

Supporting intelligent content management

Today we are awash in 'content', but unless it can be organised and accessed, this content or information could be rendered meaningless. Help is at hand thanks to an intelligent Web-based, knowledge and multimedia content management platform that is user friendly and features quick access time.

"The platform supports uniform, knowledge-based access to distributed information resources available in the form of Web pages, existing heterogeneous databases [formatted, text and multimedia], business process specifications and operational information, as well as legacy information processing systems," explains Witold Staniszki of Rodan Systems, Poland and coordinator of the IST programme-funded [ICONS](#) project that developed the platform.



The most impressive demonstration of the platform's capabilities was in the European Exchange of Documents - Poland (EWD-P) pilot, which involved 20 ministries, 12,000 civil servants and 10,000 incoming documents a month. The primary objective of the system was to ensure smooth, effective and efficient support to the adjustment of Poland to complex EU procedures and regulations both before, and after, accession.

The system mission sounds straightforward, but the architecture proved challenging. The ICONS platform addressed the most critical needs of employees in knowledge intensive organisations, including: information redundancy and lack of pertinent information; a flood of uncategorised documents; poor integration with external sources of valuable information; lack of uniform, user-friendly and personalised interfaces; facilitating smooth communication between individuals and among groups, as well as meeting the challenges of a daunting user learning curve.

Between December 2003 and March 2004, the EWD-P system was successfully deployed first in the police office of The Committee for European Integration and three ministries, involving 1,000 registered users. The remaining 17 ministries and 11,000 employees were brought on board incrementally.

"Successfully managing this much content and facilitating the necessary interoperability was possible due to the fact that the project was built upon services provided by the ICONS platform," says Mr Staniszki. "In general, ICONS' results have been met with wide acceptance."

The ICONS prototype was also demonstrated in a knowledge management system supporting a Knowledge Portal for projects applying for EU Structural Funds. The user-oriented assessment and other dissemination activities confirmed that the system is potentially important to the social and economic development of Poland and other new EU Member States. Many institutions expressed their interest and willingness to use the portal to access information to help win EU Structural Funds.

Today, advanced knowledge management features, such as automatic text classification, intelligent, rule-based workflow management, graphic user friendly browsing interfaces and a Topic Map standard compliant concept glossary have been implemented in the OfficeObjects Workflow™ product, based on the work done by the ICONS consortium. This proprietary content and workflow management software product has been developed and is being distributed by Rodan Systems.

The flexible business process management environment is based on declarative knowledge, that is, the shared recognition or definition of the concepts inherent in the platform, and described in the ICONS glossary. This is proving to be a powerful platform for developing generalised, process-based application solutions.



"This includes document management applications, as well as best-practice business and administrative process templates," he says. "We are confident the platform supported by the ICONS methodology will compete with the leaders in knowledge, content and workflow management systems both in Europe and the US."

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