

# Alfresco Case Study: Academies Enterprise Trust

## World Class Data and Record Management with Alfresco

The Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) is a multi-sponsor organization, formed by the Greensward Charitable Trust - a UK education charity - in 2008. It is AET's belief that all young people deserve to become world class learners – to learn, enjoy, succeed and thrive in a first rate educational environment with the best facilities.

Academies are all-ability, state-funded schools established and managed by sponsors from a wide range of backgrounds, including high-performing schools and colleges, universities, individual philanthropists, businesses, the voluntary sector and the faith communities.

Some academies are established educational providers and all of them bring a record of success in other enterprises, which they are able to apply to their Academies in partnership with experienced school managers. AET comprises a range of these Academies and acts as the operational body that will ensure that each Academy becomes high performing as quickly as possible.

### The challenge

It is extremely important that AET remains a cost-effective organization, capable of developing its Academies with a focus on outstanding performance.

One of AET's main priorities was securing data and records held on its systems. This meant that AET had to ensure that all documentation from new member Academies was being effectively captured and stored securely. It was essential that any data and record management system implemented could allow for growth and expansion.

One of the first AET Academies had already implemented an Electronic Data and Records Management (EDRM) solution, but this was proving to be expensive, difficult to manage and unpopular with staff. There were also concerns that the solution could not be scaled up as AET expanded.

Based on this experience, AET was searching for an enterprise-wide EDRM solution that would be easy-to-use, cost-effective, scalable and could cut back on the huge amount of paperwork and documentation the organization was generating.

### Better than the rest

AET considered a number of in-house intranet solutions that could be accessed by all AET Academies, but decided that the associated costs would be too great.

AET Chief Executive, David Triggs explains, "We're not in the business of creating Data Centers, so we ruled out of the possibility of deploying an in-house solution almost immediately. We did look at a variety of EDRM applications that could be initiated in-house, but this would still require a substantial capital investment to build the infrastructure on which the platforms could operate."



A turn-key, end-to-end solution was required and this led AET to consider open source applications as an alternative to the proprietary software suppliers. After a full procurement process, SDM Systems was selected as the service provider for cost, performance and security and through SDM, Alfresco Software was selected to provide content management capabilities.

“The combination of SDM Systems and the open source enterprise content management platform from Alfresco Software was a clear winner as it delivered exactly what was promised: it’s cost-effective, Data Protection Act Compliant, easy-to-use, reduces printing and infrastructure costs and can be scaled,” said Triggs. “Alfresco’s world class open source platform also steers us away from the dangers of single-solution vendor lock-in – something we were very keen to avoid.”

## Benefits

The new Data and Record Management system built on the Alfresco platform and hosted and supported by SDM Systems has already had a big impact on operations at AET. The organization is now moving all archived documents on to the new system to free up space for its Academies.

Additionally, AET has reduced printing and secretarial costs as documents no longer need to be printed out several times and distributed by hand. Considerable savings have also been made on physical building space as there is no longer a need for filing cabinets in record rooms.

“Our staff have been very impressed with the Alfresco system as it has enabled them to work far more efficiently; central administration printing has been reduced by as much as 50% and with the appropriate permissions, staff can access documentation at any time from any Internet connection,” said Triggs. “As we pay for the hosted service annually, our initial investment has been effectively zero – on that basis we’re saving roughly £49,000 per year across our 7 Academies.”



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