

Ameritas Financial Services Consolidates Information Management and Migrates Document Storage to Modern Platform

A Case Study

Background

Ameritas, with more than 5,000 employees, is an insurance, employee benefits and financial services company, in the business of fulfilling life, helping people plan for the future and protect important assets. Ameritas® is a marketing name for Ameritas Mutual Holding Company and its affiliated subsidiary companies, including Ameritas Life Insurance Corp. and Ameritas Life Insurance Corp. of New York. Securities offered through Ameritas Investment Company, LLC (AIC), member FINRA / SIPC and investment advisory services offered through AIC's RIA operating under the name Ameritas Advisory Services.

Ameritas provides a variety of financial services to individuals, business and institutions as well as municipalities and health care providers. Products and services include life insurance, health, dental and vision insurance, investments, public finance, bond marketing and underwriting as well as brokerage and other investment services. Ameritas is headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, has approximately 2500 employees and is privately held.

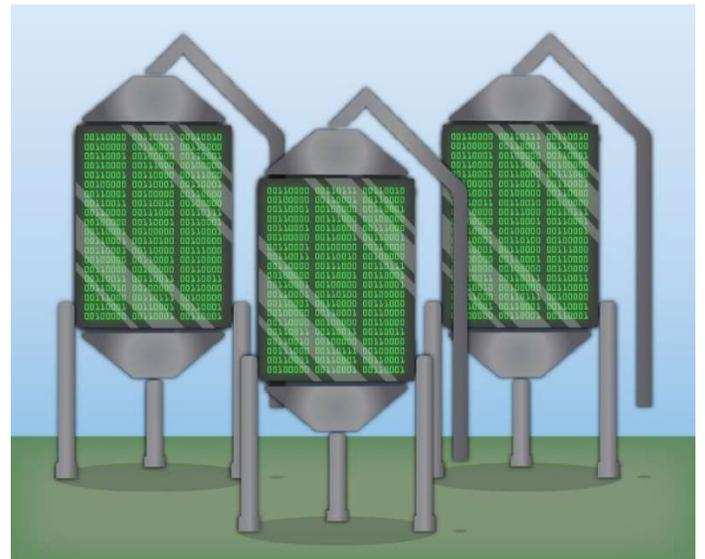
The Problem

Ameritas, originally formed as *Old Line Bankers Life Insurance Company of Nebraska*, has grown and expanded from organic growth as well as merger and acquisition. The resulting document and information storage architecture was fragmented and siloed. Electronic documents were stored in a number of repositories.

A merger in 2006 resulted in duplicate report and document management systems. When a merger or acquisition first takes place, the

immediate thought is to merge the systems right away. Enthusiasm is high and the thought of getting everything in one place is pretty exciting.

Then reality sets in and the realization that this is hard. Although the business dynamics of the merger indicated that combining systems would better facilitate synergies and consolidation of the business processes, the reality was that telling the affected lines of business that we were going to migrate to a new platform with new user interface(s) and rebuild the active integrations with other processes and provide basically the same services was not compelling enough to obtain cooperation and buy-in.



Three systems or separate silos were installed at Ameritas

- TRMS – a report management solution
- ASG Mobius View Direct, document and report management
- Datawatch RMOD, report and document management

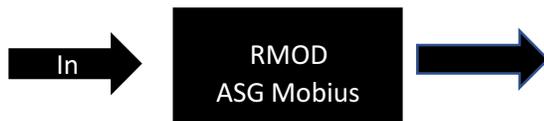
Early on, the TRMS content was merged into ASG Mobius. The architecture and content was similar enough to complete the task without significant effort.

It was then recognized that mature products just tend to run, with minimal problems and little or no outside support requirement so, the status quo continued, until...

In 2017, two things happened that forced the issue. Datawatch announce that the RMOD product would be discontinued and support would be ended. A favorable licensing arrangement with Mobius for the View Direct product would expire at the end of the year and the new licensing would be considerably more expensive. This combined with the other product going to 'end-of-life' made the decision to consolidate imperative.

The Challenge

It was determined that the best way to go about this was to attempt to fully understand the methods and purposes of these systems. These systems were originally purchased and acquired for specific purposes but had grown over time. They appeared as a 'black box' – put information in one end and take information out the other.



CrawfordTech and the Ameritas team did an analysis of the varied use cases, document content and types, indexing, output and distribution criteria was initiated as well as an inventory of existing software that might be used as a replacement.

Ameritas also owned Documentum and is using it as an Enterprise Repository along with a third-party product – Generis Cara that provides

custom-built user interfaces (UI) for Documentum. Ameritas felt that a lot of the pieces were already in place but needed a solution for electronically generated print files that Documentum did not support.

“Do we really want to acquire another tool that duplicates much of the current functionality in what is a mature and contracting market segment”?



After a thorough analysis, Ameritas selected day-forward operations using Crawford Technologies' PRO Archiver for Documentum for capture and index, OpenText's Documentum for the Repository and CMIS APIs and Generis' Cara for the document viewer.

Other Challenges included:

- Sheer volume of information
 - Thousands of reports
 - Millions of files
 - Billions of pages
 - Years of history
- Similar but different
 - RMOD
 - Fewer total reports
 - Complex indexing
 - High Degree of uniqueness
 - Mobius
 - Many more reports
 - Simple indexing
 - Low degree of uniqueness

- How much history should be converted?
 - Initial – All of it
 - Senior management engaged
 - Applied records management
 - Set 7 years as baseline
 - Allow usage-based exceptions

The Solution

Ameritas decided that a phased approach was the best way to tackle the huge volume of stored documents. We decided that the RMOD system would be the first to be converted due to a number of factors:

- Leverage previous planning
- Out of Support so if it breaks, it can't be fixed
- Contains business critical documents
- Store day-forward as it is being created

Ameritas and CrawfordTech implemented a pilot program that used a sampling of documents from each RMOD data_group (document type) to test document file decryption, indexing criteria and overall workflow.

“The proprietary formats used in RMOD made CrawfordTech’s expertise critical in migrating historical data”, Ken Schmidt, IT Lead Architect Ameritas.

CrawfordTech managed the historical conversion and Ameritas completed the day-forward configuration and operations with guidance and assistance from CrawfordTech.

The RMOD migration was completed on time and allowed for the decommissioning of the

RMOD system well before the Datawatch support cut-off date.

The Mobius migration presented a couple of additional challenges. The Mobius document storage solution footprint involved both a network system (VDRNETS) as well as a mainframe installation and a unique report distribution solution.

Regardless of the platform, the methodology is basically the same as was successfully used in the RMOD migration.

Mobius Migration

- Organize reports into categories
- Focus on the mainframe first
- Then do VDRNETS
- Use a similar approach to RMOD
 - Pilot
 - Day forward
 - Conversion
 - Repeat
 - Day-forward print production

Ameritas has consolidated archive repositories by migrating Datawatch RMOD, ASG/Mobius ViewDirect for NETS and ASG/Mobius ViewDirect MVS to the Documentum platform.

Ameritas needed to specifically ensure that it has the ability to continue printing and distributing reports. These reports were previously derived from a mainframe JES print queue and from the Mobius archive solution.

Once analyzed and understood, it was determined that the distribution and printing logic and functionality could be provided by Pro Conductor and Operations Express.

Ameritas Document Services operation production department receives daily requests for print and mailing as well as requests for report printing and distribution. Replacement of

the current environment to a new CrawfordTech *Pro Conductor* workflow environment will receive print files from source systems, including Mainframe JES spool applications and local distributed print queues.

The new system, built on Crawford Technologies PRO Conductor workflow platform and CrawfordTech's Operations Express will receive and monitor all jobs processed from the MVS JES Spool, and based upon business rules, distribute to print for mailing or internal distribution. A process to combine reports at the recipient level for report distribution is built in to provide a report bundling capability.

Key Points

The CrawfordTech migration platform was an integral component of the migration operation. In addition to the execution of moving documents from the source to the target repository. It controls the timing of execution workflow, management of multi-threaded processes and audit and reconciliation of the operation. It ensures that each document is associated with an index and each index is associated with a document and that the indexes and documents correctly reference each other.

Over timeframes like that of Ameritas' repositories, documents and index database can become corrupt, document formats can be different, and use cases can change. The CrawfordTech migration platform ensures the integrity of the migration.

Success Factors

CrawfordTech's software and, most importantly, expertise with data formats, print files and document repositories working shoulder-to-shoulder with a strong, motivated Ameritas team all but guaranteed success.



“CrawfordTech is a valued partner supplying software but, more importantly, valued as an integral member of the Ameritas team. Senior management recognizes the difficulty of these conversions and the outstanding success that we’ve had”, Ken Schmidt, IT Lead Architect Ameritas.