

PAPER, PAPER EVERYWHERE

Businesses need an effective document management system

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FINDING new value, re-engineering processes and reducing costs are essential for growth in the competitive markets of today, where cyclical profit margins, workforce fluctuations and the push for new fuels are the norm.

Because of the competitiveness, there is little time for handling all the non-core, but necessary, tasks that keep a business running smoothly.

The smooth flow of business documentation is the lifeblood of a successful company.

Today, most businesses store between 80 and 85 per cent of their mission-critical business information in hard-copy documents.

The use of paper requires file cabinets and frequent access or distribution of paper requires letter delivery, faxing and photocopying.

This pattern increases long-term operating costs while office productivity and daily workflow are compromised.

The vast amount of paper documents stored in filing cabinets becomes almost impossi-



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ble to rely on for day-to-day business.

A file indexing system must be implemented to make the task of finding particular documents easier.

However, a file indexing system is not a fool-proof method to ensure the fast and easy retrieval of paper documents because users may store documents under conflicting categories or not return them at all.

Hard-copy document storage is a limiting and inefficient method for daily access, updates and distribution.

A successful business must be able to access up-to-date information on demand. An optimal flow of information is what allows businesses to succeed today.

With the advancement of

technology, businesses can lower costs and increase productivity through the implementation of enterprise document management (EDM).

EDM is an implementation that adopts a broad definition of documents and addresses the role of document management within the enterprise.

It is able to handle all types of documents, including business documents, Web-based content, electronic transactions, email, document images and rich media.

Cost savings are achieved through the optimisation of resources and the freeing up of office space used for paper document storage, while productivity is boosted with faster and easier retrieval or archival of documents.

Documentations to clients

can also be faxed, emailed or printed on demand.

This minimises the amount of time spent by each employee in document-intensive processes, giving him the ability to spend more time on other critical tasks and result in higher revenue for the company.

In an ideal world, we would be able to break all content into its component parts and handle them as discrete bundles of information.

This would benefit storage management, help to avoid duplication in processing and allow content to be repurposed for publishing in different channels.

In the real world, however, this concept does not reflect the way we use content, the majority of which involves the bundling up of several of these discrete items into a larger unit, which we would term a document.

While we use the content in the document for its information value, it will move through the business process as a document and many of these processes have external components. The document then becomes the "wrapper" used to pass information to third parties.

As a result, it is important that document management technology is capable of dealing with the information within a document and with the document itself.

Core areas of functionality in an EDM system

Content Authoring: Facilities for creating or editing content using office applications or Web applications.

Document Capture: Range of techniques for adding documents into a repository; includes document import and transformation and document imaging.

Content Repository: Secure storage facility that can handle a variety of content types and enable access to authorised users.

Workflow: Supports the routing of documents and content between individuals and processes, enabling features such as document approval.

Website Development: Facilities for the development of content-based Web applications, supporting code and content elements.

Indexing and Searching: Ability to create indexes of document and content items and to provide powerful search capabilities at document and content levels.

Categorisation: Allows documents to be tagged and categorised within taxonomy manually or by tools that offer automatic categorisation.

Version Control: Enables the tracking of changes to documents and content, providing an audit trail and the possibility of rollback to previous versions.

Content Delivery: Provides facilities for delivering document and content to users in the most efficient manner, which includes techniques such as caching of content to reduce the load on the infrastructure.

Automate your enterprise data movement and storage operations

NEW legislation and regulations relating to information privacy and retention, particularly in the US, have resulted in a wave of litigation, warned Mr John McArthur, group vice-president for storage research at IDC.

"Companies can reduce their risk, however, by implementing a comprehensive information lifecycle management (ILM) system," he said. "In selecting suppliers, customers should look towards companies that not only have the experience and the technology to address ILM needs, but also a partnering strategy that leverages customer investments."

One of the first storage and server vendors to offer a comprehensive ILM initiative with partners is Hewlett-Packard. Its ILM programme covers the active management of data – from creation to deletion – based on changing application and business needs.

HP says it aims to increase the ability of businesses to respond to change by controlling data actively, assisting end users in meeting stringent retention requirements and tapping the value of reference information.

ILM manages information actively



Without an ILM policy in place, the data in these arrays of disks could explode out of control.

according to changing business relevance. The millions of files in an enterprise – many of which are changing continuously as business data changes – are subject to layers of business and legal requirements.

For an adaptive enterprise in which business and IT are synchronised, ILM solutions help ensure that rapid change

does not interfere with corporate governance objectives.

HP's solutions incorporate diverse storage technologies and partners – including disk, tape, optical and software – and servers.

Its initial industry focus is on financial services and healthcare. It is also targeting the growing ILM market in life sciences. Future ILM solutions will be geared toward public sector customers.

HP's partners include IXOS, Legato (now part of EMC) and Persist to meet the needs of the financial services sector.

It partners Avamar, CommVault, IXOS, KVS, Legato, Mirapoint and Persist on email archiving solutions that help customers satisfy compliance requirements. It also works with CommVault and QStar to deliver hierarchical storage management solutions.

According to HP, ILM solutions address three challenges:

- **Retention management:** Helps companies comply with regulatory requirements regarding the preservation of electronic documentation.

- **Data management:** Helps organisations to manage the increased volume of data actively while maintaining service-level objectives such as performance, availability and recovery time and reducing management costs.

- **Reference information management:** Extracts value from fixed content such as email and Microsoft Office documents by mining archives for market intelligence and CRM information.

Through a central console, HP expects to provide a unified way to specify quality of service and data policies to automate many data movement operations, such as back-up and replication.

This comes in the shape of a storage resource management software, HP OpenView Storage Area Manager.

It provides a centralised view of Oracle and Microsoft Exchange storage capacity. Detailed reports help companies recover wasted space and improve utilisation to reduce the cost of managing application-related capacity.

More information about HP's ILM offerings is available at www.hp.com/go/ilm.