



DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT HELPS ORGANIZATIONS SAVE TIME AND SPACE, BOOST PRODUCTIVITY AND MEET REGULATORY COMPLIANCE.

A MODEL OF EFFICIENCY

Few things move faster than a New York City taxi on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway at 3 a.m. But thanks to turbo-charged technology from Kofax, there's at least one thing that does: a digital copy of the speeding ticket the driver gets.

After the summons is issued, a bar-coded paper copy is sent to the state's Division of Motor Vehicles in Albany, N.Y., where it is scanned and processed. From there, a digital image of the ticket is accessed by the courthouse in Brooklyn's Cadman Plaza.

Unlike the photocopies, the digital images are never smudged or misplaced. And what used to take three months to be processed now takes one, with the last leg of the journey from Albany to Brooklyn taking just seconds.

The imaging technology, based on Kofax's Ascent platform, is just one example of the huge strides made recently in document management — the broad term for the collection, storage, indexing, and retrieval of paper and electronic documents in an exclusively digital format.

Efficient document management can provide several advantages to government agencies and educational institutions. Using digital documents rather than paper saves time and space, boosts organizational productivity and can help shoulder the burden of regulatory compliance.

It also allows organizations to improve internal processes. "Document management provides multiple opportunities to improve the return on investment," says Melissa Webster, program director within IDC's Content Technologies research group.

THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE JOB

Document management products fall into three categories: document imaging systems, electronic document management systems and integrated document management systems.

Document imaging tools, such as scanners and multifunction devices, and the specialized software that lets users capture, manipulate, index and store images, serve as the front end of document management systems.

Among applications, Adobe Acrobat — familiar to anyone who has ever read a PDF file — has long been a market leader. This document management tool enables staff, using Adobe Acrobat Connect software, to collaborate in real time over the Web. Adobe Reader lets users electronically fill out, digitally sign, and locally save an electronic form and its data.

The Acrobat software family consists of Adobe Acrobat 8, Adobe Acrobat 3D, Adobe Acrobat Capture 3.0, Adobe Acrobat Connect, Adobe Document Center and Adobe Reader.

Other top tools include FileBound, which emphasizes records management; Kofax Capio, which captures and stores documents as PDF files; and McAfee Email Compliance Module, an optional component of the McAfee Secure Messaging Gateway and Secure Internet Gateway appliances, which specializes in helping organizations meet regulatory guidelines.

On the hardware side there is a diversity of scanners to choose from. Scanners range in speed from Xerox's DocuMate 510, a low-cost unit that scans 10 pages per minute, to Fujitsu's fi-5900C, an industrial-strength device that can scan up to 100 pages per minute.

Some scanners, such as Epson's Perfection 4990 Photo Pro and Canon's CanoScan 4200F Color Image Scanner, are more suited for scanning photographs and other images. Multifunction devices, such as the HP LaserJet 4345x, let users print, copy, scan to e-mail and fax.

Electronic document management systems include all of the above as well as storage media, such as storage-area networks and network-attached storage devices, used to warehouse huge amounts of digitized documents. Most importantly, they also include a vast array of software that allows users to secure and retrieve electronic documents.

Examples include HP's StorageWorks Data Protector Express, a backup and recovery application, and GlobalTech's Archive Manager, which helps organizations capture, index and store data from messaging systems.

Integrated document management systems directly link to other applications, such as Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Outlook, allowing users to retrieve existing documents directly from the document management system, make changes and file the new version, all without leaving the application.

APPLYING THE TECHNOLOGY

In the case of New York's DMV, the urgent need for document management was obvious. The state agency processes 30,000 to 50,000 tickets per week in its central office in upstate Albany. Prior to deployment of the new system in June 2005, data was entered manually into a legacy mainframe system. Then tickets were physically separated into batches of 50 to be sent to another unit for transfer onto microfiche.

Using an integrated document management solution that includes Kofax's Ascent Capture and INDICIUS software, IBM Content Manager and the DMV's legacy mainframe system, Ascent Capture has greatly sped up the ticket-imaging process.

It has done this by collecting various types of tickets, transforming them into retrievable information and delivering the content into IBM Content Manager, according to Ray Paradise, New York State DMV spokesperson for IT Imaging Projects. From there, the data is transferred to DMV mainframes.

North Carolina State University, whose accounting department handles 4000 to 5000 pages of information every day, turned to electronic document management to maintain control over mounting paperwork. Some of the university's departments are required to maintain employee records for 60 years or more.

So the school integrated a software platform from EMC, called Documentum, with EMC's Captiva InputAccel document capture software. InputAccel captures content by scanning or importing images from other sources, enhancing the images, indexing them and exporting them into Documentum content management software.

The system has lowered administrative costs while making it easier to find and view records, according to Henry Vail, manager of North Carolina State's Infrastructure Systems Services department.

For example, when looking at an invoice record panel in PeopleSoft, users have access to an additional tab for the documentation associated with the PeopleSoft record. By clicking on this tab, they see a list of documents available for viewing, and by clicking on a document name they can call up the document image.

Increasingly, efficient document management is also the law. Some laws, such as the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) of 1998, are well publicized, but most are not. Yet the ubiquity of such compliance laws at local, state and federal levels makes document management software an increasing necessity for all governmental organizations.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

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STEP ONE: Conduct a needs assessment. What is driving the project: a desire to reduce costs, boost productivity, meet legal compliance requirements, or something else? The specific needs of the organization determine what the best solution is.

STEP TWO: Conduct a content inventory. Determine what records are vital (data that's essential for the continuation or reconstruction of the agency) and what can be archived. Records should be accessible, but most agencies don't need to make every record immediately accessible to everyone.

STEP THREE: Consider the demands on the document management system. Take into account how many documents the system must store now and in the future. This will help determine how much storage space is needed, the hardware configuration and the cost of the system. Also, assess just how many users will be using the system concurrently. This determines preliminary software costs and server size.

STEP FOUR: Consider which individuals and departments need access to the content. This will help determine the security levels needed and how documents are processed — who gets to edit, copy or view material. It also helps determine network topology.

For example, documents that must be accessed quickly might be stored on server blades connected to workstations by fiber-optic cable. Documents that are accessed less frequently might be stored on CD-ROMs and connected via SCSI and copper wire. Most documents should also be stored in tape-backup and optical-disc libraries for archival.

STEP FIVE: Get constituents' buy in. The most difficult barrier organizations face is getting people to embrace a new electronic system and let go of their paper. Getting the message out about the benefits of the new system is key to winning the hearts and minds of the people who will use it. ❖