Energie Service Biel/Bienne

Energie Service Biel/Bienne Generates PDF/A-Compliant
Document Archive

Invoice Archive now Compliant with PDF/A

In order to guarantee a steady energy supply now and in the future and to efficiently handle relocations, new connections, meter reading and invoicing, ESB's administrative processes must run like clockwork. This is made possible by a modern energy data management system featuring well-designed business processes, effective communication and easily accessible information.

When it comes to business IT, Luigi Bissolotti is a 'master cook'. In his function as SAP® Manager, he uses his SAP® systems to manage the meters of the roughly 45,000 customers, allocates facilities and supports the connection/disconnection of customers – from installing the end devices through to determining power consumption. "I'm in charge of the software and all applications in our SAP® system landscape. My tasks include implementing new SAP® modules or new functions in the SAP® system necessary due to new legal provisions, e.g., in the area of archiving. I also do programming work and manage projects, like the adjustments resulting from the opening of the Swiss power market," explains Luigi Bissolotti.

Forward-Looking Archiving in PDF/A-Format

"In 2000, we introduced SAP®'s ISU energy modules," continues Bissolotti. "This was run as a pilot project of SAP® in Switzerland. The output management system we used was LaserSoft* from DETEC. Starting in 2003, we integrated the PDF module into LaserSoft, which allowed us to generate PDF files from the documents to be processed. So what we did was to create PDFs of the documents using LaserSoft and then copied them to a CD as an intermediate step towards building an effective archive.

But it was not before 2008 that we set up a modern archiving system for our invoices. However, this old procedure became more and more problematic. While we did have

copies of the invoices in a format resembling that sent to the customers, they were not in PDF/A format and thus did not comply with the new ISO norm. We needed to change this, so the first step was to search for a suitable product. We ended up selecting an archiving solution – an SAP® content manager – and purchased the myPDFconvert tool from DETEC to convert the PDF files we had previously produced with LaserSoft to PDF/A."

Canned Data …

The next task waiting for the 'chef de cuisine' was to 'can' the legacy data. "Invoices from five business years had piled up, with an annual average of 300,000 invoices comprising three pages each, adding up to 1.5 million invoices with a total of 5 million pages that needed to be converted," states Bissolotti.

… with a Long Shelf Life …

"What we wanted was a solution that would serve us over the long term. Because one inherent problem of archives is that you can never be sure that ten years from now you will still have the devices or programs needed to read the documents you are creating today. So we decided to create a PDF/A archive – based on an official and internationally standardized data format for long-term archiving. This ensured that we will be able to search and read the archived files for decades to come."

… and Automated Processes

"We used myPDFconvert from DETEC to convert the 5 million pages to PDF/A," says Luigi Bissolotti. "The PDF converter helped us to get our legacy data in shape for long-term archival. For output management and print preparation we use a LaserSoft setting that directly generates new PDF files in PDF/A format. For this reason, no further conversion is necessary. First the documents are compiled with SAPscript from SAP®, and then LaserSoft adds a few more components, such as the barcode for the packaging machines.

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also known as LibertySoft in non-German-speaking territories and named hereafter LaserSoft

Next, the printing job is pre-processed and sent off to the printer, while at the same time LaserSoft automatically creates a PDF/A-compliant document for the archive," continues Bissolotti.

Outlook

Other forms – adding up to approximately 10,000 each year – are still archived as hardcopies. "These include, for instance, invoices for ex stock sales, maintenance of gas facilities, setting up buildings for gas delivery etc. We plan to also convert these forms into PDF/A format and archive them in a compliant manner."

Luigi Bissolotti,
SAP® Manager with ESB
Forward Looking Power
Supplier

Energie Service Biel/Bienne

Day by day, Energie Service Biel/Bienne operated by the municipality provides the city's citizens with power, drinking water and natural gas. The power plants of the municipal supplier cover approximately 20% of the power demand. The remaining 80% are supplied by third-party providers. The power portfolio offered to private and business customers also includes green electricity generated in solar, wind or hydroelectric power plants. ESB delivers natural gas right to the customer around the clock, in an environmentally sound manner and without the need for on-site fuel storage. The natural gas network of ESB stretches over 367 km. ESB also operates the water system of Biel/Bienne and Nidau, supplying 57,000 inhabitants with fresh water.

Putting IT All Together.℠