

Washington State Provides Immediate Access to Campaign Finance Information with XtenderSolutions

Case Study



The Challenge

Provide citizens with quick and easy access to filed documents

The Solution

LEGATO's solution allows the PDC to immediately make filings available to the public via the Web

Products Used

- APPLICATIONxtender
- WEBxtender
- ERMxtender
- DISKxtender

About the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission

The Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) was created in 1972 by an Initiative of the People to provide timely and meaningful public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates. With this information, compliance with contribution limits and other state campaign finance restrictions is ensured. The Commission is one of the few Washington state agencies created as a direct vote of the people, and works to provide quality public services to its citizens.

The Challenge

Meeting Legislative Mandates Required the PDC to Store, Manage and Access Hundreds of Thousands of Campaign Records

In 2000, the PDC received a mandate from the Washington state legislature that information from manually filed campaign reports needed to be available to the public in 14 days, and information received from electronic filings needed to be available in seven days. In addition, due to a new state law, any candidates and political committees that spent \$25,000 or more in 2001, or expect to do so during 2002, are required to file their 2002 reports by electronic means starting January 1, 2002. These new requirements will result in a significant increase in electronic filings, as previously only gubernatorial candidates were required to file electronically.

At the time the Commission received this legislative mandate, staff members were processing the

files manually, and it took several weeks to make campaign contribution information available to the public. The Commission needed a solution that would allow staff members to create an electronic image of each file, and provide easy and quick access to the public via the Web.

"We needed to immediately store, retrieve and view hundreds of thousands of contribution forms," said Michael Smith, chief technology officer for the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission. "The solution also needed to provide instant access to this information to the public. We wanted community members to be able to log onto our site and search the databases to gather any information they needed on campaign financing."

The Solution

LEGATO's Solutions Help the PDC Meet Legislative Mandates,

Increase Productivity and Reduce Costs
To improve the management and access of contribution forms, the Commission turned to LEGATO's XtenderSolutions® for Content. Using LEGATO's ApplicationXtender®, WebXtender™ and ERMxtender®, the Commission created a highly effective document management, storage and access system. With ERMxtender, the Commission provides an exact electronic representation of electronically filed contribution forms. Paper filings are scanned into the system when they are received. ApplicationXtender then intelligently indexes, and organizes the reports into a unified repository, enabling easy retrieval via the desktop or the Web. All of the filings are stored within DiskXtender. Filing information is made available to the public via WebXtender. Using

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Michael Smith
Chief Technology Officer
Washington State PDC

WebXtender, any member of the community can retrieve and view stored filing information via the Web, with an easy-to-use search and retrieval interface.

With LEGATO's solutions, the Commission not only met the Washington legislatures mandates, it has already exceeded the 2002 mandate for making paper filings available in four days and electronic filings available in two days. Using the new system, the Commission can provide access to images of electronically filed reports in 15 minutes, and manually filed reports are ready in approximately 12 hours or less. In addition, the anticipated increase in filers and forms will not affect the efficiency and timeliness of the Commission, nor require an increase in staff.

“Before we implemented XtenderSolutions, our data entry staffers were inundated with gathering and inserting all the campaign information,” said Smith. “Now our staffers are always caught up, and can use the time saved to focus on ensuring compliance with contribution limits and other campaign finance restrictions.”

In addition to the benefits the Commission has received, the citizens of the state of Washington can also take advantage of the benefits of LEGATO's solutions. Prior to implementation, press and other citizens requesting campaign contribution information would either have to call the Commission and request the information, or visit the Commission in person and use the computers at the site location. Now, the public can easily retrieve the information themselves from the Commission's Web site.

“We are working hard, within a tight budget, to ensure compliance with contribution limits and other campaign finance restrictions,” said Smith. “With XtenderSolutions, we have been able to provide taxpayers with an efficient and affordable way to view this information.”



Tel (650) 210.7000 • (888) 853.4286 | Fax (650) 210.7032 | www.legato.com

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