

Enterprise Content Management Seeks To Manage Information

Traditionally, the focus of information systems was on capture of data, processing it in standard ways, and distributing standard reports to managers. The emerging focus of Enterprise Content Management systems is to see the information as enterprise knowledge, and make it available on demand to people and processes.

Enterprise Content Management or ECM is not just a product, like stand-alone software. It is first of all a strategy to view the content generated (at various locations, in different formats, by different people at different times) as the enterprise's knowledge base and to develop strategies to use it as such.

ECM is a set of tools and technologies that come together to achieve the above objective. For example, modern ECM uses web protocols to make the knowledgebase accessible to a widely distributed population of users. A B2E – Business-to-Employee - intranet and B2B - Business-to-Business - extranet achieve this objective by making content available in-house and to business partners and customers outside respectively.

Components of Enterprise Content Management

ECM integrates applications such as Customer Relationship Management, Supply Chain Management, Financials and HR using such technologies as Data Warehousing and Mining. A common repository accepts information from all sources and provides information to all applications.

It follows that ECM will have provision to render all the services that were earlier provided by stand-alone functional applications. The front end might not be all that different from what these applications provided (with the possible exception that they are web-based) while the back end has been transformed into an information infrastructure that supports the different front ends visible to users.

The ECM infrastructure includes components needed to capture all kinds of data and deliver the services needed by functional applications.

Simplifying ECM:

Data is captured in different ways

It is stored in a common repository

And managed using the strategies, policies, and practices

Of technologies like Document Management, Collaboration, Web Content Management, Records Management, and Business Process Management

To deliver information needed by users

And to preserve content as long as needed even if it has ceased to change

The key component of ECM is Workflow or Business Process Management. The aim is to achieve the enterprise's objectives effectively while using its resources efficiently and optimally.

ECM is thus an integrative technology that uses existing technologies and delivers information needed by employees, customers, suppliers, and even government.

Data Warehouse

Data warehousing and mining are associated with the common repository concept of Enterprise Content Management systems. A data warehouse includes data from various sources and databases, with a common structure. It is mined through queries that seek to answer specific questions like how many units of a particular product were sold during a particular time period or in a particular area.

A data warehouse is a vast repository containing both historical and current information on many topics that can be analyzed in different ways to provide decision support information to managers and staff in different functional areas.

Conclusion

Enterprise Content Management or ECM is an integrative technology that seeks to integrate vertical applications. There is a common data repository to which all content generated by the enterprise is sent. This content can be analyzed in different ways and information needed by different functions

can be generated. ECM uses web protocols to expand the source and delivery of content to a global scale. Content can be generated anywhere and anytime, and can be accessed from anywhere and at any time.

While employees work with the content using an intranet, business partners and customers and other external entities use a web portal to access and provide content and to communicate.

About the Author

Based on user experience, Ademero's flagship product, Content Central™, is a browser-based [document management system](#), [document imaging software](#) and [enterprise content management software](#) that provides a convenient way to capture, retrieve and manage documents and other content.

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