



## Alliander

### Developer and operator of energy networks

Alliander needed help updating content metadata and improving their permissions model within OpenText™ Extended ECM. The Fastman Management Suite came to the rescue.

When challenged with the need to quickly update their permissions structure and a need to make bulk changes to Extended ECM categories and attributes, Alliander needed a partner not just a supplier. They turned to Fastman to help them tune their approach and implement bulk changes across their system.

Alliander is a group of companies that are jointly responsible for the distribution of energy throughout much of the Netherlands. With its headquarters in Arnhem, the company employs around 7,000 staff. The group does not produce or trade energy itself. Instead, their primary task is to distribute gas, electricity and heat to almost 6 million consumers and businesses across their 90,000km of electricity cables and 42,000 of gas pipes as efficiently as possible.

### Implementing the right access control model

Since around 2009, Alliander have used OpenText™ Extended ECM to manage their unstructured documentation. As a core business tool, Extended ECM is used widely around all areas of the overall business including management of Procurement and HR documentation, as well as to support broader business projects.

During their initial implementation, Alliander's approach was to allow all Extended ECM users to access everything within the repository unless there were exceptional reasons. "We used to use an open and less model for our access permissions. With this approach everyone had access to all our documentation unless there were specific business reasons why they shouldn't", explained Robin Bakker, Manager Content Services at Alliander. "Over time though, we realized that this was not necessarily the best approach and we needed to move to a more closed model that only granted access where and when required."

With a Content Services department consisting of only a handful of staff, Alliander were not in a position to allow their entire team to be pulled into a large transformation project. They also did not want them to become absorbed into the daily administration of access control rights and other permissions related support questions in the future. They needed a solution that would allow them to quickly and safely update their existing structures and give them the flexibility to allow departments the rights to manage their own permissions, within a structured framework, moving forward.

To solve these problems, Alliander turned to Fastman and their Permissions Manager solution. Permissions Manager provided the tools and reports that Alliander needed to better understand their existing access structures. It also allowed them to perform fast and accurate bulk updates to migrate their existing permissions to the newly designed model. Through its permissions overview dashboard, they were also able to quickly spot and rectify any permissions anomalies that existed. Since implementing Permissions Manager, Alliander have been able to move to a more devolved approach for management of permissions.



“Departmental document managers now administer access permissions”, said Robin, “They use Permissions Manager to view access rights and grant new permissions.” Using Permissions Manager templates, administrators are empowered to make their

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own information control decisions based around standard corporately approved permissions structures.

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## Migrating and updating content within Extended ECM

With their Extended ECM adoption growing, Alliander was regularly importing new documentation into the platform from places such as old network file shares. Many of these imports were done on a case-by-case basis with departments and users adding their own content as they needed. To do this, Alliander took advantage of Fastman’s Bulk Data Manager (BDM) solution.

“Our users needed to be able to import files from shared drives into Extended ECM,” said Robin. “As importing large numbers of files can have an impact on the performance of the underlying system, we provide support to our users and help them to do this in a controlled fashion using BDM,” he went on.

Much of the information in these new documents was related to the physical assets and facilities the company own. They use Extended ECM’s categories and attributes to capture and add additional metadata to these documents. As the volume of assets grew, they needed to update and standardize this additional metadata.

“One of our internal clients had a lot of asset information with metadata attached to it,” said Robin. “They wanted some way of updating this information in bulk. We started by creating some custom scripts, which took our developer a couple of days to write. But then the requirements just kept evolving,” he said. “In the end, we eventually spent around fifteen days creating the initial tools and reports they were asking for.” However, even this was not enough, and after further days spent coding custom scripts, Robin and his team began to look for an alternative approach.

Alliander were already using Fastman’s Bulk Data Manager solution to help them with the content import process, so using it to support the standardization of their document metadata seemed like a natural extension - or was it? “Unfortunately, the standard BDM product was not quite able to meet our needs though,” said Robin. “We performed a thorough evaluation of other Object Import tools on the market and decided that, despite this, Bulk Data Manager was by far the best option available to us.”



Fastman worked with Robin and the Alliander team to update Bulk Data Manager to include the additional functionality they needed. This was then rolled into a core product update that would benefit not only Alliander, but also all other BDM clients.

“What started as initially a bulk import tool is now our primary tool for the bulk management of files across our system,” agreed Robin.

## A partnership of equals

“Alliander’s Extended ECM journey has come a long way and over the years Fastman has been able to play a key role in helping them to tune their environment and shape it around the evolving needs of their business,” said Alister Grigg, CEO of Fastman, “We look forward to seeing how that evolves and supporting them throughout that journey.” In Fastman, Alliander also found a partner that they were able to trust.

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“We have always found our partnership with Fastman to be very rewarding”, said Robin. “The team is very open to sharing ideas and are continually looking for win-win approaches to projects. Working with Fastman has been a great experience that I’d consider more like a partnership of equals rather than a supplier and customer,” he concluded.