

FORM MANAGEMENT: PATTERNS IN THE DETAILS



CHALLENGE

In 2014, SeeWriteHear was approached by a state government health organization ("HealthOrg") in need of a large volume of accessible documents. HealthOrg had millions of members spread over a wide geographical area, all of whom received numerous communications from HealthOrg via postal mail. Many of HealthOrg's members were print-impaired. A recent legal ruling required HealthOrg to ensure that all of its mailings, forms, and literature were available to every print-disabled member in several accessible formats.

The task was daunting. HealthOrg sent out tens of thousands of letters, notices, and requests for information every day, and even if the number of requests for accessible versions was small, the workload could still be enormous. All information was considered confidential, protected by HIPAA rules and security requirements. Each document had to be converted to Braille, large print, audio, and electronic formats – and the legal ruling required that the accessible formats be mailed to print-disabled members as quickly as they would have received standard print documents from HealthOrg.

SOLUTION

The SeeWriteHear team recognized that the main problem was the turnaround time requirement. HIPAA-compliant security was already in process and the accessible formats themselves were an existing core competency, but there was no precedent for a 24-hour turnaround on potentially thousands of documents a day. The team hit on an answer after carefully inspecting the full range of HealthOrg documents and realizing that a large portion of the text was characterized by repeated segments, slightly customized boilerplate, and most importantly, uniquely identifiable markers (like document numbers and titles).

SeeWriteHear developed a series of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and editorial aids to take advantage of the documents' inherent predictability. The Form Management system could analyze any given document, compare it with a library of text blocks, tables, and layouts, and quickly convert recognized sections into an accessible electronic format. Any unrecognized sections of a document would still require a human document specialist, but the workload was vastly reduced, limited mainly to checking contact information and accuracy of newly-converted text blocks. The final file could then be instantly produced in any of several output formats and shipped to HealthOrg members less than 24 hours after the document was first ordered.

RESULT

HealthOrg has been providing accessible documents to its members since 2015, using SeeWriteHear to reliably, securely, and accurately convert high-priority communications on extremely short timelines. Response from members has been enthusiastic, with requests for accessible documents increasing steadily.

After several years of continuous operation, the Form Management system has ingested a vast amount of document information, and now works with several other state government agencies' accessible document projects. Plans are underway to expand the system's availability to private-sector organizations with large day-to-day accessible document conversion needs.