

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center's (AHEC) mission is to preserve the Army's history by ensuring access to historical research materials and to serve as the primary research facility for historical study of the U.S. Army. AHEC collects, organizes, preserves, and makes available source materials on American military history to the defense community, academic researchers and the public. AHEC manages Army materials including publications, rare books, manuscripts, photographs, video/audio media, oral history interviews, maps, student and officer's papers and other significant items.

AHEC needed a new state-of-the-art, Web-based digital archive and information delivery system that provided access and information about their historical and archival collections, descriptive information about their museum, access to photographic and realia collections, and retrieval access providing both bibliographic and full text search capability. The legacy system was not integrated, utilized a library system for bibliographic information, and possessed a few MS Access databases for descriptions of the other collections. AHEC wanted to implement new technologies and applications that would contribute to the institution's objective of preserving historic documents and improving user accessibility. Using these technologies, AHEC would make available digital copies of their collection and provide access using a sophisticated Web Portal.

BUILT WITH ARCHIVALWARE, THE AHEC WEB PORTAL PROVIDES A SINGLE POINT OF ENTRY FOR SEARCHING ACROSS MULTIPLE AHEC DATABASES CONCURRENTLY AND RETURNING DOCUMENTS FROM THE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE COLLECTIONS.

BENEFITS

Rare, fragile and historic documents that are deteriorating due to age and physical handling will now be preserved and made easily accessible via the Web for research and study

A one-stop-shop was provided for US Army military history research. Use of the latest technology provides increased work task efficiencies to AHEC staff members

The highly scalable solution provides a 2 Terabyte storage capacity with the potential to expand to house more than 10 million documents and artifacts in over 200 different file formats



SOLUTION

PTFS provided AHEC a turnkey solution by integrating two distinct software products – ArchivalWare™ (for digital documents and descriptions) and ALEPH (an integrated library system for bibliographic records). Capabilities of the Web Portal include a single point of entry federated search solution returning hits from both bibliographic and digital object databases simultaneously. This capability also searches other databases throughout the AHEC campus providing researchers with a wealth of diverse information in a variety of different forms (digital photographs, electronic reports, digitized documents, MARC-based bibliographic records, Dublin Core-based digital object records, videos, sound files, etc.).

This state-of-the-art system will significantly improve the management and dissemination of the AHEC's unique and historical document collections. PTFS services included digital archive and ILS system installation, data migration, digitization, metadata creation, Web portal design, project management, maintenance and IT Support and Services.

