ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT: CAPTURE THE BENEFITS

BY STEVE MACKES

Today, it's hardly a secret that EDMS (Electronic Document Management Systems) deliver significant monetary savings and numerous other advantages over the use and maintenance of hard copy records. Consequently, you can bet that any company or firm looking to expand profitability and viability is seriously considering the promising prospects of a digital records environment.

Digital Pluses Outweigh Vulnerabilities

Digital information, like paper, is not free of vulnerabilities. There is, after all, the possibility of data corruption, viruses, misfiling, accidental deletions, software/hardware failures and so on. But the pluses with digital, especially in areas such as distribution and information sharing, storage space, quick access, editing and overall flexibility of use, more than outweigh the potential glitches. Part of the reason is that digital information is wonderfully easy to reproduce, distribute and safely, securely store. What's more, with a little foresight and backup planning, the potential damage of an electronic failure can be minimized or altogether avoided.

Return on Investment is realized through improved operations efficiencies over manual processes that not only cut costs, but enhance customer service, improve compliance and minimize risk. Organizations benefit from the automating of processing, reporting and audit trails, greater, more accurate, record accountability and the acceleration of business analysis and decision making.

Enterprise-wide Content Management

Through digital document management, companies or firms of every size and type are able to streamline and improve the productivity of virtually every aspect of business. Workflow automation removes errors in data entry while processing and completing a wide range of tasks faster than ever. Accounts Payables and Human Resources are two departments, in particular, reaping huge time, energy and cost saving benefits by digitizing information and automating everything from invoice processing to employee benefits and payroll.

Cloud-based, Cost-effective Electronic Platform

Workflow automation and other digital benefits found in a robust Electronic Content Management system are enabled and enhanced through the hosting of information via a single, on-demand Cloud-based repository. Some document management companies offer this capability in the form of a SaaS

(Software as a Service) system. For an organization wanting to increase its digital footprint, there are substantial cost and ease-of-use advantages to this approach such as customizable flexibility and quick deployment. For healthcare organizations, in particular, such systems have proven invaluable at providing productive support before, during and after EMR transitions.

Unlike an in-house system, outside SaaS hosting often requires no upfront capital expenditures. Typically, the software is compatible with a company's existing computer systems and provided on a subscription basis. With no software or hardware to purchase, there are also no additional costs for ongoing maintenance, internal technical support or future hardware upgrades. One manageable monthly fee covers the system as well as tech support, system upgrades, implementation and training. In exchange, an organization receives the ability to archive, process and distribute a wide range of content, including health records, financial data, legal documents and real estate information.

Any Point of Entry Capture

Utilizing a single, Cloud-based digital repository lets you capture documents across an enterprise at any point of entry in the system—through scanning and imaging, emails, faxes, text messaging, file downloading and more. There is complete integration with popular software programs such as Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Office and Microsoft Outlook, among others. Captured information is secure and easily accessed, extracted, routed and archived. The ease of information capture, accessibility and sharing also encourages and promotes inter-department collaboration.

Compliance and Disaster Recovery

Additionally, Cloud-based web hosting supports an organization's compliance and disaster recovery capabilities. Information monitoring and management is ongoing 24x7 with completely defensible chain-of-custody tracking that assists legal research and discovery. Multiple servers at distant locations provide information backup. That helps ensure the survivability of data should a fire, flood or other disaster strike. With such protections, hosted repositories meet the compliance criteria of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), ISO27799, SOC2, the PPACA (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) and many other Federal/State regulatory mandates.

Key Digital Repository Service Enhancements

Whether performed onsite or offsite, high-speed, on-demand imaging goes hand in hand with a hosted electronic platform, allowing physical documents to be quickly scanned, converted and electronically uploaded for immediate access.

Some digital repository providers further empower their clients with the added convenience of remote inventory control software, where authorized users are able to securely access and actively manage records and files around the clock from any computer. Programs like this can usually accommodate a wide range of functionality that includes record searches, invoice payments, pickup or delivery scheduling and report generation. Users can even fully search for key words within the text of any email message, PDF or Microsoft Word document.

One-stop, Comprehensive, End-to-end Solution

While there is no shortage of companies offering digital platforms, a few providers maintain and support both paper and electronic media to deliver a complete, one-stop, lifecycle solution of multiple, integrated information management services.

The ability to offer long-term, off-site document storage capabilities is important to organizations wishing to preserve original paper records or wanting to archive paper and digital records simultaneously as a backup protection measure.

Additional services often found in an end-to-end solution are data protection, custom retention programs and certified document/ewaste destruction. These offerings, when combined with document and electronic storage, on-demand imaging and a hosted, digital repository, deliver a high-quality, cost-effective answer to most of today's information management challenges.

About Steve Mackes

Steve has extensive experience writing for a variety of media that include print, online, interactive CDs/DVDs, live events and film/video. As a writer and creative consultant, he's worked for companies such as Accenture, BMW, MINI, Mercedes-Benz, PepsiCo, Verizon Wireless, PowerBar, Gatorade, MasterCard, IBM, Sony and Teva Neuroscience. Now, as a Business Writer for GRM Document Management, he is especially pleased to be writing about issues, trends, products and services related to information management.

About GRM

GRM Document Management is a leading provider of lifecycle records and information management solutions. The company continues to demonstrate technological leadership by bringing proprietary innovation and new levels of cost efficiency to document storage solutions, digital records management, data protection services, document shredding services and healthcare release of information. Fully integrated products and services include: eAccess remote inventory control, the Cloud-based Online Record Center, business process workflow automation, a blended paper to digital solution and GRMpedia, a retention regulatory research tool. GRM's full service capabilities are available in major markets throughout the U.S., including Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Miami, New York/New Jersey, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. GRM is also currently the largest document storage/records management company in China and has just opened a new international location in Lima, Peru. For more information, visit the GRM web site at www.grmdocumentmanagement.com