

Project Plaza

Streamlining Process Management

White Paper



Introduction

Managing construction projects is increasingly challenging, and email has become the de-facto means of communication between stakeholders. This has increased efficiency and timeliness but has introduced its own problems; project managers are sinking under the weight of emails and companies are worrying about risk management.

How can you track all the project information: documents, drawings, contacts, subcontractors and instructions? Where is the audit trail?

How do you manage risk when all the key information is locked up in corporate email inboxes?

Project Plaza is a new, easy-to-use process management tool that consolidates the huge amount of day-to-day project communication and Information without creating additional workload.

Project Plaza in action

Employees can search for projects and list the projects allocated to them.

Every project has its own dedicated intranet home page designed for simplicity and ease of use.

Projects start at pre-contract stage, where the sales team gathers the key information and bid documentation.

A handover page ensures that all the information is passed on to the site team once the project is won and becomes live.

Contact details for all the people involved in a project are entered in the Project Directory including clients, consultants, subcontractors and suppliers.

All live projects have an associated Microsoft Exchange inbox, created automatically when the project becomes live. The project manager uses this to deal with all project email and manage key documents.

The Document Register is a central repository for all project documentation including specifications, technical submittals, drawings and contracts.

Each document is version controlled, with full history and audit trail; documents can be issued to designated groups of recipients both inside and outside the company.

The Client Extranet allows external people to access the documents applicable to them, ensuring everybody is working with the latest information.

Instructions such as Requests for Information, Confirmation of Verbal Instructions and Change Orders, Architect Instructions and Site Instructions are all maintained centrally.

The site diary is used to track progress, waste management, health and safety and accident reporting.

A selection of Microsoft Excel and Word standard forms are included and these are automatically recognized by Project Plaza and pre populated with project specific information.

Project Plaza includes specific, customisable processes for such things as benchmarks, hold points and void closures.

Subcontractor information can easily be managed, including the storage of key documents such as risk assessments and O&M manuals. Performance metrics can be recorded for each company.

Senior management get an end-to-end view of projects and their status helping to drive compliance and quality, and reduce business risk.

A project closure process captures completion information and the project is retained for future reference.

Unique Selling Points

Project Plaza integrates with existing internal systems such as Microsoft Exchange and Subcontractor databases; it doesn't reinvent the wheel.

It can be installed on-premise in your own data centre and customised for your environment; this isn't a one-size-fits-all service. Based on the Microsoft .NET platform, it's straightforward to add new features.

Project Plaza is easy to use. We've reduced the complexity to make it simple to get the job done with little or no training.

Project Plaza focuses on adhering to the specific business processes that suit your business not introducing an entirely new way of working.

Business Benefits

Project Plaza enables you to make significant savings through the reduction of direct costs such as paper, printing and distribution as well as intangibles like enhanced access to accurate information and collaboration between stakeholders.

Your customers can have 24 hour direct access to key project information via the Extranet Portal.

Site Managers are able to spend more time on site ensuring that the project is running smoothly, improving productivity and quality.

The risks associated with insurance claims in the event of accidents on site are reduced. All legal documentation is stored centrally and is readily available.

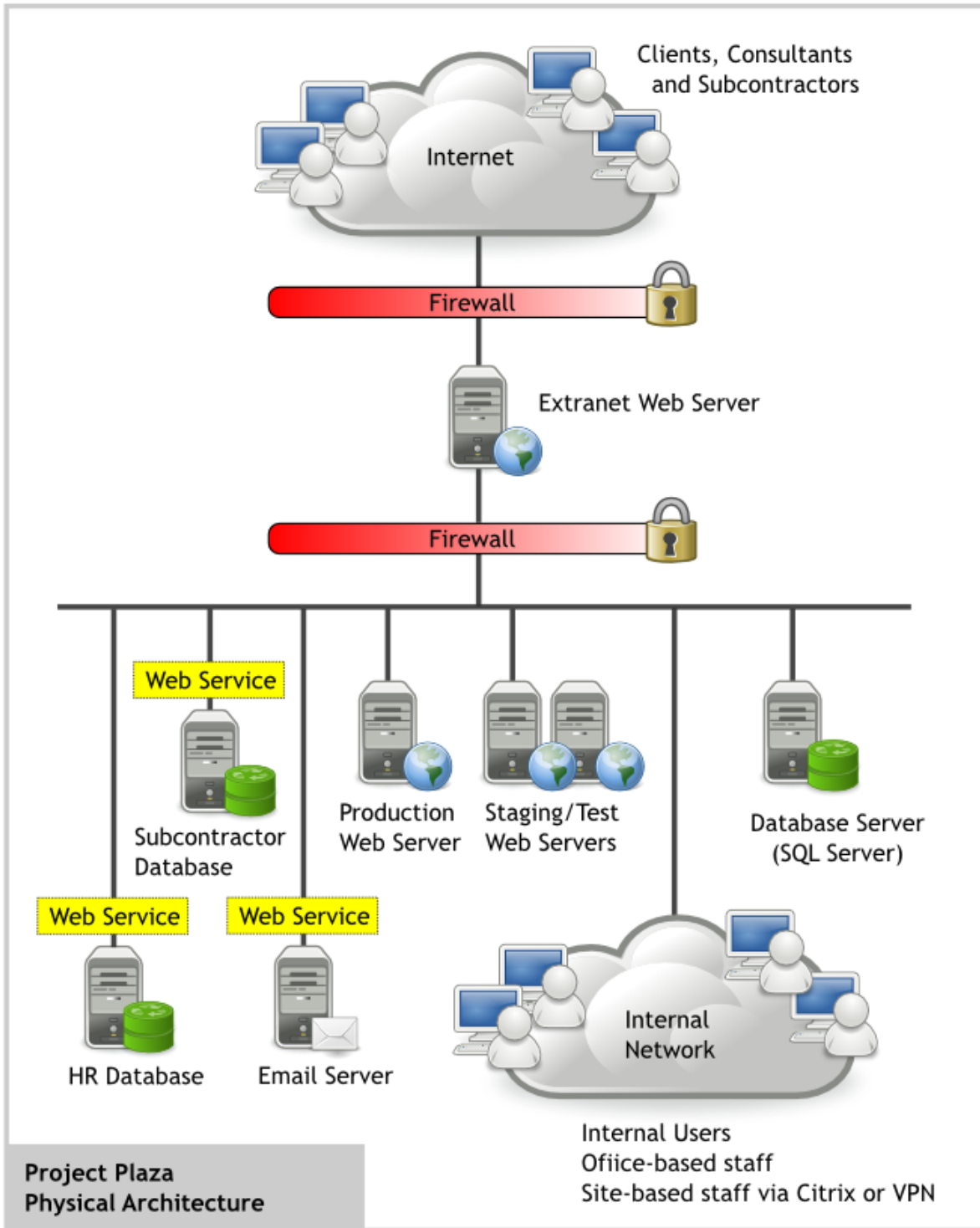
The commercial risks associated with meeting contractual obligations and ensuring any change requests are documented, priced and communicated are reduced.

Increased productivity, quality and efficiency lead to an increase in repeat business as well as new business through recommendations and reputation.

Technology

Project Plaza is a web-based application written using standard Microsoft technologies (ASP.NET, web services, etc.). It runs on Microsoft Windows servers and utilises a SQL Server database.

A typical on-premise installation will follow the design shown below.



New Directions...

We're working on a facility for carbon footprint tracking and calculation; by tracking deliveries to site, customers can measure and prove their environmental credentials.

Working with the University of Essex we're experimenting with Natural Language Processing techniques that can automatically read and categorise emails and extract semantic information and infer knowledge.

Sharing CAD drawings on the web is difficult. We've prototyped a unique viewing capability that allows users to collaborate on drawing changes from within a web browser.

We want to build an interface for mobile devices to allow easier access to project managers on-site or when travelling.

We're looking at service based solution hosted in Windows Azure so that customers won't have to provision their own hardware and network infrastructure.

We're expanding the platform to include other processes and sectors.

Corporate Social Responsibility

In April 2007, Gartner estimated that the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) industry generates about 2% of total global CO2 emissions which is comparable to the aviation industry. By optimising IT and project delivery, Project Plaza can help organisations to cut their energy consumption, reducing operational costs and carbon footprint in line with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies.

About AWS

AWS is a Microsoft Gold Partner that has been working with the Construction Sector for over ten years. We've rolled up our sleeves, worked on site and seen the problems first hand.

Project Plaza has evolved from our years of experience in providing software systems to Construction companies within the UK.

We specialise in building state of the art software to solve our customers' most challenging problems.



For more information, or to arrange a product demonstration, please contact:

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