



Electric Cooperative Solves Version Control Challenges with Process Automation

Arizona Electric Power Cooperative uses the Nintex Platform to solve its version control challenges and save time.

Organization

Arizona Electric Power Cooperative

Website

www.azgt.coop

Industry

Energy, Utilities

Country

United States

Business situation

Arizona Electric Power Cooperative manages all the engineering drawings that support its generation assets and Southwest Transmission Cooperative's system. Drawing changes involved an extensive, manual change order process. It could take months for these changes to make it into the system, resulting in version control problems.

Solution

With the integration of Nintex into their processes, the cooperative can immediately make marked-up drawings available to engineers, so they don't have to wait months to access the final drawing changes.

Benefits

95% time savings a year in indexing records into the records center
Drawing changes are available within a week instead of months
Ability to support and maintain workflow solution with in-house resources

A cumbersome and time-consuming process

When engineers at Arizona Electric Power Cooperative needed drawing changes, they'd print out the PDFs, mark up the drawings in pen, make a note of the changes and mail the drawings to the cooperative. A designer would study the change order requests, make the changes in the original documents and enter those drawings into the system, but it was a cumbersome and time-consuming process. "It was taking months – sometimes more than a year – for these changes to get into the system," says Business Information Manager Gerard Rodriguez. As a result, plant engineers could never be entirely certain if a drawing on the cooperative's SharePoint was the most up-to-date version.

Arizona Electric Power Cooperative Inc. provides electric power to more than 147,000 meters and 350,000 coop-members in Arizona, California and New Mexico through six Class A member distribution cooperatives. One of 68 electric generation and transmission cooperatives in the nation, AEPCO owns and operates the Apache Generating Station.

Cooperative Struggles to Manage Drawing Change Updates

“I’m a big advocate for Nintex. It fits very well with the model of SharePoint. SharePoint is sophisticated records management. Much like Access and Excel, Nintex is a business user tool. It brings that processing control normally devoted to a developer to the business user.”

— **Gerard Rodriguez**, Business Information Manager, Arizona Electric Power Cooperative

Version control of drawings was a big problem for Arizona Electric Power Cooperative, which maintains tens of thousands of drawings. Changes to a drawing meant “a reasonably involved change order process,” one that was manual and slow, says AEPCO’s Business Information Manager Gerard Rodriguez. Requested changes went into a designer queue and might not make it out for months.

The cooperative’s engineering records library contains about 50,000 records. These include three different kinds of documents – versioned, finalized documents that must be kept for the life of the asset plus 30 years; reference material, including aerial photographs and maps; and unincorporated documents, which are key project documents that must be versioned with every change. The cooperative’s current system did not effectively manage the latter.

“It’s a huge risk mitigator,” Gerard says. “If something is out for months, someone might need to make a change but may not be able to access it or may not know it’s being changed. You run the risk of someone looking at something old instead of at the latest updates. In power production, it’s key you have the latest information for customers.”

Workflow Automation Results in Electronic Notifications of Changes

The cooperative wanted a workflow solution that could be maintained with in-house resources, and without relying on custom coding. After moving all its engineering records to SharePoint, AEPCO chose the Nintex Platform for SharePoint to solve its version control challenges. Among other benefits, the platform's Advanced Workflow capability moves the development of workflows from an IT activity to a business activity.

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Using Nintex, AEPCO developed a process where engineers mark-up drawings with their changes and send them electronically. Workflows automatically kick off that alert administrators and the designers who'll be making the updates. Nintex's Advanced Workflow posts the marked-up drawings in the online records library so engineers can learn about them immediately instead of finding out about requested changes only when the final drawings are available. The records administrator now spends just over 28 hours a year indexing these records instead of 563 hours a year.

We're accountable to our customers, our members

After the success of automating this process, the organization has created additional workflows for several other processes, including one to manage Accounts Payable records. That has reduced the time the records administrator spends indexing these records from 10 minutes per record to 30 seconds per record.

"We're not a large company, but a small cooperative," Gerard says. "We're accountable to our customers, our members. We want to stay competitive. We want to keep our rates low. It's all part of doing the most you can with the resources you have. The less it costs to maintain our information – the more efficiently and effectively we do that – we mitigate risk and save time downstream for others."

About Total Solutions

Arizona Electric Power Cooperative worked with Nintex partner Total Solutions on the implementation. Michigan-based Total Solutions Inc. offers a robust array of solutions to help architect, implement, customize and administer SharePoint systems. The Silver Microsoft Partner specializes in document approval workflow, HR onboarding workflow, intranet development, SharePoint administration, SharePoint on-premises to online migration, and SharePoint custom applications.

About Nintex

Nintex is the global standard for process management and automation. Today more than 10,000 public and private sector organizations across 90 countries turn to the Nintex Platform to accelerate progress on their digital transformation journeys by quickly and easily managing, automating and optimizing business processes. Learn more by visiting www.nintex.com and experience how Nintex and its global partner network are shaping the future of Intelligent Process Automation (IPA).

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