

Diakonie Uses iFinder for Enterprise-wide Search in NetApp File Services

Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung (EWDE) uses NetApp file services to store documents and information. With the help of iFinder, an IntraFind search solution connected via the fpolicy service and certified by NetApp, these file systems can now be searched in real-time.



The Challenge

Documents for donations management, applications for refugee relief and important email traffic between the individual associations - over the years, a substantial amount of data accumulated on the servers of the EWDE. EWDE uses NetApp file services for storing the data. The storage solutions by NetApp are especially well-suited for storing large amounts of data. However, when staff members at the EWDE were on the lookout for a particular document, they had to know exactly in which directory the file had been stored. The search process via Windows Explorer proved to be difficult and often slow; it was also tedious, since documents with a given subject could be spread over various directories and users had no way of knowing which documents were actually available on the subject. Moreover, employees had to know the exact name of the document for the search. Once a document was located, they could still not be sure whether the document content would be relevant at all for their work. If a department colleague had modified and updated the document in the meantime, other colleagues did not necessarily know and then ended up working with files that were outdated.

Customer Profile

Diakonie is the social welfare organization of Germany's Protestant churches. The Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development (**EWDE, Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung**) was founded in October 2012. EWDE serves as an umbrella organization of the Diakonie's international emergency aid programs, Bread for the World and Diakonie Emergency Aid, and the Diakonie Germany, the social welfare organization of the German Protestant church and free churches. The merger created one of the largest organizations in the fight against poverty and injustice in Germany, Europe and the world.

The Solution

When Danijel Slankovic, Team Leader IT Operations at EWDE, visited the NetApp Insights Conference in fall 2016, he noticed the booth of IntraFind. With the enterprise search solution iFinder by IntraFind, NetApp file systems can quickly and easily be searched. Slankovic explains: "Since we were using the storage solutions from NetApp for storing our data anyway, we were curious and wanted to find out more." After a brief conversation with Franz Kögl, CEO of IntraFind, the decision was clear. Today, EWDE is using iFinder successfully for their headquarters in Berlin and approximately 900 employees profit from the new search solution. Franz Kögl is pleased: "We are the first enterprise search provider worldwide to offer a solution for integrated full-text search in NetApp file services certified by NetApp. Since EWDE was already using NetApp file services, our iFinder is the perfect solution for them," Kögl points out.

The search solution is linked to the existing NetApp file services via the FPolicy service. The time-consuming search via Windows Explorer thus is history. If a document is newly created, deleted or modified or if just the permissions to the document are changed, this change is processed directly in iFinder without requiring extensive crawling. The search results therefore always reflect the current status in real-time. The user permissions are also taken into account for the search. iFinder ensures that users only get to see the documents in the hit list that they are allowed to access. Now, if employees are looking for a particular document, they simply access the iFinder web GUI with single sign-on. Users start the search via the central search field, exactly the way they know from web searches, like in online shops or other online portals. They do not necessarily need to know the exact spelling of the document they are looking for. iFinder automatically corrects typing errors. The auto-complete function also provides contextual suggestions which users can select directly and thus generate a new hit list with matching results. The Search-While-You-Type function instantly starts showing matching documents in the search window as users are typing in their search.

For easier user navigation, each search query and the resulting hit list is displayed in a separate tab. As soon as you enter a new search, the system automatically opens a new tab. The previous search query remains and can be retrieved and processed further at any time with just one click.

The Benefits

iFinder supports more than 600 file formats. Users can access a preview of the document without having the respective application installed on their system (such as Microsoft Visio for example). The entire search process stays as simple as possible for users: The hit list shows the actual location of the search terms highlighted in color, so that users receive a good overview of the suitability of the documents in question. There is no need to open the documents and work through them tediously; instead you can jump directly to the first hit on e.g. page 87 – a huge time saver.

Recurring or complex search queries can be stored and displayed in the dashboard. In addition to the search and result page, users can configure their own dashboard with all the information modules (= dashlets) they require to display, for instance, their own phone book, a favored news stream or specific search results stored as favorites.

Another special iFinder feature is the linguistic functionality. This allows users to find multi-word terms, i.e. compounds, as they frequently occur in German, such as “Sozialversicherungsgesetzbuch” (social insurance code), for example. No matter whether users are looking for “Buch” or “Gesetz”, the hit list will display all hits for “Sozialgesetzbuch”. Even when searching by irregular plural, e.g. “Bücher”, iFinder will find the correct results, since the solution is able to normalize terms to their proper base form.

Project Overview

Sector: Social services

Challenge: Search NetApp file services for 8 million documents

Solution: iFinder with NetApp ONTAP connector and FPolicy interface

If a document is modified, these changes are processed directly in iFinder; this ensures that employees are always shown the most recent document. Slankovic is pleased with the result: “Our old search solution was simply too slow and did not provide us with the desired results. With iFinder, we have taken a big step forward.” Slankovic explains: “The search solution was easy to implement and the cooperation with IntraFind went smoothly. We were productive within a few weeks and are now successfully using iFinder for our enterprise search.”

„We are particularly excited about the linguistic functions iFinder offers. During the search we get to see all relevant results and so no longer overlook anything.”

Danijel Slankovic

Team Leader IT Operations at EWDE

Benefits of iFinder

- + Quick and straightforward search of documents which are always up to date.
- + Thanks to the NetApp ONTAP connector, changes can be processed directly in iFinder without needing extensive crawling.
- + Automatic recognition of persons or places in the body text of the document.
- + Highlights terms matching the search in the document.
- + Recognizes multi-term words in documents.
- + Auto-corrects typos.
- + Takes into account user rights. Employees only get to see files and documents they have permissions to.
- + Supports more than 600 file formats.
- + Quick and easy implementation.

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