

FM:Systems and the National Aquarium in Baltimore

Autodesk® DWF™ Developer Success



National Aquarium in Baltimore ©James West/JWestproductions.com

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Marty Chobot,
Vice President of Marketing,
FM:Systems

Visualize Better Facilities Management

FM:Systems develops with DWF™ technology to help customers save time and reduce facilities management costs.

Project Summary

A leader in integrated workplace management systems (IWMS), FM:Systems® delivers solutions that help organizations manage their workplaces more efficiently and effectively. The company's core offering, the FM:Interact™ Workplace Management Suite, leverages DWF capabilities and integrates with AutoCAD® software to give customers access to spatial information contained in workplace design files, and it displays workplace data on dynamically generated DWF floor plans. The result? Users without CAD knowledge can find, view, and manage the workplace information they need quickly and easily. From planning inter-office moves to viewing as-built drawings and more, FM:Interact users, such as the National Aquarium in Baltimore, are leveraging the power of DWF to:

- Increase productivity with fast access to design and workplace drawings
- Reduce costs through more effective planning and by optimizing space utilization
- Improve customer service by streamlining workplace management processes

The Challenge

Managing the Workplace Effectively

Workplaces have never been more complex or dynamic. With increasing pressure to control costs throughout the enterprise, organizations need to manage their facilities efficiently even as they contend with workspace management challenges. In fact, many companies have annual churn rates as high as 50 to 75 percent, which means that half to three-quarters of all workers change desks and join or leave the company each year. Other organizations need to optimize equipment maintenance processes. For example, the National Aquarium in Baltimore must ensure that all its tanks operate within precise parameters—or it risks putting the lives of rare sea creatures in jeopardy.

Engineered to streamline the way companies manage workplace activities, such as moves and maintenance, FM:Systems' FM:Interact includes all the capabilities organizations need to address workplace management challenges. But in designing the solution, FM:Systems had to enable users to manage activities through a visually rich interface.

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Developer Success Story

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Hans Keller,
Chief Technology Officer,
National Aquarium in Baltimore



“Facility managers aren’t always CAD users,” explains Marty Chobot, vice president of marketing for FM:Systems. “And most office workers certainly aren’t. Those are the people IWMS software needs to serve. We knew in developing our solution that it had to deliver AutoCAD drawings and the valuable spatial information they contain to non-CAD users via the web.”

Hans Keller, chief technology officer of the National Aquarium in Baltimore, concurs that making user-friendly information accessible to workers is critical to effective facilities management. He says, “People are visual. We needed a solution that employees outside the maintenance department could use to visualize our facility and that would give our maintenance employees access to as-builts and work orders.”

The Solution

FM:Systems developed with Autodesk DWF to drive the crucial visualization component of its facilities management solution. A number of factors contributed to the choice. First and foremost was the seamless integration with AutoCAD and other Autodesk design software. Because of this integration, FM:Systems was able to easily configure the solution to automatically publish DWF files from DWG™ files. DWF files are also easy for non-CAD users to view and review, they can be generated dynamically, and they adapt readily to web-based applications.

“DWF is a valuable component of our IWMS solution,” says Chobot. “It requires no CAD experience. For example, when onboarding a new employee, someone in an office environment can request a view of all the vacant desks in a department. And it’s there instantly. The user can then click on the drawing to assign a new employee to a space and request the appropriate office equipment with a few clicks of the mouse. DWF is incredible.”

Using IWMS to Support Marine Life

The demands of managing diverse, moderately sized workplace facilities can be similar—even

when an organization is serving marine life not office workers. When the National Aquarium decided to switch its work order process from paper to an online solution, it implemented FM:Interact. Today, the solution manages the organization’s work orders and all its as-builts in DWF. Maintenance staff can find and view all the equipment drawings and schedules they need online—no CAD experience is required.

“Our essential facilities information, such as architectural, mechanical, and life-support system drawings, are all stored as DWF files in FM:Interact,” says Keller. “From floor plans to schematics, DWF delivers all the drawings we need in a format that is far more accessible than paper. The system is helping our maintenance staff to deliver faster, better service, and if we have an equipment problem, we can troubleshoot it much more quickly.”

The Result

Lower Costs and Time Saved

With DWF powering the visualization component of its solution, FM:Systems is helping to ensure that its customers can manage their workplaces easily and effectively. According to Chobot, customers are seeing measurable cost and time savings along with improved productivity as a result. “FM:Interact allows customers to avoid the expense of maintaining excess office space, and enables the entire organization to save time on facilities management activities and requests,” concludes Chobot. “Those time and cost savings drive improved productivity in office workers and facilities staff. As the user-facing element, DWF is essential to allowing customers to realize the full potential of IWMS.”

Learn More

Find out how DWF helps software developers and design software users realize their ideas on the web at www.autodesk.com/dwf.