

XStream Software Provides SharePoint Expertise

British Columbia Transmission Corporation, now part of British Columbia Hydro (BC Hydro), sought SharePoint expertise in building out its document management system with Enterprise Search on the Microsoft SharePoint platform. XStream Software brought its extensive experience and knowledge of the SharePoint platform to the engagement.

BC Hydro's primary business activities are the generation and distribution of electricity within the province of British Columbia. BC Hydro operates 30 hydroelectric facilities and three natural gas-fueled thermal power plants. About 80% of the province's electricity is produced by major hydroelectric generating stations on the Columbia and Peace rivers.

Problem

BC Hydro chose the Microsoft SharePoint platform to power its new document management system throughout the organization. The previous document management system was hosted by IBM FileNet, a competing solution. BC Hydro also selected the Microsoft SharePoint platform to enable its Enterprise Search capabilities across thousands of documents for the new document management system. The Microsoft SharePoint technology platform, as envisioned by BC Hydro, would also pave the way for the development of future custom software applications to sit on top of the SharePoint technology stack and allow those custom software applications to utilize other capabilities of SharePoint, such as records management, workflows, collaboration, enterprise search and business intelligence. In effect, BC Hydro deemed Microsoft SharePoint as a platform that would allow the organization to reduce costs by consolidating intranet, extranet, and Internet sites on a single platform.

However, BC Hydro's Microsoft SharePoint initiatives initially fell short due to the following issues: 1) the organization lacked the knowledge and expertise required to successfully migrate and map the thousands of existing documents from IBM FileNet to the Microsoft SharePoint platform; and 2) the organization did not have the personnel or knowledge to build their custom software application on top of the Microsoft SharePoint platform to enable guided searches through the Enterprise Search APIs provided by the SharePoint object model.

Solution

XStream Software was brought in to advise on and implement BC Hydro's document management system, and build a custom search application on top of the Microsoft SharePoint platform. BC Hydro's vision for the Microsoft SharePoint project and budget allowed XStream Software to provide engineering resources as part of the formation of a SharePoint solutions delivery team. The entire team consisted of experienced personnel with extensive SharePoint experience in the roles of project manager, business analyst, QA testers, and SharePoint developers.

The solution required various backend and frontend SharePoint portals, based on MOSS 2007 (the server edition of SharePoint 2007), to provide highly customized Enterprise Search queries, guided searches, and document storage. The backend component consisted of a MOSS 2007-based document library repository, hosting thousands of sensitive documents requiring varying degrees of security authorization, authentication, and metadata tagging under the auspices of the SharePoint environment. XStream Software's role in the consulting engagement with BC Hydro was all encompassing. Some of the contributions to the SharePoint project included:

- Contributing to and verifying the architecture and solution design of the document management system and custom search application targeted towards the Microsoft SharePoint platform.
- Site information architecture (mapping the metadata property values associated with the various documents to the SharePoint platform).
- Providing programming expertise in utilizing the Enterprise Search Web Service APIs available within SharePoint, and front-end UI customization to allow its non-technical end users to effectively perform guided searches against the document management system.

Finally, XStream Software worked with the BC Hydro's SharePoint infrastructure team in properly implementing and deploying the customized Enterprise Search SharePoint solution. Throughout the engagement, XStream Software's engineering team consulted on best practices and provided the technical know-how implementation of the SharePoint project as it progressed.

Value

By bringing in XStream Software's SharePoint team to analyze and implement a highly scalable Microsoft SharePoint solution, BC Hydro was able to bridge the gap between what it wanted and how to properly accomplish it on the SharePoint platform. BC Hydro's new Intranet-based document management system solution now allows its information workers to store and quickly search for sensitive documents well into the future.

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