



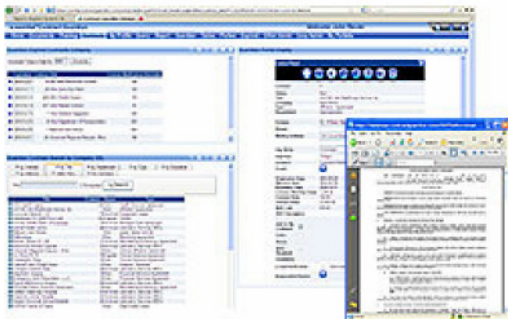
# Brings Transparency to Contract Management

CHRISTUS Health, ranked among the top ten Catholic health systems in the U.S., is comprised of almost 350 services and facilities. CHRISTUS Health uses *e.essential™ Contract Guardian*, a contract management solution from Rippe & Kingston. The browser-based solution can be deployed across multiple platforms in-house or as a hosted solution.

Diana M. Holland, program manager, Strategy and Innovation, Business/Financial Strategies with CHRISTUS Health's Information Management team, said *"With Contract Guardian, the entire contract management process is more transparent, which allows us to build our operations on a process, rather than being dependent on individual people. Deployment is simple and only requires placing an icon on the desktops of the users. Nothing else needs to be installed or maintained."*

"Our entire contract management process is more transparent"

## The Challenge



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*Contract Guardian enables users to instantly locate contracts through several search interfaces and view an image of the original contract document.*

CHRISTUS Health includes 50 hospitals and long-term care facilities, 175 clinics and outpatient centers and dozens of other health ministries. CHRISTUS services can be found in over 60 cities in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Georgia, Utah and Mexico.

In 2004, CHRISTUS Health launched an initiative, called the Unity Project, to standardize clinical, business and financial processes across its facilities. As a first and major step, CHRISTUS Health hospitals moved, or are moving to, a single Healthcare Information System (HIS), MEDITECH.

Holland, explains, *"Converting to a corporate wide HIS marked the beginning of our ability to establish standardized clinical and financial policies and procedures throughout all our facilities. Concurrently, we are looking at standardizing other applications."*

*Moving to a corporate wide contract management system is a priority, because it allows regions and facilities to collaborate and share information. It provides for a proactive approach to contract management and informed business decisions".*

With that in mind, James Lofton, process analyst, Contracts / Insurance Administrative Services for CHRISTUS Health's Northern Louisiana region, set out in 2007 to identify a contract management solution. Lofton explains, *"Each hospital generally has around 1,200 to 1,600 contracts, of which typically 800 to 1,000 are active and the others still recent enough to be archived. The contracts are with physicians, suppliers and also include real estate dealings, insurance policies and any other agreements that need record keeping."*

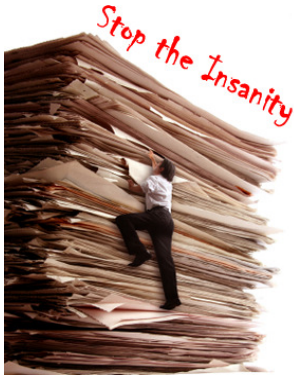
*"I was looking for a more flexible solution to manage the growing volume and variety of contracts. Another important requirement was that the solution needed to offer journaling of all activities around a contract. Rippe and Kingston's Contract Guardian solution stood out for its flexibility and ease of use. Most importantly, their solution was one of the few, if not the only, that offered journaling."*

A contract may begin with a supply chain manager negotiating the best agreement. All documents, images, email messages and meeting notes related to the agreement can be added to the journal in Contract Guardian and attached to the agreement. The manager assigns the contract to the local contract managers at the hospitals in the regions it applies to. The local contract manager then assigns the agreement to the relevant staff in their hospital. For example, if the agreement is with a supplier of syringes, all individuals who might purchase syringes are made aware of the contract.

Assigning a contract to responsible parties results in the system sending a round of e-mail messages and posting these to the journal. It is the responsibility of the assigned end-users to utilize the agreement, or to respond and report that they have been improperly assigned.

*"Contract Guardian enables us to **instantly locate contracts** through several search interfaces. It also includes a feature called My Contracts that allows you to bookmark contracts that require your focus. So, you don't even have to search. Plus it gives you the ability to create a to-do list using a calendar feature. The combination of the **automatic bookmark feature** within the contract and the fact it is a searchable pdf **delivers dramatic time savings**," Lofton explains. "Contract Guardian enables us to instantly locate contracts"*

### The Benefits



*"Contract Guardian's advanced search and bookmark facilities, together with journaling and other sophisticated features, help us **minimize the risk of non-compliance and eliminate reliance on paper**. We don't have to worry anymore about contracts being misfiled and we don't have to email or copy them," says Lofton.*

Lofton finds that the journaling gives life to the contract. *"It's especially useful where you take over an existing contract. You can read the journals from prior negotiations throughout the contract's life and understand the history. **It can save a lot of time with the legal department and avoid roadblocks.**"*

According to Lofton, it also helps with contract negotiations. *"If promises have been made by sales representatives that are not reflected in the agreement, the journals retrieve the relevant meeting notes and correspondence."*

*"Contract Guardian's ability to stop agreements from automatic renewal, provides for a potentially huge saving," explains Holland. "The system **gives prior warning** about agreements that are about to expire. That gives us time to research, look around for alternatives if necessary and negotiate a better deal."*

*"Enterprise wide deployment gives us an insight into what contracts exist. We may find out that multiple regions have their own contract at different levels with the same vendor. In that case, it would be time to talk with that vendor and negotiate better pricing - maybe covering more regions. It also allows us to properly redistribute some costs, such as annual maintenance and support. **It is contract management without walls.**"*

Lofton concludes, *"Having the most current contracts in place and the information available and transparent do allow for improved purchasing decisions and strategic planning. It avoids ending up with disparate prices and allows for standard product purchasing and use".*

### About Rippe & Kingston and Contract Guardian

Rippe & Kingston Systems, Inc. (developer and provider for Contract Guardian) is an International Information Technology Solutions Services firm with clients in 43 States and 9 Countries. With R&K you have access to standards-based, modular multi-platform software coupled with best-in-class services and support.

Rippe & Kingston has over 1,000 clients including 400 major law firms. Clients are supported by over 100 certified professionals. Strategic partnerships include: Google, IBM, Microsoft, LANSA and Avnet.

Contract Guardian delivers features like scan & store, locate immediately, email alerts, control obligations, minimize risks, reduce cost and access from anywhere in the world For more information, visit [www.rippe.com](http://www.rippe.com) and [www.contractguardian.com](http://www.contractguardian.com)