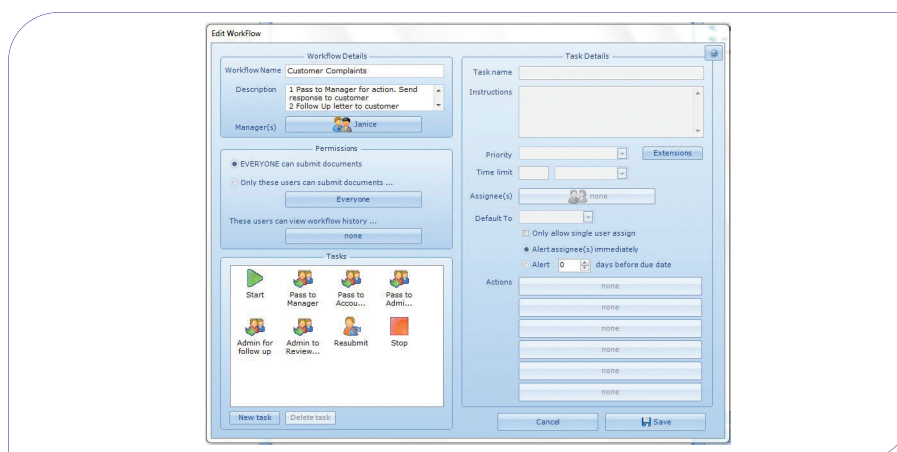


FILESTREAM

Berkshire-based Filestream Ltd. is a good example of a smaller company with big ideas, and their approach sees them winning business against some much bigger and longer established competitors. A key benefit of such a supplier is that they can be far more flexible and respond quickly and personally to support issues, change requests or third party product integrations. This has been a key strength since Filestream started promoting their own DM solution in 2003. The firm boasts a near 100% retention rate on ongoing maintenance - some customers being lost at contract renewal time is the norm for most DM suppliers.

File Stream is a surprisingly highly functional and fully-featured DM offering built on several 'best-of-breed' components: the viewer is based on Oracle Stellent, so can handle virtually all file types, OCR uses Nuance OmniPage 18 (the software giant's most recent release), while barcode recognition comes from Accusoft. Filestream's view is that it is worth paying to get the best from the top suppliers in order to build a top quality product and this approach seems to have paid off. New upgrades are released regularly to include new and enhanced features and are available to all users as part of their support contract.

The software itself is licensed to use the '2007 Microsoft Office User Interface', and so will be familiar to users of products such as Word and



Excel. It is accessible via LAN or internet as required. The opening screen can be set to suit individual needs, hugely enhancing the look and feel of the software as users only see the icons for the tools they want to work with. The result is a pleasantly uncluttered user interface. Documents are easily imported from any source or simply 'dragged & dropped'. It is clear from first use that File Stream is a system designed to reflect end user requirements as opposed to what the IT department might think they require; a good example is that the usual 'magnifying glass' zoom tool has been enhanced with a far more intuitive 'draw a box around the area you want to magnify' option. Little touches like this abound throughout the product, showing the thought that goes into how users actually use such systems.

File Stream has a useful annotation tool, allowing stamps (approved/checked), images and

signatures to be added as required during the process. OCR is cleverly handled so as to push the user to process only those parts of a document that actually need to be converted, reducing processing overhead. The system also offers sophisticated check-in/check-out and a detailed Revision History view for audit trail purposes.

Workflow functionality is simple but powerful, allowing a surprising degree of intelligent document routing; for example emails and reminders can be used to let a user know that a specific document needs to be acted upon within a time frame.

Of great appeal to user based organisations is File Stream's Role Based Access Control tool, which makes it simple for admin staff to control access to the various functions, and set permissions at document level. Such powerful admin tools are rare in products at this price point.

More info: www.filestreamsystems.co.uk

VERDICT

As is often the case with a relatively small company, Filestream has focused on developing an absolutely top class product rather than diluting investment into sales/marketing. This approach has paid off, and the product is fit to be judged alongside those of some far bigger competitors.