



Information Access Makes ECM the Hot Technology

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Enterprise Content Management (ECM) enables the sharing of information captured by any networked business system. This can include data from front and back office systems that in recent years replaced different forms of paper-based processes. It can also include emails, graphic files, Web content, scanned paper documents in digitized format for computer storage, and other forms of corporate digital assets.

Prerequisites to successfully implementing ECM are devising a central data repository that can both accept data from the many different enterprise systems and distribute it upon request to anyone with authorized access to view and use it. Centralizing information storage from all data sources is itself a formidable IT challenge only recently made possible with the emergence of Service-Oriented Architecture, Web Services, and Information Lifecycle Management technologies. Delivering the data on an ad hoc basis to different categories of end users introduces additional challenges of accessibility and information security. Plus there are other considerations of data back up for disaster recovery, data management, and leveraging the consolidation of enterprise data for business intelligence to improve operational processes and competitive advantages.

Specific challenges to implementing ECM vary by organization. The only certainty is that successful implementation unleashes a bounty of business benefits centering on enterprise information access, which makes ECM the current hot technology.

ECM BENEFITS

When properly implemented, ECM solutions empower organizations to:

- **Reduce information management costs**
- **Easily search, retrieve and reuse content for speed to market and enterprise-wide consistency**
- **Unify disparate data repositories**
- **Eliminate data redundancies through content versioning**
- **Enforce corporate IT governance standards, with user security, business workflows, audit logs, and data archiving for quick retrieval**
- **Increase real-time visibility into enterprise information processes with executive dashboards and on-demand reporting**

While Service-Oriented Architecture technology integrates ECM across legacy, component-based and proprietary business applications, it is enterprise portals, business intelligence and infrastructure security technologies that fully deliver the coveted information access:

Enterprise Portals enable personalized online workspaces for Web-based communication, collaboration, and document sharing from the central data repository that the ECM solution provides. With authorized access privileges, there can be employee portals, customer portals, partner portals, even process improvement portals that group information content and transactional interfaces into guided business processes to update multiple systems as part of single transaction.

Business Intelligence transforms enterprise data into timely information that can be used for competitive advantage and continuing business-process improvement. This would include end-to-end data warehousing; enterprise reporting and executive dashboards; and data management tuning and optimization of enterprise databases.

Security technologies ensure protection of your corporate systems beyond the ECM solution in areas such as security policy, remote access availability, user authentication and authorization, access permissions, and data integrity.

ONE REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

A national transportation association working with an arm of the *Department of Homeland Security* sought to integrate all of its data resources and make them available via Internet access to their members and partners across the country.

The ECM project involved integrating existing systems for content management, association management and customer relationship management; facilities such as an operations center, a call center, and an information analysis center—all in separate locations; and links to partners' Web sites; plus adding capabilities for Web-based training and business intelligence. The new infrastructure had to be database-driven and enable all constituencies in all locations nationwide to have real-time access to mission-critical functional and programmatic assets.

The Anexinet ECM solution joins the association's multiple audiences and Web sites in a unified Web environment, with important design considerations applied to usability and data security, insomuch as all end users must be able to interact with the system easily and intuitively but securely. Consistent throughout the solution are WYSIWYG graphical user interfaces to simplify information access, entry, and editing for all end users within the constraints of an individual's security access permissions.

Central to the solution, the content management allows for real-time updating of information on multiple Web sites from any Internet connected computer. Functionality includes:

- **Managing multiple Web sites**
- **Supporting both English and Spanish-language content**
- **Templates to simplify data entry and updates**
- **Workflow and tracking tools for usage and content**
- **Control at page-level access**
- **Supporting external links to other Web sites**
- **Content classification and search tools**
- **Member login management**
- **Enabling personalized content for site visitors**

Complementing the content management system is an integrated association management system for tracking and analyzing recruitment initiatives and member training. This functionality includes:

- **Managing member records, member communications, and membership updates**
- **Supporting linked online communities**
- **Online e-commerce capabilities for targeted marketing as well as demographics tools and inventory tracking**
- **Outreach tracking and online email newsletter capabilities**

An integrated customer relationship management system is designed to simplify member participation. This functionality includes:

- **Managing and tracking contact information and all other association activity with users**
- **Delivering personalized messages to users**
- **Allowing users to designate their preferred method of communication (email, phone, fax, mail, etc.)**
- **Allowing users to choose areas of interest and establish personal profiles**
- **Tracking correspondence, including contact activity with codes, reason for contact, descriptions, assignments, dates, etc.**
- **Automatically assigning activity and reason codes to documents**
- **Automatically sending documents to contacts via their preferred communications profiles**
- **Task creation and delegation tools**
- **Tacking mechanisms and interfaces for different types of calls handled by the association (incidents, customer service, outreach, etc.)**

This Web-based, data-driven ECM solution includes business intelligence for the association's administrators to analyze operational efficiency, as well as understand members' needs and continually

improve services. It is the business intelligence component of the Anexinet ECM solution that enables:

- **Real-time strategic insight about the needs of association members**
- **Classifying content and resources on Web sites**
- **Building a personal interest profile for each member**
- **Improving the personalization of content for each end user**
- **Analyzing the association's operational productivity**
- **Identifying gaps between members' interests and the association's offerings**
- **Planning future programs to match members' expressed interests**

The solution also includes comprehensive, full-featured, Web-based training that integrates curriculum development with a learning management system and secure content delivery. An enterprise-class hosting infrastructure places emphasis on a stable and controlled environment, access and information security, and business continuity backup. The infrastructure security features of the Anexinet ECM solution include:

- **A dedicated web hosting center with multiple connections to the Internet backbone**
- **Industry-standard security practices, protocols, and firewalls for software applications and data**
- **Disaster prevention, including comprehensive system backup featuring multiple redundancy configurations for system and data, and continuity planning in event of catastrophic system failure due to natural disaster, terrorist attack, or other cause**

SUMMARY: ALL COMPONENTS FOR INFORMATION ACCESS

ECM improves an organization's information content, integrity, and accessibility. In addition to Service-Oriented Architecture to create a central data repository from legacy, component-based and proprietary business applications, Anexinet draws from its multiple practice areas in Enterprise Portals, Business intelligence, and Infrastructure Security to maximize and simplify access to the data in ways that most benefit all classes of end users.

ECM should give anyone who needs a document or data output ad hoc access to it—including partners, customers, prospects and vendors as well as all employees—and ensure only “one version of the truth” can be retrieved. Across all industries, it is our ECM users who are increasing the speed of business. ■

John Porter, Director of Anexinet's Enterprise Content Management Practice, has led teams empowering organizations to transform corporate IT assets into powerful business nerve centers that securely manage business processes. Reach him at jporter@anexinet.com. For more information on Anexinet's ECM Solutions, visit www.anexinet.com.