

The Critical Role of Content Management in Delivering Business Services

An ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES® (EMA™) White Paper
Prepared for ASG

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Executive Summary

Enterprise Content Management (ECM) provides critical capabilities for managing the documents, spreadsheets, reports, e-mails, Web pages, etc. that drive business operations. EMA research shows that ECM delivers numerous benefits, including easier information access, knowledge sharing and collaboration, improved productivity, competitive advantage, regulatory compliance, cost reduction, and more.

However, many enterprises have ineffective ECM capabilities and cannot achieve these goals. Instead, they deliver poor customer service, provide slow access to content, and misplace records, resulting in lost revenue, reduced competitive advantage, higher costs, and lower stockholder value.

EMA recommends businesses apply an enterprise-wide ECM strategy that covers e-mail and records management, document management, report management, business user access, content workflow and collaboration, long-term archiving, integration, and broad enterprise usability.

They are also unable to maintain compliance to important standards (such as ISO15489, DoD 5015.2, MoReq, and ITIL®), or to critical legal requirements (such as HIPAA, GLBA, Privacy and FOI laws, NASD, MiFID, US Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, and SEC 17a).

EMA recommends businesses apply an enterprise-wide ECM strategy that covers e-mail and records management, document management, report management, business user access, content workflow and collaboration, long-term archiving, integration, and broad enterprise usability.

Further, to manage content according to true business service objectives, ECM should be connected to Business Service Management (BSM) solutions, such as Application Dependency Mapping, Service Level Management, Event Monitoring and Correlation, and Service Impact Analysis.

This EMA white paper investigates these issues in more depth and provides an overview of how ASG is bringing together technologies for ECM and BSM to address business-aligned content management initiatives across the enterprise.

Content Management in a Business Service Context

Businesses run on content – the documents, spreadsheets, reports, e-mails, Web pages and more that are the vehicles for communicating critical business information. The volume of content that organizations are producing is growing at an extraordinary rate, and driving the growth of ECM – a broad collection of disciplines that enables businesses to create, acquire, store, index, deliver, and delete this wide and growing variety of content.

EMA research¹ shows that enterprises deploy ECM to achieve critical business outcomes. For example:

- 88% report that making information easier to find is a very important or critical outcome of ECM deployments
- 83% report knowledge sharing and collaboration are very important or critical
- 81% report productivity improvement is very important or critical

¹ See EMA Research Report, Enterprise Content Management: Toward A New Content Paradigm

For example, if an insurance agent cannot find a coverage document, they cannot process a customer claim. If customer service representatives (CSR) cannot share customer e-mails with colleagues, they cannot collaborate to resolve problems. If branch managers cannot access online reports, they must spend hours with paper-based calculations instead. Content is critical to providing these and other business services.

A substantial majority of enterprises also report other very important or critical outcomes driving ECM deployments, including increasing security and privacy, improving competitive advantage, achieving regulatory compliance, and reducing costs.

Problems with Typical ECM

However, EMA research has identified specific problems that arise out of how most enterprises manage this critical content – or, more accurately, how they fail to manage it. For example:

- The most commonly used content repository is a shared network file server, used exclusively or often by 82% of enterprises
- Local file systems or e-mail folders are both used as content repositories exclusively or often by over 60% of enterprises
- Over one-third of enterprises store content on external Websites at least half of the time
- Over 60% of enterprises print and store content in hardcopy at least half of the time

These typical approaches mean that a significant volume of corporate content is located, at best, out of control, and, at worst, in full public view, creating a headache for retrieval and almost certainly preventing that content from being re-purposed to drive additional business.

As a result, businesses face a number of negative consequences.

For example, they are unable to provide adequate information governance and fail to meet risk management and compliance requirements because sensitive financial and customer data is exposed and potential evidentiary records are lost. This exposes companies to both criminal and civil liability and increases the potential for fraud and other criminal activity.

Similarly, on a day-to-day basis, they are unable to provide quality customer service. Customer documents are difficult to access, slowing down response to customer requests. CSRs lack consistent information, so each CSR provides different answers to the same questions – or worse, to the same clients – due to inconsistencies in how documents are controlled and referenced.

These issues drive customers to the competition, result in lost revenue, reduce competitive advantage, and dramatically increase the cost of business. They can even directly affect share prices and reduce stockholder value. EMA research has shown that public awareness following a major data loss event directly correlates with significant and sustained reductions in share price.

ECM and Compliance

Compliance is therefore a critical aspect of ECM. This includes compliance with standards – such as the ISO records management standard (ISO15489), US Department of Defense (DoD) Standard for Records Management (DoD 5015.2), the European Commission's Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records (MoReq), and the IT Infrastructure Library®. It also includes compliance with legal requirements, such as HIPAA, GLBA, Privacy and Freedom of Information (FOI) laws, NASD regulations, Europe's MiFID, US Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, and SEC 17a.

To maintain content compliance, enterprises must have scalable and reliable solutions that manage the complete content lifecycle by applying unified retention policies.

To maintain content compliance, enterprises must have scalable and reliable solutions that manage the complete content lifecycle – acquisition, storage, retrieval, and disposal – by applying unified retention policies. They must handle both entire content items (e.g., a general ledger report), and individual records (e.g., a customer statement). They must also be flexible and adapt to real-time business events (e.g., retention orders due to impending litigation).

Content compliance solutions must also handle new online content technologies such as e-mail. In fact, businesses rate e-mail behind only documents as their most important content type – higher than spreadsheets, Web pages, or application reports. E-mail is also rated as the most commonly used and most important content delivery mechanism by almost 90% of enterprises – more than both Web pages (66%) and hardcopy delivery (50%).

Business Services and Online Content Technologies

E-mail is just one of many emerging online content technologies (sometimes referred to as Web 2.0 or Enterprise 2.0). EMA research shows that business deployments of blogs, wikis, instant messaging (IM), and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) are growing by up to 20% annually. Already, more business users deliver content via IM (25%) than via fax (16%), and the widely deployed Microsoft® Office® SharePoint® Server – an online content collaboration system – is often overlooked in discussions of content-based business services.

These technologies can provide excellent business benefits. Wikis and IM can increase collaboration and improve productivity by removing barriers to communication. Blogs, podcasts, and RSS feeds can help to establish and improve external relationships. Online communications and conferencing services, such as Skype or Microsoft Office LiveMeeting®, can reduce travel costs and improve collaboration.

However, the content generated by these online technologies should still be manageable, controllable, and auditable. Unfortunately, EMA research shows that although 41% of businesses now use these technologies to a significant degree, less than 10% of businesses manage the content that they create. With no ability to capture, manage, and control this content, businesses will face reduced productivity, high-risk audit and compliance issues, data exposure, increased costs, and other critical business problems.

Business Service Management Approach to ECM

Holistic Approach to Enterprise Content Management

With all of these different content types and use cases, enterprises need to manage content holistically, across the entire business, with integrated content management technologies including:

- E-mail management – automatic capture, archiving, deletion, and other lifecycle management functions for e-mail and attachments, integrated with records management features
- Records management – policy-based lifecycle management for the many records of business activity (including documents, e-mails, memos, letters, contracts, files, etc. – both physical and electronic)
- Document management – check-in/check-out, merge and compare, collaboration, version control, storage, delivery, and more for human- and application-created content, such as letters, memos, forms, brochures, catalogues, print advertisements, etc.
- Report management – bulk capture, storage, version control, archiving, retention, deletion, and other lifecycle management functions for computer-generated application output, such as general ledger listings, account listings, inventory reports, etc.
- Business user access – ability to find, retrieve, view, print, send, and delete content from purpose-built content viewing systems, printing mechanisms, and e-mail or messaging applications, with multi-casting, streaming, format transformation, and other value-added capabilities
- Content workflow and collaboration – managing the delivery of content from person to person, or from department to department, to allow individuals to work together on the creation of content, such as complex, multi-part documents, brochures, catalogues, product specifications, designs, etc.
- Long-term archiving – providing reliable, scalable, long-term storage for content, with version control, retention and deletion policies, content delivery features, indexing/search/retrieval, and support for federation of content across multiple platforms, locations, and repositories
- Integration – providing broad enterprise capture, usability, and reusability of content within existing or new business applications (such as service desk, claim processing, ERP/CRM systems, and Microsoft Office productivity suites) across multiple online content types and multiple content repositories

EMA research shows that 84% of enterprises with holistic ECM deployments state that these solutions effectively achieve important business goals, and almost 60% of enterprises report positive cost benefits. Businesses also note a range of other benefits, including easier regulatory compliance, enhanced data security/privacy, and improved competitive advantage.

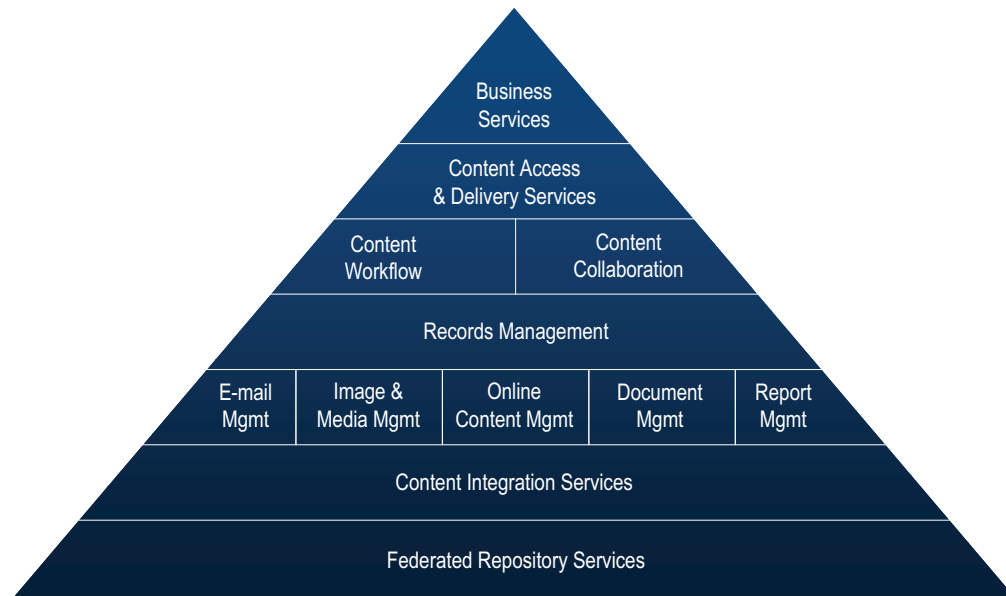


Figure 1: Holistic ECM

Connecting ECM and BSM

However, managing content is, in itself, not enough to drive business. Enterprises must incorporate ECM with other IT management systems to provide complete Business Service Management (BSM). For example:

- Application Dependency Mapping – and an understanding how infrastructure supports ECM, and how ECM relates to business services – is necessary to ensure that business users are able to access content across a complex infrastructure and minimize the impact of system changes on content-dependent applications.
- Service Level Management is necessary to ensure not just the performance and availability of systems and applications, but also the availability of business-critical content, and to identify contingencies for potential outages to content-dependent business services.
- Event Monitoring and Correlation is necessary to detect and remediate (or avoid) problems that affect content-dependent business services, especially records management processes (such as e-mail journaling) during which downtime or capacity delays can cause major compliance problems.
- Service Impact Analysis is necessary to allow IT to understand the business impact of ECM infrastructure failures and to proactively notify business users before they overwhelm the help desk.

For example, customer-related content that is accessed through a CRM application may be stored in a database. In this scenario, any downtime will prevent a CSR from accessing customer-related content. Application Dependency Mapping will ensure that this dependency is clear whenever database maintenance is scheduled. Service Level Management will mandate that the server is not brought down for patch updates during critical business hours. If the database tables fill up, Event Monitoring and Correlation will raise alerts.

Service Impact Analysis will allow IT to proactively notify any users that might be affected by any database outage.

ECM also supports strategic IT initiatives, such as ITIL or IT Service Management (ITSM) projects, that help IT to provide and improve its business service focus. For example, IT can acquire and store its own service management data and then use ECM solutions to generate reports, aggregate metrics over time, apply analytics, etc. This allows IT to keep historical content and apply it to analysis of trends and deliverables, further helping to achieve the goals of BSM.

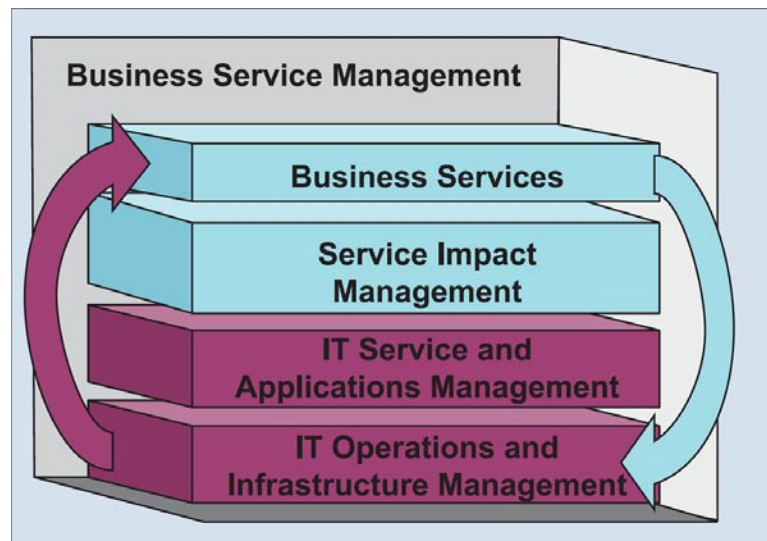


Figure 2: Business users do not use content systems, they use business services

ASG and Business Content Management

ASG is bringing together technologies for ECM and BSM to address Business Content Management initiatives, across the enterprise, on Windows®, UNIX®, and z/OS® mainframes.

On the ECM side of these initiatives, ASG has a broad range of solutions:

- ASG-ViewDirect® Suite provides a multi-platform, federated repository for lifecycle management of business content, including documents, PDF files, reports, e-mail, and records
- ASG-DocumentDirect® for the Internet provides a purpose-built, Web-based client for finding, retrieving, viewing, and printing stored content
- ASG-Total Content Integrator™ provides integration across multiple, disparate ASG and non-ASG repositories and applications – including SharePoint, content repositories and databases
- ASG-WorkflowDirect provides a content workflow and collaboration engine that can integrate content creation and management into new or existing business applications
- ASG-ViewDirect® E-mailManager provides acquisition, archiving, searching, organizing, and viewing of e-mail content necessary for e-mail and records management

- ASG-Cypress® provides output management, document enhancement, and document creation and delivery capabilities for improving the accessibility, analysis, and distribution of content throughout the enterprise

On the BSM side, ASG also delivers many strong capabilities, including:

- Application Dependency Mapping
- Service Level Monitoring
- Event Monitoring and Correlation
- Service Impact Analysis

EMA Perspective

It is barely disputable that businesses run on content. E-mails, insurance policies, account records, customer profiles, inventory reports, etc. are fundamental to delivering business services. Yet most management software vendors continue to segregate Business Service Management from Enterprise Content Management. Despite the importance that enterprise CIOs attach to aligning IT with business services, it is generally unusual to see software vendors connecting ECM and BSM directly.

However, ASG is clearly taking a different approach – and a logical approach at that. It is providing highly functional and very scalable ECM solutions, aligning them with its similarly capable BSM portfolio in a way that few (if any) other vendors are. Indeed, few other vendors are even capable of delivering these Business Content Management solutions.

As in most areas of IT, ASG does leave space for niche solutions that deliver additional competencies. However, it is not necessary to standardize entirely. EMA research actually finds that ECM satisfaction tends to be highest in organizations that deploy complementary solutions.

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Nevertheless, EMA believes that most enterprises will find that ASG provides many of the most important solutions for Business Content Management, and they will need few, if any, other providers to achieve their business goals in this area.

About ASG

Founded in 1986, ASG is a privately held global firm that provides a full range of enterprise software solutions in Metadata, Applications, Operations, Content, Performance, Identity, and Infrastructure Management as well as the Business Service Platform. ASG is headquartered in Naples, Florida, USA, with more than 90 offices serving the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia/Pacific. ASG's Business Service Platform™ (BSP™) is a solution for companies that want to manage their underlying technology and ensure that their IT infrastructure enhances business performance. ASG's BSP goes beyond Business Service Management (BSM) software by using a sophisticated engine to collect information on all IT assets and relates those assets to overall business services as specific configuration items (CIs). In addition, ASG's BSP is a powerful tool to help companies become IT Infrastructure Library® (ITIL®) compliant.

About Enterprise Management Associates, Inc.

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst and consulting firm dedicated to the IT management market. The firm provides IT vendors and enterprise IT professionals with objective insight into the real-world business value of long-established and emerging technologies, ranging from security, storage and IT Service Management (ITSM) to the Configuration Management Database (CMDB), virtualization and service-oriented architecture (SOA). Even with its rapid growth, EMA has never lost sight of the client, and continues to offer personalized support and convenient access to its analysts. For more information on the firm's extensive library of IT management research, free online IT Management Solutions Center and IT consulting offerings, visit www.enterprisemanagement.com.

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