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Expertise for the future

Company-wide deployment creates end-to-end knowledge management

The Hohenstein Institutes have used ELO^{professional} to implement fast and efficient invoice processing while also increasing the transparency and reliability of their processes. Information is available electronically in an instant, and archive space has been saved. The seamless integration of the solution into the existing IT environment by the ELO business partner guarantees fast, secure and transparent invoice processing. The result is that discounts can be fully exploited and compliance maintained in the archiving process.

The Hohenstein Institutes are an internationally renowned research and service centre. Companies and organisations throughout the textile chain and many related areas benefit from the knowledge of the Hohenstein experts in the areas of research, development, testing, consulting, certification and training.



"The flexible way in which ELO^{professional} can be tailored to our existing IT environment and the ability to integrate the ECM deeply into our processes won us over; we also benefit from the expert knowledge and geographical proximity of our ELO business partner."

Frank Müthing,
ECM Project Manager at the Hohenstein Institutes

The solution

practical added value



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Innovative solutions for successful products

"We also comply with the legal requirements for digital audits, which have been in effect since 2002. Every invoice at Hohenstein is now copied one time less, which comes to around 15,000 copies a year plus working time."

Frank Müthing,
ECM Project Manager at the Hohenstein Institutes

At the Hohenstein Institutes, a team of committed specialists works in state-of-the-art laboratories to shape the future of textile products and services. Around 240 staff now work in the German labs, delivering outstanding results. Manufacturers, distributors, importers and exporters from all over the world also send their products to be tested and evaluated for quality and product characteristics by the Hohenstein specialists.

Combining innovation with proven technology

The Hohenstein Institutes create innovative solutions for successful products. Optimum business processes are the basis for profitable work; the workflows within the company are therefore well thought-out and have proved their worth. Over time, however, the limits of paper-based administration became ever more apparent. Growing archives demanded more space and were not calculated to help find information quickly. There was clear scope for optimisation within the invoice processing area in particular. The Hohenstein Institutes decided to act, and started looking for an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system at the beginning of 2004. "Apart from savings in archiving space, the solution had to speed up the search for information and improve the reliability of our processes. But it was important here to find a system that could offer a solution without changing our tried and tested procedures", explains Frank Müthing, ECM Project Manager at the Hohenstein Institutes.



After evaluating ECM systems, the project owners opted to deploy **ELOprofessional** from ELO Digital Office GmbH. Because the IT department of the Hohenstein Institutes had developed some of the company's systems in-house, the seamless integration of the ECM solution was crucial, as Müthing confirms: "The flexible way in which **ELOprofessional** can be tailored to our existing IT environment and the ability to integrate the ECM deeply into our processes won us over; we also benefit from the expert knowledge and geographical proximity of our **ELO** business partner."

Fast invoice processing

The project kicked off in February 2004. The first step was to implement the digitisation and electronic processing of all incoming invoices. For this, the business partner generated an invoice release form in **ELOprofessional**. Multiple cost centres can be specified for each department. The Hohenstein Institutes are organised into seven institutes with 10 departments each. All incoming invoices arriving at the Hohenstein Institutes are now barcoded and then scanned into the **ELO** archive. There they remain in the **ELO** scanner input area with an indication of their status (unprocessed, in progress, awaiting approval, etc.), until final release. From this point, the Accounts department picks up the initial input and assigns the invoices to the individual work steps or employees.

*"With **ELO**, we now have transparency across all departments. Searching for information has been speeded up considerably. With electronic archiving using **ELO**, we meet the legal requirements and benefit from a substantial saving in archiving space as well as end-to-end processes for digital invoice checking."*

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Transparency and process control

"The electronic workflow guides the invoice through the digital release process to the relevant employees, until it is ultimately posted. The flow of incoming invoices is then transparent, nothing can be left 'lying around', and invoices cannot disappear. In this way, we take every opportunity to obtain discounts at the appropriate time."

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The Accounts department completes the necessary fields and adds the cost centres that are involved in invoice approval. The due date for the invoice can also be entered manually. In parallel with this, dynamic indexes are generated for the different statuses, through which the invoices then make the 'virtual' way. Each department works with its own dynamic indexes. When an employee releases the invoice, **ELO** automatically checks a number of factors as a condition for correct posting. This ensures that the cost centre matches the department, that the employee is authorised to release the invoice amount and that the release rights are in place. For security of access, the **ELO** business partner set up a comprehensive authorisation system, so staff can only view the invoices that concern their departments. To guarantee central processing, the various employees receive a reminder that there is a task within the release workflow awaiting their attention. Following final approval by the department manager, the status changes and the document automatically 'moves' (virtually) into the appropriate processing index.



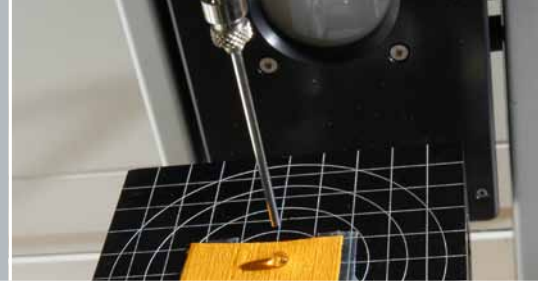
Seamless transfer to DATEV

After release, the invoice returns to Accounts for further processing and approval for the DATEV export. For correct posting, it is possible to split approved posting items once more at the post-processing stage. When the bill has been paid, it is transferred to DATEV. At the touch of a button, **ELO** exports all the necessary data to a TXT file which is then read into DATEV. After the DATEV export, the invoice is moved from the **ELO** 'scanner input' folder into the target index. A cross-reference is also inserted in the various departments involved in the invoice release process.

Frank Müthing explains the advantages of the electronic process: "The electronic workflow guides the invoice through the digital release process to the relevant employees, until it is ultimately posted. The flow of incoming invoices is then transparent, nothing can be left 'lying around', and invoices cannot disappear. In this way, we take every opportunity to obtain discounts at the appropriate time. We also comply with the legal requirements for digital audits, which have been in effect since 2002. Every invoice at Hohenstein is now copied one time less, which comes to around 15,000 copies a year plus working time."

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Seamless business processes for greater transparency

Overview

Country: Germany
Industry: Research

The company

The Hohenstein Institutes are an internationally renowned research and service centre. Companies and organisations throughout the textile chain and many related areas benefit from the knowledge of the Hohenstein experts in the areas of research, development, testing, consulting, certification and training.

The challenge

Growing paper archives take up more and more space and need to be eliminated. Information provision and processes need to be speeded up, particularly within invoice processing, while complying with legal requirements. The in-house ERP system HIS needs to be linked to ELO. Audit reports and certificates should be archived electronically.

The solution

Introduction of **ELOprofessional**. All invoices are filed in full in the ELO archive. The invoice release process is handled and managed within ELO. Audit logs and certificates are signed via the connection to HIS using the intarsys digital signature program, and archived in ELO in compliance with legal requirements. Replication of data enables access to information from any location.

The benefits

Transparent and fast process flows, especially in invoice processing. Information is now available in an instant. Savings in archive space and guaranteed compliance.

Payment processing initiated easily

The ELO business partner developed an external program tool for payment processing specifically for the Hohenstein Institutes. Here, proposed payment orders are produced to serve as the basis for the DTAUS file (data interchange format for cashless payment processing). The staff in the Accounts department can generate a payment proposal for the invoice via the 'Payment' tab on the ELO keywording screen. This lists all the necessary bank details, invoice amounts and the 'reason for payment'. The program retrieves all the necessary information from the ELO database. The authorised staff can then obtain a complete and transparent overview, and can view all invoices about to fall due and trigger payment, for example.

Outgoing invoices

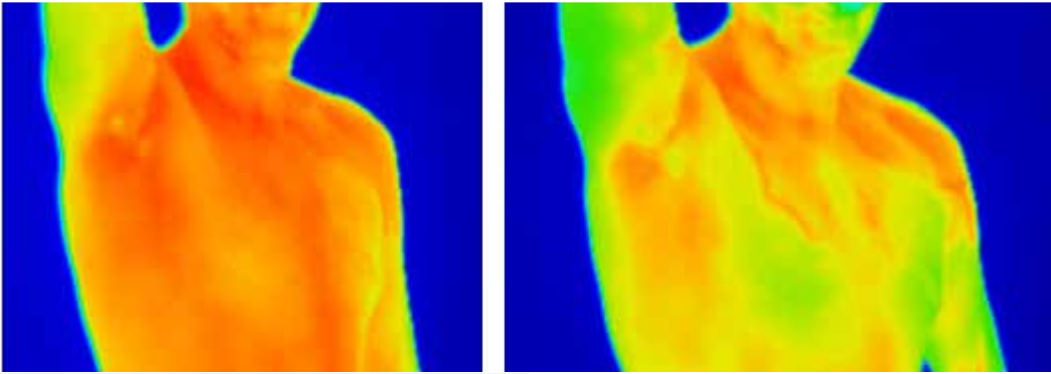
The outgoing invoices are also archived in ELO, and the ELO printer has been connected to the various applications within the company for this purpose. The employee prints the relevant outgoing invoice, and automated processing then takes place on the ELO server, followed by archiving. Based on the metadata, ELO captures the outgoing invoices, archives them automatically and passes them to the Accounts department for checking. Before they are sent to the customer (currently still by post), they undergo validation. In the spring of 2010, it is planned to integrate the intarsys system to sign the outgoing invoices electronically and e-mail them to customers, or make them available for downloading from the Hohenstein customer portal. This could allow the process to be automated and speeded up significantly. In this connection, the ELO business partner is currently working with the Hohenstein Institutes to implement automated checking and processing of open items in outgoing invoices.



Audit reports and certificates securely signed and archived

In August 2009 the in-house ERP system HIS was connected to the **ELO** archive. HIS is used to produce certificates, invoices and sometimes audit reports. In the past, these documents were always printed out and posted to customers, but now the demand for web-based certificates has increased dramatically. The Hohenstein Institutes therefore provide their reports and certificates electronically too. To guarantee the authenticity of the documents, they must be digitally signed. For this, the intarsys digital signature program has been implemented, and seamlessly integrated with the **ELO** solution. After the documents have been digitally signed, they are imported into the **ELO** archive using the XML importer, and securely filed. Staff can use the HIS system to gain quick access to the documents in **ELO**.

Oeko-Tex® Zertifizierungsstelle GmbH in Frankfurt also archives its Oeko-Tex® certificates from HIS in **ELO**. For this, a separate server with an **ELO** archive has been set up in Frankfurt. The replication function then enables documents produced by Hohenstein to be picked up directly by the Oeko-Tex® certification office for further processing. It is also planned to connect the offices in China, India and Turkey in the near future. The whole image database from the Oeko-Tex® home page is also to be archived in **ELO** with a direct indication as to whether or not the images are under copyright.



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Information available across locations

Knowledge rights made easy

As a research and service centre, consolidating knowledge and the search for information are very important to the Hohenstein Institutes. To guarantee general access to corporate knowledge, **ELO** has been connected to the library database via the standardised Z3950 interface. The data in **ELO** can then also be used as a knowledge base for research. Frank Müthing concludes:

"With **ELO**, we now have transparency across all departments. Searching for information has been speeded up considerably. With electronic archiving using **ELO**, we meet the legal requirements and benefit from a substantial saving in archiving space as well as end-to-end processes for digital invoice checking."

Outlook

The next steps on the agenda concern the signing of outgoing invoices and connecting further offices to **ELO**, as well as implementing the 'open item list' for outgoing invoices. The Hohenstein Institutes also plan to implement an e-mail archiving solution using **ELO**.