



## Leicester City cleans up using a.k.a.® software

Leicester City Council is the unitary authority serving the people, communities and businesses of Leicester City - the biggest city in the East Midlands with a population of 280,000. The Council employs over 15,000 staff.

***Prior to 2009 Leicester had no formal policies in place for managing electronic information.***

Without corporate classification schemes or policies for creating or naming folders, Council staff had created ad hoc folder structures in which to store their electronic documents and records.

Network drives were found to be highly unstructured and poorly organised with massive duplication of folders and documents at all levels. In the Information Governance section alone, there was a proliferation of hundreds of folders reaching down to seven or eight levels. Consequently, network storage and backup systems were being filled with unnecessary duplication resulting in an ineffective use of resources."

The absence of file and document naming conventions was causing other problems. Some document names were so long they exceeded the maximum 256 characters allowable in a file path and as a result, some documents could not be opened, and could not be backed up. Many document names were so cryptic as to give no clues to the

contents inside. These documents had to be opened to ascertain the subject matter.

With staff struggling to locate /find documents, customer service and performance was affected.

***The Council determined to improve its information governance and implement a rigorous Information Management Framework.***

A corporate Information Management Policy was developed and signed off in November 2009. The policy mandated the development and use of a corporate classification schemes and retention schedule to be applied to all information systems.

***The clean up the network drives was given high priority.***

Initially the Information Governance team went in search of a product that would recreate file plans to be published to the network drives, and which would also identify and clear out duplicate documents. However, on closer examination, they found that much of the duplicated information was being maintained for legislative and compliance reasons.

The team decided to develop the Council classification scheme (and retention schedule) in line with the Council's Data Quality Framework. The top two levels, function and activity, were sourced from the Local Government Classification scheme. Lower levels are being developed in consultation with individual departments.

A shared approach to development was taken with the team consulting in each section and providing guidance on the development, training, implementation and use. It was found that some departments already had classification schemes in place while others needed to start from scratch.



***a.k.a.® software by Synercon was selected as the development tool for building the classification scheme and retention schedule.***

a.k.a.® software was used to:

- Import the existing file plans as a source of terms
- Determine preferred and non preferred terms
- Compile the terms into a classification scheme
- Create reports and published online to enable consultation with stakeholders
- Export the classification scheme back into the network drives
- Export the classification scheme into their Open Text CLM system

Once the classification scheme was published into the network drives, the team were able to commence the cleanup.



### ***About a.k.a.®***

a.k.a.® software is a suite of tools for the development of taxonomies (thesauri, controlled vocabularies) and disposition schedules for records management. a.k.a.® enables development and management of schemes in accordance with the DIRKS methodology (ISO15489 Standard for Records Management), and publishes in a wide range of formats to EDRM systems and to the web.

More information is available from [www.a-k-a.com.au](http://www.a-k-a.com.au).

### ***About Synercon Management Consulting***

Synercon Management Consulting is a leading provider of records management services, training and tools. Synercon's focus is on developing tools that integrate with business processes and make it easier for organisations to achieve records management compliance and usability.

More information is available from [www.synercon-uk.com](http://www.synercon-uk.com).

***The Network Drive Cleanup is an ongoing project.***

Council's staff are being taught how to populate the new structure by dragging and dropping documents from the old environment.

Unnecessary duplicates or irrelevant documents are deleted during the migration process.

***Already the Council is experiencing significant benefits from this approach.***

There has been a sizable reduction in the consumption of electronic storage as duplicates are being identified and discarded.

The shared drives are more consistent and easier to browse. Documents can be found by searching for known terms and can be recognized without having to be opened. Council staff are spending significantly less time searching for documents and have renewed confidence in the integrity of the data in the Council's systems.

Customer service has improved with faster access to quality information.

All in all, the project is delivering healthier outcomes for all concerned – IT, employees and the Councils customers.



***It's easier with a.k.a.®***