



Case Study 09

Insight delivers Freedom of Information Act Compliancy to Landmarc

Through the design and implementation of an automated data archiving and retrieval solution.

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Requirement

The Freedom of Information act has given the public the right to make a request for any information held by a public authority. The main issue faced by organisations is not only sourcing, centralising and archiving existing and future information but the retrieval of this information on request. Landmarc, due to the nature of the contract with the MOD that they held, required a solution to deliver data compliancy.

Solution

Insight worked with Landmarc to understand how and where their existing information was stored and viewed this in the context of FIA. The solutions incorporated automatic data discovery, archiving and retrieval tools that would deliver compliancy without sky-rocketing storage costs.

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In March 2003 Landmarc Support Services Limited won the contract to provide support services to the Army Training Estate (ATE) as well as the wider ranging estate management role of Defence Estates (DE). Used by the Armed Forces to train soldiers to full operational capability, the Estate comprises some 130 camps, training areas and ranges in England, Scotland and Wales covering approximately 1 per cent (200,000 hectares) of mainland Britain.

One of the largest PPP projects ever awarded by the MOD, the contract is worth in excess of £600 million and involved the TUPE transfer of around 1300 staff. Support and management services provided by Landmarc include information management and bookings, training and range operations, built and rural estate and accommodation services, catering and professional support to Defence Estates.

The introduction of efficiency improving innovations, new management systems and commercial best practice has allowed the Army to concentrate on its core business of training the Armed Forces for front-line operations.

The launch of the Freedom of Information Act (FIA) in 2000 had very specific implications for Landmarc. As Graham Drinkwater of Landmarc explained 'FIA was designed by the government to enable people to gain access to information held by public authorities. In the context of the Landmarc contract, this meant complying with two particular

elements of the Act: the 'Publication Scheme' and the 'General Right of Access'.

Publication schemes enforced that every public authority must make some information available through a Publication Scheme. Information included in such a scheme must be routinely made available to the public by the organisation. The Publication Scheme has been implemented by the government as both a public commitment to make certain information available and a guide to how that information can be obtained.

The General Rights of Access element of the FIA gives the public the right to make a request for any information held by a public authority and the authority has to comply with the Act by responding. This right came into force on the 1st January 2005.

Stephen Hutchings of the Insight Solutions Group details how this has impacted the public sector organisations. 'The passing of the FIA held immediate implications for organisations: firstly where is the information I need currently stored? Secondly, how do I retrieve this information and thirdly how do I create an archive for new and existing information? From an infrastructure design perspective the key issues were storage and a solution that would automate archiving and retrieval of vast quantities of information that existed and would be generated by such organisations in the future.'



Insight was excellent throughout the duration of the project, from initial discussions through to technology workshops, design and implementation. They understood the issues faced by Landmarc and were able to place this in the context of FIA. Data compliancy issues are now being faced by organisations across many markets; I would thoroughly recommend Insight to such organisations as a partner with proven IT solutions expertise.



As Landmarc's preferred supplier and Enterprise Software Advisor (ESA) for Microsoft products, Insight was approached to help find a solution to the issues posed by FIA compliancy. 'Insight had pro-actively been discussing FIA with Landmarc prior to commencement of this project' details Graham. 'In our experience, Insight have worked in a strategic capacity with us and delivered tangible cost savings across other elements of our infrastructure. On this basis Insight was a logical choice to engage on this project.'

Landmarc required a solution to address the following key business issues:

- FIA compliancy
- Reduction in storage costs
- Centralised information repository
- Creation of company-wide storage policies
- Design and implementation of automated information archiving and retrieval tool

'Landmarc was suffering from the same issues that were affecting businesses of all sizes' continued Stephen Hutchings. Primarily these issues revolve around the fact that email is being used as a file-store; the reality is it was simply not designed to act in this capacity. Employees tend to keep all sent and received items - the storage implications are obvious yet difficult to manage.' Insight was able to present, assess and critique the best solution for Landmarc through 'technology workshops'. The workshop approach enabled Insight to demonstrate technology from multiple vendors 'this is the major advantage of being independent' explains Stephen Hutchings 'we were able to present potential solutions from IBM, EMC2, Microsoft and VERITAS/KVS and work with Landmarc to determine which archiving and retrieval solution best met their needs. The recent acquisition and addition of KVS' archiving software suite by VERITAS offered a solution that effectively supported FIA compliance requirements whilst driving down Landmarc's storage management costs.'

VERITAS/KVS was chosen as the solution that would best meet the customer needs; the ability to customise this solution to correlate directly with Landmarc requirements was the key deciding factor in its selection. 'The solution proposed from VERITAS/KVS offered the level of automation to the archiving and retrieving process that we were looking for' explains Graham. 'Automation was vital to ensuring that the investment not only met the immediate requirements of FIA but did so without the manual intervention, and the subsequent time loss, of our IT staff.' Landmarc had already identified the need to create a storage policy as a guideline for all end-users. The creation of such a policy would enable the design of a solution that directly mapped against the policy criteria. This approach ensured that Landmarc knew the exact functionality resulting from the implementation.

Landmarc was instrumental in transferring knowledge to Insight. They were also very clear on what they required from the solution and how the proposed storage policy would work and be implemented. By imposing storage quotas on each user the policy would immediately assist in reducing storage costs.

The storage of data on 'local' drives posed a big issue in terms of centralising data. This challenge was met through the implementation of an automated agent that sourced locally stored files across the network and stored these centrally for ease of retrieval. Landmarc now has FIA compliancy through a bespoke front end that has automated, and as a result manages, all electronic information on their network. The centralised storage incorporated into the project is key to the successful and efficient retrieval of information within the prescribed FIA timelines. Graham Drinkwater of Landmarc concludes 'Insight was excellent throughout the duration of the project, from initial discussions through to technology workshops, design and implementation. They understood the issues faced by Landmarc and were able to place this in the context of FIA. Data compliancy issues are now being faced by organisations across many markets; I would thoroughly recommend Insight to such organisations as a partner with proven IT solutions expertise.'