Why This Leading Manufacturer of Healthcare Technology Trusts BlackBerry Workspaces to Keep its File Security in Good Health

Olympus

Industry:
Manufacturing

Employees:
35,933

Location:
Japan

Products:
BlackBerry Spark® UEM Suite, BlackBerry® Workspaces

Website:
www.olympus-global.com

At A Glance

Olympus is a world-leading manufacturer of precision instruments which are used in everything from photography to scientific research to medicine. Its medical line of business is particularly important, and it holds a significant share of the global endoscope market. It frequently sends field staff to repair and maintain the products it manufactures.

Seeking a more efficient, secure means of providing these workers with specifications, manuals, and other important documents, the organization turned to BlackBerry® Workspaces, a robust enterprise content collaboration platform included in the BlackBerry Spark® UEM Suite.

The Organization

Founded in 1919, Olympus makes and sells a variety of precision instruments for medical, scientific, and imaging businesses. With a reputation for quality and excellence, the company devotes a considerable amount of time and resources to its medical line of business. Already, Olympus' technology is used in a variety of healthcare settings both in Japan and overseas.

Its endoscope products, which make up a significant share of the global market, are particularly valuable to the company. With growing demand for minimally invasive treatment – which enables the early detection of disease and reduces patient burden – the role of Olympus and its endoscope products will only grow more important.

The Challenge

In addition to manufacturing, Olympus provides maintenance and repair services for its equipment. This is ordinarily done at one of the company's repair facilities. Occasionally, however, it must send staff to do on-site repairs or periodic maintenance.

"When there is a problem with one of our devices, we normally repair it at one of our centers due to their extreme precision," explains Takuro Watabe, Senior Supervisor of IT Planning & Development at Olympus' Information Technology Division. "However, there are cases where our field staff visit a healthcare facility to perform in-person maintenance and repairs."

Specifications, manuals, and other product documents are indispensable for such staff. Initially, field staff were required to carry an unreasonably large volume of physical files with them to a job or download them to a PC in advance. The company quickly realized it needed to make things more efficient for its technicians.

"Some of our product documents are extremely large, while others are updated quite frequently," Watabe explains. "We also need to provide documents not just for newer products but older ones as well. Expensive medical devices like endoscopes are normally used over a period of many years."

Olympus initially deployed a system that would allow employees to view its files digitally. Unfortunately, this system could not be used offline. Since many healthcare facilities restrict the use of electronics because of the interference they may cause to medical technology, this meant that many technicians had no connectivity or file access while in the field.

As a result, they were required to download the data in advance or print off relevant sections of a document to bring with them. This practice further amplified concerns at the company about a data leak. Not only was there the issue of physical document theft, there were also concerns over lost or stolen devices.

"In addition to the enormous amount of data that documentation represents, another challenge we faced involved the security risk presented by either printed copies or the removal of physical files from company premises," Watabe continues. "The documents themselves are like an encyclopedia of Olympus' technologies. If they or the device that contains them are lost or stolen, our intellectual property could end up in the hands of a competitor."

In 2013, Olympus began considering a replacement for its old system – this eventually led it to BlackBerry Workspaces.

"Thanks to BlackBerry Workspaces, we were able to make many security improvements, in addition to addressing several other issues with our previous system. We are extremely pleased with the platform's features, and it has decreased our risk of information leaks dramatically."

- Takuro Watabe
Senior Supervisor of IT Planning & Development, Olympus Corporation

The Solution

Olympus needed a solution that would allow users to view documents offline, even off-site at a healthcare facility. It required a platform with the ability to set secure, granular access permissions for documents, including printing watermarks and setting file expiration dates. Finally, it needed this system to be a native app capable of running seamlessly on the iPads in use at some sites.

"We were aware of many file encryption technologies and products, but none had enough of the features that we needed for our operations," recalls Rie Makino, who works in IT Planning & Development at Olympus's Information Technology Division. "The only one that met all of our requirements was BlackBerry Workspaces."

For Olympus, one of the biggest draws of BlackBerry Workspaces is the extremely high level of security it offers at the file level. In addition to 256-bit AES encryption, which ensures protection of the data each file contains, BlackBerry Workspaces' DRM allows granular control of file downloads and printing, as well as seamless tracking, logging, and file management. It enables organizations to build an environment that only allows authorized users to access secure files.

Olympus had an enormous number of people using its original system both within Japan and overseas. As part of a technical study it carried out before fully deploying BlackBerry Workspaces, it trialed the solution amongst a limited number of employees in Japan. Following this, the company planned to expand BlackBerry Workspaces' availability in phases to other employees, such as those in management at its major overseas offices.

"Enabling users to securely view documents sent via email and download documents securely from a file-sharing server are relatively common needs," explains Makino. "However, in our case, we had to test many fundamental operations, including installing and setting up plugins and ensuring downloads were performed correctly."

"While we finished the operational verification in a short amount of time without problems, we spent most of the testing period ensuring field staff and the employees responsible for importing components had the correct download and access permissions for their individual roles," she continues. "We spent nearly six months on careful testing of this, because permissions settings for each account and group are a critical part of building a secure environment."

The Results

Olympus began using BlackBerry Workspaces at its major domestic and overseas location in February 2016, rolling it out to the rest of its foreign field offices the following August. Since deployment, it has seen several significant gains.

Simple, Streamlined Version Control: For field service tasks, it is critical that staff are able to refer to the latest version of a document as they work. BlackBerry Workspaces assists with this by allowing expiration dates to be set for document downloads. This prevents cases where workers make repairs using outdated documents saved on their devices.

Role-Based File Management and Granular Permissions: Olympus has made full use of the granular permissions settings that BlackBerry Workspaces provides. This enables Olympus to ensure that each field technician has access to only the documents they need to do their jobs. Whether they're online or offline, they're able to do their jobs – and the organization has the peace of mind that comes with knowing it's always in control.

Compliance with Overseas Regulations: Thanks to the level of control BlackBerry Workspaces provides over sensitive data, Olympus is able to easily meet the regulatory requirements of whatever country it operates in. For example, in certain countries, printed copies of documents for medical devices and related components must be submitted as part of the customs clearance process. BlackBerry Workspaces can ensure security in the process by enabling the employee to print the documents with watermarks, in addition to setting expiration dates on the files for the minimum amount of time required.

"Three quarters of the organizations currently using BlackBerry Workspaces are in Japan," notes Watabe. "The reason is because many Japanese companies have overseas subsidiaries, all with their own specific security policies. In some cases, the countries in which these subsidiaries are based have such strict regulations that even the download and printing of documents is prohibited."

Future Plans: By introducing BlackBerry Workspaces, Olympus was able to realize an environment that enables it to securely manage its documents based on roles. The company has great expectations for BlackBerry's solutions not only in its medical business, but in its scientific solutions business as well, which provides products that contribute to the safety, security, and health of people around the world.

"BlackBerry Workspaces has delivered results in our medical business that exceeded our initial expectations," says Watabe. "In light of this success, we are looking to make use of the platform in our other market segments, our scientific solutions in particular."

For more information, visit BlackBerry.com/Spark and follow @BlackBerrySpark on Twitter.

About BlackBerry

BlackBerry (NYSE: BB; TSX: BB) provides intelligent security software and services to enterprises and governments around the world. The company secures more than 500M endpoints including 150M cars on the road today. Based in Waterloo, Ontario, the company leverages AI and machine learning to deliver innovative solutions in the areas of cybersecurity, safety and data privacy solutions, and is a leader in the areas of endpoint security management, encryption, and embedded systems. BlackBerry's vision is clear — to secure a connected future you can trust.

For more information, visit BlackBerry.com and follow @BlackBerry.

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