



# Speed Times Two

*Combining enterprise content management (ECM) with geographic information systems (GIS) greatly improves data access across departments, and for citizens.*

The speed of work is rapidly increasing in Horry (pronounced OH-ree) County, S.C. The quickly growing county has been dealing with a triple challenge in recent years. An expanding population means more paperwork for county staffers. It also means less space for storing that paper. And sharing documents among departments was painfully slow at times.

That's all changing as the county adopts ECM software, OnBase, by Hyland Software. Though still being deployed, OnBase already is dramatically improving county processes. Paper documents that formerly were handled manually are now routed electronically after being scanned into the system, and less storage space is required for paper documents.

Now documents of all kinds are easier to find. Before, with approximately 57 departments in offices scattered throughout 1,200 square miles, it could take two to three days via interoffice mail for an employee to receive a requested document from another department. Now the employee can quickly and easily find that same document — within minutes — from his or her own desktop.

Horry County is so impressed with the initial results that it plans to deploy OnBase in all of its departments over three years.

A key factor in the OnBase deployment is its integration with the county's award-winning GIS. By combining OnBase with ESRI GIS, Horry County has amplified the benefits that come with better ECM — the ability to capture, store, manage and distribute all types of documents across an enterprise and beyond.

Good ECM cuts costs, increases efficiency and helps satisfy document retention requirements — something that's especially important for government. And working from maps makes it fast and easy for Horry County employees — and citizens — to find all kinds of documents.

For its integration of ECM and GIS, Horry County won a 2008 Carl E. Nelson Best Practices Award, presented by AIIM, The Enterprise Content Management Association.

## GIS Drives All

At the heart of Horry County's new system is the GIS foundation it laid down earlier this decade. Employees are used to going to the map to get the documents they need. Everything is driven from the GIS. "It's the key that ties all of the applications and all of the departments together," said Tim Oliver, assistant director of IT/GIS for the county.

By clicking on an Internet-based map — on a parcel, for example — an employee can bring up all documents associated with the location, including permits, plans, deeds, applications and much more. Or an employee can start in a document. With

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an address or parcel number, he or she can be taken from that document to the map, where more information is found. With OnBase connected to GIS, documents can be retrieved and viewed very quickly, and they can be easily shared across departments.

Putting ECM and GIS together is a basic strategy the county is using to maximize data access for all. "In Horry County, all of the applications that we've deployed have to be GIS-centric, which means they have to be able to read from our GIS databases," said Oliver. "So we wanted to make sure we found a document management system where there wasn't some middleware that had to exist." The county found what it was looking for with OnBase.

The county started with a pilot project in the Stormwater and Public Works departments, then put OnBase in at the Court Case Management and Magistrates department. Next are Parks and Recreation, Maintenance, Fleet Maintenance, Planning and Zoning, Assessor, Code Enforcement and Engineering.

The initial phases have gone well, and cost savings are already adding up. In the first year and a half, the county estimates it saved around \$300,000 through better use of time and not needing to expand storage space to accommodate more paper.

## Departments Share More, Do More

County departments can now access information from other departments — even if they don't have the application used to create the original document. For example, someone in the Stormwater department might want to see a code enforcement document, but they don't have the application used to create it. With OnBase, it doesn't matter what application was used to create the document; the employee just finds the document and opens it. This type of information sharing allows public employees to make better informed decisions more quickly, which ultimately improves both government efficiency and citizen service.

Every day, different departments need access to the same documents, whether blueprints, court case files, historical documents or zoning plans. Now, the county can make that happen much faster than it could in the past. It's a whole new level of document sharing across department lines.

OnBase is a key enabler as Horry County departments are increasingly working together for the benefit of county citizens. This improved ability to share information is the result of a single database serving the entire county across all departments.

OnBase/GIS has been a valuable tool for the public too. "Our citizens are used to starting at the map," Oliver said. Once citizens begin on the map, they can usually find what they need very quickly.

Even if citizens don't know the exact address of a place they're interested in, once they find it on the map, they have access to all the documents associated with that location. This gives citizens

more complete information and better understanding of issues that impact their lives.

Making things easier for the public frees up more time for county staff. "I can't quantify it, but we do know that it's a significant reduction in phone calls that we're taking with people who are looking for something," said Oliver.

## Single Interface

OnBase also meshes perfectly with the county's deployment plan. "We're fortunate to be implementing OnBase essentially side-by-side as we deploy new software solutions for departments," Oliver said. "We're in the process of replacing all of our legacy applications with new, commercial, off-the-shelf, Windows-based applications. Every time we deploy a new software solution, OnBase is part of that solution."

A key module within OnBase is Application Enabler. It's a powerful tool that's been a big part of improving Horry County's work processes. Application Enabler allows virtually any software application to seamlessly access documents that are actually managed in OnBase.

That means county employees can use the same applications they've been using all along, but they now have increased power when it comes to searching for, finding and managing documents.

OnBase is so easily integrated into existing practices that employee training on the new system usually takes less than an hour. According to Oliver, the capability of Application Enabler was one of the key drivers in the county going with OnBase.

Another OnBase feature the county is particularly impressed with is the ease with which historical documents can be scanned into the system. These are paper documents that were in the county's possession prior to OnBase being installed. The county plans to scan nearly 5 million of these historical documents within five years. Once scanned, even these older documents will be in a digital format, making them easier to work with.

For new documents coming into the county, there's a simple rule: Every document that anyone touches must be scanned into the system. From there, each document is quickly accessible to practically anyone who needs it.

It's all part of a larger strategy to enable workers to find all documents associated with a person or thing — a court case, for example — by doing a simple electronic search from one's own desktop instead of having to go into multiple systems or several physical locations.

Speedier work is fast becoming the norm in Horry County, thanks to the streamlined ECM solution from OnBase. As OnBase is integrated in every department, county officials will be seeing more productivity, cost savings and better service to citizens for years to come.

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For additional information visit  
[www.onbase.com/government](http://www.onbase.com/government)