



**NEW AG's goal is ambitious: The regional energy supplier has set itself the goal of becoming a digital showcase company by 2025. A key milestone on the way to achieving this goal is the digitization of incoming and outgoing mail. For this, NEW relies on hardware and software from Canon and I.R.I.S.. The result is impressive: The remaining paper-based processes are now handled centrally, and documents, instead of being collected and transported manually, are simply delivered digitally.**

#### THE CHALLENGE:

With around 2,200 employees at seven locations in the Rhineland, NEW is responsible for supplying electricity, water and gas in the region. It also provides services such as local public transport and operates indoor and outdoor swimming pools. In Mönchengladbach and Viersen, NEW also operates the approximately 1,740 kilometer long public sewer network. The paperless working world is becoming a reality: Smart solutions for digital signatures, digital time management processes, a centralized mail distribution system and the option of centralized printing are essential prerequisites for this. In addition to the benefits of local and temporal flexibility and greater efficiency in processes, paperless working is also sustainable: it conserves resources consumed in the production of paper and avoids CO2 emissions in printing and delivery processes. The "Digital Mailroom" project presented those responsible with many challenges. Due to the widely ramified corporate structure with several locations, business units and operating companies, the individual divisions previously had numerous individual solutions and interfaces for processing incoming and outgoing mail.



Standardizing them was just as much a part of the digital transformation as the automated processing of different formats. NEW receives a total of more than 60 different types of documents, including standard DIN A6 postcards, DIN A4 invoices, and DIN A0 plans. In addition, it is necessary to sort and distribute the data according to business areas and cost centers due to the requirements of the federal network operator.

### THE SOLUTION:

After exploring various solutions and providers, a complete package from Canon proved to be the Optimum solution - and today this ensures an almost complete level of automation. As a result, employees benefit from enormous time savings and a very low error rate. The focus here is on the IRIS Powerscan™ and IRIS Xtract™ scanning solutions and the uniFLOW sysHUB software as the data hub. IRIS Powerscan™ is a powerful all-in-one solution for document capture from I.R.I.S. (Canon). Among other things, the function package consists of automated text recognition including indexing. For the classification of incoming mail, NEW uses the IRIS Xtract™ solution. The platform is part of Canon's Information Management portfolio. IRIS Xtract™ is based on artificial intelligence, defines fields and filters out data, among other things. One of the solution's highlights is that it can be trained, so the program recognizes what needs to be done with the individual document types and contents and is constantly "learning". The third part of the digitized mailroom is in the hands of uniFLOW sysHUB, also a Canon development. The client-server application is ideally suited to the requirements of the NEW mailroom: it has a flexible workflow designer and can be easily integrated into different systems. The program automatically forwards the data digitized by IRIS Powerscan™ and defined by IRIS Xtract™ to various linked systems. New hardware was not necessary for the digitization project. Some new purchases were planned in any case, other devices are simply used by the employees with the new solutions.

### BENEFITS:

"What we have here today is a state-of-the-art solution that means absolute relief," summarizes Denis Schloot, IT Input & Output Management at NEW. I.R.I.S. handles many processes completely independently, such as keywording content. An employee scans stacks of documents and then devotes himself to other tasks. IRIS Xtract™ extracts the data, checks it for plausibility and passes it on to various SAP and Salesforce clients, including for the network operator division and the sales department. From there, they are forwarded to billing, e-mail clients or to archives, for example.

“ Today, we use a state-of-the-art solution that is an absolute relief. Many processes run automatically, for example the indexing of documents. ”

**Denis Schloot,**  
**IT-Input-&**  
**Outputmanagement at**  
**NEW AG**

Manual effort for processing analog data is largely obsolete today. For example, when meter reading postcards are received, the majority can be processed and forwarded independently by the IRIS Powerscan™ and IRIS Xtract™ tools. Only in the case of incorrectly completed cards are employees personally called upon. "Before the digitized mailroom, the effort required for manual input was enormous and took us many hours. Today, we update the data within minutes," Denis Schloot, IT Input & Output Management at NEW emphasizes.

While postcards, invoices, letters and reminders require minimal, if any, manual post-processing, the situation is (still) different for sealed documents or plans. So even after installation and rollout, there is still room for improvement, describes Mark Scheer, Group Manager IT Input & Output Management at NEW. "We are still at the beginning of a complex process in which there are always new situations to master. However, the solutions and services provided by Canon and I.R.I.S. have not yet reached their limits. All newly arising requirements could be solved." As an example, Scheer cites the receipt of meter reading postcards the end of the year with a cut-off date of December 31. If IRIS Powerscan™ recorded them beforehand, incorrect calculations were possible. However, not processing them until 12/31 meant a lot of work. "The Canon solution holds the cards received early and automatically transfers them to the system on 12/31. This minimizes errors and means immense relief for employees," Scheer summarizes, adding, "We can see from solutions like these that the end of the line has not yet been reached; the project continues to run, is successively improved, and the software is adapted to newly emerging requirements. For this, we have a strong partner in Canon and I.R.I.S. in the background, with whose solutions this succeeds optimally. Overall, the digitization of NEW's mailroom means a significant reduction in the workload for employees - and this has an impact not least on company-wide work efficiency against the backdrop of demographic change. "Today it is becoming clear that the digitization project was also a preparation for fluctuation and departures, for example, due to the start of retirement," explains Scheer: "Otherwise, we would fear an overload of employees by now at the latest. The digital systems, on the other hand, lead to a significant reduction in workload."

“ The digitization project is continuously improved and the software adapted to new requirements. We have a strong partner at our side for this. ”

**Mark Scheer, Group  
Manager IT-Input-&  
Outputmanagement at  
NEW AG**

## NEW ENERGIE: THE COMPANY:

NEW AG was founded in 1998 with its headquarters in Mönchengladbach. It employs around 170 people. Its companies also include the subsidiaries NEW Viersen GmbH, NEW Tönisvorst GmbH and Erdgasversorgung Schwalmatal GmbH & Co. KG. We also hold stakes in the energy companies Trianel GmbH and Klickenergie GmbH & Co. KG.

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## ABOUT US

Image Recognition Integrated Systems (I.R.I.S.), a Canon company, is a leading provider of 'Content to Process' technologies'. I.R.I.S. offers solutions for automatic invoice and order processing, HR and supplier records as well as case management in legal, healthcare, and finance sectors.

I.R.I.S. provides technologies and solutions that capture data and information contained in documents, which are relevant to business processes. The goal is to make the data easily available while reducing operating costs.

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