MITRATECH

"A more elegant solution"

Learn how Network Rail uses Mitratech Compliance Manager (CMO) to reduce manual processes and maintain compliance with national regulators.

Network Rail is the entity that owns, operates, and develops Great Britain's fabled railway infrastructure. That's 20,000 miles/32,000 kilometers of track, 30,000 bridges, and the many thousands of signals, level crossings, and 20 of the nation's biggest stations.

As a Mitratech client since 2011, Network Rail has creatively implemented our CMO solution to eliminate paper processes, improve reporting and analytics, and demonstrate accountability to government regulators.

The Challenge

For decades, Network Rail inspectors have used paper and pencil to complete reports on the status of the system, which were then compiled in a spreadsheet by a supervisor. Many inspectors were so accustomed to this process that they were hesitant to switch to a more automated approach.

> ❝ I haven't found a better piece of software that would help us..."

Another challenge? Regulators want hard data outputs to prove outcomes, but a paper-driven process meant the data wasn't uniformly collected and was manually entered, so human error was always a possibility

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How CMO provided solutions

Network Rail has used CMO in multiple environments for managing different parts of the business. A master environment manages all of the organization's CMO users and rolls up all collected data; an audit environment, a self-assurance environment, an inspections and safety environment, and an investigations and recommendation environment are others.

"We started using CMO for self-assurance and started to get some meaningful data out of it," explains Phil Bancroft, a Maintenance Compliance & Assurance Advisor for the company's Wales Route, "so we explored using CMO for safety and inspections."   Compared to the prior method, he says, "I just thought that this would be a more elegant solution."

Some of the goals they had in mind in applying CMO to the inspections and safety process? To cleanse the existing system and make it as lean as possible, create user-friendly dashboards for each use environment, draft templates and forms for new users, and build data-rich dashboards in Network Rail's analytics platform using information collected via CMO.

Adoption of the new technology was gratifyingly swift: Within six months, the number of inspections completed using CMO had doubled. "Now they could just take their iPad out with them," Phil Bancroft says, "select the (form) templates and just do it, rather than having to do a lot of writing." Completed forms no longer need to be manually scanned and sent to a central location any longer, either.

Visibility brings benefits

CMO's intuitive dashboard UI delivered nearly immediate rewards for Network Rail. "One of the things we like about the (CMO) dashboard is that you can look at an action status, and that is a useful management tool," Phil Bancroft says. Audit and compliance managers can see in real-time if projects or reports are complete, if they're missing data, "and what steps are needed to make the action compliant."

That data is then exported to an analytics application, where Network Rail "can manipulate the data and look at it in different ways, and we've improved the quality of our answers over time."

Others are on board with the change, too. CMO "is certainly being thought of quite well by our regulators," he points out. "The (Office of Rail and Road) regulators are keen to make sure that we're managing and know what's going on out there on the railway." Especially as "they actually determine how much money network rail can have to run the railway - so they're kind of important to us," he notes wryly.

"One of their challenges is around how can the management confirm that we have competent staff out there working to the standards that we have set?" Phil Bancroft says.

That's a big challenge since both outputs and the processes used to gather assurance data must be continually assessed. But as he puts it, "I haven't found a better piece of software that would help us to do that."