THE DOCUMENT CONTROL TRIBUNE

Issue 23
September 2020

Consepsys

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Document Controllers Seen by their Interfaces

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Editorial

October 2020 will mark the 10th anniversary of Consepsys.

It will be a bittersweet celebration, considering all the Document Control professionals who have lost their job due to the economic crisis caused by the Covid -19 pandemic.

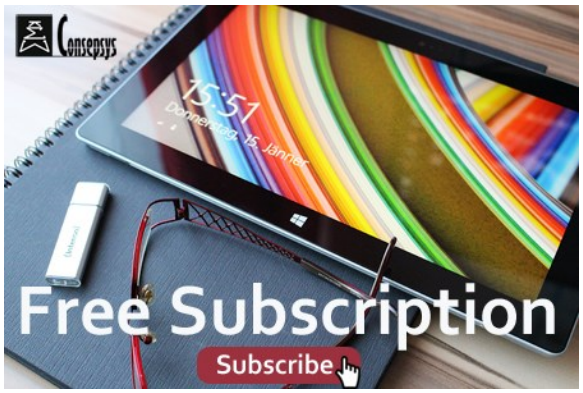
However, we have to remain positive and we must continue nurturing the Document Control community worldwide.

Our mission, our values and our message remain even stronger during these tough times, because this is when organisations are tempted to engage in the false economy of cutting Document Control costs down. We know that this sort of measures never benefits any organisation in the medium and long term.

We are planning to celebrate with the Document Control community and with all our clients at large.

There will be a few surprises. Keep an eye on our website and on our social media for celebration details.

In this issue of the newsletter, we discuss ethics, skills and value-adding, and we take an interesting look at what it really means to be a Document Controller in industries involving construction and hazardous operating environments.



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ATTENTION TO DETAIL: NATURAL ABILITY OR ACQUIRED SKILL?

The Document Control profession requires a specific set of skills, a certain personality type and specific personal qualities. These traits are indispensable to do a good job.

"Attention to detail" is one of those traits.

Indeed, Document Controllers are responsible for Quality Checks, which involve looking at a large amount of information, and being able to identify the needle in the haystack, the one detail that is incorrect.

Failing to identify an incorrect piece of metadata, such as an incorrect revision number, can sometimes mean the difference between life and death for a document user; or the difference between a successful project and a lawsuit.

Therefore, attention to detail is crucial to Document Control.

Many people naturally possess this quality, due to their personality, their upbringing, their education and their background.

But can "attention to detail" be learnt or acquired?
Can someone who does not naturally possess this quality be trained to develop it? And to even become good at it?

Our Managing Director, Luis Heng, provides his insight:

"I started my career as a Process Engineer on Oil and Gas production fields. I would say that I had a reasonable eye for detail at the time. But I must say that it is only when I started working for Design and Engineering Contractors that my attention to detail developed dramatically.

It was the first time that I was exposed to so much cross-checking of work. You do some work: someone checks it, then someone else checks it and then, the approver also checks it before he/she signs off. Believe me, your work gets rejected only so many times before you start paying more attention to details!

It took me a few months to really tune in, but years later, I am now known for my extra-sharp attention to detail [laughs]. But I still make a few mistakes, like everyone else. That is why we check each other's work, as a team."

Julie Tchao, our Document Control expert, shares her perspective:

"I have been supervising people for quite a few years, now. To me, if someone does not naturally possess attention to detail, they can develop it with the correct attitude.

Indeed, some people get annoyed when tiny mistakes are discovered in their work, and they take it as persecution or injustice. For others – the ones with the right attitude – the discovery of mistakes in their work sparks some sort of realisation of what is expected of them, they see the opportunity to become better, and they seize it.

I have seen some people make enormous progress over the years – because they have had the right attitude."

How can someone who does not naturally possess attention to detail develop this skill?

Luis Heng's advice: "**Ask people to regularly review your work and to honestly point out mistakes.** Then, thoroughly take notes every time something is discovered, identify patterns in the mistakes that you make and develop and maintain a checklist for yourself. Then keep that checklist close and use it systematically."

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CONSEPSYS WILL CELEBRATE ITS 10th ANNIVERSARY NEXT MONTH

Amidst all the current turmoil, Consepsys will celebrate its 10th anniversary next month.

To us, it will be a bittersweet celebration, considering all the victims of the Covid-19 and the dire economic consequences that have affected many.

However, we have to remain positive, and we feel that this anniversary could bring us all together and spread of bit of joyful energy throughout the close-knit Document Control community.

We are planning a few activities to celebrate and we will communicate about it along the way.

LUCKY DRAW - GET A CHANCE TO WIN UP TO £930 IN COURSE FEES

Amongst the celebration activities, there will be a lucky draw where you have a chance to win one of these amazing prizes:

- **1st prize:** One seat to attend one of our training courses in its Live Online Format (value £ 930)
- **2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th prize:** One seat to attend one of our self-paced online course module (value £ 105)

You can participate in the Consepsys 10th Anniversary Draw for a chance to win one of these prizes here:

Participate

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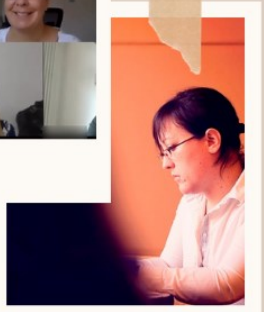
Come & Celebrate with us!

YOU ARE PART OF THE CONSEPSYS STORY!

WISH CONSEPSYS A HAPPY 10TH!

- Post a short video or message on our social media Facebook | LinkedIn | Twitter
- Include the hashtag **#ConsepsysHappy10**
- The ones with the most likes will be featured in the next DC Tribune!

The Story of Consepsys



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CAN AN 'AS-BUILT' DOCUMENT BE REVISED?

The majority of Document Controllers (70%) work on projects, and the majority of those projects involve a construction phase.

Best practice dictates that documents are revised to reflect what has really been built

As per safe and best practices, at the end of the project, all "Issued for Construction" or "Approved for Construction" documents must be marked up and revised to reflect what has really been built.

These revised documents must all be issued with the:

a. "As-built"; or

b. "As-constructed"; or

c. "As-installed"; or

d. "As-fitted"

status, whether they have changed since the last revision or not.

As-Built documents are critical for safety

The "as-built" status is the only guarantee that what is shown on documents reflects exactly what has been built. **This is very important, and it has profound implications, including in terms of safety** (see article "Do you know what 'trusting a document' means?" on page 9).

These "as-built" documents are handed over to the Client / Employer organisation, who will be operating what has been built and who will use these documents as part of their operations and maintenance manuals.

Recently, a few Consepsys consultants have reported a question that they have rarely been asked, but it has been asked frequently enough to deserve its own article. This question is: "Can an 'as-built' document be revised?"

So: "Can an 'as-built' document be revised?"

First, the answer is "yes, of course".

But why?

Basic principles of Document Control state that any change / revision / update / modification on a document must lead to a new revision. Therefore, if any change / revision / update / modification is made on a document that is already in "as-built" status, well, it must be revised (with a new revision index) and re-issued with the status "as-built", again.

What has been built never stays the same throughout its life

A building, facility, process / chemical plant, mine, aircraft – just to name a few – never stays the same throughout their lives.

Just like a home, improvements are made, modifications are implemented, things are removed, things are added, and sometimes the site is expanded.

Every time any such modification is made on an already constructed building, facility, process / chemical plant, mine, aircraft etc, the "as-built" documents must be revised (with a new revision index) to reflect the latest changes, and they must be re-issued with the status "as-built", again.

Therefore, in practice, "as-built" documents can be revised dozens of times over the course of the life of a facility, to reflect the various undergone modifications (see Figure 1).

Rev	Date	Status	Context of Revision	DRN	CHK	APP
Z05	15-Aug-2020	As-built	Project P-00726	JFR	AKG	GSP
Z04	11-Sep-2017	As-built	Project P-00708	VLM	AEL	LLV
Z03	08-Jul-2015	As-built	Project P-00705	WAH	MRB	JTA
Z02	17-Mar-2015	As-built	Project P-00702	JAT	AGT	AJM
Z01	02-May-2013	As-built	Project P-00689	LXH	TMO	BHY
C01	14-Apr-2010	Issued for Construction	Project P-00689	LXH	TMO	BHY
B01	23-Dec-2009	Issued for Quotations	Project P-00689	PFJ	TMO	BHY
A02	01-Dec-2009	Issued for Review	Project P-00689	PFJ	TMO	BHY
A01	28-Nov-2009	Issued for Review	Project P-00689	LXH	TMO	BHY

Figure 1

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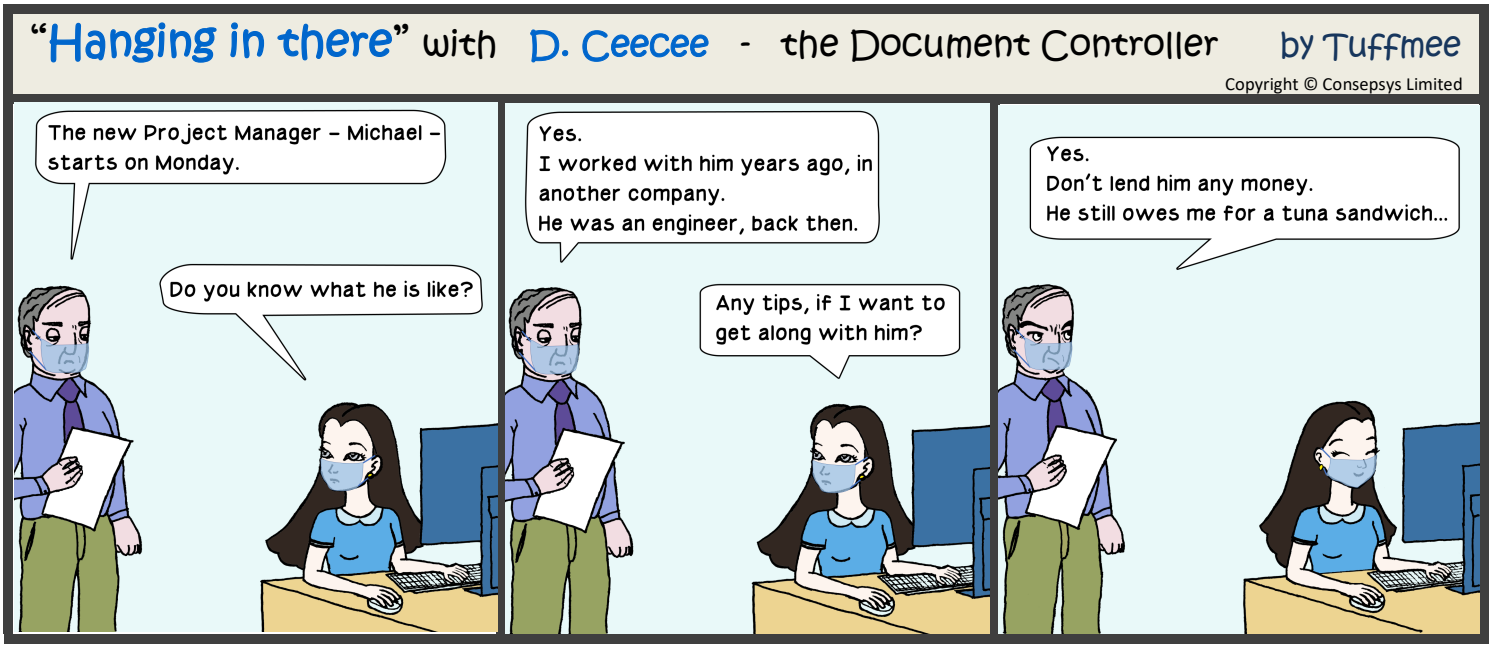

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Credits

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DO YOU KNOW WHAT 'TRUSTING A DOCUMENT' MEANS?

One of the core missions of Document Control is to ensure that users can trust the documents at their disposal. Document Controllers facilitate controlled processes to achieve this objective, such as quality checks, revision control, and facilitation of distributions and reviews – just to name a few.

But do you know what "trusting a document" means, in practice?

Two years ago, one of our consultants returned to the office after a business trip abroad. She was very concerned, because during her mission, she came across a person who was in charge of handling project final documentation in a hazardous industry and who did not want to understand the need for "As-built", or "As-constructed", or "As-installed", or "As-fitted" drawings.

That person was opposing the practice and was arguing that people on site should be able to operate with "Issued for Construction" drawings.

This story chilled the spine of our whole team, who is well aware of all the accidents caused by this sort of thinking.

Consepsys consultants travel around the world every year indeed and, through their interactions with hundreds of Document Control professionals, users, engineers, managers and directors, they systematically collect stories about incidents, accidents and deaths due to poor Document Control practices.

This attitude towards "as-built" drawings showed a profound lack of understanding of:

- The very purpose of Document Control;
- The best practices that prevent incidents, accidents and deaths;
- What happens on the engineering and construction side of a project;
- The fact that what ends up being built is often different from is shown on the "Issued for Construction" drawings;
- What happens at the end of a construction project, that is hand-over of what has been built and its documentation;
- The fact that the end of a project is not the finish line: the life of what has been built only starts at the end of the project – the Operation phase;
- The dangers that Operations people face in hazardous industries, when documentation does not follow safe and best practices,

and a terrifying lack of professional ethics.

Document Control and safety

The need for strict Document Control is much higher in hazardous industries, where people operating facilities are exposed to potential danger everyday – such as oil and gas, chemicals, mining, aviation, nuclear and so on.

"As-built" documents contribute to a much safer environment for these people.

Let's take a simple example: imagine that, on an Operations facility, a high-voltage battery must be installed (see Figure 2), based on the displayed "Issued for Construction" drawing (Figure 3), which shows that neither ends of the cables are connected to the battery.

Project and construction people cannot guarantee that what has been installed reflects what is on the drawing, because they have given you only an "Issued for Construction" drawing. But as with all constructions, there is a probability that the final installation is somewhat different from the "Issued for Construction" drawing. In this case, there is a probability that they have connected the cables to the battery.

Figure 2

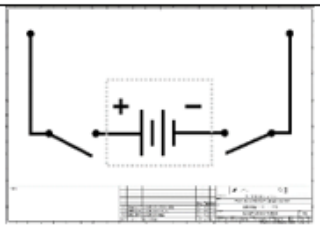

Figure 3

This voltage is sufficiently high to kill you if you come in contact with it.

The battery and one end of the cables have been placed in a locked electrical cabinet, and two of the cable ends are hanging loose, on the outside. You do not know whether the hidden ends of the cables are connected to the battery or not. All you have is an "Issued for Construction" drawing.

Would you grab the metallic parts of the cables protruding out of the electrical cabinet (Figure 4), based on the questionable "Issued for Construction" drawing and in the absence of an "as-built" drawing?

Figure 4

Would you?

Only a dishonest person would respond "yes". Well, this is the kind of situation in which people who do not understand the importance of accurate "as-built" documents put Operations people every day. They expose real people to real mortal danger.

We hope that this example sticks with you – whether you had not yet understood the importance of as-built documentation, or whether you are trying to convince someone else to follow safe and best practices.

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PORTRAIT OF A DOCUMENT CONTROLLER

KATIA MONTIRONI

Information Repository Manager at ESO (European Southern Observatory) in Germany

Katia attended the Certified Document Controller Course and Advanced Document Control course in 2018, the Certified Lead Document Control Course in 2019 and the Transitioning to a Manager Position Course in 2020.

Can you tell us a bit about you?

My name is Katia Montironi, I am a 46-year old Italian, born in France and raised in Canada and Italy. I have lived in many different countries and have now settled in Munich (Germany). I am happily married and we have a wonderful 4-year old son. In my spare time, I enjoy sports, reading, cooking and travelling to new places.

What is your current role?

I am the Information Repository Manager at ESO (European Southern Observatory) – a scientific research organisation with headquarters in Germany and telescope facilities in Chile. I am responsible for the administration of our PDM (Product and Document Management) system and for its implementation across the whole organisation. I am in charge of defining our documentation management processes, establishing workflows, providing guidelines and enforcing document control procedures. My responsibilities also include liaising with the software vendor, finding ways to automate our processes and training end users, both on the tool and on our document control processes.

Can you describe your professional experience?

I started working at ESO for the ELT Programme (ELT will be the world's largest ground-based telescope) and was archiving documents, but quickly introduced quality checks to ensure consistency across all project documents - I was doing DC without knowing it! Soon afterwards, our archive was migrated into our new document management system. At the same time, the ELT Programme got green light for construction. That was the starting point of my document controller adventure. It was very exciting to structure our system and to see it grow, but at the same time it was very tiring to convince users to adopt the new tool and to comply with the stricter procedures that went along with it – that's probably why people refer to me as their "PDM Guru".

"After each Consepsys course, I come back to my desk with many new ideas and ever more enthusiasm for my job!"

As the ESO Information Repository Manager, I am moving away from project documentation and discovering new areas of our organisation with specific documentation requirements. My main task (and challenge) is to implement a document repository for these new units.

Which Consepsys course did you attend and when?

I attended all Consepsys Courses in Amsterdam and hope there will be new courses in the future. I attended the Certified DC Course in 2018 and the Lead DC Course in 2019, and got the certification for both. I also attended the Advanced DC Course in 2018 which was extremely fun and motivating and the Transitioning to a Manager Position course in 2020!

What did you think about the course? How did it help you in your current role and career development?

Consepsys courses are very informative and have a good balance between theory and practice.

They helped me consolidate the knowledge gathered throughout my professional experience, deepened my understanding of DC fundamentals, and provided many useful tools that I have integrated in my daily work.

During and after the courses, it was very motivating to share experiences and exchange ideas with other like-minded individuals from around the globe who understand the importance of document control and who take pride in their work.

After each Consepsys course, I come back to my desk with many new ideas and ever more enthusiasm for my job!

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PORTRAIT OF A DOCUMENT CONTROLLER

ALISON BASTICK

Senior Manager, Document Management at Aecon Group Inc., in Canada

Alison attended both the Certified Document Controller Course and the Certified Lead Document Control Course in 2020 (Live online classroom)

Can you tell us a bit about you?

I am a happily married and a proud owner of a cocker spaniel called Manu. I love taking my fur baby on walks, doing yoga and Pilates, and cooking. I am an American by birth, grew up in Asia, returned to the US for university, before moving to London, England, and then Australia. I came to Canada in 2017.

What is your current role?

My current role is Senior Manager, Document Management for Aecon Group Inc., a Canadian company is an industry leader in the development and construction of infrastructure. My role is to implement document control on all infrastructure projects. This includes, creating a common data environment, standard processes, document numbering, and project setup across Canada. I have a team of twelve, with eight working on projects across Canada.

I have recently started reporting to the Director, Integrated Digital Delivery. We have been working together for over two years to bring together the IDD software and the EDMS software. It was a natural fit to merge the two teams.

Can you describe your professional experience?

I fell into document control in my mid 30's but looking back on my career, most of my positions have had a document management element to it. My job title has varied from Business Administrator, Project Administrator and finally, in 2004, Document Controller! I have worked in a large variety of industries such as Finance, FMCG, Mining & Metals, OG&C, Government. The biggest project I have worked on was in Gladstone, Australia, where the company was building three LPG projects on one island with a total cost of AUD$24B.

When I first starting working, we used hardcopies only. It was in Australia when I started working in different electronic document management systems, such as Documentum, SharePoint, InfoWorks where we used a mix of softcopies and hardcopies. Since moving to Canada, I use Aconex and SharePoint and (BIM360 for Modelling) on all our projects.

> ***"The Consepsys courses are well put together and incredibly interesting"***

Which Consepsys course did you attend and when?

I have attended two - virtual— Consepsys Courses: Certified Document Controller (July 2020) and Certified Lead Document Control (August 2020). Being able to do the courses virtually offered me flexibility. The skills from the Certified Document Controller and Certified Lead Document Controller courses have complemented my knowledge to be a better document controller and this has inspired me to extend myself further by signing up for the Advanced Document course in November, which I am very excited about.

What did you think about the course? How did it help you in your current role and career development?

The Consepsys courses are well put together and incredibly interesting. I originally planned on only taking the Certified Document Controller course as my DC experience has been on the job with mentors. I wanted to see if what I had been taught was standard document control practice. Attending the training with Julie (Director of Consepsys), it confirmed that I was doing my job right and everything I had been taught on the job was standard practice. In a strange way, it was nice to meet other document controllers who can relate to the challenges and issues that we face every day.

After taking the DCC course, I enrolled in the Certified Lead Document Controller course. Using the skills this course taught me, I have been able to hire three new document controllers using data backed by logic.

After reading the reviews in the Consepsys magazines, I am really looking forward to participating in the Advance Document Control course in November.

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DOCUMENT CONTROLLERS SEEN BY THEIR INTERFACES

Last year, Consepsys asked various non-DC clients around the world to anonymously give their honest impression of their Document Control colleagues.

These clients included Managers, Engineers, Planners, Scientists, Construction Supervisors, Architects and even Aircraft Pilots.

We have selected a few anonymous testimonies, and we have split them into two categories: **(1) Positive** and **(2) To be improved.**

Please note that all names have been changed for anonymity.

……

(1) Positive

John, Planner, Malaysia: "*The Document Control Executive is very helpful. We are sat next to each other in the open space. It allows us to exchange information about the plan and deliverables in real time. I am always aware of progress before anyone else, thanks to the DC.*"

Jack, Engineer, United Kingdom: "*We are in the design phase of a new project. I love the way the Document Controller distributes documents per reviewer role, like "Review", "Approval" or "Information only". It saves me from unnecessarily opening tens of emails before I can find out what really concerns me. It allows me to focus on what I need to do when things get really busy.*"

Peter, Project Manager, Canada: "*I didn't know much about Document Control before I hired Jane. I had a very limited idea of what I expected from it, really. All I needed was for someone to create Document Numbers for me. What I got in Jane is someone that pro-actively manages a whole lot of activities for me, like distributions, reviews and comments and that keeps an audit trail of all submissions. She taught me all I know about Document Control and, funnily enough, with all I know now, I am now more demanding towards DC than I have ever been!"*

(2) To be improved

Paul, Package Manager, Australia: *"I get very frustrated with the Client's Document Control person. The rules are not clear and they keep delaying our progress, for no good reason. Some transparency on the rules and processes would be appreciated."*

Bill, Operations Manager, United States: *"The final documentation packages I receive from Projects is always messy and full of mistakes. We have to wait an eternity for the documents, and when we finally get them, the Document Controller sends us lots of incorrect revisions and lots of drawings that are not even "as-built". We are thinking of hiring our own Document Controller, just to sort out their mess."*

Bob, Construction Superintendent, United Arab Emirates: *"This Document Controller was hired because he was supposed to be the best. But all he did was come in with procedures and templates from his previous job, and he tried to implement them here. It doesn't work in this company. We are not in the same industry and the practices and tools he brings don't even apply to us! A lot of time and money have been wasted in the process."*

……

In conclusion, whether the above testimonies are in category **(1)** or category **(2),** they should be seen as an **opportunity to better understand the perceptions and the needs of Document Control stakeholders.**

We hope that the above gives our Document Control readers a glimpse of the areas where they can make sure that they perform impeccably.

Think like a Leader
Lead with success

Buy the book now

Avoiding or Overcoming Organisational Inertia

by Luis Heng

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CAN A COMPLEX PROBLEM BE SOLVED WITH AN 'EASY' SOLUTION?

We live in an era where the truth often struggles to find its way into debates. Complex problems are often over-simplified and therefore, inadequate solutions are proposed, because they are based on an incomplete assessment of reality.

So, can a complex problem be solved with an "easy" solution? Or, in other words, can there always be a simple solution to a complex problem?

Let's take the example of a complex problem involving an element of Document Control: a miner dies from severe electrical shock after drilling through a rock face hiding high-voltage cables.

Who is responsible? Is it:

- The Document Controller, whose database contained an outdated drawing of that part of the mine?
- The supervisor of the dead miner, who failed to check the drawings of where the accident occurred?
- The site Engineer, who knew that drawings were out of date, but who did not raise the issue?
- The Engineering Manager, who refuses to spend money on updating drawings?
- The site Manager, who overloads the daily tasks of the miners, such that they often prefer to take shortcuts to finish in time?
- The Technical Director of the mining company, who has no regards for safety?

Here is where it gets interesting: the investigators request the documentation of the area the mine where the accident took place. They realise that the electrical drawings of that area are outdated.

The investigators ask who is responsible for Documentation, and they are told that it is the Document Controller. Therefore, they decide that the Document Controller is responsible for the death of the miner and they initiate criminal prosecution.

That is a nice and simple solution. Problem solved.

Or is it?

Is it the right solution or is it an "easy" solution? Would you like to be the arrested Document Controller? Do you think that the problem is more complex than what the investigators saw and, therefore, that the answer to their investigation is more complex than it seems?

This example beautifully illustrates the danger of always seeking "easy" solutions, rather than correct solutions.

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