

## IHS Standards Expert™

### Ameren Corporation Accesses Up-to-Date Standards Right on the Desktop



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## Case Study

“The ability to get the full text of standards right in front of you pays for itself. IHS Standards Expert is by far an improved system for us - self service at the desktop.”

— Katharine Hayes, Corporate Librarian



#### Business Benefits

- In the past, the corporate librarian assisted with searches 10-20 times each month. Now, that might be twice a month – saving her several hours.
- Engineers find specific information 5-20 minutes faster, saving 2-3 days worth of time each week across 50 engineers.
- Users access new subscriptions immediately, rather than waiting several days for paper standards.
- Engineers are alerted when standards are updated, ensuring they use the most current standards data.

#### Customer Profile

Ameren Corporation, a major American utility company, provides services to 2.4 million electric customers and nearly one million natural gas customers across 64,000 square miles in Illinois and Missouri. The company has approximately 9,000 employees and ranks in the top third in market capitalization among the nation's utility companies (NYSE: AEE).

Ameren companies' net generating capacity is more than 16,400 megawatts (MW) through coal-fired facilities, nuclear plants, combustion turbines (CTG) natural gas and oil-fired facilities, and hydroelectric plants.



### Business Challenge

In Ameren's widely distributed environment – across two states – engineers and technicians throughout the company must comply with thousands of diverse and frequently changing standards and codes governing utilities. In recent years, the corporate library has become wholly electronic.

"We abolished a decades-old physical library and now all information services are electronic," said Katharine Hayes, Corporate Librarian for Ameren. "The whole model for our library service is desktop-ready information sources for individuals. My goal is to make information access as simple and easy as possible."

As corporate librarian, Hayes manages all information vendors and approximately 500 different subscriptions. With that volume of information, the business case for transitioning to an electronic library was clear. At the time, Ameren purchased paper copies of standards, which took three to five days to arrive. One set of standards, the Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, consisted of 15 volumes that had to be stored, and each power plant needed its own set of volumes, requiring Hayes to mail heavy volumes to each location.

Most significant, as codes gathered dust on the shelf, they quickly became outdated. "Engineers and technicians didn't know when codes were updated," Hayes said. "Very often they would only know about updates if they happen to hear about them."

### Web-Based Standards Access

Hayes knew that Ameren's nuclear plant division subscribed to IHS for electronic access to specifications and standards. That group found it simple to order individual standards on demand and view the specific information they need online.

Ameren chose to expand electronic access to engineering and technical standards through the IHS Standards Expert solution. Standards Expert provides an interface that enables information users and managers to access the world's most comprehensive

databank of engineering standards. They can search and navigate through up-to-date standards – giving them access to current information quickly.

The database includes thousands of commercial engineering and government standards such as IEEE, ASME, ASTM, ANSI and UL. Ameren subscribes to the Utilities Standards Collection, which includes the ASME BPVC Nuclear Package, ASTM Metals and Redlines, ASME Historical, and Catalog Xpress.

"Many of the standards we use over and over are available through Standards Expert," Hayes said. "It eliminates the need to buy individual standards, which saves us time. It's heavily used."

### Immediate Access to Current Information

With the Standards Expert interface, Ameren staff have direct electronic access to standards right on their desktops. Sophisticated searching allows users to find and navigate a single standard or the entire database rapidly. Electronic access also means that they can pull up information from their laptops in the field – an impossible task with paper-based standards.

They can also establish their own "watch lists" to receive alerts regarding updates to specific standards relevant to them. "Alerts take the burden off of us to seek out updates," Hayes said. "We're informed of updates as soon as they happen that we might not otherwise know about."

In the course of searching with Standards Expert, engineers and technicians may also come across additional standards that they may not know about – and would not have been aware of with hardbound standards books.

### Less Search Time for Standards Managers, Engineers

IHS Standards Expert reduces searching and processing time for Hayes and end users. As Hayes serves information requests from a base of 9,300 employees, she finds that direct employee access to standards saves her significant time.

“Having boiler and pressure vessel codes is a godsend for them and I don’t have to deal with volumes anymore. It’s all web-based so there are fewer demands on my time,” she said.

Before, she had to assist with searches 10-20 times each month. Now, that might be twice a month – saving her several hours that she can spend on other responsibilities. She easily sets up new users by simply sending them the link to IHS Standards Expert. If a needed standard is not included in the current subscription, Hayes subscribes and lets users know. They access that information immediately, instead of waiting several days for it to arrive.

“The ability to get the full text of standards right in front of you pays for itself,” she said. “IHS Standards Expert is by far an improved system for us – self service at the desktop.”

Tom Kordick, Manager of Plant Support Services, oversees about 50 Ameren engineers. The ability to navigate to relevant codes and standards quickly has provided major efficiency compared to hardcopy books of the past. Engineers access standards at least a couple of times each week, and save anywhere from 5 to 20 minutes over the previous method. Those savings add up to 2-3 days worth of time across all engineers.

Kordick also appreciates the immediacy of access to new subscriptions. “If someone has a problem in the field, they want a response as quickly as possible,” he said. “Having the information readily available lets us do calculations and respond faster. We get back to them in an hour instead of a couple of days, so we meet the increasing demand for a timely response.”



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