



CANADIAN NUCLEAR LABORATORIES NAVIGATES PANDEMIC CHALLENGES WHILE MITIGATING OPERATIONAL RISKS

“For us, digital means getting vital knowledge and information from A to B in the least time possible. So, our highly skilled experts in physics, metallurgy, chemistry, biology and engineering can work collaboratively and safely.”

Megan Diamond, Information Management Supervisor, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories



CHALLENGE

Strictly regulated, CNL relies on fast access to archived information, a lengthy process compounded by growing records and inconsistent manual work practices. This made it hard to maintain inventories, retention schedules and audit trails.



SOLUTION

Iron Mountain® helped develop a holistic digital strategy and end-to-end solution for centralising and digitising legacy records in multiple formats. It ensures secure full chain of custody covering collection, transportation, imaging, and shredding.



RESULTS

CNL was able to ramp up scanning and support home workers during the pandemic. Now, with substantial productivity gains, vital information flows faster throughout the organisation. Plans include a new CNL facility with Good Laboratory Practice compliance.



Over 2.3 million

digital images produced so far



Up to 30x

productivity increase



100,000+

engineering scans in progress



C£17,000

saved on one project alone



ADVANCING NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR A CLEANER AND MORE SECURE WORLD

“As our archive continued to snowball, it was taking longer to hunt through boxes and retrieve records. And we had all the usual problems like maintaining up-to-date inventories, retention schedules and audit trails.”

**Megan Diamond, Information Management Supervisor,
Canadian Nuclear Laboratories**

IMPROVING INFORMATION STRATEGY AND BEST PRACTICE

Snowball effect

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL) is a world leader in developing peaceful and innovative applications from nuclear technology. It delivers a range of services: from research and development, design and engineering to waste management and decommissioning.

Over the years, CNL had accumulated an ever-growing archive of personal files, scientific reports, decommissioning plans, test results, seismic recordings, and other vital information. Stored across various sites, it was mostly paper based, but also included microfiche, data tape, CD and VHS formats. Ensuring timely access to these records was becoming harder.

“We’re required by law to hold certain information for up to 300 years, which tended to promote a hoarding culture,” explains Information Management Supervisor, Megan Diamond. “As our archive continued to snowball, it was taking longer to hunt through boxes and retrieve records. And we had all the usual problems like maintaining up-to-date inventories, retention schedules and audit trails.”

Digital partner

In response, CNL began looking for a partner, initially for off-site storage with the longer-term goal of developing a holistic digital strategy for consolidating paper and legacy records. Following a competitive tender among government-approved suppliers, Iron Mountain® was appointed to help accelerate this vision.

“Aside from extra resources and feet on the ground, Iron Mountain provided the strategic focus and information governance best practices we’d been missing,” recalls Diamond. “The turning point was three years ago and since then we’ve thrown new challenges their way and broadened the relationship.”



CNL



Legally required to retain information for up to 300 years



CHALLENGE



SOLUTION



RESULTS



MANAGING PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL RECORDS FROM THE OFFICE OR REMOTELY

“Files don’t go missing and we spend way less time preparing for audits. Also, when we couldn’t get to the office during the pandemic, we were still able to ramp up scanning and support home workers with digital records.”

Megan Diamond, Information Management Supervisor, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories

JOINED-UP, END-TO-END SOLUTION

Serving remote workers during the pandemic

Iron Mountain® helped CNL develop a holistic digital strategy and end-to-end solution for centralising and digitising legacy records in paper, microfiche, data tape, CD and VHS formats.

Blending off-site records management with on-demand imaging, the Iron Mountain service provides full chain of custody covering collection, transportation, scanning and shredding. Specialists pick up paper files from CNL sites, index them, give them individual barcodes for tracking and safely house them in state-of-the-art warehouses. As part of the service, CNL can ask for individual paper records to be digitally scanned.

If a file needs to be recalled or converted to PDF, staff place an order using the Iron Mountain Connect™ online records management tool and it’s usually delivered next business day. In total, more than 2.3 million digital images have been produced so far.

“Because it’s so simple to use, we rolled Iron Mountain Connect out to several users rather than relying on just one person,” says Diamond. “Now, we have complete visibility and can manage all our orders, inventory data and shred programs - anytime, from anywhere. Files don’t go missing and we spend way less time preparing for audits. Also, when we couldn’t get to the office due to the pandemic, we were still able to ramp up scanning and support home workers with digital records.”

Co-innovating at scale

Firmly on track to achieving its digital vision, CNL is collaborating with Iron Mountain to push the boundaries in other areas. “We’re now able to scale up and work on larger digitisation projects, which is something we couldn’t do before,” says Diamond.

Supported by Iron Mountain Entertainment Services, one of those initiatives is transferring information buried on unwieldy and fragile microfiche records. Other work in progress includes sharing insight and expertise to create a new CNL facility based around Good Laboratory Practice compliance, ultimately improving the test data and safety of nuclear services.

 **Over 2.3 million digital images produced**



CHALLENGE



SOLUTION



RESULTS

PUTTING VALUABLE DATA IN THE HANDS OF EXPERTS SOONER

“We were able to go straight to the correct report and drawings, avoiding the need to take more samples and run further tests. We probably saved around C£17,000, not to mention the knock-on cost of delays and project slippage.”

Megan Diamond, Information Management Supervisor, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories

Making faster connections

No more visiting sites and searching through scores of dusty cabinets and boxes in crowded basement storerooms. Instead, digital records flow quickly throughout the CNL organisation. “For us, digital means getting vital knowledge and information from A to B in the least time possible,” adds Diamond. “So, our highly skilled experts in physics, metallurgy, chemistry, biology and engineering can work collaboratively and safely.”

For another digital project CNL seconded two Iron Mountain specialists. Based onsite, they’re helping to update inventories and scan 100,000-plus engineering drawings across three vaults.



Removing risks and costs

CNL has also seen a significant productivity gain. A recent HR scanning project is a prime example. Previously, staff used to receive numerous daily requests to pull paper files, each of which took between 20 to 60 minutes to fulfill and racked up postal charges. Now, it takes only around two minutes to supply a digital record. And those shipping costs have disappeared, freeing up budget.

The investment in digitising microfiche files didn’t take long to start paying back either. “Our engineers were working on a building decommissioning project in Quebec and urgently needed to confirm the thickness of the concrete and check for radioactive contamination,” concludes Diamond. “We were able to go straight to the correct report and drawings, avoiding the need to take more samples and run further tests. We probably saved around C£17,000, not to mention the knock-on cost of delays and project slippage.”

 **Ability to ramp up scanning and support home workers during pandemic**

 **3,000% productivity increase**

 **C£17,000 saved on one project alone**

 **Co-innovation for Good Laboratory Practice compliance**

CNL: Photo provided courtesy of Canadian Nuclear Laboratories.

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