

# How Boehringer Ingelheim uses migration-center to manage (mega) migrations

The right documents in the right place



Data and documents are crucial to the pharmaceutical industry – a sector that not only has technical challenges to overcome but also GxP-relevant documents to handle in a very particular way. But how do you move millions of documents a year and simultaneously ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines for every single document? Gernot Lang, Head of Document Management for Boehringer Ingelheim, and IT Project Manager Dr. Helge Gottwald explain how fme migration-center helps Boehringer Ingelheim's IT department do just that.



Easy-to-use validation functionality



Metadata migration capability



Time-saving compared to custom scripts

*Mr. Lang, how important is document migration to you?*

**Gernot Lang (GL):** Our department moves almost half a million documents from different source repositories in an average month – mainly into the archives.

*How did migration-center come to be the standard tool used for migrations at Boehringer?*

**Helge Gottwald (HG):** Back in 2012 we wanted to introduce a new Document Management System (DMS) – FirstDoc, a standard piece of software used for document management in the life sciences industry. We had more than 12 million documents to migrate. FirstDoc replaced the individualized Documentum platform we used to use. When you're talking about this kind of volume, it's important to create smaller units that can be moved over in a single step. fme's migration-center offers numerous ways to select which documents go into which units. That's how the enormous quantity of data can be divided up into packets, migrated, checked, updated, and ultimately put to productive use.

*What are the main challenges you face with migration projects and how do you handle them?*

**GL:** It's crucial for every document to be fully migrated – including all of its structural attributes. fme's migration-center helps with that through its tracing function. What it does is create a record – for

every single document – of when it was migrated and whether the migration was successful. The system stores this information in log files. This means we are always able to demonstrate that all information has been migrated correctly. This function is as important for our daily migrations as it was when we made the original migration to FirstDoc.

**HG:** What made the first project with migration-center particularly complicated was the fact that the old system had to continue working for the duration of the migration. It took several months. And all of the documents that anyone worked on during this period had to be available from the moment FirstDoc was launched. The project team used what's known as delta migration to make sure that this happened: migration-center automatically picked up any changes made to documents in the old repository after the initial migration had taken place and transferred these changes over in subsequent migrations just before FirstDoc went live.

*Why do documents at Boehringer have to move around so much?*

**GL:** In the pharmaceutical world, we operate within a very strict legal framework. Companies have to keep any documents pertaining to pharmaceutical products unchanged for up to 30 years after selling the last batch of product. So if a department wants to stop using a certain software system, we need to ensure that we don't lose the data contained in it. And when we acquire other companies and integrate them into our organization, we need to import their

data into the Boehringer DMS as well. Another typical scenario is when we're running function tests on software systems. These kinds of tests are periodically necessary whenever there's a change to any of our procedures as a result of business or regulatory requirements.

*Can you give us an example?*

**HG:** Boehringer Ingelheim uses migration-center to generate large quantities of documentation for test purposes in DCTM systems, like for performance testing, or to create large volumes of test data. For example, we used migration-center to generate test data as part of a DMS function upgrade.

*And how do such migrations work?*

**HG:** From a technical point of view, it's mostly a case of moving documents from a Documentum-based DMS into a different one. But many documents also come from other systems, like SharePoint platforms, where project teams have been working together. Once the project is over, the data are stored on a fileshare server and it's from there that they are moved into Documentum or FirstDoc using the migration-center connector. The process works the other way around, too, like for exporting data when we sell a product.

*Which migration-center features are particularly important to you?*

**GL:** Several aspects are key: First, the ability to migrate documents with all of their associated attributes and rules, as I already mentioned. There are often very many rules that have to be respected in order to map document structures, classes and version histories properly. This would be hard to achieve with home-made scripts, and certainly not within just six months, as was the case with FirstDoc.

**HG:** And second, the amount of effort we have to put into validation for the numerous migration projects large and small is significantly lower. That's partly down to the fact that we're using standard software maintained by fme as the provider. It makes it easier to demonstrate regulatory compliance.

*What is it that makes the validation of migration processes so time consuming?*

**HG:** For companies in the pharmaceutical industry, validation involves proving that a process always leads to the intended outcome. In the migration context, this means that we have to prove that every document has been correctly migrated, one to one, with all of its attributes and rules. To do this, the entire process within every migration is defined down to the last detail, tested step by step and

documented according to a strict plan. The installation itself needs to be validated, too. But this is much less time-consuming than it was without migration-center, partly because there's no need to validate the creation of migration tools and the whole complexity of the data – with path lengths, special characters and document structuring – no longer applies. This means that we can implement the migration rules faster and we're more flexible in the event of revisions.

*In what way will using migration-center pay off for Boehringer Ingelheim in the long run?*

**GL:** The main thing is the quality aspect. We defined and validated our migration processes on the basis of a standard technology, which means that we are able to migrate data in consistent quality – verifiably. If we didn't have this standard and data were to go missing, it would take a great deal longer to reconstruct it. And we're saving time compared to a migration based on home-made scripts. That is as true for an everyday archiving request for 1,000 documents as it was for the initial migration of more than 12 million documents. But still, time savings are not the main concern for Boehringer.

*How did you find working with fme overall, and what's next for the migration-center at Boehringer?*

**GL:** We have a very good partnership that has endured for many years. Like in any relationship, difficult situations arise now and again. But we ultimately resolve them in the spirit of partnership.

As to the future, we are going to be introducing a big new Enterprise Content Management system as a central repository. Whichever platform is chosen – we're currently in the process of making the decision – we anticipate that migration-center will help us with this major changeover, too, thanks to the many connectors it offers. And migration-center remains a part of our archiving strategy.



**fme group** | Germany · Romania · USA

T +49 531 238540 · [info@migration-center.com](mailto:info@migration-center.com)

T +1 475 329 2398 · [info@fme-us.com](mailto:info@fme-us.com)



#37500

**Free Evaluation  
Copy Available**



The migration-center Free Evaluation Copy is a trial version of our leading content migration software and grants all functionalities of the full version, just limited by a 14-day time period. Choose one or more out of 140+ migration paths supporting all kinds of source and target systems, 100 % out-of-the-box, fully documented, easy to deploy and without any additional programming or scripting. Content migration has never been that easy!

**Download at [www.migration-center.com](http://www.migration-center.com).**