



SUCCESS STORY

State Environmental Agencies

State agency automates environmental compliance reporting with Adobe® solutions, improving government operations and enhancing services to corporations and private citizens

Industry

Government

Solution

Online Compliance Reporting

Products Used

- Adobe Form Designer
- Adobe Form Server
- Adobe Output Designer
- Adobe Web Output Pak
- Adobe Central Pro Output Server
- Adobe Workflow Server

Organization Overview

State environmental agencies work with federal and local regulatory agencies to safeguard the health, property, and overall quality of life in communities. To monitor corporate adherence to environmental regulations, government agencies require companies that discharge pollutants to submit compliance documents, including Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs). The lengthy DMRs are reviewed by state regulatory agencies that issue business operating permits and are shared with staff at federal agencies. Once processed, the DMRs and portions of the reports are made available to the public.

At a state environmental agency, Adobe solutions have been adopted to automate the completion of and processing of compliance reports, streamlining agency and business operations and enhancing services to corporations and citizens.

Challenges Faced

Minimize administrative burdens on businesses

The Federal Clean Water Act requires businesses that release pollutants to obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) Permits and report on contaminants they release into the water system. In accordance with the permits, approximately 60,000 NPDES businesses nationwide must complete multiple forms monthly outlining their disposal of chemicals. These companies can incur considerable administrative costs as employees spend weeks completing repetitive forms, copying and filing paper reports, searching archives, and shipping documents to government agencies.

Streamline report processing and lower agency operating costs

Manual processes for creating forms and handling compliance reports at agencies are time-consuming and prone to errors. Forms are typically preprinted and overlaid with data pulled from systems at Federal agencies. The composite forms are then mailed to companies for completion. Once completed, the paper forms are returned to the agency, where staff must manually enter data into back-end systems, further increasing costs, delays, and possible errors.

Improve collaboration among federal, state, and local agencies

Government agencies at all levels are involved in monitoring business compliance to regulations. Information delivered on paper or on static electronic forms must be dealt with manually, draining limited government resources. For example, paper forms submitted by regulated companies often must be passed from agency to agency, with employees at each office rekeying data into multiple systems.

Success Strategy

The state environmental agency is using Adobe solutions to automate every stage of compliance reporting, including electronic generation of forms; online completion and submission of forms; and the electronic review, processing, and distribution of information inside and outside of the agency.



Government staff, business representatives, and private citizens access the state's electronic compliance reporting system via the Web. Users responsible for submitting and reviewing compliance reports utilize a secure Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) that authorizes the level of access and type of materials available to them. Private citizens can access the state agency's Web site to search for and retrieve compliance reports tailored to their interests.

Using Adobe solutions, the agency created electronic versions of DMR forms previously available only on paper and posted them online. When a corporate user logs onto the site, the Adobe based system uses the log-in information to determine which DMR forms are needed, populates the forms with company information on file at the agency, and delivers the partially filled-in documents online to the user.

The electronic DMRs include edit checks for out-of-range values, missing data, and violation flagging. Companies completing the forms can also include comments. Once completed, the forms are digitally signed using Entrust technology and submitted online to the agency, where the data is automatically stored in XML in a compliance database. At the same time, the Adobe solution uses rules-based processes to route materials to reviewers at the state agency as well as the pertinent federal and local agencies.

Frequently, information from DMRs is needed for reference by staff, corporations, or private citizens. To accommodate the requests, the agency uses Adobe software to dynamically generate custom documents. For example, citizens can request reports detailing chemicals discharged into their local water systems. Based on the request, the Adobe solution captures the relevant DMR data from the agency database, places it into a template, and renders electronic documents with charts and graphics in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) or other formats.

Business Benefits

- Minimized administrative burden on corporations submitting compliance documents
- Reduced agency costs and time to process compliance reports—in some instances shortening review time from two months to a few hours
- Streamlined government-to-government collaboration with automated sharing and processing of materials
- Improved citizen access to compliance information

The Adobe solution integrates seamlessly with back-end systems and supports intuitive, accessible presentation of forms and information to government staff, regulated companies, and private citizens. Within minutes, business users can log onto the agency's Web site and complete compliance materials that are routed immediately to the appropriate parties. Updated information is also available instantly in the agency's compliance database. Previously, processing compliance information could take months due to the manual delivery of materials and the need to rekey data into back-end systems. Today, electronic reporting enables the same processes to be handled in hours.

By linking businesses, government agencies, and constituents into a unified process for completing, processing, and accessing compliance reports, the Adobe solutions increase efficiencies, enhance agency services, and support the agency in achieving its overriding goal—protecting the quality of life for the communities it serves.

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