

# VANGENT

U.S. Department of Labor ERISA\* Filing  
Acceptance System (EFAST)  
(\*Employee Retirement Income Security Act)

*Capturing and Managing Data  
to Help Protect Employee Benefit Plans*



## Case Study

## U.S. Department of Labor ERISA\* Filing Acceptance System (EFAST) (\*Employee Retirement Income Security Act)

### *Capturing and Managing Data to Help Protect Employee Benefit Plans*

#### The Challenge

To protect the employee pension and benefit plans of some 200 million Americans—both plan participants and their beneficiaries—four federal agencies use data collected annually from the nation’s employers. These agencies—the Department of Labor, the Internal Revenue Service, the Social Security Administration, and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation—developed a series of forms, the Form 5500 Series, which benefit plans use to report the information required by the government. The Department of Labor faced the challenge of efficiently processing more than 1.1 million Form 5500 Series returns annually. These returns were complex, paper-based filings with attachments ranging in length from 1 to 1,000 pages. In addition, data captured from the filings needed to be effectively managed to meet the different regulatory and enforcement responsibilities of the four end-user agencies.

#### The Solution

Vangent designed, developed, and operates EFAST, a turnkey system that processes the employee benefit plan annual reports required by the four agencies. Our unique design streamlined the existing paper-based system and supports the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) by promoting the migration to electronic information submission and reporting. EFAST is based on an open systems architecture that combines commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software (Microsoft Windows, Oracle, Captiva, etc.) with custom-developed software. This low-risk, cost-effective solution allows for easy system integration, maintenance, and updates.

Vangent designed a flexible EFAST solution that accepts both machine-print and hand-print forms. Machine-print forms are completed using computer software from EFAST-approved third-party vendors and can be filed electronically via a variety of media, or by mail. Data is captured using a combination of automated technologies including optical character recognition (OCR), intelligent character recognition (ICR), and 2-D bar code technology. Data quality is assured through numerous data edits and verification and

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validation checks; correspondence to filers is automatically generated in response to incorrect or incomplete information.

As part of our complete business process outsourcing solution, Vangent also operates a toll-free EFAST Help Line to provide assistance to filers. Via the Help Line, we provide assistance with general questions about EFAST, questions about completing the Form 5500 or Form 5500-EZ, confirmation of receipt and processing of submitted forms, and questions related to correspondence received as a result of EFAST processing. Our Help Line solution includes a user-friendly, cost-effective interactive voice response (IVR) feature for filing status information and frequently asked questions (FAQs), in addition to live customer service representative (CSR) support.

## The Results

Vangent's EFAST solution has enabled the Department of Labor to achieve its goals of improving the efficiency of Form 5500 Series processing and providing better service to its constituents. A supporting contact center answers more than 66,000 filer phone calls each year. EFAST is a highly complex imaging and data capture and data management project that involves more than 400 program deliverables; applies more than 200 data edits and more than 1,000 data verification and validation checks; sends out correspondence to more than 250,000 filers annually based on the results of data capture; maintains a 1 terabyte database; supports an electronic filing (e-filing) system; and provides end-user agencies with online, real-time access to data and images of the filings.

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