IRON MOUNTAIN®

HOW TO EVALUATE YOUR ECM SYSTEM?

BEFORE READING THIS, START WITH THE QUESTION: HOW MUCH CRITICAL BUSINESS INFORMATION DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION MAINTAIN?

Over time, both content types and the repositories in which they're stored have expanded. We've seen a dramatic increase in the types of information assets organizations must manage like voice/audio files, videos, photos/images, etc. In addition, we've seen increases in average file sizes and the overall volume of information stored - placing even greater demands on IT infrastructure. The sheer volume, scope, and overall magnitude of information an organization produces and consumes today is off the charts!

So, ask yourself again – how much critical content does your organization maintain? Is it tens-of- thousands of assets? Hundreds of thousands? Millions? Billions? More? Do you even know if it's possible to project what this figure could be?

REVIEW YOUR CURRENT SYSTEMS

At one point in time, the prevailing theory was that if you could have all of your content reside within a single digital archive, you'd finally be able to get a handle on it. So, you invested in a document imaging solution, then a document management system, and then an enterprise content management (ECM) software. Along the way, you picked up a few other point solutions as well. Then other departments within your organization felt the need to set up specialized file shares, network drives, and other content management solutions for their specific needs. Next came things like SharePoint, along with solutions that have been integrated into the company via mergers and/or acquisitions.

So that might be your status today: a huge mess on your hands; information of every size and type scattered from one end of your organization to the other. And it's costing you a fortune to maintain the myriad of disconnected content management applications within your organization, not to mention you're exposing your company to enormous risks.

As if this debacle couldn't get any worse, now imagine trying to integrate all these disparate information management applications into your business systems. Each application likely has its own proprietary programming interface that requires a unique skill set, and in-depth knowledge of the product's inner workings just to build an integration that is unlikely to meet expectations.

REVIEW YOUR USER'S BEHAVIORS

Technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud, and mobile have delivered seismic changes to the way in which we all work, and have brought new tools and methods for people to use to get their work done. But many organizations are still unable to take advantage of the new and innovative features and benefits that come with modern technology. Why? Because they find themselves tied down by the weight of the past - tied down by legacy applications that provide important benefits, but are often cumbersome to use, and cannot easily be transitioned away from.

This introduces an entirely new set of problems that come from your employees trying to search and retrieve information stored within disconnected apps and content repositories. It's difficult at best, impossible at its worst. No single individual within your organization can possibly know where to look for all the information they need to do their jobs on a daily basis. And even if they did, they probably don't have security access to all those systems. For all practical purposes, troves of information are hidden away, inaccessible, needlessly replicated, and locked within information silos.

WHERE TO START WITH ECM MODERNIZATION?

Most organizations don't just have one legacy ECM application - they have many. So an important question is, "Where do I start?" Only you can fully answer that, but here's some guiding questions that may help:

> Which app is most frequently used?

> Which app stores information that could be of benefit to more users than those who can currently access it?

> Which app costs me the most to manage and maintain?

> Which app could benefit from access to mobile, cloud, or other new technologies?

The answers to these questions will help guide your decision about where to start first. Once that application is modernized, you can move onto the next one, and so on and so forth until you have a completely interconnected set of applications - your very own ecosystem of corporate information and business value.

THE ADVANTAGES OF MODERNIZING ECM

Imagine that your users can access all of the data and content (aka information) stored within legacy ECM solutions, but they can do it from a new system, potentially via the cloud, or a mobile device, or via a modern new UI. When information management systems and content repositories are connected in this manner, users can quickly find the "single source of truth" instead of manually navigating through multiple different systems themselves.

Enterprises can also build new applications on content stored not just within that system, but within other legacy applications that are connected to the platform. Modernizing information management systems will deliver direct business value by reducing total cost of ownership (TCO) and improving return on investment (ROI).

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