Storage wars:
Is it time to move to the Cloud?

Mailroom automation:
Opening up the market

Reviews:
Fujitsu, Kodak, Canon

Archival strategies:
The challenge of digital obsolescence

Unstructured data:
Finding a needle in a haystack
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Some of our readers may know that I am also Editor of one of Document Manager’s ‘sister titles’, Storage magazine; and as you might imagine, there can often be a degree of overlap in the themes that the two titles address. One topic that crops up regularly in the pages of Storage - though rather less frequently here in DM - is ‘digital obsolescence’.

This is the idea that while we may be cheerfully archiving masses of data off to various storage media, there is a distinct possibility (in fact a very strong likelihood) that if and when we come to try to restore that data, we may find we no longer support the devices needed to access the media.

An article in this issue from EASY Software’s Howard Frear discusses the potential problems, and frankly if you aren’t worried now, you certainly will be when you’ve finished reading Howard’s bleak warning. He starts by recounting how the creator of ‘Star Trek’, Gene Roddenberry, had recorded a number of ideas for future projects on a then state-of-the-art medium: 2.5 inch floppy disks. Two hundred of them, in fact. Now, if you’re anything like me, you’ll be saying something to yourself along the lines of ‘2.5 inch floppy disks? That must be a typo, I don’t remember any such thing.’ And that, dear reader, is exactly the problem.

They did exist, albeit briefly, and there was a time when they must have seemed like the ideal place to store one’s most precious ideas. And then of course, they stopped making them as the format was replaced by something faster, bigger, more practical, longer lasting - or probably all of those things. Then they stopped making the drives to read them. Then service companies stopped keeping instructions for the maintenance and repair of those drives. And suddenly our best ideas - or vital business records - are just so many slightly odd-shaped drinks coasters.

Hopefully, in a world where we are increasingly aware of the need to regularly backup our data (and perhaps also backup the backup, into the cloud), the issue has become less about proprietary hardware and storage media, and more about a standard file format that we can all agree is most suitable for reading a particular type of record. For documents this might mean PDF/A - but what about video content, for instance? This issue will run and run.

Dave Tyler
Editor
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EASY INVOICE

Giving ‘Sally from accounts’ the ability to process invoices at super-speed

Saving invoice processing costs, reducing controlled invoice receipt-to-payment times, improving cash flow and giving robust audit compliance
M-Files fuels business processes at IGas

IGas Energy, a leading UK-based exploration and production company, has deployed M-Files to meet its ISO 9001 certification requirements, as well as for document management and quality management throughout the organisation. IGas Energy is one of the leading British onshore oil and gas explorers and developers, producing oil and gas from over 100 sites across the country. Its operations have been safely exploring, developing and producing onshore oil and gas for the past three decades.

IGas initially needed a system to help the company maintain ISO 9001 certification along with other health and safety compliance requirements, but the company soon found that M-Files could be configured and leveraged as a core system of record for their information management and quality management needs.

"We originally deployed M-Files for compliance purposes, specifically to help us meet an ISO 9001 requirement to manage our Integrated Management System documentation," said Chris Holly, Head of IT at IGas. "But since then, we’ve expanded our use of M-Files across the business as a comprehensive platform to manage as much of our company information and related processes as possible.

"From the outset it was clear M-Files could be easily configured to meet our specific needs. It was simple and straightforward to integrate M-Files into the various parts of our business and thus enable a deeper level of collaboration and secure information sharing from department to department."

www.m-files.com

CentriLogic to host eDisclosure solution

CentriLogic is to provide critical and secure managed hosting and IT infrastructure for CityDocs, a print and document solutions specialist, that is returning to the eDisclosure marketplace since its last success 5 years ago.

CityDocs will deliver the European instance of its Forensic Technology & eDisclosure platform from the CentriLogic data centre in Bracknell. The hosting solution is comprised of a scalable virtual environment hosting the eDisclosure application Relativity. Additionally, CityDocs is able to access CentriLogic’s on-site conference rooms to facilitate meetings with clients.

“The CentriLogic team have been instrumental in collaborating with us to design and implement a unique and end-to-end eDisclosure hosting solution, and provided us with a 'name over the door' environment through extended access to onsite meeting rooms," says James Merritt, Director at CityDocs Forensic Technology & eDisclosure. “In addition, the global reach of CentriLogic allows us to meet the regulator requirements for document management through additional instances of our platform at CentriLogic facilities in the US and Asia."

www.centrilogic.com

Storetec keep calm and scan on

Storetec is digitising a number of historically significant Second World War posters for the Imperial War Museum. Digital Preservation is a growing service for many organisations who hold precious or unique original documents, photographs, books and maps. The process of creating high quality digital images uses the latest in scanning technology to ensure that the original items remain intact and damage free. Once digitised, the original items can be placed in storage and protected from future handling or exposure, thereby preserving them for future generations.

The digitisation for the Imperial War Museum

Global partnership takes to the cloud

Tikit, part of the BT Group and a leading provider of technology solutions for law and professional services firms, has announced a worldwide partnership agreement with NetDocuments, the global native cloud-based document and email management service provider for law and professional service firms.

Katherine Ainley, Tikit CEO, says, “Our partnership with NetDocuments will continue to enhance Tikit’s partnership portfolio, with a focus on expanding the options available to legal and professional services firms who are looking for cloud-based document management solutions. …We believe the NetDocuments solution is unique in the marketplace and that customers with cloud strategies will welcome its vast feature set and expansive security and governance characteristics together with its easy to use interface.”

www.tikit.com
Power PDF 2 has the Windows 10 touch

Nuance’s newly released Power PDF 2 software makes it easy for businesses to gain control over PDF workflows with the ability to create, convert, edit, assemble and securely share PDF files. The software delivers an intuitive and familiar Microsoft Office look and feel that also supports Windows 10 touch-enabled 2-in-1 convertible laptop devices similar to the Microsoft Surface.

“Nuance Power PDF 2 addresses the needs of the more than 270 million active Windows 10 users by delivering PDF software tools that conform with their familiar Microsoft Office 2016 experience,” said Holly Muscolino, research VP, printing, imaging and document solutions for IDC. “It provides an impressive array of features specifically designed to make business staff and mobile professionals more secure and productive, with pricing and licensing structures that make it easy and cost effective to deploy in large and small organisations.”

Power PDF 2 enables the user to navigate, draw annotations and type using a tablet or notebook and a pen or finger so users can be productive in the office or on the go. The software has a ‘touch mode’ option on its Quick Access Toolbar to optimise the size of toolbars and tool icons so they are easy to press and navigate with a finger.

www.nuance.co.uk

SoftTrac Capture Suite 4.0 released

ibml has released the latest version of its SoftTrac Capture Suite software, which offers significant enhancements and new capabilities. SoftTrac Capture Suite 4.0 provides more tools to intelligently capture and process information from any input source, resulting in faster delivery of content to downstream systems and processes, fewer downstream errors, and more secure, compliant capture operations.

Enhanced and new features of SoftTrac Capture Suite 4.0 include:

- Powerful post-scanning data recognition capabilities and business rules for scanned images and “born-digital” documents, achieved by extending ibml’s DocNetics software beyond the scanner;
- Certified compliant with the stringent Veracode Level 3 standards for application security, in keeping with ibml’s commitment to provide the most secure and compliant capture solutions;
- An improved user experience for data validation;
- Enhanced quality control and administration tools and new image processing functions.

More freedom to scan in the workplace

The newest desktop scanners from Kodak Alaris - the Kodak ScanMate i1150WN and the Kodak i1190WN - provide wireless and network connectivity and are mobile app ready to support BYOD and mobility in the workplace.

The scanners are ideal for business environments where employees need to quickly and easily share document capture devices. Users benefit from a control panel that offers custom commands and colour coded icons to make scanning quick and easy, while providing useful information to help avoid and resolve errors.

Additionally, the scanners enable seamless connectivity through the office network or over Wi-Fi for a variety of office environments. Equipped with standard drivers (TWAIN, ISIS), users can integrate with their existing and legacy business applications, eliminating extra steps in the capture process and complicated software installations, which helps reduce IT costs. IT administrators also have the ability to set security levels and disable wireless and mobile if needed.

The ScanMate+ Mobile App lets users scan quickly and easily to a tablet or mobile phone from the i1150WN or i1190WN Scanner. The app also makes it convenient to share files via email and upload to cloud-based applications such as SharePoint, Box or Evernote. Organisations that prefer to scan files and documents using their own proprietary mobile app can integrate with Kodak Alaris scanners using the web API.

www.kodakalaris.com

Closer collaboration with accountancy App

Reckon Software, the developers of Virtual Cabinet, have announced a global relationship with MyFirmsApp that is set to benefit 150,000 end users. MyFirmsApp provides accountants with an App that becomes the interface between their firm, their contacts and the systems they use, improving client communication by providing useful tools such as calculators, GPS mileage tracking and receipt management.

The portal speeds up the approval process. Virtual Cabinet provides an easily deployed solution to the challenge of new privacy-focused legislation. The portal speeds up the approval process and is used in 110 countries and over 1.5M documents were published to the Virtual Cabinet portal during the 12 month period ending December 2015.

www.reckon.com
Document capture is becoming increasingly part of the normal business function of non-specialist staff in all sorts of industries - and at the same time their requirements of the technology are changing. While smaller documents such as bank cards or driving licenses are comfortably handled by most manufacturers in their desktop and mobile scanner ranges, there has also been a growth in demand for scanning of larger documents. This is especially true in sectors that have historically generated a large number of ‘non-standard’ size and shaped documents, such as healthcare. Long documents are commonplace in hospital records systems, and until recently the only solution for digitising these has been to invest in a dedicated A3 scanner that might get only occasional use - making the expenditure hard to justify.

Canon offers a well thought-out solution with its imageFORMULA DR-M1060: an A3-capable device that is barely bigger than most A4 scanners. Sensibly, Canon has opted to avoid the more common (and space-swallowing) flatbed design normally used for A3 scanners, going instead for a ‘U-turn’ paper path as default. For very long documents (such as medical charts) it is a simple matter to convert the DR-M1060 to ‘straight through’ scanning by opening the Straight Path tray on the rear of the device. It can then scan sheets up to 3 metres long.

In everyday use the DR-M1060 is far more likely to be in ‘U-turn’ mode, which makes for a remarkably compact A3 scanner. As users would expect from the manufacturer, the DR-M1060 contains a wealth of robust paper-handling capabilities. Skew detection and ultrasonic double feed detection reduce downtime. It also offers a ‘Double Feed Release’ option to instantly override the double feed detection in the case of envelopes, post-its or other false-positive situations that can otherwise cause delays. Automatic blank page detection can be used as an alternative to separator sheets to split batches.

The image processing software supplied is also impressive: text enhancement helps with recognition accuracy, and auto colour detection, orientation correction and colour dropout can all enhance overall image quality. The DR-M1060 comes bundled with Kofax VRS, Nuance eCopy PDF Pro Office, and Canon’s own CapturePerfect and CaptureOnTouch tools. For something that fits on a desktop the DR-M1060 boasts some impressive specs: duplex speed of 120 ipm and a daily workload of up to 7,500 documents via its 60 sheet ADF make it more than adequate for even demanding environments. It is worth pointing out that the scan speed quoted is for A4 even though the DR-M1060 is ostensibly an A3 scanner - simply because this is the industry standard used for comparison, and an A3 speed would have less meaningful comparisons available.

In real world use, we would expect a device like this to be used to handle mixed workloads that might still be predominantly A4 - but it is the ease with which it will be able to handle the occasional (or even frequent) A3 document thrown its way that will make it stand out for potential buyers.

More info: www.canon.co.uk

VERDICT

With increasing demand for a straightforward approach to A3 and large document scanning from users in healthcare and other markets, the imageFORMULA DR-M1060 is a smart, compact and robust device that appears to occupy a near-unique place in the current market.
WHAT I AM
IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN
WHERE I’M FROM
The challenge of Digital Obsolescence

EASY Software's Howard Frear has been thinking about how changes in recording media can affect the big problem of business archiving.

In January data archivists wrote special code to access the content on two hundred 2.5 inch floppy disks. This was especially newsworthy as they belonged to science fiction TV pioneer Gene Roddenberry, the creator of Star Trek, who, it seems, set down a set of interesting creative concepts in the 1980s on this then state-of-the-art medium - but which up until now has been locked away from us as technology moved on.

It's not clear whether this will result in some new and exciting science fiction programme material or not. But it's a nice reminder of how quickly data storage formats change and can become obsolete; floppy disks were, after all, a common business data format through the 1990s and well into the 2000s, and they are still in evidence.

Not all of them will contain any groundbreaking creative ideas such as those in the possession of Roddenberry. But if your business still retains any and you want or need to get access to any data they contain, you'll find that nigh on impossible. Welcome to the world of rapid digital data inaccessibility.

DIGITAL BLACK HOLES

This could turn out to be a major business challenge. The British Library already has a special digital collection that's about trying to capture some of our collective electronic footprint, with Web formats like Flash proving very hard to work with from the curator's point of view.

We've only had a World Wide Web for 20-plus years, but already so serious is the issue for our common culture that the Library's Head of Strategy and Planning has warned that, "So much of our cultural memory has been lost already; there is a 'digital black hole' of the 21st century".

But of course preserving information - or as we say in business technology, archiving it - is incredibly important for any business,
"I have been examining the issue of business archiving for a number of years and appreciate the challenges but also the importance of this oft neglected area. As a result, I am a big advocate of the emerging standard for preserving paper content in an electronic format, PDF/A, as that offers a very long-term solution for preservation that for some organisations may be a sensible direction of travel."

PUBLIC SECTOR OR CHARITY ORGANISATION, just as it is for preserving our common culture. We are generating a huge volume of digital content from mobile usage and the Internet, and come the Internet of Things expect a lot more, as we transition from the era of the gigabyte to the petabyte. If the story of Gene's floppy disks is anything to go by, this information may suffer a brief shelf life and will become inaccessible in a short time.

I have been examining the issue of business archiving for a number of years and appreciate the challenges but also the importance of this oft neglected area. As a result, I am a big advocate of the emerging standard for preserving paper content in an electronic format, PDF/A, as that offers a very long-term solution for preservation that for some organisations may be a sensible direction of travel.

By the way, preservation isn't always one way. Intriguingly, the UK Parliament recently reversed a decision to go from vellum to paper. For over a millennium, we've been using the recording medium of calfskin to make a permanent copy of the country's laws and while the Lords had suggested a technology upgrade to this process, it seems that vellum is actually a better option from the cost point of view, so the age-old practice will continue. While it may seem counterintuitive, if a medium is fit for purpose, then that's sufficient.

DATA ARCHIVING LESSONS

Let's finish by reminding ourselves what lessons can be gleaned from another piece of science fiction when it comes to preserving the past. In the first (1960) film adaptation of HG Wells' classic 'The Time Machine', the Time Traveller from our Victorian era asks to see the collected wisdom of the England he's travelled forward in time to - the story is set in 802,701 AD. His new friend takes him to a huge library, but the problem he faces is that the books are so fragile because of their great age they crumble to dust at his touch. The first lesson for the data archivist here is that if what you are saving onto won't physically last, then you have failed in your task.

The next scene involves the hero being taken to a second archive, where more modern, electronic media are available, a 'talking ring' that produces voice playback when spun on an appropriate surface, demonstrating the second rule of good data archiving; namely that analogue is great - so long as you still have the right player!

WHY DOES ALL THIS MATTER TO BUSINESS?

Information, whatever the medium, is critical in order to address compliance across the board. A great way to start avoiding the Digital Black Hole issue is to get your team to start asking, 'Do we really need to keep this information, and for how long?' That will in effect dictate the manner of storage and medium required.

Archiving is a big problem. Businesses are far too complacent about it. And if recording devices we all used just 20 years ago are already out of reach, even though these media were considered the best option a computer user had at the time, then what does that tell us about the risks we're running now?

The clear takeaway is this: organisations need to work a lot harder on this area in document management than we have done to date - and complacency has to be avoided, lest your own great ideas get potentially lost forever.

More info: www.easysoftware.co.uk
Joining the Digital Transformation fray

Previewing the seventh Fujitsu Information Capture Conference, which takes place in London from September 12-13, 2016

Fujitsu’s seventh Information Capture Conference (ICC) will reflect the rapid rate of change involving the digital transformation revolution with its increased demand for electronic document management solutions across all business verticals. The ICC has always been an industry event where partners can learn about the latest trends and solutions, while networking with peers from throughout Europe, Middle East and Africa.

CHANNEL AND END USER FOCUS
PFU, the manufacturer of Fujitsu scanners, has always been committed to the channel and therefore it is of key importance to its strategy. As the digital transformation evolves, end users will have increased demand for Fujitsu scanners to support processes to efficiently capture, store, retrieve, share and distribute content. For this reason PFU are opening this platform not only to resellers and ISVs but also to end user delegates, offering us all more feedback and insight.

End users are invited to attend ICC on September 13, the second day of the event, and they can now sign up via email support@information-capture-conference.com.

SUPPORTING THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY
Instead of talking about single hardware solutions PFU’s focus will be on the software, i.e. the two software platforms ScanSnap and PaperStream. Depending on the requirements, a customer might be directed towards the ScanSnap platform, if their aim is to improve personal productivity, or the PaperStream platform, if the requirement is to scan to an enterprise process. These are the two starting points for PFU’s customer approach to encourage greater adoption of scanning and in order to help its 30,000 resellers and 2,000 ISVs adopt more consultative processes and vertical solutions. These are the two starting points for PFU’s customer approach to encourage greater adoption of scanning and in order to help its 30,000 resellers and 2,000 ISVs adopt more consultative processes and vertical solutions. Once again PFU is setting a new standard in channel and customer support.

Whether to join the fray of digital transformation is already out of the question. Many governments and private businesses now prioritise better and more customer-focused services to deliver enhanced experiences and more efficiency. It is of key importance to digitise paper-based information and integrate it into the electronic process chains. ‘Scan-to-Process’ is the catchword here. This concept is a logical step for any business or government authority that is en-route to better quality, greater efficiency and improved, faster business processes. Document scanners even support a ‘Scan-to-Cloud’ concept, allowing the transfer of paper documents into cloud services.

“The Fujitsu Information Capture Conference is a unique industry event where partners can learn about the latest trends and solutions, while networking with peers from throughout the EMEA region”, says Mike Nelson, Vice President at Fujitsu subsidiary PFU (EMEA) Ltd. “This year’s conference will reflect the accelerating digital transformation and the vital role that our products play in bridging the gap between physical documents and the digital world.”

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS
The attractive programme provides channel and software partners as well as end user delegates an exclusive platform. Leading industry partners will present their latest technologies in a dedicated exhibition zone, the ‘Solutions Village’. The two conference days are filled with strategic updates from PFU executives, industry, technology and keynote presentations and specialised breakout sessions on the legal, education and healthcare vertical markets.

The Fujitsu Information Capture Awards will be awarded at a gala dinner in 12 categories honouring the most successful resellers and partners.

More info: www.informationcaptureconference.com
Clinical precision

NHS North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group has chosen Docman Vault to support its Locality Hubs under new models of care.

NHS North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has established a fully integrated, patient-centric frailty service based in Locality Hubs, a physical location which house GP-led multi-disciplinary health and social care teams. The service provides all assessment and planning, preventive, proactive and reactive care and rehabilitation for an identified cohort of patients; supported by diagnostics, pharmacy and transport services.

The project covers 42 GP practices across North West Surrey providing access to over 7,800,000 documents and the millions of pieces of information within the documents for the Locality Hubs.

To support the delivery of the service, the CCG will implement the Docman Vault solution to provide access to information and documents to complement its shared clinical record. Docman Vault supports record sharing by providing access to the latest version of a clinical document and the associated clinical information to help contribute towards a complete view of that record. In the future, the Vault can be used to store and access any type of digital asset, such as images.

Kerry Maddison, Programme Manager, NHS North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group “We have an ageing population, are battling with reduced budgets and funding, and there’s an over reliance on hospitals and residential care. We want to focus on prevention and early intervention and to do this we need to provide connected systems between social and health care. “There is currently duplication, lack of coordination and fragmented services, so we are on a journey to coordinate and align our services across providers. By providing access to records, audit trails of information we can explore ways of managing complex pathways in the most efficient and cost effective ways."

This new solution for secure access removes barriers and facilitates new possibilities and new ways of working. This is applicable but not restricted to GP federations, out-of-hours services, secondary care settings and sharing records across a CCG or group of CCGs. In addition, Docman Vault has the ability to plug into various consumer application portals such as the Integrated Care Record that many CCGs are now embarking on.

“Docman Vault will enable us to share documents between practices and the Locality Hubs so we have access to the latest patient information,” continued Maddison. “The cost savings will be a great relief and the benefits of having all this information centrally will ensure information is available to the right person at the right place. This means we will not need to rely on paper, and we will be well positioned to enable access to clinical documents, including transfer of care to support the delivery of an integrated digital care record.”

Ric Thompson, Managing Director, Docman commented: “We are really excited to be working on this innovative project in Surrey, supporting the delivery of Locality Hubs ensuring all healthcare professionals have access to the latest patient information. Our platform is ideally placed to enable the support for the delivery of new models of care and ways of working. Having access to the millions of documents and associated clinical information is so important to deliver the quality of care when working in these new ways.”

More info: www.docman.com
KODAK i5850S

The i5850S high volume scanner from Kodak is not, the company tells us, a version update to the i5850: rather it represents a new design from the ground up, and it has to be said that it offers clear improvements on what was already a very attractive proposition. The enhancements are intended to reduce pre-scan and post-scan operations in large volume users such as BPO and bureau businesses as well as insurance firms and others who have to process large volumes of mixed documents from incoming mail and the like.

The key difference between the i5850S and its predecessor is immediately obvious at first glance. Where the earlier device offered a limited - but useable - capability to sort and separate documents after scanning via a controlled ‘air-flow’ that pushed some documents to the front or rear of the single output hopper, the new device takes the more straightforward (and consistently reliable) approach of adding output trays: the i5850S has one rear and two front hoppers. The main tray will take up to 750 sheets, the other front one 300 and the rear one 250.

The top tray is intended for exception handling and the rear for patch sheets: the i5850S can read up to 15 different standard patch types (although most users tend to stick to only 2 or 3 of the most common ones). An example of their use might be to identify occasional colour documents among a batch of mostly mono pages - a ‘colour toggle patch’ saves those sheets having to be scanned separately. The use of patch sheets, as bureaus have long known, can allow a business to get the full benefit of high speed scanners - whereas manual sorting of those sheets can add to processing time and cost.

The sorting trays can also be used to separate out any multi-feeds (for example documents with post-its or similar attached) without stopping the whole run - a good example of what Kodak Alaris announced at its recent conference as ‘Pause and Play’ functionality. The touchscreen display will show the operator a thumbnail image of the document that has caused the ‘pause’. A firmware update due in October this year will add barcode reading as well.

There is a very slight images-per-minute speed cost to the patch sheet processing, and this is likely to also apply to barcodes when they are added - but it should be pointed out that even with this impact taken into account, the i5850S is likely to still be faster than the equivalent process done manually by the operator pre- and post-scanning.

Like most devices at this level the Kodak includes a front and rear imprinter as standard, as well as advanced LED scan technology. The i5850S is also easily adjusted for different height requirements: while most bureau operators tend to stand (as they are moving around a lot shifting batches) there is the option to set the scanner at a more ‘seated-friendly’ height if preferred.

The thinking behind the re-working of the i5850 shows that Kodak has listened to its users and responded promptly and intelligently; the i5850S promises productivity improvements for any large scanning operation.

More info: www.kodakalaris.co.uk/go/IMnews

VERDICT

Kodak Alaris has clearly listened to feedback from its typical users in this wholesale upgrade to the i5850: the addition of output sorting trays has made it a much more appealing prospect for BPOs and other heavy users by reducing post-scan labour.
Convert.

Turn your paper documents into a digital archive.

Storetec make it quicker and easier to access, manage, protect and share the data in your paper archives.

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And we give you instant, 24/7 access through our online, cloud-based hosting system.
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STORETEC
Your documents. Managed.
The term 'Unstructured Data' refers to information that is not held in a spreadsheet or database or does not fit within any recognised template or model. It can be textual or non-textual, comprising of dates, numbers, email messages, instant messages, etc. It is typically held on paper and electronic files like Word documents, PowerPoint, email, images, audio, and video files - and increasingly these days as social media feeds. This makes unstructured data difficult to understand using traditional computer programs as compared to structured data stored in defined fields in a relational database or tags within documents such as XML.

A DATA DELUGE IS COMING

Businesses across all industries are gathering and storing more and more data on a daily basis - most of the business information in use today does not reside in a standard relational database. An often-cited statistic is that 80% of business data is unstructured. More recently, analysts have estimated that data will grow 800% over the next five years. Unstructured information accounts for more than 70%-80% of all data in organisations and is growing 10 to 50x more than structured data, especially with the explosion in use of social media.

In terms of estimated volumes, the numbers are staggering: The Digital Universe study projects that the total amount of data created and copied annually was 4.4 zettabytes (or 4.4 billion 1TB disk drives), at the end of 2013 and will grow by a factor of 10 by 2020. Every day, we create over 2,500 petabytes bytes of data - so much that 90% of the data in the world today has been created in the last two years alone! By 2020, companies will need to manage 50 times more data with only a tiny (1.5 percent) increase to IT staffing. What's more, the rise of unstructured data will far outpace its structured counterpart. The explosion of social media metrics, wearable devices and sophisticated data mining tools will generate an influx of data that makes previous information volumes seem like a slow trickle by comparison.

IMPOSING STRUCTURE

If left unmanaged, the sheer volume of unstructured data that's generated each year within an enterprise can be costly in terms of storage, potential liability, access, and inefficiencies that multiply because data cannot be analysed (e.g. for relationship management) or cannot be shared between users and between systems. Unstructured data held in electronic files can have some imposed structure, at least for filing purposes, e.g. filenames, folder and sub-folder names, etc. - the assigned filing structures provide some degree of management and control to document collections just like tags within HTML.
serve to render information in a browser but do not directly convey the semantic meaning of the tagged content.

Paper-based unstructured data poses the biggest problems - some organisations manage paper records internally using technologies such as imaging and document management which apply predefined indexing rules to provide some degree of management and control. In both cases, the assigned indexing or metadata provides the means to convey structure onto collections of documents held on servers or managed using document management technologies.

Organisations believe that their unstructured data stores include information that could help them to make better business decisions. Unfortunately, it’s often very difficult to analyse unstructured data. To help with the problem, organisations have turned to a number of different software solutions designed to search unstructured data and extract important information. The primary benefit of these tools is the ability to glean actionable information that can help a business to succeed in an increasingly competitive environment.

Recognition technologies have been around for a while and are getting better. These provide text-based content extracted from unstructured data sources, particularly from paper based records. Recent advances in text and content analytics, Natural Language Processing (NLP), and predictive analysis are offering opportunities for software applications to understand the extracted text (concepts, context, and meaning) and help unlock and use information buried on paper and in files. Can these technologies help practitioners unlock and use potentially life-saving information held in health records, for example?

PICTURE OF HEALTH
It is worth looking at the health record problem as the potential benefits can be life-saving. The majority of document management solutions in use in hospitals in the UK provide facilities for capturing, managing, and delivering patient records. A key requirement at most sites is to capture the legacy paper records - records which have been typically collated and managed over the years with few, if any, guidelines on how to manage paper records. There is a large variation in the way hospitals file paper records, ranging from random storage within paper folders (worst case) to organised filing within tabs or sections held in such folders. Consequently, the high investment required to sort, prepare, and digitise such records for use by practitioners, is difficult to justify.

As a result, scanning processes are put in place to digitise the patient records using the quickest and cheapest options - i.e. scan the records as they are found! It is worth stating at the outset that new (or ongoing) records captured within document management systems and information created within such systems do not fall under the same trap - classification of new records is much more granular and, furthermore, automated to a large degree. Consequently, access and use of these records within an electronic system is more acceptable and welcomed by practitioners.

SCANNING IS NOT ENOUGH
The cost models for scanning paper records to alleviate storage space are based on scanning these as they are found. These have not changed. Consequently, given the poor and variable paper filing practices, the digitised records add little value in delivering information and the digitisation exercises do not adequately compensate for the loss of the universal convenience of paper!

While clever facilities within the viewing software help users to navigate through the electronic records, these are not seen as an ideal solution and, at worst, lead to IT failures due to poor user acceptance. Given that the time-consuming and costly processes necessary to sort, prepare, and in many cases restructure existing paper records, cannot be justified, can content analytics help to unlock this vital information?

GAINING INSIGHT
Extracting textual information held on paper records is not new - limitations due to handwritten text remain although recognition accuracy is getting better. Simply searching through extracted text offers limited returns. Businesses want to be able to rapidly analyse both unstructured and structured data. Ingesting large volumes of documents into a knowledge management system so they can be searched is not a practical option in organisations that want real-time or near-real-time insights into their business operations.

Moreover, the large-scale corporate knowledge management systems that were popular a decade or more ago are not usually flexible enough to accommodate new types of information or to support new analytics tools. Some big data tools, primarily those based on Hadoop, have been designed from the ground up to manage and analyse unstructured information. Other, more conventional business intelligence (BI) and data warehousing technologies may not be. BI and data warehousing suppliers have been adding support for unstructured data management to their toolsets, and some IT organisations have built their own platforms for converting unstructured data into structured records, for example, through knowledge management systems. But that can be a time-consuming and expensive process.

SEARCH OR FIND?
There are additional, more advanced search techniques based on machines understanding the text to help ‘find’ information rather than simply ‘search’ for information. The key difference
between the two is that the outcome from a ‘search’ will present the user a list of related items to select from; the outcome from a ‘find’ will not only present what the user is looking for but offer suggestions for more because systems understand the textual content and, more important, understand what the user is looking for. We all use search engines almost on a daily basis - I can search for ‘cardiology’ and spend my time finding what I actually need! In other words, searching is one step in making sense of unstructured data - the real value is linking apparently disparate pieces of information to generate actionable information.

Staying within the Health Sector, text analytic solutions leverage new text analytics technology to deliver the capability to read free-form text in health records to discover both content and context, analysing the results and transforming those findings into usable information which can then be used for more efficient patient treatment and to support researchers. The technology can help unlock vital information buried in unstructured data and potentially transform it into actionable information.

There are many examples where real and tangible benefits have been realised using these technologies. Hospitals in Denmark are using it to eradicate errors in coding treatment - doctors and nurses were describing a single medical condition using several different rules, including common names, medical descriptions and Latin terms, leading to high error rates in discharge letters, including incorrect or missed diagnostics and treatments. This often led to loss in revenue and, more important, clinical risk.

The solution adopted was to use text analytics to create a dictionary of words and phrases that describe medical conditions, within discharge letters, rather than users making up words, leading to 100% accuracy in content.

An example of using text analytics to discover new information comes from a European co-op supermarket group which provided some scientific support for an old wives’ tale about the ill effects of eating close to bedtime, with the discovery that eating cheese late at night is a major cause of increased body mass index (BMI) in the over-50s.

HAPPY SHOPPING
Consumer behaviour can be difficult to quantify: unpredictable, and seemingly irrational. Why do some shoppers spend more time in particular aisles than others? Why do preferred routes through the store vary from shopper to shopper? Why do certain products sell well in the morning but ‘bomb’ in the afternoon? Crowd analysis is used by retail companies, theme parks, even police departments, to predict how groups of people might react in certain situations. In the case of a supermarket, videos of shoppers are analysed to record the routes people use to navigate the store, where they pause, the points at which they put items in their baskets and how they behave in the face of bottlenecks or dead spaces.

Using technology to discover and extract usable information from unstructured data is helping to realise tangible benefits for businesses across all sectors. The gains in competitive advantage are beyond question; potential life-saving opportunities are a real blessing!

More info: www.ccubesolutions.com
Fujitsu has been eagerly promoting its PaperStream software platform ever since its launch as a professional capture and image processing solution at an affordable price. Now that software is available to business users of all sizes as a bundled component with the company’s newest fi-Series scanner, the fi-7030, which is priced very competitively at around £500.

As an entry level scanner, the fi-7030 has a lot going for it, even without the inclusion of the newest version of PaperStream Capture, v 1.5. It is around 35% faster than the model it replaces, offering A4 scan speeds of up to 27 ppm/54 ipm in colour, greyscale or mono. The ADF holds up to 50 documents, and can also handle embossed cards (bank cards or driving licenses for example) if required. It boasts a remarkably compact footprint, less than a foot wide and six inches deep, but its compact and lightweight build still manages to feel robust and well put together - which is no less than any user would expect from Fujitsu’s engineers.

In use the fi-7030 ‘wakes up’ almost instantaneously, which is a nice touch compared with even some other PFU kit that can take several seconds to be ready to use - not a massive issue, but over time productivity can be affected. There is a new skew handling mechanism, ‘Skew reducer’, which has been designed to prevent one skewed document from causing those following it from also being skewed, as well as the ultrasonic multi-feed detection that we’re used to seeing on Fujitsu hardware - and indeed that of many of the leading competitors as well these days.

But despite the fi-7030 being a neat, reliable and quick little scanner, the software is the area where Fujitsu is really focused with this solution. PaperStream IP (for TWAIN or ISIS) will automatically convert even the grubbliest, most faded or discoloured originals into clean crisp images every time. A new ‘front and back merge’ function helps users to collate pages more efficiently. Further highlights are functions such as auto colour detection, auto deskew, multi-colour/multi image output and irregular shape cropping.

PaperStream Capture, meanwhile, adds intelligence to your processing as never before: workflows are easily designed and tweaked without the need for complex technical know-how. A new ‘browse view’ functionality can display both thumbnails and previews on one screen, and enable the user to confirm scanned images during scanning. This saves time when users validate, classify and verify their data.

Other PaperStream Capture highlights include the display of batch jobs during processing for more transparency, and an on-the-fly batch release process. Once users have scanned a batch they can verify the data, collect documents in a combined file, index and automatically release to local or remote repositories, feeding into workflows, business applications or ECM systems. They can also pause and resume operations. Overall the fi-7030 and its software platform will help companies large and small on what Fujitsu describe as their ‘digital transformation journey’.

More info: www.fujitsu.com/uk/scanners

**VERDICT**

The tagline for this device could easily be ‘serious scanning - on a budget’. The fi-7030 is a well engineered example (with some superb bundled software) of how Fujitsu continues to bring its high-end expertise into the reach of first-time and smaller user organisations.

www.document-manager.com
MARKET FOCUS: HEALTHCARE

GP practices benefit from digitisation of patient records

The digitisation of patient records has become increasingly popular recently. As David Wilkinson of Storetec explains, with important information being captured and immediately availability to staff, this is an essential facility for any practice.

When the National Health Service went digital a few years ago, it was considered a milestone. But recently, GP practices are doing the same - in the form of digitising patient records. This process is said to save the NHS millions in administration costs and it has become essential for medical practices.

In addition to scanning patient records, ageing Lloyd George files can also be digitised. This will significantly reduce administration costs as staff can now access medical records almost instantly. The system allows you to save thousands, even millions of records, making it very effective and efficient.

WHAT ARE LLOYD GEORGE NOTES?
The term 'Lloyd George notes' refers to the medical records that are created for a patient when they get treated by their physician. These records contain important information, such as procedures performed, medication prescribed, and how a patient was referred to a specific doctor. These notes are very important for any doctor to have access to, as it will contain all the necessary information to effectively treat a patient.

Having medical records stored electronically removes a lot of risk for any physician. Patient information will be kept intact and secure, improving safety and confidentiality. Staff members will have access to these records whenever needed, significantly reducing the amount of time required for administration.

Many health practice management software packages only capture basic information from these notes, like prescribed drugs or referral information. But modern digitisation services capture all the detailed information that a doctor will need for a patient.

ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS

When medical files are digitised, they are scanned and stored digitally in a centralised database. They can also be split into categories, such as patient correspondence, procedure results and summary reports. This makes it very easy for doctors and medical staff to access important information instantly. There is no need to look up manual files and searching for a patient's record among thousands of others.

This system is designed to free up space and improve the efficiency of a practice. It will also allow patient information to be readily available, which can be crucial in many cases. Doctors no longer have to work with manual notes and risk the possibility of losing information along the way. It will also free up space, as records don't have to be manually stored anymore.

This means that patient information will be kept safe, as files cannot get lost or destroyed in a fire or similar threat. This information will also be available remotely, simply by accessing the database from a computer. This is a
great way for practices small and large to reduce storage space and have detailed records of patient information, referrals, procedures, prescription details and more.

**PRESERVING PATIENT INFORMATION**
Many practices have already switched over to electronic medical records and GP practices are increasingly benefitting from this system. Digitising medical records increases the security around them, as they won’t be freely available to anyone who has access to the practice or storage facility. This keeps the integrity of the information intact, which is a huge benefit for doctors and medical practices all over the country.

Patients also benefit from a digitised system as their information is being handled in a more dignified and personal manner. They don’t run the risk of their records lying around for anyone to see, thus preserving their privacy.

Electronic medical records are also easily shared between doctors and consultants. A patient’s history can be retrieved in seconds and sent over to someone else. This makes many procedures easier and faster to complete. Doctors no longer have to wait hours for medical records for their patients, improving communication and collaboration between GP practices and medical consultants.

**BENEFITS OF DIGITISATION**
Digitising patient records has many benefits for GP practices. It’s a great way to ensure that all patient information is kept in a central database and that it’s easily accessible to staff. Here is a recap of the benefits of digitisation for GP practices:

- **Frees up crucial space.** Digitising medical records will free up space within a medical practice, which can be repurposed for something else. Some doctors turn this into larger reception areas, while others use it for additional consulting rooms.

- **Provides instant access to historical records.** Staff members no longer have to look through thousands of records to find a specific file. It reduces the time it takes to provide information to other consultants and doctors from other practices.

- **Removes risk.** You no longer have the risk of losing files, or records being stolen or destroyed. Digitised records are much safer and secure.

- **Allows administration to be streamlined.** With these records available digitally, the system can be organised to significantly improve efficiency within the practice.

- **Allows access for multiple users.** This streamlines productivity, as records can be available to multiple staff members or doctors simultaneously.

- **Preserve the quality of records.** Paper can fade over time, while digital records will look great permanently. Information won’t be lost and detailed information will always be available.

Patient notes and documents can be digitised for any medical practice. GPs know that they can benefit from increased space, reduced administration costs, improved productivity and lower risk. That’s why the digitisation of medical records has become so important. The NHS is supporting this process and encourages GPs and other medical practices to digitise their records.

At Storetec we have seen an increase in the demand for digital records. The company helps GPs to go digital and get access to important patient information instantly and securely. It’s a cost effective system that has plenty of benefits to offer any medical practice. More info: www.storetec.net.
After months of debate and planning, we are thrilled to be able to announce the new venue and date for the DM Awards 2016: Thursday November 24th, at Central London’s Grand Connaught Rooms. Put it in your diaries now!

As ever, of course there can be no awards without winners - and that's where you come in! Please visit the awards website (see opposite), as it is your views as users of DM/ECM technologies that should be shaping the list of winners.

David Hammond, sales manager in charge of the DM Awards, is keen to encourage companies to get involved: "With most of the Awards decided by voting, the candidates have a part to play themselves. The impact that companies have made on readers over the past year will be a factor. We think there is a lot to play for. The marketing that companies do between now and..."
the close of voting will influence the outcome.’

David suggests three tips to help companies get the best out of the process:

1) Nominate yourselves: One extra nomination might make the difference between a company becoming a finalist or not.

2) Ask others for their support: Encourage those who know your solutions and products to nominate you.

3) Step up the publicity: Your most recently-launched solutions might be your best yet, but have they had a chance to make their mark on the wider community? Solutions that have been on the market longer perhaps have a natural advantage. Your newest solutions may therefore need the most marketing support.

Nominating and voting will decide most winners, but not all of them, of course. A panel of selected judges (including the Editor of Document Manager) will, as in previous years, be judging the Project of the Year categories.

As well as our regular categories we have this year introduced a new award category for Print Management solutions. Organisations of all sizes are increasingly having to control the cost and security of print and scan functions across diverse fleets that may include a plethora of hardware, software and networking options. The DM Award for Print Management Solution of the Year aims to reward those tools that successfully integrate printing, scanning and/or workflow management - including mobile - to achieve cost and security benefits.

Nominations will close in August, voting closes in October, and the tenth Document Manager Awards ceremony will take place in at the Grand Connaught rooms on November 24th.

As we touched upon in our last issue, there are still some sponsorship opportunities available, but they’re being snapped up fast. So if you’re interested in using the ceremony as a way to promote your company’s brand, or just in booking a table for the event, please contact David Hammond direct on 01689 616000 or via email at david.hammond@btc.co.uk.

More info: www.dmawards.com
The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is an independent government department that uses its expertise and influence so that food is safe and honest. The main objective of the Agency in carrying out its functions is to protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food (including risks caused by the way in which it is produced or supplied) and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food.

Creating a Corporate Memory
The FSA did not have a single accessible space to store and share important information. There was a need to promote collaboration and move away from the risk of 'silo' style working, with personal email boxes used to file information.

To be able to use, manage and support information effectively it needed a new solution; a set of processes ensuring everyone knew what information was available, where it was stored and how to make the best use of it to advise and inform the public and organisations. Their key aims were to:

- Create a ‘corporate memory’
- Enable and promote collaborative working
- Provide better information sharing
- Promote informed decision-making
- Reduce duplication of documents

The solution needed to be highly reliable and simple to use, with the ability to adjust easily if required. An easy link to Outlook for filing emails was essential, as was the ability to access documents from different locations.
locations, including home. The FSA also needed to be confident that it provided the right levels of security for the organisation.

Other key requirements included the ability to capture records, and provide a flexible granular system where administrators could choose who was able to do what, e.g. Internal Auditing works in a very different way to Legal, so the solution needed to suit all departments.

OUT OF THE BOX EDRM
The implementation of an Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) solution was an Agency-wide initiative, and the first step in making the necessary improvements to FSA’s information Management. It wanted more than a collaboration tool, a true EDRM solution - one which would support a functional file plan and be easy to use ‘straight out of the box’, as it needed to be delivered quickly.

The FSA created a requirements document based on MoReq standards. Various solutions were reviewed and Wisdom was selected as the best for the organisation’s requirements. The project team were also impressed with the very strong references and the high degree of satisfaction from existing Wisdom users. They felt that the Daisy team were honest and informative about the solution, and gave them confidence in what the solution would deliver, and how the two businesses would work together.

Wisdom supports four different locations and a wide variety of users - including specialist policy developers, scientists, field based staff, corporate services staff, procurement, finance, HR, organisation development and IT. It also supports the Private Office, which oversees all of the documents relating to the FSA, and the Board - who are key users.

As part of the implementation Daisy also provided file planning workshops, support for the configuration of the file plans, and full training for administrators and users.

UNIVERSAL APPROVAL
Feedback shows that users particularly like the file plans, the facility to share information, the version control capability and search functions. Everybody now has access to the same documents, with better structure of information and the ability for this information to be circulated via links in emails, rather than as attachments.

The Wisdom solution is an overall success, with 90% of the user base using it actively. Key benefits include:

- Ability to file emails as records
- Ability to enforce better email governance
- Ability to email links to documents, to cut down on duplication and data volumes
- Making key documents read-only, with open access to everybody, so staff do not keep their own versions
- Uploading of past information so all staff have access to relevant documentation
- Creating templates so all projects follow the same process
- Enabling the use of case files to manage and structure information

With Wisdom in place, everyone within the organisation can see the functional file plan and understand what is available, even if some of the lower levels are restricted access. Wisdom also helps with FOI requests and makes it easier for the FSA to comply with the Public Records Act.

As Jenny Desira, Acting Information and Knowledge Management Team Leader, commented: “The key aim for this project was to create a solution so that staff had access to the right information to do their jobs. This has certainly been a success, with Wisdom now being the default for storing business documents and emails, adopted and owned by the users. Introducing Wisdom has raised the profile and importance of Information Management within in the FSA, with buy-in and approval from the CEO down.”

More info: www.daisygroup.com
Automated Mailroom - no longer a vision of the future

Ashley Keil of ibml explains how adding intelligence to desktop scanners can revolutionise mailroom processes

The capture market has just seen the long awaited launch of ibml’s new desktop scanner range, the ImageTracDS series. Long known as specialists in the enterprise capture space, ibml has now brought the advanced functionality and performance of its intelligent high-end ImageTrac platforms to these new desktop scanners. Now the desktop market has access to advanced scanning technology, which to date has only been available to high-end users. Users continue to look for ways to optimise their capture processes. This is true, for example, within the traditional mailroom, where contrary to previous predictions, net paper volumes are on the increase, making them ripe for automation.

Traditional scanners have reached their limits in performance, remaining focused purely on speed and paper handling. The addition of intelligence to the desktop scanning process adds significant value to these core functions and introduces the ability to automate the larger cost and SLA capture overheads, which relate to business rules document preparation and physical document workflow.

Software to automate business rules scanning has been available for some years, primarily offered as a server based utility, which by definition takes place after scanning and as such loses any ability to apply business rules to the physical process of capture. The new ImageTracDS series come equipped with ibml’s SoftTrac Capture Suite software, which provides the ability to recognise and extract content while scanning, react to a business rule, and affect not only the electronic routing of documents but also the physical routing of those documents.

This automated business rules based scanning is particularly important in the mailroom where, by definition as the entry point into an organisation, mail arrives as mixed content and needs to be sorted, both electronically and physically. Indeed, the modern mailroom receives content which drives the daily business process of an organisation, including, for example, order processing, new business applications, AP and so on. On this basis, the capture of the image content becomes all important and intelligent scanners enable this, using look-up tables and other external references to validate extracted content before supply to line of business systems. Failed extraction can be both electronically and physically rejected.

Our long experience in enterprise capture at ibml has contributed to the development of these new desktop scanners. The end result is a scanner that can process more documents in a shorter time frame, with less operator overhead and resulting in significant reduction of cost. Those users who are already experiencing an ImageTracDS scanning platform have achieved a typical reduction of 50 percent in cost for their front end capture costs.

It’s worth noting that the ImageTracDS series can be purchased as a standard scanner and integrated with third party Scan Client software using both the TWAIN and ISIS (soon to be released) driver standards. Importantly the scanner can be upgraded to an ‘Intelligent’ scanner at any point in time, future-protecting its users.

These high quality images also assist staff involved in the Quality Control process, ensuring they have clear detail to work with, whether in thumbnail form or enlarged for enhanced examination. The end result is a scanner that can process more documents in a shorter time frame, with less operator overhead and resulting in significant reduction of cost. Those users who are already experiencing an ImageTracDS scanning platform have achieved a typical reduction of 50 percent in cost for their front end capture costs.

More info: www.ibml.com
NOMINATE NOW FOR THE 2016 DOCUMENT MANAGER AWARDS

This is your opportunity to put forward the companies, hardware and software products that have impressed you the most over the last 12 months

To make your nominations go to: www.dmawards.com
Nominations close on the 14th August

The Awards Ceremony will be at the
Grand Connaught Rooms, London
on the 24th November 2016

For more information
or to book a table please contact:
david.hammond@btc.co.uk
or call on 01689 616 000
Massive amounts of enterprise data is generated every day, and organisations are now faced with two choices: an on-premises storage system, or an external, hosted solution through cloud service providers. Although many companies continue to invest in traditional local storage, cloud based storage is quickly becoming a storage contender. Look at Amazon’s announcement of the storage appliance, Snowball, to securely transfer data from on-premises to the AWS cloud. Of course, while cloud storage may be an intriguing option, there are positives and negatives associated with each, including cost, control and security. Sadly, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, organisations need to decide which approach - on-premises or cloud-based - provides the best fit based on individual needs. When evaluating which option is best suited, three key considerations must be kept in mind.

1. Management and control
For organisations that want or need more control over their storage, traditional on-premises infrastructures offer a wide range of options. On-premises storage hardware is often ideal for organisations looking to optimise performance for different types of applications, by offering greater support for file system replication, data tiering, snapshots and backup capabilities. On-premises hardware also provides organisations with more direct management of data security and compliance, whereas some cloud providers may not have the level of privacy needed to comply with specific data regulations such as the EU data protection law.

In contrast, businesses that choose to leverage the services of a cloud provider must comply with the terms laid out in the SLA. This means that the IT professionals don't have to manage as closely, but they also don't have the same level of control. If the current SLA does not have the sufficient services and capabilities, organisations must upgrade to the next, more expensive, tier.
Nevertheless, cloud storage can still outweigh physical hardware in terms of benefits. For example, SMEs with limited IT budgets may find cloud storage’s built in data management extremely cost effective, despite the service level agreement (SLA).

2. Availability and latency
The ability to store and access data at any point in time is a critical component of data storage solutions and greatly influences whether on premises or cloud is the best for an organisation. In this case, cloud storage may exceed the benefits...
offered by traditional storage, as systems accessing data won't typically have a single point of failure in the way that one failure is unlikely to disable the whole system. Also, it means data can also be easily accessed from multiple locations.

However, an inherent challenge with off-premises cloud storage is latency, which is difficult to reduce without paying for a higher tier of service. IT professionals should make note of these potential drawbacks if inability to access data quickly is a serious problem for them.

On the other hand, traditional on-premises storage infrastructures can be configured for high availability, although it will often come with a hefty price tag. However, fast storage networking combined with SSDs can make it suitable for a number of different workloads that require high performance and low latency storage, such as server and desktop virtualisation or database applications.

3. Cost savings
With cloud based storage, the main advantage when it comes to cost is its scalability. An organisation can purchase the exact amount of storage needed on demand, rather than having to buy expensive hardware which carries a high initial investment cost - not to mention the added costs of space and power. The cloud’s ‘grow as you go’ capability can help businesses with a smaller initial spend, whilst being prepared for future growth.

However, whilst cloud storage has smaller overall capital expenses, there can often be hidden expenditures which may increase operating costs such as charges per gigabyte of storage and for each data transfer. In order to efficiently determine whether cloud computing is an affordable option, businesses should conduct sufficient due diligence with regards to pricing structures and SLAs so there are no surprises.

SO, WHAT’S THE ANSWER?
Both solutions can support an organisation’s application stack. So IT and the business need to decide on which criteria are the most important to their objectives. As long as businesses have a need for a range of storage availability, protection, services and compliance, both storage solutions will remain viable. IT professionals need to evaluate and understand the quality-of-service and compliance requirements of their applications in relation to the needs of the business before determining whether to keep their data on their grounds or up in the clouds.

More info: www.solarwinds.com
Spirit Circuits is a UK-based manufacturer of Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs). The company generates and manages vast quantities of varied documentation related to its many processes, and these documents were being stored in a multitude of network drives. This disconnected approach led to content chaos throughout the organisation, leaving the business vulnerable to mistakes due to using incorrect versions of documents as well as employees wasting valuable time searching for the information they needed and verifying if it was indeed the correct version.

Back in 2010 Steve Driver, CEO of Spirit Circuits, identified the need for an Enterprise Information Management (EIM) solution through which the business could store, control and manage its various document types. Driver turned to Hampshire-based business solutions specialist Laminin Solutions, which proposed the M-Files EIM solution as the ideal approach.

M-Files EIM solutions eliminate information silos and provide quick and easy access to the right content from any core business system and device. M-Files achieves higher levels of user adoption resulting in faster ROI thanks to an intuitive approach to EIM that is based, says the firm, on “managing information by what it is, rather than where it’s stored.”

“The team at Laminin were invaluable in both introducing us to M-Files and also in configuring the solution to meet our exact requirements,” explains Driver. “Their expertise and deep knowledge related to information management was a huge asset for us during the evaluation and implementation process.”

M-Files is based on a unique metadata-driven architecture, and once Spirit Circuits understood the power of metadata, the company began to explore other ways to leverage M-Files above and beyond basic document management throughout the business. An immediate issue that needed resolving was the extremely manual and complex quotation system for the sales team, which involved multiple worksheets and lots of duplicated efforts since the same information had to be manually entered into several worksheets. It was an extremely complex process to calculate the price of a PCB based on the customer’s specific requirements, so the added complication of managing this effort manually, not only resulted in a very time consuming process, but it also left the business vulnerable to user error and inaccurate quotations.

Laminin was able to leverage the flexible metadata-driven architecture of M-Files to easily configure the system to serve as a sales quotation solution. By automating data capture rather than relying on employees to manually input data into spreadsheets, and by streamlining the transition of data from one stage of the quoting process to another, M-Files enabled Spirit Circuits to dramatically simplify the quoting process, vastly reducing the time it took to produce a quotation.
quote, and improve the overall efficiency and accuracy of quoting.

'The purpose of this project was to speed up the quoting process and it has certainly had a positive effect in that regard,' said Lee Lloyd, Sales Director at Spirit Circuits. 'Things happen much quicker now, and they are improving all the time. We're always looking to find other ways to make the speed and accuracy of the quotes better using the M-Files System.'

**M-FILES AS A CORE BUSINESS SYSTEM**

The use of M-Files within Spirit Circuits continued to evolve until it became the core system used to drive the business and streamline efficiencies within and across multiple departments. M-Files now serves as the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system within the business, managing the full process from customer request to sales quotation, through to production and despatch. This process involves multiple departments within the business and includes transitioning the quote to an order and then passing it to engineers to prepare the specification of the requested PCB for manufacturing. Furthermore, M-Files has been integrated with Sage 50 so that all invoicing and finance-related documentation and information is seamlessly captured and managed within M-Files.

The entire business process from the initial inception of a request for a quote, confirming the order, routing the order through the manufacturing and engineering teams, on to production, followed by despatch and invoicing is entirely controlled by M-Files workflows. This allows Spirit Circuits to look at the request from the client as a single object that can be traced throughout the entire process with clear ownership of the responsibility for stage completion.

'The use of M-Files workflows to automate and streamline as many of our processes as possible has vastly transformed how the business operates. It helps ensure timely completion and despatch of orders and minimises the chance of human error,' said Driver. 'M-Files allows us to provide a better service to our customers and ensure they receive their correct orders without delay.'

**QUALITY CONTROLLED**

In addition, M-Files also controls many other supporting processes such as purchase orders for offshore manufacturing, general purchase ordering, control of PCB parts on behalf of customers and all the documents and files that are associated with the processes. M-Files also plays an important role in managing Spirit Circuits' quality related matters, helping the company adhere to ISO 9001 requirements. M-Files notifies relevant users of quality related information such as a customer complaint, and is used to create key quality reports such as delivery performance. Spirit Circuits also leverages M-Files metadata to manage specific customer requests about an order. This ensures that the important information is fed through the full chain from quoting to engineering, and ensures the quality and accuracy of orders.

While M-Files is already seen very much as a core business system within Spirit Circuits, the company plans to continue to expand its use to more departments, and to replace other existing legacy platforms with the EIM platform.

'M-Files has been hugely beneficial to our business, because it's so easy and intuitive to use,' concluded Lee Lloyd. 'Finding information about a customer, order or product is simple since everything is in one place. It's incredibly flexible and with the help of Laminin we've been able to adapt it to our very specific requirements. It's become a truly vital system within our business.'

More info: www.m-files.com
David Tyler: A lot of the discussions at this year’s AIIM Forum have been around mobile and the growth in use of ‘app’ type solutions, and how to oversee that from an information management perspective. How great a challenge is this for the DM/ECM industry?

John Mancini: Mobile is a game changer for business. In one of the roundtable sessions today a delegate was talking about Dropbox, and their view was ‘Well, we just banned it’. That probably isn’t the right approach at this point in time - it might have worked ten years ago when users didn’t really have choices - but how do you ban it on a user’s private mobile device? All you’re really doing is covering up a problem, you’re not solving it. People will still use these systems - we have to address it in a different way from what we’re used to, and perhaps we need a new focus on security.

Given how hot a topic information security is right now, you have to wonder if the DM/ECM industry is missing a trick by not ‘hitching our wagon’ to that whole area: when we talk about compliance or records management, we still get people’s eyes glazing over. But information security is usually on somebody’s list of their top three priorities. It seems to me to be an opportunity that we could be capitalising on more than we do, right across the industry.

DT: With the ongoing emphasis on regulatory changes like the GDPR, you’d expect our industry to be using compliance and security as go-to-market opportunities, wouldn’t you?

JM: Absolutely: it should be a way to get people to do what we would have liked them to do anyway. But that raises an interesting point - I have lost count of the number of conversations I’ve had over the years with vendors where I ask them who are the competitors that they lose business to. By far the most common answer is that they don’t lose business to a specific competitor - they lose business to ‘not right now’. This is exactly because we haven’t succeeded in presenting our technologies as part of
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that priority list of things that the business needs to have done.

There is still a tendency for our industry to assume that people outside the sector have an inherent interest in managing content in an effective way; they really don’t! The terms that we use to describe the processes and such like - document and content management terms - don’t resonate with the person involved in a specific business process. They use the terms that relate to the tasks they’re performing.

I would say that I think we have actually got better at it over the last few years - but at the same time, with the arrival of all these application specific, SaaS type solutions, then customer expectations have kind of leaped ahead of us again. Because the people supplying those systems can show a far better understanding of what their users do and how they get business done. We still have catching up to do.

DT: And over time there will be a whole generation of people coming into the workplace for whom that ‘appified’ way of working is the norm, and they’ll not be comfortable at all with things we see as standard business systems such as Outlook, email etc. Is the DM/ECM sector prepared for that?

JM: If we try to force those kinds of interfaces and ways of working onto those employees, we will be making things worse. They will just go back to using the solutions they’re comfortable with: as I said earlier, it’s not like the ‘good old days’ when users didn’t have any choices. They have their own devices, they can do whatever they want! We therefore need to be very careful with what we mandate, and what we encourage.

Equally important is the way that content itself is changing, in its nature and in how it is consumed. There was some research I saw recently that suggested that in 5 years time, over 95% of the content on Facebook would be video-based rather than written content. Hard as that might be to imagine, if it happens it will have a huge impact on data management, and again on information security.

But video makes sense in a lot of ways - think about how you explain procedures to someone starting in a new job, for instance. As these things take off, our industry will have to prepare for a business world that covers a whole lot more than just scanned documents!

Basically we are having to think about the ultimate unstructured data set - a piece of video - and turning it into some form of structured content. This might mean embedding information into the file itself that might include security settings (moving security from the perimeter to the asset itself), and/or SEO metadata to make it searchable by users.

DT: One of the closing points in your keynote touched on this - and particularly in how it changes the role of the Information Professional, or whatever you want to call it. What is the future for people who manage content?

JM: We have had this idea for maybe four or five years now, that every worker is an information professional in some form - that’s why we launched the CIP (Chartered Information Professional) qualification programme. And while that basic concept makes sense, the level to which we need to understand core information management practices and strategies would in reality be tiered, depending on your role within an organisation. Some people are strategists, some people are configuring or connecting systems, some people are developing systems - and others are effectively users.

It’s something we’ve had to put a lot of thought into: the kind of skills and knowledge that any business needs are changing rapidly and constantly. Our recent website redesign was initiated specifically to address that realisation: the core message being ‘Information is your most important asset - learn the right skills to manage it’. And implicit in that messaging is this idea that the specific skills you might need to do that will vary a lot depending on your own role within an organisation. Project managers need one set of skills, people in charge of a content management implementation who are creating the taxonomies, will need another set of skills. Somebody whose focus is on how to connect content repositories across different business processes, they will have another set of skills.

The challenge for us is to map our content and our training against those different roles and requirements. As the nature of content and information itself are changing, so we at AIIM are having to change to keep up.

More info: www.aiim.org
Adactus, a group of housing associations with over 13,000 properties across the North-west of England, with offices in Leigh, Chorley and Manchester, is focused on saving and getting the best value for money. Following recommendations from its auditors, the company decided it was time to implement a Purchase Order Processing (POP) solution to make sure it had robust control over spending across all departments, with a transparent system of accountability for budget holders.

Prior to implementing a document management system with automated invoice processing, Adactus had a manual process that had resulted in long delays in handling invoices. While automating the process significantly improved invoice approval practices, it did not allow budget holders full control of their budgets at the point a spending commitment was made. What was missing was a purchase order system to connect to and complement the entire purchase planning and accounting process.

Adactus compared different purchase ordering solutions on the market and chose Invu as a document management system provider. Invu developed a customised solution, which moves the point of control from the invoice arrival to the point of requesting a purchase and enables the budget holder to see the potential impact of that commitment on their budget before any expenditure is committed to.

The solution is based on the ABBYY FlexiCapture platform, which automates the capture and extraction of data from supplier invoices for matching against purchase orders. Invu’s solution allows staff to search previously purchased products or services to use as a template - or simply create a new one and send a request for approval based on automated business rules within the system. It uses these rules to relate General Ledger (GL) codes to the relevant budget holders, who can themselves approve requests, while the system also has the capability for budget holders to delegate a level of authority on each GL code to users based on monetary value. The solution is self-service, thus once the line items are extracted by ABBYY and approved, an employee can raise and place an order with the supplier and ‘receipt’ the goods or service when delivered.

Supplier invoices when received, are read via the ABBYY data capture solution and then the relevant metadata is automatically extracted for indexing using multiple criteria. Subsequently, the invoices are either automatically matched to fully receipted purchase orders or adjusted and approved by budget holders. Since the users access the system via their web browser there is no end-user software installation required. The corporate services and finance departments were first to pilot the solution and iron out any queries, when ordering items such as stationary or IT equipment. The solution has been used to raise purchase orders, and the number of purchase orders processed has increased, as it has been rolled out across more departments over the year since its introduction.

“Our budget holders have far greater control over what is being spent against budgets because they are seeing purchase requests before goods are ordered. This gives Adactus better oversight and we are better able to forecast our cash commitments,” Holden said. “The Invu and ABBYY solution enables our budget holders to easily approve purchase requisitions or reject any that they do not wish to commit to before the supplier receives a purchase order - thereby preventing cash from leaving the business unnecessarily.”

With this solution, Adactus has increased budgetary control and full oversight on expenditures. In the future, it will look to enhance the solution to further help staff collectively improve their purchasing choices by using the historic data from across the business combined with management tools to suggest the very best matching options when they next make a request.

More info: www.abbyy.com
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