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From hours to minutes...
A job that would probably take 3 or 4 hours to dig out all the records now takes 2 minutes.



Conserving data as well as nature

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) recognised the vital role of effective data management in wildlife conservation

The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) is a leading UK charity with a singular mission: to promote the sustainable conservation of wildlife and game habitats. For decades, GWCT has been at the forefront of researching the complex interplay between environmental changes, weather patterns, and habitat dynamics, providing invaluable insights that shape conservation strategies. As the environmental challenges of the 21st century intensify, the need for effective data management in conservation efforts has never been more critical.

DATA MANAGEMENT IS CRUCIAL

Effective data management is the backbone of modern conservation efforts. In an era where climate change and human activities are rapidly altering natural landscapes, having access to accurate, timely data is essential. This data helps conservationists understand trends, assess risks, and implement strategies that protect vulnerable species and habitats. Moreover, the ability to analyse large datasets allows organisations like GWCT to make evidence-based decisions, thereby increasing the efficiency of their conservation initiatives.

Digitising data is not just about converting paper documents into digital formats; it's about creating a dynamic and searchable archive that can reveal patterns and trends previously hidden in the clutter of physical records. This transformation is crucial for environmental research, as it enables quick access to historical data, facilitates comprehensive analysis, and ultimately supports the development of more robust conservation strategies.

CHALLENGES OF TRADITIONAL PAPER SYSTEMS

Before their partnership with Storetec, GWCT faced significant challenges related to their traditional paper-based record-keeping system. Decades of conservation records, including weather reports, wildlife breeding patterns, and species sightings, were stored in physical formats.

These records, while rich in valuable information, were difficult to manage and prone to deterioration over time. Searching through these documents was a time-consuming process, often requiring days or even weeks to find specific data. Additionally, the physical storage of these records posed risks, including potential loss due to damage

or misplacement.

The inefficiencies of a paper-based system hindered GWCT's ability to conduct timely research and respond to emerging conservation challenges. Recognising the limitations of this approach, GWCT sought a solution that would not only preserve their invaluable records but also enhance their accessibility and utility in research and conservation efforts.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY: OCR, LLM, ML, AND AI

To overcome these challenges, GWCT partnered with Storetec to embark on a comprehensive data digitisation project. The goal was to transform their vast archive of paper documents into a digital format that could be easily searched, analysed, and utilised in their ongoing research efforts.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology was employed to convert scanned images of text into machine-readable data. This process enabled GWCT to create a searchable database of their conservation records, significantly reducing the time required to locate specific information.

Beyond OCR, the project utilised Intelligent Document Processing (IDP) by

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integrating Large Language Models (LLM), Machine Learning (ML), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. While OCR allows you to read what is on the page, IDP goes further by enabling you to understand and use that information effectively. This enhanced processing allowed GWCT to not only extract meaningful data but also to identify patterns and generate reports with unprecedented speed and accuracy. For example, the AI Assistant can summarise in seconds, years of weather data and provide actionable insights that would have taken human researchers much longer to uncover.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATION

One of the key reasons GWCT chose Storetec was the ability to provide both digitisation expertise and advanced AI-powered software within a single solution. This integrated approach ensured that there were no breaks in the process, from scanning and digitising documents to analysing and reporting on the data. Having a single supplier manage the entire project streamlined the workflow, reduced the risk of errors, and ensured that the project stayed on track and within budget.

Storetec's proprietary document and data management platform, MDI Cloud, played a central role in this integration. Hosting the digitised documents in MDI Cloud gave GWCT easy access to their data from anywhere, at any time. The platform's AI assistant further empowered GWCT's researchers by automating the summarisation of reports and highlighting critical trends, enabling them to focus on more strategic aspects of their conservation work.

STATE OF THE ART

The digitisation project with GWCT was meticulously planned and executed. Storetec began by conducting a thorough assessment of GWCT's existing paper archives, identifying the types of documents that needed to be digitised and determining the best approach for each.

Given the fragile nature of some of the older documents, Storetec employed specialised book scanning equipment to ensure that the integrity of the records was maintained throughout the process. The digitisation phase was completed within the agreed timeline, thanks to careful project management and the use of state-of-the-art scanning technology.

Once the documents were digitised, they were uploaded to MDI Cloud, where IDP organised and analysed the data. Throughout the project, Storetec worked closely with GWCT to ensure that their specific needs were met, providing regular updates and addressing any challenges that arose.

PROFOUND BENEFITS

The benefits of this digital transformation for GWCT have been profound, both in terms of quantitative and qualitative outcomes.

Quantitatively, GWCT has reported a significant reduction in the time required to access and analyse data. What once took days or weeks can now be accomplished in a matter of minutes, thanks to the searchable database and intelligent automation. This increased efficiency has enabled GWCT to conduct more research in less time, allowing them to respond more quickly to environmental changes and

emerging conservation challenges.

Qualitatively, the digitisation project has enhanced the overall quality of GWCT's research. The ability to cross-reference data from different sources and identify long-term trends has provided deeper insights into the factors affecting wildlife and game habitats. This, in turn, has led to more informed decision-making and more effective conservation strategies.

Moreover, the digital archive created by Storetec has not only preserved GWCT's valuable records for future generations but has also made them more accessible to a wider audience. Researchers, policymakers, and the public can now access these records more easily, contributing to greater awareness and understanding of conservation issues.

A NEW ERA OF CONSERVATION

The partnership between GWCT and Storetec represents a new era of conservation, where technology plays a crucial role in protecting our natural heritage. By embracing digital transformation, GWCT has not only preserved its rich history of conservation efforts but has also enhanced its ability to carry out its mission in the years to come.

As environmental challenges continue to grow, the need for effective data management in conservation will only become more critical. The GWCT's experience demonstrates the value of investing in advanced technologies and integrated solutions that can unlock the full potential of data, driving more effective and sustainable conservation outcomes.

More info: www.storetec.net