



athena software

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

USING SMART FORMS

In order to ensure uniform data collection, Dmitry and Carlos have been heavily involved in overseeing a switch to using Penelope's innovative and highly configurable smart forms to log all activity at each ASO.

The transition means moving from using events and service units in Penelope to "completely running the whole system on the documents," said Dmitry. "We developed customized documents and this is the new way the system is being set up now."

The decision to use Penelope's powerful documents functionality to ensure uniform collection of data at ASOs across Ontario was the result of an extensive process analysis, Dmitry said.

The Ontario HIV Treatment Network Ontario, Canada

The Ontario HIV Treatment Network supports more than 30 AIDS Services Organizations across Ontario using the smart forms in Penelope HIV and AIDS support software.



Dmitry Rechnov (left, below) and Carlos Joseph (right) of the Ontario HIV Treatment Network have implemented the exclusive use of Penelope smart forms to document services provided at 31 AIDS Services Organizations in Ontario.

The Toronto-based organization, a collaborative network of community-based agencies, people with HIV, health care providers, government policy makers, educators and researchers which supports more than 30 AIDS Services Organizations (ASOs) across Ontario, is in the midst of a transition that will see each ASO in the province exclusively use Penelope smart forms to document their programs and services, and track all activity by their workers.

OHTN first purchased Penelope for Ontario ASOs in 2008, with the intention of allowing each agency the chance to configure and use Penelope their own way.

WORKING WITH ATHENA

This experience has come in useful because, as a result of moving to using documents exclusively, they have also been working closely with Athena staff on custom queries and reports to be able to extract massive amounts of data from the completed forms. They currently have two large reports being worked on in collaboration with Athena's technical staff, and are using Athena's professional services to create custom reports that will become part of Penelope for each ASO.

Dmitry said the experience of working with the Athena technical team has been "very positive. With all this transition, we realized that we pushed you guys out of your comfort zone a little bit," he said with a laugh, "simply because of these things which we asked you to develop for us."

"The concept of transforming the system and using the documents is basically a long-term thing, because right now I know that the system is capable of doing pretty much everything," he said



INITIAL PENELOPE IMPLEMENTATION

One of the team members at OHTN involved in the initial implementation of Penelope was Carlos Joseph, a development and training specialist with OHTN. Formerly a software implementation specialist in the corporate banking sector, Carlos was hired to help implement and configure Penelope for each ASO.

Starting with a pilot implementation at two ASOs in downtown Toronto, the project expanded across Ontario, with all 31 implementations completed by 2010.

BENEFITS OF PENELOPE

Given that some ASOs were coming from a paper-based system, the benefits to using Penelope were immediate, said Carlos.

"With everyone on the same database, for some it put structure into their day," he said. "(With Penelope), they had a way of recording all the work that they did more permanently, rather than just in a book or a notepad or in a file folder. And also for the managers or (executive directors), it gave them an idea of what work was being done, and the numbers of things that were being done. And then they could investigate the things that seemed to be reported incorrectly - some of it was that maybe we had something categorized incorrectly at the back end and some of it could be the workers recording something in a way that maybe they were mistaken and it was just being recorded in a different way, so we found and were able to streamline a lot of things that way."

The original implementation plan was to essentially customize the implementation for each agency, to "make it just like what they were doing currently, not change the way they were working," said Carlos.

Given that OHTN consists of over 30 community agencies, however, complications perhaps inevitably ensued. Dmitry Rechnov, the manager of the evidence-based practice unit at OHTN, picks up the story from there.

In order to ensure uniform data collection, Dmitry and Carlos have been heavily involved in overseeing a switch to using Penelope's innovative and highly configurable smart forms to log all activity at each ASO.