Global Life Sciences Corporation engages with long-time partner fme for structured archiving with OpenText InfoArchive

Challenge

When a Global Life Sciences Corporation began a consolidation effort to simplify its architectural landscape, the document management platform services team hit a roadblock with archiving. While its OpenText Documentum repository was able to be used to archive unstructured data, it had limitations in archiving structured data.

A project team was established to understand the company's archiving needs. Working with analyst research and its own experience, the company began assessing technology and vendor options. A priority established early on was to enable GxP compliant archiving of data from different databases.

One of the biggest challenges the team faced was the timing. Not long after identifying the solution to adopt, the company went through a merger and acquisition, shortening the timeline to validate and implement the platform.

Lessons learned

- Archiving structured data is highly complex, requiring knowledge of the data and how it needs to be presented

- Don't underestimate the learning curve and the need for experienced external resources

- Ensure time is spent understanding the scale and scope of project

Enabling archiving flexibility

After a careful evaluation, the Global Life Sciences Corporation decided to move forward with OpenText InfoArchive, a legal and GxP compliant archiving platform that stores structured and unstructured data in a single repository.

For assistance with the implementation, the Corporation turned to long-time partner fme to help build and validate the environment and to create training materials to support the system roll out.

The archival tasks are driven by the system lead who understands the system application, the business owner of the data, and the document management platform services team, which archives the data and oversees data ingestion.

To gain experience with InfoArchive, the project team established several workstreams. The teams focused on bringing in the necessary resources to define the data ingestion process, getting up to speed on the product, and assessing how to set up and architect the system.

Within three months, the team charged with overseeing the project had completed validation of the platform for one system. Validation began with analysis of the data, a comparison of tables, records and rows from the source database to data ingested into InfoArchive, and final validation in the QA environment of the Global Corporation.

Given the extensive amount of data involved, it was crucial that the team only archived data needed to fulfil GxP and other compliance requirements.

Taking archiving to the next level

The current project is just the start for the archiving team. The next step is to assess the approximately 25 systems awaiting archiving of structured data. The goal is to consolidate the company's archiving approach, bringing together structured and unstructured data. The document management platform team has begun consulting business units and IT teams to determine data archiving needs, including what is required to transform both structured and unstructured data.

The team is looking at different methods for conducting the integration, primarily working with the fme migration-center and related capabilities.

Together with fme, the team has been running test scenarios for migration to find the optimal approaches to manage a large migration project.

The archiving initiative aligns with the overall content management strategy of the Global Life Sciences Corporation, which now seeks to take a user and content life cycle approach to document management. Systems are now set up based on four working categories: (1) draft, (2) finalize, (3) use and (4) retire.

The strength of partnership

The team of the Global Life Sciences Corporation initially tried a similar approach to the one used to archive unstructured data but quickly learned the same model didn't fit.
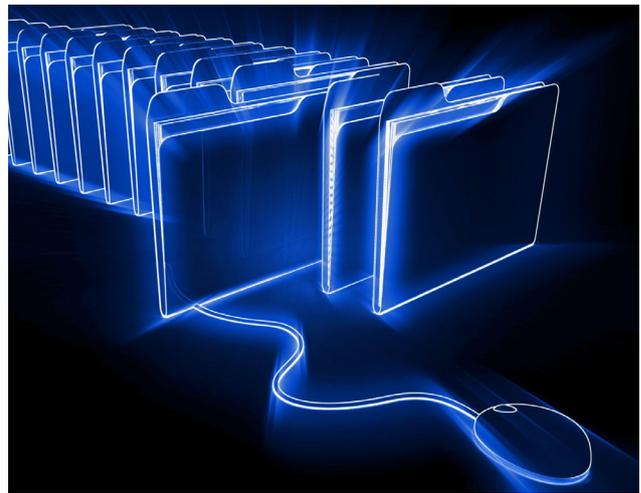
Archiving structured data is complex. A lot of knowledge is required when pulling data out of the source applications and consideration has to be given to what data needs to be kept, for how long and how that data will need to be presented in future. These activities are resource and time-intensive.

An important learning for the Global Life Sciences Corporation team was not to underestimate the learning curve involved and the support needed from a vendor partner. A critical resource for a successful archiving project is working closely with a vendor partner that has in-depth knowledge of the source systems and the tools for extracting data from those source systems.

Integral to a successful migration project has been to leverage the skills of fme. The Global Life Sciences Corporation has brought fme into various archiving projects to better understand the scale and scope of the projects and to leverage the skills needed to use extract, transform and load tools, run scripts, and translate and load data.

Technology

- OpenText InfoArchive 16 EP5 (Patch 2) [Version 16.5]

- fme migration-center

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