

Abstract

The successful implementation of an electronic document management system begins with a detailed understanding the specific challenges and requirements of your organization. Knowledge of the capabilities of document management systems is essential for the development of a requirements document that will facilitate the vendor selection process and the overall project management.

In this document you will learn about important features of a document management system including general functions, workflow, security and integration with business applications.

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Introduction

Completing a successful document management project requires detailed planning and execution. While every project has its own unique attributes, incorporating best practices from other successful projects provides a template upon which to base your objectives. Establishing best practices for electronic document management (EDM) is especially challenging as customer needs and vendor solutions vary widely.

This document provides an overview of best practices that Treeno Software has observed from a variety of industries and organizations that have successfully implemented document management systems. Topics include practical considerations for purchasing and implementing an electronic document management system, identifying which components and features to look for, and determining which solution is right for you.

The goal of this document is to help those involved in the planning, evaluation, acquisition, and implementation processes make informed decisions so they can experience maximum end user adoption, organizational efficiency, and measurable return on investment.

The document is divided into the following sections:

1. Project Planning
2. Standard EDM Features Check List
3. Document Management Security
4. Workflow Automation
5. Application Integration

Key 1: Project Planning

To ensure a successful EDM implementation, you must thoroughly understand your organization's current business processes and how documents and electronic files flow through those processes. When a document or electronic file is created or sent to your organization, what happens next? What is movement of that document until it reaches its final destination?

Your initial EDM deployment should address areas that are currently causing the most "pain" and where there is the greatest opportunity for improved efficiency. An enterprise wide implementation of an EDM system is best achieved using a phased approach, where those users with the greatest need are served first. When working with an individual department, take into consideration their interaction with other departments in the enterprise to improve overall efficiency.

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What information is going to be captured and entered into your EDM system? Paper documents, electronic files, e-forms, faxes, email and attachments are common content. The ability to quickly and easily capture and upload this content into your EDM system from different departments, offsite locations and from different scanners manufactures is key the creating a comprehensive systems.

You may choose separate document capture software vendor from that provided by your scanner hardware manufacturer depending on your specific capture requirements. Taking advantage of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) will allow you to scan and automatically index files by recognizing metadata contained within the document.

After information is captured, it must be logically filed and then stored for easy and secure retrieval. Each department with an organization will have different index values or naming conventions that will allow for rapid retrieval of the files in the future. Learn how files are currently organized and how employees search for them. Who will need to access those files in the future? If it is someone from outside the department or organization will they be able to understand the filing methodology. How would an auditor in a regulated industry be able to retrieve files to prove compliance?

Understand your organization's corporate and office politics. Who are the stakeholders? How much influence do the daily end users have on the decision? Does the IT department have the bandwidth to implement the project with the required time frame? Make certain that there is buy in at all levels.

Examine and develop the process to implement the EDM system and to manage change. Find a system that minimizes the impact on employees by allowing you to configure the system to fit your processes rather than requiring employees to make major changes to how they do their day to day tasks. A well designed system will be welcomed by the end user community.

The system with the most features and functions may not be the best choice. Choose the EDM system to solve your specific business challenges. Find the EDM solution that addresses your specific business requirements and then deploy it according to a detailed well conceived project plan.

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Key 2: Standard EDM Features

Though EDM features can vary quite a bit, you should look for these standard features when selecting your vendor.

Searching

- Top-level search
- Cabinet index search
- Document index search
- File name search
- Full text search
- Document type filter
- Bookmark searches

Workflow

- Simple point and click user interface
- To Do item searches
- Ad hoc workflow
- Fixed workflow
- Workflow routing decisions
- Detailed workflow reports

Security

- Detailed audit trail
- Three-tiered administration
- Field formatting enforcement
- User/group/system security
- Recycle bin deleting
- Barcode reconciliation

Scalability

- 1 to 1000s of users
- Store billions of documents
- Unlimited filing cabinets

Document Management Functionality

- Barcodes
- Burn to CD
- Convert to PDF
- Export to ZIP
- Export only metadata
- Document versioning
- Annotations
- “Sticky” notes
- Content hiding with redaction
- Multiple departments (databases)
- User inbox and inbox reporting
- Public inbox
- Document delegation
- Document publishing for external viewing
- System use reports
- PDF form processing

Usability

- Full screen mode
- Thumbnail view
- Up to 255 index fields
- Store any file format
- Flexible document storage design
- Keyboard-driven indexing

Integrations

- Integration with third-party applications
- ODBC integration
- Active Directory/LDAP integration
- Web Services API

Plug-Ins

- Outlook check-in
- Lotus Notes integration
- Word/Excel check-in/check-out
- Print To
- File Monitor/Hot Folder tool

Key 3: Document Management Security

Document security lets you control who has access to different parts of the system and what actions they can perform. The permission you set determines how users interact with information contained within the system.

The EDM system should allow for multiple permission levels such as:

- **At the department level** – All rights (system, group, and user) are assigned by department.
- **At the systems level** – Set global permissions that apply to all groups with a department.
- **At the group level** – The most efficient way to manage security because you only need to set up security permissions once for multiple users.
- **At the user level** – Set permissions for Individual users.

A detailed audit table is necessary to fully understand what is happening on your EDM system and to aid with regulatory compliance. The audit table displays a history of transactions on the system based on defined criteria.

Audit information available should include:

- **ID** – System generated ID for each transaction.
- **Username** – The name of the user who performed the transaction.
- **Data/Time** – The date and time the transaction was performed.
- **Info** – Detailed information about the transaction
- **Action** – What specific action was performed

EDM Security Requirements:

- User name and password rules
- Strong data encryption
- Designation of who can view which information, down to the individual user and document type
- Documents can be frozen and can't be altered
- A detailed audit table of all file access and user transactional activity
- Redaction (electronic "white-out") of sensitive data and Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

Key 4: Workflow Automation

Automating repetitive business processes that involve the movement of documents or files can significantly improve efficiency and return on investment. However, these repetitive routine business processes can be complex, with multiple touch points where new information enters a process and decisions need to be made. It is rarely as simple as just accepting or rejecting a document. Therefore, the workflow function of the EDM system you select needs to be flexible and powerful enough to mirror your processes. The system should allow you to create and edit your own workflows without the need of a programmer or professional services from your vendor.

Workflow Essentials

- A simple, intuitive point-and-click user interface for building workflows without the need for programmers or technical expertise.
- Optional email and message notifications.
- A clear hierarchy for decision-making, including departmental and individual authorizations.
- Designation of how exceptions to standard processes should be handled.
- Transactions within processes that are fully searchable and instantly auditable when immediate answers are required.

Key 5: Systems Integration

How much efficiency would be gained if all the documents and files associated with a customer, client, or vendor were literally one mouse click away? In many cases, EDM without integration delivers an incomplete solution. Integrating your EDM with applications that your employees use every day speeds up user adoption, increases productivity, and decreases organizational costs. Integrating business process management/workflow software with other key technologies will enable you to leverage your investment in existing technology enterprise wide.

Integration Essentials

- Seamlessly integrates with legacy systems, line-of business software, fax, email, and in-house developed software.
- Product functionality supports industry-standard Web Services.
- Professional integration services if assistance is needed or a software developers kit (SDK) if you have your own technical resources.

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Summary

A successful electronic document management project starts with a detailed project plan. Examining your organization to target obvious inefficient bottlenecks is a good place to begin; however, a holistic approach will deliver the most long-term benefit.

Understanding your current business processes will help you implement a document management system that drives efficiency, productivity, and reduced operating costs. Choose the EDM system with features that serve your current and future needs. Keeping your information secure is fundamental. Develop the security policies that meet industry standards and requirements. Workflow automation should be considered as a way to increase the benefits of EDM. Integrating with existing line-of-business applications will speed up adoption and also improve the return on investment.

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About Treeno Software

Established in 2002, Treeno Software is a leader in the Enterprise Document Management (EDM) industry. Treeno Software was one of the industry's first to embrace cloud computing with the Treeno EDM Cloud (SaaS) and to provide web-based solutions offering secure global mobile access. Treeno Software's mission is to provide their customers with operational workflow efficiencies and measurable return on investment (ROI) through the fast installation and implementation of their fully secure, highly reliable, and easy-to-use, web-based Enterprise Document Management (EDM) Software Solution.

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