



Case study West Burton Power Station

BC supports EDF Energy's European project team in Power Station build



EDF Energy recognised that their ability to reliably share multiple elements of project information across geographically spread teams in UK and France was critical to successfully building a new £500m+ power station in the UK. EDF Energy implemented Business Collaborator (BC), the online collaboration system from UNIT4 that supports information sharing across multiple locations.

Background

EDF Energy, one of the UK's major energy companies with around 20,000 staff, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of EDF Group, one of Europe's largest energy providers. The company received government authorisation to build a 1,300MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Station, at its site at West Burton, North Nottinghamshire, with its Paris-based Thermal Engineering Department, EDF-CIT acting as Managing Contractor.

Following an intensive design and procurement phase in 2007, the construction project was launched in early 2008, completes mid 2011, and involves twenty people from EDF Energy, sixty with the managing contractor, EDF CIT, and various consultants. The workforce on site will peak at circa 1,000 staff.

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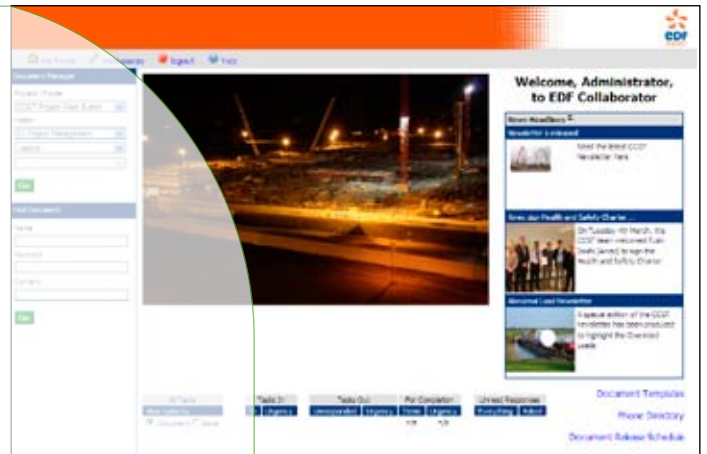
Key Benefits

- Fast and consistent delivery of project documentation
- High levels of user involvement, system usability and team buy-in
- Robust file storage and flexible distribution capability
- Fine-grained privacy controls for optimum confidentiality management

A major challenge in planning and managing the project was the need to control the vast amount of associated documentation. “A critical requirement was reliable sharing of multiple documents,” explains Tracey Simpson, Project Control & Support Manager with EDF Energy. “Project team members constantly exchange complex workflow documents, as well as photographs, drawings and correspondence. Keeping track of approvals through standard email was challenging and there were issues with document mark-up and version control. We also needed to ensure that everything was compatible with our own and EDF-CIT's particular systems, and on top of that we needed fine-grained privacy and security controls.”



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The Approach

Resolving these various demands came under the remit of the EDF Energy's IT department which proposed three possible solutions, including BC. "The UNIT4 consultants listened carefully to our needs and took the time to respond in a way which showed exactly how their tools could address them," continues Simpson. "In particular they showed an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the problems of integrating French and English documents, and recognised that the extranet had to be compatible with EDF-CIT's systems."

UNIT4's consultants took a lead role in the system deployment, designing data migration paths and ensuring thousands of existing documents were loaded successfully. They also worked with EDF Energy and EDF CIT staff to develop robust data structures and tags to enable simple search terms to drill down into files, folders and documents fast. For security, privacy tools enable administrative staff to limit access to manage access to financial or confidential contract details. The UNIT4 consultants provided full training and a comprehensive help desk; Simpson confirms, "EDF Energy chose BC against two other possibilities, but the BC system best met our requirements and is an extremely reliable service."

EDF Energy's deployment of BC has delivered many benefits including speed of access and consistent delivery of project documentation, achieved through improved file storage and distribution. It has also enabled a much improved workflow that previously involved extensive use of email that was challenging to track and control.

"We have in excess of 15,000 critical documents safely stored in BC giving our people secure access to project information from anywhere in the world. This along with powerful audit capability and version control enables our teams to keep track of key documentation with confidence," explains Simpson.

Management Issues

Effective document workflow requires the buy-in and co-operation of all participants. This was achieved through the extensive expertise of UNIT4's consultants, who took the lead in the implementation process through workshops and discussions, and involving all user-groups in the system development. This has ensured high levels of usability, made training easier and encouraged the sense of ownership so important to successful collaboration systems.

- Spend time identifying and prioritising requirements, since these will influence the final system.
- Collaboration is important, but you need to consider security, customisability, training and support.
- Identify all user-groups and stakeholders to ensure their needs are heard and built into the system.
- Buy in from stakeholders at all levels aids system development and supports successful implementation.

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