

Paper Storage and Production: A Growing Concern for Governments

Insight into Cranberry Township's Digital Transformation in the Cloud



Paper-based processes are widely used across the U.S. for community development. This contributes to the [U.S. being the second-largest producer of paper](#) in the world. In 2021, paper and paperboard production totaled [67.5 million metric tons](#), an almost two percent increase from 2020. Each day, the average office worker uses four dozen (48) sheets of paper – [and half of that is counted as waste](#).

Such heavy paper usage seems shocking to many as online software has become more popular in recent years. In some instances, it's estimated that the pandemic [sped up digital transformation by 3 to 4 years](#).

There are also many benefits to working online over paper-based processes. The [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Technology Engagement Center](#) reported [four key benefits to digitizing government forms and systems](#): reducing costs, increasing efficiency, building resilience, and better serving Americans.

Despite the availability and clear benefits of moving online, some governments continue to rely heavily on paper. Paper tends to accumulate since governments have strict record-keeping regulations. Staff are required to keep specific files for several years or decades, so sometimes work environments become cluttered. Research estimates that storage takes up [50 to 70 percent of company office space](#).

One government that wanted to take advantage of the benefits online processes provide was Pennsylvania's [Cranberry Township](#).

Before cloud-based software, the Township was using two processes for its community development. One involved manual digital input, while the other was entirely paper-dependent. Its staff wanted to move away from paper usage and storing information in piles at the office. So, in 2022, they opted to digitize their processes in the cloud to achieve this goal.

“When we were using an on-premises system for our permitting needs, we had to use a server, spreadsheets, and a lot of paper, and we kept our code enforcement data in file folders,” explained Eric Heil, Cranberry Township's Manager. **“And now with cloud-based software, we can store and link our permitting, zoning, and code enforcement information together in the cloud.”**

Using outdated paper-based processes can make it challenging to retrieve data. When information is connected and stored online, it becomes easier and faster to access. Cloudpermit has helped Cranberry find relevant information quickly and all at once with improved data accessibility.

“With Cloudpermit, we can now search for an address and view past zoning permits, building permits, and any code enforcement issues in the same place. It's nice to have all that information at your fingertips, without any data storage limits, in the cloud,” Heil continued. **“It used to be difficult for us to go back and find past permits from years ago**

with our old processes. Now, our records are searchable and quickly accessible. The more information and various fields we fill out online, the faster it is to find property information later.”

Instead of sifting through piles of physical documents, staff now easily search for relevant information by entering a keyword into their digital database. This enables Cranberry Township’s team to dedicate more time to other valuable projects.

“It was a smart move to store our information in the cloud to reduce how much paper we use,” revealed Heil. *“We implemented Cloudpermit in just a few*

months and once you get used to the flow of how it works, it’s very easy to use. The overall ease of implementation and functionality make it a good fit for us, and I think why it would make a good fit for a lot of other governments too.”

Local governments across the U.S. can help reduce the country’s paper usage with cloud-based software. They can also benefit from streamlined processes, optimized storage, and improved data accessibility, much like Cranberry Township.

Cloudpermit provides community development software. We offer simple and online software solutions for building permitting, business licensing, planning & zoning, and code enforcement.

