



## A CONVERSATION WITH



Back in early 2012 we knew from our conversations with itgroove, a Microsoft consultancy specializing in SharePoint, that our PDF Converter for SharePoint was going to play an integral role in the major project they conducted for their client, BC Ferries. In June we were incredibly pleased to see this project become nominated for the first annual Nintex awards!

Since the nomination, we recently sat down for a chat with **Sean Wallbridge**, owner of itgroove, and **Keith Tuomi**, SharePoint consultant, to find out more about the project, how the PDF Converter for SharePoint played a role, and their thoughts on working with the PDF Converter for SharePoint in general.

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**MUHIMBI:** Well for starters, major congratulations on being nominated for the Nintex awards. How did that come up?

**SEAN:** Thank you, this is the first year for the award. We've been a Nintex partner for about two years now. Our Nintex rep suggested that we should submit for the awards since the project was fairly interesting and high profile, at least for our region. The client, BC Ferries is a pretty big outfit in British Columbia. We don't know if we'll win, but hopefully! We were pretty happy to be nominated.

**MUHIMBI:** Thanks for including us prominently in the submission as part of "the recipe."

**SEAN:** Well sure, it was worth while doing and Muhimbi was a big part of it.

**MUHIMBI:** Can you tell us a bit about yourselves, itgroove and the client, BC Ferries?

**SEAN:** We started out as Microsoft consulting company but I've been involved in SharePoint since the first digital dashboards in Outlook '98, but nobody was on board with SharePoint back then. With SharePoint itself becoming more prominent, we now show businesses how to get more out of it. I think SharePoint

consultants are a new breed: we're part business analyst, part developer, part ITPro, part Project Manager, part political activist, part trainer, and part Dion Warwick psychic network. With a platform like SharePoint, there never stops being \*something\* to work on.

We don't normally go looking for big clients like a BC Ferries, but the demand for SharePoint expertise is definitely on the rise. Currently we're a team of 8 with around 90 clients total, 24 of which we work with on a daily basis with SharePoint. BC Ferries (BCF) is one of the largest ferry operators in the world, providing year-round vehicle and passenger service on 25 routes to 47 terminals, with a fleet of 35 vessels. They are headquartered in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada and have operations over the length and breadth of the British Columbia Coast.

In a nut-shell the objective of the project was to convert entire policy and procedure manuals from paper to digital PDFs.

If you stacked the binders that contained these policies on top of one another, you'd have a 26 foot tall "pillar." Multiply that by the 47 terminals and you have a stack of paper about 100 feet shy of the Eiffel Tower. There was a lot of paper!

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**MUHIMBI:** As one can see from the awards submission, BC Ferries had actually purchased our PDF Converter for SharePoint previous to your coming on board for the project. Were there any particular notes provided by BC Ferry staff as to why they had decided to purchase Muhimbi's PDF Converter for SharePoint?

**SEAN:** Essentially, because the main objective of the project was to assemble PDF's from the huge number of files previously distributed, Muhimbi seemed the clear choice. I actually knew of Muhimbi previous to this project for that same reason. Nintex does have some basic PDF assembly, but it didn't provide the capabilities we needed. We needed far more than that.

**KEITH:** If I can jump in, the project started out working with native SharePoint workflows and the complexity of what needed to be accomplished was so astronomical compared to what you can do with native SharePoint workflows. Initially they were converting basic file types to PDF but couldn't do much else. That's where Nintex and Muhimbi came in. Water marking in particular was a needed feature.

**MUHIMBI:** When it comes to getting new tools up and running in a project, there's always a chance it'll take a moment to get everything working. You guys ending up needing to exchange a few messages with Muhimbi's support, how would you rate that experience?

**KEITH:** It was almost scary how fast it was. We are aware that Muhimbi's response time is officially 24 hours, but most of the time we received a reply within minutes, which is pretty unheard of in the software industry we are used to.

To purchase this product, or for more information, visit [www.muhimbi.com](http://www.muhimbi.com)

**MUHIMBI:** What was your initial impression of the tool?

**KEITH:** The Installation was well-documented—clear and straight forward. Licensing and activation was painless. Integration with Nintex, which is our big focus as a firm, was also pretty straightforward. The product is better documented than a lot of similar (ISV) software products out there.

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**MUHIMBI:** How did you feel about its performance?

**KEITH:** It definitely does the job it claims to.

**SEAN:** It makes the complex simple. There’s a lot it’s capable of doing and as SharePoint vendors, we can definitely appreciate all the options it provides its users in terms of functionality.

**MUHIMBI:** Was there anything pleasantly surprising about using the tool?

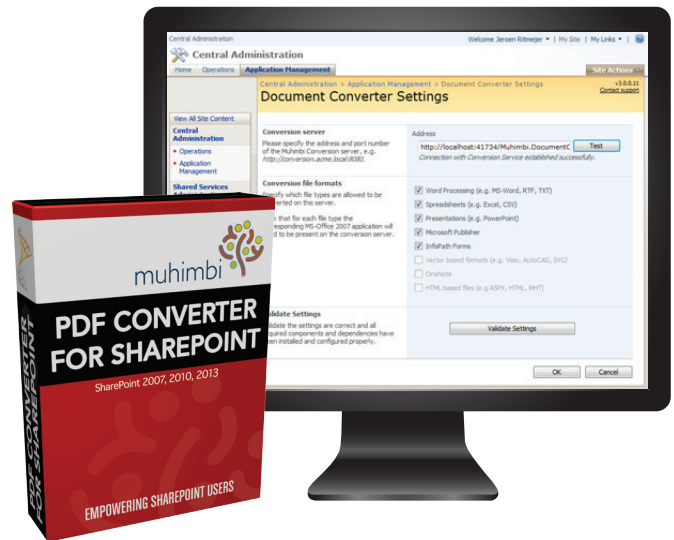
**KEITH:** I guess that it has that much functionality. I was not expecting it to work with all the different file types, or water-mark. The functionality is well above the name or description. I thought it was just going to be a solid tool for PDF Conversion but there’s a lot more happening, like Sean said.

**SEAN:** Yeah, I could see it being an under-appreciated tool, because a lot of people aren’t going to look under the hood and see all that it’s doing. It’s the quiet hero that plays a big role in projects similar to ours.

**MUHIMBI:** Can you summarize the use of Muhimbi’s PDF Converter for SharePoint in the BC Ferry project.

**SEAN:** 20,000 paper files have been condensed into 90 unique PDFs that can easily be electronically transmitted, updated, etc. and Muhimbi’s tool is the one converting them. They’re going to add even more files now as well because this process has worked out so well. It’s very green. It also means improved safety and will save a lot of money.

**KEITH:** They’re also using HTML to PDF for the change log when changes in the brochure/documents occurs. Again, using the product for more than just SharePoint to PDF.



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**MUHIMBI:** On the client side, have you noticed changes in workflow and culture since deploying Muhimbi?

**SEAN:** In a nutshell, the project has showed BC Ferries how much more can be done with SharePoint, and folks are excited about it. Again, it's played an integral role in a project that's green, has saved BC Ferries money, administrative head-ache, and increased the quality of information exchange.

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**MUHIMBI:** Would you recommend PDF Converter for SharePoint to other SharePoint users?

**SEAN:** Yeah, if it's a fit for the client or project, then definitely we would. The topic of PDF hasn't come up a lot in our line of work but we suspect that will increase and with some of the new features rolling out on the Muhimbi product, there will likely be other reasons to consider it for a project. A lot of companies are just starting to realize the power of SharePoint in the document management space, so the future looks bright.

