

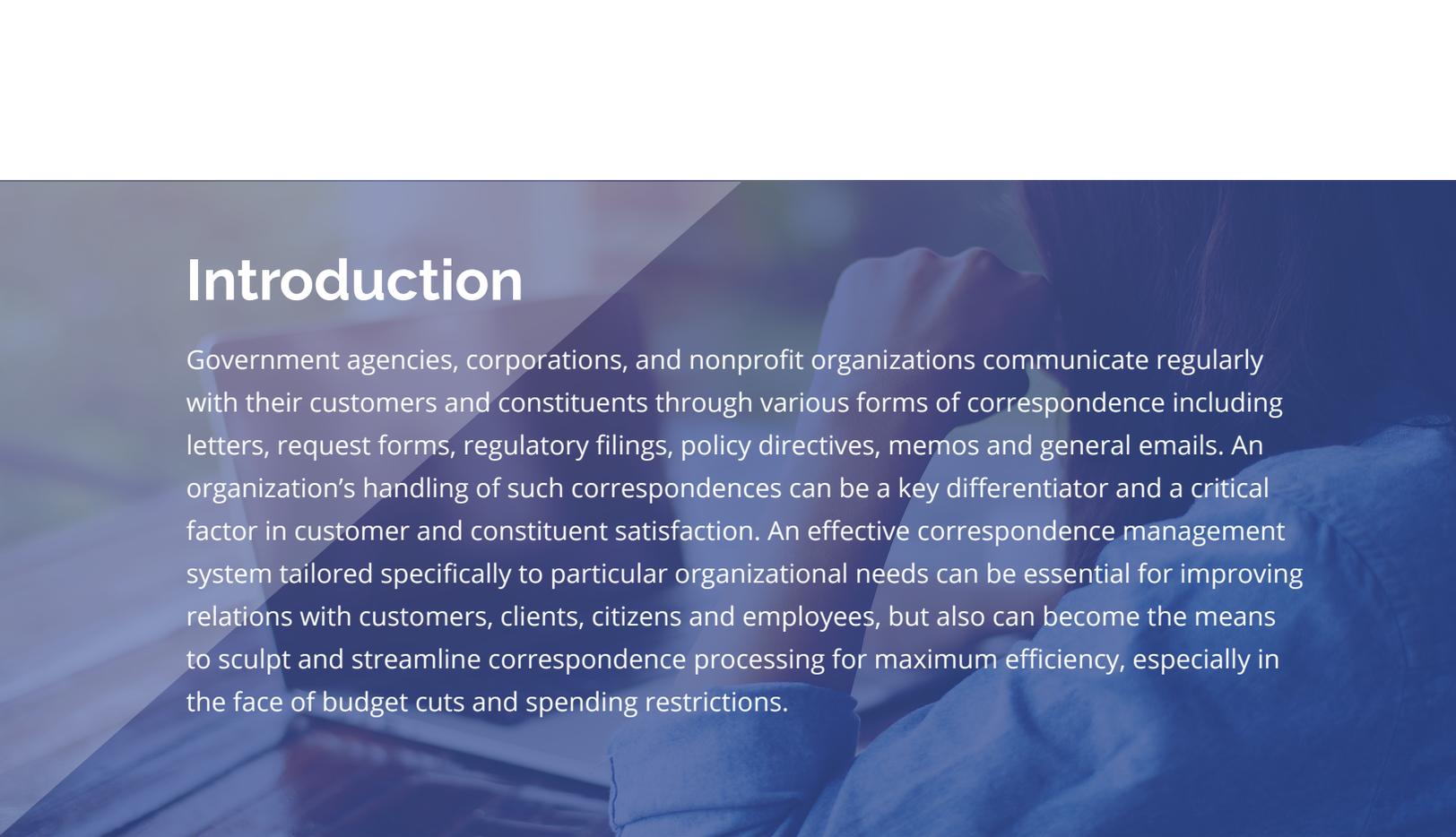
eCASE Correspondence

| Streamlining the Correspondence Process



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Introduction

Government agencies, corporations, and nonprofit organizations communicate regularly with their customers and constituents through various forms of correspondence including letters, request forms, regulatory filings, policy directives, memos and general emails. An organization's handling of such correspondences can be a key differentiator and a critical factor in customer and constituent satisfaction. An effective correspondence management system tailored specifically to particular organizational needs can be essential for improving relations with customers, clients, citizens and employees, but also can become the means to sculpt and streamline correspondence processing for maximum efficiency, especially in the face of budget cuts and spending restrictions.

The Problem

Businesses, regulated industries and government agencies receive and must adequately handle numerous forms of correspondence, which may follow a unique business process, require approvals or concurrences depending on to whom an item is addressed to or its subject matter. Moreover, inconsistent responses can plague an organization when communications are not streamlined and a number of employees are responding to similar requests with different answers, through varying channels or even through diverse workflows.

Finding ways to automate such business processes, reduce the number of hands that touch correspondence, and invoke change can be an overwhelming task. Such a task is one that commonly leaves organizations continuing to do things the same way they always have while the volume of inquiries increases, which can then cause problems with backlogs and delays in response times. A paper-based system does not provide status transparency or visibility into the process; therefore, identifying such bottlenecks or planning ahead for delays can be a challenge. Furthermore, without adequate reporting and tracking of the workflow, there is far less accountability for missed deadlines or inadequate handling of cases.

The Solution: eCase Correspondence

Electronic correspondence management systems are gaining a lot of momentum, especially as more and more organizations are moving away from paper-based systems in an effort to becoming a paperless environment and automating records management. eCase Correspondence is not just an electronic replacement for a paper-based system; it is a configurable workflow-driven application designed to meet various business processing needs, from basic correspondence tracking to complex case management.



Some Common Types of Correspondence

- Congressional Inquires
- Questions for the Record
- Memorandum of Agreement
- Policy Directives
- Meeting Invitations
- Funding Requests Information Requests
- Complaints
- Citizen Mail
- Travel Requests

eCase Correspondence is a robust application that integrates with various document management solutions (such as SharePoint, Documentum, Open Text, Oracle Content DB, etc.) to provide enterprise-wide tracking, document version control, retention management and real-time reporting of statistical data. eCase Correspondence

automates and reports on business processes to ensure transparency and accountability across an organization. Electronic folders with flexible workflows (ad hoc or standard) are tailored to an organization's business processes, which allow users to electronically interface and collaborate for efficient processing.

Dynamic Case and Workflow Management

One of the first steps to a streamlined business process is capturing the real life workflows present in an organization, and improving them to maximize efficiency. Our expert staff analyzes standard operating procedures and distills them into definable workflows. For example, a constituent complaint differs greatly from a policy directive or memorandum, and the workflow should not only reflect that, but also anticipate and plan ahead for it.

Using the eFlow Composer, a workflow mapping tool that comes with eCase, predefined workflows are configured to provide a step-by-step routing chain that supports conditional routing to accommodate decision logic and approvals in an organization, or ad hoc workflows can be implemented to allow for more flexibility in a business process.

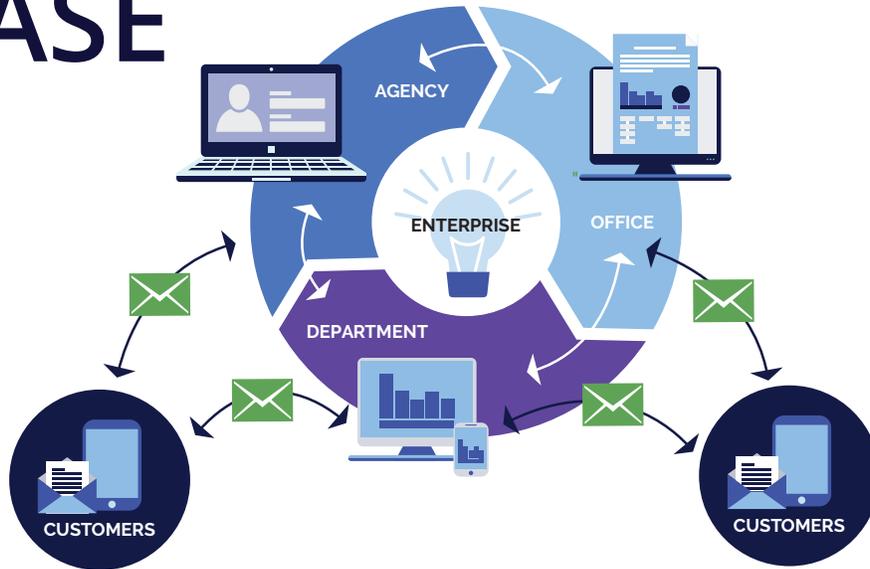
Standard and ad hoc workflows facilitate the routing of assignments across departments and within departments. Assignments are pre-defined in standard workflows, but in ad hoc workflows, a user has the ability to choose the next task depending on the needs of that particular case. If a user is unsure of the next steps, they can start a public or private discussion thread within eCase to facilitate a quick resolution to the problem, or they can note their concerns/ comments in the journal entries tab. Both are standard features in each case folder regardless of the type of workflow.

Assignments can be routed to a specific user, a group of users, an office queue, or a combination of these choices. This can be done one of two ways: through pre-set definitions within the workflow or manually by the user. When tasks are routed to specific employees, that employee receives an email notification of that assignment, along with a direct web link to that task in eCase.

eCASE Correspondence

-  Correspondence Tracking
-  Work Flow Automation
-  Action Tracking
-  Document Control

When assigned, tasks can have a hard deadline of a particular date and time, or can be defined by a pre-set (or user-defined) number of turnaround days that is configured per activity type during the construction of the workflow. These turnaround days can be configured to work with an organization's business or calendar days. Furthermore, reminder email notifications are sent to tasks assignees at defined intervals before a task is due, and past due email notifications are sent once a task is overdue.



Workflows can be suspended or delegated by users with sufficient privileges. When a person is out of the office, all tasks assigned to him/her can be automatically rerouted to alternate users ensuring timely responses and the fulfillment of necessary work. Required Approval can be defined within a standard workflow to ensure that tasks are cleared by authorized user. These approvals can function as simple clearances, concurrences, or signature requirements. Approving officials can receive email notifications alerting them about the pending approvals needed. Disapproved tasks are re-routed to a previous part of the workflow for revision or information gathering purposes, and can be approved or disapproved once they reach the approval level again. If a task is disapproved a second time, the same procedure occurs each time until approval is gained or a supervisor closes the case.

Forms and Template Integration

Forms integration provides the ability for each business process to have its unique data entry form. An organization's forms are electronically re-created using Microsoft InfoPath and maintain the same information gathering requirements. For example, mandatory fields are clearly marked with red asterisks, and must be filled out. These electronic forms are then uploaded into eCase for use in the business workflow.

Multiple business forms can be uploaded per business process, and these forms can be connected within eCase to auto-populate common data between one another. Multiple due dates can be applied to a business process to provide overall out the door due date and an internal due date. These dates can be automatically populated according to agency defined business rules to ensure required due dates are met.

Letter templates and email templates facilitate communication throughout a business process, especially with those outside of your organization. eCase Correspondence provides tools to create and save frequently used form letters and email templates that can populate case data supplied directly from the details captured within the case folder through merge fields. This allows for the instantaneous creation of form letters that can be sent via email as an attachment, or printed to be mailed. Email templates provide “canned” responses to frequently asked

questions and status updates about case folders to necessary parties. These templates streamline communication throughout the business process with one clear and consistent message no matter who is producing the form letter or email message. This enhances outside communications to ensure quality control.

The use of an office’s current form, form letters and email templates allows a business to maintain their correspondence standards, but also maximize work efficiency and quality.

Robust Reporting, Transparency and Tracking

eCase Correspondence provides complete audit trails for all actions performed in the system. In addition, eCase Correspondence provides both standard and ad hoc reporting. These reports can be molded to report on the specific data fields or combinations of data fields that are important to your organization. Reports can be customized to report on a variety of performance metrics such as incoming case type volume and workload; this information can be gathered on an employee, group, office and organizational level. Reports can be shared with other users or groups, and scheduled for automatic generation and delivery to necessary parties within and outside your organization. Instant graphs can be created on the reported data for quick use in presentations, and reports can be exported in a variety of formats including .CSV, HTML and .XLS.

User Roles and Privileges

eCase Correspondence offers various levels of access control; a user’s permissions to the application can vary depending on the roles they play in any given business process. Permissions can be assigned on a group or user level to each business process and/or individual permissions can be assigned at the folder or document level to control access as needed.

Benefits of the Solution: Empowerment

eCase Correspondence makes it possible for an organization to streamline its correspondence business process. This configurable solution utilizes an organization's current forms and templates to more efficiently handle correspondences by anticipating and planning ahead for deadlines, streamlining communications with a consistent message and workflow, and providing a means for transparency and accountability throughout the entire process.

eCase can grow with an organization as these requirements change. eCase Correspondence allows an organization's power user to easily modify or add fields, labels, forms, reports, and workflows to suit specific business processes. Additionally, through the robust reporting function within eCase Correspondence, managers can pinpoint inefficiencies or bottlenecks within a business process. This valuable information allows managers to effectively make decisions to solve this problem and improve timeliness, ultimately saving their business time and money.



The eCase Platform can power a wide range of business process applications.

The Big Picture

Managing Correspondence is far more than simply 'answering the mail'; it is the lifeblood that drives an organization. With the complexities of today's business processes, organizations need a solution that can handle the full scale, scope and breadth of an organization's correspondence needs while remaining dynamic and flexible to grow as new technologies, policies or standards are adopted.

eCase Correspondence is an application built on the eCase platform—a dynamic case management framework with the capability to power a wide range of workflow-driven processes, document management, record retention, and core case management functions.

The eCase platform presents a new, more versatile architecture that speeds application production, support and maintenance while greatly reducing IT costs. eCase Correspondence can help organizations produce or replace workflow applications under a single unified platform to streamline architecture, thus decreasing O&M

costs and time to upgrade multiple applications.

eCase Correspondence automates the complete correspondence life cycle, giving an organization's management insight into its business processes, while allowing you to modify your process as your business and environment changes.

About AINS

AINS Inc. is a minority-owned, small business headquartered in Gaithersburg, Maryland that has been providing innovative solutions for Enterprise Information Management (EIM) since 1988. AINS provides comprehensive Information Technology (IT) services to federal, state and local governments, health institutions, and commercial customers. By offering a single point of service for designing, installing, implementing, and supporting commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) and custom solutions, AINS is able to help our customers make best use of technology in support of their business.

