

Case Study

Revolutionizing Arbitration Management Through Digital Transformation

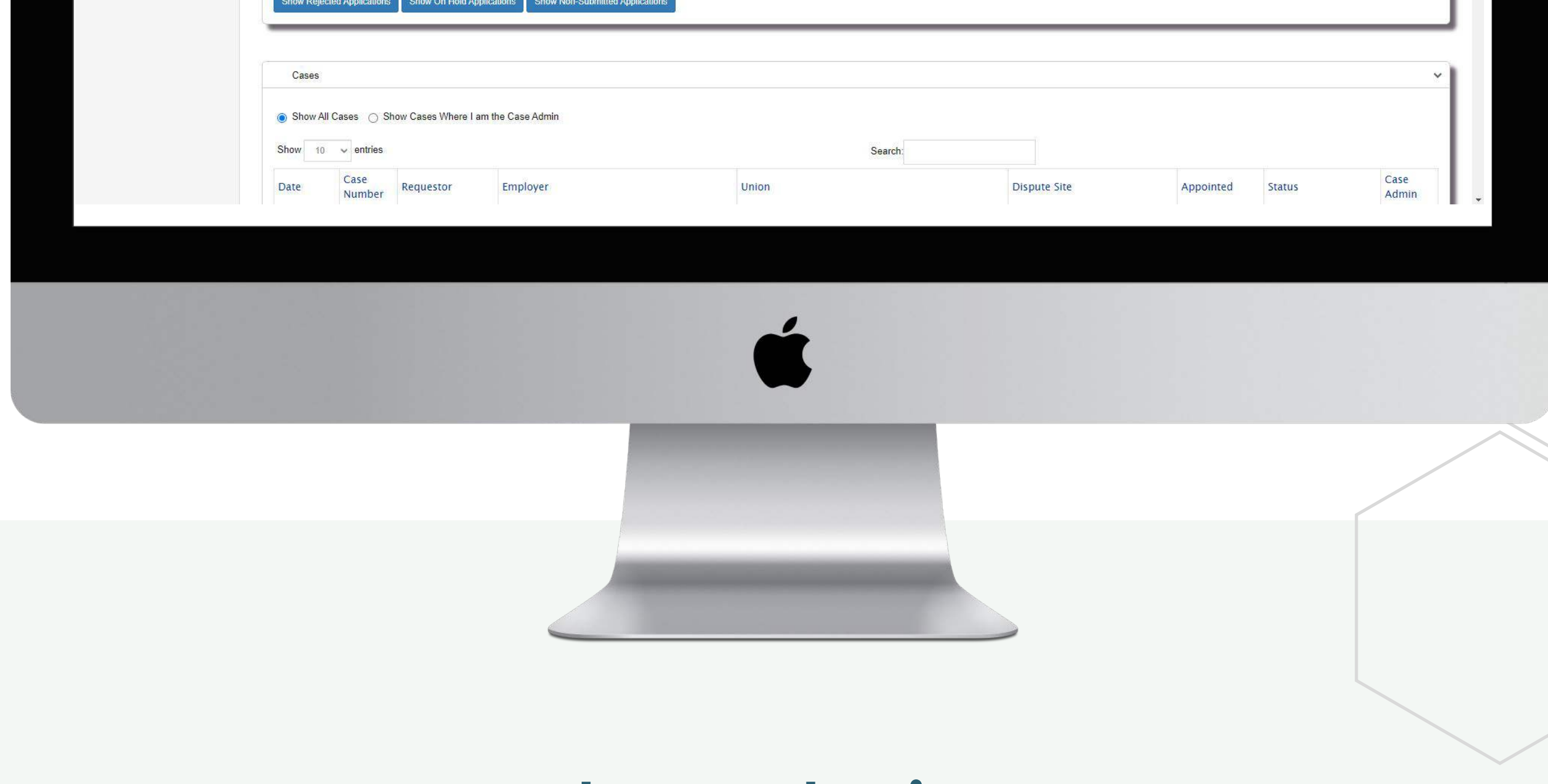


The Customer

And Their Challenge

The primary mission of the **Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS)** is to promote peaceful and cooperative labor-management relations, prevent and mitigate laboring disputes, and facilitate the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements between employers and labor unions. The agency achieves these goals through a range of services, including mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and training programs aimed at building effective communication and conflict resolution skills. Based in Washington, DC, with a network of regional and field offices, FMCS offers **critical mediation and conflict resolution services across various industries, government agencies, and communities.**

FMCS faced a daunting challenge with their **Arbitration system**, which encompasses over 900 arbitrators, 200 requestors, and more than 10 administrators. The current system lacked a digital process for tracking, awarding, and compensating arbitrators. Instead, it relied on an antiquated, paper-based approach. This inefficiency posed significant challenges in the seamless management of the arbitration process, underscoring the need for a solution capable of enhancing operational efficiency. A flexible and controlled environment was necessary to meet the needs of both arbitration requestors and arbitrators, to improve the entire process.



The Solution

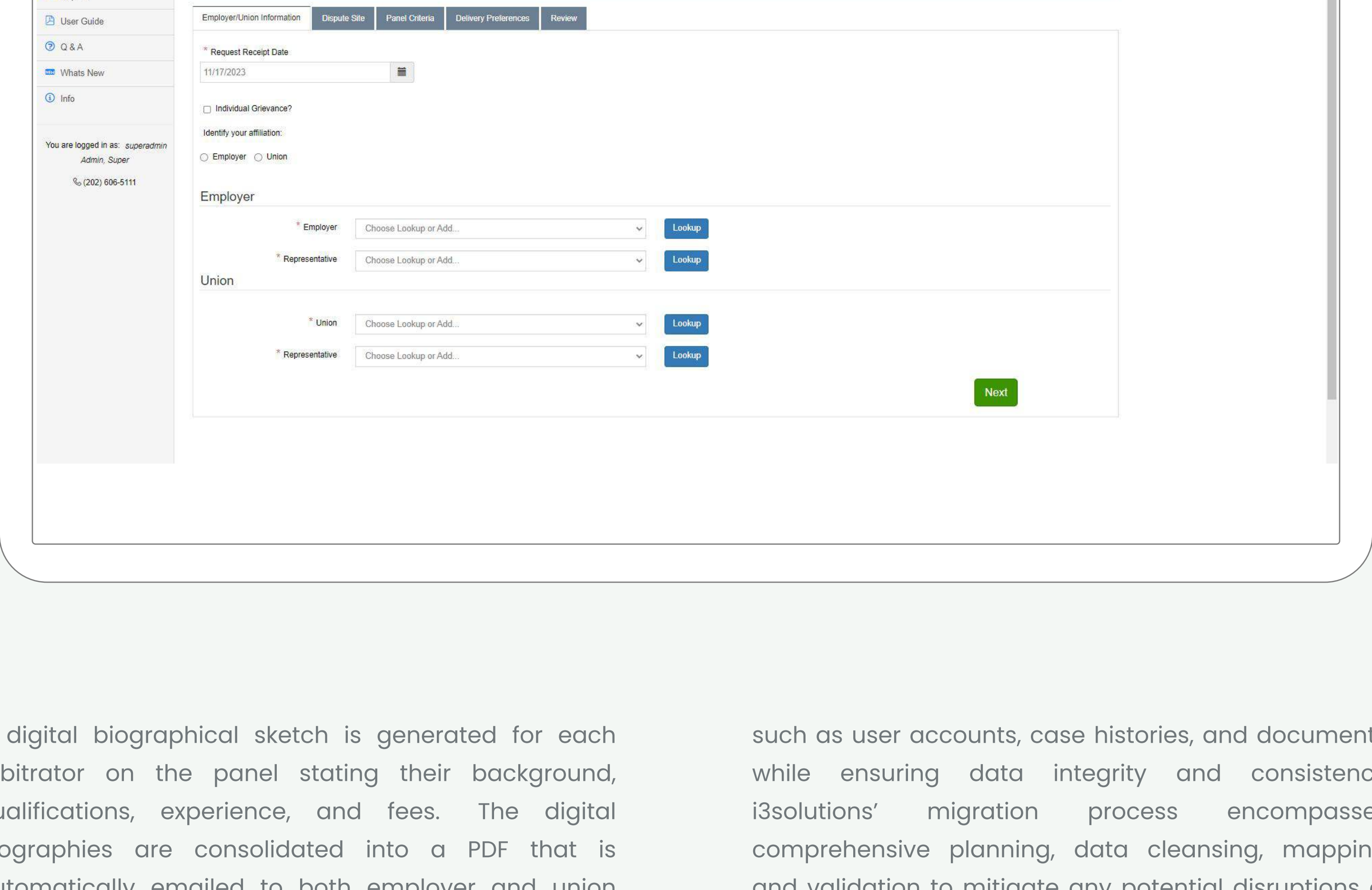
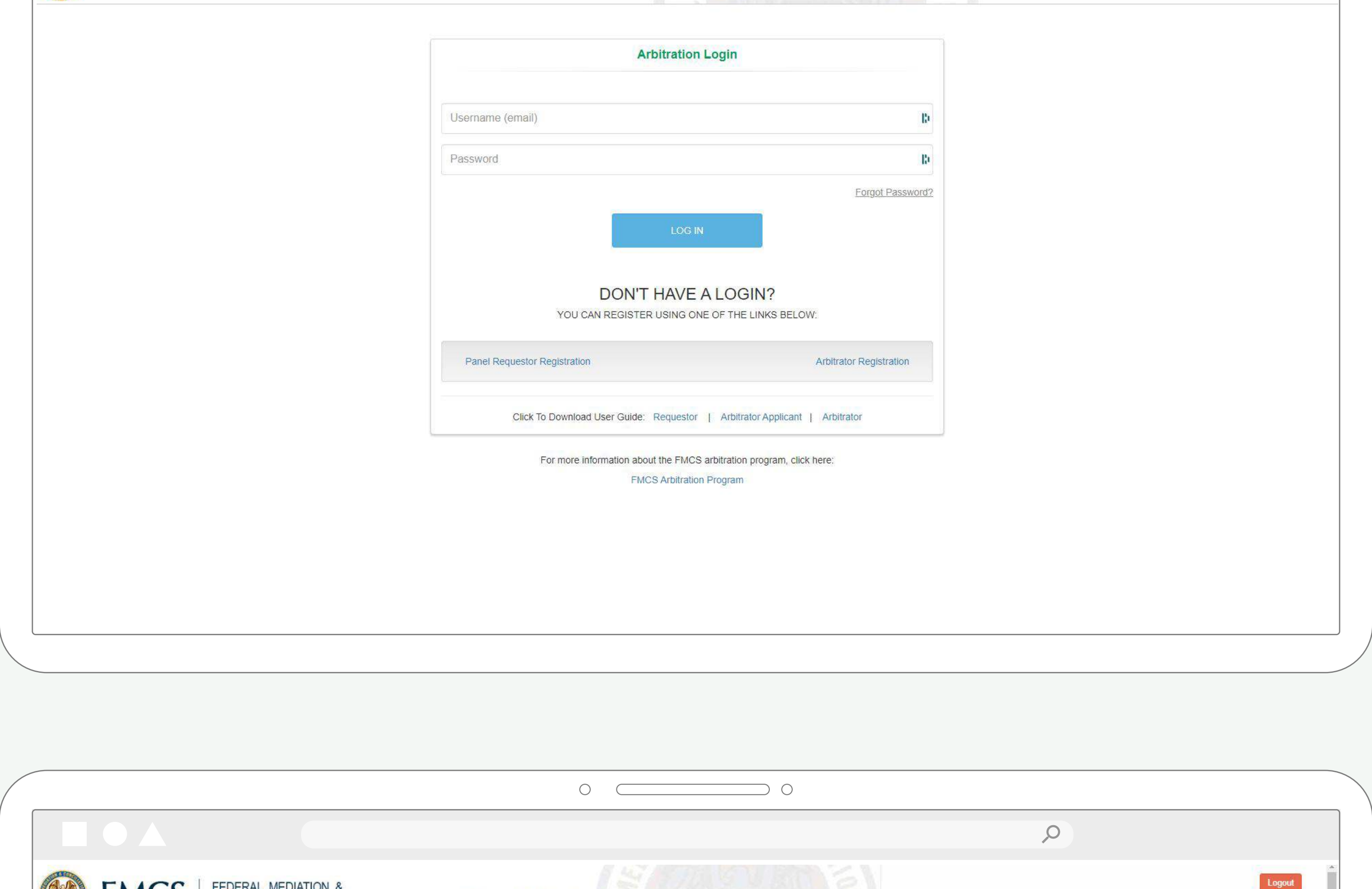
Digital Transformation of the Arbitration Management System

To address these challenges, **i3solutions designed and developed an innovative solution:** a new online arbitration system designed to simplify, enhance and automate the arbitration process. This system not only modernized workflows but also introduced greater flexibility and control for the arbitrators and those requesting arbitration with things like **self-registration, account management and auto-assignment.**

Requestors who typically register through the system represent either an employer or a union. The registration requests include essential details such as employer and union information, dispute location, issue, panel criteria, and any special requirements. Once the request is submitted and payment is processed, the system automatically generates a randomized list of arbitrators based on geographic proximity to the dispute site, as well as their compatibility with the specified criteria and special requirements.

Arbitrators applying for registration must submit an online application for review and approval by FMCS. Once accepted, arbitrators are required to pay an annual fee, with the option to add up to 3 additional addresses. The new system empowers arbitrators with the ability to make annual fee payments and manage their accounts, allowing them to update personal profile information, education, certifications, affiliations, experience, associations, published cases, fees, policies, availability, geographic restrictions, issue and industry experience.

The system also has the ability to create panels by comparing the details of the request with arbitrator information entered into the system. By default, a panel will consist of 7 arbitrators but allows for special requests to include more. The system generates a pool of available arbitrators then randomly selects 7 arbitrators to be on the panel with an additional 8 arbitrators to be considered as alternates. If the system is unable to provide enough arbitrators to fill a request the requestor is asked if they would like to increase the geographic area until the system is able to provide a panel with enough arbitrators.

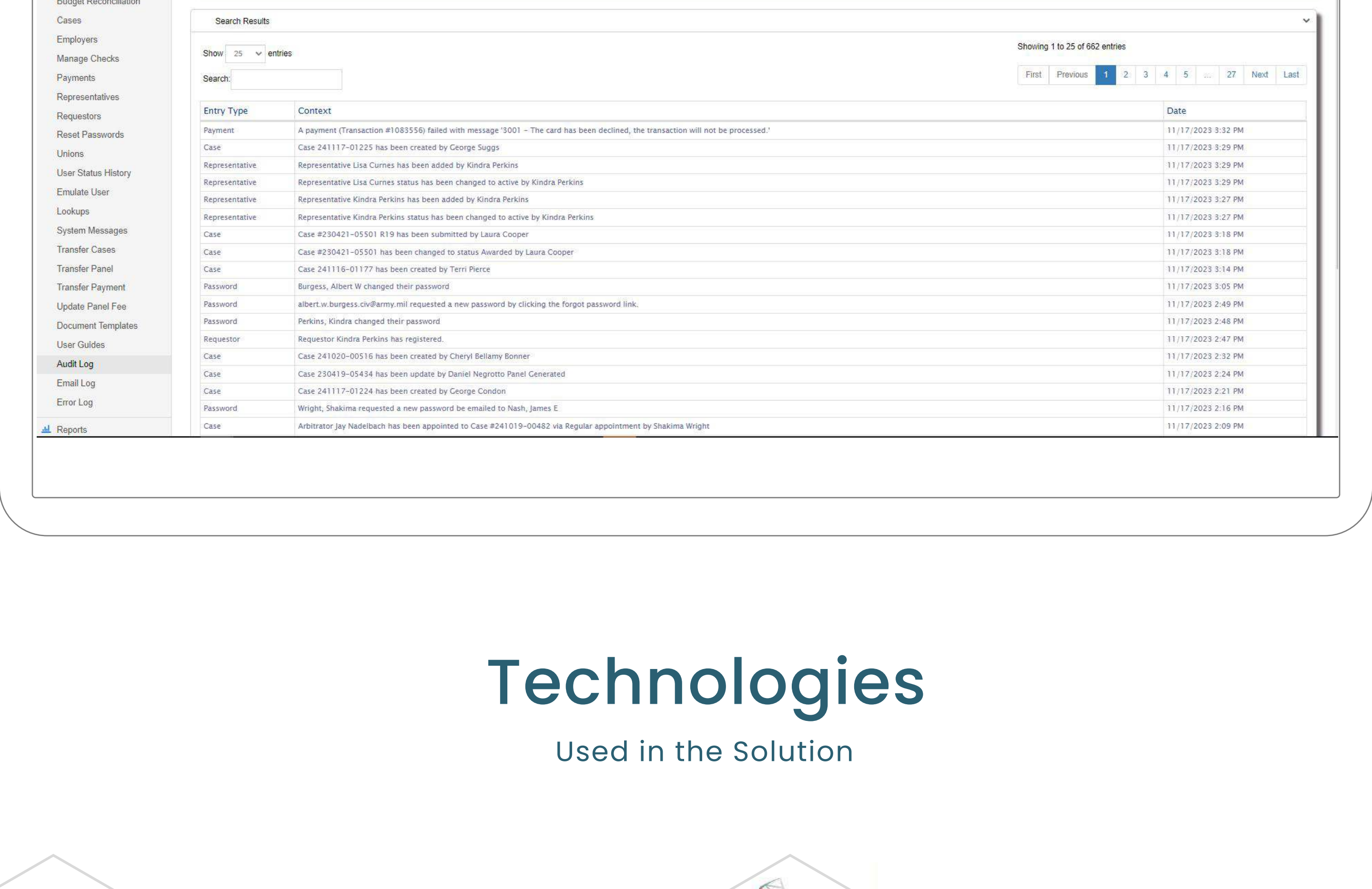


A digital biographical sketch is generated for each arbitrator on the panel stating their background, qualifications, experience, and fees. The digital biographies are consolidated into a PDF that is automatically emailed to both employer and union representatives for review. Once both parties inform FMCS of their selected arbitrator and the arbitrator is appointed, an email is automatically dispatched to notify the arbitrator of their appointment. Once arbitration is complete, the arbitrators report and fee statement is processed by the system.

such as user accounts, case histories, and documents, while ensuring data integrity and consistency. i3solutions' migration process encompassed comprehensive planning, data cleansing, mapping, and validation to mitigate any potential disruptions or data loss. By executing this migration with precision and care, the transition to the new digital platform was not only seamless but also ensured that historical data and insights remained accessible and preserved for continued use and reference.

Another pivotal component of this solution entailed the meticulous migration of data from the legacy arbitration system. This process was essential to guarantee a smooth transition to the new digital platform, as it involved transferring critical information,

Post-launch, **i3solutions continues to play a pivotal role, providing further enhancements and ongoing support to the Arbitration system.** This commitment to continuous improvement and support underscores i3solutions' dedication to delivering long-term value to FMCS.

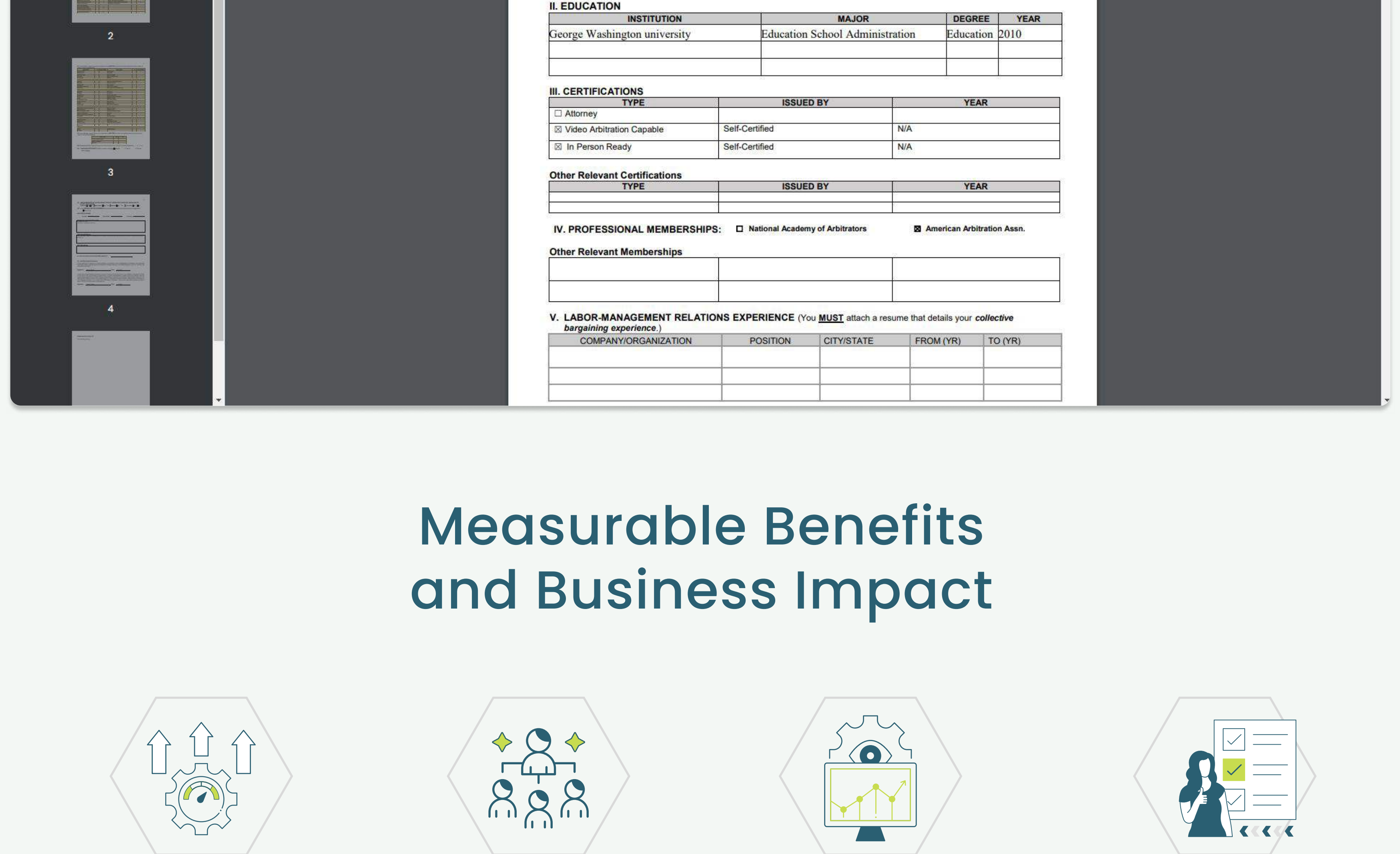
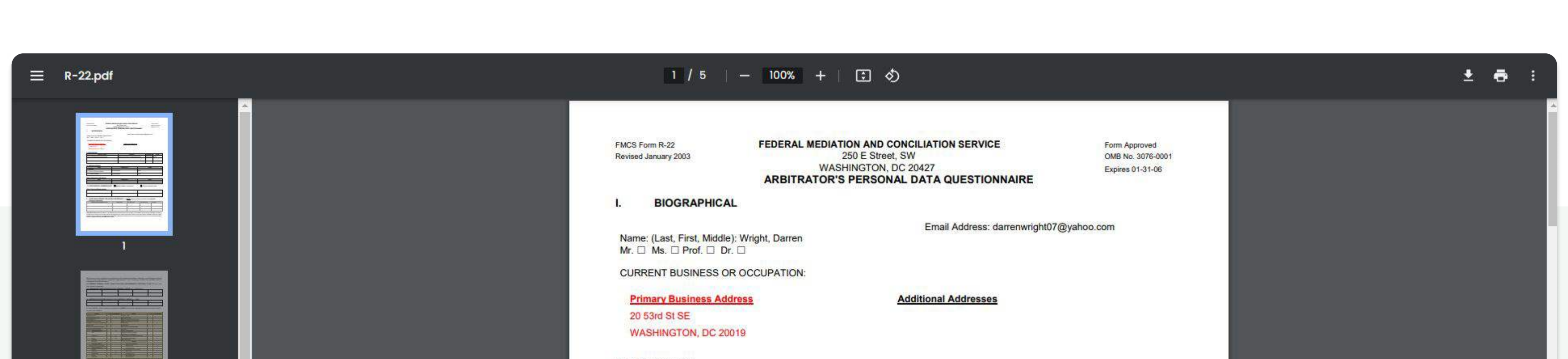


Technologies

Used in the Solution

<p>ASP.NET</p>	<p>ASP.NET, a server-side web application framework, along with C#, a robust programming language are used for the backend development of the arbitration system. This combination facilitates secure and efficient data processing, user authentication, and other server-side functions.</p>	<p>SSRS</p>	<p>SQL Server Reporting Services (SSRS) is a server-based report generating software system. In the arbitration system, it is used to generate various reports, such as panels, biographical sketches, tracking arbitrator selections, payments, and case statuses.</p>
<p>jQuery</p>	<p>Client-side scripting languages such as jQuery and JavaScript are used to enhance the user interface and user experience of the arbitration system making the application more interactive and responsive to user actions.</p>	<p>Visual Studio</p>	<p>As an integrated development environment (IDE), Visual Studio is used for writing, testing, and debugging the code. It supports the development of web applications, making it an ideal choice for this project.</p>
<p>HTML5 CSS3</p>	<p>These technologies are essential for front-end development. Bootstrap, a popular framework, along with HTML and CSS, are used to design the responsive and visually appealing user interface. This approach ensures that the arbitration system is accessible and user-friendly across various devices and screen sizes.</p>	<p>Pay.gov</p>	<p>Integration with pay.gov allows FMCS to handle online payments securely. This is essential for the payment of arbitrator fees and other financial transactions within the system.</p>
<p>Entity Framework</p>	<p>Entity framework is an object-relational mapping (ORM) framework for .NET used to manage database operations more efficiently. It simplifies data access and manipulation, allowing the arbitration system to handle complex data transactions with reduced code.</p>	<p>Microsoft SQL Server</p>	<p>Microsoft SQL Server, a relational database management system, along with T-SQL its SQL language extension, is used for storing and managing all the data related to arbitrators, requestors, and arbitration cases. T-SQL's powerful querying capabilities allows complex queries and data manipulation to handle the arbitration process efficiently.</p>
<p>AJAX</p>	<p>Asynchronous JavaScript and XML (AJAX) allows for updating parts of the web page without reloading the entire page. This is critical in making the arbitration system more dynamic, improving user experience by providing immediate feedback and interaction without page refreshes.</p>	<p>Telerik by Progress</p>	<p>Telerik provides a range of UI components and tools for .NET applications. Its inclusion likely enhanced the user interface with advanced features like grids, charts, and other interactive elements.</p>
<p>ActivePDF</p>	<p>Microsoft Word and ActivePDF are used for document management and processing. They enable the generation and conversion of digital documents such as arbitrator biographies, arbitration requests, and reports, facilitating easy sharing and printing as needed.</p>		

The combination of these technologies has resulted in a comprehensive, user-friendly arbitration system. It has not only streamlined FMCS's arbitration process but also provides a more flexible, transparent, and efficient method for managing arbitrations thus enhancing the overall effectiveness of FMCS's services.



Measurable Benefits and Business Impact

<p>Enhanced Efficiency and Operations</p> <p>The digital transformation of the arbitration process eliminates the need for outdated paper processes, streamlines operations and saves time and resources.</p>	<p>Increased Flexibility and Control</p> <p>The system allows arbitrators and requestors to self-register, manage their profiles, and handle arbitration requests online, offering greater autonomy and ease of use.</p>	<p>Improved Tracking and Payment System</p> <p>With the new system, FMCS can efficiently track arbitrators and manage payments, reducing administrative burdens and enhancing financial accuracy.</p>	<p>Expanded Access and Convenience</p> <p>The digital platform enables requestors to submit arbitration requests online, offering greater accessibility and convenience compared to the legacy system.</p>
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