European Court of Human Rights

Improves Content Searching with SeeUnity

The Court relies on eDOCS to store and protect valuable legal resources. SeeUnity software was used to build a FAST-powered search portal, improving search performance and usability.
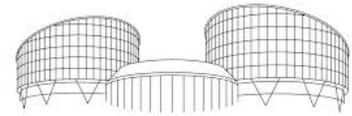
HOW THE COURT USES ITS INFORMATION ASSETS

The European Court of Human Rights plays a vital international role, ruling on alleged civil and political rights violations. As a judicial body, its binding authority fosters greater peace and prosperity across 47 European member states. The Court also provides training and best practices to visiting lawyers who work at the Court in Strasbourg, France for a fixed term. Visitors contribute to the Court while gaining valuable insight and knowledge into human rights law. At term's end, these lawyers return to their country of origin, better equipped to practice and uphold the Court's legal standards. With such regular turnover, transforming new users into proficient content consumers is a priority.

THE NEED FOR FAST SEARCHING

The Court had previously deployed Microsoft FAST as the search engine behind both its public internet site (http://echr.coe.int) and jurisprudence database (http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/), providing access to appropriate public information. FAST was provided to provide superior search performance and user tools for filtering – including segmentation according to specialization, languages and nations. The Court's IT department then turned towards their own internal data. Replicating this approach with internal eDOCS resources would provide substantial benefits to members of the Court.

"We have over four million documents in our eDOCS library," said John Hunter, Head of the Court's IT Department. "Maybe ten percent is needed on a regular basis. Data volume accessed by a rapidly changing user base presents a search challenge. Robust search forms aren't enough; we need intuitive search tools that filter out extraneous 'noise' and return only relevant results."

EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Overview

- Region served: Global
- Licensed Content Users: > 700
- eDOCS Document volume: > 4M
- SeeUnity products used: SharePoint FAST Integration Modules

The European Court of Human Rights is an international court set up in 1959. It rules on individual or State applications alleging violations of the civil and political rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights.

In almost fifty years the Court has delivered more than 10,000 judgments. These are binding on the countries concerned and have led governments to alter their legislation and administrative practice in a wide range of areas. The Court's case-law makes the Convention a powerful living instrument for meeting new challenges and consolidating the rule of law and democracy in Europe. For more information, visit: www.echr.coe.int

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The Power of Portal-Driven Content Management

INTEGRATING FAST AND EDOCS WITH SEEUNITY

The Court envisioned a custom user portal running FAST's search engine against their eDOCS library. The rich metadata that eDOCS stores in content profiles created the potential for rich filtering in FAST. The Court had already relied on SeeUnity software to successfully convert data to eDOCS DM5 from eDOCS DM6.

The Court's IT Department evaluated SeeUnity's FAST search connector and found it ideal for their project. A key requirement met by SeeUnity was integrated access to eDOCS metadata and permissions. As a result, sensitive content could be restricted to designated users, and unnecessary volumes of data could be filtered out.

> "We are fortunate to have built a portal that is easy to use, elegant, and powerful. We anticipate building future FAST-powered search pages with ease."
>
> - John Hunter, Head of IT European Court of Human Rights

After the planning was complete, the portal integration project was implemented in under three months. The pilot program consisted of making the Lawyer's Manual (a vast body of procedures and practices with which lawyers must become familiarized) available through the portal. With FAST, users can widen or narrow search results based on a range of options, including document type, case subject, language, functional group, author and modification date. The portal empowers new users to rapidly become proficient content consumers, without disrupting the user experience for permanent members and staff.

MAKING MORE FAST SEARCHES

With the initial pilot program completed, the IT department is now creating other search sites aimed at specific subject areas. These include portal pages dynamically populated with the results to commonly submitted search requests. The IT department is also eyeing specialized portals, that will enable experts on specific Human Rights areas (e.g. war crimes, prisoner treatment, etc.) to better share knowledge with other members of the Court.

"Building an integrated solution could have been complicated," said Mr. Hunter. "We are fortunate to have built a portal that is easy to use, elegant, and powerful. We anticipate building future FAST-powered search pages with ease."

ABOUT SEEUNITY

SeeUnity has over 40 combined years of experience with successful integration, migration, and synchronization of ECM systems. Our products and solutions help you make the most of your ECM systems. Our products have helped many industries, including legal, government, real estate, and entertainment, take control of their content by helping them implement publishing plans, extend security across repositories, integrate multiple repositories, or enact archiving policies across all of their repositories.

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