

United States Army Corps of Engineers

Base building

United States Army Corps of Engineers

Washington, District of Columbia
www.usace.army.mil

Results

- Reduced project document preparation time from hours to minutes
- Automated application of document security rules
- Leveraged compact PDF files to accelerate delivery of critical project information
- Streamlined project bidding and review processes
- Improved transparency for contractors
- Helped to ensure a fair business environment

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers uses Adobe® LiveCycle® Rights Management ES to streamline and secure construction project bidding and management

Delivering on government building projects—including bridges, dams, military facilities, and more—requires U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) project managers to balance providing transparency and accessibility during contractor bidding processes with safeguarding sensitive project information. Comprised of approximately 37,000 dedicated civilians and soldiers providing engineering services in more than 90 countries, USACE works diligently with private contractors worldwide to strengthen the country's infrastructure.

Given its vast footprint and diverse project portfolio, USACE is home to many departments, each responsible for specific project lines and coordinating with appropriate organizations. For example, a group within the USACE Engineering Research and Development Center (ERDC) works with the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Navy to collaborate on developing bases and other important projects.

Depending on a project's scope, size, and impact on national security, keeping key details confidential is paramount. "Every project we do requires some level of security for documentation, such as sealing bid proposals," says Drew Anderson, an electrical engineer and web application developer for ERDC. "Some projects, such as military bases, need to be more tightly controlled and we needed a way to centrally manage how documents are distributed, accessed, and shared."

In the past, companies interested in receiving project documents for bidding had to sign a security agreement acknowledging the proper handling, return, and disposal of bidding documents on paper. However, the paper-based process made it difficult to control who accessed content and ultimately what was done with it before and after projects were completed.

Transparent and secure

Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite (ES) software now plays an integral role in helping USACE protect sensitive documentation. With Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES, USACE can better manage its bidding and project management processes by applying a range of business rules to control access to documents, protect against unauthorized modifications, and set expiration dates for documents.

"The bidding process has to be transparent and inclusive to give contractors a fair chance to win business," says Anderson. "Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES enables us to include qualified contractors in the bidding process while protecting the integrity of project documents by limiting document printing, copying, and other activities, as well as by tracking who reviewed or tried to review materials."

USACE provides bid materials via secure Adobe PDF files that include fillable forms enabled with Adobe LiveCycle Reader® Extensions ES. Materials delivered in PDF help ensure reliable access to the largest possible audience because users need only the free Adobe Reader software to access the files. As a result, contractors can easily view and complete files on virtually any computer or device.

The flexibility and utility of PDF files isn't just helpful for end users, but for USACE as well. Recently, during the construction bidding process for a U.S. Air Force base, USACE used LiveCycle Rights Management ES to better safeguard project documents in PDF. The more secure PDF files were transferred to DVDs to send out to project bidders. USACE authorized 130 prospective bidders for the Air Force base project, each receiving a DVD with individually secured and trackable project documents in PDF.

"Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES enables us to include qualified contractors in the bidding process while protecting the integrity of project documents by limiting document printing, copying, and other activities, as well as by tracking who reviewed or tried to review materials."

Drew Anderson

Electrical engineer and web application developer, Engineering Research and Development Center,
United States Army Corps of Engineers

Challenge

- Enhance security of digital bid documents and project plans
- Streamline project bid processes
- Enable digital tracking of distributed documents
- Reduce time required to compile project bids

Solution

- Use Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES to determine how, when, and for how long contractors and bidders can review project plans
- Leverage digital rights management software to better secure PDF files containing project information to help ensure that only authorized personnel can view and print details

Systems at a Glance

Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite.

Modules used include:

- Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES
- Adobe LiveCycle Reader Extensions ES

Adobe Acrobat Pro

"We already have Adobe Acrobat® Pro on all our desktops, so it's easy to convert materials to PDF and compile bid documentation into a single file," Anderson says. "Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES enables us to apply important controls to documents in PDF and actively track which bidders have received DVDs and tried to open files. In addition to preventing recipients from printing documents or copying content, we can also set expirations on documents to help ensure documents are available only during the bidding process."

Using Adobe software, USACE can apply watermarks to electronic source files that remain on the digital and printed documents, which helps improve ongoing document security and minimize unfair advantages for existing contractors during contract competition periods. Contractors awarded projects are granted access to some USACE systems, providing them with the information required to complete a particular project on time and on budget. However, once the contract has ended, USACE needed a tool to restrict how much information existing contractors could access and support its own document auditing processes.

"With LiveCycle Rights Management ES, we can automatically apply rules to restrict access and viewing rights to important information to help ensure that no advantage is gained by existing contractors when the time comes to submit a bid for a new project," explains Anderson.

Smoother, easier, and cost effective

Large-scale projects are often complex and bidding contractors want to see exactly what's expected. Using Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES, USACE can work with companies that manage construction plans for large-scale projects to help safeguard materials in more secure PDF files, place them on DVDs, and distribute them to potential bidders.

"By securing Adobe PDF files with LiveCycle Rights Management ES, we can safely include dozens of documents on each DVD. Each DVD provided to contractors contains its own unique set of secured PDF files, so we can track documents distributed through plan rooms," explains Anderson. In the case of the recent U.S. Air Force base project, USACE included secure PDF files of 16 plan documents and 11 project amendments on each DVD. The documents originated in a variety of formats, such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, image files, CAD files, and others, which were combined easily into more compact, reliable PDF files.

Now, document management companies fulfill requests for drawings and documents, electronically noting which bidder made the request, who printed copies of the documents, and from which print room. Because user access is reported automatically through Adobe software, USACE managers can see instantly which sets of documents have been distributed and when they need to be returned.

"It used to take days or weeks to compile all the documents, assign them tracking numbers, and get them distributed to the right recipients. With LiveCycle Rights Management ES, it takes about ten minutes. Our entire process from start to finish is smoother, more efficient, and easier to manage."

Drew Anderson

Electrical engineer and web application developer, Engineering Research and Development Center,
United States Army Corps of Engineers

Since launching the new initiative, other agencies and departments have taken notice and begun exploring similar programs based on ERDC's success. Employing Adobe LiveCycle Rights Management ES has enabled the department to conduct bids in a more secure, controlled manner, which has saved the organization and potential bidders considerable time, labor, and expense.

"It used to take days or weeks to compile all the documents, assign them tracking numbers, and get them distributed to the right recipients," Anderson says. "With LiveCycle Rights Management ES, it takes about ten minutes. Our entire process from start to finish is smoother, more efficient, and easier to manage. It's a great foundation for future processes."

For more information

[www.adobe.com/products/](http://www.adobe.com/products/lifecycle)

[lifecycle](http://www.adobe.com/products/lifecycle)

[www.adobe.com/solutions/](http://www.adobe.com/solutions/government)

[government](http://www.adobe.com/solutions/government)



Adobe

Adobe Systems Incorporated
345 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110-2704
USA
www.adobe.com

© 2012 Adobe Systems Incorporated. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

Adobe, the Adobe logo, Acrobat, LiveCycle, and Reader are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

91067895 3/12