

UK Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Driving down costs in high-volume document environment

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is one of the United Kingdom's largest public service operations. Headquartered in Swansea UK, the agency employs more than 7,000 staff responsible for meeting its statutory core objectives. This includes issuing and maintaining driving licences for the UK, vehicle registration and renewal, and facilitating police and intelligence authority investigations into vehicle related crime. Each year, the DVLA issues over seven million driving licences, 18 million registration certificates and collects more than £4.9 billion in vehicle excise duties.

Three years ago, the DVLA realised that being able to respond more quickly with document changes and delivery was mission critical for the agency and decided to move its outsourced production operation in-house. The strategic decision was made to improve the efficiency and flexibility of its document creation and delivery processes, and a team was formed to manage the massive conversion project.



Using Dialogue, the DVLA replaced 33 million vehicle registration certificates with highly customised documents that comply with new European regulations.

FINDING THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

"When we started to evaluate technology alternatives for our decision to move document production in house, our primary requirement was software that would be able to handle the extremely large volumes of different, personalised documents that we have to produce," said Bill Skedgell, IT development manager at DVLA. "Any technology that was introduced would have to easily integrate with our existing systems as well as any new technologies we implemented in the future—including new equipment. Such an example is our major project for producing more secure UK driver licences by mid-2007."

"We looked at several options, but fairly quickly came to the conclusion that Exstream's Dialogue was the best solution for us because of its ability to create any type of personalised document, could easily integrate into our operations, and had the performance and capabilities we needed to handle very high volumes of variable output within tight timeframes."

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

"The first application we developed with Dialogue was the Harmonised Registration Certificate, commonly known as the logbook—a registration certificate required for all vehicles in the UK. We had to replace all of these documents in 2004/2005 in line with new European regulations. This worked out to be some 33 million documents, each highly specific to the vehicle and its owner," said Skedgell.



In addition to the new registration documents, the DVLA had to continue producing all of its routine day-to-day documents, which could be up to 100,000 a day. The phased transition of document applications to Dialogue included monthly tax reminders—numbering up to 3.8 million documents every month—as well as a large volume of highly personalised letters the agency needed to get out every month.

“So far, we’ve not needed much assistance from the team at Exstream in our conversion of these document applications to Dialogue. Maybe once or twice, but the system is really very easy to use,” said Skedgell. “We have a good relationship with the company, and Exstream’s customer website portal is a very helpful resource for day-to-day questions and support.”

THE BENEFITS SO FAR

“Dialogue is a nicely structured technology to use” remarked Skedgell. “It’s now a lot faster for us to develop, test, and change new document applications, especially with the ability to reuse design components across multiple applications. It integrates well with our existing systems, and has facilitated other production improvements too. For example, we are now looking to move to plain reeled stationery, where we have used pre-printed stationery in the past. This will be considerably more efficient and will bring real cost savings to the agency.”

Bringing document development and production in house compared to the previous outsourced arrangement has also resulted in other benefits for the agency. “We have recognised the most direct and tangible benefits when changing documents and applications,” said Skedgell. “Previously, we found this to be extremely time consuming but now with hands-on capability, we not only implement changes very quickly, but are also able to identify further efficiencies in our processes. For example, in addition to changes only taking a few hours to implement, Dialogue allows us to utilise duplex printing which is significantly cheaper. Similarly, Dialogue’s ability to support our bilingual requirements from a single application design creates big savings in stationery and handling.”

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

Future plans for the DVLA include migrating all of the agency’s high-volume document applications to Dialogue—which currently result in over 100 million communications output every year. Additionally, the agency plans to use Dialogue for the full production of UK photo card licences and their paper counterparts by mid-2007. This will be a major project for the agency, which currently produces up to 30,000 licences a day. This figure is expected to increase dramatically in 2008 as the current ten-year photo card licences come up for renewal.

Skedgell concluded, “We have been impressed with how things have progressed so far since implementing Dialogue. We’re looking forward to bringing more applications over, and especially using Dialogue to implement the new driver’s licence application. If things keep going as they are, we anticipate even greater bottom line impact using Dialogue in the future.”

