Internet Based Private Construction Office/Internet Plan Room Network

Unique Solution

The iSqFt system was built to emulate the flow of information in the "bricks and mortar" world, but takes advantage of the speed and scalability of the Internet to create an online "virtual private network" for each user.

Savings for all

The system consists of two primary components:

1. **The Internet Plan Room (IPR)**

   This solution is accessible by any paying subscriber on a regional (typically statewide) basis any time of the day or night. Users can scroll through hundreds of currently bidding construction projects which typically also reside in their local Associated General Contractors of America (physical) Plan Room.

   The online view of these projects includes basic project information as well as copies of the plans and specifications in a highly compressed format. These plans can then be downloaded quickly (even over a dial up connection) and printed to scale on a small printer or large plotter, measured onscreen using the special software provided, or marked up and printed or copied to the Windows clipboard.

   Users, typically subcontractors or suppliers, can quickly do a keyword search and locate projects in their area that include a specific word or phrase anywhere in the specification documents. Easy access to more potential projects is a simple recipe for more successful subcontractors and suppliers.

2. **Private Construction Office (CO)**

   This tool is geared towards the General Contractor (GC) and allows it to post projects it is currently bidding on or for. Each project includes the plans, specifications, bid forms, site photos and any other relevant documents. Each project is kept "private" unless and until the GC issues invitations to bid, also done online, to any vendor in its online directory. Each invitation contains a unique 8 digit code which may be used by the vendor for free access to the entire project. The vendor can then accept or decline the invitation, also done online, and the GC then can track and organize its invitations to bid, also using the special tools inside its CO.

   Each vendor, sub, and supplier can also expect a phone call from the iSqFt staff informing it of the recently sent invitation, and helping it to log in and view the plans/specs right on its own computers. This added benefit has been proven to drive online adoption in a dramatic fashion.
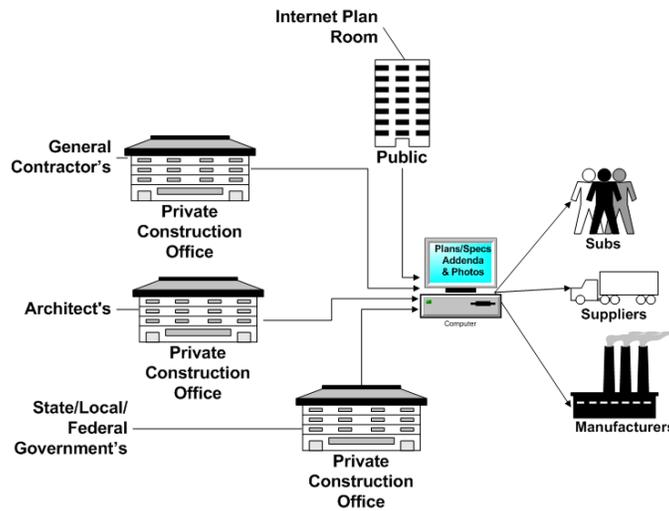
   The GC user can search the online, "public" directory for additional firms to invite and once selected, they are automatically added to the GCs directory for future use. Vendors who are already using the network can also search for GCs or others who may have their own CO online and request that they be added to the directory for future projects. This solution provides significant savings over traditional methods to both the general contractor and the building owner in reduced paper printing and distribution costs. The savings for the subcontractor and supplier are also substantial in terms of saving time, travel, plan deposits, etc.
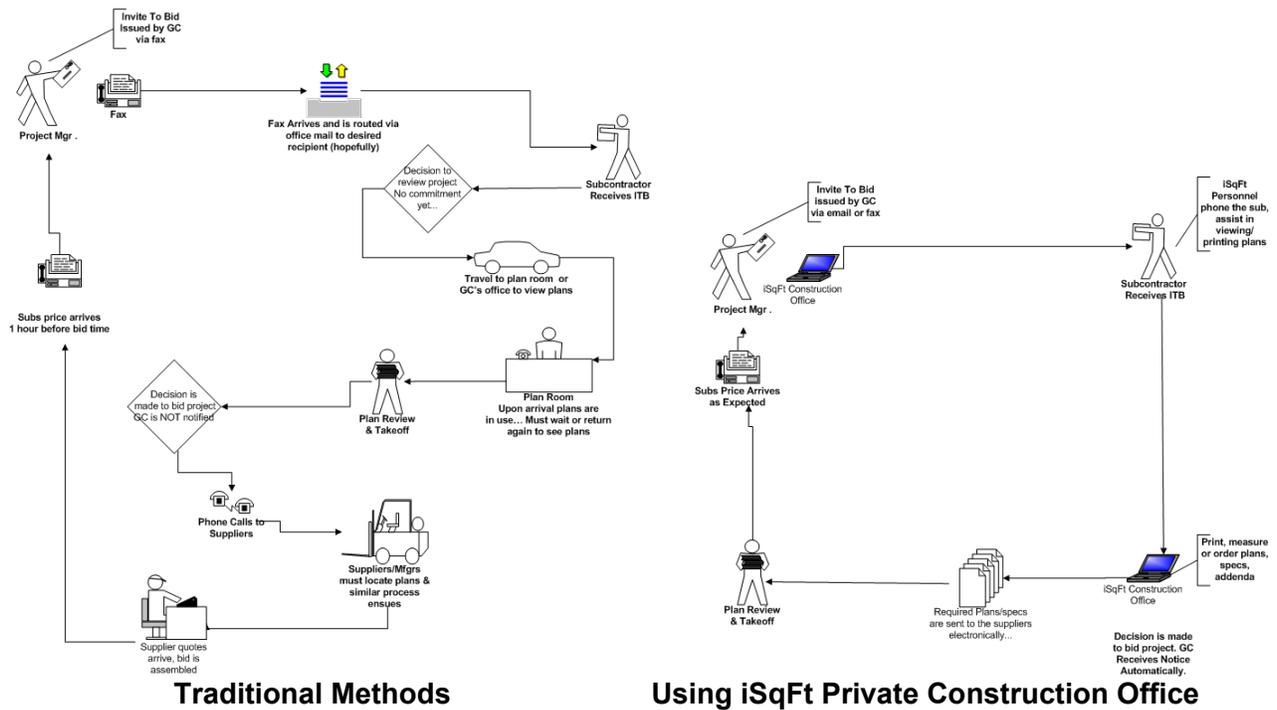
Rapid Adoption

This solution has at its core the documents most important to all parties in the construction process, the plans and specifications. That single difference has helped iSqFt to gain adoption by the subcontractor and supplier community at a very rapid rate. As of this writing, it's been only 16 months since the iSqFt launch, and on average, more than 5,000 visitors per day use the iSqFt network to download plans, specifications, job site photos and other pertinent documents. The typical user spends more than 17 minutes on site in each visit and typically views, prints or downloads 11 different document pages. More than 200 Gigabytes of plans and specifications were downloaded in the month of August 2002, alone.

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Conceptual Diagram of the iSqFt Construction Information Network

Traditional Methods　　　　　　　　**Using iSqFt Private Construction Office**

Understanding the Invitation to Bid Process