



AutoFORM bespokes our documents without the cost & disruption of bespoking our application

Overview

■ Challenge

To provide a single interface for TROPOS and other ancillary IT applications.

To automate the collation of data from a number of different IT systems and PC based LABORATORY equipment for test certificates and other documents.

To provide long-term product traceability archiving facilities for outgoing and incoming documents

Scanning, indexing and folder management for product life cycle traceability records management

■ IT Applications

Solarsoft TROPOS (Windows and Oracle)

MARPACS (UNIX)

IMPCON (VMS Legacy)

■ Scope

100,000 documents/year

■ Solution

AutoFORM LaserNet

Output management

Cold Archiving

Process Document Management with scanning interface

■ Why AutoFORM?

"Cuts output development times and costs." Paul Armitage

■ Is it For You?

AutoFORM is a Solarsoft recommended Output & Document Management Solution for TROPOS.



"AutoFORM LaserNet has proved to be an extremely useful, powerful suite of document management tools. It has allowed us to collate data from a number of disparate IT sources, and assemble it into highly detailed, informative customer orientated business documents, both in paper and electronic format. To achieve the same standard using ERP programming alone would have been prohibitively expensive."

Paul Armitage B.A, M.B.C.S., CITP
Firth Rixson Ltd. Group Systems Executive

Firth Rixson is one of the worlds leading providers of highly-engineered forged, cast and other speciality metal products for the aerospace, automotive and medical markets. Much of Firth Rixson's business success rests on operating a tightly controlled manufacturing and testing operation focused on ensuring product safety and reliability. In turn, their quality control relies on producing highly detailed, accurate documentation to record product traceability throughout each products' life cycle, from receipt of the raw material to manufacture, test and despatch. These records must also be archived for the lifetime of the product—perhaps 50 years or more—so that they are available for inspection by regulatory authorities such as the Air Accident Inspection Board.

For the last ten years, Firth Rixson have been using each new version of AutoFORM LaserNet to produce and, more recently, to electronically archive their manufacturing and transaction documents. Commenting on AutoFORM LaserNet, Paul Armitage says: "AutoFORM significantly cuts the time and cost of managing document output, particularly in situations like ours where you have a number of IT applications to manage. For instance, we operate TROPOS

SOLARSOFT TROPOS Output & Document Management

as our core application, with some operations remaining on MARPACS (UNIX) and to a lesser extent a VMS legacy system, IMPCON. AutoFORM works with them all."

Armitage continues: "AutoFORM has given Firth Rixson the facilities to create a unified corporate identity across 100 different document variations for our nine UK Group Companies. To manage this level of variation using ERP specific output programming would have been extremely time consuming, not to mention prohibitively expensive. AutoFORM's ability to manage several IT systems also helps when Firth Rixson acquires a new company. Firth Rixson's overlays are simply transferred to the new company's existing IT output, allowing them to quickly produce invoices and purchase orders with the Firth Rixson legal identity and corporate styling. "

Automated Document Assembly

"A prime example of the power of AutoFORM is how AutoFORM has automated the collation of data for Quality Control Test Certificates" says Paul Armitage. Only five percent of the data comes from the ERP system: the test results are collected from the laboratory databases, raw material certification details from goods-in and the customer specification details from the customer CRM files. "Not only does this eliminate high levels of manual input saving a great deal of time, it also avoids the propensity for human error. However, Firth Rixson do have a stringent certificate checking policy" comments Paul Armitage.

E-invoicing



Jon Free - IT Programming Manager, comments on another innovation using AutoFORM: e-invoicing.

"If industry statistics are to be believed it costs one of our customers around £5 to £15 to process and pay each of our invoices. By sending e-invoices we can

reduce their costs to around £1. In the current climate where customers are asking us to reduce their incoming goods costs this is a way to achieve it without having to reduce our sales prices."

The cost savings can be achieved as the invoice will be emailed to the customer as a data file so that the invoice data can be electronically transferred to the customers computer system, without manual input. The format also allows rules-based, computer validation and checking, again significantly reducing the time and cost to process the invoice. With Firth Rixson making several hundred deliveries per week, the cost benefits of e-invoicing to Firth Rixson's customers are clear to see.

Whilst Firth Rixson had a number of reporting tools that could create the necessary e-invoice CSV or XML files, AutoFORM offered a number of advantages. Firstly, our administrator does not have to create invoices any differently than with a paper invoice: AutoFORM automatically switches between csv or print according to the customers' preferred format. Secondly, AutoFORM can consolidate several deliveries into

one invoice, either on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. AutoFORM also calculates the sub-totals, adds various subheadings and of course, the legal identity details. "In all, using AutoFORM to create e-invoices has been a very straightforward procedure" concludes Jon Free.

Electronic Archiving

In addition to output management, AutoFORM offers integrated document archiving. As documents are created in AutoFORM an electronic replica is automatically indexed and stored in a web-browser archive. Copy invoices, test certificates and other documents can also be emailed or faxed direct to the customer on demand. Paul Armitage says "AutoFORM Archive not only eliminates a multitude of filing and document storage costs, the archive facilities have improved our business efficiency in a number of ways and we are already looking at ways of extending the benefits further." Examples of how they are using AutoFORM Archive include:

- **TEST CERTIFICATES:** Certificates are electronically passed to AutoFORM Archive, ready to be sent by email on the day of test, rather than day of despatch. This has two benefits: customers can pre-authorise goods acceptance prior to delivery, which is ideal for Firth Rixson's JIT manufacturing customers. It also means that customers who use Firth Rixson's contract test facilities receive results two days earlier than they would have done, if the certificate had been posted.
- **ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLES:** Credit Control can view outgoing invoices onscreen rather than having to pull them from the files, helping them to resolve invoice queries whilst the customer is on the line.
- **PRODUCT LIFECYCLE TRACEABILITY RECORDS:** Firth Rixson has recently invested in the AutoFORM PDM scanning solution to convert archive traceability records from hard copy to electronic storage. Once completed, this will give regulatory inspectors and customers faster access to historical records. Electronic records can also be duplicated and held off site more easily, making them less vulnerable than paper to water, vermin & fire risk.
- **WEB PORTAL CUSTOMER ACCESSIBLE RECORDS:** A planned future development is to use AutoFORM to publish customer invoices and test certificates to a login controlled Web Portal or Extranet, to give their world-wide customers 24/7 self-service access to copy documents.

Paul Armitage finished by saying: "AutoFORM is a very powerful suite of document management software that allows you to bespoke your documents without the cost of bespokeing the application. It has helped Firth Rixson enormously to produce and efficiently manage the documents that our customers and regulators require. We highly recommend AutoFORM to other engineering companies."