

“RSS is a powerful technology, but it really should be centrally managed if you want to take full advantage of it. For anyone in a Microsoft environment who is serious about harnessing the power of RSS, I would strongly recommend that they consider NewsGator Enterprise Server,” - Elizabeth Ellis, partner and Chief Knowledge Officer, Goodman and Carr LLP.

Company Profile:

Company Name:
Goodman and Carr LLP (www.goodmancarr.com)

Primary Industry:
Professional Services- Law

Size of company:
100-500 employees

Corporate Headquarters,
Toronto, ON, Canada



G&C

Goodman and Carr is an innovative and dynamic full service business law firm with 110 lawyers in Toronto, serving a diversified roster of national and international clients.

Lost in the E-Mail

For a firm that prides itself on having an entrepreneurial spirit and mindset, having important information get lost amidst the clutter of e-mail inboxes was not acceptable. In 2005, the firm made the decision to move important internal information as well as the premium content from LexisNexis onto a Microsoft Sharepoint Portal. That portal became the single place for practice groups to access this information.

“Even for a relatively small organization like ours, far too much information was getting lost in e-mail and people couldn’t quickly find what they needed,” said Elizabeth Ellis, partner and Chief Knowledge Officer at Goodman and Carr. “When we moved to the Sharepoint Portal, it was like night and day. Unfortunately, that solution alone didn’t address a lot of the news and blog content that is relevant to our attorneys.”

NewsGator Enterprise Server- The Icing on the Cake

As Ellis noted, the Sharepoint Portal had dramatically improved the productivity of the firm’s attorneys, paralegals, clerks and other knowledge workers, but it only provided a subset of the important information that the people needed to access. News sites and blogs were also valuable sources of information about clients, case law and best practices and nearly all of them had started producing RSS feeds. After expending the effort to build the portal, Ellis and her team did not want to have individuals spending time searching for that information either by going to Web sites or using desktop RSS aggregators.

Ellis mentioned her dilemma to some knowledge management professionals that she trusted and they recommended that she look into NewsGator Enterprise Server as a way to ensure that all

relevant sources of content were automatically available for the practice groups on their Sharepoint sites. When she found out that NewsGator Enterprise Server could be easily integrated with Sharepoint and that NewsGator was a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, she quickly decided to take a look.

“NewsGator Enterprise Server was a natural fit with our portal strategy,” Ellis noted. “If we’re going to centrally manage our internal content and our LexisNexis content, why shouldn’t we do the same with the external RSS content? That way, we ensure that the right information gets to the right people without forcing them to waste a lot of billable time trying to find it.”

Phase I: Mining the Internet and Blogosphere

The firm decided to leverage NewsGator Enterprise Server on a phased-basis, beginning with external content. With all of the information coming from legal blogs, legal and business news sites, company press releases and other sources on the Internet, Ellis decided to focus on bringing this content into the portal during the first phase. Ellis and her team automatically assign practice groups to relevant feeds, which automatically show up in Outlook and can be quickly dropped on the Sharepoint team sites. This process is very easy since NewsGator Enterprise Server is tightly integrated with both Microsoft Active Directory and Sharepoint. Practice groups exist as groups in the Active Directory store and show up within the administration dashboard of NewsGator Enterprise Server, while the feeds can be added via Web Parts to Sharepoint.

When a user needs to add additional feeds, either individually, or for their group, they can quickly find them through the customized taxonomy, or directory of feeds. Had the firm decided to use individual RSS aggregators instead of NewsGator Enterprise Server, users would have had to make do with either a default taxonomy from the vendor or enter the feeds manually by typing in the URL, a much more cumbersome process. Ellis and her team are quickly rolling the product out across the organization as fast as they can. Unfortunately, they hit an unexpected hurdle.

“Everyone who is using it has been very pleased with how easy it is to find, read and share relevant content,” Ellis said. “Ironically, we’ve had problems getting people to attend the training sessions because the invitations are getting lost in the clutter of their e-mail inboxes.”

Phase II: Moving to RSS Internally

After seeing how powerful RSS feeds are as a content delivery channel for external information, Goodman and Carr plans to start publishing more internal content in RSS and managing it through NewsGator Enterprise Server. They are working with XMLaw, who built the initial RSS Sharepoint webparts for them, to create additional ones that will allow them to manage more content through the system. In addition, they plan to start encouraging teams to collaborate through blogs and other social media tools and subscribe to those systems via RSS through NewsGator Enterprise Server.

“NewsGator Enterprise Server is really powerful tool and is integral part of our portal,” Ellis notes. “We haven’t been able to exploit it fully yet since we’ve been juggling a lot of priorities. But we’re excited about the opportunity to use it for a bigger set of content.”

Why NewsGator Enterprise Server?

For Goodman and Carr, the decision to go with NewsGator Enterprise Server was quick and straightforward. The tight integration with the Microsoft platform and technologies they were already using was a major factor, as was the ability to customize the taxonomy to meet the needs of their practice groups.”



CASE STUDY

"NewsGator was really the only one who could offer a solution that met our particular needs," said Ellis. "Between the tight integration with Microsoft and the flexibility the platform offered, it was a very easy decision to make. It's a great enabling technology."