

University of Western Sydney learning the benefits of TRIM Context®



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Introduction

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) has found the introduction of an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) is empowering its staff, by improving access to corporate knowledge; maintaining corporate history; and most importantly, unifying the organisation's vast array of document based information. The introduction of TRIM Context as UWS EDRMS has meant that the University is now one of the leaders in best practice for managing and sharing corporate knowledge enterprise wide.

The challenge

UWS is one of the largest universities in Australia: its six campuses across eleven different sites in Greater Western Sydney offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs in more than 100 course areas, and provide academic services to over 36,000 enrolled students.

The large number of students and the wide geographical spread of campuses caused the university concern about the challenges and complexities of daily business document sharing. In 2001, the University's IT Directorate conducted an investigation into enterprise application architectures. The investigation concluded that there was need for a unified system to more efficiently share business documents between all campuses and departments. The new system had to provide:

- Document check-in and check-out
- Automated version control
- Interest profiles and document subscriptions
- Templates
- Categorisation and meta-data
- Inter-campus and intra-campus document sharing
- Single user directory
- Portable and off-line documents
- Multi-format viewing and document preview
- Web browser access and multi-platform access
- Desktop application integration
- Search interface
- Document archiving and retention
- Workflow engine
- Collaboration capabilities
- Integration with existing systems
- Web publishing integration
- Document naming enforcement
- Document Capture and scanning

While this functionality would address the document sharing issue, the system also had to be easily adapted to the University's existing IT Architecture, including a network spreading over 9,000 square kilometres.





TRIM Context was already being used by small sections throughout the University for managing paper records, so a decision was made to investigate whether the full functionality of TRIM Context could meet the University's entire information management requirements.

The investigation was performed by an independent consultant, who concluded that TRIM Context would meet the information management requirements as identified by the study, whilst retaining the flexible architecture required for in-house applications. Sign off was given for TRIM Context to be implemented as the information management solution that would support business processes at UWS.

The implementation

The University's Records Management Policy devolved to each organisational unit the responsibility for managing its own records. For the implementation of TRIM Context, one (or more) staff from each unit were nominated to coordinate the overall management of records for that unit.

With the delegation of responsibility to the business units, it was important that prior to the rollout, each unit completed an information management analysis. The outcome of this process was a 'Records Information Form' (RIF) which became the blueprint for how files would be created in TRIM Context and managed throughout the recordkeeping continuum.

The user desktop roll-out commenced in 2003. The University implemented a Standard Operating Environment on all user desktops and then deployed the TRIM client remotely. This made for a consistent deployment and also made the delivery of future application upgrades a particularly simple process for administrators and users. Remote deployment was critical in selection of the application, as the University's IT Department is centrally controlled.

The Architecture

TRIM Context is a D-COM multi-tiered application that has a solution for even the most complex customer sites. The strength and flexibility of TRIM Context's architecture is such that it can enhance performance at sites with WAN issues (due to bandwidth and network latency). The University has a high bandwidth optical fibre network so the IT Directorate did not need to consider this feature of TRIM Context's architecture. A centrally located server has been implemented to manage all the components of TRIM Context.

The Benefits

The University began the staged rollout of TRIM Context in August 2004. Michael Smith, Manager, Records and Archive Management Services, is pleased with the results to date. "The introduction of TRIM Context as the University information management system has not only achieved the initial business requirement of sharing documents across campuses, but has also provided other business benefits". Michael adds "the University's introduction of TRIM Context has assisted in the compliance with information management legislation such as:

- State Records Act, 1998 (NSW)
- Privacy Legislation
- Freedom of Information

Michael says in an organisation as large and geographically spread as the University of Western Sydney, it would have been impossible to meet compliance obligations without a system such as TRIM Context.

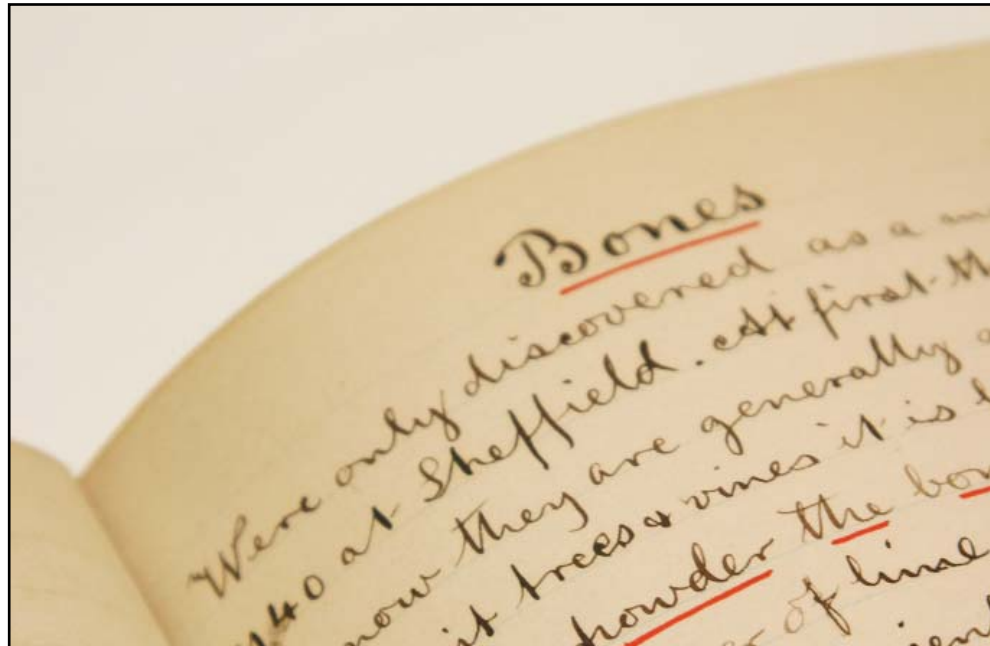


Compliance, while important at the organisational level, is not necessarily the highest priority to an individual user. Michael says users are seeing the benefits of:

- Improved access times
- Reduction in duplication of documents being stored
- Document security
- Information sharing and
- Version control

Michael explains "it's not only the users who are seeing these benefits but also the University's clients - the students, the University now scans and registers student forms in TRIM Context." Having the forms made available electronically through TRIM Context has meant improved service to students.

"A form can now be submitted at a Student Centre one day and be available to any Student Centre staff (with appropriate access) the following day". The "student forms scanning" project has resulted in savings in the resources required for the processing of these forms.



Another scanning project that has taken place is in the Capital Works area of the University. This area has scanned approximately 11,000 plans into the system providing instant access to water, electrical, structural and other plans in an emergency eliminating the time consuming task of searching for the paper plans.

The Future

With the success of the unification of corporate knowledge Michael says the University will further expand its use of TRIM Context to include a single centralised file for each student. This would integrate TRIM Context with the university's student system, and similar integration with the University's personnel system is also planned. The integration would incorporate the creation, management and closure of student and staff files.

UWS are also investigating the use of TRIM Context within the Media Unit. As TRIM Context can store any form of digital media this would allow the Media Unit to store and manage their digital photos.

Conclusion

Formal records management in the University of Western Sydney previously occurred in small pockets of workers, but with the introduction of TRIM Context, this is now a unified process. Staff are more empowered through the effective management of the information that supports their business processes. In the ten months since the rollout of TRIM Context commenced, the University of Western Sydney has already achieved many business benefits. The University is now looking to further expand the use to provide additional benefits and efficiencies to both their staff and student clients. It is anticipated that TRIM Context will be fully rolled out to all areas of the University by mid 2006.

About TOWER Software

TOWER Software is a leading enterprise content management (ECM) provider, delivering electronic document and records management (EDRM) solutions. TOWER Software's award winning solutions empower organisation to manage and secure their vital information assets. The TRIM Context solution is a single, integrated platform that manages business information throughout its complete lifecycle. By relying on its proven domain expertise, strong strategic partnerships and powerful solutions, TOWER Software enables organisation to improve accuracy of information on which business decisions are made; maximise efficiency by finding business critical information more quickly and easily; and achieve and maintain standards compliance across industries, resulting in sustained competitive advantage. TOWER Software is a privately held company with operations in Europe, North America and Asia Pacific. For more information, log on to www.towersoft.com/uws

