

Better Asset Management Improves Prognosis for Regulatory Compliance

ARCHIBUS has made significant contributions to Alegent Health, the Omaha, Nebraska-based healthcare provider serving eastern Nebraska and western Iowa, since its adoption over seven years ago by the healthcare provider's Building Operations Department.

With six major campuses and over 50 clinics, Alegent has been benefiting substantially from its use of the ARCHIBUS Building Operations and Furniture & Equipment Management applications.

Those applications have been essential in providing state-of-the-art facilities management, not to mention meeting regulatory requirements mandated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Joint Council on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) guidelines, respectively. But escalating standards for secure handling of patient information, as well as more stringent guidelines for equipment and facilities auditing, demanded more rigorous information management.

That prompted Alegent to embark on a new IT initiative: extending ARCHIBUS to closely track key IT and healthcare assets for HIPAA and JCAHO compliance. The result: more extensive information-sharing and reporting capabilities that turned out to be just what the doctor ordered.

Easier to Collect, Share, and Protect Data The implementation of the asset management plan using ARCHIBUS required a shift from a departmental to an enterprise-level approach, says Alegent database administrator and project team member Jim Clark. As a result, Alegent's corporate IT department took responsibility from its Building Ops colleagues for the planning and roll-out of ARCHIBUS Telecom & Cable Management and the creation within the ARCHIBUS Furniture & Equipment Management application of screens for a surgery and catheter equipment inventory function.

The project required documenting who the new users would be and their needs as well as defining standardized reporting formats, uniform auditing methods and more. That system would be configured to provide flexibility in collecting and sharing data among departments, while also having the capability to limit access where necessary.

The expanded ARCHIBUS solution delivered the new features and functions needed to execute Alegent's ambitious asset management initiative, which included:

- **New Security Features:** The Virtual Private ARCHIBUS (VPA) Security



Vital Statistics

Organization:

Alegent Health

Location

Headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska

Facilities Facts:

6 major campuses and over 50 clinics in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa

ARCHIBUS Applications:

Furniture & Equipment Management, Telecommunications & Cable Management, Building Operations Management

3rd Party Applications:

Autodesk AutoCAD®, PeopleSoft®, MAGIC®

Reasons for Implementing:

Need for greater regulatory compliance to protect patient data confidentiality, mandated by the HIPAA; better IT- and healthcare-related asset management as required by JCAHO

Benefits Gained:

Automated reporting, better asset control and regulatory compliance; self-service data access by end-users; PDA-based applications to expedite inventory function; improved data security

Business Partner:

Applied Data Systems, Inc.

Web Site:

www.alegent.com

feature defines the security requirements of each functional group and any new group or individual. It also maintains information in a centralized location to track holdings and performance through out the organization while controlling access on a “need to know” basis.

- **Improved Content Control/Delivery:** Prior to ARCHIBUS, equipment and other data were stored in a welter of programs including Microsoft® Access, Excel, and even Word, with communications between programs difficult if not impossible. “Everyone was doing their own thing,” says Alegent’s Razvan Petrescu, database administrator. “The right hand didn’t know what the left hand was doing.” The new ARCHIBUS Process Navigator database replaced old legacy systems, making data table updates easier and supporting selfservice data access that is at least 50% faster. And more user-friendly.
- **Screen Personalization:** Tailored screens for IT were developed as interfaces to the organization’s data using HTML, JavaScript and ARCHIBUS ActiveX controls to provide a more Web-like appearance. The interface collected equipment entry/modification information as well as computer tape management and hard drive inventory control data.
- **Introduction of PDAs:** For greater mobility and ease in collecting asset data, Alegent added PDAs running Windows® CE and SQL Server™ CE to its IT arsenal of Web-based and other modules. This allowed the transfer of data from PDAs to ARCHIBUS as XML files.
- **Barcoding:** A PDA-based system linked to a barcode scanner was designed to generate barcode labels for Room and Equipment items. This function is incorporated into the system’s equipment maintenance screen for printing of individual or batch labels.

Taking the Complaints Out Of Compliance

In spite of the time – and diplomacy – involved in establishing project processes, policies and procedures, the effort was well worth it. Alegent now has a single source of information on multiple lists of telecom, IT, and healthcare-related hardware assets. It’s a convenience that saves a significant amount of time in tracking the location and condition of those assets, as well as facilitating reporting on stolen or otherwise missing resources.

“There’s a much better understanding of where everything is and where it goes,” confirms Petrescu. “That’s because we’re collecting information that we never had before. We’re working on PDA-based applications, that will collect inventory information on things like software and the thousands of computer tapes that are associated with our storage systems.”

This ability to keep tabs on hardware for auditing, retention and replacement purposes, furthermore, has been invaluable at a time when JCAHO regulatory compliance can help a healthcare institution avoid hefty fines, something that any company—especially a non-profit like Alegent—would want to avoid. A single ARCHIBUS-based system that can be used by multiple departments also eliminates the overhead of licensing and maintaining multiple systems and their accompanying infrastructure.

Future Plans: Greater Security, Bigger User

Base

Alegent has far from exhausted the potential of ARCHIBUS, and its future plans are to extend that solution still further, into a number of other departments. Other projects include the creation of interfaces between ARCHIBUS, PeopleSoft, and MAGIC, and the addition of more selective security controls for granting access at the individual and group level.

And that can only make improved operational efficiency, and healthcare standards compliance, more easily attainable than ever before.

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