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TECHNOLOGIES

PORT of vancouver

Port Authority Safeguards Its Drawings and Gains Peace of Mind with Autodesk Vault

The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority is responsible for the stewardship of federal port lands in and around Vancouver, British Columbia. The port authority manages over 16,000 hectares of water, more than 1,000 hectares of land, and approximately 350 kilometers of shoreline, bordering 16 municipalities and intersecting the asserted and established traditional territories and treaty lands of several Coast Salish First Nations.

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>
> — **Shane Pittman, Spatial Data Supervisor, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority**

As part of its mandate, the port authority handles permits for all projects proposed for the use of federal port lands, is responsible for real estate management, and manages infrastructure development to support growth and efficient operations. In support of these activities, the organization maintains a repository of AutoCAD drawings.

The port authority's Spatial Data Group maintains source drawings of many systems including water, communication, electrical, storm, sewer, and more. When team members create plans based in these, they often query features from them. Those features can be unintentionally, and permanently, removed from the source drawing if the user does not detach it before saving the working file. The organization recognized that it needed a more secure way to store its CAD drawings. In an ideal world, the team wanted a solution that would generate an audit trail identifying everyone who modified a file.

"Every now and then we would find that a feature had been inadvertently deleted from a drawing. Fortunately, our I.S. department maintains backups of our CAD files, but this involves unnecessary time and effort to restore them." said Shane Pittman, Spatial Data Supervisor.

Finding a Solution for Tracking CAD File Edits

The Spatial Data Group considered how to set permissions on files. Since not all members of the team needed edit access, the group tried setting permissions at the Windows folder level. "This turned out to be a very clunky security approach," noted Pittman. "It was a hammer-like solution and we wanted something that offered finer control over file permissions."

At one of the scheduled bi-annual meetings with the Spatial Data Group and IMAGINiT Technologies, the group described their CAD file challenges. The IMAGINiT team took time to understand what was happening and why, and offered Autodesk Vault as a potential solution. The system could be easily configured and optimized to achieve their goals.

"We liked that Autodesk Vault could fully integrate with our existing environment. It really was a no-brainer. We could implement Vault quickly because it required no customization. The security case was very easy to make internally—we wanted to move from the 'Wild West' of CAD management to a more structured and secure solution," said Pittman.

Implementing Autodesk Vault

Vancouver Fraser Port Authority leveraged IMAGINiT's expertise to implement Autodesk Vault for the organization. As expected, the process was straightforward. IMAGINiT took great care to understand the port authority's workflows. With that knowledge, they completed the project with minimal disruption to the day-to-day operations, including working after-hours to keep the interruptions to a minimum.

The implementation team set up accounts with permissions, established a hierarchy of drawings, and moved drawing files to the Vault server. According to Pittman, "Although we use AutoCAD Map 3D and Civil 3D, our skills are centered on what we need for our jobs. It was more efficient to have an IMAGINiT expert handle the implementation and recommend the best approach, given our workflows."

The Spatial Data Group has been very pleased with the results. Every drawing has a record of who has worked on the file and when. If questions arise, it's clear who to ask. If issues are related to an as-built file from a third-party, it's also easy to find out when it was added to the system.

"The biggest benefits are security and peace of mind. We are the keeper of the port authority's data. We used to worry about what might happen accidentally to CAD drawings, but now we have dramatically reduced the likelihood of human error. We trusted that IMAGINiT had our best interests in mind and it was a good base to work from," said Pittman.

About IMAGINiT Technologies

IMAGINiT Technologies, a Rand Worldwide Company, is the world's largest provider of enterprise solutions to the engineering community, including the building, manufacturing, civil and mapping industries. With over 25 years of experience, and 45 offices throughout North America, we provide the expertise, training and support to help companies realize the full power of design technology, maximize ROI and gain competitive advantage.

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