

*Client: The Mangold Group*

*Industry: Accounting & Financial Services*

## Professional Accountants Get Serious About E-Filing

*CPA firm places client records into document manager for big returns*



While dealing with your own filing can get out of hand, imagine taking care of other peoples' paperwork. Every year, the Mangold Group of certified public accountants processes bookkeeping for nearly fifty businesses and the tax returns of hundreds of individuals. Each client represents stacks and stacks of financial records, which Mangold places in digital format.

"As the paperwork would come in, we would scan each piece, make a folder for the client in Windows Explorer, and save it under their name," says Michael DuFresne, Technical Service Administrator at Mangold.

After a few stacks through the scanner, mixed together with electronic data that would drift intermittently through CD-ROMs or email, the structure of each client file grew more complicated and arbitrary.

"Fundamentally, the problem was a lack of file management," DuFresne says. "Searching for one particular item took too much time. You could not find anything unless you knew exactly where to look for it."

The standard Windows folder set-up also tended towards misplacement of information through accidental drags and drops or the accumulation of multiple versions saved in different locations. Clients trust the Mangold Group to keep their private documents not only secure, but also organized, so CPAs would have no gaps in understanding when assessing their accounting situation. As the tax rush sets in, clients add another demand, urgency.

So to streamline the overall process, Mangold CPAs looked towards document management software for a solution.

### ***Smart digital asset management integrated into Windows***

Mangold chose a simple, but powerful document control software that put an emphasis on office efficiency without a lot of expense or interruption of normal accounting workflow.

“I think the main reason M-Files content control stood out from other document management solutions was the Windows Explorer integration,” says DuFresne. “Because Windows Explorer was something familiar and that we used all the time, we were able to start using M-Files very simply and easily. The staff would not get confused by a whole new system; they already had an idea on how to go about using it.”

Once installed, M-Files controls appear in every Windows application when users select “Open” or “Save” from the file menu.

“Another reason to go with M-Files is that we can access this client information from anywhere,” adds DuFresne. In the past, accountants used remote desktops to connect with their workstations when they were away from the office, but with M-Files, they can simply log on to a single file repository for all company data from any Internet browser. “Connecting from outside the office was a big feature for us.”

### ***Searching by keyword, not by folder***

M-Files replaces the sprawling growth of subfolders in Windows Explorer with a more precise database-driven approach. Scans of incoming documents, for example, are all saved to one location -- the M-Files vault -- through “Save As...” right in the standard interface of the scanning software. The dialogue box does not require a lot clicking through subfolders, but instead asks for a few descriptive terms. For Mangold, each item is tagged with client name, tax year, document type (like account statement, expenses, or assets), and more specific terms as needed.

Mangold set up choices for other categories according to workflow, for example, whether an item is going to a client, a prospect, or was for internal use.

These keyword attributes or tags are stored in the M-Files database along with time-stamp and author information. “Upon installation, we linked M-Files into our client database in our time and billing software called BillQuick. In doing so, it added fields that we could use in the document properties of files inside M-Files,” DuFresne says. Employees could save documents in the file management system from drop-down lists of possible tags, based on client information previously entered.

To find a file, the CPAs don’t need to peck through layers of folders; instead, they just type one or two keyword terms in the search box and M-Files displays all files company-wide with those tags. Adding in another keyword term narrows the field of possibilities. Viewing results by date gives an immediate sense of what updates have occurred. The database scheme eliminates multiple copies and naturally creates a system of version control.

As a result, M-Files has given the accountants more command over the digital archives. They can see an overview of all files for a particular client, or all files in a specific class of documents, and zoom into the item they want in a few seconds.

“Once users saw how powerful M-Files’ search capability was -- all they needed to do was type in what they wanted -- they really got into it,” recalls DuFresne. “Suddenly it was much simpler and faster and easier to find files.”

“With M-Files, we have the entire history, so even if a file gets inadvertently deleted you can always go back to a file and look at prior versions of it.” Through M-Files’ automatic backup capabilities, even if files are deleted, users can easily and quickly recover them.

### ***A flexible and efficient document management system***

“We had M-Files up and running within a day,” reports DuFresne. “Linking up to the database was intuitive and was really simple to do as well.”

“M-Files is a document management solution that has certainly worked well for us. Our productivity has gone up immensely. When clients come in, they want their tax returns and they want them done now, so retrieving the right files quickly is definitely a plus,” he says. “It’s also extremely important to know you always have the most up-to-date versions.”

Mangold CPAs put out a little effort to shop for quality document control software and received big returns in faster operations when they chose M-Files.

### **About the Mangold Group, CPA, PC**

The Mangold Group, Certified Public Accountants, PC is a full service accounting firm specializing in complete outsourcing of your accounting functions from bookkeeping to tax returns, located in Austin, Texas. For more information on services, please visit: [www.mangoldcpa.com](http://www.mangoldcpa.com) .