CASE STUDY

Evaluating Business Risk to Meet a Compliance Deadline

INDUSTRY
Energy

COUNTRY
USA

Access Sciences

Due to a compliance finding, a global energy company curated a diverse project team to help clean, organize, and label its SharePoint Online (SPOL) environment before a non-records disposal (NRD) deadline.

The company set a goal to label 62 million documents in SPOL by October 31, just 10 months' time from the start of the project. After that date, all unlabeled documents that had not been modified in three years would be wiped.

Despite the limited timeline and unforeseen challenges, the team achieved the goal and secured millions of essential records from deletion. Here's how:

CLIENT NEEDS & PROJECT CHALLENGES

The client previously adopted SPOL as a common collaborative space but wasn't yet using it as the global records repository. SharePoint sites can be like personal garages, they accumulate things very quickly and before you know it, it's overwhelming.

SERVICES DELIVERED:

- Content Analysis & Classification

ISSUE

To meet a compliance deadline, the client had to either label 62 million documents or risk deleting company records

While the project sounds simple, the challenges that came along with it called for out-of-the-box thinking for new methods of execution.

The first challenge was the limited timeframe allocated for the project, which gave 10 months to filter through 62 million documents across 1,922 SPOL sites – an effort that would usually require several years. In fact, Access Sciences calculated that if 10 people worked nonstop for 8 hours a day, it would take 14.5 years to complete the project manually.

All the while, 428 new SharePoint sites were added and document creation wasn't slowing down.

In addition, the global nature of the project required irregular working hours to accommodate collaboration with the different business units in Asia, Canada, and Europe.

Lastly, COVID-19 presented abrupt, unforeseen challenges. Even though the client had to pause most external projects due to the pandemic, this project team was deemed essential and allowed to continue with reduced hours, resulting in an even tighter time frame.

CALCULATING THE BUSINESS RISK

In the last three months of the project, there were still millions of documents at risk for NRD. It was increasingly apparent the traditional records labeling process (which is manual, time-consuming, and vulnerable to human error) wouldn't satisfy the client's timeline. It was time to look to alternative solutions.

One option was to set up new SPOL sites to house all new records moving forward and push the clean-up to a later date. While this may have served as a temporary solution – a quick band-aid for the issue, it didn't solve the compliance problem. Once October 31 passed, those unlabeled documents that had not been modified in three years would still be deleted.

SOLUTION

☑ Access Sciences helped guide the client to label records using a keyword tool and bulk-labeling process

BENEFITS

☑ Met the compliance deadline

☑ Reduced risk by saving company records from deletion

☑ SPOL was ready to become the primary records repository

Rather than delaying the clean-up process, bulk-labeling was suggested to expedite the process. With this option, the project team would use a keyword tool to provide suggested labels for large amounts of documents in each site. For example, searching for "draft" would generally reveal non-records that could be approved for deletion. Searching for terms like "contract" and "training" would identify company records that could be easily bulk-labeled and saved.

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While the bulk-labeling option provided a way to accelerate the process and meet the NRD deadline, it did have a level of risk for potentially mislabeling documents. However, the client and project team concluded that the risk of losing millions of records upon NRD far outweighed the risk of mislabeling documents, which could always be resolved later.

The project team applied bulk-labeling for 75% of the records in SPOL with an apparent high degree of accuracy.

At the end of the project, the client's SharePoint was successfully cleaned, organized, and labeled within the 10-month time frame, adhering to the deadline, and saving important company records from NRD.