

The Benefits of a Unified Enterprise Content Management Platform

An Oracle White Paper

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A unified enterprise content management platform enables maximization of ROI. Oracle offers a truly unified enterprise content management platform.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Documents, emails, spreadsheets and presentations are created faster than we can count them. Documents, images, web pages, and other types of content are known as unstructured content. As the amount of content continues to grow within organizations, challenges with its creation, management, and distribution continue to grow as well.

Enterprise content management (ECM) provides organizations with a platform to house unstructured content and deliver it in the proper format to multiple enterprise applications. With this technology, you can efficiently build content-rich business applications, reuse content, and integrate hundreds of content services with other business applications. ECM helps to decrease costs, automate processes, reduce resource bottlenecks, share content effectively, minimize the number of lost documents, and better manage risk.

Historically, content management applications were used to address separate lines of business (LOBs), slowly converging over time to address the needs of the entire organization. Although many ECM deployments and solutions have been implemented using an integrated approach, they are now moving toward a unified approach.

Unified ECM provides the full array of content management functionality—including document and imaging management, Web content management, digital asset management, and records and retention management—on one platform. The unified approach yields much greater return on investment (ROI) in just a few years, especially if more than one application is used. Consolidating the overall architecture on a single code base, security model, and API eliminates “Band-Aid” integrations, leverages a common IT infrastructure, and minimizes application development and support costs, thus lowering costs; improving user experiences; and enabling simple upgrades, maintenance, and training.

Oracle offers a truly unified ECM suite—a single platform that provides the full array of rich ECM functionality. The unified architecture of Oracle Enterprise Content Management Suite ensures all ECM applications can be deployed on the same platform, and specific content management capabilities are interchangeable, extensible, and complementary to each other.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of content management has evolved dramatically over the past decade. Organizations are beginning to see widespread adoption of content management technology across multiple departments within their enterprise and across multiple industries—driving corporate IT to implement an enterprise-wide strategy for managing their unstructured content. This white paper introduces the concepts of ECM—the content challenges, technology, and benefits. It also discusses how content management has evolved over the years and explains its two different approaches—unified versus integrated ECM.

CHALLENGES OF MANAGING CONTENT

As we've moved into the digital age, organizations have faced several challenges with content creation, management, and distribution—for both paper-based content as well as digital content.

Many organizations use multiple systems to house unstructured content created during the normal course of doing business. These documents include Microsoft PowerPoint files, scanned images, spreadsheets, graphics, video, e-mail, and ZIP files, which are usually stored on shared network drives, Web sites, individuals' laptops, custom applications, FTP sites, or even on hosted servers and applications.

These disparate systems cause duplication of content and effort and make it nearly impossible to effectively reuse content for multiple purposes. Additionally, having content in multiple places makes it very difficult to share content across the enterprise and outside the firewalls with customers, partners, and suppliers. Although many organizations have used work-arounds, such as an FTP site, to share content, users can't control access or security, and there's no concept of version control or "locking" of the files, so several versions of one document are often created and shared with different users, causing confusion.

Shipping and printing costs pose another content challenge. In many organizations, employees print hundreds and thousands of pages of manuals, technical specifications, and reports, and then ship them to different divisions and suppliers. Further, waiting around for content to be printed and shipped to your location takes time and it might be out of date by the time it reaches you. Wading through hundreds of files on network shared drives or receiving out-of-date information could cause you to make business decisions based on inaccurate information.

Another factor in content management is compliance and risk management. Digital content is increasingly being used in courts during litigation, and the government is continually enforcing compliance with new regulations and mandates.

Disparate systems cause duplication of content and effort and make it nearly impossible to effectively reuse content for multiple purposes.

31% of organizations have 20 or more repositories.

- **AIIM Survey, 2009**

These are just some of the drivers behind the widespread adoption of ECM systems.

ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT

With all these content challenges, organizations have turned to ECM software to help them proactively manage content.

ECM technology “understands” the entire lifecycle of content, applies the appropriate amount of control, and adds additional support for users during each phase. This means your content is managed during creation, capture, and storage. ECM technology also applies such features as version control, indexing for search, content cleansing to minimize risk, metadata, and security. Content services are also added to help distribute, publish, classify and retain, expire, and delete content.

Figure 1: The content management lifecycle—from creation to retention/destruction.

Content Management Lifecycle



If bad data impacts an operation only 5% of the time, it adds a staggering 45% to the cost of operations.

Thomas Redman – “Data, An Unfolding Quality Disaster,”
Information Management Magazine

We often think of what the technology value is but we need to express it in business value. To the retail banking organization it means opening accounts faster - hours instead of days, without spending \$8 to FedEx documents around. This truly eliminates our time obstacles, location obstacles, and it helps to drive greater business improvements.

-Tom Showalter, JP Morgan Chase

Business applications are all powered with a combination of structured and unstructured information. ECM provides organizations with a platform to house this unstructured content and deliver it in the proper format to multiple enterprise applications. An ECM system can efficiently reuse content and integrate hundreds of content services (such as checking in content, performing a search, returning search results, or approving an item in workflow) with other business applications. This allows organizations to turn their unstructured content into assets and implement a cohesive strategy for securely managing content across their enterprise.

Benefits of Enterprise Content Management

Organizations benefit in a variety of ways by implementing ECM technology. Because ECM allows organizations to control access to content, maintain audit trails and histories, and automate the disposition of content based on consistent policies, it helps to minimize risk and apply control around the content lifecycle.

Additionally, one of the key aspects of ECM is content sharing. Organizations do not have a problem creating content; they have a problem sharing it and consuming it. ECM allows content to be delivered to the right people at the right time on the right device in the right format.

Finally, ECM is all about automation—finding and eliminating redundant steps and automating steps that previously were manual, such as converting items to Web formats or routing documents. All of this results in using technology to help cut costs and grow revenue. ECM can help organizations

- Improve communication and strengthen relationships and service offerings with improved Web sites, call centers, extranets, and billing processes
- Adhere to compliance and government regulations such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, Office of Management and Budget Circular A-123, International Organization for Standardization 9001, and the Joint Commission (formerly Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations)
- Reuse and share content across the enterprise and outside the enterprise to improve employee effectiveness and reduce shipping, printing, and storage costs

UNIFIED VERSUS INTEGRATED ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT

Initially, content management consisted of separate LOB applications built on separate applications and platforms. Additionally, these applications

were for managing specific content types, for example, one application to manage documents, another to manage Web sites, a specialized application for managing digital assets, and another one for managing physical, then eventually, electronic records. This led to scenarios in which, for instance, organizations creating human resources portals for managing résumés, policies, and procedures purchased document management systems. Then, when they needed to add other functionality, such as records management, or when building new applications to support Web sites, they had to purchase another software package on a separate server from a different vendor specializing in that application.

As the content management industry matured, customers demanded more out of existing software implementations, so vendors began acquiring other complementary technologies to coexist alongside or embed within their own software. This strategy benefited end-user organizations because they could consolidate multiple existing applications from different vendors onto one platform—to help manage all content types within the organization. This was the birth of ECM.

Although this streamlined approach pleased organizations by allowing them to deal with one software vendor, they usually incurred higher consulting and implementation costs. This was because organizations wanted to use more than one piece of functionality to build a business application—and the content management applications were not integrated out of the box. To address this issue, vendors created standard integrations between applications built on one platform (integrated ECM), which allowed customers to more-quickly implement their content management-based applications.

ECM has evolved over time from separate LOB applications to integrated ECM and now, unified ECM.

To be sure, integrated ECM offered some advantages; however, a number of issues again prompted a change. For example, weak integrations, differences in support for operating systems and programming languages, painful upgrades, duplication of content across applications, and cumbersome training on multiple interfaces plagued organizations implementing an integrated approach. Organizations recognized the need for one platform with one code base and interface, leading to unified ECM. A unified approach puts applications on a single platform and in a single interface, enabling effective content reuse and simple upgrades, maintenance, and training.

Unified ECM offers the same set of common functionality in one product for all content types.

THE UNIFIED APPROACH TO CONTENT MANAGEMENT

As previously discussed, historically, content management applications were created to manage a single type of content for specific content management applications (such as records management, Web content management, digital asset management, and document and imaging management). When looking at these different content management applications, you'll notice that they all share a similar set of functionality used to manage these

content items—such as the ability to have revision control, security and access controls, search, metadata management, and workflow or routing capabilities (see Figure 2).

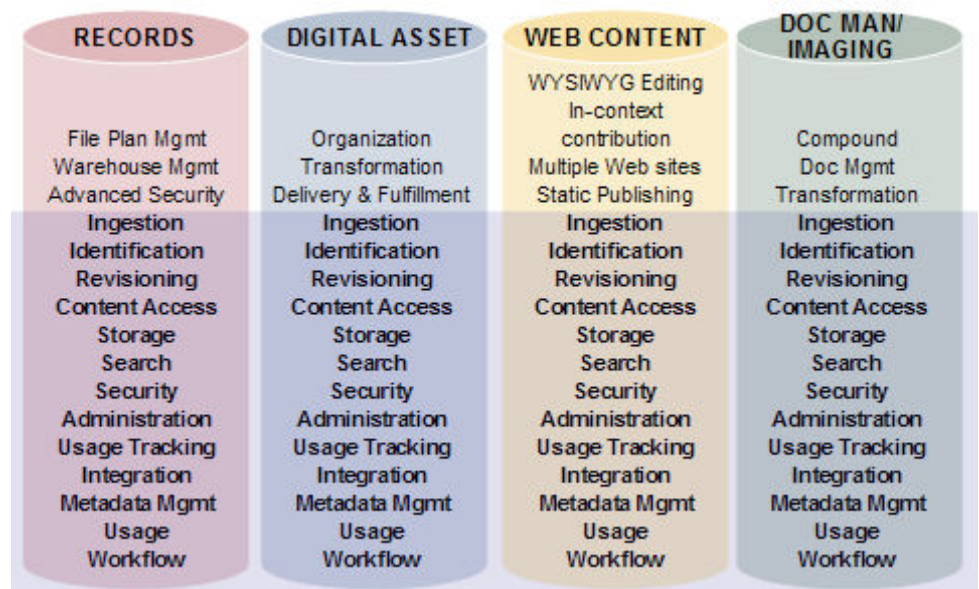


Figure 2: There is a common set of content services that are shared across independent content management applications.

Although each type of content requires some unique functionality—such as file plan management or warehouse management for digital and physical records; robust transformation for video files or for digital assets (such as taking Adobe Photoshop files and transforming them to different formats, resolutions, and sizes); and WYSIWYG editors, layouts, and templates, or dynamic and static publishing models for Web sites—these independent content management systems all share a common set of services and functionality. Unified ECM offers the same set of functionality in one product for all content types. Any of the other unique content management features can literally be enabled or disabled within the single platform—depending on your business application’s needs.

Unified ECM provides the full array of ECM functionality—including document and imaging management, Web content management, digital asset management, and records and retention management—on one platform and eliminates the requirement for integrations between various ECM components.

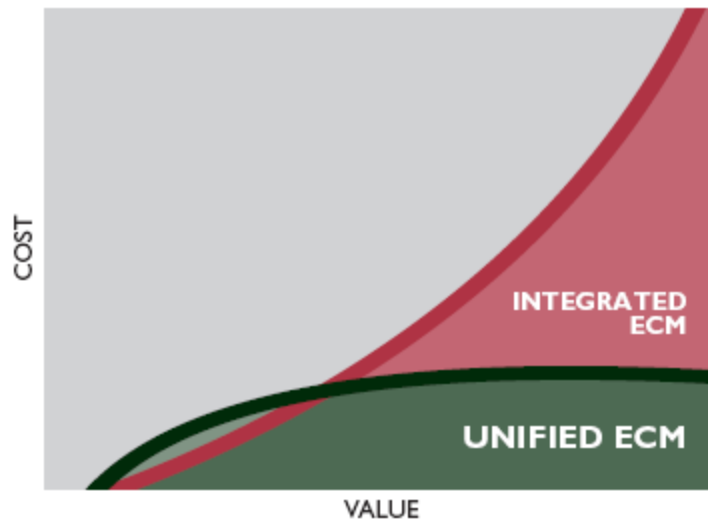
A unified approach removes the barriers to creating composite applications. For example, an organization might need to manage versions of a Web site as records or apply holds to Web content during litigation. Or, an organization might want to easily use digital asset and document management functionality together. Because all technologies exist on one

Typical business applications require support for multiple content types and multiple content management capabilities. The unified approach yields much greater ROI in just a few years, especially if more than one application functionality is used.

platform and code base, integrations between the technologies are no longer needed.

These composite applications deliver functionality that organizations need, regardless of where one product ends and another begins. As multiple content management features are enabled, the benefits accrue.

Figure 3 illustrates the amount of dollars spent on implementing a unified versus an integrated ECM solution. The unified approach yields much greater ROI in just a few years, especially if more than one application functionality is used.



A unified approach to ECM offers cost savings and better user experiences, and enables simple upgrades, maintenance, and training.

Figure 3: A unified approach offers greater cost savings than an integrated approach.

Benefits of a Single User Experience

Users do not care if content is created in Microsoft Word, Visio, or Adobe Photoshop. Whether they're adding content to a Web site or collaborating on a presentation, the functions they need stay constant—the ability to find content easily, collaborate efficiently, securely store and version content, transform content from one form to another, and deploy it wherever it's needed. A unified architecture offers graphical user interfaces with a common look and feel—easing training and improving usability.

For end users, the benefits of a unified approach include

- Ease-of-use, because document and imaging management, digital asset management, Web content management, and records management functions are exposed through the same well-designed Web interfaces
- Higher productivity because users can perform all content-related functions in one place
- Higher adoption rates, making the system more valuable for everyone

Benefits of a Single Platform

Consolidating the overall architecture on a single code base, security model, and API eliminates integrations that serve as only a temporary solution, leverages a common IT infrastructure, and minimizes application development and support costs.

The benefits of a unified approach include

- Dramatically reduced implementation and setup time compared with rolling out separate or integrated systems
- Simpler upgrades because all occur on a single platform
- Ability of administrators and developers to focus on meeting user requirements rather than getting the various application components to work together in the first place

ORACLE ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT SUITE

Oracle offers a truly unified ECM suite—a single platform that provides the full array of rich ECM functionality, including document and imaging management, Web content management, digital asset management, and records and retention management. Only a unified platform can deliver on the promise of ECM by increasing user adoption, decreasing administrative and other ownership costs, and providing a single point of control for enterprise content.

Oracle Enterprise Content Management Suite's unified architecture ensures all ECM applications can be deployed on the same platform, and specific content management capabilities are interchangeable, extensible and complementary to each other.

Not only does Oracle provide all ECM functionality in one product, but any of the content management features can literally be enabled or disabled within the Oracle Enterprise Content Management Suite platform. The same Oracle multisite Web content management capabilities used to build and manage an Oracle customer's heavily trafficked movie Web sites also work seamlessly with digital asset management, so the customer's images and videos can be automatically transformed and added to the site. The same document management system that drives the information behind one of the largest telecom companies call center works also with records management, so information can be retained and controlled across its lifetime.

CONCLUSION

These are many forces driving the widespread adoption of ECM systems. This technology allows organizations to turn their unstructured content into assets and implement a cohesive strategy for securely managing content across their enterprise. Although, historically, many ECM deployments and solutions have been implemented using an integrated approach,

Oracle Enterprise Content Management Suite's unified architecture ensures all ECM applications can be deployed on the same platform, and specific content management capabilities are interchangeable, extensible, and complementary to each other. This single-architecture approach allows users to access all content, applications, and content services from a common user interface.

Unified ECM provides the full array of ECM functionality on a single platform.

organizations are now moving toward unified ECM for better cost savings; better user experiences; and simpler upgrades, maintenance, and training.

Unified ECM provides the full array of ECM functionality—including document and imaging management, Web content management, digital asset management, and records and retention management—on one platform. The unified approach yields much greater ROI in just a few years, especially if multiple content management capabilities are used.

Consolidating the overall architecture on a single code base, security model, and API eliminates Band-Aid integrations, leverages a common IT infrastructure, and minimizes application development and support costs. Oracle Enterprise Content Management Suite delivers a unified suite that provides the full benefits expected of an ECM implementation.



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