

## Prudential

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### Prudential expands its file conversion capabilities using technology from Xenos Group

Established in 1848, Prudential plc\* is an international financial services group with significant operations in Asia, the US and the UK. It provides insurance and financial services through its subsidiaries and affiliates throughout the world. In the UK, Prudential UK & Europe is a leading life and pensions provider with approximately seven million customers. It is a FTSE 100 company.

PGDS is a distinct company within the Prudential plc group of companies. It is responsible for the delivery of IT infrastructure services for the group.

A Xenos customer since 2001, Prudential has relied on Xenos to streamline a number of internal processes. Prudential initially implemented Xenos d2e software, the technology behind the transformation services for documents component of Xenos Enterprise Server™. More recently it expanded on Xenos' capabilities to bring even more workflow improvements to its document generation, proofing and COMfiche functions.

### Challenges

Prior to adopting Xenos technology, proofing Xerox-formatted documents was a time consuming process for Prudential IT staff.

"The proofing process took a lot of time due to the slow turnaround on test prints," says Jane Spittal, IT Technical Specialist with PGDS. "In order to check application changes, programmers often had to wait two or three hours for their test outputs to be printed and sent back to them. If further changes were required, it could take several days to test even minor changes to formatted output."

Xenos d2e technology enables the transformation and repurposing of high-volume print stream documents into electronic formats. In 2001, Prudential purchased the technology specifically to streamline the document proofing process. With this transformation services software, Prudential was able to convert print streams to PDF. This enabled staff to check changes right away, reducing the testing cycle from hours, and in some cases days, to a matter of minutes.

From the outset, when volumes were in the region of 1,000 documents per month, Prudential increased the use of Xenos technology every year. A second licence was purchased to enable the software to be used for distribution of outputs to business areas, and volumes reached 15,000 documents per month by the end of 2008.

As the regulatory climate changed, Prudential decided in March 2009 to reconsider the management of its COMfiche creation and storage. "Historically we had been sending print streams from our mainframes offsite via tape to be converted to microfiche and returned to us for storage," John Alcock, Senior IT Technical Specialist, PGDS explains. "According to our policy, we sent tapes out once a week. This ultimately meant a potential 10-day turnaround before we saw the output in microfiche form. Also, there were occasional mis-filings and search functions were cumbersome at times!"

In addition to lengthy processing delays and potential errors, Prudential also decided that the risk of losing data during transport to and from the site was too great, he adds. "We wanted to eliminate the physical transport of data and adopt an online alternative. In doing so we would be able to achieve a next-day turnaround."

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**Jane Spittal**  
IT Technical Specialist  
PGDS  
Prudential

## Solution

According to Spittal, taking on the additional print streams would more than double the volumes of what was being handled by the existing Xenos transformation technology. As she points out, while they initially considered a number of vendors, Xenos had been chosen because of the fidelity of the print stream conversion. "In considering the new requirements, we had to be satisfied that Xenos could handle outputs from our IBM mainframe as well as the existing Unisys outputs. And we needed to ensure that the system could cope with the extra volumes without adversely affecting turnaround on existing PDFs."

After considering a software upgrade, the decision was made to add CPUs to increase processing power, as well as acquire a test license for the COMfiche data requirements. Prudential was aware that the conversion was a considerable effort, since it entailed a number of changes in mainframe functions.

"It was a big project that involved many people on both the IT and business sides," says Alcock. "We did look at different versions of software to implement, but ultimately decided it would be better to augment the processing power instead. We already knew the capabilities of the Xenos solution, so we felt this would allow us to implement the transition with minimal disruption. We were worried however that the large file sizes – up to 650MB in some cases – might tax the system."

The worries were laid to rest fairly quickly in the process. "The fiche conversion exercise was very successful," he adds. "By adding processing power to the Xenos technology, it easily handled the file sizes and volumes, and we have had no problems in terms of loading and searching. Now all files are available and easy to locate; and users are benefiting from the search capabilities in PDF."

## About the technology

Xenos d2e is the underlying technology within Xenos Enterprise Server's Transformation Services for Documents. Xenos Enterprise Server (ES) transforms, indexes and repurposes information into other formats for print and presentation. It integrates with existing applications through a variety of input and output services allowing organisations to add value to their document-centric business processes and applications without changing their infrastructure. With its Java-based, multi-threaded architecture, Xenos ES is designed to process millions of high-volume print documents – each with sub-second performance.

## Summary

To date the Xenos platform handles 30,000 documents a month on average, half of which are used for online viewing for internal and external users. As users become more familiar with the technology, Spittal says that Prudential will continue to build on its capabilities to improve processes in other areas. "Originally we started with document proofing. The next stage was distributing internal reports to business users in their offices, then the COMfiche conversion. There is still more we can do with the new system. We are all very happy with the change."

\*Prudential plc is a company incorporated with its principal place of business in England. Prudential plc is not affiliated in any manner with Prudential Financial, Inc, a company whose principal place of business is in the United States of America.

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**John Alcock**  
Senior IT Technical Specialist  
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