

The most important steps in this process are about collecting of data for existing documents and processes. Content management projects will not work unless there is a set of document templates and associated metadata. We recommend that users provide this data themselves. The project team can quickly get an idea of how many document types and how many business processes there are by sending out a questionnaire. With that data they can begin the process of creating document templates and metadata — the most important of which is retention metadata, namely, how long a document exists before it is routinely archived or deleted. Two crucial benefits gained from implementing an enterprise content management (ECM) project are fewer documents and more reliable versions of those documents. But, without some method for tracking the life cycle of a document, that will not happen. One of the other important points on this plan is that user organizations should undertake market research that doesn't involve talking directly to vendors. This is because a vendor organization's features, functions and "marketing speak" have a way of coloring a project to a shade that most suits the vendor.

Organizations are increasingly demanding a solid business case and return on investment (ROI) before deploying ECM. There are significant costs involved, which can easily range between CZK 500,000 and several million CZK for an enterprise-class system. This, coupled with tighter IT budgets, has resulted in greater scrutiny before executive sign-off. Measuring the return on ECM has always been a challenge.

Every implementation is different and there are no hard and fast rules because it depends on the business case. Many of the real benefits and savings are based on intangible factors, like internal efficiency, regulatory compliance, better information sharing and reuse, competitive advantage, and speed to market. However, content management systems (especially imaging, document management and workflow) typically pay for themselves within two to three years. Organizations can recover the cost of implementation fairly fast if they plan it right.

Some areas where cost savings can be found include fewer costs for physical and electronic storage, fewer steps in processes, time saved for information workers, the ability to outsource a now totally electronic workflow and the enablement of customer self-service. Thus, content technologies often result in substantial value on the investment (VOI) in content management. VOI is an expanded view of value that includes financial ROI plus many forms of non-financial value, such as reusing, sharing and leveraging knowledge embedded in an organization's content.

First steps in implementing an enterprisewide content management system.

- Establish a methodology and sponsor for document inventories. A document inventory can be used to identify document flow, retrieval and access patterns, volumes, and other important document population attributes, which help to define the type and scale of the integrated document management (IDM) system that will be required.
- Identify all content management projects under way. The typical "bottom-up" approach that has historically prevailed in deploying content management technology leads to multiple systems. It is a rare enterprise that has full knowledge of all the resources involved in these departmental systems.

- Identify overlapping functional and technical requirements. This helps prevent redundant and wasteful practices.
- Evaluate the feasibility of deploying a single-enterprise content-management system. A single-enterprise vendor is an increasingly viable option, as vendors have added functionality and have begun bundling options into packages offered at varying costs.
- A single system makes volume discounts available for software licenses, software maintenance fees and training expenses, thereby enabling better management of IT department resources.

Many organizations are trying to reduce the number of content management applications and repositories they have, to integrate content and to have easier access to it across organizational "silos." At the same time, the costs of managing and maintaining content may decrease, particularly those for licensing and servers.

Most organizations are undisciplined in how they manage content. The overwhelming volume of content that organizations want to consolidate is often redundant, irrelevant and poorly managed. Integrating and migrating poorly managed content can lead to a bigger problem — like sweeping together small piles of trash to create a bigger pile. To get effective results and value from content integration efforts, organizations must first establish good information governance around unstructured content — that is, content governance.

Integrating and migrating content is an opportunity to improve content governance, which in turn saves money within IT departments and business units, and increases workplace productivity. Content governance requires organizations to establish: 1) accountability for bodies of content; and 2) effective ECM systems with operational support personnel who can enable and enforce retention and review policies.

Ensuring a Smooth Landing: Best Practices and Lessons Learned

- Build a business case
- Create the right project team
- Make a document inventory
- Develop an ECM architecture
- Use a structured methodology
- Balance your project portfolio
- Gain user acceptance