



Digitech Systems Case Study:

Illinois School District Moves Records to the Cloud

with ImageSilo®



A Digitech Systems Case Study

Cook County School District #104

When Dr. Troy Whalen became Superintendent of Cook County School District #104, he was greeted by rooms overflowing with paper. “Virtually every system—from time off requests to ordering supplies—was on paper,” said Whalen.

After implementing ImageSilo, a cloud-based electronic content management service, the District has improved employee efficiency, boosted control of sensitive information, and saved money on operational costs.



The background of the slide features a collage of images related to document management. At the top, there are stacks of white papers. On the right side, there are several colorful folders (yellow, green, blue) stacked on top of each other. On the left side, there are more stacks of papers, some with blue and green edges. The overall theme is a large volume of physical documents.

The Situation

Background

Outdated and inefficient document management processes

In the last 17 years, Whalen has become something of a process optimization expert for school districts. When he moved to Cook County, he recognized immediate opportunities to streamline paper-based Human Resources (HR) and Accounts Payable (AP) processes.

Cook County School District #104 serves more than 1,800 pre-kindergarten through 8th grade students in five schools. When Whalen arrived, records were entirely paper-based, and they were stored in a vault located at the District offices onsite at one of the schools. Regulations require the District to store HR records for 99 years, and financial records are kept a minimum of seven years. Over time, the paper began to pile up, and records boxes began to take over closets and other usable space.

Locating information in this system took time, and records were often grouped together making specific details hard to find. Every year, the District's records are audited, and the audits consumed resources as employees searched for records. It was especially painful when a record could not be located, because staff had to recreate the document whenever possible. A single paper record could take up to twenty minutes to locate. Paper files are also harder to protect in compliance with regulations safeguarding personal employee information, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Eliminating paper records across the District would improve process efficiency, increase control of sensitive information, and make more space available. Whalen knew digitization would help the District better manage resources and devote more budget to instruction and other student-focused programs.

The Solution

ImageSilo®

Whalen has worked for several Illinois school districts, and Cook County is the third that he has converted to digital record-keeping with assistance from Datamation, a Digitech Systems reseller. Whalen believes that “ImageSilo is one of the first and easiest ways to improve workflow and internal controls and to save any district the time and space needed to improve efficiency.” He appreciates the simplicity and security the cloud-based content management service offers, because school districts typically have limited IT resources making an on-premise software application difficult to manage. Cook County School District began digitizing HR and AP records in 2010, and today they have more than 8GB of records securely managed and stored in the cloud.

The goal for schools is always to save on operational costs in order to put more money into instruction. ImageSilo allows us to improve staff efficiency and to convert storage space into classrooms, putting more of our budget to work for students.

- Dr. Troy Whalen, Superintendent Cook County School District #104



Document retrieval times have gone from 20 minutes to just seconds



All documents are 100% protected from loss, theft or natural disaster



Saves almost \$9,000 a year through improved productivity

The Results (1 of 2)

Recognized Benefits

Today, HR files and invoices are scanned as soon as they come through the door, which speeds processes and helps District staff to maintain file accuracy.

Locating records in the previous paper-based filing system took about twenty minutes on average, but today a simple electronic search returns information almost instantly.

Digital records have replaced the old records vault, improving the District's ability to control who has access to information. Instead of an open room where records were at risk, layers of electronic security now control access. The District can lock down access by user and the type of document, and they apply encryption to records in the system. Whalen explained, "ImageSilo has improved our ability to protect employee privacy and district financial information." In addition, ImageSilo has simplified the audit process. Auditors are now given secure electronic access to the records they need to review, saving staff time. With ImageSilo records are never lost, so audits always go smoothly.

I can find HR records quickly. We were at ground zero when everything was on paper, so it was hard to find what we needed. With ImageSilo, it's much faster!

- Dennita Sierra, Assistant to the Superintendent



The Results (2 of 2)

Recognized Benefits

According to Whalen, the most impactful savings were recognized by Barb Horadovsky the AP Clerk. Faster access to invoices saves her about 35 hours a month, resulting in annual savings of almost \$9,000 for the District. Horadovsky said, “ImageSilo makes my job a whole lot easier. I keep the search items simple, so we can look anything up quickly.”

Clearing the District’s limited physical space of paper files and filing cabinets offers further benefits. Cook County School District is landlocked, meaning they do not have space to build additional schools or classrooms. ImageSilo helps them utilize more existing square footage for classrooms. Digitizing school records has allowed the District to reclaim more than 500 square feet, which has been converted to a new STEM lab and additional instructional space.

It works. It’s a proven winner. We can trust that ImageSilo will protect our records and will always be available, and we receive great local support from Datamation.

- Dr. Troy Whalen, Superintendent Cook County School District #104



Since 1995, Datamation Imaging Services has provided document management consulting and imaging services for numerous clients in the Chicago area. Datamation has helped hundreds of businesses implement cost-effective, time-efficient document imaging solutions. They offer an array of imaging options, including document scanning, data entry, OCR, forms processing, workflow and online document management software, and backlog conversions of existing files. Datamation has been a Digitech Systems reseller since 2000, and they are a nine-time recipient of the Circle of Excellence award. To learn more about Datamation, click the link below or call **630-321-0601**.

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