



8 factors

to consider in creating
an information strategy

- How your organization can improve efficiency,
increase productivity, and reduce risk...

*document management, records management, email management,
enterprise 2.0, imaging, scanning, SharePoint, BPM and ECM*

About this eBook

Thanks to all the guest writers who contributed their work to this eBook.

The intention of this e-book and the other eBooks in the series is NOT to provide a set of detailed technical requirements for how to create a strategy for managing information. There are other places for that — the [AIIM web site](#) and [AIIM training](#) and [AIIM webinars](#) and [seminars](#) are good places to start.

Rather, the purpose is to increase awareness across a broad cross-section of organizations and industries about the kinds of issues you need to think about when you begin to adopt a more strategic approach to managing information.

So the purpose of this series is educational and evangelical rather than technical.

You are free to share the link to anyone to download the book — and we encourage you to do so.

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8 Factors to Consider in Creating an Information Management Strategy

How Your Organization Can Improve Efficiency, Increase Productivity, & Reduce Risk

For many years, organizations have survived by “winging it” when it comes to information management.

“Yes, we need a strategy for managing the financial assets of the organization, so we’ll invest in an accounting system.”

“Yes, we need a strategy for managing the physical assets and their associated data, so we’ll put in place an ERP system.”

“Yes, our human assets are important, so we’ll spend money on an HR system.”

But a strategy for managing information? Treat our information assets with the same rigor and discipline as we do our money, inventories, and people? OK, maybe we’ll automate a specific process. But in terms of getting our arms around the legendary “80% of the information in our organization that is unstructured,” we’ll get to that sometime, someday, thank you very much.

The sheer quantity of information that is descending upon our organizations is rapidly creating a set of circumstances in which we will not longer be able to just “wing it.” The strategic imperative to manage information effectively will soon become irreversible—with devastating consequences for those who assume it is otherwise.

1 — Don't underestimate the importance of your platform choices: The choices you make have a long tail.

The good news is that there are a lot of content and document options out there. The bad news is that there are a lot of content and document options out there.

The elephant in the room in a lot of ECM discussions is [SharePoint](#). Since its launch, SharePoint 2007 has demonstrated phenomenal growth. Recent AIIM surveys have indicated adoption rates of over 65% across multiple geographical regions and different verticals, and Microsoft is positioning SharePoint as the “Information Operating System” for organizations. It seems like all organizations using Microsoft products will over the next few years implement SharePoint in some fashion, and Microsoft has now started to create awareness around SharePoint 2010.

In many ways, “SharePoint” has become somewhat of a noun in the ECM space (like “Kleenex” for tissues or “Xerox” for copying), describing for many end users a cluster of functionality that begins as a replacement for shared drives for Office documents and a collaboration platform and extends into other more complex areas as the platform spreads. Even competitors to SharePoint in the collaboration space tend to increasingly use SharePoint as the reference point, essentially saying, “We can do ‘SharePoint-y things, but in a different infrastructure.”

A number of the more traditional ECM players who are more focused on transactional content and the mission critical processes associated with this content tend to position their capabilities as the “stuff” that SharePoint does not do out of the box. All of this is changing the ECM industry since ECM implementations now have to add value to SharePoint. Most analysts believe that SharePoint 2010 will consolidate the ECM repository business. A great deal of collaboration-driven and Office application content in organizations will be housed in SharePoint repositories.

We are also seeing a growing interest in open source content solutions. This is particularly evident in Europe (witness the European Commission white paper on open source solutions), but is increasingly the case in the United States (witness the recent decision to host the White House site on Drupal). Tom O'Reilly offered these comments on the implications of the Drupal decision: “While open source is already widespread throughout the government, its adoption by the White House will almost certainly give permission for much wider uptake... There are huge opportunities for open source, web 2.0, and new media companies in government, but there are also challenges reaching that market.” Open source companies seeking to penetrate the ECM space include (but are not limited to) [Alfresco](#), [KnowledgeTree](#), [Nuxeo](#) and [Plone](#). There are also a number of open source companies focusing on the WCM and E 2.0 space, most notably [Drupal](#), [Joomla](#), and [WordPress](#). In addition, a

number of SaaS solutions have emerged as alternatives to traditional in-house software (e.g., [SpringCM](#) and [Crownpeak](#)).

The more “traditional” ECM players (e.g., [IBM](#), [Oracle](#), [EMC](#), [Hyland](#), [OpenText](#)) increasingly focus their value on managing a continuum of content that often includes—but is not limited to—information in SharePoint repositories. They focus their robust capabilities on mission critical content intensive processes, imaging and capture, and records management and e-discovery, areas that are still relatively immature within SharePoint. These solutions typically entered organizations within a single department and then spread.

Early implementations were focused on the needs of document-intensive process owners and specialists rather than a broad base of general knowledge workers. These companies focus on their ability to manage content across a variety of repositories and forms (including SharePoint content) and across the full continuum of retention and records requirements. The larger of these companies (and Microsoft as well) are increasingly focused on the blurring lines between structured and unstructured information and the desire of users to manage all of this content and information, regardless if its type. The smaller ECM companies are increasingly focused on departmental and process specific document management and building their

value on their low cost, ease of adoption, and domain expertise.

In the absence of an information management strategy, most organizations arrive at what passes for a strategy simply by aggregating their past sins. Organizations typically have a variety of technologies and tools in place, often the result of decisions made years ago and often made within individual departments.

Simply ripping out this accumulated infrastructure is usually not an option. However, there are some hard questions that organizations should ask in terms integrating and leveraging what they have and driving future decisions against a strategy.

So how does an end user sort through the wide variety of platform options? We would suggest asking a few questions:

- How comfortable are you with reliance on a particular vendor “stack?”
- How does your organization value the various types of functionality normally associated with an ECM solution? This would include such areas as: portals, collaboration, search, business processes, basic document management, web content management, imaging and capture, records management, and e-mail management.

- How well does each platform perform the core functions that are MOST important to your organization?
- How much is out of the box and how much is through custom integration?
- In business terms, what are you really trying to accomplish (both short and long term)?
- How are the various solutions you are considering addressing [CMIS](#)? CMIS is an emerging standard that many feel will open the content world in the same way that SQL opened the database world.

2 — A good starting point: Focus on paper.

One of the first things that needs to be addressed in any content management initiative is paper. A few data points to consider:

- If the U.S. cut its office paper use by roughly 10 percent or 540,000 tons, greenhouse gas emissions would fall by 1.6 million tons — equivalent to taking 280,000 cars off the road for a year.
- There are over 4 trillion paper documents in the U.S., growing at a rate of 22% per year.
- For 56% of organizations, the volume of paper records is increasing.
- The average office worker uses 10,000 sheets of

copy paper each year and wastes about 1,410 of these pages.

- With the average cost of each wasted page being about six cents, a company with 500 employees could be spending \$42,000 per year on wasted prints.

There is a very compelling environmental case that can be made for reducing paper use through the digitization of key business processes. But a key element for organizations to consider is that the economic case for reducing paper use is just as compelling. Among the benefits:

- Direct and immediate cost savings on paper and shipping.
- Increased process effectiveness and efficiency.
- The potential to fully integrate field staff and offices into the information capabilities of the organization rather than relying on daily overnight mail.
- Reduced real estate costs through the elimination of filing.
- Improved morale as an integrated information infrastructure allows for greater flexibility in working arrangements.
- Reduced off-site storage as the sheer volume of what needs to be physically preserved declines.

Of course, scanning a document to an image is only half of the equation. The real process impact comes from capturing the information that resides within an image and converting this into data and information to power a business process. Capture technologies are a sort of force multiplier when it comes to content and document management. For example, integration of bar codes into the scanning process greatly accelerates both the speed and quality of the scanning process itself. Recognition technologies and forms technologies automate the capture of data and enhance the streamlining and automation of core processes.

So a key question to ask in building your information strategy is how well integrated are scanning and capture capabilities into the platform(s) you are considering. For the foreseeable future, the ability to easily digest and digitize analog content (i.e. paper) into your ECM platform(s) will be a critical element in your success. Paper is not going away.

Tied to this question of paper and processes is all the paper and files you have in offsite storage. This likely isn't going away either. Is there a way to better leverage the information in off-site storage. Is there a strategy in place to digitize the part of this information that is critical to ongoing processes? What is your strategy for managing the discovery implications of this information?

3 — Collaboration without structure is a waste of time.

Your people are constantly connected. Your people expect instant connectivity. They expect to work the same way sitting on a beach as they do in the office. Even the smallest of organizations increasingly work cooperatively on projects and documents, this is just as likely to occur from a coffee shop or home as it is from a formal office setting. Even if they have absolutely no malice in their hearts, employees are likely to have organizational documents and information on their phones and on their laptops and on their home computers. As our employees reach outside the firewall to access critical expertise, networks, content, and markets—and as we simultaneously require 365/7/24 availability—the lines between what is “organizational” and “personal” become somewhat mindless.

Inside the firewall, there is a growing frustration with email as the primary tool that we use for collaboration. Many organizations are in the process of deploying an entirely new set of extraordinarily powerful collaboration and content creation tools—often with no thought to how all this eventually add up. How do you move from what passes for collaboration in most organizations—endlessly sending around massive and uncoordinated attachments via email—to a more productive approach. The tools are out there to start to create a much more robust framework for collaboration.

The *New York Times* recently ran an article about the wave of SharePoint implementations that are sweeping across corporate America. Most articles about Microsoft Office SharePoint Services (MOSS) point out that its \$1 billion in first year sales make it one of the most successful software launches in history. Recent articles point to 130 million SharePoint licenses out there. Of course, SharePoint is only part of the drive to place corporate-hardened collaboration and social media tools on the desktop. In addition to SharePoint, other products like IBM's Quickr and EMC's CenterStage and Open Text's LiveLink and Alfresco Share and soon the Google Wave are sweeping through organizations, placing extraordinarily powerful collaboration and content creation tools in the hands of individual knowledge workers and project teams.

Social media both inside and outside the organization is becoming mainstream, creating an entirely new set of tipping point imperatives. Ask any young person what their most important applications are and they are likely to say things like Twitter and Facebook and LinkedIn and YouTube and Google Docs and Flickr and a feed reader. How will you bring these kinds of tools into the enterprise? Will you take the misguided IT-centric approach that many organizations take—"we just don't allow our people to use these; we block them" - or will you take the time to think through when and how and under what terms does use of these tools make sense. In the early days of e-mail and then again in the early

days of internet access, many organizations took the posture of blocking access to these tools for many employees. It did not work then and it won't work now.

A key part of creating an information management strategy for the next decade is thinking through what you are trying to do with all this collaborative capability, how it will fit together with the other information systems in your organization, how you will find stuff across these systems, and how you will eventually get rid of everything that you don't need to keep. Understanding how your platform choices impact your ability to seamlessly manage content across a continuum of retention requirements—from ad hoc social content to formal records—is critical to your success.

4 — The need for control is not going away.

As the complexity of the information management problem increases, so too do the risks of making mistakes. Organizations face a cascading set of information management compliance requirements defined in global, national, state, local, and industry terms. Managing these in manual terms has become cost prohibitive—as well as extremely risky—for many organizations.

On top of these, organizations must deal with very substantial risks associated with e-discovery. As the volume of information continues to expand exponentially, so too do the legal costs associated with discovery—unless technology

is applied to the process.

In addition to compliance and litigation risks of information mismanagement, there are a host of additional risks on a day to day basis that are often under-appreciated. “We didn’t keep it.” “It was on the disk that crashed.” “Hey, that’s not my signature!” “Where is it?” “The system is down!” It is only by adopting a holistic risk management mindset to information management (similar to the one you might take with managing finances) that organizations can fully appreciate the risks of mismanaging information.

5 — In a tight economy, it all comes down to process efficiency and automation.

Compared to recent years, cost saving has taken a clear lead over compliance as the main business driver for investments in document and records management. Tracking the most significant business drivers over a number of years shows regulatory control and associated compliance risk peaking in 2007 with a fall back in the last two years to cost savings. This is obviously due to the economic downturn - which was in part caused by insufficient regulatory control.

Processes are the glue that ties organizations together. Documents—especially paper documents—are the glue that ties organizational processes in knots. It is simpler to herd cats than to try to automate processes without automating the information flow associated with those processes.

Organizations need to think through the two types of processes in their organization and understand how their information strategy either facilitates or frustrates these policies.

The first type of process is those that are specific to your particular industry. If you are a bank, account opening and check processing and credit approvals are likely to be mission critical. If you are a hospital, health records management and dealing with RAC audits are core processes. If you are a college, student records and application processing are core processes. In addition to these industry specific processes are a host of processes that are endemic to any organization. Invoice processing. Contract management. Human resource processing. Accounts payable. These kinds of applications are often thought of a “horizontal verticals” because they are defined in process terms, but applicable to any organization. Many organizations first test the waters of document and content management by automating these kinds of processes.

Many organizations survived the first wave of the information revolution by assembling a patchwork quilt of technology and manual systems. The result of this patchwork approach is a host of process inefficiencies:

- It costs \$20 to file a document, \$120 to find a misfiled document, and \$220 to reproduce a lost document.

- 7.5 percent of all documents get lost; 3 percent of the remainder get misfiled.
- The average document is photocopied 19 times.
- Professionals spend 5-15% of their time reading information, but up to 50% of their time looking for the right information.

The viability of this manual patchwork strategy will increasingly be in question as the volume of information that must be managed rises. We are rapidly approaching the point at which only additional technology to automate information ingestion and digestion can solve the problem. Very soon, organizations that rely on individual employees to smooth out the gaps and white spaces in their information management strategy will be at a distinct disadvantage.

6 — In making choices, think knowledge workers, not document specialists.

For many years, the document and content industry was focused only those employees for whom document and records management were a core part of their day-to-day job responsibilities. Think of these employees as document or records specialists focused on making a particular process work—maybe 5% of the total workforce.

While the needs of these specialists are not going away, the need for effective information management tools now touches almost every knowledge worker in your

organization. “A pleasure to use” is not the phrase that many of our knowledge workers would use to describe the information management systems that we give them. It is also not the phrase that many of our customers would use to describe the experience of interacting with our externally facing web systems.

It is not unrealistic to think that your employees—who currently say they are overwhelmed by the volume of information they must manage and who currently say they spend hours each day just dealing with email—will need to manage 10X as much information in the near future.

Unconventional forms of information are everywhere. Paper documents are still much better managed than electronic Office files, although there is a likely effect in many offices that paper filing procedures are deteriorating as electronic content takes over. Instant messages, SMS/text messages, blogs and wikis are largely off the corporate radar in 75% of organizations. Heavy-handed governance of these nascent channels is considered to be old-fashioned, but given the potential external exposure, lack of policies and lack of inclusion in the corporate archive is a major risk.

How will your employees handle this tidal wave? Simply extrapolating the current tools and approaches to deal with this tidal wave will not solve the problem. A new approach is needed. The key to organizational productivity as the

economy recovers will be individual knowledge worker productivity. And yet many organizations are frankly in a state of “they don’t know what they don’t know” at best and a state of denial at worst.

7 — You need a plan.

What all this boils down to is creating an ECM architecture for your organization. How on earth do you go about such an undertaking? Here are some suggestions from Michael Elkins from the Kestral Group:

- Requirements and not just technology should dictate the architecture. Solutions developed in a vacuum are far more likely to fail. The best solution is not always out of the box from the ECM vendor.
- Start with what you know. Nearly a third of all companies have implemented Master Data Management (MDM) technology in order to gain control of their structured data sources. Unfortunately, few companies are utilizing that data to assist with the development of their ECM information architectures.
- Don’t create something unwieldy. It’s important to have a comprehensive information architecture that provides benefit to the company, but there can be a fine line between adding value and creating overhead. Sometimes, less is indeed more.

- Leave all information access options on the table. Typing a term into a search box is not always the best path for a user to get what they need. Folders and taxonomies are not dead. A strong information architecture should provide flexibility in how information is accessed.
- Data governance is critical. Developing the information architecture is not the end of the process, but rather just the beginning.
- Think big and think portable. All too often, ECM deployments are departmental in nature. As a result, only the implementing department’s needs are taking into consideration at the time of the design.

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.

8 — In everything you do, remember that change is difficult.

[Crown Partners](#)' Lynn Fraas describes the user adoption challenge in this way: "A consistent topic in ECM circles is low user adoption. We think of ECM as 'mature' technology, however, most companies still struggle with broad user adoption. In implementing ECM technology we fundamentally change the way an individual or group does their job. Consequently, the business process and culture change associated with the technology is much more significant than the implementation of the technology itself."

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.

Per Lynn Fraas, the key elements in a successful change management initiative are:

- Get top management support.
- Start small.
- Be fanatical about internal PR and communication.
- Use personas to understand how the new system will impact users.
- Focus on the business process (not the underlying technology).
- Get users and business owners involved early in the process.
- Train, train, and then retrain.

8 Factors to Consider When Evaluating a Next Generation ECM Platform

With more than 16 years experience in Enterprise Content Management, **Cheryl McKinnon** has developed a keen interest in the challenges facing information workers in the increasingly electronic and online work environment. Her specialty is researching, writing and educating both business and technical audiences on the trends in information management, social media for business and the rise of open source in enterprise. Holding progressively senior positions with key vendors such as [Nuxeo](#), and formerly Open Text, Hummingbird and PC DOCS, she brings years of market and requirements research in addition to experience in consulting and training.

An active member of industry associations such as AIIM and ARMA, Cheryl frequently contributes articles and opinions to online and print publications, and speaks regularly at industry conferences. She holds a BA (Hons.) from the University of Winnipeg, a Master of Arts from Carleton University, and has completed the required coursework towards a PH.D in History at the University of Ottawa (though regrettably she remains “ABD...”)

1 — Look at New Approaches to Software Acquisition

Back at the turn of the century (yes we mean the late 1990s...) there was but one way to acquire a content management product to meet enterprise document or records management needs. We bought per-seat or per-server licenses that shipped on CD from the software vendor, crossed our fingers that we budgeted for enough seats or connections for key employees, all while hoping that the vendor roadmap delivered the fixes and features we quickly realized were missing.

In 2010 things are different. The options to acquire ECM software have changed dramatically, offering a far richer range of choices to serve customer needs—not just those of the vendor. Open source and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) are two new approaches that put power back into the hands of the enterprise. Simple, clear online downloads or subscription sign-ups via the web cut through the red tape of license keys, the endless sales cycle theatrical negotiations, and lets your team get started on an ECM project Today.

2 — Interoperability is Hot. Closed Systems are Not.

2010 will be the year that content silos get harvested—not busted. When evaluating your next generation ECM platform, watch for vendor commitment to new standards such as CMIS (Content Management Interoperability Services). Many businesses today are challenged by content

sitting in multiple document repositories, requiring costly and complex custom integrations to make it useful. The next wave of ECM will take this burden off of customers and build interoperability into core products. Watch for the vendors that are quickly building applications and integrations to help fuel quick solution delivery. CMIS integration today helps to bring managed content into BPM, WCM, portal or mobile-based applications quickly and with minimal re-coding needed to support new third party products.

3 — No Longer does the Vendor have to be in Control of your Company's ECM Roadmap

Would you be surprised to know that your company has more software developers on the payroll than even the leading ECM vendors? Government, financial services, and other large enterprises understand the value of having enterprise architects, information architects and application development expertise in-house. Companies that are innovators in their own markets, and that understand the value of technology to stay competitive, responsive and efficient, are becoming impatient with vendor roadmaps and release cycles that don't line up with their priorities. Next generation ECM platforms that have active community engagement, and use open source development practices give a tremendous advantage to organizations who want to deploy quickly, fix critical issues or create their own feature

extensions—because the customer knows their business better than anyone else.

4 — Compare your ECM Growth Plans with Vendor License Models

If your ECM vendor inhibits your organization's information management strategy adoption, product roll-out or application extension because of per-user license restrictions and limitations, it's time to look at alternatives. Next generation ECM platforms are not hobbled by the leftover client-server licensing model of the last century. In the world of the web, the burden of every new user added to the application is negligible—so why are we charged this way? Organizations that are on a growth path, that have merger/acquisition plans, or that simply want to be more holistic in their content management goals need to align with a vendor engagement model that supports their business goals—not with vendors that present costly barriers to natural growth.

5 — ECM Market is Differentiating: Platforms vs. Suites vs. Condominiums

An ECM Platform is a cohesive, end-to-end offering architected and built by a core team with a common vision (vendor or community). It is a foundation for the content or case-centric applications that business users need. Platforms are intended to be used as infrastructure: the plumbing to make business run in the knowledge economy. This

ecosystem of services, plug-ins, APIs allows organizations to be the makers - building the applications that are meaningful to their information workers and business objectives.

Several of the ECM suite vendors have been acknowledged as the “leaders” of this last decade. Feature rich product portfolios are assembled via acquisition - less organic internal R&D strong point solutions, integrated at wildly different levels of depth. The suite approach helped make sense of the diverse content management applications that emerged in the 1990s and needed to be consolidated. Increasingly this is the mark of the ‘old guard’ legacy ECM vendor.

We are now in the world of the web, and mobile, and social. Information workers aren’t afraid of technology and new devices any more. One size fits all apps that are tough to customize and tailor to specific business processes are frustrating to end-users and systems administrators alike. When the capabilities that sold the ECM suite are actually from entirely different products - different installers, system requirements, administrative modules, support for standards—tasks are burdensome for administrators.

And the Condominiums? Some of the Suite vendors are more cohesive in their vision and architecture than others. If every feature used to be a company... if it looks like a nice building from the outside, but through the front door you realize every unit has a separate owner... and is decorated

differently... every room has its own rent schedule...and the resident’s association won’t let you change anything.. some floors are well maintained and others left unrepaired... well then it might not be a Suite... but a Condominium.

6 — Generic DM and RM Don’t Cut it Anymore

Measurable resources—time and money—are what business managers worry about. General purpose deployments of ECM products generally don’t cut it anymore. Businesses are under pressure to constantly improve results, meet internal quality or external compliance mandates, discover efficiencies and automate routine tasks. ECM products that are time-consuming or costly to customize for specific business scenarios, or integrate into other key line of business applications risk low levels of user adoption and thus poor ROI. Your next generation of ECM platform needs to be built for rapid application deployment. Find the tool that lets your internal business analysts or content architects whip

up document types, lifecycles, shortcuts, new metadata or vocabularies to meet fast-paced business shifts in hours or days—NOT weeks or months.

7 — Is it Time to Future Proof Your Roadmap?

The ECM product landscape is littered with neglected and unloved solutions that got caught on the wrong side of a vendor acquisition. Has your license investment and ongoing maintenance fees only bought you the headache of

migration to the vendor's preferred product? Often yes. Next generation

ECM platforms that have a strong independent community through open source development practices build in an extra layer of 'future-proofing' insurance: no one corporate interest can completely set the roadmap. Active and engaged customer and partner communities have the opportunity of continuing development and evolution of products that are developed in the open. In this case, the customer is always right, and has the power to control its own ECM destiny.

8 — Find Better Protection for Customization Investments

Upgrades and patches are a natural part of the software world—no one should expect to stay on the same version indefinitely. Yet so many ECM deployments do languish on out-dated releases, risking loss of user engagement, forgoing integration with new office applications, or missing out on cool new features that could solve many help desk complaints. Why? Because the customizations done for legacy ECM products are so rarely portable to newer versions, either completely incompatible or require a rewrite that is too costly to pursue. Businesses that are serious about incorporating content applications into their core processes can't be shackled to old, outdated systems. Agile is a state of mind for successful enterprises today—constant tailoring, tweaking, improving helps tune how the business runs,

and ECM platforms should be able to easily keep up with ongoing innovative iterations demanded by business analysts and content architects. Your next generation ECM platform should have the tools, design environments and extensible nature that's designed to be shaped for your business. No longer should your content management choice be a burden that holds back your corporate evolution.

8 Ways to Choose the Proper Scanner for your Needs

John Kaiser has over 18 years experience in the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) and Document Capture industry and is currently the Channel Sales Manager for [Imaging 411](#). Prior to joining Imaging 411 Inc, Mr. Kaiser was the Northeast Regional Manager for ABBYY USA Software House, Inc, a leading provider of document conversion, data capture and linguistic software. For nearly 13 years, Mr. Kaiser held various challenging Sales and Management positions at Cranel Imaging, a major distributor for document imaging products and scanner maintenance services within the ECM industry. John also has worked in a reseller capacity, providing highly productive solutions to major accounts throughout the U.S. John is a CDIA+ as well as an AIIM Practitioner.

While creating an Information Management Strategy, you need to determine the most important piece to getting your documents digitized and that is the scanner. There are many choices on the market ranging from low end, 25 pages per minute and up desktop scanners to production scanners that will perform at 100 pages per minute and up. Almost all have duplex scanning to scan both sides of a document,

To determine the best scanner for your needs, consider these items...

1 — Scan Speed and Duty Cycle.

When determining the scanner for your organizations strategy, you want to make sure that you have one that will complete the project in the specified time frame. You will want to determine the amount of documents you are looking to capture and the timeframe you are looking to complete the project in. In a lot of cases, organizations will purchase a less expensive scanner that is not designed to handle the throughput required by the project. Exceeding a scanners duty cycle places additional stress on the scanner and often results in equipment failure that may void any warranties or maintenance agreements.

2 — Flatbed or Auto Feeder?

When selecting your scanner, determine the type of documents you will be scanning. If they are books or extremely delicate or odd shape documents, you may want

to consider a flatbed scanner for these needs. This is a very slow option as you have to stop and restart the scanner for each scan along with having to change the documents. Auto feeders are a better option and will allow you to stack your documents and scan them without intervention. Most scanners do not require you to stop between batches. This continuous feed feature is something that you will want to make sure the scanner has for maximum productivity.

For production projects, you want to make sure your auto feeder can handle large batches. Typical production scanners have 300 - 500 page plus feeders. Most high production scanners feed from the left side which allows for the use of paper joggers to get the documents in a large batch aligned for proper feeding. Without proper alignment the number of double feeds and jams is likely to increase due to smaller documents not being fed properly.

3 — Resolution

Resolution is one of the keys to getting the best image quality. Most scanners have the option to capture images at 100DPI - 600DPI in bi-tonal (black and white/ grayscale). For color, 150 DPI is typically used as it's the best compromise between image quality and file size. Also remember, the higher the resolution, the larger your file size and also the slower the speed of the scanner. The manufactures typically give the scanner speed rated at 200 DPI landscape so be sure to ask what the rated speed is at higher DPI's.

4 — Ability to Sort Documents.

When dealing with large batches with separator sheets, batch or patch code sheets and exception documents due to odd size (such as checks, receipts, etc), you may want to have the scanner automatically sort these for you. For this feature to work, the scanner must have at least two output trays. This will save time and money when it comes to physically separating these types of documents from your batch after scanning. Some software companies will automatically remove the electronic image but the issue is still removing the paper documents from the batch. A scanner with multiple output trays typically will provide you with more control over your conversion process and reduce your cost of labor.

5 — Image Enhancement Features.

For a clean electronic image, there must be image enhancement built into the scanner or offered via software. When scanning documents, especially Bill of Ladings and other difficult to read documents, the image can be blurry, speckled or just impossible to read. Most scanners, especially those that were designed with OCR (Optical Character Recognition) in mind, have built in image enhancement features that will clean the image and make it more legible. There are also add-on software components that will do the same.

Another feature to consider is color dropout. This allows

for you to select a color for the scanner to drop out of the electronic image. This is often used in cases of highlighters. If scanned without this feature, the highlighted area will appear as a dark box. This box will cover up the text and making it non legible. Most scanners only do red, blue or green dropout but more sophisticated scanners have the ability to drop out any color you like by using color palette selections similar to those used in photo enhancement software solutions.

6 — Imprinter and Imprint Checking

Organizations often want to have the ability to verify whether a document was scanned. To do so, an option would be for the scanner to have an imprinter. The imprinter allows you to print characters on the scanned document which provide verification. The characters can be text or numbers such as a project name and date.

In some cases, a file that has already been scanned and imprinted may accidentally be placed in the next batch to be scanned. If this happens, some scanners have imprint checking. This feature allows the scanner to detect there are imprinted characters on the document and reject them (preferably to an exceptions hopper). This then allows the scanner operator to determine whether it is ok for this image to remain in the file or deleted.

7 — Consumables and Maintenance.

Consumables and maintenance can become the most expensive part of a solution if you do not do the proper research on the scanner and the manufacture. Find out what the average life of scanner consumables, what is considered a consumable and how to replace them. Most scanners only list rollers and bulbs as consumables. There are manufactures which include bulbs as part of the warranty and/or maintenance agreement. In some cases, belts and other items that wear out are considered a consumable and these may be costly.

Maintenance and warranties are another area to consider. A typical scanner warranty should be 90 to 120 days and includes on-site repairs that cover all parts and labor. Find out how much annual scanner maintenance is and be sure to get quotations on preventative maintenance calls also. These will help to keep the scanner at rated speed and also be able to spot something that may be going bad. Consider it like a tune up for a car.

8 — Multi-Stream Color, Bi-tonal and...?

Most scanners come with the ability to scan in color, gray scale, black and white and color. If you need to have color, you will need to verify that the scanner does so. A great feature to look for is the capability to do dual or tri-stream output. The dual stream feature allows you to capture and

export a high resolution color and a bi-tonal image in one pass from the scanner. The tri-stream feature allows the user to configure three different outputs. For instance, with a single scan you can capture an image with color dropout to send to your forms processor, a bi-tonal image to full-page OCR and a full color image that can be stored for archival purposes, in both simplex and duplex modes.

Conclusion

There are many different options for scanners that need to be considered based on your application and size of project. It is recommended you work with a reputable Value Added Reseller that can provide you with assistance in this area as well as the full solution. Stay away from internet resellers and order takers as you will get a good price up front but end up paying in the long run.

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8 Factors to Consider in Creating an Information Management Strategy

Joan Honig is Product Marketing Manager for Westbrook Technologies, Inc., developer of Fortis™ and FortisBlue™ document management software. Fortis and FortisBlue are in use at thousands of customer sites worldwide, to capture, index, store and retrieve critical information from anywhere— instantly and securely. For more information, visit www.westbrooktech.com.

Jim Sheridan is Executive Vice President for the DRS Imaging Group, one of the largest service bureaus in the United States. DRS offers a complete line of onsite and outsource services (such as Imaging, Data Entry, Data Capture, and Micrographics), turnkey systems, imaging-related hardware and document management solutions. For more information visit www.drsimaging.com/index.html

1 — Establish an Enterprise-wide Approach

Knowledge workers once accessed information from neat stacks or disorderly piles of paper on their desks, or from alphabetized folders. Information management techniques varied with each individual. Without an enterprise-wide strategy, employees may apply the same attitude to electronic documents, data and images—filing them away in folders on computers, often forgetting where they put them. Ideally, an enterprise-wide system will enable your staff to find a particular document or piece of information immediately—for reference, to kick off a business process, for collaboration, an audit, or for discovery in a lawsuit.

A well-designed information management strategy improves business processes, helps organizations meet compliance mandates, and fosters effective collaboration. It requires a holistic way of thinking that looks beyond classifying, archiving and sharing data, documents and electronic files. An IDC study showed that an enterprise with 1,000 knowledge workers wastes \$48,000 per week (\$2.5 million per year) due to an inability to locate and retrieve information. Moreover, it's been estimated that 80% of vital business information resides in unmanaged repositories, making effective utilization nearly impossible.

2 — Make Process Re-engineering Part of the Plan

Creating an information management strategy often

identifies the issues that are driving up operational costs and keeping your organization from running efficiently. Many business units, including order management, accounts receivable, accounts payable, human resources, and risk management have great potential for generating quick ROI from streamlined processes.

Automating workflow requires a lot of planning. The most difficult aspect is not in determining how to automate a manual process; it's getting everyone to agree what the process is and should be. We estimate that at least 30% of total project time should be spent defining current business processes and gaining consensus on the proposed new process. Once that's been done, implement the new process, test, adjust, retest, and roll it out.

3 — Identify Champions among Stakeholders in Each Department or Functional Group

Implementing new technology means that there will be changes to everyone's day-to-day work life. Organizational change is easier to accept if there is enthusiasm that runs from the top down. Define the organization's information management objective and then empower the key stakeholders to create the path to achieving it.

4 — Plan for Line-of-Business Extension and Integration

You have invested in your legacy systems and should

continue to benefit from that outlay. You don't have to change what already works well or disrupt ongoing efforts. Understand where your business information flows in and out of your systems and identify consolidation points. Look for solutions that provide non-invasive data exchange. The line between structured and unstructured content is blurring. Organizations need meta-data and content search that are effective across systems.

5 — Encourage Collaboration but Control Access

Your system should be highly auditable and flexible. Plan to carefully track user and administrator activities to assure compliance with Sarbanes-Oxley, HIPAA, state records management rules and other industry-specific regulations. Audited user activities should include indexing, modifying, deleting, viewing, faxing, forwarding, emailing and printing data and documents. Your information management strategy should include the ability to track versions, audit system changes, and protect intellectual property from unauthorized access.

6 — Provide Remote and Mobile Access

According to a Tech Republic study of 370 IT and business professionals, 75% viewed extending business applications to mobile and remote workers as a high priority. Remote workers are also coming to expect the same access as local employees to applications and internal resources. Internally,

IT professionals feel the strain of having to support the complex requirements of a growing mobile and remote workforce. Look for applications that provide secure and easy access for remote and mobile workers across a range of environments—satellite offices, home offices, and customer sites.

7 — Don't Forget to Measure Incremental Process Improvement and Track ROI

Executing your information strategy involves ongoing analysis, planning and measurement. Decide in advance what activities you plan to track, set benchmarks and celebrate progress.

8 — Develop a Strategy with the Flexibility to Accommodate Change by Enabling Integration with Emerging Technology

Your information management strategy must be built to accommodate change. Invest in technology that is well positioned to take advantage of new platforms and services. Look for solutions based on Web services which are designed to support richer, more interactive Web applications. While cloud computing is poised to become more prevalent, there are still unanswered questions about the safety of data housed in the cloud as well as legal issues in terms of required “uptime” and fear that data could be held captive. This may keep you from exploring the cloud today.



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The 8 Things That All DM Solutions Need to Make Life Easy

Bergen Wilde is the Director of Channel Development at MaxxVault LLC and is responsible for fostering the growth of the MaxxVault reseller network. Bergen quarterbacks sales support, co-marketing activities and reseller training, keeping the network running at peak efficiency and profitability. Bergen has been involved in the design and delivery of Document Management solutions for over 8 years. For more information about MaxxVault solutions please visit www.maxxvault.com.

1 — Easy to Use Interface

When building a strategy for a successful electronic document management solution—as with any significant change to the way business is done within your organization—user acceptance is crucial. The simplest way to minimize the impact of a new solution is to make it as easy and familiar to use as possible. When reviewing different vendors, be sure to have the eventual users as part of the review process. Apart from getting the features users need, how quickly do they understand the layout? Is the interface easy to understand? Does it look like standard applications they are using on a daily basis (such as Microsoft Office) or is it completely different? Is the interface customizable so the users don't suffer confusion from features they don't need to use? Would the casual user have much difficulty in remembering how to use it? If the answers are “no” then the success of your implementation is in jeopardy.

2 — Easy Solution Switch - Open Architecture

A good electronic document management system will free organizations from the pain of compartmentalized, off-site or otherwise difficult to obtain data. Since it is becoming more and more vital to ensure employees have access to the information they need, it makes little sense to implement a document management system that holds your data hostage. Success is built largely by being the best to foresee the future and being prepared for any eventuality. Having an open

system is insurance against unanticipated changes to your corporate network architecture. Document management systems with an open architecture make certain that a bridge can be made between it and other business applications.

3 — Ease of Integration

What good is moving all of your documents and organization's information to an electronic system if it is no easier to access? EDMS is supposed to deliver the required information to the fingertips of the worker to achieve the promised improvements in efficiency and to ensure informed execution of their duties. Switching between applications is tedious and unnecessary so it is vital that the EDMS application chosen can communicate with the disparate applications without costly add-ons or customized programming.

4 — Easy Importing

Not all document management solutions are created equal. Production capture and importing features are a “must have”. The EDMS must support production scanning, remote scanning, web scanning, email capture, ERM, XML data import and have strong add-In features to store files directly into the EDMS repository from key business applications such as Outlook and Microsoft Office.

5 — Easy 1-2-3 Compliance

One of the top drivers for EDMS is its ability to implement and enforce the various legal obligations around the holding and handling of important documents and data. With the rise in different types and sources of this information such as email, text messages, instant messages, blogs and wikis, the need for records management and overall compliance has never been greater. Your EDMS of choice should not only be able to capture and manage these different data formats but also be able to easily and quickly enforce your compliance policies. Setting up retention and compliance rules should be as easy as 1-2-3.

6 — Easy Flow Workflow

You would be hard pressed to find anyone with just one task to perform to complete their work. Particularly in a tight economy, we are all asked to assume extra responsibilities. While EDMS systems can dramatically improve your workflow processes, many still require that the responsible parties monitor several in-boxes. To ensure efficient processing, the EDMS needs to notify users of new tasks regardless of whether they are in the EDMS system or not. Items requiring attention should be easy to locate and process. The workflow tools also need to be flexible enough to provide full collaboration options at the touch of a button. If the previous task was not completed or there is a problem, sending the document backward through the process or to

an exception queue should be available without changing the integrity of the workflow. Workflow processes need to be streamlined and flow naturally within your selected EDMS vendor.

7 — Easy Search

While the ability to search for documents may seem obvious and not worth a second look, ensuring that your EDMS of choice can locate and present the desired information is vital. Ease of use and search flexibility is key in any solid search solution. If users can find what they are looking for quickly and easily your EDMS solution will be a home run.

8 — Easy Forms

The best way to eliminate paper is to never create it in the first place. Using electronic forms can dramatically reduce paper costs by shifting forms to the keyboard and away pen and paper. A complete EDMS should have little trouble converting internal documents such as vacation request, expense reports, activity logs or purchase requests into e-forms. E-forms is the Greener way to complete your business processes. Making forms widely accessible and easy to use will only magnify the return on your EDMS investment.



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8 Strategies for Increasing User Adoption

Tracey Klein is Divisional Vice President of Sales for mindSHIFT's Application Development & Integration practice group, managing a team of 40 consultants and software developers highly specialized on Microsoft Information Worker Solutions. She has consulted on, and managed projects for mindSHIFT's application development customers for over 10 years. She has extensive experience guiding customers through various types of technology projects and consulting on business initiatives and challenges. Tracey earned a Masters Degree from New York University in Management and Systems, with thesis work in Software Project Management. For more information, go to www.mindSHIFT.com/SharePoint

Organizations often make big plans to get users on-board and excited about their new SharePoint intranet after it launches. They have an office pizza party to announce the new intranet, set everyone's browser to default to the SharePoint site, or run contests on the site and award prizes for those who visit.

While these tactics may work to some degree, the problem is that each one treats user adoption as an afterthought. With many organizations planning to re-launch their SharePoint sites on 2010, or first embarking on a SharePoint project now that 2010 has arrived, it's time to put user adoption strategies where they belong: at the start of the project. To maximize user adoption of your new intranet, here are the top 8 strategies to consider for your project.

1 — Get Input from Across the Organization

Intranet projects are often owned by the Information Technology (IT) and Human Resources departments—working together, or perhaps with a vendor. Marketing departments sometimes weigh in with their needs, management will establish some requirements, and development begins. This approach can leave many functional and operational requirements out of the intranet design. It is critical to include every area of the organization in the planning phase of your SharePoint deployment. Even if their requirements are “parked” for a subsequent phase of development, these users will feel like they were part of the

process and their needs were heard, thus making them much more likely to use the site when it launches.

2 — Analyze Current Usage and Traffic Patterns

Assess your existing intranet for guidance on the features and content that are important to the users. Even intranets with the lowest traffic usually have a feature or two that users will miss if taken away. So look at your usage reports and make sure to account for popular pages, content, or features in your new SharePoint deployment—or risk alienating users. If you don't have reports currently available, there are products and services you can use for just a few weeks to get a baseline indication of usage. Additionally, comparisons against old usage reports will be a great way to benchmark success and adoption of your new SharePoint site down the road.

3 — Don't just Migrate all of your Old Content

If you are replacing an existing site with SharePoint, think carefully before you migrate all of its content to your new site. There are tools available that automate content migration from older versions of SharePoint as well as other platforms, and they can make the migration easy and very appealing. But it is a worthwhile investment of time to inventory current content and bring over only the relevant materials. Your organization and staff has probably changed in many ways since that old content was created. Think

about SharePoint as an opportunity to make a fresh start. Also, consider leaving the old site and its content running in parallel for a period of time, until users have adopted the new intranet, and then the old site can be retired.

4 — Give them a Little More

If your existing intranet is just a one-way communication path, add a team site for collaboration. Even if the users say they don't need advanced features or tools, use your SharePoint project to whet their appetites for what's possible. A simple tool like the Note Board feature of SharePoint 2010 will give users an alternative to company-wide email blasts.

5 — Brand it for your Organization

Your organization's corporate culture must be reflected on your SharePoint site. Use SharePoint Designer to give the site a look and feel that fits your company's mission and values. People choose to work in a certain job—in part—because of the attitude of the company. Is it a traditional investment bank, a high-tech start-up, or an educational institution? Your site should have a personality that matches the personality of your organization. In concert with the design, give your intranet site a name. Marketing works, and giving your new intranet a branded name will help to gain the critical levels of awareness among the users.

6 — Personalize the Experience

Today's user is accustomed to a web experience that allows them to connect with people they know, and meet people they want to know. Incorporating the social collaboration tools in SharePoint 2010 is a great way to mirror this experience for business and boost adoption. “My News Feed,” “Organization Browser,” and enhanced “My Profile” are just some of the tools available to enable personalization.

7 — Assume Search will be the Primary Navigation Tool

Even with the best navigation in place, users will default to using search more often than not to find what they need. Therefore, be sure you are tagging and indexing content properly. This will ensure that search results are accurate and can be filtered using new metadata-driven refinements in SharePoint search. Consistently presenting users with the right search results will keep them coming back.

8 — Plan an Official Launch

In the end, everyone loves pizza. So have an office party or announcement where you present the new SharePoint site and give everyone a brief demo.

If you follow the intranet launch strategies outlined here, your users will welcome the new site, and your new SharePoint site will be well on the way to success.

8 Factors to Online Presentment

Craig Smith, VP, Sales and Marketing, has been a proven leader in providing core leadership in the areas of business, technology, sales and marketing functions during an era of explosive growth in business and Internet marketing technology. Craig has a deep and diverse range of knowledge and experience from initiating innovative business/technology strategies through to large scale development and acquisitions. Craig has a BA from Carleton University.

Today customers, partners and internal stakeholders demand web access to accurate, timely, and pertinent business information. Driven by competitive pressure to continually improve the customer experience, organizations are enhancing their online, self-service model of customer interaction. The ability to promote seamless online information availability and react promptly to in-person or telephone customer service requests not only provides a marked competitive advantage, but can dramatically reduce operational costs.

Many organizations that use IDARS/ECM systems to archive their internal operational and customer-facing documents are faced with the following challenges:

- Meeting corporate SLAs for online document delivery performance
- Rapidly and cost-effectively implementing an online customer channel
- Ensuring document fidelity and providing delivery format flexibility
- Extracting and delivering content extracts for re-purposing
- Reducing document archive storage costs

1 — Strategy

The first thing you need is a strategy, which can eventually

boil down into a plan. Pull together the cross-functional team representing all the key aspects to your online presentment. Ask some key questions: What are we hoping to achieve in our presentment strategy? Are there key KPIs for service levels, cross or up sells? What are our limitations? Are there competitive aspects to the strategy? Try not to get bogged down in the technical details of what can or cannot be done, or what has or has not worked in the past. Build out your requirement list at a high level, prioritize based on feedback from the team and start to move forward. Your presentment strategy is a long-term commitment, and the best advice one can give is to plan ahead, plan for the best, and prepare for the worst.

2 — Accessibility

This generally makes us think of physical access to buildings, ramps to doors and automatic openers, but there is quite a bit driving web and document accessibility, particularly the visually impaired. Current and emerging legislative drivers are pushing presentment groups to address the needs of this important and growing customer segment. Providing websites and statements which can be used by assistive technologies such as screen readers is increasingly becoming a requirement for presentment providers. Often ignored, this segment of your customer base has, and is actively, spending money. They are also quick to praise organizations committed to accessibility, and even quicker to call out those

who are not.

3 — Multiple Archives

In today's world of financial services, having a single vendor's archive system is next to impossible. With the constant stream of mergers and acquisitions, as well as varied silos of business internally, it's almost guaranteed we will have many different archives. Whatever system we implement, it needs to be holistic and something which can easily and effectively connect with a wide variety of archive databases. Investigating performance at this level is key. Find out which databases work best and set KPIs which are reasonable, based on industry norms and organizational metrics.

4 — Document Storage

Still saving a separate copy of each individual statement as a PDF for online presentment? Why! The single largest operational cost reduction can be found using single instance storage, with some clients realizing reductions up to 80% or more. What is single instance storage? It's the process by which one separates the "promotional" components of a statement or invoice from the "transactional" ones, then reassembles them on-demand as and when needed for post or online presentment. Also known as "de-duplication", this technique creates a single copy of the common resources such as logos, graphics, fonts, and terms and conditions. It is

a process which can be applied to many file systems, email server software, data backup and storage solutions. It reduces the need to constantly store and present this common information, thereby significantly improving storage and bandwidth costs.

5 — Transpromo

You know the word, transpromotional. We all receive statements from one financial institution or another, whether it's our latest mortgage, credit card or investment summary. All those advertisements you see are transpromo. What better way to make use of all that empty whitespace. Did you know only 10% of organizations use transpromo as a delivery vehicle for marketing messages? Recent surveys have shown that typically statements sent via the post have a readership rate of around 95%. Do you open and read your monthly statements? Most consumers read their statements more than once, and on average read them for one to three minutes at a time.

6 — Unification

Are you providing multiple statements to your clients today? Perhaps you are a financial institution with many flavors, or a utility provider such as cable/internet/phone. As a client, why should I have to go through multiple statements or web interfaces just to access all the information for a single provider? Presenting a unified statement to your clients

(if you are not already) is quickly becoming the standard for statements. Pulling statements together into a unified interface can reduce your costs and improve customer experience, as well as provide more opportunities for up and cross-selling within a given interface or statement.

7 — Caching

One of the easiest mechanisms to improve performance, caching stores a set of commonly used files on the web server used for presentment. This means an end-user requesting such files does not have to wait for data to load from an archive or existing database, since it is readily available at the presentment layer. This is the same process web browsers use to increase performance for commonly visited sites and services.

8 — Dynamic Content Consolidation

With dynamic content consolidation, multiple related pieces of information are merged or linked together to provide an expanded and/or supportive view of a single transaction. An example would be a personal bank statement, where all relevant check images are appended to the end of the statement or hyper-linked within it and then made available online. This translates into significant time savings for end-users who would otherwise have to search for supporting materials. In addition, providing the customer with a consolidated view of all their transactions across multiple

lines of business, or over expanded periods of time, enhances the personalization and service experience.



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8 Ways to Use Collaborative Apps More Effectively

Luis Sala is Alfresco's Chief Community Officer. In this capacity he works with and educates the [Alfresco](#) community to the capabilities and benefits of Alfresco's technology. Luis has been at Alfresco since 2006 and was responsible for establishing Alfresco's US-based technical account management team.

Luis' previous experience includes being Chief Solutions Architect at Epicentric[®] which was acquired by Vignette[®] where he served as Principal Sales Engineer. Most recently, Luis was the Business Development SE at Systinet[®] (now Mercury[™]).

So, you've just deployed your brand-new collaboration app and you're looking forward to using it to improve your efficiency and productivity as you work with your colleagues on different projects. But hold on! How you use the application dictates your likelihood of success. You have to be aware that no matter how many features collaboration products possess (e.g., blogs, wikis, document libraries, etc.) they are only useful when properly adopted by the enterprise.

This article briefly outlines eight tactics that can drastically improve your overall productivity when using collaborative apps.

1 — Leverage Notifications

The first step to reaching productivity nirvana is to ensure that your collaboration app notifies you of relevant events when they happen. Mobile device notifications are particularly valuable given today's highly mobile workforce, but other notification channels include feeds (RSS & ATOM), email and instant messaging. I personally like to be notified via SMS text messaging and IM, just be sure not to ignore these notifications, lest you forget to act upon them.

2 — Avoid the Noise: Be Selective with Feeds

As useful as notifications can be, it's very easy to get carried away with them. It's important to subscribe to events you

know you are relevant to you. It's more important to know that Jim assigned a task to you than it is to be notified that Roger just had tuna for lunch. Use filters if your collaboration app provides it to help improve the signal-to-noise ratio.

3 — Be Diligent with Tasks

Most of us are accustomed to using email to assign or delegate a task, but pretty much every collaboration app includes some form of workflow and/or task management. I cannot understate the value of this capability, particularly when combined with feeds and notifications that inform you when a task has been assigned or is due.

Letting the collaboration app serve as your taskmaster and “external brain” will relieve stress and ensure you and your collaborators finish work on time.

4 — Keep Your Document Repository Up-to-Date

Collaborative workgroups are usually formed around some form of document (such as a requirements doc) and tend to produce document artifacts (such as a proposal). Of the bad habits I commonly see in collaboration app implementations, the most common is failure to keep the document repository up-to-date. This is often complicated by the need to check-out, edit, then check-in your document artifacts; an often time-consuming process.

Some collaborative apps, such as Alfresco, simplify the process through shared drive interfaces. Irrespective of all this, you do yourself and colleagues a favor by making sure the canonical version of a document is promptly checked back into the repository once you're done editing.

5 — Use Email Wisely: Link, don't Attach!

A corollary to keeping your repository up-to-date is eliminating the nasty habit we all have to attach documents to an email. This leads to numerous problems such as poor revision control and wasteful use of email storage. Virtually all collaborative apps that feature document management will include some ability to share a link to the relevant content. Be sure to use that link, your colleagues and email inbox will thank you.

6 — Start Documents as Wiki Pages

It is best to create a wiki page for content authoring if you know a particular document will undergo many revisions during the authoring process. Doing so makes iterations much faster and you know your colleagues will always see the latest version of your content directly from a web browser without having to download it. You can then paste the content into your word processor once it's closer to being finalized.

7 — Simplify Discovery: Don't Overuse Social Tags

We all love social tagging, it gives us a simple way to simplify search, but beware of “tag creep”. It is best to use a handful of selectively-picked tags instead of going overboard and associating every adjective you can think of. Also avoid the temptation to use commonly used words as tags as this virtually guarantees you will never find your content again.

Case-in-point, if you're working on a project called “Alfresco Implementation”, don't use “Alfresco” as a tag describing “Alfresco-Requirements.doc”. Most collaborative apps filter searches by the site/project you're working on so you can safely skip using the project name in the tags and therefore make it easier to find the relevant documents.

8 — Setup a Team Chat Room

Chat rooms are often not considered a core requirement for collaborative apps, but they can be of great value when used properly. Most instant messaging apps include some form of group chat rooms. The Alfresco team, for example, makes heavy use of Skype for instant messaging and voice communication. Instead of relying on relatively “slow” email, we also often create moderated Skype chat rooms whose membership includes project team members to facilitate ad-hoc communications, group coordination and real-time discussions.

These eight points are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg,

but I'm confident that, properly adopted, you and your colleagues will be more efficient and experience less stress when collaborating on projects.



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8 Factors to Consider When Creating an Information Management Strategy

Maura Dunn is a director in the Chicago office of [Duff & Phelps](#) and is part of the Legal Management Consulting service line. She has extensive experience in all aspects of records management (RM) program assessment and development. Among many other engagements, Maura's experience includes leading selection and implementation of a document generation tool as part of globalization effort for a top-five mortgage bank, for which she recommended new organizational structure, including roles, responsibilities and job descriptions; policies, processes and procedures; and content management approach, tools and methods. She has also led comprehensive RM policy and procedures assessment and development for multiple government organizations.

The chief executive officer (CEO) and the chief counsel walk into your office (you know, the office where your RIM certifications and all the accolades from AIIM and ARMA are hanging on the walls). They tell you that litigation costs are out of control, information management practices are constantly showing up in audit findings, and the acquisition of the firm's biggest competitor is in full swing and will be finalized by the end of the month. They want to know what you're going to do about it, and they want to know now.

Before drafting your resignation letter, take a deep breath and remember that all those hours studying and learning information management concepts, trudging through exam preparation and earning all of those continuing education credits have prepared you for this task. As a wise person once said, you eat an 800lb stack of paper, CDs, DVDs, USB storage media, hard drives and electrons one bite at a time.

Establishing an information management program is not an overnight task. A successful information management program requires that the daily work habits of every person in your organization change. A successful program requires a thoughtful, comprehensive strategy. A strategy is your guide to get from where you are to where you want to be. Developing the strategy involves assessing your current situation and developing a shared vision for where you want to be. Armed with those two pieces of information, you are ready to build the roadmap—your implementation

plan. Duff & Phelps has helped numerous companies and government agencies develop and implement information management strategies. Our experience has taught us many things: how to pack for three days in a rollaboard, where to find a great cup of coffee in any city in the world, and the factors that go into a successful information management strategy.

One way to divvy up the problem of creating an information management strategy is to address three distinct components, common to any program: people, process and technology. A successful information management strategy must address all of these areas. Within each component, there are several critical factors—Duff & Phelps’ eight factors for creating a successful information management strategy. Look at each factor separately, but remember: they all interact with each other. This interplay must also be considered. Addressing only one aspect of the program (e.g., technology) is not a full solution.

1 — People – Is your Firm ready for Information Management?

To avoid building a program that cannot be implemented, determine the current state of information management practices at your organization and assess the ability of the organization to address shortfalls. Ask questions, such as the following:

- Have reductions in work force hampered our ability to modify work habits and/or impacted morale to the point where people are unwilling or unable to take on more work?
- Will there be ongoing budgetary support for people/process/technology changes required for the records information management (RIM) program?
- How is information management handled at the desktop today and what would it take to exert more control over it?

The answers to these questions will shape your implementation plan for the RIM program.

2 — People – Who will be Responsible for Managing your Information?

Creating an information management program within your organization may start with your one-person crusade to save the firm from ruinous litigation, government sanctions or devastating data breaches, but successful RIM programs require sound governance from a dedicated team that represents your whole organization. Building a strong governance structure can be accomplished in three steps:

- Develop guiding principles for your organization that form the basis upon which you build the information management program
- Translate these guiding principles into your information management program.

- Proactively address the evolving information management needs of your organization

Your simple (but not easy) task, if you choose to accept it, is to assemble an information management governance team that incorporates senior members of the organization, representing (at a minimum) information technology, legal, RIM and the core business lines of your organization. Once you've organized the team, draft and ratify a charter for the group that includes the three activities mentioned above. Once the charter is approved, develop the list of guiding principles that address your organization's needs.

Guiding principles can range from statements, such as “We will manage proactively the entire information lifecycle” to “We will utilize sound information management principles to minimize litigation costs.” Whatever principles are appropriate for your organization drive the development of policies and procedures within your organization's information management program, so they must work for everyone. Bring together key, interested executives and leaders from your governance team and work through these questions together. These visioning sessions are eye-opening; you learn more about your own organization than you can imagine. And the executives start to come together around solving their collective information management problems, instead of trying to implement their own, stove-piped solutions because they think they are the only one

facing a particular challenge. This visioning works for you in a number of ways. First, other people see the problem and share the responsibility for solving it. Second, they become your champions when you need people to make some changes—and when you're looking for money and resources to implement your program. Third, you have expanded your personal network and influence in the organization—never a bad thing.

3 — People – How will you tell People about this Change?

Just about everyone accepts that proactive communication is essential to the acceptance and adoption of new processes and new technology. A successful information management program requires that you maintain an ongoing (some might say never-ending) cycle of talking, advertising, building momentum, training, gathering feedback, and, most important, adjusting your program to meet evolving needs. To address the need for change management (and maintain your sanity), enlist the help of other key people within your organization.

- Establish relationships with recruiting, marketing, training, communications, public relations and any other departments within your organization that can assist you in preparing your organization for information management.
- Develop a plan for rolling out new processes and

new technology with your core group of change management staff, capitalizing on their experience with what works in your organization's culture.

Bear in mind that information management discipline normally requires more work in the creation/use stages of the information lifecycle, but this makes the searching/re-use/storage/disposition stages easier and more productive.

4 — Process – What will People do with their Information?

Practicing sound information management requires discipline, and discipline is more easily achieved when a well-defined process governs a particular work activity. Sound, easy-to-follow processes that govern your organization's information throughout the information lifecycle, from creation through use and storage to final disposition, are a key component of your program. These processes must address specific information management requirements such as how information is created, where it is stored, how it is disseminated, who can view it and where it goes when it's no longer needed. Designing these processes requires rigor and ingenuity to balance the needs of your firm's staff with the requirements of your information management program.

5 — Process – What about the Way you've always done Things?

To facilitate the adoption of processes specific to information

management, it is best to embed information management into existing business processes wherever possible. This approach minimizes impact and maximizes value. If the RIM requirements can be met without any active change by the user, that is ideal. For instance, you may be able to redirect document saves to a central server instead of to a personal network drive behind the scenes. Or you could add a storage step to an existing workflow within a business application that is triggered by the final approval. Otherwise, design a new process to enhance the speed of the business process or enhance the ability to find/re-use information for future work, and ask the end users what they think will work for them. Working with managers and staff within the lines of business to balance their needs with the needs of the information management program gives them a stake in what happens and increases their acceptance and understanding, while ensuring your information management needs are met. Hint: this also helps move your change management activities along as a bonus!

6 — Technology – Do you need an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Solution?

Your information management program is going to rely on technology to enable your organization to comply with your policies and execute your information management processes. The right application of technology can provide your program with a great degree of control over your

organization's information while having a minimal impact on daily activities of your staff. The content management market sector is rich with vendors that provide solutions to most, if not all, information management issues. The key to ensuring that your implementation is successful is to identify the requirements for your content management solution in terms of supporting your information management program. Vendor solutions may have some pre-packaged workflows that fit your organization, but the principles, policies and procedures that form your information management program should be the primary driver of your vendor selection process. Once you select a vendor (or vendors), incorporate your governance board and select end users into the planning, execution and monitoring of your implementation. Throughout the implementation, analyze all your decisions in light of how the decision supports your information management program as well as the business processes across your organization.

7 — Technology – Your users love Collaboration Tools – What do you do with those?

Controlling the creation phase of the information lifecycle is one of the most complicated information management issues you face. Striking a balance between controlling information and allowing your staff to be creative and innovative requires imagination and collaboration. With the emergence of tools that allow for collaborative content creation, your

information management program may benefit from a thoughtful implementation of collaboration tools like SharePoint, eRooms, NetConnect, Google Waves, etc. By integrating a tool that can address information management concepts such as version control, centralized storage, and retention at the same time as supporting collaboration, these tools can enable control of content on the front-end of the information lifecycle.

Again, the focus of your vendor selection and implementation is on supporting your information management program. Many collaboration tools can be configured by non-IT personnel and be available for use in minutes or hours. This can lead to chaos. Avoid implementing a tool without a governance structure and well-defined processes for content creation and management. Once a tool is implemented, your users will use it. Establishing control after content has already been generated and stored in the collaboration tool is extremely challenging. Taking away a tool they have come to love and rely on is not a way to win friends and influence people. Your program's chances of success increase if you think about collaboration up front.

8 — Technology – What about your Enterprise Systems and Business Applications?

The business applications (e.g., ERP, Human Resources Information System, Accounting, etc.) within your

enterprise support your business processes and enable your organization to run efficiently. Often, these applications are repositories of your corporation's information assets. Whether stored as content in a transactional system or as rows of data in a database table, the information stored in your business applications is a key component of your institutional knowledge and intellectual capital. These systems also contain records which must be managed in accordance with your policies in the same way as documents or other media.

Review and analyze your business applications to determine how they can support your information management program. Chances are that information stored in your business applications represents an untapped competitive advantage, a poor audit result waiting to happen, or both. Develop an enterprise information map indicating where your information assets reside. Develop a plan to protect and capitalize upon your information assets as part of your information management program. Remain vigilant with your information assets by putting into place governance processes that identify when information assets move to new systems or new locations inside or outside of the firewall.

Now you've thought about all the factors that go into your information management strategy. You've worked with key executives across your organization to develop a vision, build a roadmap and convince people to come along for the ride. You're ready to start implementing. Take it slow: divide your roadmap into phases and tackle each piece as a

project. Clearly identify milestones and celebrate each one you achieve. Soon, your information management strategy will start to be a program, and your information will be protected and working for you, just the way it should be.

The CEO and chief counsel stop in. They come by pretty often these days to talk about the ECM system you've put in place, discuss the next round of communications, decide who's writing the next newsletter article and check on the current litigation holds. They also tell you that the firm received a large settlement in a recent litigation because you, your team and the firm were prepared for ediscovery, had all your ducks in a row, and were able to produce everything that was needed on demand. The other side caved. Great job! So put away that resignation letter, but update your resume to include all this good work. You never know what might be around the corner.



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8 Tips for Selecting a Digital Signature Solution

John Marchioni is the Vice President of Business Development at ARX - the Digital Signature Company. John has over 20 years experience in US and international high-technology markets creating partnerships through strategic sales, technology licensing and large-scale systems-integration projects.

For more information about Digital Signatures visit www.arx.com or contact John at johnmarc@arx.com.

As the traditional “paper-based” world gives way to digital documentation and transactions, enterprises are demanding innovative solutions for digitally signing and authenticating such documents, files, and forms with iron-clad protection against forgery. Solutions must guarantee non-repudiation and promise the same level of security and trust that exists with conventional documentation. At the same time, such a solution should be simple to use, easy to deploy and offer a rapid Return on Investment (ROI). With the rise of global digital businesses, transactions and documents may need to be signed by many people in different parts of the world. Users should be able to sign documents directly from their desktop or via a zero-technology footprint using any web browser.

Digital signature solutions should be able to: 1) Verify recipients outside of an organization; 2) Enable employees to sign documents while traveling; 3) Enable cross platform capabilities; 4) Enable the use of numerous applications, such as Microsoft® Word and SharePoint®, Adobe® Acrobat, and TIFF images.

1 — Sealing Documents

Digital signature systems should allow you to seal documents using standard technology, allowing you to easily add your graphical signature to any document.

Some solutions add a graphical signature image to any

document created in Microsoft Word. This signed document can be easily changed by any recipient while the graphical electronic signature remains intact. This security flaw opens the door to fraud and forgery. The solution used has simply placed a digitized “picture” of the signature on the document - it doesn’t seal the document, verify the authenticity of the person signing, or guarantee that the transaction cannot be altered.

In the traditional paper world, transactions are validated by signing them either on an accepted form, such as a check, or in front of a trusted third party. A notary or lawyer, then “stamps” the signatures, so that they cannot be changed. In the virtual, paperless world, digital signatures must perform the same function.

A digital signature must be able to seal any electronic document and guarantee that it is tamperproof. It uses a one-time “fingerprint”, unique to both the signer and the document to ensure that the signer is indeed the originator or owner of the document. This “fingerprint” cannot be reused or reassigned and proves that the message has not been altered in any way.

2 — Multiple Application Support

A digital signature system needs to support multiple applications. Some electronic signature systems enable the signing of documents created with the most commonly used

applications, such as Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat. However, many electronic signature systems do not support popular applications like SharePoint, AutoCAD, ERP, and others. Traditionally, when signing paper documents, it doesn’t matter what type of document it is, be it a form, an invoice or a typed contract. The paperless world requires the same flexibility.

3 — Multiple Signatures

It should be possible for more than one person in more than one place to sign a document. There are some electronic signature systems that only allow one signature and when the document has been signed and sealed, it becomes impossible to add more signatures.

Traditional document-intensive organizations, such as insurance companies or financial institutions, have large volumes of many different types of documentation that must be processed every day. Many of these documents must be reviewed, approved and signed by more than one person. In some cases, one part must be approved by one signatory while another section needs approval by a different person. With a traditional “wet” signature, it is a simple matter of signing or initialing any place in the document. In the virtual world, an effective digital signature system should enable “sectional signing”, which allows signatories to edit and sign their portion of the document.

4 — Compliance

To be considered as legally-binding, documents and transactions (whether paper-based or electronic) must meet many basic requirements and strict standards. A digital signature solution must meet the same criteria as a “wet” signature. These include the following basic requirements:

- Authenticity – the signature can be authorized by a secure process.
- Integrity – any tampering during transmission can be detected.
- Privacy – the signature cannot be accessed by unauthorized sources.
- Enforceability – the signatures must be verifiable by all parties.
- Non-refutability – the signature cannot be denied or disavowed.

The first two requirements prove that the recipient and the sender are authentic and authorized to perform this transaction. The next two provide methods to prove that the message content is authentic and that the recipient can be certain that the data has not been altered or lost in transit. The last important requirement is that the message must be able to “stand up in court”. Referred to as “non-repudiation”, this means that the digital signature must ensure that the parties involved in the transaction cannot

deny sending the message or its contents. In addition to the above general requirements, some industries such as finance or pharmaceutical have specific requirements.

5 — Transportability

An effective digital signature system should ensure transportability. If a company implements a digital signature solution and sends a signed document to a client who has not installed the same digital signature system, they will not be able to verify the document. In the traditional paper world, signed documents sent to third parties can be read and understood without a problem. In the paperless world, however, documents must be recognized by the software application. To be truly versatile, a sender must know that the digital signature will arrive unaltered anywhere in the world and that it can be easily verified without the need for complicated, proprietary third-party applications.

6 — Seamless User Sign-up

In the traditional paper world, people who need to sign documents are identified in one of several ways: via a signature card, in-person or through a photo ID. In the virtual paperless world, signatories register electronically and obtain a digital certificate. The certificate provides electronic identification similar to a birth certificate or passport. Digital certificates contain information about the user, such as the certificate holder’s name, e-mail address and other specific

identifying information. Digital certificates verify that the user is who he or she claims to be. Certificates are generated by the Certificate Authorities (CA) immediately after the identity of the user is validated. Once a digital signature system has been deployed, it should be both simple to use and transparent. Neither the users, nor the IT person, should be aware of how a certificate is generated or maintained.

7 — Simple-to-Use

In the traditional paper world, signing a document is simple, intuitive and quick. In the virtual world, signing a document should be just as easy. It should take no more than 10 seconds or 1-2 mouse clicks to ensure that the document is signed, sealed and legally compliant. Users should not be required to learn new technologies or rely on assistance from a Help Desk.

8 — Total Cost of Ownership

Traditional paper signing creates mountains of paperwork. This requires physical storage in archives that often mushroom to warehouse proportions. To reduce costs and improve efficiency, companies should move into the world of electronic processes. Standards-based digital signature systems enable companies to become totally paperless. However, when considering a digital signature solution, it is important to look into the potential hidden costs. Many traditional digital signature systems are difficult to deploy.

They involve complicated software requiring a heavy investment in IT support and development. Sometimes, a Help Desk needs to be created or additional staff employed to support the system. Other costs that need to be checked include registration and renewal fees for digital certificates, cost for smart cards, etc.

8 Factors to Consider in Choosing a Production Scanning Platform

Mark K. Smith is the Director of Product Planning for OPEX Corporation, the mailroom automation and document imaging company. Mark has 25 years of experience in the data capture, forms processing and imaging industry. He holds an MBA in Information Technology from the University of Connecticut and BA in Mathematics from the University of Hartford. For more information visit www.opex.com or contact Mark at msmith@opex.com.

Whether you are new to production scanning, or have been involved for many years, it's tempting to believe that scanners have become a "commodity"—that most scanners are very much alike in design and functionality, and that choosing a scanning platform is no longer a critical decision when compared, for example, to the decision related to your capture or ECM software. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Don't shortchange the evaluation and choice of a scanner. The device you choose will be with you for many years and will be responsible for accurately capturing your paper documents efficiently and effectively.

The following 8 factors will help you think about just how different scanning platforms can be. Consider your business needs carefully before choosing the device that is right for you—you'll be happy that you did!

1 — It's not Just about "Speeds and Feeds".

It's tempting to use the "pages per minute" (ppm) specs published by scanner manufacturers when choosing a scanning platform. Specs like this appear to make it very easy to compare price / performance across vendors. But concentrating on "rated speed" alone ignores many other important considerations when making a purchasing decision. Don't rush a decision without doing your homework and asking some important questions. Taking a

little time will pay dividends in the future.

2 — “Burst” vs. “Effective” Throughput.

The published speed (ppm) of a scanner is the theoretical maximum speed that the scanner can run when it is moving paper. But the feeder will go empty, there may be a jam to clear, and operators take breaks. So the more important number to look at is the average “effective” rate. How many pages can an average operator scan in a standard 8-hour shift? Typically the “effective” rate will be a much lower number than if you had simply multiplied the “burst” rate by the number of minutes in a workday. Make sure you understand what these various numbers mean, and don’t be afraid to ask questions. In addition, many capture operations find that the true bottleneck in their image capture process is not at the scanner. How much doc prep does the scanning platform require? Too many up-front steps in preparing documents for the scanner can create processing bottlenecks and affect your ability to get your work done in a timely and efficient manner. So think beyond “speeds and feeds” and take a wider view of the entire process as you evaluate different scanning platforms.

3 — You Have Different Kinds of Work to Scan.

Before choosing a scanner, it is important to review the variety of document types you may want to scan—both initially and in the future. Is your work primarily 8.5” x 11”

documents? Or do you also have smaller pieces of paper to scan, as well? Are the documents arriving in the mail, or are they coming out of file folders or boxes? Will you ever need to image incoming envelopes to get postmark dates? What about overnight envelopes and file folders—would you ever need an image of them? Would you want to be able to scan both remittance / payment transactions and forms-based transactions on the same platform? Carefully consider the full range of documents that you plan to scan prior to looking at scanner makes and models. If you have a wide range of colored documents or a variety of light and dark types of documents, it is also important to consider how well your new scanner will image across these variations. You may want to take a set of “trouble” documents and ask your vendor to scan some images for you to look at.

4 — Daily Volumes and Duty Cycle.

As you consider your document volumes, it’s best to take some time to forecast future daily volumes. Are your paper volumes growing or decreasing? At what rate? Will the company want to add new applications to the scanner once it is installed and in place? Are your daily volumes fairly level, or does your work have high-volume peaks at certain times of the month or year? Are you willing to run a second shift during the peak times? Or do you need to purchase enough scanning power for those peak days? Next, take some time to understand the “duty cycle” ratings of the

scanners you are considering. For example, a 90ppm scanner with a 10,000 page per day duty cycle can only be run for 3-4 hours per day. If you have only “ad hoc” scanning to do, this may be more than adequate. But if the scanner is going to be run all day long, you will quickly wear out this device. On the other hand, a scanner with an “unlimited” duty cycle is built to be run all day, every day.

5 — Redundancy.

Some people think it is smarter to purchase two or more slower scanners as opposed to one very fast scanner. If all of your scanning production depends on a single device and that device goes down, you will be unable to continue processing until the unit is repaired. But if you have two scanners and lose one, you can still get half of your work processed while the one unit is being fixed. Of course two scanners will also mean extra labor requirements, so look at this decision carefully and decide what is best for your business.

6 — Maintenance and Consumables.

Who will be maintaining the equipment? Like any electro-mechanical device, scanners require daily operational cleaning as well as regular “preventive maintenance” to keep the scanner running and in top condition. Depending on your business needs, you may also want to be able to make “demand calls” as needed to get a technician on site same

day to fix a down scanner and get you back in production. Does the scanner manufacturer maintain their products, or do they outsource this function to a third party? Have you asked for references for the maintenance service? What “consumables” does the scanner require you as the end-user to purchase on your own outside of the maintenance contract? What is the expected annual dollar outlay for these consumable parts? You may be surprised to learn how expensive these parts can be on an annual basis.

7 — It’s all about TCO.

A useful exercise is to ask your vendor to give you some data on the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of the proposed scanner. This would need to include any maintenance charges and projected consumable purchases, as discussed above. Will you need to purchase a PC to attach to the scanner? Will you need a jogger? TCO should also include the labor needed to run the scanner on a monthly or annual basis. For a real look at the total cost of your scanning operation, this labor should include the scanner operators as well as the staff required to prepare documents for the scanner, including opening mail, extracting documents, sorting, batching, inserting separator sheets, etc. It is a well known fact that labor is the largest cost component of a capture operation. If one scanner requires you to scotch-tape small pieces of paper to 8.5” x 11” pages while the other accepts the small pieces without any taping, then this affects

your cost. Over the lifetime of the scanners, these labor components can really add up. Another example of this: What will you need to spend on an annual basis on separator sheets? What if a scanner didn't require these extra sheets? That could represent substantial cost savings and efficiency improvements—and your effective throughput rate goes up, as well, because you are no longer scanning those extra separators.

8 — Scanner Intelligence.

Scanner technology has come a long way over the last twenty years. There are scanner makes and models to fit almost every need. In fact, intelligent scanner models are available today that have in-line OCR and document sorting capabilities. There are even scanners on the market that incorporate mail opening in the same device with the scanner, creating a true, all-in-one work platform for your scanning operation. Do most of your incoming documents arrive via the mail? Do you have any need to outsort specific documents? Should you consider an intelligent scanner?

Whatever your specific business needs are, and whatever functions you desire in a scanner, just remember: Not all scanners are created equal. There is a unit out there that's best suited to meet all of your goals. You just have to do a little homework up front to ensure a great choice in your new production scanner.



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8 Key Things to Consider when it Comes to Getting Paper into SharePoint

Bill Galusha is the Senior Product Marketing Manager for [EMC Captiva](#) enterprise capture solutions in the content management and archiving division of EMC. Mr. Galusha has more than 15 years experience in the document capture market and has a keen understanding of best practices for utilizing document capture to solve complex business problems across many types of industries. Mr. Galusha regularly speaks at conferences and seminars, and writes about the latest trends and data around capturing and managing information. Check out his blog at <http://billgalusha.wordpress.com>.

Microsoft® SharePoint® is sweeping through organizations, serving as a powerful catalyst for the benefits of enterprise content management (ECM), which include not just managing content, but also collaboration and process automation. In some cases, it has pushed companies to seriously consider leveraging SharePoint as the first step towards ECM. For other companies, it has been more about how SharePoint needs to coexist with current systems. While SharePoint has brought ECM to the masses in a simple and easy-to-deploy way, one question that looms large is: How do I get my paper into SharePoint so that I can transform it from a liability into an immediate business advantage? To answer that question requires careful consideration of the eight key points outlined here.

1 — Ad hoc Capture into SharePoint is not Enough

Ad hoc capture is one approach to turning paper into digital content and delivering that information into SharePoint. Ad hoc capture provides lightweight capabilities for scanning and digitizing paper documents to be stored in SharePoint. But let's not forget about the other common ways capture is used for process automation; documents enter the business at multiple locations—the mailroom, fax, e-mail, and remote offices. Implementing capture across many departments and processes requires an enterprise capture strategy. An enterprise capture solution should include the ability to connect to many devices and sources, support

centralized and distributed capture, and provide document capture automation that can deliver significant value to an organization in the form of cost reduction and time savings.

2 — Automating Manual Tasks will Save Time and Money

Document capture automation can shorten processing time, enable businesses to do more with fewer resources, and reduce cost. There are varying degrees of capture automation, including something as simple as using barcodes for document identification and routing those documents to a particular SharePoint library. More advanced capture capabilities include sophisticated identification of forms and unstructured documents, as well as extraction of form data. Applying these types of capture capabilities allows businesses to cut operational costs and accelerate processing.

3 — Solutions Need to “Play” with Other Systems

While SharePoint may be the cornerstone of an organization’s long-term ECM strategy, don’t forget about the other systems that play a role in running a business: other content repositories, archiving systems, ERP systems that are part of AP processes, and other line of business systems. With a wide variety of systems that often need to coexist with SharePoint, finding a flexible approach to integrating capture into SharePoint and other systems will ensure you can meet the needs of your IT and business users.

4 — Standardized Capture Rules will help Avoid Headaches Later on

Understanding how and where content will be stored in SharePoint is one aspect of the strategy; enforcing it on the capture (input) side is the other part that needs careful consideration. The old saying, garbage in garbage out, is relevant here. By having set rules to enforce where content is stored, how folder and file naming convention are applied, how data is formatted, and which document types are allowed, you will ensure that storing documents in SharePoint does not simply become an electronic filing cabinet—without business rules for organizing the information.

5 — Scanning should be a Second Job, not a Day Job

In a centralized capture environment, the scanning and indexing of documents is traditionally done by employees who work with the capture system daily. When capture is pushed to the front office to support branch operations or even mobile workers, it often involves casual users. In order to be successful in using capture in this type of environment, these knowledge workers need an application that is both simple yet powerful enough to handle the business requirements. Deploying a capture application that is unmanaged or too difficult to use reliably will only lead to failure and lack of adoption.

6 — Flexibility and Adhering to Standards

In order to grow with, and adapt to your organization, a capture solution must follow industry hardware, software and IT standards; it must also adapt to emerging IT infrastructure needs such as SOA and virtualization.

Organizations can ensure support for multiple device types, including scanners and faxes, by utilizing standards such as the Image and Scanner Interface Specification (ISIS), which provides compatibility and maximizes productivity with hundreds of document scanners without requiring additional software or hardware.

7 — Consider the Business Needs at Hand

Before investing in a capture product, consider the business needs at hand. The capture requirements of modern businesses differ greatly from the past, when simply getting the documents scanned and indexed into a repository was the overriding objective. Today's larger organizations focus not only on turning paper into digital information, but are also seeking ways to automate identifying, routing, and indexing documents to accelerate their processes and further reduce operational cost.

8 — Vendor Expertise is Important

Capture products and solutions are one aspect to consider, but equally important is the vendor you are looking to establish a long-term relationship with. As capture

technology has matured and become part of larger software businesses, it is now possible to work with a single vendor who can leverage enterprise capture expertise and complementary solutions that may be important to your overall business challenges. This ensures your applications can grow and change along with your business, providing the greatest flexibility and return on investment.



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8 Reasons to Outsource Document Management

Iron Mountain Incorporated (NYSE: IRM) provides information management services that help organizations lower the costs, risks and inefficiencies of managing their physical and digital data. Founded in 1951, Iron Mountain manages billions of information assets, including backup and archival data, electronic records, document imaging, business records, secure shredding, and more, for organizations around the world. Visit the company Web site at www.ironmountain.com for more information.

When confronted with information management challenges, many organizations operate on a reactive basis — developing ad hoc solutions to specific problems as they arise. And because of this, many document management programs are rife with duplicate capabilities, non-standard approaches and process inefficiencies. The result is that companies are becoming exposed to unnecessary risks and costs and missing out on opportunities to add business value.

It's time to take a step back and view information management as a critical process on par with more traditional business operations. But few organizations have the time or expertise to build an information management program that meets today's needs — and will be ready for whatever the future holds.

That's where working with a knowledgeable partner and leveraging a hosted solution can make all the difference. They can help you quickly reach a new level of information management capability without a major up-front investment in software, hardware and in-house skills.

Here are Iron Mountain's top eight tips for getting your information management strategy and program back on track through the use of outsourcing and hosted solutions.

1 — Eliminate the Need to Make a “Platform Decision”

The investment in procuring and operating a modern,

enterprise-class document management system is significant — and many solutions offer high-end features, such as workflow, that few small and mid-size businesses need.

Hosted document management solutions offer a usage-based cost model that allows you to pay only for the services you need and the volume you process. What's more, since your partner is responsible for hardware and software upgrades and that cost is prorated across all organizations using the service, you gain access to the latest and greatest without having to spend your limited capital funds.

2 — Get an Expert to Tame the Paper Monster

The average business produces a massive volume of documents, which makes locating and retrieving vital records in a timely fashion a challenge. In addition, files are frequently organized by non-standard indexing schemes that do not support enterprise-wide discovery efforts.

A single source supplier for document management solutions can help limit operational and legal risks by holistically managing an organization's information assets. With document management as their core business, these partners have seen and done it all — developing best practices and expertise based on hundreds of customer engagements.

3 — Don't Wait to Collaborate

IDC estimates that the typical enterprise with 1,000

knowledge workers wastes \$2.5 to \$3.5 million per year searching for nonexistent information, failing to find existing information or recreating information that can't be found. These estimates are supported by other research that shows that professionals spend 5 to 15 percent of their time reading information, and up to 50 percent looking for it.

Hosted document management solutions can be up and running in a matter of weeks, compared to the months it takes to evaluate, procure and install an in-house solution. This speeds time to value, accelerates decision making and increases productivity thanks to easy access to the information workers need to do their jobs.

4 — Chain of Custody Matters

Maintaining a strong chain of custody for documents is essential to minimizing business risk. With in-house document management solutions, physical records are often moved from off-site storage facilities to be scanned at another location and then returned for re-filing. Every step introduces an opportunity for lost and improperly filed documents.

By choosing a single source provider for records storage and document management solutions, chain of custody risks are mitigated. Physical documents can be retrieved, scanned and re-filed in a single location, so that the paper file never leaves the security of the vendor's facility. In addition, document-

level audit trails are maintained, which can be extremely valuable should your organization be required to produce document histories as part of legal or regulatory actions.

5 — Hybrid Solutions “Fuel” Process Efficiency

Managing documents with unstructured content and in non-standard formats requires a level of cross-process coordination that consumes more business and information technology resources than most organizations realize. With documents stored in paper file cabinets, record storage boxes in distributed locations or electronic files in multiple applications, this untamed storage environment makes rapid information access a challenge.

A hybrid document management solution combines the cost effectiveness of traditional paper storage for the bulk of your records, with the speed, convenience and cost savings of digital access. Files are kept in paper format, but scanned and digitized on demand according to business needs. Only a single-source provider that offers physical records storage and outsourced document management can offer the efficiency of this hybrid model.

6 — Arm Knowledge Workers with Self-service Tools

In today’s find-it-yourself, search-engine-enabled world, employees demand self-service document access and management tools. As a result, the document management specialist’s role has changed from records gatekeeper to an

information access coach or mentor.

As such, it’s important that digital file access and management be put in the hands of the end users — the people who know the documents, their business uses and access requirements. A hosted document management system must support this need, with intelligent scanning and image capture features supported by a digitization process that addresses the requirements for each document type. And as documents are imaged, they should be made available per your specific requirements — via an FTP site, in an ECM-ready form or via a hosted repository.

7 — Create a Plan that Reflects Best Practices

Few organizations have the resources or expertise to create/overhaul their information management strategy and/or solutions. And, with businesses challenged to do more with less, this complex task frequently falls to the bottom of the to-do list. When outsourced experts take care of document management needs, companies can rest easy knowing that conversion process, retention schedule, information security and privacy best practices are being maintained and consistently followed. This approach, with appropriate oversight on your part, reduces the risk of compliance violations and associated costs.

8 — Change doesn’t have to be Difficult

Changing information management strategy and processes

can be easier than you imagine. An experienced records management partner, with years of multi-industry experience, can typically address the complexities of a comprehensive records management strategy more effectively and cost-efficiently than your organization. And, at the same time, provide a holistic solution that will return significant additional value because the component pieces are capable of working together in a seamless fashion while removing any duplication of effort.

8 Information Management Strategy Factors

Sheila Taylor, CRM, ERM^m, is the General Manager - Southern Ontario at CONDAR Consulting Inc, a product-independent leader in the field of information management advisory services. Sheila has more than 20 years experience in assisting organizations to develop and implement information management strategies which meet business needs, satisfy legislated and/or regulatory requirements, and comply with industry best practices.

For more information about CONDAR Consulting, visit <http://www.condar.ca> or contact Sheila at staylor@condar.ca.

The success of any organization's information management (IM) strategy depends on managing three different spheres of concern: people, business processes, and technology. IM strategies often fail because they do not properly address one or more of those areas which are like three legs of a stool: remove one and the whole thing falls over.

The following eight points identify some key considerations for each of these legs. Each point is a distinct, major area of activity within any large-scale IM strategy. Putting sufficient effort into all of these areas will significantly improve your degree of success, but losing focus on even one of them can have a disproportionately large and detrimental impact.

The First Leg: People

1 — Don't Underestimate the Challenges of Changing People's Behavior

Changing people's behavior is the greatest obstacle to the success of an IM strategy. Behavior changes when there is motivation to do so, and when the barriers to change are removed. If people don't believe that changing will make them more successful or make their lives easier, they won't do it. Even when convinced of the benefits of changing, the transition must be facilitated by removing the obstacles and overcoming the inertia of the status quo.

Consequently, a change management plan is an essential component of an IM strategy, including an ongoing

communication program to emphasize the strategy's benefits and demonstrate organizational support. It should also include an easily accessible support program, consisting of training, well-written documentation, and support staff who can answer questions and solve problems quickly.

2 — Don't Lose Sight of the End user's Needs

The people within an organization are both the implementers of an IM strategy and its beneficiaries. Responding clearly and directly to users' existing needs will secure initial enthusiasm and momentum. Anticipating and satisfying their needs during implementation will maintain that momentum. Satisfying existing needs to save time or money, increase convenience, lower risk, etc. need to be communicated as the benefits of your strategy. Satisfying implementation needs is done once users are on board, by providing training, straightforward guidelines, user-friendly technology, and so on.

By thinking through user needs, priorities, benefits and barriers, you will avoid many problems during implementation that could have been prevented. Divide users into functional groups and develop a profile of each group's needs. Use interviews, questionnaires and other fact-finding techniques to develop or validate your assumptions. Although this might seem like a lot of up-front effort, the investment always pays off.

3 — Focus on the Pain Points

You have two choices when describing the benefits of your IM strategy. The first is to show how you are providing a new benefit. The second is to show how you can solve an existing problem. In general, people respond better to approaches that emphasize the latter method. If you solve the pain points first, people are more receptive to thinking about benefits. The reverse is not true. It's like inviting someone who has a headache to a party—the person may be more inclined to go if you give them an aspirin first.

So what is bothering users or their managers the most? Inability to identify and locate information when needed? Uncertainty about retention periods? Need to safeguard personal information? Ever-increasing, uncontrolled volume of e-mails? Design your IM strategy to focus on pain points like these before moving on to other things.

4 — Secure Ongoing Senior Management Support

Senior management must do more than sign off on a strategy or approve the budget. Because leaders in an organization are seen as role models, authority figures and bellwethers for organizational change (not to mention often having direct ability to enforce and reward compliance), having highly visible and ongoing senior management support will smooth over interdepartmental hurdles and conflicts, foster better support and cooperation, and speed adoption.

Merely enrolling a senior management “champion” to help kick off your strategy isn’t sufficient. Part of your IM strategy should include dedicated time and effort for keeping both your champion and the senior management team on side, actively engaged and visible to the rest of the organization.

The Second Leg: Processes

5 — Define Policies, Procedures and Business Rules

Policies, procedures and rules are the skeleton of every business process. If they aren’t carefully thought out, formalized in writing, and kept current, then the execution of an IM strategy quickly loses focus, direction and cohesion as departments interpret and apply the strategy in unpredictable ways.

Policies, procedures and business rules are separate but related documents created as part of your IM strategy. Policies define and assign high-level accountabilities and provide for compliance management. Procedures provide step-by-step instructions for implementing the policies, and are the basis for training and ongoing reference. Business rules provide the “nitty gritty” details for managing content (e.g. metadata, retention rules, access and security controls, etc.) and are contained in separate reference documents cited by the procedures, and/or integrated into information management technologies.

6 — Define and Monitor Performance

Performance metrics, essential as they are, are often avoided because of the risk of missing committed targets. This attitude is ultimately self-defeating. Although some organizations punish risk takers when they fail, all organizations reward risk takers when they succeed. In setting your goals and metrics, it is important to foster (in yourself and others) the same attitude towards measuring success and failure as airplane pilots have towards measuring altitude: it tells them if they’re in the right place and how to correct their course.

Metrics should be measurable and relevant to the IM strategy’s overall goals. Choose metrics which are easy to measure and strongly related to the overall business outcome. For example, one metric might be to achieve a 40% reduction in storage volumes within one year through the application of retention rules. Achieving this metric can be translated directly into cost savings on storage equipment, floor space, etc.

The Third Leg: Technology

7 — Plan a Pilot and Phased Roll-out

Unless your organization is very small, a pilot—in a department that is highly motivated and supportive of the strategy—is a good way to work out the kinks before you embark on organization-wide implementation. It is almost

always a better approach to plan for a series of ongoing, small, repeatable successes. Successful implementation, even on a small scale, generates excitement and interest, builds momentum, delivers concrete benefits, and validates the overall strategy.

Even within a pilot department, phased implementation can be advantageous. For example, the first phase of an IM strategy may address paper-based information only, followed by electronic information at a later date. Phasing can also occur by work group, business process or other subdivisions. The key is to ensure that the end result of each phase provides measurable benefit and the promise of further benefits by expanding to the next phase.

8 — Plan Well into the Future

An IM strategy is often a multi-year endeavor consisting of dozens of different projects, each of which needs to be planned and executed successfully. Having a long term view (5+ years) of information management can be difficult to manage, especially when technology changes on a 2-3 year cycle.

However, only reacting to short term requirements without a longer term vision is more like an expensive game of whack-a-mole than a strategy. Long term technology strategies are rarely detailed, but they do set timelines, milestones and key investment decisions over a long term. When creating

your IM strategy, plan to review it every 6 months or so to validate the original goals and planned outcomes to ensure they are still the right ones, and to measure overall progress towards those goals.



[AIIM State of the ECM Industry Research Report](#)

User strategies and experiences

<http://www.aiim.org/Research/Industry-Watch/ECM-State-of-Industry-2010>

8 Things You Need to Know About Integrating Content Management with Enterprise Processes

Brian Dirking is Principal Product Director for Oracle Content Management. He is a former AIIM Board member and very active in AIIM's Golden Gate Chapter. He tweets at [bdirking](#) and blogs on the [Content@Work](#) blog.

1 — Not all Content is Equal.

Some is important, some not so much so. There's more content that's not important than there is important stuff. The difficulty is in sifting through all the content to find the important stuff. In many cases you can base that upon metadata—the document type, the author—these can be key indicators of important content. But often you have to have other methods. A content use tracking system can be a good way to determine important content—less used content is less important. Some content is important to the enterprise, some is important to the individual. Some content is important only in the short term. A sales proposal might be important for 30 days. A marketing plan might be important for a year. Then there is some content that is not important on a day to day basis, but is important in the long term. You might not refer to your insurance policy for 35 years, but when you need it, it might be the most important document in the company.

2 — If you Need it in one System, you Might also need it in Another.

The important stuff tends to get reused. And mostly the important stuff of short term value. Business transaction information such as a shipment notice might appear in your ERP system and also in your CRM system, tied to a customer record. But reuse doesn't mean copying—it's good to have a system that allows one source of truth to be

referenced from both systems.

3 — When Content is Siloed, People Bridge the Gap.

In most companies, the siloed content (as well as siloed business processes) means that people fill in the gaps. Usually one person understands the process, and makes it happen. This is a sneakernet phenomenon. If that person goes on vacation or falls ill, the process stops. Make sure to at least document your processes if your organization can't justify a full-blown BPM system. But if you can you will also gain flexibility—you can build in workarounds for when people are on vacation and the other types of things that pop up in everyday life.

4 — Content Doesn't Exist if it is not Accessible.

If a tree falls in the woods, does anyone hear it? If a document is locked away on a hard drive, does it really exist? Documents that live on overused file shares, on local hard drives, on CDs, on thumb drives pose a problem. How do you get access to it when you need it? Like when the person who knows the process is out on vacation, when you can't open their hard drive without a password, the content is inaccessible. Almost as if it didn't exist.

5 — Content that is too Accessible Causes Risk.

How do you secure a document when it is sitting on a share drive? Or how do you secure it when it gets out of your

organization? Lost laptops are one example. A malicious employee is another example. But everyday documents leave our organizations with our blessing. Documents being worked on at home, documents shared with partners or board members—lots of documents leave our premises every day. DLP (Data Loss Prevention) vendors provide systems that patrol the perimeter of your organization, but that doesn't address documents that willingly leave. How does an organization disable content after it has left?

6 — Understand Your Green Benefits.

Moving business processes to be keyed from electronic documents certainly can save your organization a lot of paper. But the other benefits are where you will really see the dollars add up. Eliminating shipping costs can have an impact. Saving storage space can be a huge benefit. But the real green benefits come in dollars saved by improving your business processes. Some organizations have saved as much as 90% by replacing paper systems with integrated electronic systems. Providing faster access to information for a more and more decentralized set of workers will keep your organization competitive.

7 — Content in Context Raises Value.

By integrating content directly into your enterprise applications, users can look up and refer to content from right in their enterprise application interface. No need to go

down the hall and find invoices or employee documents in a file cabinet. No questions about is this the right documents, is it the latest one, etc. Content in context means faster resolution to questions, and more accurate answers.

8 — Understand Tech Trends and Know when they will Collide.

There is a coming collision between Enterprise 2.0 and e-Discovery. Many organizations are beginning to experiment with Enterprise 2.0 (social media) functionality to improve collaboration and productivity (see the AIIM research). But how do you manage that content and where will it go? How do you make sure the content is kept for the appropriate amount of time? Is this information discoverable? Where will you go to perform e-Discovery? And most important, does your organization have a written policy about Facebook, Twitter, and other social media usage?



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8 Ways to Enhance Knowledge Worker Productivity

Paul Walsh is Chief Product Officer of Knowledge Worker Applications for [Global Graphics](#), (NYSE- Euronext GLOG) a leading developer of e-document and printing software. Drawing on a pedigree in PDF, XPS and other document formats, the aim with Global Graphics' gDoc™ product range is to provide a cost-effective mid-point between expensive, over complex solutions and free but feature-limited PDF conversion tools.

How much time does you or your organization waste each week assembling and compiling information? Here are eight ways that eDocument applications can enhance knowledge worker productivity.

It is now common knowledge that information overload is a major source of stress to individual knowledge workers and a major cost to their companies and the overall economy. At the latest estimate, the cost to the US economy is \$960 billion in salaries alone which corresponds to a cost of \$7 million per year for companies with 500 knowledge workers.

Some of the images offered by organizations such as IDC and AIIM to illustrate the sheer amount of information are highly graphic — the amount of paper received being equal in weight to all a company's employees put together conjures up a wonderful scene to re-enact in the parking lot. Or, the fact that year's worth of information is equivalent to 12 stacks of books stretching from the Earth to the Sun. Or, that in 2010 the online digital data we produce will be 16 million times more than every book ever written.

How can we apply some Lean principles to reduce waste and restore satisfaction in knowledge worker productivity?

Here are eight ways that can help:

1 — Provide a Tool to Enable Gathering Multiple Pieces of Information into one Source File

Just imagine the time you would save if your eDocument application allowed you to combine pages from your Excel, Word and PowerPoint documents in one file with a simple drag and drop and converted them to PDF automatically for you. What if you could also keep a useful record of web pages you visit and find useful by virtually printing the web page using an eDocument application print driver to either a PDF or XPS file. Better than bookmarking a URL that might not be there next time you visit.

2 — Confirm at a Glance you have the Information you Need

An eDocument application should allow you to view multiple documents at the same time in one viewing pane. The time saved in opening multiple applications soon adds up to your benefit.

3 — Remove the Obstacle of Missing Applications and File Formats that can't be Opened

Your eDocument application should handle multiple file formats - you shouldn't need to have the latest version (or any version) of MS Office installed in order to access the information.

4 — Save Time Searching through Documents

Yes, good enterprise search tools narrow down the options,

but eventually it takes a user to decide if what's on screen is the information they need. Find an eDocument application that provides a flick-based document viewer that allows you to browse through large documents quickly to find what you want by flicking through pages on screen like you would with a printed document. It saves time and money on printing out large documents too.

5 — Bring the Feature to the User, not the User to the Feature

Knowledge workers may have many applications installed, but research shows that they will spend a significant amount of their time in just one or two applications. And the most likely #1 application will be their word processor. You really need your eDocument application to provide an add-in for the common Microsoft Office tools (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) that enables you to create PDFs in one click using the MS Office toolbar.

6 — Repurpose Documents for Sharing, Web, Printing with the Right Level of Security

Too often PDFs are saved without the right Open or Security settings. A Finish Document Wizard in your eDocument application ensures the right settings are applied by guiding the user through the process, step-by-step. It allows you to apply a password that must be entered every time a document is opened. You can also apply a password that controls the security settings for Printing, copying text

and graphics, document assembly, adding or removing comments.

7 — Support Editing of PDF Files

PDFs are becoming the de-factor “format of convergence” for sharing information. Knowing that the end-recipient can open and read your information is a key requirement. But simple PDF Readers just overcome the first obstacle. Good eDocument applications allow you to edit, comment and review PDFs—the editing tools are there on the page so you don’t need to waste time searching for them.

8 — Convert PDF to Word for More Extensive Redrafting

You’ve been sent the latest version of a document as a PDF file. You notice that there’s a mistake or something that can be improved. What do you do? You can annotate the PDF file with a comment and send it back to the author for editing. Or, you can use your eDocument application to convert the PDF to Word, make the changes yourself and send back the finished article to the author.

8 Features in SharePoint 2010 That Rock

Chris Caplinger is CTO and one of the founders of [KnowledgeLake](#), a Microsoft Gold ISV specializing in Document Imaging. Chris is a member of both the visionary and engineering teams at KnowledgeLake. Chris has been working in the Document Imaging, Workflow and ECM industries since 1996 working for systems integrators and as an independent contractor before helping build KnowledgeLake.

1 — Business Connectivity Services.

The Business Connectivity Services (BCS) used to be called the Business Data Catalog (BDC). It provides access to your external data sources such as databases, external business systems and web services. Using BCS, External Content Types can be created that allow read/write access back to the external data sources. External lists, which operate much like normal lists can be created in SharePoint from these External Content Types so you can have access to these external systems right inside of SharePoint. Client applications such as office or third party applications can also connect to the external data source using the ECT without writing any proprietary code. There is also an offline caching mechanism, to enable offline access to External Content Types.

2 — List Validations.

List validations are a very powerful way to validate not just documents but any content before it goes into a list. This feature improves column property entry, which in the Document Imaging is called indexing or in the collaboration world, often called tagging. List Validations were very limited in SharePoint 2007, but have major improvements in SharePoint 2010 that can be leveraged:

- **Hidden Columns** – This setting is unique per content type, not just by the site column, which makes is very granular.

- No Duplicate Values – This will enable lists to act like databases, forcing items to be unique.
- Column Validations – Column validations will force column data to meet conditions before content is added to SharePoint.

3 — Enterprise Managed Metadata.

The Enterprise Managed Metadata Service allows you to centrally define taxonomies that can be leveraged across farms to quickly classify and find content. There are two main features of the service, the first being the ability to publish content types to other site collections and farms and the other being the taxonomy term store. The Taxonomy Term Store allows two new columns to be used in lists. The first being terms allows a static list to be created and used to validate during data entry. The second is managed keywords, which allows freeform entry of multiple values using existing keywords as suggestions.

4 — Search.

Search has certainly evolved since SharePoint Portal Server 2003 as the scalability of the architecture has improved. You can have multiple index servers and index partitions can represent a portion of the index and live on the query server. Partitions can be spread across multiple query servers but can also exist on multiple query servers for redundancy and load balancing. SharePoint 2010 can scale to 100 million documents and FAST search will take us beyond 100 million!

5 — Remote Blob Storage.

External BLOB Storage (EBS) has evolved into Remote Blob Storage (RBS), and helps provide a more scalable architecture. RBS allows BLOBS (documents) to be stored in external systems in order to keep the database size smaller and more manageable. Transactional consistency allows for update capabilities and allows Write Once Read Many (WORM) mode devices to deny a delete or modify operation. RBS is completely transparent to the SharePoint API so existing custom and third party code will continue to function as expected.

6 — Audit Trail.

Audit trails are not just for workflow anymore as they were in SharePoint 2007. The audit trail functionality applies to most events pertaining to documents and it is extensible. The audit trail can be used to track all scanning events so documents will have a consistent audit trail from the moment of capture until they are archived.

7 — Document IDs.

Document IDs is a new capability that assigns a unique identification number to a document. It is embedded with a special URL and can be used to retrieve a document regardless of where it is moved within a site collection. This is very useful because in many third party scenarios it was very difficult to create links to documents as there was no

permanent ID attached to content in SharePoint unless you added the data yourself or used searching scenarios.

8 — Document Sets.

A Document Set enables grouping of documents belonging to a workflow, project or other similar group together into a single working set. Document sets allow these documents to have one consistent set of meta data, can be downloaded as single ZIP file and can be work flowed as one unit.



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8 Ways to Make Sure That Collaboration Adds Business Value

Noel Rath is WW Product Marketing Manager for HP Software & Solutions and is focused on marketing HP TRIM Records Management solutions. For more information about HP Information Management solutions please visit www.hp.com/go/imhub.

Collaboration is a business process and we have been collaborating long before computing technology changed the landscape. Building a ship a few hundred years ago required collaboration and project management to achieve an outcome. Evidence of such collaboration was carefully documented and managed on paper. We now collaborate with powerful technological tools that allow us to deliver outcomes faster. What needs to be considered in the race for faster communication and collaboration is maintaining adequate controls in order to minimize business risk. When looking to collaborative tools consider this...

1 — Collaboration is Part of a Process.

Let's look at the productivity benefits of collaboration. In isolation there is no doubt that with modern collaborative tools we communicate and make decisions faster. Does that mean it's good for the overall business need? Think about a highly regulated industry where decisions made without control mechanisms in place and the ability to audit those processes puts the business at risk of Government or court imposed penalties. Organizations need to deliver products, services and outcomes efficiently and effectively and do this within internal governance constraints and in accordance with the legislative rules and regulations. In this context we should consider collaboration as events and processes that are a subset of broader executive set business outcomes. Records management controls should therefore be

established over collaborative processes to reduce the risk of adverse business consequences.

2 — Control is Essential.

Organizations always consider risk and benefits when making decisions. This applies to how we manage the information that is part of business activities. For example in the context of information, poor records management introduces risk of inefficient business processes, inability to deliver services efficiently, high cost of products and services, bad publicity, and the inability to bring information to hand to defend or prosecute legal action. Control of information processes is critical to reduce risk. This applies to the most fundamental of decision making processes, collaboration. Without collecting evidence of collaboration, a black hole of information will exist as to why certain decisions are made. Without control and good record keeping, collaboration is no more than idle chit chat, albeit well intentioned. Without control, ad hoc decisions without consultation with corporate policy may see critical business information inappropriately retained or destroyed, or not even captured which can result in operational, legal and financial risk.

3 — Records Management is a Discipline.

When adopting new technologies, it is easy to lose sight of the broader business implications of a new technology. Take for example the viral adoption of email. Whilst

communication became instantaneous with decisions made quickly, the consequences that lack of control caused it still apparent today. Collaboration tools using Web 2.0 content is the new widely adopted solution that is permeating business operations. It is the role of information specialists to ensure that such use of technologies support the business and do not introduce unintended consequences as a result of poor information management practices. Collaboration is a business activity that needs to be recorded in context with the broader business process and according to the corporate policies. Records management is the discipline that meets the challenge of capturing and managing all business activities and ensuring that this information is retained for operational and historical purposes. Records management systems enable management of all corporate information assets including content from collaboration tools.

4 — Consider Content Sources and Types.

Having established that information needs to be managed for its life according to corporate established policies, let's think about types of content. Organizations need to capture evidence of business events, no matter their source, into logical collections that provide context to the evidential record of their business activities. Employing this discipline simplifies the management, retention, disposition and discovery of information in its business context. Business records may be created by office productivity

tools, be received by email, physical mail, emanate from line of business applications, and of course, collaboration tools. Collaboration environments e.g., in SharePoint add complexity to records management.

5 — SharePoint Collaboration.

Microsoft SharePoint collaboration is being widely adopted and is a prominent example of technology enabling business to be more productive with its use of web 2.0 content types. These new content types of discussions, calendar items, blogs, wikis, and complete sites are also discoverable and must be managed as business records. A blog or wiki could just as easily expose an organization to considerable risk as an email if unmanaged as a business record. Consider all content types and sources and not just your collaboration environment when choosing your enterprise records management approach to managing corporate content.

6 — Educate.

Collaborative tools are an enabling technology that used without records management processes and systems in place are little more than a casual unrecorded chat. Education is critical in planning for an information governance environment that supports the needs of the organization. This means education of executive management who will understand governance and risk, technology management and system administrators, and knowledge workers are

the powerhouse of the business process. It's the knowledge worker who uses the tools, and we need to consider the productivity of the knowledge worker.

7 — Consider the Knowledge Worker.

It's the knowledge worker who collaborates, who makes the decision on where to store important information, and who strives to deliver for the business. They are the cog in the wheel without which the desired business outcomes just will not happen. Why do we attempt to overload knowledge worker with the responsibility of deciding what is an important business record? As IM professionals it's incumbent upon us to enable knowledge and process workers, and at the same time deliver to the corporate objectives of the organization. So consider records management primarily as an administratively established function.

8 — Records Management should be back-end Driven.

The last thing we need to do is burden the knowledge worker with administrative tasks. Systems need to be employed that embed the records management rigor into all information management systems. Consider systems that provide knowledge workers with transparent records management with administratively set and systems based processes to ensure relevant business records are managed transparently. This is not a nirvana it can be a reality. Organizations should

consider collaboration in context with all business processes and look for enterprise information governance solutions that have as a fundamental design concept transparency for records management.

8 Keys to Findability

Dan Gilroy is a Project Manager with [RDA Corporation](#) headquartered in Maryland. Dan is located in Charlotte, NC and has over 15 years of experience developing business solutions utilizing Microsoft technologies. Managing cross-functional project teams ranging in size from 5 to 30, Dan has a depth of management experience in a large variety of industries and corporate environments. He has leveraged a variety of methodologies and technologies to successfully and efficiently solve business problems for a long list of satisfied clients. Dan's technical specialty is projects that leverage SharePoint and FAST to provide business value through collaboration.

With the explosion of content in the enterprise, findability has become a major concern for most organizations. Tens of millions of documents can be scattered between multiple file systems, databases and content management applications. Each application has a different access method and no common interface exists for a user who needs a piece of knowledge to get their job done. Putting all of this content in a common location and providing an interface to find this data is the job of enterprise search.

1 — Data in Many Types of Files

Much of the content in organizations has grown over time through multiple different systems. Every merger or acquisition introduces additional types of files and storage locations. Many of the applications to open this data are proprietary and may not be available to all users. Data, however, resides in all of these different file types and must be accessible. The ability to identify relevant files and provide a peek into the content regardless of format removes a burden from users that often leaves data unused.

2 — Data Locked in Systems

As organizations grow, so do the number of applications that they support. Each of these applications, whether purchased or developed internally, stores corporate data and - therefore - knowledge. This is often a fishing expedition, requiring knowledge of many different systems and interfaces.

New users can take months or years to learn all of these applications and understand the data that they contain. While helping a client build a customer service system, I learned that their representatives had to open as many as 11 applications to answer a single customer question. Not only did this cause a dramatic increase in the time spent on the task, but often led to incorrect answers.

Providing a single interface into the data from many systems eliminates this problem. Even though the information is in a single application, it still needs to provide sufficient context and relevant details so the user can take action. This approach moves users from a simple search box to a search-based application and continues companies down the path of deriving value from enterprise search.

3 — Not all Text is the Same

Much of the functionality of search comes from the ability to handle unstructured data. An application that can help users find a subset of documents based on a keyword search can be valuable, but the ability of the search application to interpret the text and provide context around specific elements or entities provides the findability that produces even greater value.

The ability to find products, people, locations and many other entities allows for the documents to be meaningfully categorized. This categorization is different for each

company and - sometimes - for each user. Consider the value of searching for a term and being presented with thousands of possible matches and then being able to further refine the search based on a product and customer list that is created specific to the current results.

4 — Users Can't Spell so Gud

Somewhere between thought and my keyboard is a gremlin because what I think is not always what appears! This is certainly a common problem and one that must be accounted for in any search effort. Many times data in files is overlooked because a keyword is misspelled. The ability for a search engine to find near matches and common mistakes provides an option to expand a search and return documents that would otherwise get overlooked.

This capability is also useful in a search interface. Checking terms in a query against a spelling dictionary and a list of words common to the corpus and making suggestions provides another tool that improves the ability to quickly find the correct information.

5 — Word Forms should not be Important

Spelling is certainly helpful but lemmatization - the ability to group together the different inflected forms of a word so they can be analyzed as a single item - has the ability to transform a search experience. Wouldn't it make sense that if a search is performed for "run," the word "ran" may

also be relevant? This is a simple example, but the ability to expand a search to include multiple forms of the requested terms means that users don't have to spend time performing multiple searches or miss data that may be exactly what they need.

6 — Relevancy is not the same for Everyone

Turning search terms into relevant results ensures that users can find the documents they are seeking effectively. What is relevant to one company or one person may not be relevant to another. Tuning for relevance can therefore turn a mediocre search application into a fantastic one. Some applications are just fine with basic word matching. The more we understand about documents and their contents, however, the easier it is to adjust weighting. For example, the ability to recognize a document by type, author, creation date or contained concepts allows the application to place a higher weight on specific data fields and more accurately predict the results a user is seeking. A document on the first page of results should be very relevant to the entered search terms, but keep in mind the ability to refine the search based on domain specific data.

7 — Security is Paramount

We restrict access to documents in many different ways. Often the decision of authorization is left up to a specific application. Application programmers go to great lengths to

ensure that data is only viewed by those who are authorized to do so. A viable search application therefore must be able to understand and respect the authorization rules given to the content that is indexed. This means that, even though a user finds a relevant match, if they have not been granted permission to the document, they should not be shown any part of the document or even be made aware that it exists.

8 — Effective Search Experience

All of the above points are great and will produce a fantastic index, but that index is irrelevant without an application that provides an intuitive, friendly experience. Users need to understand not only how to perform a search, but how to filter their results and how to take action to be productive with those results. The average number of search terms is about 1.7 words, which is not a lot when searching across millions of documents. Therefore, a conversation type of experience where users can get feedback from the results and refine their search makes for the most effective search results. This solves the findability problem, but the final step is allowing users to take action on a document through preview, common tasks, and other functionality provided directly by the application.

These eight items are critical to consider when implementing an enterprise search solution. Keep in mind however, that most often this needs to be an iterative process. The goal of findability requires regular reviews of user activity and

tuning to ensure that the application is still effective. The core, however, is a good search engine and some domain knowledge about the content available to an enterprise. While these projects can be difficult, achieving findability for your knowledge store will make your users productive. And that is certain to make management happy.



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8 Ways to Ensure Return on the Investment with Enterprise Content Management Initiatives

Pamela Doyle is responsible for forming and driving key imaging industry relationships as the worldwide spokesperson for [Fujitsu](#). She frequently shares her imaging experience at numerous events, including global conferences such as AIIM, JIIMA, and ARMA. In dedicating a major portion of her career to the enterprise content management (ECM) industry, Pam has distinguished herself with a forthright style, a compelling market vision and a solid technical background.

1 — Business Assessment.

Enterprise Content Management (ECM) should be implemented to help an organization achieve its business objectives and strategies. Recent industry studies indicate four primary drivers for ECM adoption: cost reduction, enhancing customer service, ensuring business continuity and regulatory compliance. Organizations should do a thorough assessment of their needs in these key areas and identify the strategic imperatives that should be targeted by ECM. Return on the investment (ROI) provides proof of how ECM supports the organization's business strategies. Success is identified by measuring business benefits.

2 — Technology Assessment.

Organizations should also do a technology assessment to understand what they currently have and to identify what they ultimately need to meet their business strategies. The goal is to identify the gaps between the current and future states of the technology infrastructure. Careful consideration should be given to leverage existing technology investments.

3 — Seek Expert Assistance.

It is recommended you seek the assistance of knowledgeable system integrators who can assist in assessing, designing, implementing, training and supporting your ECM initiatives. The information technology professional you select should have vast experience in content management integration and

be committed to being your partner for the lifecycle of the ECM project.

4 — Careful Vendor Analysis.

In conjunction with your selected information technology professional, you should carefully analyze a number of potential options for your ECM project. The options should be compared across a number of different criteria such as fit with strategic objectives, cost-benefit result, nonfinancial benefits, scalability, ease of use, and implementation risks.

5 — Demand Proof of Handling.

Have your system integrator demonstrate your content being handled by the recommended hardware and software solutions. Many vendors will offer a try and buy type program to allow you to try out product features and functionality before you make a purchasing decision.

6 — Phased Approach.

A phased approach is recommended when implementing ECM. This will enable your organization to find quick wins, which can help prove the concept of ECM and are essential to justifying the continued investment and support for the project. Start by identifying a single information-intensive business problem, apply the appropriate technology to address that problem, measure the ROI, and, if successful, allow this to be the champion to further the adoption of ECM throughout the enterprise.

7 — Benefit Realization.

At the end of each phase of ECM deployment, it is important to thoroughly measure the benefits realized to prove that all expectations from the ECM project have been met. Measure both return on the investment and value add on the investment. ROI are tangible benefits that can be translated into quantifiable financial savings. Some examples would include reducing staff positions, reducing storage requirements, and reducing reliance on courier services.

Value add on the investment are intangible benefits that are not quite as easy to convert to actual dollars but are certainly desirable results of implementing ECM. Some examples would be enhanced customer service, faster information retrieval to demonstrate compliance and more reliable content that leads to better decision-making.

8 — Leverage the Investment.

Organizations should always look for ways to leverage their IT investments. For most organizations when deploying ECM, there will be a beginning, a middle, but no end. Organizations should constantly be evaluating the next content-centric project to embrace and identify the expected benefits from that project. This will enable ECM to evolve throughout the enterprise. Think big. Start small. Grow big steadily.

8 Things to Consider When Decommissioning Legacy Data to an ECM Suite

Janet Luisser is a Senior Program Manager with [Open Text](#) focused on data and content integration solutions such as Legacy Data Decommissioning and Data Archiving. Janet works with customers and market leaders to deliver integration solutions as a component of an organization's ECM strategy.

Legacy systems are often maintained simply to reference historical data. This kind of compliance and discovery strategy is expensive and comes with a high total-cost-of-ownership (TCO). You could archive this data to an appliance meant for data archiving, but does help you 3 years later when your company has a product recall and has to pull together ALL the relevant information pertaining to the product?

Why is it that we treat data and content separately when at the end of the day it's just information. I challenge companies to examine this fact and consider unifying their data and content strategies for complete information management. When it comes to legacy data, why not archive this data alongside its sister content to increase the relevance of our discovery searches? In a time when cost cutting is key to survival and leveraging the investments we have already made—critical, decommissioning legacy data into the ECM infrastructure for lifecycle management could offer companies cost savings, resource efficiencies and time to market of business decisions. But, decommissioning this data can be a complex task. Where do you begin? Consider these 8 tips.

1 — Evaluate your Applications Inventory and Identify Redundancies.

The first step towards understanding the lifecycle of your critical business data and decommissioning that data to the

ECM archive is to complete a full inventory of your business systems and determine what kinds of data you create, manage, support, and require. Complexities are guaranteed including managing the many overlaps and redundancies that make it confusing as to which application is being used for which purpose, as well as the increased maintenance efforts of outdated, low value applications. With a full audit of your technology infrastructure, you can identify the overlap and redundancies.

2 — Determine your Data Owners and Key Stakeholders.

When planning to decommission business data you need to understand who the key stakeholders are and what their requirements are for the movement and maintenance of the legacy application data. This data is not only important from a compliance perspective but may be critical to a line of business or department for key decision making. As you gather requirements from data owners, remember to adopt a business process and legal view of the long-term requirements of that data rather than just a technology approach. Business and legal requirements are an important factor in managing the lifecycle of application data.

3 — Identify Types of Information (Active or Inactive).

Benjamin Franklin once said, “there are two things you can count on—death and taxes.” Well, let’s add data to the list.

Business data or information continues to grow at a rapid pace, with more data being created in the past three years than all other previous years combined. An important step in managing the lifecycle of this information and ensuring the most efficient and accurate means of archiving it is to clearly understand what it is and how it needs to be used. Identify active versus inactive business transactions in your systems. Separate the data into transaction categories, each with their own predefined archiving constraints.

4 — Consider Reporting Requirements.

A frequently lost consideration of application decommissioning and information archiving is the longer term reporting requirements. What information needs to be recalled and how is it presented back to the knowledge worker that requires it? What about legal discovery? What are the legal and compliance requirements for recalling inactive information and its audit trail from the beginning of its lifecycle? Organizations must collect LOB and departmental reporting requirements before decommissioning legacy data. Have your means of reporting in place before you decommission an application regardless of whether you are simply moving the data to a new system or archiving it.

5 — Document your Corporate Data Retention Policies with a Global Perspective.

It's only natural for people to focus on the information that surrounds them—not often considering the perspectives outside their regional silos. But today's reality includes the rules, policies, people, and information that span our global operations. When considering and documenting your corporate data retention policies, you must factor in the rules according to individual countries. Each country that you do business in or have operations in has specific compliance rules and policies to which you must adhere. Additionally, specific industries dictate compliance policies. By the way, talk to the content experts in your organization, they have been dealing with records management rules and policies for content for quite some time, they can help support this phase of information gathering.

6 — Standardize on one Single Archiving System.

The archive can be a single source of historical data. When a legacy question needs to be asked, a single look at the archive should result in a quick resolution and complete view of the information. Take for example, a toy manufacturer — that needs to recall its best-selling doll because it may contain lead paint on the doll's face. A cross-functional team must rally to find and pull the historical information on the product, answer customer concerns, prepare for any potential litigation, and communicate the news. Whether

that information is a document such as correspondence, the image of the product, or the list of distributors, your business needs trusted information to respond within the critical timelines. By unifying your data and content strategies, teams will not scramble to decipher which sources of information to go to and how to consolidate a complete view.

7 — Develop a Plan and Schedule for Decommissioning.

Because the decision to decommission can impact many departments and people, it is recommended that a full analysis of the impacts is documented including users and customers, as well as organizational and financial impacts. Questions such as; Where will the information go once we have decommissioned the application?, Who needs to be notified?, What new application, if any, replaces the services provided by the legacy system? and, What timeframe is acceptable to decommission the application?, all need to be asked.

8 — Create a Plan for Data Integrity Validation and Audit.

Content and data is only as good as the trust that people have in it. Almost every organization has a system or two that the employees are cynical about based on the quality of information it provides (or lack thereof). In order to support decision making, the integrity of our data is vital. It goes

without saying that organizations require a well documented plan and supporting technology to ensure data integrity. There are many threats to data quality including hardware problems, data entry errors or carelessness to name just a few. In order to minimize these threats, the organization must articulate its definition of what quality data means and share it across the enterprise.

8 Criteria to Select Technology for your ECM/DM Solution

Charlie Minesinger is an expert in enterprise software solutions with over 15 years of experience in consulting to and working directly for enterprises such as Nortel and Siemens. Charlie is the VP of Sales and Marketing at [Innovative Query](#) where he is building semantic solutions with IQeXplore for publishers, enterprises, government partners, and our online channels to transform text and unstructured data into assets that drive revenue or cut costs.

Capturing and storing digital assets for your organization with an ECM or DM solution is only the first step. Now you need to leverage those digital assets to drive revenue and cut costs further. So here is your checklist for making technology choices to complement and future-proof your ECM or DM implementation.

1 — Metadata Maintenance (Automation)

If your long term problem has been the categorization and organization of digital assets then you must address this long term maintenance issue. And do not forget that the meaning and importance of metadata will change over time and quality of [tagging](#) will depend on perspective of each end user. Not to say [folksonomies](#) or allowing end users to contribute tags is not useful, it is; but have no doubt that automation is the only scalable solution. Do not leave tagging to the end users. The end user is overwhelmed already, so you need to reduce the metadata maintenance requirements on their time. To automate metadata maintenance tasks, you will need a solution that supports [entity extraction](#) and tools for [vocabulary management](#). This ensures the longevity of your solution for digital assets of all types by minimizing your reliance on end users to maintain it.

2 — Findability

No use storing digital assets securely with redundant

backups if no one ever uses them or worse yet, has no ability to discover those assets. Keep in mind that tagging is often insufficient because a two-line email might have the same number of tags as a 50-page report—but obviously 50-pages has more content to index/tag than two lines in an email. Also, do not settle for a faceted search or simple [content analytics](#) either. Your ability to empower users to find relationships between documents, people, and events is paramount. Look for solutions based on [RDF or semantic web](#) technology to reveal relationships, so your end users can build profiles and aggregate facts about a person or document without having to read every line. [Linked data](#) and semantic web technology save time and build value.

3 — Total Control

Can your IT department and developers manage all the software and directly work with it or is the solution dependent on proprietary code, limitations in functionality? Can you use the metadata for more than search? Can you integrate with BI systems? Can this support email and CRM systems and leverage the daily inflow of information from conversations and transactions? Look for solutions that are not simply point solutions, but platforms with a measurable [benefit](#) for more than one application.

4 — Total Cost of Ownership

Future proof? Does the software rely on proprietary code

or require specially trained and certified developers? Look for solutions that rely on open source and open standards. Open source could mean that the search engine is [Lucene or SOLR](#) or the structured database is mySQL. Or perhaps the solution can leverage my existing investments in enterprise licenses for Oracle or SQL. In any case, you need to look at the ancillary licensing costs related to the implementation and then the maintenance of the solution... be aware of hidden staffing costs, certifications, and license costs!

5 — Flexibility for Applications

Can you provide direct access for application developers to access, search, and build upon the information you are storing? Can they effectively use the metadata? Can you search the actual text and content of files or only the metadata? If you cannot build upon what you store and give your IT team easy access to support your end users, then you have created an archive. Your ability to [search and build](#) upon the full text of what is stored is the key to maximizing the ROI of your information management strategy.

6 — Flexibility for User

What are the native tools and applications that your users have to access documents and metadata? Can you easily develop applications that access and utilize the text within these documents or only the metadata? What is the search capability? Are you generating more support requests with

this implementation than you are solving? The main point is that users need to be able to mashup, [visualize](#) and access the documents—document management is not synonymous with archiving. The more access options and end-user controls you can utilize, the better.

7 — Security

Can you manage security for users, groups, collections of documents, categories of documents, and/or by location of data? Can you change those settings and provide audit logs to journal the changes in security settings? How about mapping security protocols from one organization to another for access to the same document repository? There is no right solution for every organization, so the security offered must be scalable and flexible.

8 — Audit and e-Discovery

Can you capture all required elements for dispositioning data and files in compliance with legal requirements of document management policies? Are you ready for e-Discovery and auditors? Can you map the capabilities of your solution to the [e-Discovery Reference Model](#)? Truly you can kill two birds with one stone here and create allies within your legal department.

The tools and applications you select for your [ECM or DM solutions](#) that integrate easily can address a variety of IT tasks - saving time and money. Moreover, you can win many

advocates in your user community by saving them time and helping them do their jobs better.



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8 Things to Consider Before Developing an In-House ECM Solution

Kevin D’Arcy is the Vice-President of Sales and Marketing for [Hybrid Document Systems Inc.](#) He frequently works with organizations to consult and recommend on document management initiatives across Canada. He is active in many industry groups, most notably AIIM and IIMDA, for whom he currently holds a position on the executive board. Kevin differentiates himself on developing unique solutions to document management challenges.

Enterprise Content Management has become a critical strategic business process, due in part to increasingly stringent legislation and aggressive litigation. To meet this challenge, some organizations take a do-it-yourself approach, letting their in-house IT department build an ECM system from scratch or using ostensibly cheap tools. Inevitably, this only complicates matters and leads to greater expense with an inordinate amount of time spent on research and development, testing and debugging, and on-going support. When ECM is viewed as a technology system and managed as an IT project rather than as a management-led information governance initiative, the resulting implementation may lack the necessary security features and functionality to ensure regulatory compliance and discovery protection.

1 — Beyond IT

ECM implementations are often mistakenly viewed as simply Information Technology projects that will have little impact on the business until the finished application is installed and ready for use. Of course, IT does have a major role to play in any ECM deployment. Typical tasks include configuring application and database servers, setting up backup and recovery devices and schedules, integrating the application with user account services, installing client software on user’s workstations, training end users and administrators, and so forth.

This will inevitably consume a significant portion of the IT department's time and may, for even limited deployments, require the sole focus of one or more IT team members for the duration of the project.

A successful ECM implementation satisfies the needs not just of Information Technology but of the business as a whole. To do this, it must include the active participation of other departments within the organization to address issues of planning, research, and business process analysis and alignment.

2 — Research & Planning

Before turning on a server or writing even a single line of code, a successful ECM development effort requires substantial and time-consuming research into applicable legal requirements, business processes, and technologies. Yet, some organizations focus only on the last—and least important—element, technology. This occurs when ECM is viewed and implemented as an IT project, rather than as a business strategy.

3 — Time & Resources

An informal survey of IT employees revealed that few if any were able to devote quality time to researching new technologies within the scope of their day-to-day activities of administering and maintaining existing systems or training and supporting users. For most, time for research

and education had to be stolen from other activities in one or two minute increments, or conducted after hours on their own time. It is thus not surprising that many in-house ECM projects suffer from delays, scope creep, cost overruns, or even abandonment and complete failure.

A successful project must bring together multiple departments within the company, even those which may not yet be putting the ECM system into use. Including other departments in the planning and definition phase, including those not targeted for the initial rollout, makes it easier to extend the system to those departments later without additional development and customization.

4 — Open Source vs. Commercial Applications

Determining an organization's license requirements for commercial applications, analyzing license options and negotiating volume purchases can be a complex and time-consuming task, such that larger corporations may employ full-time Contract Managers to navigate these agreements.

Some organizations attempt to side-step this process using free and open-source alternatives. While such options exist, for everything from the database and application server to the IDE used to write and debug code, this course is not without cost. Such a solution invariably takes longer to implement—and therefore costs more in the long run—than an off-the-shelf pre-developed and tested system.

5 — Application & Database Licenses

Some document management systems are designed to give users direct access to the underlying database used to store document metadata and therefore require a database access license for each user.

For example, an installation of Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS) requires a license for each SharePoint server, as well as client access licenses (CALs) for each device or user connected to the servers. Additionally, an equal number of server and user CALs must be purchased to allow those users to access the requisite Microsoft SQL Server. It should be noted that these MS SQL Server licenses and CALs cost almost as much as the MOSS licenses, immediately doubling the apparent license cost of a SharePoint system.

6 — Testing & Debugging

ECM systems created in-house tend to be in a constant state of flux, undergoing continual cycles of development and customization. The resulting testing and debugging may take as long as the development itself.

7 — Training

User acceptance is crucial to a successful ECM implementation. If users are not comfortable with the interface or don't understand how to carry out their jobs,

they will invariably find ways to circumvent the system or return to their old ways of working. To this end, sufficient training—for system administrators and for end users—is essential.

Unfortunately, ECM systems developed in-house tend to be works-in-progress, with long cycles of development, testing, and debugging. This means that end user training must likewise be ongoing, leading to reduced efficiency and increased frustration.

8 — Ongoing Support

It's almost inevitable that an individual crucial to an in-house ECM development will eventually move on, either to another position in the same company, or to an outside firm. JDA Professional Services, an IT staffing agency, comments that “78 percent of all IT workers will leave their company before their fifth anniversary. IT workers with eight to ten years experience—the category of employee that previously was most likely to stay with a company through retirement—are now changing jobs more frequently than ever.”

When this happens, an organization may be left without adequate support for an application developed in-house. While knowledge transfer programs and succession planning can mitigate the risk, ongoing support for custom applications is an issue that should be considered before an in-house development project is allowed to grow into a mission-critical application like ECM.

8 Factors to Consider in Creating an Information Management Strategy

Aaron Levie is the CEO and co-founder of [Box.net](#), which he launched in 2005 with the goal of helping people to access, collaborate, and share all their content online. Based in Palo Alto, [Box.net](#) has since grown into a leading Cloud Content Management solution for almost 4 million users and companies ranging from small businesses to Fortune 100 companies. At [Box](#), Aaron focuses on product and platform strategy, incorporating the best of traditional content management with the most effective elements of social business software.

1 — Talk to Your Employees

Technology decisions have traditionally been handed down from the top, forced on employees along with a training manual and a help desk number. But there's a fundamental difference between giving your employees technology that they *have* to use and giving them technology they *want* to use. Before you formulate your information management strategy, consider talking with your employees. Do they feel enabled—or disabled—by technology? Chances are, they have some pretty valuable insights into what isn't working, and maybe even some technology recommendations. Individuals and departments often find creative ways to work around cumbersome infrastructure and platforms, implementing wikis, extranets, and cloud content management platforms to better manage and share information. Take a look at the organic processes your employees have put in place and the solutions they've adopted—if they're working, why not consider broader deployment?

2 — Leverage the Cloud

With geo-distributed workforces, an explosion of business information, and decisions that need to be made in real-time, there's a massive disconnect between the legacy infrastructure businesses have deployed and the problems they're meant to solve. Transitioning from on-premise solutions to cloud-based platforms brings cost efficiencies,

shorter deployment times, and platforms that can scale to accommodate company growth and massive amounts of data without penalty. Between Amazon EC2 for infrastructure-as-a-service, Force.com for platform-as-a-service, and Google Apps for software-as-a-service, companies large and small now have enough options to run their entire business in the cloud. And there's a new crop of enterprise software solutions like Box, Jive and Yammer that are leveraging the scalability and real-time capabilities of the cloud to tackle massive information and collaboration challenges, giving enterprises a holistic view of content and conversations within their business.

3 — Don't be Afraid to Experiment

We've all heard stories about six-or-seven-figure technology purchases that never got off the ground or were only implemented narrowly, so it's no surprise that businesses tend to move slowly and carefully when deploying technologies to solve their information management challenges. But the enterprise licenses, year-long deployments, and third party consultants that are common to traditional software deployments are time and resource-intensive, and don't guarantee the technology will solve the problems it is meant to address. Cloud solutions are more cost effective on a per-user basis, go live faster, update seamlessly and frequently, and carry far less risk with implementation and execution. Innovate IT departments are taking advantage of

these attributes to pilot new technologies like cloud content management in departments or project teams (or looking at technologies these groups have already deployed themselves), and then implementing them across the organization if proven successful.

4 — Think beyond the Firewall

Today's workplace has exploded beyond the office walls, and the firewall meant to protect and control information has ironically become a security liability. Workers need to share and collaborate with vendors, partners and customers, and if their given software is too restrictive, web-based tools outside the IT department's purview are only a few clicks away. In order to be successful, any information management strategy needs to incorporate tools and policies that enable employees to get their jobs done. By recognizing the need for external collaboration and deploying web-based technologies that are flexible, easy to use, and facilitate sharing beyond the firewall, IT leaders will have far better visibility into how information is being shared within and beyond their organizations.

5 — Social does not mean Facebook

Your strategy needs to deal with more than just information management and storage—it also needs to make sure that the right information is connected to the right people in real-time, and also enable end user collaboration around

that content. This is where social comes in. Workflow and collaboration tools should be seamlessly integrated with the systems used to store and manage content. We're seeing this trend emerge in the enterprise content management sector, as SharePoint 2010 adds social features to its platform and Box brings social intelligence to users through a real-time, content-centric newsfeed. Making social and collaboration capabilities an integral, integrated part of your information management strategy will only become more essential as the amount of information within organizations continues to grow.

6 — Make Mobile a Priority

We are closer to the promise of a “mobile workforce” than ever before. We have near-ubiquitous internet access, a broad array of sophisticated mobile devices, and extensible, cloud-based software. Companies that make mobile an integral part of their information management strategy will see a more productive, more collaborative workforce; companies that don't take mobile into account will handcuff their employees and open themselves to security risks when employees try to find workarounds. By deploying software solutions that extend securely to mobile platforms, you'll empower your employees to share and engage with information on-the-go and better realize the benefits of real-time, cross-organizational and cross-geographical collaboration.

7 — Your Services Should Talk to Each Other

Information is infinitely more valuable when it is accessible across relevant platforms. Integrations with on-premise solutions have traditionally been time consuming, complex, and handled by third-party experts. Today, businesses can take advantage of solutions that have out-of-the-box integrations or open APIs that enable easy connections between platforms. As cloud-based content management solutions become more prevalent, we'll see the industry move towards openness, where rich, open APIs enable easy integrations with other systems, and standards like CMIS promote data migration and facilitate better sharing of information between platforms.

8 — Hold your Technology to High Standards

At the end of the day, the technology you deploy to manage your business information should make your company more competitive and your employees happier and more productive. Over the past few decades, we've developed dangerously low expectations, shrugging off excessive downtime, cumbersome updates and complexity as typical. Fortunately, there is a new breed of software companies that are tackling businesses' massive information and collaboration challenges in new ways, leveraging the cloud to deliver services that are powerful, scalable, and as intuitive as consumer technologies. Take an honest inventory of the technology solutions you're using today, and if they're creating more problems than they solve, it's time to explore alternatives.