



*Removing the complexity, improving performance and increasing efficiency for The Commonwealth Secretariat*

## THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT USE SOUTRON AT THE HEART OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

### CHALLENGE

The Commonwealth Secretariat provides guidance on policy making, technical assistance and advisory services to Commonwealth member countries. They support governments to help achieve sustainable, inclusive and equitable development.

Their work promotes democracy, rule of law, human rights, good governance and social and economic development.

Soutron has supplied library automation services to the Commonwealth Secretariat for over three generations of librarians that have led the development of the Secretariat's Library services.

In 2012, when Soutron introduced a new totally web-based Library System built on Microsoft technologies, it was chosen to replace Inmagic Genie.

The Commonwealth Secretariat preferred the power of a purposefully designed web system that integrated with Active Directory. Single Sign On and integration with internal IT systems was essential and IT wanted to be confident of the security of the system and adherence to new web standards.



Nsekanji Pelekamoyo, Head of Library & Knowledge Services says, "We were looking for a system that would reduce the complexity of finding information and at the same time meet our budget. Soutron enables the organised sharing of information within the



The Commonwealth

organisation, thereby increasing efficiency, improving performance and adding value by allowing users to discover other related information.

"Our staff are constantly on the go delivering programmes in various Commonwealth countries, a web based system really supports accessibility from whichever country they find themselves in. Ease of use and intuitiveness are big drivers; the system has to be straightforward because users want simple interfaces with simple search boxes that do a lot behind the scenes".

They were seeking a solution that would help them realise the vision for the Knowledge Centre, which is *to provide information resources and services that are essential to support Commonwealth Secretariat staff, member Governments, academics, students and other key audiences identified in the Communications Strategy and to respond to and help develop new and better ways of working around information, records and knowledge management.*

Nsekanji adds, "Soutron continues to help us deliver our vision".

### SOLUTION

Conversion from Inmagic was very straightforward and the implementation took just ten days. Since then the library has seen a number of service improvements - automating and improving access for members of the Secretariat and having access to functionality to manage serials and documents that were not present in their older system.

Nsekanji joined the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2012, after the Soutron Library System had been installed. Her background and knowledge of IT systems and knowledge services from previous positions proved valuable and she immediately saw the opportunity to exploit the Soutron database technology.

Many important documents were held in PDF format in file stores without indexing or any consistent way to find or access the information in them. For all intents and purposes the content was lost. By bringing these into the same search function as other library materials, it would save staff considerable time and effort when researching topics.

The Commonwealth Secretariat used project disciplines and set up an internal project to examine documentation sets to determine how they could best be indexed and brought into the library catalogue and maintain security levels.

One of the strengths of the Soutron system is the ability to ingest large amounts of documentation in PDF format, assign metadata and fully index the content. Graham Partridge, Research and Development Director at Soutron, provided expertise to design workflows. He worked closely with Nsekanji, who defined the terms of the project, while he set up automated loads and checks to correctly identify and sequence documents. This type of content is distinguished from other types of materials and has its own security profile, record templates and display formats.

## RESULTS

The result has been the creation of workflows for staff to place important Secretariat documents in folders that are then automatically indexed in the catalogue. A single point of access is available and this saves considerable time and effort in locating documents.

The audit trail and log of actions shows who has accessed and downloaded any document and the library has the facility to require certain documents to be unavailable for general download but instead have to be requested. The workflow does not interfere with the normal routine of staff who create reports and

documents and this has made the system more acceptable given how easy it is to administer.

Nsekanji says, "The Soutron solution has improved how we catalogue our Board of Governors Meeting papers. The ability to relate records allows users to discover other information relating to their search topic, that they may not have been aware of.



**"users want simple interfaces with simple search boxes that do a lot behind the scenes"**

Nsekanji Pelekamoyo,  
Head of Library &  
Knowledge Services



"The Commonwealth Secretariat is involved in diverse activities, from helping countries with trade negotiations to encouraging women's leadership, building the small business sector, supporting youth participation at all levels of society and providing experts to write laws. For this reason, several different papers and reports will be presented for discussion at the Board of Governors meetings, the ability to create several parts to a record allows us to see at a glance all reports that were presented at a particular meeting.

"This adds value to the user search experience by organising information in a way that increases efficiency and allows the user to find information quickly".

Document security is paramount within the Secretariat. Nsekanji says, "We have confidence that our key organisation records are catalogued in a systematic manner and can be found easily. The ability to manage the security of documents means only those that have the right to view documents will view them. This is very important to us especially when documents are classified 'confidential'. When management have trust in the system, they value the work and services that the Knowledge Centre provides".

To learn more about The Commonwealth Secretariat and the services they provide, visit their website: <http://www.thecommonwealth.org>

To find out how you can migrate to a library management system to support your knowledge centre, start a conversation with Soutron today: [www.soutron.com](http://www.soutron.com)



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