

CRI Scion Implements a New Image Management System

Many organisations produce digital images as part of their business. Storage of and access to these records is a growing area of concern for records and information management professionals.

Selecting a tool

Crown Research Institute Scion is the home of New Zealand's largest forestry related image collection consisting of digital images, slides, photographic prints, photographic negatives and colour transparencies.

To meet the organisational demand for storing, searching and management of digital images in smarter and more effective ways, Knowledge Centre Manager Gerard Rooijakkers initiated a project, which ultimately led to the implementation of Third Light's Image Management System.

After considering Scion's diverse business requirements, we chose Third Light's Image Management System (IMS) due to the following features:

- a web-browser interface,
- an excellent search engine,
- automatic conversion of images to different sizes and formats, and
- a very intuitive interface, making it easy for staff to upload, search and download images.

Implementation

The steps of the implementation included:

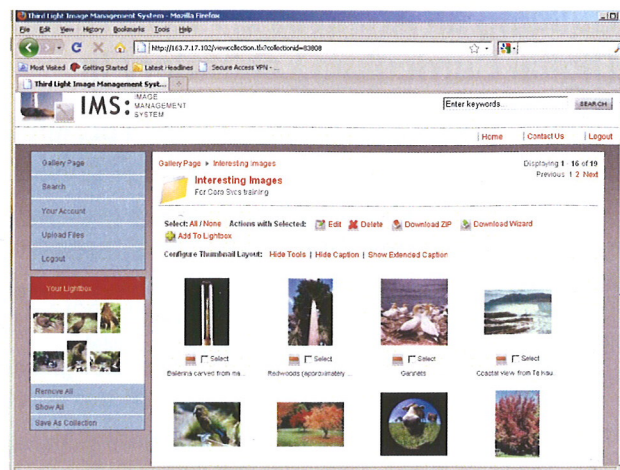
- 1) deciding how each metadata field would be used,
- 2) establishing business rules detailing what images were to be captured in the IMS,
- 3) creating a preliminary controlled vocabulary list,
- 4) deciding what images were to be migrated/uploaded initially, and
- 5) deciding the rollout strategy taking into account Scion's size (350+ employees).

Migration

During the initial phase of the implementation, images held in a Lotus Notes image library were migrated with existing metadata. Scion's Marketing and Communications large digital image collection was the second in line to be migrated.

Due to the huge volume of unmanaged images stored by staff on PCs throughout the organisation (estimated 200,000), we decided to do a phased roll out of the system for science groups. This allows time to resolve any issues that might crop up.

Business rules determine which images are to be uploaded, such as images created as part of research. The person uploading the image is responsible for entering sufficient



metadata. Captions and keywords are mandatory as well as a "history note" detailing what downloaded images are used for.

Testing and training

User acceptance testing was carried out at all four Scion offices (Rotorua, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch), which also tested the IT-infrastructure at each location. Training material was developed and training provided to all scientists and support staff.

Retrospectively adding images

While it is easy to follow business rules for current and newly created images, it is more difficult to determine what older images (in a variety of forms and formats) should be added to the IMS. As uploading images and adding accurate metadata can be a time-consuming process, it is important to appraise the images held on various media by scientists, and choose which images are to be uploaded. This is especially important in the case of such disciplines as microscopy, which can generate hundreds of images for a single piece of research.

Acceptance

Scientists appreciate the usefulness of a central repository for images and the excellent search and upload functionality. While it is expected to take some time for the IMS to be used to its full potential, scientists are already using it on a regular basis and have expressed appreciation for the simplicity and usefulness of the system.

Future potential

Third Light's IMS makes it possible for Scion to plan for and implement an E-business extension. That would make it easy for customers to search, select and buy images online.

Deborah Gayle and Tracey Fenton
Records & Information Management, Scion, Rotorua

Ed. - Scion's previous system was a Lotus Notes application. For further information about how Third Light helps them, contact Tracey.Fenton@scionresearch.com DDI +64 7 343 5349