Preparing for an ECM Project
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Don’t just install it – Prepare for it!

By Bob Larrivee, Director and Industry Advisor at AIIM International — In this role, Bob works in identifying, developing and delivering specialized training in best practices, technology and methodologies. An internationally recognized, lecturer and journalist, Bob is the recipient of the Cenadem - Brazil ECM Pioneer Award, an AIIM Master in ECM, BPM, ERM and EMM, AIIM Specialist in IOA, E2.0 and SharePoint, and a CDIA+ with over twenty-five years of experience in the application of advanced technologies and process improvement.

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Recent research shows that up to 85% of ECM implementations do not meet the expectations of the organization. In fact, many of the folks I talk to at different venues often tell me about how they did not get the expected results from the technology they chose. When I ask how they implemented, the typical answer is that they were reacting – I emphasize the word reacting – to a situation and applying technology to resolve it. In many cases, once the technology was in place there was either a lot of time and money, up to 45% of the implementation costs, spent for rework to make the technology do what they thought it would do or a complete abandonment of the project and a new search for a better solution.

In each case, when I dug deeper into their approach, I found that they really did not know the true business requirements nor did they have the necessary elements in place to effectively implement a successful ECM environment. Note the term environment and not solution. You see, many organizations apply technology to a perceived problem addressing a symptom but not the cause. Many organizations do not fully prepare for ECM, neglecting to identify the true business requirements, address governance, establish taxonomic structure, and develop metadata and security models. As a result, they find themselves in a situation where the technology does not meet the need. It is not really the technology at fault as much as it is the lack of preparation. Unfortunately, many organizations still do not realize the impact these elements have in achieving the goal of an ECM implementation.

Know the Requirements

Many times when I ask about business requirements, the response I get is about functionality and not the business. For example, a typical response is that an organization needs to scan documents using a scanner that does more than 100PPM (Pages per Minute) in duplex mode. That is not a business requirement nor is it even a functional requirement. That is a purchase request. It is an example of someone who already has a solution in mind before understanding the true business requirement.

Using capture as the example, in order to understand the business requirement, you must first know what needs to be captured. A general requirement statement for an ECM solution would be that it must be able to capture, manage, store, preserve and deliver information of all types regardless of format. To enhance the capture portion of this statement, you must know the types of information you are dealing with and be able to expand the concept of capture beyond paper conversion. Some questions to ask in relation to this are:

- Is it only paper based information you are dealing with or does your organization also deal with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, digital images and audio files?
- Is there a need to capture and store emails along with their attachments?
Do you use Instant Messaging and is there a business need to capture and store the text threads?

Do you record phone conversations and if so, is there a need to capture and store these in your corporate repository?

These are but a few of the questions you should ask in relation to capture along with a most important question, what is the value, if any, of the information you wish to capture and are there regulatory guidelines you must meet regarding the information being captured?

As you can see, when you begin to ask these questions, the idea of simply buying a scanner does not meet the business requirement completely. So, the real statement related to the business requirement now becomes, the solution chosen must have the capability to capture information of all types regardless of format – physical or digital. You may also provide examples referencing Word, Excel and paper with the idea that you want the solution providers to present you with options and best practices on how they would approach it.

**What are the Rules?**

Establishing an ECM environment means that you are now placing more responsibility in the hands of the employees. You are giving them the ability and holding them accountable to properly capture and store information, but do you have policies, practices and tools in place that enable them to do so effectively and efficiently? This is where governance plays a role.

I often hear people say that the company wants them to store their files in a central repository, say SharePoint for example. In addition, all collaboration will be done using the team sites with the idea that the emergent result then gets moved to its proper place in the corporate repository. The missing piece is that no one told them how and what was proper. There are no rules so the result is that the individuals do what they feel is the right thing in relation to using the technology and it all turns into a giant dumping ground without control. Several of my students have referred to it as a contained digital landfill rather than a sprawling digital landfill. This relates back to the concept of establishing governance over organizations practices and providing guidance on organizational behaviors. The graphic below depicts an example of how this might be approached.
The concept of establishing or defining organizational behaviors is one of defining the proper use of the information infrastructure and how it is used. In order to do this, we add in the dimensions of guidance and protocols and expected behaviors. As we see here, when addressing guidance and protocols, you begin by establishing a set of principles like information is a corporate resource and does not belong to the individual. As a result, there is a duty to share this information within a collaborative working environment. These principles are then embedded in the rules stating the information must be stored in the appropriate locations and if there is an identified corporate value, stored in the ECM or ERM repositories. This, of course, requires that we present the proper locations and provide definition of the term “corporate value” for the employee. Some examples of best practices include collaboration across functional areas to address the entire business process and collaborative effort.

When focusing on organizational behaviors, the principles help to drive best practices, which should be recorded and shared throughout the organization. Repurpose information and make it available for many to use rather than continuously rewriting the same or similar content through proactive sharing of information. This supports procedures that must be set up and are driven by the rules we made, in order for the employee to comply. In this area, there should be procedures to request the creation or closure of a team site or perhaps how to declare a record and capture it into the ERM repository. If there are rules, and there should be, there is also a need to establish process and provide the tools to do it effectively. If not, the system will be sidestepped and people will work around what you are building.

Storage and Management

So now you have some real business requirements and governance but do you have a structure in place that will provide consistency and structure within your ECM environment? What I am talking about is the combination of taxonomy and metadata, the way in which you will store and label your information so it provides the maximum result in meeting information management needs for the organization and any regulatory requirements you must address. One of the key elements here is that you have a consistent and concise way to organize your information using an established structure and consistent labels. Imagine you are facing an audit or litigation and that you are required to produce every bit of information related to the case. You can search through the corpus of information and retrieve what you searched for but did you really find all of it?

I know attorneys who will not likely challenge the technology as much as they will the process and methods you use to capture and manage your information. Questions they ask are:

- Is it an established method and structure?
- Is it consistent throughout your organization?
- Is it documented and can you prove consistent practices?
- Do you have a set vocabulary in use for the storage of your information or do you allow meta-tagging and if you do allow meta-tagging, do you know all of the terms being used to store the information?
- How can you defend your position in relation to the information you are presenting and this includes emails?

The use of a formal taxonomic structure and controlled vocabulary will help address these areas of concern and risk. So, the question to ask here is do you have a structure in place with an established vocabulary by which all of your information will be managed? More importantly, do your employees know what it is and does it support the business needs of the organization? Can the employees actually work within this structure or is it too cumbersome and time consuming?
Security
The topic of security at times, seems to focus on government yet many know there are and should be security controls in place for all electronic information. I have heard many times that IT manages security of the information. Is this right? Should IT be held responsible for security or is it the corporate security officer and business unit managers who should be the ones responsible? IT should no more establish security policies than they should information retention guidelines on what we keep and for how long. Yet in many cases, the burden of responsibility is pushed upon them because of the mindset that ECM is technology. Organizations have security policies in place already but most employees do not realize it. Access and authorization controls are used in finance, human resources, R&D and many areas but we do not always think on those terms.

Security and having a security strategy in relation to our information is a key element of an ECM environment. The ability to provide the right information to the right people at the right time and protect it from those who are not authorized is essential. Given that premise, it is only logical that there should be a security strategy in place when establishing an ECM environment. Who can see what and how they see it should be part of your security strategy. If you have information of a confidential nature and have a requirement that it not be displayed outside of the country for example, how do you control that even if the person is authorized to access it? In some cases, it may be a government regulation and if broken – for example, I view something stored in Italy considered of such confidential nature that it is not allowed to leave the country - could result in fines and incarceration.

Given this scenario, the mere application of technology is not a solution to address the security requirements, it is the organization that must establish the rules and choose the right technology that supports them. Developing a proper security strategy means not only deciding what requires security and what levels, but also how to apply those controls and the tools you will need like encryption and is it applied at the repository, folder, document or element levels.

Bottom Line
In my view, while this is merely a sampling of what is needed, the only way to effectively and successfully implement an ECM environment is to go through the upfront effort and take the time to:

- Identify and document the real business requirements
- Establish sound governance policies
- Develop a taxonomic structure
- Create and apply a controlled vocabulary
- Design an appropriate security scheme

These are several critical areas that are needed before even considering technology selection and application. Beside what I have outlined here there are also other considerations like change management, design considerations and implementation planning that might include the use of a model office and pilot program.

This is why we say “Don’t just install it – Prepare!”
8 Ways to Kill Your ECM Project

This blogger is from an end user organization and would prefer to remain anonymous. Which is cool. It’s also a shame because this is a good and honest article — would love more like this from end users!

1. **Make sure to include only high-level managers in the planning stages.** Don’t let anyone who actually does the work anywhere near the process. They are “too busy” to be bothered. Senior managers know all of the step-by-step processes, of course, and they have lots of opinions on how these can be made more efficient. (Plus, one of them probably has a brother-in-law who sells ECM software.)

2. **Do not appoint a project leader.**
Or, appoint several and let them fight it out. You can also appoint one, and make sure they don’t have any actual authority. These are all good. The point is to avoid leadership and accountability at any level.

3. **Write up detailed project plans and timelines, and then ignore them.**
Make sure there are no consequences for missed deadlines, lack of input, or refusing to engage with the project. Failure to complete critical tasks, which stall the other phases of the project, can produce blame, frustration and resentment that will keep your project team entertained for months.

4. **Fight about who is going to pay for what.**
Stall the process indefinitely while refusing to pay for necessities like scanner maintenance. It’s best if there is no clear budget to start with, so everyone can dodge responsibility. Remember, no expense is too small to become an issue!

5. **Let the users who whine the most have the most influence.**
After all, your employees are busier than anyone else, anywhere in the world. It is an enormous imposition to expect them to learn anything new, or to endure the smallest bit of discomfort while adapting to a new system. Constantly change the project requirements to cater to their complaints.

6. **Get lots of advice about best practices for implementation, and then do the opposite.**
Don’t listen to anyone who has ever implemented a project of this type before – after all, your organization is “special.” Processes that work for other people obviously won’t work for you, so feel free to just make it up as you go along.

7. **Refuse to change anything about your current business process.**
Don’t even think about analyzing your procedures and seeing if they still make sense. Instead, insist that the software be endlessly customized to fit your quirky, inefficient “business process.” Bonus points for how many times you can insist “We’ve always done it this way!”

8. **Complain to anyone who will listen how awful the new software is, and how your paper-based processes were so much better.**
Don’t encourage your staff to work with the new system and give it a fair chance. There should be no learning curve – if they don’t see instant results, obviously the system is a complete failure. Take every opportunity to criticize the project, and say “I told you it would never work here.” Be amazed that these ECM vendors can stay in business, when they can’t even make this stuff work when they have such reasonable and brilliant customers like you!

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Change Management Always at the Top of the List of ECM Implementation Obstacles

Good stuff from the KnowledgeCenter blog. When we survey end users about the obstacles they encountered along the way to an implementation, change management and governance issues are always at the top of the list.

What’s at the top of YOUR list? What do you wish you had done along the way that you didn’t? (Hint, hint — might make a good “8 things” list...)

- You could be changing contact management software, upgrading office tools or embarking on process improvement initiatives and the fundamental question you should ask is a simple one, “What impact will this have on the worker and the organization as a whole?” Just think about it for a minute. Imagine that you are moving from your current Office Suite of products for a different set of tools that are free and available to you either to own or through Software as a Service. What changes and training needs to happen? What productivity impact will there be? I know of small companies who have taken this approach without looking at their world from different perspectives and failed. They did not intend to fail, they wanted to become more efficient and reduce costs, failure just happened. The transition lasted exactly one day before reverting back to the original state.

- If the question had been asked of the workforce, it would have been brought to light that many add-ons were in place that would need to be replicated before transition. Macros for calculations in spreadsheets could not function in the new application. Templates created for sales contracts and other business documents, were not migrating in a useable state. Fundamental operating processes were now obsolete and needed to be redesigned. Integration between the mail system and the new tools was minimal and would not sustain the business model.

- When you embark on a change initiative, you need to carefully assess all of the impact it will have on the organization. The best assessment is made through bi-directional communication with the workforce and integrating knowledgeable and respected representatives into the project team to ensure all perspectives are shared and potential risk areas are addressed. In this way you will not only maximize your results, you will find user acceptance is more readily given.

Visit our Digital Landfill Blog
Accelerated Adoption of ECM Across an Organization – Why is this Important, and How do I do it?

By Mark Mandel, Public Records Administrator for Executive Office of the Mayor

One of the great challenges of the Enterprise Content Management industry is that it is seldom truly deployed enterprise-wide. It is most often deployed for a specific business application or department within an organization. Often multiple ECM systems are deployed in an organization over time, each from a different vendor and with no integration between them.

There are many reasons for this: limited budgets, lack of executive sponsorship, logistics obstacles, lack of internal expertise in the ECM domain, lack of an internal champion who is a proponent of this approach, and so on.

From a Records Management (RM) perspective, the ideal vision of an enterprise electronic records management system, which manages both physical and electronic records, cannot be fully realized unless the ECM application is also used across the organization. Industry best practices today dictate that Records Management is a fully integrated component of an ECM suite, and it is therefore a prerequisite that ECM be deployed first so that the RM system can manage all digitized and electronic records throughout their lifecycle.

1. I feel very strongly that organizations should therefore adopt an accelerated rollout strategy.
   This strategy addresses rapid adoption of a basic feature set across the enterprise. The basic feature set includes capture, storage and retrieval first, followed by integration with existing business applications. Workflow, business process management, electronic forms, etc. are deployed in future phases.

   I have seen this approach adopted by several organizations, and it works wonderfully. The Return on Investment (ROI) is realized very quickly and the approach involves very low risk. Change management issues are minimized, and the quick and very visible success produces an infrastructure upon which more advanced processes are more easily deployed.

2. The key is to limit functionality in the initial rollout to “out-of-the-box” functionality, with no custom development.
   The first phase includes installation of the enterprise infrastructure, including servers, database, storage, network, backup and disaster recovery components, scanners and user workstations with the requisite large monitors (note: 22” widescreen LCD monitors are under $300 today). A SaaS or Cloud approach minimizes this step.
3. A key component of this phase includes development of an enterprise document taxonomy that includes definition of document types, indexing criteria, required fields, field masking and validation, security and access controls, retention rules, and so on.

This study can be performed in phases, beginning with a group of high priority departments and addressing additional groups of departments or agencies in a logical order. It is important to address multiple related departments together to understand how documents are shared and to ensure that each document type is defined only once, reducing duplication and normalizing the index criteria. For example, a Resume is used by Human Resources, but it is also used by all other departments. You want to identify a Resume and its index values only once, and not have different definitions for each department.

4. Document Capture includes two basic models: Centralized and Distributed.

The Centralized model includes one or more high volume scan centers with full time staff, high volume scanners, and an optimized processing model. The Distributed model includes use of desktop, workgroup and production scanners, and multifunction copier/scanners, which are located in departments. Typically in an accelerated rollout a combination of these approaches is used.

A method for capture in this accelerated rollout process is what is sometimes called a “back end capture” model. This model addresses scanning after the paper has been processed, essentially replacing paper filing with scanning and indexing. This approach minimizes change management issues because the current paper based process is not changed. Only the filing aspect is changed.

5. A very successful and low risk approach is to develop, using the results of the document taxonomy study, a Web-based indexing application that allows users to select a Document Type, enter index data, and press Submit.

Pressing “Submit” produces a barcode label or cover sheet which is then placed on top of the document. The document is now ready to be scanned, and indexing into the system is automatic based on the barcode value. Scanning can be done in the department using the Distributed model, or documents can be collected and sent to the central scan center using the Centralized model.

This approach reduces change management issues dramatically. It is a very simple approach that takes only minutes to learn, and most people find it easier than filing documents in a filing cabinet. The approach pushes the document preparation and indexing task out to the end users, reducing and simplifying the effort required for scanning even very high volumes. Indexing is typically very accurate, taking advantage of the Web based indexing application’s built in indexing tools such as required fields, edit masks, drop down lists, numeric and alpha formats, date formats, and pre-populated fields. Once documents are scanned, barcode recognition is very accurate.

Now, when users need to find a document, they go to the ECM system to search and retrieve their documents in seconds. Out of the box features such as zoom, rotate, annotations and sticky notes, fax, email, etc. are easily learned. No longer are there “out of file” issues, missing documents, or days or even weeks of searching for important documents. Once a document is scanned and indexed, it can be automatically associated with the correct retention schedule based on Document Type, and the RM system can track it throughout its lifecycle.

This accelerated approach provides basic capture, storage and retrieval functionality as a baseline across the enterprise. It addresses most of the hard dollar costs of paper based issues: staff time for filing and searching, storage space costs in the office, file cabinet and supply costs, and short and long term third
party storage costs. Digitizing the documents addresses compliance, E-Discovery, FOIA, and audit requirements. Therefore, with this low risk, high reward approach, enterprise adoption can become a reality, and the benefits can be articulated with a huge, easily documented ROI.

This baseline infrastructure now can be leveraged to integrate the ECM into business applications, so that users can retrieve their documents directly from their financial, human resources, manufacturing, or engineering applications.

It can also be leveraged to introduce new automated workflow applications, moving the capture from “back end” to “front end” processing, scanning at point of capture (or using E-Forms) and using workflow to route the documents through the appropriate business processes. **Introduction of these advanced processes after the baseline storage and retrieval application is in place and is commonly used reduces the risk and change management issues dramatically, and typically minimizes adoption issues.**

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Records and information change management. It hurts. Records projects are a tough sell when senior management doesn't care. I looked through Tom Kendrick’s “Results without Authority: Controlling a Project when the Team Doesn’t Report to You” (AMACOM: 2006) which I found through the wonderful virtual library at PMI.org. Essentially, Mr. Kendrick acknowledges five, familiar operating styles of power in organizations: power of position; power to coerce; power to reward; power of expertise; and power of personality. Unless you’re a paragon of pheromonic virtue and controlling a project comes easily to you (and more power to you if it does), any one of them will do…to an extent. You will need tools to accompany your approach. While communication is the best leadership tool on a project, followed by motivation, it is the barter system that is the most effective and oldest path to success.

Mr. Kendrick describes three types of project control: process, metrics, and influence.

Control through process reflects traditional project management phases—but note the last piece (nice to see it here):

- Life cycles and methodologies
- Project definition
- Contract and procurement management
- Project planning, execution, and tracking
- Change management
- Risk management
- Quality management
- Issue management
- Decision making
- Information management

Control through metrics, which we should see mentioned more in the study materials for the ICRM test:

- Resource allocations and cost estimates
- Project deliverable benefits and value assessments
- Complexity
- Forecasted volume of output
- Measures of risk and uncertainty
- Project duration
Finally, control through influence. It is a ten step process, but note how much you will still depend on documentation:

- Document the objective.
- Identify who could do the work.
- Evaluate options and select the best person.
- Consider the other person’s perspective.
- Possibilities for exchange.
- Meet with the other person.
- Verify assumptions and determine what to exchange.
- Request a commitment.
- Document the agreement.
- Deliver on the offer and track the work to completion.

Considering the heavy dependence on documentation even under the guise of influence, review the MOSS 2007 governance plan carefully. Change management usually isn’t mentioned there, but in the case of a Records and Information Management project, it should be. Check out the questions below.

- What records and information management problem are we trying to solve?
- How sure are we of the scope of this implementation? How can we verify it?
- Where are the origins of these information sources?
- Has this situation occurred before? How did we deal with it (or similar situations) in the past?
- Can we quantify what we are hearing? What are the measurable aspects?
- What is the maximum tolerable project impact of this governance plan?
- What is the overall business case for what is being proposed?
- What are the risks associated with the plan?
- Is the plan consistent with our overall priorities?
- What are this plan’s benefits? How can we verify their value?
- Are there possible unintended consequences of the plan that could affect others?
- How will we evaluate success? Who will be responsible for verifying successful closure?
- What might we have overlooked?

Once questions are answered, craft a paragraph or two to address these concerns and commit to them in the MOSS 2007 governance plan. Don’t let easy end user adoption be the driver. Enough MOSS 2007 implementation stories are out there; you know better. Your project will stand out.

Influencing a project without authority is a ridiculously tough road. I’m serious. It hurts for everyone. But think about the above. Answer the difficult questions in your SharePoint 2007 Governance plan.

Join the conversation in the AIIM Communities
8 Reasons Why ECM Implementations Experience High Failure Rates, and What to Do About It

By Jeetu Patel,
CTO, Information Intelligence Group at EMC Corporation

For better or worse, I have been in the ECM industry for over a decade and a half. During this time, I have consistently seen opportunities for organizations to use ECM to bring about transformative value. But more often than not, ECM implementations fall short of the initial promise.

These so called failures are of three specific types:

- Failure to Garner Adoption: ECM implementations tend to have lower adoption rates compared to what was initially anticipated more than 50 percent of the time.
- Failure to Achieve Timeline Goals: ECM implementations tend to take much longer than originally planned.
- Failure to Stay within Budget: ECM implementations tend to miss the mark on staying within the initially agreed-upon budgets.

So the obvious question is: What are the key causes of such high failure rates? The other side of that question, of course, is: What can be done by organizations to avoid them? A more fundamental question is whether ECM is even worth pursuing, given the odds of success – which, for purposes of this discussion, I am going to assume is not worth debating, since many organizations have in fact been successful at it; it’s just that certain proactive measures that are critical to ensuring success need to be addressed.

But before we do any of it, I think we need to understand the key reasons ECM implementations fail.

8 Reasons Why ECM Implementations Experience High Failure Rates, and What to Do About It

1. Disregard for Adoption.

Most organizations are so focused on trying to get something in production, that they tend to disregard the simplicity and fluidity of user experience that is required to garner the appropriate adoption rates. Adoption is a two-dimensional problem. The first dimension is making sure that a critical mass of users is enabled to access and use the ECM system. The second dimension is that a critical mass of content be available through the system. If either of these conditions doesn’t hold true, overall system adoption suffers. However, for both the number of users and amount of content, simplicity of user experience is the most critical dimension. If a user has to perform additional work to use the ECM system, that he/she didn’t have to do in their old world, more than likely than not, they will bypass the ECM system. Not placing sufficient emphasis on both of these dimensions of user adoption is one of the biggest reasons ECM implementations fail.

Recommendation: Focus on scaling the number of users and the amount of content with an acute emphasis on simplicity of user experience. Integrate ECM’s back end with social computing front ends.
2. Picking the Wrong Business Scenarios.
Most organizations don’t pick the right business scenarios to start with to demonstrate the true potential of ECM. Those organizations that choose the first few scenarios for roll-out based on a combination of strong ROI potential and strong strategic enablement of long-term business directives can drive high (and positive) visibility for their ECM initiatives. It is the demonstration of the transformative potential of ECM to a business that tends to get the right level of enthusiasm from the other business areas.

For example, if your company is looking to move non-core business processes to a cheaper geography via business process outsourcing (BPO) activity, digitization of content is a necessary pre-requisite and enabling condition. Enabling digitization for BPO will have a higher likelihood of obtaining executive attention than digitization to save file-room real estate.

Recommendation: Pick business scenarios to start with that: (i) have high visibility at senior levels of management; (ii) offer strong potential for cost reduction or for increasing the top line; (iii) need ECM as a strategic driver to their business rather than a toolset from IT.

3. Over-customization.
Doculabs consulted for more than 500 companies across a multitude of highly regulated and complex industries, including life sciences, financial services, consumer packaged goods, utilities, state and local government, etc. Very seldom have these companies recognized the similarity of their operations to those of their peers. Instead, what we hear more often than not is how unique each company is, despite the fact that very few are that different from each other, especially regarding the reasons they could potentially fail with ECM.

One result of this conviction of uniqueness is that as businesses implement ECM, they tend to over-customize their implementations, believing they are different from the rest of the world in the ways they use information. The net result: long, arduous, risky, and expensive roll-outs, with even more expensive upgrade cycles. If most organizations focused not on meeting 100 percent of their needs with ECM, instead aiming to get 70 percent of their most important needs fulfilled by ECM, the cumulative benefit over a period of time would be far greater than trying to boil the ocean all at once. This seems like common sense, but is very rarely practiced.

Recommendation: Focus on less custom development; place greater emphasis on configuration.

4. One-off Provisioning of Business Requests.
The period from the time a business request comes in to IT to the time users have a functional system is, on average, 12 to 15 months of elapsed time. This extremely slow turnaround time is characteristic of many companies and is primarily the result of the lack of a repeatable implementation process.

Recommendation: Implement ECM as a shared service so that repeatable, configuration-based roll-outs become the norm.

5. Lack of Focus on Proving Business Justification.
A big reason why ECM implementations fail is a lack of focus around quantifying the ROI for ECM. Defining concrete and credible benefit streams and tracking against the model to ensure that the implementations produce those results is the only way to obtain sustained executive support and funding. Most business justifications tend to be either too optimistic to be taken seriously, or too generic to be applicable to an organization.

Recommendation: Develop specific business justifications with organization-specific data and a defensible heuristic model, showing peer group benchmark data that can be demonstrated to an executive in 10 minutes or less, but with rigor in the back end to be able to support the conclusions. (See Doculabs’ white paper for more details.)
6. Ignoring the Impact of User Experience.
Eventually a system either succeeds or fails based on how it appeals to the user emotionally and whether the user is able to imagine the possibilities of a better world as a result of sustained use of a system. Since ECM has such a huge platform component to it, many organizations fail to get clarity in how “a day in the life of” a user will be impacted a result of ECM.

Recommendation: Build out storyboards or prototypes depicting how a user’s life would be materially impacted for the better as a result of using ECM capabilities.

7. Lack of an Overall Vision for ECM.
Most organizations don’t tend to have a sufficiently comprehensive vision of ECM to be able to determine whether their efforts are a success or a failure. A strategy for information management within an organization is largely absent in most places.

Recommendation: Either develop an ECM strategy, or dust off and refine your existing ECM strategy, especially in light of the rapidly changing landscape of social computing, information governance, and cloud-based computing models.

8. Underestimation of Cultural and Change Management Implications.
Last but not least, most failures aren’t the result of technology issues. ECM is a mature technology; most ECM suppliers are in their tenth and eleventh major versions of their products. The primary reason for failure is that organizations grossly underestimate the cultural and change management implications related to automating certain business tasks. People have become accustomed to doing things a certain way, and this sort of change can sometimes have a jarring effect. If not properly positioned, the ECM initiative starts off on the wrong foot and never gets back on track.

Recommendation: Whatever you’re budgeting for change management during a roll-out of an ECM project, simply double it. No matter how much you think you’ve overestimated the effort, trust me when I say you’ve probably underestimated it by a long shot!

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8 Ways to Advance Your ECM Project

By Dan Dillon,
Team Lead of Influence Marketing at Perceptive Software

Because best-of-breed enterprise content management (ECM) software enhances existing business processes, organizations can quickly identify the many tangible benefits of implementing ECM technology. Calculating the return on investment (ROI) for the implementation becomes a relatively straightforward process, which makes it easy to develop a convincing business case.

If the ROI is so obvious, why aren’t ECM implementation plans at the top of every IT project list? Perhaps there isn’t a single proponent in your organization to drive the process because no one person controls the whole budget for a solution that is truly enterprise-wide. Or possibly the sheer volume of documents and unstructured content your organization is dealing with makes it difficult to narrow the initial project focus to a manageable size. (Hint: Start in one department and then expand from there.)

Whatever the reason, the benefits of ECM are too great to let implementation languish in the no man’s land of “if we have budget left over in Q3, we’ll consider it.” If you’re ready to dramatically speed business processes, get rid of cumbersome paperwork and meet the many compliance regulations facing your organization, read on to see eight ways to advance your case for ECM.

1. Do Some Digging to Prove Cost Savings.
The good news is ECM technology offers real savings that can be quantified. And the easiest ones to quantify are those for key business processes, such as invoice processing, vendor management and travel and expense processing. Start with those because real numbers are far more compelling than vague promises about “better collaboration” or “enhanced communication,” although those are among the benefits of ECM.

The bad news is most organizations don’t collect data on the materials, volume of documents and labor associated with these processes. So you’ll need to do some figuring on your own.

But don’t get bogged down in the details. Select one portion of a process – invoice approval, for example – and use it as an illustration. Get estimates from your accounts payable manager on volume and how much time each step takes. Estimate error rates/reworks to add to the labor costs, then the cost of materials, including paper, toner and equipment leases. You don’t need to know down to the penny. Just use a logical methodology you can explain.

There are lots of cost savings calculators around. You can try this one for free. And no log-in required.

2. Use Benchmarks to Show the Value of Other Key Benefits.
While cost savings may be the most tangible benefit of an ECM solution, there are other advantages that should be emphasized. Risk mitigation in the event of litigation and business continuity in the face of a
disaster will also gain the attention of executive management. You may be able to get industry data on legal discovery expenses and the cost of recovery from disaster. If not, ask the ECM software vendors you’re talking with for examples or case studies that show the value of risk mitigation in these areas.

3. **Line Up Your Case With Your Company’s Business Goals.**
   Look at your company’s mission statement and strategic goals to be sure you’re emphasizing benefits that directly support your company’s top priorities. If customer satisfaction is at the top of list, emphasize how will ECM improve your customers’ experience. If delivering value is a key operational goal, cost savings and ROI should be right up that alley. You’re competing for budgetary resources that are fragmented and can be allocated a thousand ways. You’ll give your case a big boost if you can underscore how ECM is the logical choice to help your organization reach its stated goals.

4. **Understand How the Expense for ECM Will be Classified.**
   Find out if your ECM initiative will be classified as a capital expense or an operating expense. If it’s the latter, initial cost savings combined with future cost avoidance may easily exceed the acquisition expense, fully justifying the investment. If part of the ECM solution would be a capital expenditure, you may want to emphasize the timeframe over which savings will be realized. Your chosen ECM vendor should offer various pricing options to suit your purchasing needs.

5. **Review How Your Company Budgets for IT and Go With the Path of Least Resistance.**
   Look into how implementation costs will be apportioned across departments. If the first business unit to be deployed will bear the majority of the cost, consider proposing simultaneous adoption by several departments. Otherwise, deployment will be a long process. You also can ask your ECM vendor about SaaS (software as a service) options that allow you to subscribe to software (with upgrades included) instead of purchasing it.

6. **Emphasize/Prove Usability.**
   All the cost savings, budget gyrations and strategizing in the world won’t help if you can’t assure senior management that the ECM technology you’re proposing will actually be used. Emphasize that the technology will expedite your current processes without disrupting them, and highlight integration with existing (or proposed) line of business software systems. Both of these factors are vital if your company is to realize a positive ROI as quickly as possible. Again, ask your ECM vendors for any white papers or case histories that will help prove these points.

7. **Do a Little Research into What has Worked at Your Company in the Past.**
   Review any major IT projects that have been approved or turned down in the last few years. Are there any aspects of the successful initiatives you can emulate with your case? Do the unsuccessful cases have common pitfalls you can avoid? Everyone has pet peeves and things he or she really likes. Your senior managers are no different. Don’t be afraid (or too proud) to emulate a strategy that has worked before and, of course, steer clear of what hasn’t.
8. Present Your Case Clearly.

Resist the temptation to put too much detail in your presentation. Describe your methodology for projected cost savings and benefits, and broadly cover the functional and technical aspects of the solution you propose. But don’t go into the minutiae in spreadsheets or charts. Your audience could end up losing sight of the real, big-picture benefits, and you may find yourself answering questions about details that have little to do with the overall strategic purpose of your initiative.

Offer senior management enough details and substance so they can clearly see the business benefits of ECM, the approximate costs, and a high level view of the technology to make it work. Save the details for your written leave behind, and be prepared for any questions they might ask. Ask the ECM vendors you’re talking with to help you build your case. They should be willing and able to partner with you to make your ECM project a success from start to finish.

Visit our Digital Landfill Blog
What Works: Prepare for Change!

By Alex Visser, Independent Consultant

How many times do we have to read about an ECM (or any IT) project that failed because the users didn’t buy in to the new system? Get a jump on making your project successful by thinking about change management and empowering your users to make the change work for them.

All ECM projects have a few, key steps that must be taken. You must analyze your organization (on functional and technical levels), plan your business case, establish ROI, and, of course, manage your implementation and watch for scope creep, etc. These and other project steps are generally followed for all IT projects. A step as, if not more, important – and often overlooked – is preparing your employees (you know, those folks who have to use the technology) for the change.

We too often ignore change management.

If you want any ECM implementation to reach its full potential, the system must be accepted by those who are going to use it. Proper change management can both increase the uptake and the speed of the uptake by these crucial people that will be using it day in and day out. Here are 8 steps that organizations can take to manage their change.

1. Establish a sense of urgency.
   People almost never like change so they need to have a good reason to change. The credit crisis can be one of those reasons that could compel the average users to recognize the need for change. The need to comply with regulations or the need to decrease the time to market for products could be others.

2. Form a powerful guiding coalition.
   It needs to be clear that urgency is represented by the people trying to solve it. These need to be high level and skilled people driving the change and they need to have the power to make actual changes.

3. Create a vision.
   Having the movers and shakers involved in this project is not enough: a well-defined goal is a must.

4. Communicate the vision.
   Communicate, communicate, communicate, from the earliest step until after the project has finished. Communicate and educate up, down, and sideways through the entire organization.

5. Empower others to act on the vision.
   Empowering others spreads the workload (and opens up more opportunities for input from creative minds) and, most importantly, will create a sense of ownership and willingness to use the ECM solution.
6. **Plan for and create short-term wins.**
The concept of the quick wins has been mentioned many times as a useful tool to push others to change. Choose them carefully. A good implementation is, well, good. A quick win that is useful? That’s great.

7. **Consolidate improvements and produce still more change.**
ECM is always more than just one project so you have to make certain that you keep going with making positive change and communicating this to the organization. You also have to keep monitoring in order to prevent old habits from returning.

8. **Institutionalize new approaches.**
The new way of working must become the norm. It will be business as usual. Only better.

Of course, these 8 steps only hint at the complexity of making change happen (and then stick). Want to learn more? Take a look at AIIM’s [ECM specialist certificate program](https://www.aiim.org) for in-depth knowledge of change management and everything you need to know about implementing an ECM project.
Building a User Group for the Implementation of an ERM System

By Carl Weise, Industry Advisor for AIIM

First, a senior staff person who is appropriate to serve as lead user needs be identified and their commitment to the ERM and the project needs to be gained.

Such a person should be:

- respected and influential;
- a believer in the ERM project; and
- be willing to promote it among their peers and staff.

When this person is identified, they should be fully involved and ‘nurtured’. That is, they should have everything to do with ERM and the project explained to them, including:

- what the project is trying to achieve,
- how the organization will look and feel once the implementation is complete, and
- what the benefits will be.

Careful two-way consultation and communication should be maintained with this person and they should be supported in regards to the ERM system.

Secondly, this lead user should be included on the Program Board to be the overall representative of all of the users.

And thirdly, an ERM User Group should be created under the Chair of that lead user.

Creating and working well with the ERM User Group involves inviting the appropriate people to join it. Working with the Chair of the User Group, invite others to join. The members of the User Group should cover the total organization.

The User Group should not have too many members – 10-15 is generally an appropriate number, depending on the size of the organization.

Advice should be taken continuously from the Chair, the Records Management function and the Senior Responsible Officer regarding membership. It should always be remembered that the ERM User Group is the Chair’s group.

Having created ERM User Group, the next step is to prepare and agree on Terms of Reference (TOR) for the User Group with the User Group, itself, and with the Program Board.

The third step is then to educate the User Group. This involves explanation, consultation, communication and support.
Then, the ERM Implementation team has to work with, and through, the User Group on:

- The specifications for the ERM system and environment;
- The approach to the Business Classification Scheme and the other records management instruments;
- The testing of the candidate ERM systems; and
- The selection of the preferred ERM system.

Tell us about your success in creating and using a user group for ERM implementation. What did you find were the keys to their successful involvement?

Join the conversation in the AIIM Communities
What are you going to do? Building a Business Case

By Bob Larrivee,
Director and Industry Advisor at AIIM

The boss calls you into the office and informs you that an opportunity is before you. An opportunity to help the organization become better and stronger through a content and process management initiative to enhance business operations but they need to understand what it will take to get there. Your mission, should you accept it, is to put together a business plan. The question now is where do you begin?

This is a process you need to focus on and gather the right information that accurately portrays the various elements involved in your initiative. In order to assemble a strong business case, you have to do some upfront work, get seed funding, and elicit initial input from management to move your project forward in the early stages. What I refer to here is the development of what is known as a Concept of Operations of ConOps that describes at a high level, the different steps needed to move your project forward and set the right expectation on the effort required to position the initiative in alignment with stated outcomes or objectives. The tasks you should consider include:

- Identifying the issues
- Assembling a task team
-Preparing an initial assessment report
-Performing a feasibility study
-Studying the requirements
-Developing the business case
-Preparing a high level project strategy that outlines how the project is going to work
-Creating the project plan
-Developing an RFI, or request for information to validate your requirements
-Developing an RFP, or request for proposal, which is a more detailed requirement to specific vendors and suppliers who seem to meet your needs
-Conducting technology selection
-Building a prototype/ proof of concept
-Implementing the solution

In large organizations or with large projects, you'll find these elements happen in a phased order. You may have an interim start and then move into a more substantial project that will require a more substantial business case. Therefore, you may need to update the business case at different stages as you move along. Bottom line is you need to gather, analyze and present tasks and activities that will set the right expectations.

What say you? How do you position projects and solutions to get support? Do you have a story to tell? I want to hear from you.

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Detailed Business Requirements

In defining the detailed business requirements, the level of business requirements in operation at THIS stage of the project are taken to a sufficient level of detail to create a set of working business requirements that are prioritized and define the functional capabilities that will be delivered as part of the current release or iteration. (This may seem redundant to work earlier described, but as you have likely noticed, MIKE2 is quite methodical in stepping through all of the work to be done, and only doing the amount of work needed at any given time, in order to maintain momentum and progress for the project as a whole.)

Be cautioned that “business requirements,” as the name would indicate, need to come from the business and not from IT. Power users and power teams from the business, as well as business analysts (from the business, not IT), are vital resources in gathering and prioritizing business requirements. This is not to knock the involvement of IT; rather, it is to assign roles and responsibilities to those areas of expertise where they are most needed. The business alone can determine “what” needs to be done, and IT will be the key in “how” it can be done.

Many business requirements are generic, e.g., capture images as close to the originating source as possible. But many more of them are not. It is these specific needs of the specific business/company that make that company unique and give it many of its competitive edges. Such needs are not satisfied through a contractor’s generic list of “1,000 items your ECM system should have.”

Some further exploratory work may need to be done to get to the level of detail where the project team can be certain that what is being designed and developed is truly useful and relevant to the users, sponsor and stakeholders. Only in very rare circumstances should NEW and previously unheard of business requirements be added to the list of work to be done.

Clarification and refinement of requirements is the goal at this point, with the focus on the previously defined requirements specified in the Blueprint. The goal is not to discover new requirements. The types of questions the team should ask at this juncture would revolve around concerns such as:

- What dependencies require certain work to be done first?
- Are requirements still valid and understood by the team?
- What team members are doing what work?
- Are the current skill-sets and toolsets sufficient?

Prioritizing requirements simply focuses the project team on the work to be done in THIS iteration, while keeping an eye on the bigger picture.

Join the conversation in the AIIM Communities
Requirements, we don’t need any requirements.

By Bob Larrivee,
Director and Industry Advisor at AIIM

Where have I heard this before? Hmm, I guess that would be from former prospects in my past life in the vendor community. All too many times I would approach a prospect to discuss how I may be able to help in providing them with an ECM solution and ask the question, what requirements do you have for this type of technology? Many times, and even now I would hear the response, what requirements should I have? At this point the salesman in me would be jumping around thinking I hit the pot of gold and could lead the prospect any place I wish to meet quota. The inner consultant would beckon to help this individual and discuss the importance of sound requirements in order to ensure what was chosen is the right fit for the need. I guess that is why I am no longer in sales, as the consultant side of me won every time and I guess that is not a bad thing since the objective is to keep a client forever thus being a consultant and choosing the right technology meant a happy customer.

Enough about my sales career, back to the topic at hand and that is requirements. In my view, the best approach to any project regardless of type is to understand as best you can, the vision and goals of the organization. What is it you are trying to achieve both now and in the years ahead? You must also understand what the organizational goals are in support of the vision and the tactical activities needed to achieve those goals. Once you know these business requirements, you can formulate a set of functional requirements that support your business requirements and whenever possible, using industry standards and keeping all of this aligned to the vision and goals of your organization.

It is this set of standards and functional requirements that should help you determine the technology set needed to operate effectively, efficiently and successfully. Using a saw to bang nails, while eventually might get the desired results, is not the best choice. In our world, if you are trying to capture paper based information, a Web content solution unto itself is likely not a good choice. Likewise, if what you need is document management with check-in/check-out capabilities along with version control, why buy an email management solution. You need to fit the right technology to the job as you would with any other project.

When you look at the core technology set for ECM, remembering that ECM is an environment made up of a combination of technologies, policies, people and practices rather than a singular technology, it is easy to stray and sway from the right tools. Know where you want to go and how you want to work then address the technology and you will achieve higher levels of success.

What say you? How develop your requirements? Do you have a story to tell? I want to hear from you and learn what you and your organization are doing.

Join our Knowledge Center Blog
Business Case Development Process

Wiki Entry

The below steps outline a general process (applicable to electronic records management) for developing a business case.

1. **Agree on the owner of business case.** This will normally be the project sponsor; the actual work of preparing the business case will generally be delegated to a business analyst or business case specialist.

2. **Confirm specialized resources.** A small team should be used, with its size depending on the size and complexity of the organization and the ERM environment. The main skills required are in business finance, benefits management, technology expertise and commercial knowledge.

3. **Agree on review and approval mechanism.** The outputs produced by the team will be reviewed by individuals with ERM technical knowledge and with business expertise to provide an external challenge to the analysis contained in the business case. The approval mechanism will also be defined and this would normally be through the steering committee as the first step. Organizations may also have other approval steps, but these should be determined in advance.

4. **Confirm sources of information.** These include technical information on ERM management and business requirements, overall program plans and current infrastructure arrangements, information on current ways of working, independent research, and vendor-provided information. Time needs to be allowed for development of information that is not readily available, for example on evaluating benefits.

5. **Develop the plan for producing the business case.** Key dependencies will be cost information obtained from supplier bids and ERM requirements and infrastructure needs developed by the program team.

6. **Complete the strategic case.** This will be based on the program charter, the business assessment, and other strategic documents. Key outputs from the work will be the how the ERM program will satisfy identified strategic objectives. The options will be assessed against their ability to satisfy the objectives.

7. **Complete the economic case and select the recommended option.** Often the options will be developed as a range that will satisfy an increasing number of the business requirements. The aim is to demonstrate the link between increasing cost and increased satisfaction of business requirements. Sufficient time needs to be allowed for calculation of the benefits, which can be time-consuming. Costs will be developed based on supplier bid submissions from the procurement process.

8. **Confirm the funding case.** This is largely dependent on completion of the economic case, although preliminary work can be undertaken to confirm the sources of funding.

9. **Develop the commercial case.** The commercial case can only be finalized after completion of the economic case.

10. **Develop the project management case.** A significant amount of the details such as the project plan milestones and resource requirements will be dependent on the recommended option. Ensure that the project management case and the commercial case are in agreement.
11. Obtain feedback and refine the business case. Review and feedback on draft sections of the business case, in particular the strategic case and economic case, can be obtained prior to completion of the whole business case document. For example, it is often appropriate to agree the range of options to be evaluated before undertaking the detailed work of the economic case.

12. Submit the business case for approval. The steering committee is asked to approve the recommendation contained in the business case and the plans for the next stage of the ERM program.
8 Secrets of an Effective Content or Records Management Implementation

By John Mancini, President of AIIM

Do you have a copy of our e-book? No charge, no registration. 8 reasons you need a strategy for managing information — before it's too late.

Before getting started with an implementation — before even moving into the 8 secrets — it is useful to begin by recalling why you are even considering this in the first place and by confirming there is a commitment to proceed.

This kind of “strategic mobilization” should kick off any ECM or ERM project. To do this effectively, organizations should gather sponsors and stakeholders, identify the team that will lead the project, understand what the vision of the sponsor of the project is, and understand where significant gaps are likely to arise.

At its core, this is about defining 1) who needs to be involved, and 2) the scope of the project. Framing the initiative and confirming commitment needs a variety of key stakeholders: business, legal, executive, records, and IT. And don’t forget some representation from the people who will actually have to use all this technology! In terms of scope, this will need to be done across a number of dimensions, including some or all of the following factors: 1) geography, 2) organizational, 3) legacy content, 4) information types, 5) information classes and 6) timing.

All of this should lead to a charter for the initiative. I will confess my bias in this area, which will carry over into some of the documentation described in the 8 secrets — this document is better off being short and strategic and actually read than long and detailed and gathering dust on a shelf (or whatever the equivalent is in digital form). My friend Martin White from InранetFocus.com has some good advice — think Magna Carta, not a 100 page document.

Everyone still on board? Have a charter and sponsorship and commitment? OK, then, let’s get going...
Here are the 8 secrets...

1 — *Build a Business Strategy and Blueprint.*
A successful blueprint begins with identifying the critical success factors for the initiative, how they will be measured, and what the drivers will be (i.e., how will life be different after all this work).
A good business blueprint includes the following:

An **Executive Summary** that summarizes the key information contained in the business blueprint, and highlights the recommendations and decision required.

A **High-Level Program Plan** that provides a very high level plan showing a sequence of projects and approximate delivery schedule. This will likely include a series of tactical and strategic projects.

A series of **Business Case** justifications covering the multiple dimensions of any ECM or ERM project:

- The *strategic case* shows why the ECM-related project is required, and what business needs the project satisfies.
- The *economic case* contains the summary of costs and benefits. The economic case focuses on comparing alternative ways of implementing the ECM-related project.
- The *funding case* confirms that the available sources of funding are sufficient to implement the ECM environment and operate the ECM service.
- The *commercial case* describes plans for the procurement of any ECM services or technology from suppliers.
- The *project management case* describes the governance arrangement for the project and details of the project team.

A **Future-State Conceptual Architecture** illustrates the gap between the initial Current-State Conceptual Architecture, and what is proposed as the conceptual components of the solution to solve the concerns of the business.

2 — *Conduct a Technology Assessment and Create a Blueprint.*
As its name implies, the technology assessment concentrates on the technical aspects of your strategy. The goal of the assessment is to develop a technology blueprint similar in scope to the business blueprint defined in Secret #1, but focused on technology.

There are 5 main stages in producing an effective set of technical requirements for an ECM or ERM related initiative:

The first stage is to plan the work effort that is required to develop the technical requirements and blueprint. Sufficient time should be allowed to obtain consensus and agreement; this can often be considerable and often takes longer than those closest to the project anticipate.

The second stage is to gather requirements. This will involve obtaining needs from the key stakeholders and users.

The third step, after having gathered an initial set of requirements, is to analyze and understand the requirements.

The fourth stage is the documentation of the requirements. Documentation of the requirements is a powerful tool to achieving consensus on the end-state solution.

The fifth and final stage is to obtain agreement to the documented set of requirements. This will involve obtaining some kind of sign-off authority from each of the key stakeholders. [Again, recall the earlier advice — volume doesn’t score extra points!]
3 — Think Through a Governance Structure and Approach.

Information governance is a set of formal and documented policies, procedures and rules that control how enterprise content will be managed potentially across its entire lifecycle, from the point of creation to ultimate destruction. Defining expectations, building a system that supports and enforces these expectations, and defining the role that end users have relative to those expectations is critical to an effective governance structure.

A sound Information Governance Framework will include the following:

- Laying down policies that will govern behaviors.
- Defining processes for all stages of the Information Lifecycle.
- Setting standards that must be followed when carrying out a defined process.
- Appointing specific people to be responsible for the information assets.
- Providing tools and technology to enable staff to carry out the defined processes to the required standards.
- Auditing the elements of the Framework regularly to ensure that the guidelines are being followed.

Again, it is important that all of this be incorporated into a governance document that is understood, endorsed, and supported by the key stakeholders in the organization. AIIM research indicates that many of the core problems encountered during an implementation have poor or ill-defined governance at their core.

4 — Create a Roadmap and Project Plan.

A project plan typically how the following activities will be addressed: 1) Project management, 2) Testing and deployment, and 3) Issue resolution.

We define project management as a structure, process and procedure based on the organization’s preferred Project Management methodology. The role and responsibility of the Project Manager is to make decisions and balance resources across the entire program, and to make sure that all projects are working to a set of shared requirements. The project manager monitors plans and progress across all projects in the ECM project, to ensure coherence and integration across the whole program.

5 — Build a Sound Foundation.

Organizations need to make sure that the appropriate software development environment exists for the project. Some of the questions to ask: 1) Is the configuration management environment set up, so that code and other artifacts can be checked in when they are completed? 2) Do the developers have a workable development environment? 3) Are the developers trained in the tools that will be used to build the system?

Another core foundational requirement is defining the enterprise information architecture. Some of the necessary tasks at this stage are: 1) Defining the enterprise master data model; 2) Defining the master data management architecture; 3) Defining when synchronization of content, data and information are required by different systems to meet their business-based information needs; and 4) Defining the master data definitions and business rules.

Taxonomy design and metadata development are also core elements in building a sound foundation. [One sentence for these two — obviously easier said than done!]
6 — Design the Plan.
The design phase of a project typically includes the following activities:

**Design of user support and operational procedures.** The user support and operational procedures are intended to create the documentation and training program for all users and technical support staff as the relate to the project.

**Security.** Security design builds in the appropriate content security model, supporting security at each level of the system – whether at the repository, folder/collection, document, element or physical levels.

**Design of infrastructure management processes.** Infrastructure management process design provides a set of requirements for the physical implementation of the information platform and its associated management functions. The target audience for the design documents produced by this activity is operations staff such as Systems Administrators and Systems Operators.

**User collaboration.** User content generated through increasingly powerful collaborative tools is a growing challenge in many ECM and ERM environments. A key element in designing the plan is define how these tools will work in relation to the rest of the ECM environment.

**User interfaces.** User interface is specifically focused on the layout, information access and information presentation of the ECM environment.

7 — Deploy the Plan and Cycle Through Phases of Assessment and Improvement.
Once you get to the point of deploying your solution, there are 4 main phases to consider: development, testing, actual deployment, and improvement. These phases typically recur as different versions and levels of functionality are introduced and improved.

**Development** — transforms the design into working modules that can be tested. Includes development of operational documentation and training materials.

**Testing** — focuses testing of the environment at many levels, from technical functioning (at all) through to testing of end-to-end processes.

**Deployment** — delivers the new system into production. Includes setting up production environment, installing the new system applications, interfaces and repositories, publishing the system documentation, training users and initiating production operations.

**Operation and continuous improvement** — focused on delivering incremental improvements to existing functionality.

8 — And Don’t Forget Change Management!
AIIM research suggests that the main pitfalls for an ECM project stem not from technology but from a failure to anticipate change management issues.

Regardless of the kind of change — whether technological, cultural, procedural, role-based, or any other — organization must determine whether they are ready to face the change and adjust to it. Determining readiness is a big factor in the potential success of your ECM project.

Organizational change is always going to appear threatening to people as it is often linked to job security. Some enterprises freely disseminate information regarding strategy changes. Other firms are very secretive and feel that this is for senior management only. Practitioners should be as open and honest with staff about change as they possibly can. Typically, people will more readily embrace the change process if clear information is available.
The readiness of both management and affected workers to accept and adapt to change are the most crucial factors in the success, or failure, of your project. Management may be far more ready to change than the potentially effected workers, particularly if the idea for the proposed change is coming from management – as it typically is. However, just because you have meetings with middle or senior management who are very enthusiastic about this new project, doesn’t mean that the organization as a whole is ready to change.

Well, that about does it.
It can feel daunting, I know, and at this point you may be thinking, do I really want to do this?

Obviously, we feel the answer is yes. It wasn’t easy for organizations to set up strategies and structures to manage money, people, and resources. But we all did it because these areas were deemed strategically important to organizational success.

Developing — and implementing — an information management strategy is hard work. But it’s not impossible work.

AIIM research, training, publications, and events can help your organization understand and streamline the journey.

[Note: The AIIM methodology is built upon the MIKE2 open source implementation framework. Details on the MIKE2 implementation framework can be found at http://mike2.openmethodology.org. The AIIM Training program applies this framework to specific technologies.]

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This is a representative framework and process for developing policies. It can be used to develop any type of policy, though the focus here is on an ERM policy.

1. **Get management support.** One way to do this is to have the sponsor and other senior managers issue regular, visible statements in support of the ERM program, the policy, and the policy development process. Management must also provide support in the form of resources for the policy development project.

2. **Identify key stakeholders.** As the policy should address the entire enterprise, key stakeholders will likely include senior management, business unit managers, legal, records management, and other specialist functions.

3. **Identify the goals of the policy.** These should focus on the changes that are being introduced, the desired outcomes, and the behavioral changes that should result.

4. **Conduct research and analysis.** This may include legal research to identify specific requirements; review of organizational documents such as existing policies and procedures; review of policies from similar organizations; or best practices as espoused by industry and professional associations.

5. **Develop the draft policy.** The actual drafting of the policy should be a highly collaborative, iterative process. Stakeholders should be encouraged to review the draft and provide honest feedback.

6. **Get input and feedback from stakeholders.** Once the policy has been drafted it should be reviewed by legal and HR to ensure that it is comprehensive, valid, and legally sound; it should also be reviewed by users to ensure that it meets their operational needs that that it will work within the existing organizational framework and culture.

7. **Approve the policy.** Next the policy should be reviewed by business managers and senior management, with an emphasis on the risk management and operational impacts of the policy. If changes are required, the policy is returned to the drafting team for revision; once the policy is completed and approved by management, it can be implemented.

8. **Implement the policy.** It should be published throughout the organization using all of the communications methods available. Users must be trained on the policy and how to comply with it – and need to be given time to come into compliance with it.

9. **Post-implementation.** Once the policy has been implemented, the organization will need to monitor for compliance with it. The organization should also solicit feedback about the policy, both positive and negative. And the organization will need to plan for periodic review of the policy and maintenance as required.

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Creating a Governance Program is the 1st Step towards a Successful SharePoint Implementation

By Alan Weintraub,
Principal, ECM and Governance Solutions for Perficient.

Successful SharePoint implementations are less about the technology and more about the business functions that are delivered to the end users. To insure that the delivery of the SharePoint solution is consistent and meets the needs of the users, a robust governance program should be established. Governance programs are one of those areas that can cover different topics depending on the focus of the organization. Successful SharePoint solutions require a governance program that covers the business aspect of managing the SharePoint implementation. A SharePoint governance program will cover the:

- Establishment of a Governance Board
- Definition for release management, standards enforcement, and cross-functional delivery
- Roles and responsibilities for using and administrating the SharePoint system
- Actions to be taken in the resolution of issues or problems relating to the SharePoint system

The SharePoint Governance Board is comprised of both business and IT representatives. It is also critical that the Governance Board has an Executive sponsor that represents the board and governance issues to the senior leadership team. The Governance Board is responsible for:

- Driving Project-level governance, Key Decisions, and issue resolution
- Approving designs, plans, and results
- Creating business requirements, standards, and governance
- Recommending enforcement policies

The Governance Board also is responsible for understanding the SharePoint Roadmap and recommending the phases and budget for implementing key SharePoint functionality. Successful SharePoint projects are typically implemented in short phases that deliver a defined solution or set of functionality that delivers value to the end users.

The initial governance meeting is critical to establishing the principles for the SharePoint project. This initial meeting should:

- Explain the SharePoint Program and Roadmap
- Review Project Timelines
- Detail Guiding Principles, Approach, and Governance
- Validate Roles and Responsibilities of the Governance Board
- Confirm SharePoint Initiative Board Team Membership
When developing the guiding principles, several areas should be evaluated. These areas include:

- The amount of customizations. Should the implementation be very close to out-of-the-box or was customizations needed to meet the required functionality?
- The development of a global framework and governance for internal and external SharePoint usage?
- Look and feel, designs?
- Participants / quotas?
- Exposure (Internal / External)?
- Data retention?
- The design and implementation using a phased approach. Using the SharePoint Roadmap, determine the phases of functionality that will deliver a defined, measurable business value.
- The determination of the importance of a customized user interface versus the functionality of the site?
- The creation of a consistent user experiences (internal / external)?
- SharePoint templates/themes for common branding?
- The utilization of third-parties to provide marketplace best practices and deployment assistance?
- The establishment of program metrics: Quality, performance, functionality, cost?
- The capture the successes and areas for improvement, translated into lessons learned, and applied to other initiatives?
- The prioritization of areas for future deployments of Social Networking, Web 2.0, and Collaboration Tools?

Once the Governance Board has been established, charter set and the project direction has been determined, the next steps towards establishing a governance program are to develop a governance plan. The plan is a guidebook outlining the administration and support of SharePoint system. It identifies lines of ownership for both business and technical teams, defining who is responsible for what areas of the system. Furthermore it establishes rules for appropriate usage of the SharePoint system. The plan will outline the approach to managing the SharePoint system, identifying if the system will be managed centrally by IT or distributed by the business owners. This is a key decision as it affects the process and procedures for provisioning new sites and maintaining the access to current sites.

The Governance Board, as previously stated, provides the business leadership. This includes:

- Vision, Design, Plans, and Results?
- Policy, Procedure, and Issue Resolution?
- Governance and Key Decision?
- Layout and Structure?

The Content Owner is responsible for managing the content and access to sites and sub-sites. This can include:

- Determining site membership?
- Policing the content integrity?
- Provisioning sub-sites?
The Contributor role provides users with the ability to create, update, and delete content. It is up to the governance plan to define the process and procedures for submitting and promoting content for general availability. The Reader role is a general role assigned to users of the system that allows them read-only access to content.

Just as important as the business roles is the Technical Administrator. This role is responsible for:

- Maintaining the system configuration
- Managing the standards and security
- Enforcing the policies and procedures
- Provisioning the sites
- Performing system maintenance and backup

Establishing these roles early in the program will ensure that the necessary policies and procedures are established and followed both during implementation and usage of the system.

- Creating the Governance Board and Governance Plan are an essential step toward the success implementation and operations of your SharePoint system. In summary the key items to remember are:
  - Governance should be part of an overall Roadmap
  - Governance should be included in the Foundation and in all phases
  - Governance IS an ongoing effort.
  - Departments may change depending on project mix

Key roles will not change
Best Practices will not change

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**Technology, As Ever, Isn’t the Answer**

*By Roger Poole,*

*Global Head of Records Management for Barclays Capital.*

**Views expressed in this blog are my personal views and not those of my employer. Any reference to any living person or organisation, past or present, is entirely co-incidental**

When they realised technology alone was never going to be the answer it was too late…

So, the enforcement regulator has just arrived in your offices with a warrant and will not leave until they have the information they are looking for…

Your immediate thoughts may be to summon the Head of IT. However, it is unlikely they will be able to locate all of the Records required. It is common for Records to be retained on different media and in a number of locations such as:-

- email
- shared drives
- systems databases
- external vendor systems storage
- microfilm
- Microfiche
- hard copy kept on the premises
- hard copy stored with a professional vendor offsite

The result of failing to identify/provide the Records when required is likely to be:-

- reputational risk – the risk of damage to your organisation as a result of negative publicity
- a fine
- imprisonment
- a fine and imprisonment

From the above, we can see it is of paramount importance to have a defined (and implemented) Records Management Policy and framework. The requirements of such a Policy and framework will be driven by the laws of the jurisdictions you trade in. The requirements will also be impacted by Regulators body such as:-

- Financial Services Authority (United Kingdom) – FSA
- Securities and Exchange Commission (US) – SEC
- Civil Aviation Authority (UK) – CAA
- Food and Drug Administration (US) – FDA
- Regulatory bodies often have the authority to impose significant fines.
We can see from the above that there is a need for someone to have an organisation wide remit to develop and implement Policy (in collaboration with Legal, Compliance and Tax). This should be a short high-level document supported with advice in terms of Retention Requirements (Retention Periods and, where necessary, specific media types). This programme must have high level sponsorship to succeed.

Some form of inventory should be built across the organisation to ensure there is an understanding of where all the Firm’s Records are retained. This will include, in most cases, a number of legacy systems and records. An important part of this task is to talk to as wide an audience as you can. Pockets of information can be found throughout the organisation.

Once such an inventory has been completed you can start work on determining the most appropriate infrastructure to maintain (and make available) these Records. ECM technologies are great, but proceed cautiously ensuring a detailed cost benefit determination is taken at each step. Bear in mind it is likely that, for some Records, an investment in technology may not be appropriate.

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8 Ways SharePoint Helps in Enterprise Governance, Risk and Compliance

By Thomas Bahr and Michael Neumann, Enterprise Content Management Projects for BearingPoint

BearingPoint is an independent management and technology consultancy. Owned and operated by its Partners throughout Europe, BearingPoint is offering its clients the best possible value in terms of tangible, measurable results by leveraging business and technology expertise. The company currently employs 3,250 people in 14 European countries and is serving commercial, financial and public services clients.

BearingPoint’s Enterprise Governance, Risk and Compliance (EGRC) solution is designed to help your organization better identify, understand and manage the dynamic interrelationships between risk and compliance and incorporate those disciplines into daily business activities.

8 Ways SharePoint Helps in Enterprise Governance, Risk and Compliance

1 — Learn how to manage risks and compliance.
Managing business risk and achieving regulatory compliance are among the greatest challenges that enterprises face. There is increasing pressure to comply with evolving legislation, mandates, standards and regulations designed to protect against an array of risks that span different industries, disciplines, governments and geographies.

Yet in many organizations, compliance and risk management have been treated as silos of responsibility, supported by reactive point solutions that can introduce new cost burdens and complexity. Constant fire drills, regulatory pressure, organizational anxiety and even outright confusion are not uncommon. Despite large investments in this area executives believe their organizations have inadequately addressed the processes and systems dealing with risk, compliance and security.

Top challenges in risk management are

- Prioritizing risks
- Defining control objectives and control activities
- Measuring potential risks and control efficiency
- Constantly being in reactive mode when dealing with risk

2 — Become “risk adept” rather than “risk-averse.”
Take a results-oriented, execution-driven approach to become “risk-adept” rather than “risk-averse.”

A best-leading-industry approach has these elements:

- Use strategies and processes that drive value (access, execute, monitor, remediate and report)
- Establish effective processes integrated with automated workflows to make sure nothing important is skipped
- Maintain a library of tested risk indicators and control activities
- Remain current with new and emerging risk factors and compliance issues
- Leverage insights about leading practices from many industries

The approach should be designed to help your organization better identify, understand and manage the dynamic interrelationships between risk and compliance and incorporate those disciplines into daily business activities.

Build up a global, unified risk and compliance framework that can be vertically tailored to your specific needs, allowing your organization to assert more control over complex and ever-changing risk and compliance dynamics. With this approach, you can achieve greater levels of compliance and better manage risk at less cost with degrees of efficiency and precision not possible with a traditional siloed approach.

3 — EGRC comprises strategy, business process and technology.

An enterprise wide governance, risk and compliance implementation (EGRC) comprises strategy, business process and technology to give your organization an enterprise-scale platform configurable to address a host of regulatory requirements, industry standards and controls and internal policies. It should help managers and auditors assess the potential effect of threats and vulnerabilities on compliance—including the risk of noncompliance itself—by covering:

- Internal policies and procedures: configuring the solution to your organization’s specific needs.
- Enterprise risk management: assessing and managing business risks using key risk indicators that measure risk likelihood and effect, then translates those effects into control objectives and monitors effectiveness through compliance.

For companies based in the United States, the EGRC solution should align with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board’s Auditing Standard No. 5, which encourages a risk-based approach to compliance under Sarbanes-Oxley Section 404. It gives public companies greater flexibility to focus compliance initiatives on areas that present the greatest degree of risk, such as financial-closing processes or fraud-management controls, rather than on myriad Sarbanes-Oxley-based controls without regard to the importance to their business.

4 — EGRC is aware of end users needs.

Based on our experience the primary end user wants to...

- Store, access, search, track and manage risk and compliance data, e.g. by a survey functionality that helps users in making a realistic assessment of their current state and also chart out the course of action for their risk or compliance program.
- Automate workflow processes and information routing.
- Prioritize, assess and manage remediation of control deficiencies e.g. by entering Risk, KRI and Compliance data into libraries or link attributes through a hierarchy.
- Collaborate atop a familiar standards-based platform.
- Monitor risk and compliance with metrics, alerts and analytics e.g. by reviewing status of risk and compliance metrics.
5 — *SharePoint offers features and capabilities for EGRC.*

Why? Here are some reasons:

- Rapidly acceptable. The familiar Microsoft “look and feel” increases the speed of adoption and reduces users’ resistance to change, while implementing standard libraries for COSO, CoBIT, ISO and ITL.
- Configurable versus customizable. Taking advantage of the extensive and flexible software functionality of Microsoft’s applications enables business requirements to be met through configuration instead of the development of custom code. Best examples: are versioning, audit logging, multistage workflow, survey, search, reporting and dashboard functions.
- Practical and cost-efficient. Most organizations have already standardized on Microsoft and have most of the necessary applications to run the solution, thereby reducing acquisition costs and freeing up resources for more value-added activities.

6 — *Tips for implementing an EGRC platform.*

In order to adequately address ongoing business risk and compliance, organizations need a transparent view of their enterprise. A leading-edge approach has these elements:

- Use strategies, processes and technologies to proactively manage risk and compliance enterprise wide.
- Use automated workflows to increase efficiency and reliability.
- Provide a comprehensive enterprise risk and compliance management framework.
- Build a library of identifiable risk indicators and control activities.
- Stay current with new and emerging risk factors and compliance issues.
- Leverage insights about leading practices from many industries.
- Create a “one size fits one” risk-based compliance solution that will drive business value and reduce costs and complexities.

7 — *Realize the benefits of integrated risk and compliance management.*

By introducing an EGRC solution you will realize the following benefits:

- Reduce costs
- Reduce audit fees, fines and penalties through integrated systems, controls, processes and audit trails
- Save internal costs and gain efficiency by redeploying resources from manual and duplicative controls
- Reduce Complexity
- Replace silos of risk and compliance activities with an overarching, integrated view
- Reduce risk and compliance complexity by integrating and de-conflicting risk requirements
- Increase Business Value
- Align a comprehensive risk strategy with specific execution controls through transparent processes and technology
- Make better, informed decisions with forward visibility into risk and compliance through data transparency and real-time reporting
- Improve risk and compliance management with a solid governance structure
8 — *What you need is a Governance Model.*

We believe there are 4 key competencies in a governance model: 1) Guiding/Strategizing, 2) Designing/Coordinating, 3) Executing and 4) Monitoring.

- A Steering Committee with executive sponsors will guide the company by defining a policy for EGRC and aligning it with the Information Management policy.
- Project teams will initially design and coordinate processes to enable each business to consistently fulfill their execution obligations for EGRC; and Working Groups will monitor these for continuous improvement.
- Each business will execute and enforce the policies and processes for EGRC.
- Internal Audit will audit and monitor adherence to the policies and processes as part of routine audits of EGRC.

Visit our Digital Landfill Blog
Classification Scheme Development Process

This outlines a general process for developing classification schemes. Different schemes may require additional steps – for example, a records retention schedule will involve more legal research.

1. **Identify stakeholders.** This will probably include the overall ERM program owner; one or more project sponsors depending on what ERM-related projects are underway; the business unit managers for whatever BUs will be using the scheme; records management staff; and IT staff.

2. **Define the purpose of the scheme.** Different classification schemes will have different purposes and will therefore be designed differently.

3. **Determine the approach for the scheme.** The approach should identify whether it will be hierarchical or thesaurus-based and whether it will be based on the organizational structure, a functional approach, a subject matter-oriented approach, or some other method.

4. **Collect information.** This will include gathering information from the information inventory and the interview and survey notes produced during the inventory; existing classification schemes; existing job aids and references; and other classification-related resources such as standards and guidelines.

5. **Develop the scheme.** Different schemes will require different amounts of effort to create. It is more important to do it right and do it well than to do it quickly.

6. **Pilot the scheme.** As part of the pilot program users will have a chance to use the classification scheme to classify information and to find information. The pilot will help to ensure that everything the organization creates can be classified somewhere appropriate and that users can understand the structure of the scheme.

7. **Deploy the scheme.** Once the pilot is complete the scheme can be rolled out to the users who will be using it. If it is to be incorporated into a technology solution, such as an ERM system, it can be set up within the system at that point. Deployment might also include creating templates or forms, loading controlled vocabularies into fields, and setting up business logic for populating and validating fields. It should also include training users on how to use the scheme.

8. **Gather feedback.** Users should be asked about the completeness and usability of the scheme once they are comfortable with it. If it is used in a technology system there may be additional statistics that can be gathered about if it is being used and how well. If any gaps are identified the process will begin again for the next iteration.

Join the conversation in the AIIM Communities
6 Practical Tips for Designing Taxonomy

By Johannes Scholtes,
Chairman and Chief Strategy Officer for ZyLAB

Now I know this is not the most exciting topic, but it is worthwhile because the role of taxonomy is becoming increasingly important to the complete search experience as well as the automatic classification of documents in various applications (see also the footnote).

Designing the structure for a dynamic taxonomy is not that hard if you follow these tips:

Tip 1: Use a Dynamic Taxonomy. When one takes the multi-dimensional approach with a traditional static taxonomy, each additional dimension will result in an explosion of possible relationships. This makes it very hard to maintain and setup several different taxonomies. However, in a dynamic taxonomy for faceted search, the multiple relationships between the concepts are dynamically inferred and also immediately visible to the end user. Therefore, they are closely related. One of the benefits is that it is possible to suppress the combinatorial explosion (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combinatorial_explosion) by combining different dimensions of different concepts in one multi-dimensional structure.

Tip 2: Use fundamental facets: the best approach is to break down the dynamic taxonomy into fundamental facets, each covering one specific dimension and together able to cover the entire universe of discourse. In a way, this is similar to traditional normalization as it is implemented in relational databases.

Examples of such fundamental facets are:

- Chronological order
- Alphabetical order
- Spatial / Geometric order
- Simple to complex order
- Canonical order
- Increasing quantity / quality order

Tip 3: Find logical hierarchical relations: Once the fundamental facets or dimensions have been determined, the next step is to determine hierarchical relationships, or in other words, find a IS-A (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Is-a ) hierarchy for objects in the facets. For example, "concept C" is a subset of "concept P" as part of a Child-Parent relationship, or more specifically, the concept "digital camera" is included in the concept “consumer electronics”. Make sure to use a clear and consistent way of ordering children of concepts in facets. If you don’t, then you will confuse your users.

Tip 4: Next, apply a number of known and proven principles to build up the facets. Examples are:

- Principle of division: organize your taxonomy as a set of independent “orthogonal” sub-taxonomies.
- Principle of mutual exclusion: avoid conceptual overlap between the different dimensions.
- Principle of relevance: use your division only in such a way so that it improves access.
By using these basic principles and by ordering your taxonomy in a logical manner, for instance from large to small cardinality you can use a structured approach to develop a dynamic taxonomy.

Tip 5: Also, be aware that taxonomies need to be maintained. Nothing is more disruptive than a badly maintained legacy taxonomy. This is also where text mining and content analytics can make a huge difference. They can help you to maintain your taxonomy, inform you of new relevant terms, clean-up legacy terms, and outline additional dimensions when things really change.

Tip 6: Last but not least, make sure to test your taxonomy on your user community to make sure it is truly practical.

Various example and many more tips on the process of designing taxonomy can be found here: http://www.taxonomybootcamp.com/2010/.

Footnote:
1. One of the properties of taxonomies that are used for faceted or exploratory search (see http://zylab.wordpress.com/2010/03/26/understand-the-two-different-faces... for more information) is that they need to be constructed of different (multi-dimensional) classification schemes. In other words, documents or multi-media objects need to be classified under more than one concept. These individual concepts are the facets used when searching and navigating.

2. The choices made are also relevant for the automatic construction of the facets by using text mining or other content analytics (see: http://zylab.wordpress.com/2010/01/26/finding-relevant-information-witho... for more information).

Join the conversation in the AIIM Communities
Why Create a Taxonomy for a SharePoint ECM Implementation

By Alan Weintraub, Principal, ECM and Governance Solutions for Perficient

I was in a customer presentation the other day and was asked about the importance of a taxonomy to the successful implementation of a SharePoint ECM solution. Why do you need a taxonomy and what value does it bring to the project? Taxonomy provides the structure to the SharePoint ECM solution that enables the users to easily find the information that they need to make a business decision. There are two basic components to a good taxonomy, a well defined and intuitive folder structure and a set of content types and associated attributes. I usually break the taxonomy into these two components to best address two distinctly different audiences; the “experts” and the “novices”. The “experts” are the group that uses the system on a daily basis and thus will use the advance features to find information. The “novices” are the group that may only use the system once a month or once a year to find that one critical item they need to make a decision.

For the “novices”, an intuitive navigation of the folder structure is key to finding information quickly. This type of navigation best mirrors the Windows Explorer folder structure and thus the same type of visual navigation that a one would use in locating a document stored on their My Documents Folder. By providing the “novice” with a visual navigation capability, the system will be viewed as easy to use and will not require constant retraining every time the “novice” wants to find a document.

“Experts” will want to search for documents using their specific knowledge about the content of the document, the document type and the associated attributes. SharePoint ECM solutions provide a search capability that allows the user to enter that’s specific information about the document into search fields for document retrieval. These fields can include full text entry, specification of a document type and values for the document attributes. For example, you are looking for a document that contains the words ‘4th quarter revenue’. You would enter the words ‘4th quarter revenue’ in the full text fields, pick the document type ‘10Q’ for the earnings document’ and the attribute ‘2009’ for the year. This query will return a single document, the 4th quarter, 2009 10Q. This is best way to find the one document that contains the information you are looking for.

As you can see, creating an effective taxonomy is critical to a successful SharePoint ECM implementation. It helps both the ‘novices’ and the ‘experts’ get the most value out of the information stored in the system.
The Importance of Controlled Vocabularies

By Carl Weise, Industry Advisor for AIIM

I regularly get agreement from other records management professionals when I say that starting a new management position in records management is quite different from starting a similar role in other areas of the organization.

Across all functions, the new person is to establish procedures and controls and to improve the operation and the performance of the function. Going forward, the work of the function is to be better than, perhaps, it was.

What is quite different with records management is that the new person is also responsible for the existing holdings which may have been built up over years and decades. These existing holdings may have no documentation associated with them, or have different levels of quality of documentation. Examining the existing documentation, you can come to realize that different departments, or areas, of the organization called the same records by different names. It can also be seen that the description of the records prepared by the same person may actual change over the years.

From this painful experience, records management professionals realize the value of consistent description of the records.

Users across all level of management have very little hesitancy in suggesting that records be retained for long periods of time. They don’t appreciate the work involved in being able to manage and retrieve the records for long periods of time.

The good news is that with both electronic and physical records, there are very powerful ERM solutions that can be used to manage records. However, along with the technology, controlled vocabularies over these periods of time are also very important.

A very important benefit of managing all records with the ERM computer solutions is the sharing of records and information across the organization. Records can be captured in San Diego, Chicago or New York and retrieved at all national, or international, locations of the organization. For this to be successful, users capturing records will need to use a structure and metadata (indexing terms) that others are familiar with, to find the information.

So while the ERM technology is very powerful, there is also the need for controlled vocabularies.

Organizations need to develop an enterprise-wide classification scheme to use with the technology. The classification scheme, once approved and put in place, is one type of controlled vocabulary.

In theory, there is the topic of developing a metadata model within an organization. This is set of metadata elements that will be used to describe the records across the whole organization. As I travel extensively to teach the ERM, ECM and EMM courses for AIIM, I am learning about large global and national companies that are doing just that - building metadata models.

There has been a lot of talk about how employees will not be willing to work in such a structured manner. This is a topic for another blog. However, the good news is that so much of the metadata elements can be
obtained from the computer systems, themselves, and staff are doing so much of this same activity on their own. Most of us move emails into personal folders that we have set up. Users would do the very same thing but within an organization’s structure. Most of us already apply tags to our internet content. We will do the very same thing using the organization’s metadata model. The ERM solutions, with their drop down menus and selection, using radio buttons, will accommodate this practice. If we are successful at resisting the natural push back we will get from the users, they will come to appreciate the benefits of working within a structure, especially in being able to find their records quickly.

How is your organization establishing structure to manage its records across locations and over time? What success have you experienced in getting employees to work in a structured manner?

Join the conversation in the AIIM Communities
What’s upfront is what counts

By Bob Larrivee,
Director and Industry Advisor at AIIM

Ok, you’re probably thinking, what’s he talking about, the front of what? Well I’ll tell you it is what we do upfront – in advance – as part of the ECM, ERM, SharePoint or any project that makes all the difference between success and expectations not being met. Companies look at ECM and all of the associated technologies as the solution but in reality if we do not take time to assess, plan and then implement, we will not get our desired results.

I have heard from some in my classes that organizations do not see this as the focal point but rather implementing technology as the first order of business. When I hear this I often ask if they have their governance in place. What about taxonomic structure, metadata strategies and security schemes? Are these in place and appropriate to meet the needs of the organization? This is typically where most organizations lack and projects fail. Using SharePoint as an example, I recently had several students in my class discuss how they implemented SharePoint and migrated away from shared network drives. The idea being that all information would now be managed in SharePoint where it could be found. The reality is that they created a container filled with information that could be searched but found no more easily than when it was on the shared drives. Team sites were popping up all over and no one had control. This scenario aligns with recent AIIM research that many SharePoint implementations lack governance, taxonomy, metadata and security strategies.

In my view, organizations have come to rely on technology to the degree that fundamental tasks have been lost. We do not need to develop a taxonomy our software will do that for us. Metadata is applied by the software automatically by our solution. This is all well and good but someone has to determine what metadata and what structure will be of greatest benefit in meeting the organizational requirements. Installing the software is only part of the process, planning and preparing is or should be the bulk of any project. Know what you need, know what you have, know where you are and know where you want to be. These are essential to success. If you are not sure how to go about moving in that direction, seek professional assistance and/or training to get you started.

What say you? Do you have a story to tell? What are your thoughts on this topic? What is on your mind? Do you have a topic of interest you would like discussed in this forum? Let me know.

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Webinar

What’s New in ECM Technologies
Join us for a special AIIM webinar that captures top technologies to watch for 2010. This “armchair” technology showcase will feature product demonstrations, customer case studies, and listener-driven Q&A.
http://www.aiim.org/Events/Webinars/Archived/403

Integrating ERP and ECM: the Why, How, and What of the Issues
ERP has long reigned supreme as the all-encompassing enterprise application, and is primarily focused on structured content. ECM, meanwhile has grown rapidly to become the repository of all the unstructured content and documents that accumulate outside of the purely transactional processes. Joining up these two major business engines has major potential as a common information interface for users across the business.

In this webinar we will present results from AIIM’s research indicating which process integrations bring the best ROI and what strategies are working for integrated access portals. We discuss the benefits and practicalities of integrating ERP with content and document management systems, what the most popular choices are for portal configurations and integration middleware, and what longer term issues might arise for support and compatibility.

http://www.aiim.org/Events/Webinars/Archived/397