

# Alfresco Case Study: City of Denver

## Business Overview

The City and County of Denver located in Colorado has a population of over 600,000 people and is the 21st largest city in the United States. It has a mayor system of government and employs more than 10,000 people with an operating budget of \$1 billion.

Prior to 2005, information technology functions were federated within the 70+ separate agencies that comprise the city's government structure. In order to support all of the city's services, Denver's departments and agencies amassed a complex technology environment. In 2005, the mayor created a centralized IT group called Technology Services. Today, Technology Services works to provide a unified technology strategy to support the city's needs while managing IT costs.

## Business/Technical Challenge

As a result of the decentralized IT environment, Denver acquired 14 separate document management systems, including EMC Documentum, Microsoft SharePoint, and many proprietary systems; none of which interfaced with each other. This required Technology Services to maintain multiple systems, which was both costly and time consuming. Document sharing was also burdensome. In addition, scanned document applications, such as the city's contract and financial records application, were difficult to use and did not provide the required security and auditing functionality.

Denver needed to implement one centralized document management system that could serve as a platform for all its document and content applications. The first application to move to the new platform would be the city's Contracts Management System - the official system that stores signed contracts and associated financial information. The existing contracts application was outdated, slow, hard to search, and had bugs which required the Technology Services team to reboot the server every night. The system's broad departmental use further emphasized the need for the city to implement one centralized platform that all of its departments could access.

Key requirements for the project included implementing an enterprise content management (ECM) system that offered both document and records management functionality and a flexible content repository that could easily integrate with other applications and technologies such as PeopleSoft, Oracle, and Kofax. Denver also needed a solution that could be implemented quickly, would result in a low Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), and would be easy to maintain and support.

## Why Alfresco was chosen

Denver's Technology Service team had experience using a number of different proprietary ECM systems and researched the costs associated with each. After doing a cost analysis, they selected Alfresco Enterprise Content Management as the content platform for the city. Alfresco had the best overall return on investment (ROI), as well as the key features required from both the users and the Technology Services team to help the city meet its growing demand for document management.



**“As a city government, there is always the pressure to deliver a high level of service to our constituents at the lowest possible cost. Alfresco’s low cost of ownership, simplicity of design, and standards-based approach allows us to deliver services faster and cheaper than other commercial document management solutions.”**

Chuck Fredrick, Director, Enterprise Applications for the City of Denver

Alfresco fit with the city’s long term goals of leveraging the cost benefit of open source software. Alfresco has the most scalable content repository that runs on commodity hardware and software. This allows the city to support more users with less hardware, and easily scale for future demand while maintaining high performance.

## Project details/highlights

The City of Denver turned to Alfresco partner Zia Consulting to help implement and support its new content management system. Zia worked with the Technology Services group to design a multi-phased approach which allowed the city to implement Alfresco in stages without any disruption in services.

The first phase of the project included the implementation of Alfresco as the new content repository. Zia set up Alfresco Enterprise running on Red Hat Enterprise Linux. Zia also provided integration support to ensure that Alfresco could interface with Kofax as well as an existing PeopleSoft application using Oracle ESB.

**“Zia Consulting has been instrumental in helping us implement Alfresco. Their consultants have become an extension of our technology team. With their help, we have been able to implement a modern content platform, built on a modern architecture, using modern tools for highly scalable and collaborative applications.”**

Chuck Fredrick, Director, Enterprise Applications for the City of Denver

Zia implemented a custom content model with multiple document types and their attributes. In addition to supporting the immediate project's requirements, this also provided a base for the city to extend usage of Alfresco to other departments. The Alfresco security model was also customized, supporting role-based access for each department's users as well as providing cross-department access for certain job functions, such as auditor.

Once the Alfresco system was installed, Zia provided the Technology Services team with the support to migrate content from its former contract management system into a new Alfresco application. The migration process also leveraged the PeopleSoft integration to improve the metadata attributes of the existing content, in many cases providing metadata that had been lost by the old system.

By building its new contract management system in Alfresco, the City of Denver can ensure future compliance against local, state and federal government rules and procedures. Alfresco provides the functionality to manage the entire lifecycle of a contract while controlling who has access, and what actions they can take for each individual record.

**“Alfresco is an ideal ECM system for governments. Its records management functionality is not only DoD 5015.02 certified but also built on top of a generalized records management metadata model. This means that Denver officials can be confident that all their contracts can be easily audited and meet city and state procedures.”**

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## Benefits of Using Alfresco

The City of Denver saw immediate cost benefits from using Alfresco. The Technology Services team was able to significantly reduce its content management spending as well as cut out many redundancies from the system, which has saved it time and resources.

The Technology Services team was able to implement Alfresco and develop the new contracts management application in three months. The speed of implementation meant that the city could quickly address issues related to security and auditing. In addition, the new system is dramatically easier for all users.

Other benefits that the city has realized from the Alfresco implementation include:

- ability to deliver new functionality quickly;
- a robust search capability;
- role-based security; and,
- improved auditing capabilities.

Now that Phase One – the implementation and existing document migration – is complete, the City of Denver is in the process of fully automating the method used to create and collaborate on a contract, from its inception to approval signatures. This is the first of many projects aimed at solving the high number of document management needs within the city.

**“We are extremely excited to leverage Alfresco as the document management platform for our city. Alfresco’s support for open standards, flexible architecture, rich functionality and low cost means that we can begin to standardize on one ECM system while being mindful of budgetary constraints.”**

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