HEMPSONS

As a full-service, award-winning UK firm, everyone at Hempsons has a full workload. However, performance issues in core applications were impacting productivity and undermining compliance with key industry regulations. Discover how Hempsons found an alternative.

How confidence was restored in core applications like metadata cleaning and document comparison at UK firm Hempsons

The business need

Resolve stability and performance issues

Relieve pressure on the IT service desk by reducing the number of open tickets

Restore user faith in metadata functionality

Meet ISO 27001 controls by preventing inadvertent data breaches

Improve the firm's redaction workflow with a PDF file editor that completely burns out the text

About Hempsons

Hempsons is a multi-award-winning, full-service law firm based in the UK. It is a market leader in the health and social care sector and advises clients involved in the planning, commissioning, regulation or provision of health and social care services. Hempsons was awarded Best Healthcare Law Firm – UK at the International Life Sciences Awards 2018, and Best Health & Social Care Law Firm – UK at the AI Legal Awards 2018.

Resolving stability and performance issues and remaining compliant

When **Anna Lawton** started in her role as IT Director at Hempsons, "the firm's infrastructure was struggling to provide for our needs, and we were operating with a number of non-performing products."

"The users were experiencing stability and performance issues with a number of essential applications, like metadata cleaning, on a day to day basis. Outlook would freeze, or there would be a failure to attach some cleaned documents to emails whilst successfully attaching others. An email can contain a significant amount of attachments and with time pressures to deliver it was not always immediately noticed that this was failing ", explained Anna. "Ultimately our users lost confidence in the metadata product."

Anna's IT team embarked on several projects including replacing the firm's infrastructure with IaaS, rebuilding the entire environment and all incumbent products to best practice on the new high-performance platform so the firm could move to a more agile way of working. Once this was complete and after a settling period, the next stage involved reviewing the applications in terms of suitability and efficiency.

"After the rebuild, we were still experiencing issues with our metadata cleaner and were receiving a significant amount of tickets in the Service Desk. But I also needed the users to be confident that the applications we were using would help protect them against accidental data breaches and wouldn't get in the way of their day-to-day work. One of the reasons I decided to pilot DocsCorp solutions was due to my experience of the product in several other firms; it had always performed. DocsCorp also works alongside Visualfiles (LexisNexis) without causing any integration clashes, which was extremely important for Hempsons", said Anna.

The Hempsons pilot program predominately trialed the desktop productivity suite: cleanDocs for metadata management, compareDocs for document comparison, and pdfDocs for PDF file editing and bundling.

The first step was to establish the pilot. "Giving the software to a cross-section of users across our offices – including those who typically experienced problems and those who had not – was vital to ensure we got a fair assessment across the board" Anna explained. "When it came time to remove the pilot products and gather the feedback for review, the pilot group asked if they could continue using the DocsCorp solutions – an early indication that the pilot had been successful."

"In the same period of use for the incumbent product and the new, we had 113 tickets opened as opposed to 6 - all raised within the same period. On close inspection, the 6 raised for the DocsCorp solutions were all use-based queries."

ISO 27001 Certification

At the same time as the rebuild, Anna's team was running a separate project to achieve and maintain ISO 27001 compliance. The ISO 27001 information security standard requires firms to implement and uphold a comprehensive system of security controls. These controls cover risks, threats, vulnerabilities, and impacts on a firm's information security.

"The DocsCorp suite of products is helping us to maintain this standard by providing additional layers of protection. We now have products in place that strip metadata from email attachments, force users to check email recipients, secure PDFs and provide an easy way for the secretaries to redact. These are all important when it comes to protecting data, and importantly staff feel confident using them".

Improving PDF redaction

"The introduction of pdfDocs has revolutionized redaction for the team leads at Hempsons who performed this function and were used to battling with the old PDF file editor. Now, anyone performing the redaction function no longer has the hassle of multiple workarounds to complete this task", said Anna. "pdfDocs burns out the text completely, whereas other redaction methods – like drawing a black box over the text or changing the font color to white – only mask it."

Summary

"We have experienced a huge amount of transition in the firm in a short space of time to get to a position where we can encourage agile working whilst ensuring that the firm's and the clients' data remains secure at all times. Moving to the DocsCorp suite was a no-brainer for us. Given the amount of change the users had experienced, DocsCorp solutions were easy to use with minimal training required and importantly, they work well in our environment helping us reduce the risk of a data breach."

"DocsCorp were also great in allowing us access to the applications prior to purchase. It enabled us to prepare the trainers and get the builds ready to go live."

"If you have issues with your existing application, you certainly should look at DocsCorp."

DocsCorp
Work smart