Introduction: New Horizons for Enterprise Content

Today's digital business must deliver the next wave of revenue growth, service excellence, and business efficiency. Smart organizations are leveraging digital technologies to deliver on this digital business and unlock breakthrough innovations for new products, services, and business models.

Information is the currency of the digital business and success often depends on being able to easily and securely exchange information, both inside and outside the organization, with customers, partners, suppliers, and remote employees—anytime, anywhere, and via any device. Succeeding as a digital business also depends on seamless, frictionless, multichannel experiences that maximize engagements with users. These digital experiences must be tailored to distinct audiences and presented in the proper context. And they must be innovative to differentiate your brand, grow loyalty, and increase revenue.

Many organizations are seeing employees leverage consumer-grade content cloud solutions such as Dropbox and Box for exchanging information. These solutions are quickly supplanting e-mail attachments as an easier way to share and collaborate on content with both internal and external users. However, most employees use these consumer solutions haphazardly, against company policy and without considering the security policies that govern how enterprise content should be saved, exchanged, and deleted. Such careless content management practices can expose an organization to myriad risks including the distribution of outdated or incorrect information and potential security and compliance issues. Proprietary content may escape through the firewall without proper authorization or version control—not to mention without any audit trail. As the popularity of content cloud solutions increases and varied solutions proliferate, these unsanctioned solutions create significant new problems and further exacerbate existing information management challenges for organizations.

As the limitations of first-generation content cloud solutions become apparent, enterprises are faced with the prospect of reigning in or looking for ways to possibly integrate and secure these solutions—or replacing them with something better. This paper suggests a more innovative way to enjoy the convenience of content cloud solutions while upholding essential IT policies and liberating enterprise content via best-in-class user experiences.

First-Generation Content Cloud Solutions

The use of consumer-grade content cloud solutions is growing rapidly in the business world. It's easy to see the appeal of these solutions: Dropping a document into a cloud-based folder, box, or drive eliminates the problems associated with sending large attachments by e-mail, such as size limits and problematic file formats. These consumer-oriented tools make it easy to access content from virtually any device with a few clicks. People enjoy being able to access, consume, edit, and spontaneously share content with others, without having to go through complex provisioning procedures. They can automatically synchronize content across geographies and devices including desktops, phones, and tablets—all without bothering with e-mail or an FTP site.

However, users fail to consider the challenges that these first-gen content cloud solutions present to their organizations.
First, they provide a limited expression for content sharing, restricted to simple browsing and file linking via web and desktop interfaces. This is a very restrictive experience for the needs of business users that require in-context content collaboration capabilities; i.e., integrated into existing portals, applications, and business processes used for internal and external engagement.

Second, these first-gen solutions fragment information. Organizations can end up with multiple copies of important files, with no clear understanding of where the master copy resides. Because there is no “single source of truth,” this disparity can cause all types of costly decision errors and confusion with users not knowing what file is the latest or approved version.

Third, there is an inherent lack of governance with these solutions. They were created for consumers and thus often sidestep the robust security and control necessary for enterprise use, leading to potential loss of intellectual property and other sensitive business information.

And finally, these first-gen solutions augment the challenges around multiple content silos within an organization. Users are creating their own personal cloud repositories that are often impossible to integrate or leverage for other systems. How can an organization possibly manage, protect, and revise content from any number of active—or abandoned—content silos?

Users want convenience. IT wants control.

Progressive CIOs want an integrated array of cloud services that will meet the needs of their modern enterprise. They are looking for robust, enterprise-caliber services that combine the convenience and consumer-oriented simplicity of cloud services with the power, flexibility, and control of existing on-premises systems. They want to meet the business collaboration needs of an increasingly mobile and extended enterprise while protecting their organization’s most valuable information.
A Better Approach: Next-Gen ECM in the Cloud

Most organizations have been storing important business information in enterprise content management systems for many years. Today, organizations see the value of leveraging their on-premises content both inside and outside the four walls of the organization to enable new modes of collaboration and improve engagement with customers, partners, and employees.

However, there is also a desire to deliver this enhanced content collaboration experience without creating the security and management headaches present with first-gen consumer-grade content cloud solutions.

A hybrid ECM solution provides a progressive approach to manage and reuse content across cloud and on-premises content repositories. It permits files to be shared securely inside and outside of the firewall. It provides easy, transparent access to files via a variety of user experiences (for example, “expressions”) such as desktop, web, or mobile application and portal. Most importantly, it tightly integrates with existing ECM systems of record and enterprise business processes, so that users can easily leverage the organization’s content assets and avoid information fragmentation.

Such a solution enables users to move documents to the cloud for easy access when they are offline. It also enables collaborators to pick up these documents in a secure fashion by enforcing corporate access rights and permissions. Fine levels of access control determine who can access which files and how. The content can be encrypted and the system can maintain an audit trail of who accesses the information. Finally, system administrators have mature management utilities for assigning disk quotas, enforcing the use of permitted file types, and enforcing information management policies.

Hybrid ECM
Unified, Secure, Integrated Everywhere, Rapidly Available

A hybrid ECM solution does not limit users on the types of experiences that can be delivered. On the front end, it provides a contextual user experience via web browser, enterprise portal, on-premises app, cloud app, or mobile app to ensure that users receive the enhanced experiences that they desire wherever they work. Whether they use a cell phone, a tablet, a web browser, or an enterprise application, a hybrid ECM solution ensures that users always access the master copy of any document
while being able to easily and securely share information across corporate and organizational boundaries.

On the back end, a hybrid ECM solution enables a unified content management strategy, allowing the organization to mobilize enterprise information, even as it eliminates silos and ensures compliance. Hybrid ECM solutions integrate naturally with all existing applications—cloud, on premises, and legacy—and utilize enterprise content in the context of business processes and workflows. Because a complete hybrid ECM solution is fully cloud-enabled, it supports public, private, and hybrid cloud systems by harmonizing all content from all locations. It also enables rapid provisioning of content to new and existing information systems. These robust content management capabilities ensure that users have a seamless digital experience that encompasses on-premises and cloud-based content.

Hybrid ECM Use Cases

There are many different ways to use a hybrid ECM solution. In general, these can be categorized into three basic types of systems:

**Business Partner and Enterprise Collaboration**

One of the most prevalent and simple use cases involves collaborating with agents, third-party agents, and partners, e.g. advertising agencies. In this scenario both parties leverage basic desktop collaboration and exchange ad copy and creative work. This experience delivers frictionless sharing of content among internal and external users. People can access content from any device and easily exchange it by simply dragging and dropping it into a folder or sending a link to a given file. However, unlike consumer-grade content cloud solutions, a hybrid ECM solution provides robust security, version control, auditing, and content sync, so files are always properly managed and in compliance.
Sales/Service Collaboration

Another common use case involves interacting with customers, both before and after a sale. These use cases include customer service, customer onboarding, and order/billing. Many organizations desire to develop more personalized services and deeper customer relationships as they handle order/billing issues, customer service issues, complaints, and exceptions. By incorporating a content-sharing and collaboration solution directly within a customer self-service portal, these organizations can deliver a cohesive, contextual (“personalized”), and rich branded experience to drive loyalty and market differentiation. For example, content can be accessed and shared as part of a composite view for a specific customer account and include order history and tracking of current service requests. In this case, document access and collaboration further enhance the overall self-service experience and reinforces the promise of the brand.

Support for Mobile Field-Workers

Mobile field-workers depend on their smartphones and tablets for a rich user experience that brings data and insight into their everyday activities. For example, a team of field-workers at an electric utility might be dispatched to repair an electrical transformer. These workers need easy and intuitive mobile applications that provide fast, secure, and accurate information access—regardless of where the enterprise information is stored. They also need to collaborate with workers at the head office, at a service depot, or perhaps at a warehouse where equipment and supplies are kept. Simple file sharing is not enough. These field-workers prefer task-oriented applications that have been developed especially for their needs. A hybrid ECM solution allows organizations to incorporate robust content sharing and collaboration capabilities within specialized mobile apps to increase worker productivity and efficiency.

Hybrid ECM Solutions from Oracle

The Oracle Hybrid ECM solution combines Oracle Documents Cloud Service with Oracle WebCenter Content, enabling ECM systems to increase worker productivity and efficiency. In addition, Oracle’s hybrid ECM strategy goes beyond merely integrating on-premises and cloud content repositories by providing a way to easily extend other SaaS and PaaS solutions with content-based collaboration. Oracle is a leading cloud vendor with the most comprehensive set of SaaS and PaaS offerings, all available on a single unified infrastructure. Oracle’s hybrid ECM solution is designed to seamlessly integrate with these other cloud-based solutions in a way that minimizes integration and management complexity. This uniquely positions Oracle to provide progressive CIOs with the integrated array of cloud services that will meet the needs of their modern enterprise.
Final Considerations

As you formulate your cloud strategy, ask yourself these questions:

- How easy is it for customers, partners, suppliers, and employees to obtain secure access to the right information?
- What benefits would be gained by “mobilizing” your customers, partners, and employees?
- How secure are your collaborations with remote employees, partners, and suppliers? Does your security architecture include mobile devices?
- How many silos of information exist in your organization and are you able to easily manage those silos and resolve them to a single source of truth?
- What challenges and regulatory risks do you face when managing the retention and disposition of content records in the cloud?

Oracle provides a complete next-generation content management solution. To learn more about the benefits of Oracle’s hybrid ECM solution and Oracle Documents Cloud Service, please visit cloud.oracle.com/documents
Hybrid Enterprise Content Management:
The Next Generation of ECM in the Cloud
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