



City of Lippstadt digitizes files at construction and immigration departments and at City Archives

Digitization of all files

Lippstadt is a city in North Rhine-Westphalia with around 70,000 inhabitants. It has been digitizing files for many years, for which the Organization and Digitization department is responsible. "Our vision is to replace all files in cabinets with digital versions, as far as we are legally allowed to do so," explained Gudrun Strathoff, clerk in the Organisation and Digitization department and responsible for digitalisation at the city of Lippstadt.

In recent years, the files of the building department, the immigration office and the City Archives had been digitized with the help of the Iron Mountain Digitization team.

Archives bursting at the seams

The Building Regulations and Monument Protection department had a large file archive with mobile shelving visibly bursting at the seams. As a result, a second archive location was set up in a room two kilometres away in the basement of another administrative location.

Some of the files had to be retrieved from this secondary archive in response to inquiries. "This was not done on a daily basis, but requests

were collected and processed once a week, which naturally led to longer access times," said Strathoff.

Together with the Building Regulations and Monument Protection department, Strathoff developed a list of requirements to turn the paper file archive into a digital building file. The decision was made not to digitize the files using scan-on-demand, but to divide them into nine batches, which were then successively digitized.

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Gudrun Strathoff and Cedric Kremer, Department Organization and Digitalization, City of Lippstadt

Industry

Government

Challenge

The city of Lippstadt had been digitizing files for many years to increase process efficiency and save storage space.

Solution

Now, the Iron Mountain Digitization team ensures regulatory compliance when collecting, transporting, digitizing, and destroying paper files.

Value

- > TR-RESISCAN certified (official German standard for replacement scanning)
- > Over 80,000 files digitized to date
- > Significantly faster access to files by eliminating physical document searches
- > Flexible working for more effective collaboration within and outside the office
- > Savings in storage space



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From handwritten notes to large plans, the building files had many formats with different types of paper and covering a broad spectrum from ancient to brand new. As a construction file archive lives as long as a building, there were also files over 100-years-old. After consultation with the archivists, it was decided not to hand over the monument files for scanning because they are plainly historical documents.

Digitization of construction files

An experienced employee with extensive knowledge of the paper files and file structure was assigned to this task to prepare the files. He made sure that all the necessary metadata was on

the file covers. Files for buildings that had already been demolished were naturally removed. For all other files, the metadata on the file cover was updated before they were released for scanning.

Iron Mountain then collected the files and took them to their scanning center in Rosbach. Following digitization, the files were not physically returned to Lippstadt. After quality approval by the department, they were destroyed by an Iron Mountain subcontractor.

If a file was needed that was currently at Iron Mountain, the responsible contact person in Rosbach was informed. It was then taken out of the box and scanned. "That took one or two days on average, then we had the digital file," said Strathoff.

Digitization project at the city archive

The successful digitization of the construction records led to two other departments having their files digitized by Iron Mountain. The process began with the Immigration Services Department in spring 2024. A total of approximately 15,000 files were collected by Iron Mountain in three

batches. All such files are now in digital use.

Strathoff also reports on another project at the City Archives. File digitization is not unusual there, but rather a necessary measure for the preservation of the archive. "We have bound books in the archive containing data from 1874 to 1897 from the civil registry. We had these scanned by Iron Mountain in 2024. The special part here is that the books were subsequently returned because they are historical documents. Now we can access the scans more quickly and thus conserve the registers and, in the foreseeable future, also allow citizens to access the data, for example for genealogical research via the Internet."

Working together on identical files

Digitization has significantly improved the process efficiency of the departments. "In the immigration department, finding files is now much faster," said Cedric Kremer, clerk in the Organisation and Digitization department and also responsible for digitalisation. "Previously, the files were stored in eight to ten offices, and older files were stored in the



basement, so finding them was naturally time-consuming. It's now much faster, and two employees can look at a file at the same time, which wasn't possible before.

"When a file needs to be sent out, entire files used to be copied, sometimes up to 400 pages at a time, and then the pages had to be numbered manually. Of course, all of that is no longer necessary. Our document management system now allows us to extract individual documents from a file and send them out of the office."

Many advantages are recognized

The advantages of digital files are now generally recognized and appreciated. This also applies to the building department, as Strathoff

confirms: "Nevertheless, large-format plans are sometimes missed. People had become accustomed to them, for example, for recurring inspections. Digital documents were a challenge, because the feeling of being able to unfold a construction plan and correctly orient oneself no longer exists.

"A certain habituation effect is now setting in. We had some large-format plans returned to us after digitization, namely those intended for so-called recurring inspections, for example, sites like hospitals or large companies. If necessary, they are still available in paper format for on-site inspections."

The cooperation with the Iron Mountain site in Rosbach, where the files of the City of Lippstadt are being digitized, is rated as consistently positive by Strathoff: "Over the years

of working together, we've gotten to know the key players, and there's also good communication, which is especially important at the beginning of a project. For example, Is it OK to break seals? What do we do if a CD turns up in a file? You don't feel like you're left alone with such questions or having to put things aside because no one answers. Working with the Iron Mountain digital team in Rosbach is highly satisfactory."

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Gudrun Strathoff and Cedric Kremer, Department Organization and Digitalization, City of Lippstadt

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About Iron Mountain

Iron Mountain Incorporated (NYSE: IRM), founded in 1951, is the global leader for storage and information management services. Trusted by more than 225,000 organizations around the world, and with a real estate network of more than 98 million square feet across more than 1,400 facilities in over 60 countries, Iron Mountain stores and protects billions of information assets, including critical business information, highly sensitive data, and cultural and historical artifacts. Providing solutions that include secure storage, information management, digital transformation, secure destruction, as well as data centers, art storage and logistics, and cloud services, Iron Mountain helps organizations lower cost and risk, comply with regulations, recover from disaster, and enable a more digital way of working. Visit www.ironmountain.com for more information.

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