

SAP R/3 and AutoFORM LaserNet: "A Perfect Combination for Sending Invoices in XML"

Overview

Challenge

To create invoices from SAP in oioXML format: a Danish Public Authority XML standard.

To eliminate the cost & time to handle and deliver paper invoices.

Just 6 weeks to meet the project completion deadline.

High volumes of invoices per month.

Complex system with a number of projects included on a single, end of month invoice.

IT applications

SAP R/3
Microsoft Business Solutions
Navision
Windows 2003

Solution

AutoFORM LaserNet Output Management with XML
Email & Fax distribution

Why AutoFORM LaserNet?

With 14 worldwide offices, COWI required a solution that could be controlled from the Danish headoffice, but could create invoices in each country's favoured XML format(s).

In addition the LaserNet software greatly simplified the XML formatting process.

Would this help you?

LaserNet can be used with all IT applications and platforms, to selectively send your standard output such as SAP Script or SAP RDI in a range of customer specific XML formats, without complex and expensive programming.



Danish engineering consultancy, COWI, needed to create and send SAP R/3 invoices in oioXML format for their Government customers. EFS Technology's new XML software meant that this assignment could be achieved quickly without the need for complex and expensive programming.



On the 1st February 2005, public authorities in Denmark officially stopped accepting paper invoices from their suppliers. In place of paper they requested that invoices be electronically transmitted in XML format to avoid the time and costs associated with processing hard copy documents.

Having numerous customers in the public sector, including many of the Danish Local Authorities, COWI were already generating several thousand invoices per month via their SAP R/3 system. To add to this, each invoice was highly complex, detailing multiple projects over several A4 pages. COWI was therefore aware that converting to oioXML (similar to eBIS-XML in the UK) would be a major project.

Fortunately COWI were prepared for the Danish Government's initiative as IT Director, Jens Erik Nielsen, explains: "Initially we looked at 4 or 5 different solutions, but when we saw how AutoFORM LaserNet simplified the creation of XML documents from SAP, we soon realised that it was the right choice for us. The AutoFORM LaserNet solution was not the cheapest, but on the other hand it offered a greater level of functionality. Its XML processing also works with a number of different IT systems not just SAP, which meant that we could create XML documents from our other ancillary IT applications, including Navision, which many of our subsidiaries and local branches use."

Quick implementation

With the decision to use AutoFORM LaserNet arriving in December 2004 and a projected project completion date of February 1st 2005, COWI needed a rock solid solution that could be planned, implemented and rolled out fast.

Hitting the ground running

Jens: "We made it in good time even though we encountered some unexpected problems. The original plan with AutoFORM was to take the invoice records that SAP Script sent to the printer as an ASCII file and map them over into oioXML, but because of the sheer complexity of the invoices this was not possible. So we had to find another way to convert them."

After reviewing the structure of their invoices, Jens and the EFS Technology team worked together to develop an alternative solution, whilst still managing to finish the project on time.

A good investment

Jens: "We sent the first oioXML invoices on the 2nd February and it went well. The only problem was that a number of Denmark's VAN networks were not able to transmit oioXML files, which was a bit frustrating when we had worked hard to meet the Government's deadline".

However, the situation was quickly remedied as AutoFORM LaserNet can easily render and print XML files as normal documents. So COWI were able to continue sending paper copies of their invoices to its customers for a few more weeks until the Danish networks were completely oioXML ready.

Final thoughts

Jens: "We now have a solution that is quick and easy to work with and our clients are delighted to be receiving XML documents tailored to their precise needs. So we are very satisfied with the result and with EFS Technology's quick, efficient and competent service. Finally, we are *very* pleased with the amount of money we are saving on postage and delivery".

COWI: World-Class consulting

COWI are a leading international consulting firm who provide state-of-the-art services within the fields of engineering, environmental science and economics.

With offices all over the world, they offer consultancy services and plan projects using their extensive knowledge of local markets while drawing on the international experience of their entire organisation.

Their 6,000 employees include engineers, biologists, geologists, economists, surveyors, anthropologists, sociologists and architects.

