PROOM

Transparent Project
Collaboration

- **A data exchange platform to ensure transparency and control the exchange of project documents**
- **Project rooms as a single point of communication**
- **Reduced workload on IT administrators: no more maintaining and configuring the FTP server, no more user inquiries**

When projects require multiple companies to collaborate on technical documents, their exchange can become a real hassle. Conventional data transfer mechanisms like email and FTP come with a number of disadvantages: no data security, out-of-control document versions and overwrites, not to mention limited file size. Knowing these limitations, the medical engineering company Dürr Dental AG decided to switch to PROOM, a data exchange platform developed by the German software company PROCAD.

Today, they leverage the platform to secure and control the exchange of technical documents across different systems and companies. It provides them with virtual rooms that can be accessed by employees from across the company and external business partners alike. Currently, some 300 users have already been registered and the number is steadily growing.

Dürr Dental AG was founded in 1941 as a precision workshop by brothers Karl and Wilhelm Dürr in the southern German town of Stuttgart. Today, the medical engineering company has its headquarters in Bietigheim-Bissingen, not far from its original location. Here, it has around 400 employees engaged in production, research and development as well as sales and marketing. Worldwide, the group has around 1,000 employees and is represented by company personnel in almost 40 countries.

Email and FTP put the brakes on collaboration

Every day, Dürr Dental's staff and external partners exchange hosts of documents. Designers, engineers, and purchasers in particular are often dealing with very large technical documents. Internally, the company relies on its intranet and secure VPN connections for their exchange. But what about the many external partners with whom Dürr Dental has to share and collaborate on project documents? In the past, email and FTP were the preferred methods. This, however, made it very difficult to maintain collaboration among its employees working in the design and development, purchasing, sales, and IT departments as well as with its suppliers and external development partners: The sheer number of different file versions and local copies created a crippling lack of transparency. Files were stored in multiple locations, FTP server, email storage, and local computers, which made finding the latest file version a daunting task. Tracking the current status of a project was a tedious and time-consuming process that put the brakes on project collaboration and made it highly inefficient.

Dürr Dental decided to look for a solution that would provide a standardized way to handle the exchange of its data. The objective was to establish a common platform for its project teams with all of their internal and external contributors. Dürr Dental also wanted to be able to track and log every access to a document along with all changes. Other important criteria included quick deployment, fast and secure integration of external partners, and intuitive usability – for both users and administrators.

Dürr Dental, inventor of the oil-free dental compressors, presents incredibly quiet and powerful compressors for dental medicine "Made in Germany".

Dürr Dental as a seasoned PRO.FILE user

In light of PROCAD's expertise in product lifecycle management (PLM), product data management (PDM) and document management (DMS) solutions, the company's data exchange platform PROOM was an obvious choice. Dürr Dental has been a loyal PRO.FILE user since 2006 and relies on the PDM/DMS solution to manage CAD data in its R&D department. On top of that, Dürr Dental uses PRO.FILE as a certified archiving system for all of its commercial documents to keep complete audit trails.

"With PROOM, we get a single platform for all project teams and all of their different members. We are able to track and log every access to a document and any data changes."

Ralf Durst,
Head of IT, Dürr Dental

For more than seven decades, the name Dürr Dental has been synonymous with progress and innovation in dental medicine.

ERP project paves the way

"In mid-2012, we started implementing IFS Applications and soon we found ourselves needing a central platform to exchange data and documents," explains Ralf Durst, Head of IT at Dürr Dental. The project team was comprised of 120 people, among them 30 external contributors working for the ERP maker plus seven other partner companies whose staff also needed to access the project's documents. "We were already looking to get rid of our FTP server anyway," explains Ralf Durst. "PROCAD with PROOM proved to be the perfect alternative for our data exchange needs."
After PROOM had lived up to the demanding expectations of the ERP project, other departments made the switch as well. Users in the design and engineering department, for example, rely on it to exchange their large and constantly updated drawings and CAD data with external design offices and suppliers. For the customer service organization, it provides the perfect means to make technical documents, support documentation, and patches available to the field staff, while the sales organization uses it to upload catalogs, sales collaterals, and manuals. Additional departments will soon follow suit. By mid-2014, several hundred users were registered in PROOM, with 90 percent of them external contributors. Ralf Durst: "The platform is very easy to use and takes little time to manage. It received widespread acceptance from day one.".

Lowered administrative costs

PROOM not only makes it easier for project teams to collaborate, it saves Dürr Dental money by eliminating the cost of running and managing an FTP server. And now that the remaining administration responsibilities are divided among the company's employees, the IT department receives far fewer requests.
Setting up authorizations for FTP servers is a tedious process, as Durst as the head of IT knows. Business users had to constantly reach out to the company's IT experts for support. Today, key users from the different departments are able to carry out every step themselves. Member of the marketing unit, for example, now set up project rooms for their agencies and printing companies for the exchange of brochures and other media, invite new members, and assign permissions. This gives the unit manager maximum freedom in configuring the platform. For other business units dealing with

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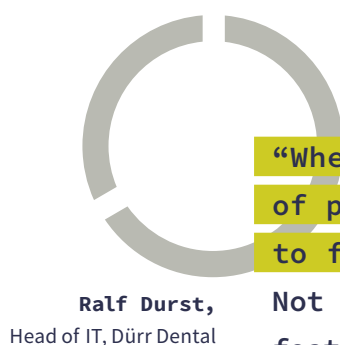PROOM interface with project folders, individual documents and user section.

more sensitive data such as R&D and accounting, the IT department remains in full control of project room configuration. Whatever the business needs are, PROOM is able to satisfy them. Not everyone is authorized to use every single feature the platform has to offer; they are rather granularly controlled by the project room managers.

Deployed as an SaaS service

Dürr Dental deployed PROOM as software-as-a-service; the system is hosted by PROCAD on Windows Azure, Microsoft's cloud computing platform, making it a turnkey solution. The PROOM infrastructure ensures unlimited scalability and high availability – without having to invest in administration or hardware.

PRO.FILE & PROOM – a winning team

Another highlight is the direct integration between PROOM and PRO.FILE PDM/PLM system. It enables PRO.FILE users to easily exchange CAD models and other project documents stored in the PDM/PLM system with development partners, customers, and suppliers directly though PROOM. This can be done in various ways: The latest PRO.FILE features a ribbon toolbar that lets them upload documents to PROOM and download new documents straight into the PDM system. For particularly sensitive data, they can also choose to use PRO.FILE transmittals. Whatever they do, it provides a highly secure method that brings many advantages to project teams and IT administrators alike.

Ralf Durst,
Head of IT, Dürr Dental

"When it comes to authorizations and the setup of project rooms, the system gives us the ability to flexibly respond to different requirements. Not everyone is authorized to use every single feature the platform has to offer; they are rather granularly controlled by the project room managers."