



less paper less paper less paper

London Borough solves communication challenges with e-port™, the innovative new software application for the egami® document management system

"the e-port extension to egami is an extremely cost effective solution for local government organisations such as ourselves . . . and will definitely provide tangible improvements to our service levels, both internally and for the citizens whom we serve".

**Peter Millet - Production Services Manager for the IT Department
The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham**

The Organisation

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham serves approximately 170,000 citizens and is an outer London borough situated inside the M25 towards the east of London. It is unique in London, having been created from two separate boroughs which were joined in 1965 to form the current London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

As a result, council premises are based in 21 separate buildings throughout the region, with key office locations at the Town Hall in Barking and the Civic Offices in Dagenham. In addition, council employees are also based at over 70 schools in the Borough – all of which presents a serious communication and information access challenge!

The Background

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has been using the egami document management system since the early 1990's. This has enabled minimal paper records to be kept, providing cost savings for the Borough by reducing the requirement for storage of paper-based information and improving employee productivity by reducing the time spent on hard-copy information retrieval.

Whilst the egami system was used only in the payroll department initially, its uses have widened over the years and the system has been further developed. The IT department, the Revenues and Benefits department and the Housing department all now use egami, enabling them to scan and index hard copy documentation for storage and retrieval electronically.



Previously it was often the case that a document which needed to be viewed by an employee in Barking could in fact be filed somewhere in Dagenham, or vice versa, making it extremely difficult to access the required information speedily. With the implementation of the egami document management system into these departments, the information required is now readily to hand for all employees, regardless of which office they are based in. This includes items such as invoices, delivery notes and purchase orders for the IT department, benefit forms, tenancy agreements and correspondence for the Revenues and Benefits department and property files, subdivided by individual tenants, for the Housing department. In addition, since 2001 the Revenues and Benefits department has also been using egami for signature verification, which has assisted in reducing benefit fraud within the Borough.





The Challenge

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham have 30 concurrent egami user licenses and until recently this had provided sufficient capacity to meet their requirements. However, as demand for the software has widened - and with over 100 employees now regularly using egami, the 30 licenses were no longer enough to enable as many people as required to use the system.

This was highlighted by the housing departments' need to extend their use of egami which had been implemented in 2002 and at the time covered just 3,000 of the 24,000 properties which the Borough own. However, to expand the use of the system to scan and index all information relating to the additional 21,000 properties, including items such as rental agreements, tenant information and so on, a large increase in the number of concurrent user licenses would have been required.

The cost implications of this were significant and whilst the service improvements and cost savings in terms of information accessibility and document retrieval time would be great in the longer term, the up-front investment required presented a problem for the Borough.

The Solution

Peter Millet, Production Services Manager for the IT Department at the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham takes up the story: "I have been working for the Borough since 1987 and with the egami system since the early 1990's. There has been a lot of interest in document imaging here, especially more recently and so we wanted to find a way to enable more departments within the Borough to use egami, but it looked as if the costs involved would be prohibitive. However, I was hopeful that e-docs would have a solution and so we met up in September 2003 to discuss the situation. It was then that Chris Clark, one of the directors at e-docs, told me about e-port™ - a new process extension pack (PEP) which works in conjunction with egami to give full web-browser access for people who need only to view previously-scanned files and documents.

I had looked at our usage of the system and had discovered that out of the 100 or so users which we had, only around eight of them actually needed to scan and index documents. The remainder of the users were just viewing information which had already been input into the system. Once

we realised this and discovered that e-port would allow these users to access the information they required without needing a separate license, it became obvious that e-port was the ideal solution for us".

By implementing the e-port PEP for a one-off fee rather than buying new user licenses, The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham have freed up the remaining egami user licenses which they do hold to issue to other areas of the business who require full scanning and indexing capability, thus maximising the benefits of the system enormously. This will enable all documentation in the Housing Department, which relates to the remaining 21,000 properties owned by the Borough, to be added to the egami system over the coming months.

In addition, other departments within the Borough to start using egami for the first time, as e-port will allow an unlimited number of users to view stored information whenever they require, without any more capital expenditure on software licences having to be made.

The Future

e-docs and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham are now working together to roll out the e-port implementation to users throughout the organisation. e-docs are providing full back-up and support as well as 'train the trainer' sessions to ensure that the Borough can give all new users the ability to access the full benefits of both egami and e-port.

Peter Millet concludes: "The e-port PEP has enabled us to expand the benefits of egami into other areas of the Borough in an affordable way. It is an extremely cost effective solution for local government organisations such as ourselves, especially when compared with similar offerings and will definitely provide tangible improvements to our service levels, both internally and for the citizens whom we serve".

