document imaging, NIC chose to weigh how much they had invested in consulting, licensing, hardware and maintenance costs, over the 10-12 years ImageNow had been deployed on campus, against the benefits enjoyed

by users within the three offices where the solution had been deployed. This financial analysis drove NIC's decision to look for an alternate solution that would allow them to more effectively and affordably introduce the benefits of document imaging across campus.

NIC also recognized this search for a new imaging solution as an opportunity to more fully embrace enterprise content management, expanding what the institution could accomplish with their next technology deployment. Wardinsky shared, "For a long time, we had been looking for that one missing piece – a solution that would allow us to move away from paper forms and shift our processes into electronic workflows."

Whereas ImageNow had been used primarily for back-office functions, the institution wanted to deploy a solution that would allow them to create and utilize electronic workflows capable of integrating directly with Ellucian Colleague. Understanding the value and importance of having robust integrations linking their ERP with other deployed solutions, such as an enterprise content management solution, NIC narrowed their search to ECM providers within Ellucian's partner network.

Wardinsky mentioned that the College also wanted to feel confident in the long-term viability of a prospective partner. "We saw our first document imaging system go through multiple acquisitions and an accompanying lapse in support," he explained. "We wanted to create consistency and improve the experience of our users by choosing a long-term ECM solution."

The Search for Enterprise Content Management

While searching for alternative solutions, NIC sought feedback from other Colleague schools by gauging peer reviews on Ellucian forums. There, the institution confirmed their positive evaluation of Etrieve by Softdocs.

Wardinsky commented how helpful that feedback was in NIC's decision to move forward with Etrieve. "In reading reviews from other schools, we became confident that not only would Etrieve readily scale with our institution, but it would allow us to introduce e-forms and electronic workflows into processes across campus—a functionality our institution has really needed."

NIC's Governance Committee also looked at the costs of using the enterprise solution to extend the benefits of ECM to the financial aid and business offices. In comparing the costs with their existing solution, it became clear that Softdocs' licensing agreement would best allow cost-effective expansion.

"In comparing the costs of implementing our previous solution in just those two offices, to the cost of moving to Etrieve by Softdocs, it became an easy decision," said Wardinsky.

Moving Forward with Etrieve

With a smooth migration and issue-free implementation, NIC experienced rapid acceptance and use of Etrieve in human resources, the registrar and admissions offices.

"Our users really like the UI. They find pulling up information to be much more intuitive and easier to use than with our old system," said Wardinsky. "As CIO, I've gone from hearing about difficulties to only hearing updates and no major issues."

In fact, the implementation of the first three departments went so well, the institution finished with a number of professional services' implementation hours remaining. NIC chose to leverage those hours to begin the immediate migration of financial aid.

Due to the large number of forms associated with financial aid, the College was excited to replace the task of manually recreating PDFs each year, with an Etrieve feature that automatically updates the date on federal forms. "That will really make life easier for our financial aid office," said Wardinsky. "We have had several conversations with the Softdocs team, and their expertise in the area of higher education financial aid is a huge win for our College."

"Our choice to implement Etrieve by Softdocs represented a large investment for our institution. It's a more natural part of our workflows. We're very happy we made the switch."

ABOUT SOFTDOCS

Softdocs is a privately-held software company focused on the development, implementation and support of enterprise content management, electronic forms and workflow solutions for the education marketplace.

With a next generation, fully browser-based platform, Softdocs' solutions integrate directly with existing ERP solutions. Institutions are able to eliminate the need for paper-based records and processes institution-wide from student records, finance, human resources, and beyond.