



Tait Radio Communications is a global leader in designing and delivering radio solutions which are the right fit for a variety of industries including public safety agencies, government services, utilities and urban transport providers. Corporate services are based in New Zealand, and Tait has a network of worldwide offices and distributors.

As part of a wider strategy to develop an advanced intranet, Tait asked Flax to install a search engine to index a wide variety of content types. Frank Gebhardt, ICT Manager at Tait, said *"We considered a variety of commercial, closed source search engines including search appliances, but chose Flax due to the flexibility of their open source solution and the way it allowed us*

to index millions of documents at a much lower cost."

The Flax system builds an index of twelve million documents across Tait's file systems, in formats including Microsoft Office, Open Office, Adobe PDF and plain text. The system automatically re-indexes any documents that change (or new ones that appear), removing the need for a regular complete rebuild of the index, which is kept up to date on a daily basis.

The search engine is powered by Xapian featuring Bayesian probabilistic ranking of results. Flax developed a high performance, multi-threaded file system crawler and custom search front end to augment this software.

One of Tait's key requirements for the

search engine was that results should only be shown to those with the appropriate rights to view them. The search engine thus captures security information for each document indexed, and matches this against the rights of the logged-in user.



The search engine runs on a single server that handles all indexing, searching and tagging operations, and is available globally to all Tait staff. Frank Gebhardt says *"Our staff are very excited about the new search engine. 'I have been waiting for this a long time.' is the most common phrase I get to hear, along with 'I like it, it does the job!'"*

Enterprise Search Report

Analysts Ovum have released a report on enterprise search, called "Enterprise Search and Retrieval 2011/2012: Exploiting all of the Organisation's Information Assets".

Interestingly most of the press coverage around the release is focussing on the author, Mike Davis's statements about open source solutions – in particular *"... in fact, companies should only go to the big proprietary players if open source can't deliver what they need."* He also states that *"there are mere nuances between those ranked"* – and this includes the open source option Solr 1.4.

This is the clearest statement yet from an analyst that enterprise search engines are all pretty much the same thing, if you strip away the marketing – but more importantly, that open source should be the first option to consider.

Ovum provides clients with independent and objective analysis that enables them to make better business and technology decisions.

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Cambridge Meet Up

To encourage networking and to help keep Cambridge at the forefront of search developments, Flax has created the Enterprise Search Cambridge Meetup group. Our first meeting is on Wednesday 16th February at 6.30 p.m. upstairs at The Boathouse Pub in Cambridge – all are welcome, whether currently working with search and related technologies or simply interested in the possibilities. Hope to meet you there! <http://www.meetup.com/Enterprise-Search-Cambridge-UK/>

About Flax

Flax is highly active in the information retrieval market with international clients from sectors including academia, public relations, e-commerce, government and private businesses. Flax's clients include The Financial Times, Accenture, the Newspaper Licensing Authority (NLA), The University of Cambridge and Mydeco.

Flax delivers a cutting-edge enterprise search solution, using the power of open source software to drive down costs and provide world beating search performance with no software licence fees. Flax is an authorized partner of Lucid Imagination, the commercial company behind Lucene & Solr.