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CASE STUDY

USERS: 226

PRODUCTS: NetDocuments
ndThread

Case study with a large public university on why they have stayed with NetDocuments for over 10 years and why they chose to add ndThread to their product suite.



How One of the Nation's Largest Public Universities Uses ndThread to Unite Dispersed Teams

Interview with the Associate Director of Legal Operations

When one of the largest public universities in the nation needed a real-time messaging platform to unite over 200 lawyers and legal professionals across numerous campuses and administrative offices, the Office of the General Counsel knew they needed a modern tool that would meet their rigorous security standards. After much due diligence, they chose ndThread from NetDocuments, an add-on to the University's existing document management system (DMS) to get the functionality and security required.

SCATTERED COMMUNICATION

Though they work under a common banner, the University's campus and central legal teams handle day-to-day operations individually. Apart from sharing their document management (DM) and enterprise legal management (ELM) systems, each location has their own tech stack to manage including communication tools such as Slack, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, listservs, and more.

As a result of multiple tools and lack of a unified chat platform, communication suffered and caused additional headaches. From lagging response times and security concerns, to manually classifying messages—the variety of solutions produced more hurdles than benefits, limiting the team's ability to connect and collaborate in a way that inspires great work.

FINDING A SECURE SOLUTION

When the University hired a legal ops leader with history in the tech industry, he knew change was long overdue, and that a real-time messaging solution would bring needed modernization and connection across the University's legal ecosystem.



“Security is of utmost importance to the University and new technology initiatives always raise questions about compliance.”

Associate Director of Legal Operations



The central legal operations team began looking for a solution that would enable efficient communication without compromising security, creating additional administrative responsibilities, or complicating workflows.

“Security is of utmost importance to the University,” stated their Associate Director of Legal Operations, “and new technology initiatives always raise questions about compliance.” Thus, finding a trusted solution was crucial.

Nearly a decade ago, the University chose NetDocuments for its system-wide legal document management needs. Already satisfied with the solution, and with confidence in the platform's unmatched security, it was natural that the University explored the firm's instant messaging solution, ndThread, for secure 1:1 and group messaging across the legal organization.

The benefits of ndThread were clear from the start: First, the platform would be controlled and managed within the University's legal environment. It would also connect seamlessly to NetDocuments, and most importantly, it would provide the level of security required by the University.

BUILDING TEAMS WITH REAL-TIME MESSAGING

Transitioning out of old habits and creating new ones is always a challenge. However, department leaders quickly saw the benefits of communicating in ndThread. Leadership buy-in, support, and active use played a key role in increasing adoption across the University legal organization.

Installing the ndThread desktop and mobile apps has been an adoption tipping point. The anywhere, any device access to ndThread has helped users, especially those in leadership, get to value quicker by accelerating communication and reducing the barriers to one-off requests. Regardless of if the University's users are in a meeting, caring for family at home, or experiencing a power or network outage, ndThread has always been available so answers to questions are never delayed.



“[ndThread] is solving pain points we didn't even realize we had.”

Associate Director of Legal Operations



ORGANIZING CONVERSATIONS IN NDTHREAD

The University has found a variety of ways to organize conversations in ndThread:

- The administrative office can quickly communicate announcements and training to all employees, while managers can create groups with their direct reports.
- Channels around specific topics allow users from different campuses to discuss common issues—from intellectual property to sexual assault—and seek advice from experts.
- Meanwhile, the “virtual water cooler” provides space for non-work conversations, sharing pictures of pets or vacations, and getting to know others on a personal level.

UNITING LEGAL ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The University's legal teams have had nearly ten years of exceptional tools and security for its document and email management needs through NetDocuments. Now, this trusted security and functionality extends even further since adding ndThread to its tech stack.

One of the biggest benefits of bringing all the teams together onto one messaging platform has been quicker, easier communication. Back-and-forth happens far faster on ndThread than email and coordinating asynchronous discussions between campuses is much simpler. “It's a really quick way to get a response—whether that's from another attorney, a manager, or even a subordinate,” explains the Associate Director of Legal Operations.

Naturally, real-time messaging has also reduced dependence on email and listservs to communicate. But there have been unexpected benefits as well.

“It’s solving pain points we didn’t even realize we had,” he shared.



“When you receive information [in ndThread], you don’t even have to take a few seconds to classify it in your head or in Outlook. It’s already classified.”

Associate Director of Legal Operations



Beyond providing more secure, simpler communication, ndThread has helped to reduce the team’s administrative work by automatically classifying messages within a matter or workspace. Choosing another messaging platform would have required the team to keep track of their information, export it, and upload to the DMS. But ndThread does this work automatically, recording, classifying, and storing messages directly in the DMS.

“When you receive information [in ndThread], you don’t even have to take a few seconds to classify it in your head or in Outlook. It’s already classified,” he explains.

Users have also been able to turn to each other (rather than the operations service desk) for help getting the most out of their tools as well. Now, instead of passing problems up the support chain, team members can crowdsource solutions and power users can share their own tips and tricks.

CREATING COMMUNITY DESPITE SOCIAL DISTANCING

The University legal teams were fortunate to implement ndThread shortly before the worldwide shift to working from home as a result of COVID-19—but that has only amplified the benefits of the software.

Communicating fluidly through ndThread has built a sense of community that would otherwise be significantly lacking during this time. “People post pictures of their pets, jokes, and news items. There’s a lot of social activity that people are missing while working from home, things they wouldn’t have shared by email,” he explains.

As users connect with each other on a daily basis, they can work more effectively together and build stronger relationships with colleagues, even when they're working remotely.

EMPOWERED TO WORK (AND COMMUNICATE) INSPIRED

As the University continues to increase adoption of ndThread across the legal organization, they will continue to benefit from improved communication. Whether users are in the office, working remotely, or on vacation, they can easily stay up-to-date on matters and projects. But ndThread also expands the benefits of NetDocuments—a platform they already know and love. Users can even markup documents inside ndThread without having to download, edit, and re-upload them.

"I'm a really big fan of NetDocuments," says the Associate Director of Legal Operations. "The functionality has been exponential, and the efficiencies, tips, and tricks are so worth it," he explains.

With real-time messaging that helps the legal team be more efficient, connected, and protected, the University is getting even more value from their NetDocuments investment, this University team is truly empowered to work inspired.

[See how ndThread can help your team stay connected and Work Inspired.](#)

ABOUT NETDOCUMENTS

NetDocuments is the leading cloud-based document and email management solution to securely store and organize documents on a single platform. Backed by 20 years of experience in cloud innovation, over 2,900 companies worldwide trust NetDocuments to secure their data while increasing productivity and team collaboration.

Make the move to the NetDocuments cloud to get the speed, mobility, and industry-leading security companies worldwide are already taking advantage of.

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