

SMS Engineering

Micro Focus® Open Workgroup Suite and Filr Advanced team up to deliver increased user productivity and IT efficiency.

Overview

For more than 50 years, SMS Engineering has specialized in commercial, industrial, and institutional projects for Canada's building industry, continually striving to set the standard for design, service, and quality of work.

Challenge

A long-time Micro Focus technology user, SMS Engineering leverages Micro Focus Open Enterprise Server (OES) to deliver advanced file, print, and networking services to the company. SMS Engineering runs a lightweight IT function and has always used tools to help automate processes so that it can focus on its core business. Micro Focus ZENworks® Configuration

"We regard ZENworks as a virtual IT department that has automated half my job. Coupled with Filr Advanced supporting remote file access and synchronization, we find we don't need to spend any extra budget or headcount on doing a great job for our users."

RODNEY WILDER

IT Manager
SMS Engineering

Management is a good example of that, as explained by Rodney Wilder, IT Manager for SMS Engineering: "We use ZENworks to push settings and policies out to our users. This makes it much easier to provision new machines when required. No more running around physically loading software since it's all done remotely and through automated processes. When we upgraded from Windows 7 to Windows 10, the benefits of ZENworks were really clear."

He adds, "Our workforce is increasingly mobile. Engineers are often on-site at a building project for 3–4 days, during which they need access to their project files. They also take photographs that need to be uploaded to the project folder. Previously, they would use a company camera, and upload images when they were back in the office. Another issue was file sharing. Our business works with massive file sizes. Sharing these securely with clients and sub-consultants was a real challenge. Cloud-based solutions such as Dropbox or Google Drive just don't give us the tracking facilities and security we need. We work on highly sensitive projects

Solution

Micro Focus Open Workgroup Suite (OWS) is a great collection of printing, collaboration, and security tools. As it contains many of the solutions SMS Engineering already use and love, it was an easy decision for the team.



At a Glance

- **Industry**
Business Services
- **Location**
Winnipeg, Canada
- **Challenge**
Deliver an easy-to-use and secure on-premise file-sharing solution to an increasingly mobile user community.
- **Products and Services**
Micro Focus Filr Advanced
Micro Focus Open Workgroup Suite
- **Results**
 - + Light-weight IT function delivering full service
 - + Fully automated endpoint management processes
 - + Increased productivity for mobile users
 - + Auditable and secure internal and external file sharing

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GroupWise, as part of OWS, is their email solution of choice, and Wilder explains why it continues to satisfy all requirements: "Back in the 1990s, GroupWise® was a natural fit for our technology stack. While at the time there weren't that many alternatives, there are now of course, and we regularly examine options to reaffirm our GroupWise decision. We have moved with the different GroupWise versions and love the new features. In-office message tracking is highly regarded, and we use GroupWise Messenger as our instant messaging platform. A third of our employees leverage GroupWise Mobility to connect remotely to their emails using mobile phones. As IT manager, I just appreciate the GroupWise stability, security, and easy administration."

Micro Focus Filr, also part of OWS, was introduced to prevent the use of potentially insecure cloud-based storage solutions. Initially, it was just used for quick file sharing, but as the product developed and SMS Engineering followed the upgrade path, the use of it rapidly increased. The issue of having to upload photos in the office was quickly solved by using mobile phone cameras combined with the Filr mobile application. Now, engineers upload photos to the relevant project folders and have secure access to all their documentation while on the go. Net folders are in use for efficient file sharing within project teams.

When SMS Engineering moved to the Filr Advanced edition, there was more excitement about new features, as Wilder recalls: "Filr Advanced enables external users to upload files

without a Filr registration. This support for unauthenticated users is a real benefit and just removes an extra hurdle in using Filr. Users also love that they can download a single file from a folder without having to download the whole folder. When working remotely with limited connectivity, this really helps their productivity. Within the standard Filr edition, we were limited to single file sharing, whereas with Filr Advanced we now share multiple folders from a NetFolder. We can also share submission folders without having to zip an archive of the folder and share that, which unnecessarily wasted space and time."

Close integration with OES means that all OES-determined access rights automatically flow through to Filr, without further system administration required. Filr Advanced delivers automatic download reports to the file owner. Previously, users would need to ask Wilder to go through the download log if they wanted confirmation of a download.

Results

SMS Engineering employees appreciate the flexibility and increased collaboration opportunities with Micro Focus Open Workgroup Suite, and Filr Advanced in particular. With full access to their network drive on the go, productivity is soaring. Wilder is also an active participant in Micro Focus beta programs for Open Workgroup Suite products. This gives him the opportunity to influence product direction, and Micro Focus gains first-hand feedback on customer experiences with the products.

Wilder concludes: "When I compare the lightweight IT set-up within SMS Engineering with other firms of a similar size, I'm always amazed that they employ up to three times more IT staff to do the same job, or have a much higher IT budget to fund third-party consulting. Recently, we implemented ZENworks Service Desk to track issues and requirements while improving communication. We regard ZENworks as a virtual IT department that has automated half my job. Coupled with Filr Advanced supporting remote file access and synchronization, we find we don't need to spend any extra budget or headcount on doing a great job for our users."