DOIT

Illinois Department of
Innovation & Technology

Text Time Capsule

Enterprise IT Management Initiatives

State of Illinois
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Initiation Date: 12.05.2022
End Date: 05.25.2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT) provides telecommunications solutions and fully managed support to 52 entities under the purview of the Governor. DoIT is also tasked with providing these same agencies their stored data for timely responding to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Prior to implementing the Smarsh solution in May 2023, DoIT did not have a digital solution for "discovery" of text messages on wireless devices as part of a comprehensive response to FOIA requests.

IDEA

DoIT receives approximately 1,700 requests annually from state entities to pull stored data for FOIA request purposes. The Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140, requires FOIA requests to be answered completely within 5 days of receipt for noncommercial requests and within 20 days for commercial requests. The DoIT staff resources are limited, the requests many, and the timeframe very aggressive. FOIA requests seemed to grow disproportionately in recent years and a backlog was building. The numbers were identified as an audit risk, and it was time to make some changes.

One area of immediate focus was on text messages. DoIT had not historically allowed texting on state issued mobile devices because data capture and retention on text messages did not exist and text messages could not be captured for FOIA purposes. However, it was believed that users communicated via text for business purposes regardless of the policy.

State agencies' business needs to utilize text messaging services were rapidly growing within the technology ecosystem, and DoIT needed to find a solution for data retention. Several text messaging archiving solution services were reviewed, and the chosen solution was able to meet the mandatory requirement to archive messages from all carriers. The solution selected was also able to provide the quantity of licenses required along with the requisite data security support. Multiple DoIT teams collaborated to research and competitively procure the product that could be implemented enterprise-wide on state issued cellular devices. Smarsh, a software as a service (SaaS) company, was selected to provide the solution to capture and store, text messages. Beginning in May 2023, DoIT has included Smarsh functionality on all smartphones issued to state employees.

IMPLEMENTATION

Once the solution was chosen and met the requirement to integrate with AT&T and Verizon, a project plan was put in place and the three DoIT teams (Legal, Email, and Telecommunications) took action to prepare for the new solution.

Weekly meetings were held with AT&T, Smarsh, and Verizon to ensure all details of the State's needs were known, reviewed, and could be met. The teams involved were trained before implementation. Verizon and DoIT Legal worked together on the communication that went to all users notifying them that their text messages would be captured. The procurement process was typically lengthy, but while

waiting, the email and telecommunications teams built their processes and "divided and conquered" tasks to make the new program run smoothly.

The email team focused their efforts specifically on several tasks in preparation:
- Re-writing the enterprise mobile device policy documents.
- Disabling iMessage on iPhones, a prerequisite of Smarsh.
- Implementing an "Out of Contact" mobile device process to ensure licenses were recaptured when users leave the enterprise.
- Removing third party texting applications from our enterprise mobile app offering.


Image 1
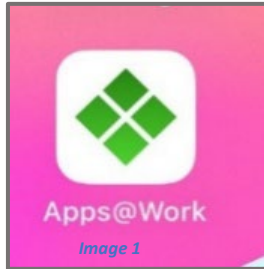
The first step in the project was to disable iMessage, previously used as a standard Short Message Standard (SMS) messaging tool, and communicate that change to all users. In addition to the change to iMessage, DoIT blocked the Apple Appstore so that all applications used by state employees on a state issued device would be provided through a DoIT managed **Apps@Work** *(Image 1)* portal.
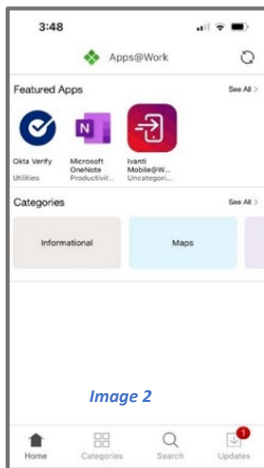
Image 2

Disabling the AppStore and self-publishing approved applications *(Image 2)***,** allows DoIT to control which downloads are available to users and ensure that third-party texting applications could not be utilized to circumvent the archiving solution.

DoIT also implemented and enforced mobile device check in for compliance. **By enforcing device check-in** *(Image 3),* DoIT can regularly audit devices and detect if users have been able to sidestep any controls. If a device hasn't checked in to the mobile device server through the secure state network at regular intervals, corrective action is taken on those lines according to the following schedule:

Image 3

- If a device is out of contact for 30 days or more, the user will receive "Out of Contact" texts on the device and email notices twice each day.
- If a device is out of contact for 60-89 days, a list of users is distributed to agency Chiefs of Staff and Telecommunications Coordinators for review.
- If a device is out of contact for 90 -119 days, DoIT will suspend cellular service on the line.
- If a device is out of contact for 120 days or more, DoIT will disconnect the line with the carrier and remove the device. The user will then be required to contact technical support to re-enable services, if still using the device.
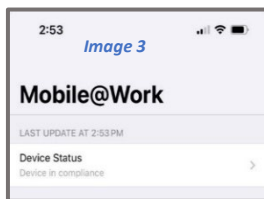
This process provides an opportunity to ensure devices are properly configured and communicating with the Mobile Device Management tool that provides a layer of security for the enterprise.

State agencies submit a request for a mobile device to DoIT Telecommunications, which purchases the device on behalf of the agency, and the DoIT email team loads the Smarsh software before deploying to the user. Any conversation in a text message on a state mobile device is captured and delivered via email to a user's mailbox within 24 hours.

The Smarsh solution was fully implemented in May of 2023 and initially included 13,000 devices. That number has grown to over 14,000 devices today.

Implementation of text archiving was a journey that took approximately six months and three DoIT teams from inception to deployment and adoption. This was a necessary step to ensure the State was properly addressing compliance requirements for archiving and retaining State records and responding timely to FOIA requests for data. Since the implementation of this solution, FOIA requests that include text messages can now be processed consistently with other types of FOIA document requests.

IMPACT

What Did the Project Make Better?
The text archiving solution enables state resources to leverage text messaging without limitations caused by document retention requirements. Natural resource officers and child welfare investigators rely on text messaging during the normal course of business to communicate their location and status with colleagues or confirm appointments while in the field. To meet retention requirements, they would capture a screen shot of their text messages and send them to themselves via email for archiving in the email system. The need was similar across the other state agencies. The text archiving solution eliminates what was a time-consuming process that relied on manual compliance.

The solution ingests the text records into the email system where they can be managed and archived using the same tools and processes as emails. This simplifies the e-discovery process for state agencies and DoIT.

What's Next
DoIT is beta testing a self-service solution for client agencies to search and retrieve archived records from the email retention solution. The compliance boundaries are configured to segregate access by agency, and the DoIT Legal staff have completed training to begin testing the solution. DoIT intends to implement the self-service solution to client agencies over the next few years, which will decrease FOIA response times and enable two full-time DoIT staff currently involved in the search and retrieval process to redirect their time to new initiatives and opportunities.