

First Nations Summit

Collabware provides First Nations Summit with SharePoint Compliance Automation to Grow and Scale into the Future

FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT

“By leveraging Collabware’s automation capabilities for our retention policies and using the visual workflow editor, we have created a set of workflows that more concisely reflect how the lifecycles of our records need to be managed in order to remain compliant.”

Sandra Dunkin,
RIM Coordinator,
First Nations Summit

COMPANY

Name

First Nations Summit

Industry

Government Services

Customers

BC First Nations

Employees

Elected executive 3-member political executive Task Group, elected 2-member administrative executive Co-Chair Group, and a permanent staff of nine who implement the mandates.

www.fns.bc.ca

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- Cluttered, Complex Shared Drives & Physical Records
- Redundant Document Versions/Copies
- Brimming Inboxes from Collaborative Correspondence
- Desire for Streamlined Team Collaboration
- Need for Additional RM Capabilities and Compliance

EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

- Physical Filing Storage Onsite
- Shared Network Drive

ECM SOLUTIONS

- SharePoint 2016
- Collabware CLM v3.2

BENEFITS

- Freed up volumes of storage both digitally and physically
- Created user-intuitive, easy-to-navigate SharePoint team sites
- Gained ability to access content offsite
- Decluttered shared drives and increased search capabilities through metadata tagging
- Updated RM process and streamlined collaboration
- Enhanced research capabilities with Collabware's Global Information Query Tool
- Applied automated retention policies and end-to-end lifecycle workflow features to ensure RM compliance

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Composed of a majority of First Nations and Tribal Councils in BC, the First Nations Summit (FNS) is an action and solutions-oriented organization that works to ensure the process of addressing treaty negotiations is accessible for all First Nations in BC. The FNS team consists of a 3-member political executive Task Group, 2-member administrative executive Co-Chair Group, several other staff, and consultants who support daily operations. For their ongoing role negotiating with all levels of government, the FNS requires proper content storage and the ability to access and research documentation dating from the organization's inception in 1991 to present.

This includes a large volume of physical and digital records such as paper records, meeting binders, verbatim transcripts, bound publications, video tape and more formats. In recent years, the FNS recognized that they would soon exceed their storage capacity. This realization, along with the desire to be able to access information offsite, is what began this organization's journey towards implementation of SharePoint in 2009. Initially there was trial and error trying to customize for their needs: first without any external support and then with a formerly hired on consulting firm that lacked RIM compliance knowledge. Then in 2013, they chose Collabware CLM for pre-built SharePoint compliance features and automation, and Gravity Union consulting services for implementation support. This case study will share the challenges, process, and eventual successes that the FNS experienced with this project for their records management storage, capabilities and compliance.





FNS CHALLENGES

Prior to implementing SharePoint and Collabware CLM, the FNS relied mainly on filing cabinets and shared drives for storing their documentation. This resulted in the following challenges:

- Cluttered, Confusing Shared Drives and Physical Records: subjective folder structures had grown full and difficult to navigate.
- Redundant Document Versions and Copies: disparate old draft versions of documents were rarely deleted, making searchability for the correct copy a difficult task.
- Brimming Inboxes: since email was the preferred method for FNS staff, they ran into the challenge of email clutter and difficulty with merging multiple changes into single documents.
- Desire for Streamlined Collaboration: improving collaborative efforts by including providing better access of content to stakeholders, increased access to historical treaty collections, and higher engagement with SP team sites by end users.

BREAKING POINT

The desire to address these four challenges led to the organization's implementation of SharePoint 2007 in 2009. Also wanting additional records management capabilities and compliance, FNS hired on a consulting firm the following year and upgraded to SharePoint 2010 with some customizations. Unfortunately, this portion of the project failed because it didn't provide the necessary RIM compliance, structures, and protocols out-of-the box that FNS required.

FINDING A SOLUTION

Down but not out, this project was revitalized when some of the FNS staff attended the 2013 ARMA Canada conference in Saskatoon and were recommended third party add-ons at a SharePoint pre-conference. After additional vendor research and demo viewings, FNS chose to purchase Collabware CLM. The decision to go with this third-party add-on was based on several factors, including:

- ensured RIM compliance;
- seamless SharePoint integration for minimal end user intervention;
- enhanced search capabilities with the Global Information Query tool;
- automated, end-to-end content lifecycle workflows;
- and [more](#)

IMPLEMENTATION

Moving ahead in 2013 with Collabware CLM implementation and consulting support from Collabware partner, [Gravity Union](#), the FNS adopted a new, unique approach that resulted in SharePoint 'victories,' solutions to their previous challenges, and overall improvement of their RIM program.

For this implementation process, a significant amount of extra time and effort went into ensuring that before any content was uploaded, the SharePoint interface was functional, end user-intuitive, and RIM compliance had been fully configured. This included the following steps:

- Three years of extensive legacy records conversion in various formats for an enhanced and intuitive user experience with SharePoint.
- Designing their SharePoint site with the highest level of classification structure: granular organization of categories, icons representing the categories, grouping of most commonly accessed areas, and categories hosting both subcategories and libraries of documents (see Figures 1 & 2).
- Applying 'metadata terms,' which are standardized description and organization 'tags' that users can apply to describe documents, allowed the FNS staff to classify content no matter where it resided.
- Providing group training sessions and individual support activities such as lunch and learns to acquaint users with the platform.
- Ensuring sufficient materials on utility and functionality of SharePoint are readily available, including a User Guide specific to their SharePoint site and a Governance Manual to assist users and administrators.

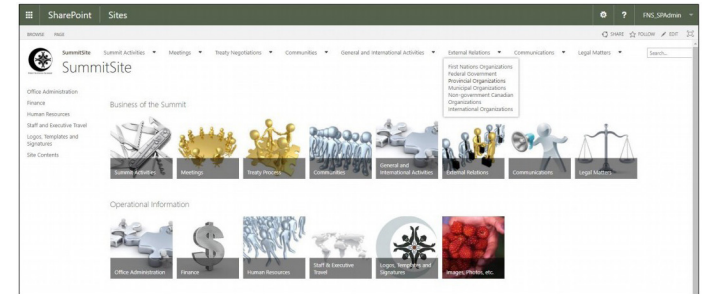


Figure 1: FNS SharePoint Site Home Page

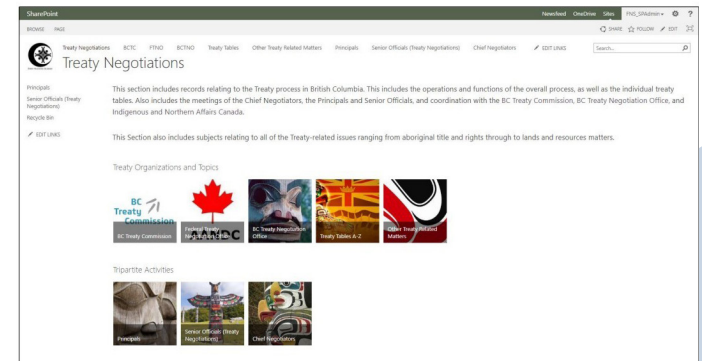


Figure 2: Example of one subcategory

VICTORIES/ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

With the time and resources invested into conversion, configuration, and staff training and materials, FNS ensured compliance and a user-intuitive experience with SharePoint and Collabware CLM. They were able to target the previously-mentioned challenges and gain additional organization values in the following ways:

Freeing of Storage (Physical and Digital)

Through the implementation process, storage limits were freed up both physically and digitally. With the new, easy-to-navigate SharePoint site, many physical records could now be digitized, classified, and stored with less of a limit on retention. Nearly three decades' worth of FNS information: around 12,250 documents as of December 2018, were included in this implementation.

Providing Offsite Access

All shared drive content was made available for offsite users through a targeted remote access workstation that was built for external access. This aspect of the implementation has proven extremely valuable for the FNS legal counsel, who may work remotely and require the ability to search and access relevant records at a moment's notice. They've not only been freed from reliance on onsite staff, but also have the ability to upload their own content.

Decluttered Shared Drives, Enhanced Search

By indexing the shared drive as an external repository, FNS staff are now provided with the location of relevant records/documents in the complex folder structures. Metadata tags are applied to documents to classify content no matter where it resides, assisting the FNS with any search, sorting, filtering, or grouping needs. These tags separate all documents by year, so it is not necessary to spend time organizing content into subcategories.

Overall, configuring SharePoint search to index their shared drives has allowed FNS staff to search across their digital collection more efficiently (see Figure 3).

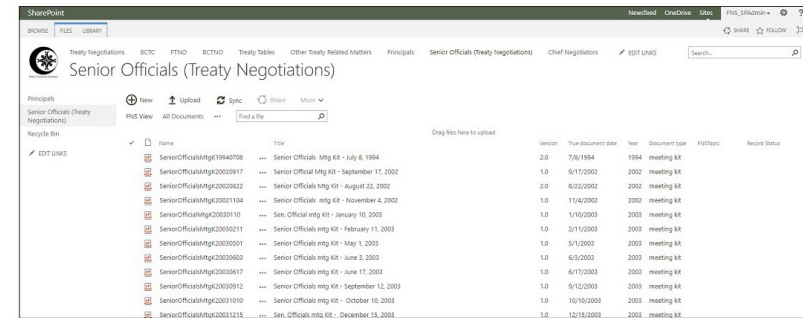


Figure 3: Example of FNS document library with metadata shown in several columns.

Clearing Redundant Copies and Excessive Inboxes

With SharePoint, staff can now maintain a version history for each document, eliminating the need to save and merge multiple versions of a file when collaborating. This has increased productivity by allowing multiple users to simultaneously edit a single document.

For sharing these collaborated documents, email is still a remaining method. However, the FNS continues to build new collaboration sites within SharePoint that address specific FNS projects and objectives so staff can migrate to the team sites and cut down on excessive growth of their email inboxes and secondary email folders.

Streamlining Collaboration

Moving forward, FNS decided that a designated, core RM team is responsible for adding new content areas in the shared drives and then providing end user consultation. This allows the records managers to maintain consistency and control of content to avoid more clutter build up as they work to convert these documents into .pdf format, upload them into SharePoint, and eventually eliminate the shared drives altogether. This has resulted in an improved collaboration with higher end user engagement to the SharePoint sites, better content access for stakeholders, and more access to the historical treaty collections.

Enhanced Research Capabilities

This implementation not only streamlined collaboration, but also the research process. With Collabware CLM's Global Information Query tool, users can tag documents that reside in disparate locations to view similar documents within a single results list.

Having content that is easily accessible and deeply searchable has proven incredibly useful for the FNS staff in response to any legal counsel queries and research efforts.

RM Automation and Ensured Compliance

The FNS was able to meet their records management and compliance requirements with Collabware CLM. This solution was selected because it provides in-place RM and seamlessly integrates into SharePoint, allowing end users to go about their day-to-day tasks rather than focusing on managing their content. The FNS leverages Collabware CLM's automation capabilities for their retention policies, where the combo of the content type and metadata is used to automatically classify documents as records without any direct action by FNS staff. They have also gotten great use from the solution's Workflow feature which reflects how the end-to-end lifecycle of their records needs to be managed (see Figure 4).

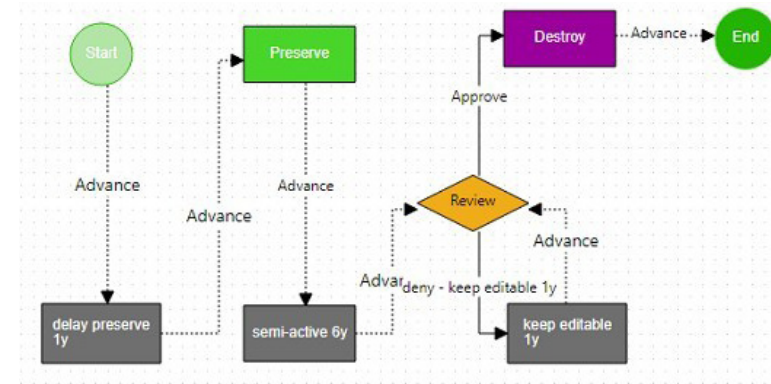


Figure 4: Example of Collabware CLM Lifecycle Management Workflow

CONCLUSION: How has SharePoint enabled Growth for FNS? What's next?

The First Nation Summit's decision to implement SharePoint in 2009, and then the revitalization of the project in 2013 with Collabware CLM and Gravity Union has not only freed up volumes of exceeded storage space and improved content accessibility, but also automated and ensured their RM compliance. This has allowed FNS to evolve and scale as they continue to develop the collaborative functionality of their SharePoint sites.

Moving forward, the FNS Human Resources and Finance team sites will be enhanced for their respective needs, with plans to upgrade to the most recent versions of SharePoint and Collabware CLM for further streamlining and functionality.

For help on your next project, call us at 1-855-268-0442 or email: contact@collabware.com