

CASE STUDY



University of Michigan
Health System

Key Facts

Industry:

Higher Education

Product:

Enterprise Document Manager

Audience:

Students, Researchers
and Administrators

Benefits:

- Web-enables administrative processes
- Enable secure file collaboration
- Reduces IT burden

Why Xythos?

- Open standards-based
- Provides document audit trails
- Enables secure collaboration

The University of Michigan is home to one of the largest health care complexes in the world. It has been the site of many groundbreaking accomplishments and technological advancements in the time since the Medical School first opened its doors in 1850. Today, the University of Michigan Health System continues to be on the cutting edge of research and patient care. In 2003, U.S. News & World Report magazine ranked the U-M Hospitals 11th in the nation, and among the top in many specialties.

A Requirement For Research

The research environment at the Medical School is a vigorous one, enhanced by \$307.8 million in research funds in the fiscal year 2003, and by the presence of world-renowned investigators working at the forefront of their respective fields. There is also a very strong tradition of collaboration between the basic science researchers and their clinical colleagues. As a result, working electronically with documents is a key component of the Medical School's research program.

Wayne Wilson is the Assistant Director of Technical Services for Medical School Information Systems (MSIS) at the University of Michigan, where he manages a team of four who are responsible for the Medical School's Internet infrastructure, including all servers, as well as its applications.

In order to provide a system that could address the growing document and file management needs of faculty, staff and students, Wilson's team needed to do more than just track access to applications. For example, a key challenge they faced as a primarily Unix-based technology service provider was that they did not have control of the desktops. What Wilson wanted was a web-based document tracking system based on Internet standards. After further investigation, his team concluded that they wanted a WebDAV-oriented product. According to Wilson, "When it came to looking at standards for documents, we looked at the WebDAV protocol, decided that a sufficient number of commercial vendors were supporting it and that it was a viable technology. As a result, it became the initial requirement."

Wilson then assembled a task force comprised of six people representing both IT and end users to establish the evaluation criteria for the new system. The task force then participated in product demonstrations, reviewed documentation, listened to



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vendor presentations and compared their notes. The evaluation took two months – however, as Wilson pointed out, they had already done research on the subject for close to over two years and were ready to move quickly. “The task force recommended Xythos. The company was the only one that delivered the document security, file level access control, auditing and document version management that we required in a WebDAV-based system,” he declared.

Starting The Deployment and Roll-out

The IT team decided to deploy Xythos Enterprise Document Manager by first targeting the school’s administrative departments. Wilson’s approach was to first implement Xythos as a lightweight document management system for administrators. Integrating online documents into the administrators’ workflow was the first step – which led to a requirement to reinvent some aspects of the workflow itself. Because the transition to online systems requires new behaviors, it also provided an ideal opportunity to evaluate past practices and improve upon them.

Xythos has found adoption in several administrative departments, where use continues to grow at a steady pace, including:

- **Application Process for Biomedical Sciences:** This program allows potential Ph.D. students to sample a variety of research labs before committing to a final research choice. Once the Medical School decided to move to a paperless process, it had to establish an electronic version of that process. Xythos has become the electronic document source for the process, storing the curricula vitae and recommendation letters for each applicant. Faculty reviewers from other programs who participated in this initial process are now starting to adopt the Xythos-based document flow for their own programs.
- **Preparation for Compliance:** These documents must be provided as part of patient privacy, human safety and HIPAA compliance requirements. Xythos was ideal because it provided collaboration in a more secure manner across the campus, plus it included built-in audit trails and version control of the documents that were end user accessible. Historically these types of capabilities are either difficult to use or require the intervention of the IT staff. Once familiar with the Xythos system, however, the compliance staff can manage all aspects of a secure and audited document repository themselves.
- **Distribution of Licenced Software:** Because Xythos requires authentication, Technical Services can restrict access to authorized users and make specific software available only to them. Those authorized go to Technical Services’ Help Desk web page, review the installer packages available, click on the link, authenticate and download the software they need. The Help Desk is then able to track who and how many times any particular package has been downloaded!

IT Burden Reduced

Xythos provides a rich set of access control lists that can be and are administered by end users and designated end user managers. “We now have a distributed and secure management system where we can appoint people, create an area in the Xythos servers for their users, show them how to enable and disable audit trails, version control etc. – and from then they are in charge of their own systems. This is a marked departure from the classic file server model we used previously,” Wilson reported.



Before Xythos, Medical School faculty and staff would have to send queries to the Help Desk which would, in turn, create permissions etc. With the Xythos system, operational units do the work themselves with a web interface that is readily available, easy to use and easy to administer. "This was a paradigm shift for our people to be in control," Wilson remarked. The Help Desk staff also like the system as they receive fewer calls. "Once a sufficient amount of understanding has been transferred, users really don't need us for backup," stated Wilson.

Currently there are 500 Medical School personnel using Xythos. Technical Services staff have found Xythos support personnel to be easy to contact, always responsive and willing to assist. As an example, the Medical School initiated a custom development project to integrate the university-wide Kerberos authentication system with Xythos and is pleased with the results. "We appreciate many things about Xythos including its people and product functionality. The greatest strength that the company provides, however, is that it was – and is – aggressively out front in terms of supporting open standards – and developing valuable functionality based on those standards," Wilson concluded.

***For more information please call 1.888.4XYTHOS
or visit www.xythos.com***

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