



Federation of Tax Administrators

Enhancing Knowledge Sharing Among State Tax Administrators and Industry with a Simple and Secure Information Exchange System

Background

The Federation of Tax Administrators (FTA) was organized in 1937 to improve the quality of state tax administration by providing services to state tax authorities and administrators. These services include research and information exchange, training and intergovernmental and interstate coordination. The Federation also represents the interests of state tax administrators before federal policymakers where appropriate.

Challenges

FTA serves as a custodian and facilitator to the development of state tax standards, connecting states with a technology standards practice that encompasses both the State Modernized efile Program (MeF) and other tax type schemas. The organization assists state tax agencies in applying best practices to tax administration in order to simplify the administration of taxes, increase knowledge sharing, improve compliance and boost productivity.

Every year FTA's E-Standards practice works with states and the efile industry to develop schemas for use with state systems. State tax agencies modify these schemas to fit their specific needs and requirements and share the final version with the developers of state efile software.

The final schemas were historically shared publicly, but with recent developments in fighting tax fraud, the schemas now contain sensitive information and must be confined to authorized users. "We needed a solution that would enable our organization and the state tax agencies to share information securely," said Ryan Minnick, Special Projects Manager with the Federation of Tax Administrators. "It had to be a proven, enterprise-grade tool that would be easy to administer and expedite the collaboration of states and the efile software industry, while simultaneously implementing secure access."

"The platform is a huge equalizer, taking the time constraints states work under and making needed information easily and securely available."

– Ryan Minnick
Special Projects Manager, Federation of Tax Administrators

Quick Facts – Federation of Tax Administrators



Deployed
Since
2016



Number
of Users
400



Enterprise-level
Security
Yes



Demonstrates
Compliance
Yes



FedRAMP
Deployment
Yes



A “one-stop shop” for
sharing information



An easy to use and easy
to administer solution



Maximum security to
ensure data privacy

Solution

FTA evaluated several solutions and selected Accellion’s secure file sharing platform for its strong security controls, ease of use and third-party recommendation from one of FTA’s stakeholders. “Accellion came highly recommended by a state revenue agency that had already implemented Accellion,” said Minnick. “Their positive experience and high marks for the platform’s ability to secure confidential information, added to our decision to select this product.”

FTA selected Accellion’s secure file sharing platform to power the organization’s State Exchange System. Leveraging Accellion’s FedRAMP authorization, FTA deployed Accellion in a secure isolated environment. The enterprise-grade security inherent in the Accellion platform assures FTA and their state agency stakeholders that all shared content is fully protected. Minnick noted two security features in particular that FTA especially valued: encryption of all data in transit and at rest as well as two-factor authentication for secure access.

With Accellion’s secure file sharing platform, states can now securely control access to their materials. The platform also provides efile software providers a centralized, “one-stop shop” to access each participating state’s information for use in developing their software solutions.

FTA purchases individual licenses for each of the states and gave the state agencies full control over their own folders, files and access rights.

“Accellion’s licensing structure was a huge benefit for us as licenses are only needed for individuals who contribute or upload information,” said Minnick. “States can grant authorized access and download privileges to any number of users, including specific industry staff who can download current information when needed.”

“We needed an easy, efficient, self-service tool that could be implemented quickly,” said Minnick. “When we deployed Accellion across multiple income tax jurisdictions, 200 hours of setup translated to thousands of hours of benefit because each jurisdiction didn’t have to create its own solution.”

Since launching the State Exchange System at the end of 2016, nearly all state participants in FTA’s Modernized efile Program have adopted the system for securely distributing their information to authorized software vendors.

“Using Accellion for the State Exchange System has created a level of efficiency for states and efile software providers that has exceeded our expectations,” said Minnick. “The platform is a huge equalizer, taking the time constraints states work under and making needed information easily and securely available.”

TOP-SELLING POINT

Enterprise-grade security controls, including encryption and two-factor authentication, keep sensitive information protected.

STAND-OUT FUNCTIONALITY

Simplicity has resulted in nearly 100 percent adoption among income tax jurisdictions.

COOL USE CASE

FTA allows state tax agencies to manage their own folders and share them with trusted third-party partners, to ensure only authorized users have access to sensitive information.

Accellion, Inc. enables enterprise organizations to securely connect all their content to the people and systems that are part of their critical business processes, regardless of the applications that create that content or where it is stored, while maintaining the controls and visibility needed to demonstrate compliance. Accellion’s solutions have been used by more than 25 million end users and have been installed at more than 3,000 of the world’s leading corporations and government agencies including NYC Health + Hospitals; KPMG; Kaiser Permanente; Latham & Watkins; National Park Service; Umpqua Bank; Cargill; and the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST). For more information please visit www.accellion.com or call (650) 485-4300. Follow Accellion on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Accellion’s Blog.

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