

# Choosing Governance- Based Enterprise Content Management

**Buyer's Guide for Electronic Records and Content Management**

Guide

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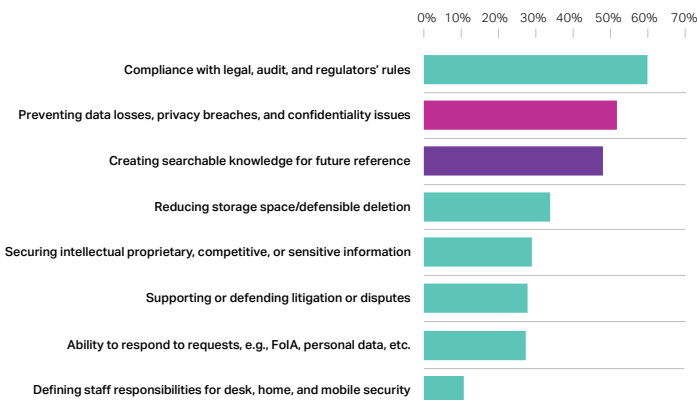
**Buyer's Guide**

Information Management and Governance

**Introduction**

Few organizations today are prepared to handle the exponential growth in the volume, velocity, and variety of their enterprise data. Fewer still are equipped to manage and account for that data and make the resulting records accessible to the organization as a whole. While information governance is a well established practice among government entities, it has typically not compelled private sector organizations to invest in enterprise content management (ECM) systems.

This is changing, however. A 2015 survey conducted by AIIM revealed that 53% of companies surveyed now have new information governance initiatives in place, driven by a variety of factors ranging from compliance to data loss prevention<sup>1</sup>.



**Figure 1.** What are the three biggest drivers to create and enforce IG policies in your organization? (N=319)

The purpose of this ECM buyer's guide is to provide organizations with a concise overview of how to select an ECM system that will also enable industry best-practices information governance, as well as how to scope a project and plan it based on your business needs and objectives. This buyer's guide is organized as follows:

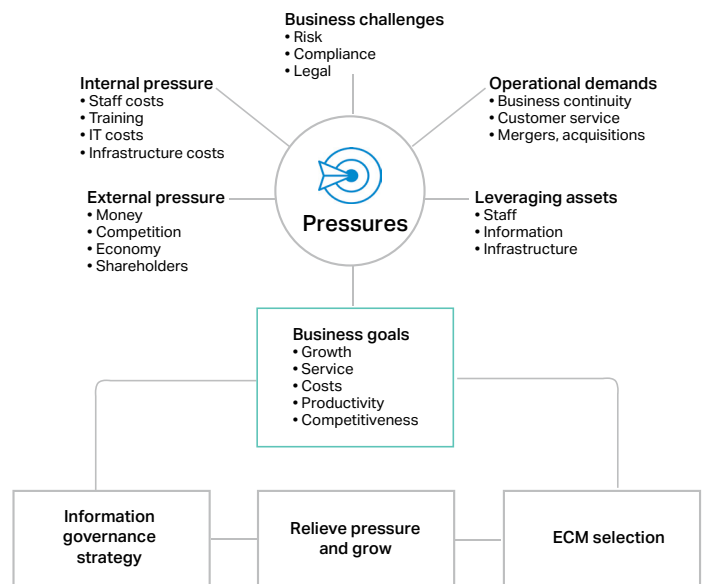
- Introduction
- Single-sheet, quick-reference guide to choosing an ECM
- Governance-based ECM: definition and discussion
- Taking a best-practices approach
- Core functions
- Key elements and capabilities
- Additional considerations

<sup>1</sup> AIIM Industry Watch: Information Management State of the Industry 2016.

**59%**  
percentage of large organizations citing compliance and risk as the biggest drivers for IM, up from 38% last year<sup>1</sup>

A governance-based ECM allows organizations to:

- Manage content across the information lifecycle
- Ensure the authenticity, reliability, and integrity of documents and records
- Deliver content to authorized users across a range of devices
- Access, share, and use content in a secure, managed environment
- Establish rules and processes so governance and records functions are managed transparently
- Overcome storage and access constraints to content
- Transition from the confines of paper to the flexibility and freedom of digital
- Leverage search technologies, links, and relationships for greater collaboration and context



**Figure 2.** Considerations and drivers in selecting an enterprise records management system

## Biggest problems related to poor enterprise content management practices<sup>2</sup>

**62%**  
too long to find content

**52%**  
duplicated efforts

**46%**  
insufficient reuse

## Quick-Reference Guide to Choosing an ECM System

### Minimum Core Functionality

An ECM integrates document, email, records, and Web [content management](#), content workflow, image processing, and collaboration technologies. Organizations rely on ECM as a means to facilitate the lifetime management of their business content, from creation to disposal, according to their business needs and policy.

### Core functions:

- Contextual links among content, people, and process
- Enterprise management through classification and linked disposal policies
- Efficient management and linking of governance and recordkeeping controls for all content, not just records
- Storage and preservation of digital records Ability to maintain content processes and add layers of metadata
- Access, security, and audit

### Benefits:

- Improved sharing and collaboration

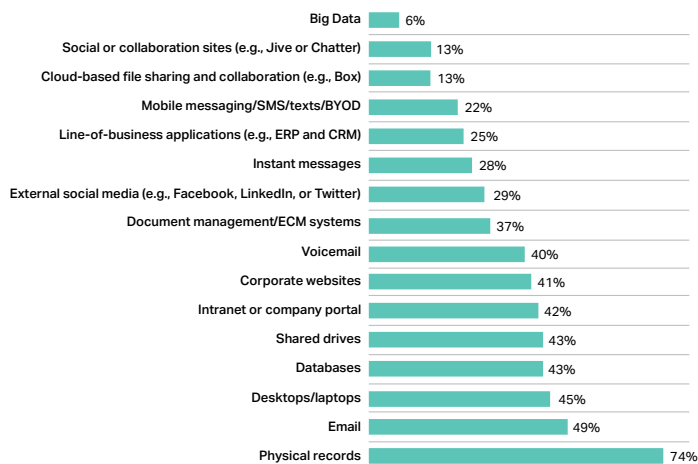
<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Forrester Research and ARMA International Records Management Online Survey, Q2 2015

<sup>4</sup> AIIM Industry Watch: Information Management State of the Industry 2016.

- Productivity and process improvements
- Consolidation of enterprise applications
- Improved regulatory compliance
- Reduced paper storage and handling costs Reduced cost and risk of legal discovery, investigation, or audit
- Environmental savings

New content sources are growing at an exponential rate, yet they are the least likely to have retention policies applied, according to a Q2 2015 online survey conducted by Forrester Research and ARMA. Conversely, physical records are the most likely to have such policies applied, despite their slowing and/or decreasing growth (39% of respondents reported a decrease in the volume of paper records)<sup>3</sup>.



**Figure 3.** New content sources are least likely to have retention policies applied

**According to a 2015 AIIM survey, 60% of respondents feel that automation is the only way to keep up with the increasing volumes of electronic content. Similarly, 63% feel that improved searchability is the biggest benefit of automated classification<sup>4</sup>.**

Refer to the questions and capabilities below to initially assess, and ultimately choose, the ECM system that best suits the needs and objectives of your organization.

**Does the Proposed ECM System Offer...****Authenticity, reliability, and integrity of content:**

- Can the system capture metadata and events to support the transformation of information into records?
- Can it understand the metadata required for good governance and recordkeeping? [Learn more.](#)

**Importance of metadata standards:**

- Is the system content-agnostic and source-agnostic—i.e., can it receive different content types from a wide variety of sources, including scanned images, pictures, voice, and video? [Learn more.](#)

**Governance and records controls:**

- Does the system create a governance framework and establish a shared workspace that protects sensitive content?
- Are control tools linked automatically across classification, disposal, and security schema? [Learn more.](#)

**Content classification:**

- Does the system link content to the business process that created it, as well as create links between content that is part of the same transaction sequence? [Learn more.](#)

**Disposal guidelines:**

- Does the system establish standards and guidelines for how content should be retained, how long, and which content should be destroyed or archived?
- Does the system allow you to proactively manage the retention and disposal of all content under management (not just records)? [Learn more.](#)

**Security and access scheme:**

- Does the system create a governance framework and establish a shared workspace that protects sensitive content?
- Does the system allow you to define individual privileges determining who has the authority to view, update, amend, or destroy a document or record and its properties? [Learn more.](#)

**Vocabulary controls:**

- Are there vocabulary controls in place to standardize on the use of terminology for naming and improved content retrieval? [Learn more.](#) Use and tracking: Does the system manage user permissions, access controls, and security status? Can it track the use, location, and flow of content? [Learn more.](#)

**Use and tracking:**

- Does the system manage user permissions, access controls, and security status?
- Can it track the use, location, and flow of content? [Learn more.](#)

**Capture and registration:**

- Can the system define processes for incorporating content created and received by an organization?
- Does it record metadata about the content?
- Can it assign a unique identifier to each content item, and assign attributes of the records control tools? [Learn more.](#)

**Implementation of disposal:**

- Does the system enable the routine disposal of content (including records), and provide documentation for audit purposes? [Learn more.](#)

**Storage and preservation:**

- Can the system preserve the accessibility and integrity of content and its metadata when stored, or when content is migrated or moved between systems? [Learn more.](#)

**Additional Considerations****Enterprise integration:**

- Is the system flexible and configurable enough to simplify implementation and ongoing management?
- Does it offer sufficient room for growth to future proof digital records, and ensure the continuation of governance-based ECM? [Learn more.](#)

**Standards and standardization:**

- Can the system standardize on processes to ensure business content is captured and managed appropriately, and enforce adherence to relevant standards? [Learn more.](#)

**Interoperability:**

- Can the system transfer and utilize information in a uniform and efficient manner across multiple organizations and systems, including electronic business, cross-agency systems, and Webenabled transactions?
- Is it sufficiently equipped to move beyond these systems, as well as beyond organizational and jurisdictional boundaries? [Learn more.](#)

### Skill sets:

- Does your organization possess the technology skills to understand network and bandwidth requirements, and the ability to manage system traffic issues?
- Does it also possess the governance and recordkeeping skills needed to configure the internal components of the software? [Learn more.](#)

## Why Is Electronic Records Management Important in ECM?

Organizations that want to manage their content in accordance with their information governance strategy will recognize the importance of having an integrated approach to the management of working content and records. In many instances, this content will evolve into a record over time. Content, and therefore records, arises from business actions, and thus needs to be managed in ways that preserve these links and enable organizations to make authoritative statements about its authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability. This means that systems managing records must ensure that records are persistently linked with the business action and the people involved with that action.

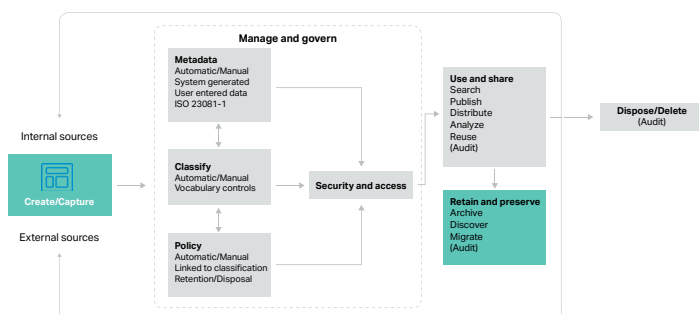


Figure 4. The information lifecycle

## Enterprise Content Management Core Functions

An ECM system can include elements of a number of disciplines, such as electronic records management; electronic document management; content management; content workflow; and image processing and archiving. The challenge most organizations face is how to make informed decisions about the functionality they need, and then strategically select the right technologies that will serve as a foundation for future growth as their needs become more sophisticated. To build this foundation, it is vital that an organization understands the core functionality

required of any governance based ECM regarding its business needs. These core functions include:

- Contextual links among content, people, and process
- Enterprise management through classification and linked disposal policies
- Efficient management and linking of governance and recordkeeping controls for all content, not just records
- Storage and preservation of digital content
- Ability to maintain content processes and add layers of metadata
- Access, security, and audit

### Key Elements and Capabilities

#### Authenticity, reliability, and integrity of content:

As a discipline, recordkeeping is more interested in the circumstances that led to the creation of a record, and in maintaining the chain of custody of that record. Information workers, on the other hand, are more interested in the content itself (whether it's a finalized record or not) and in ensuring that it is authentic and accurate—particularly if they are responding to a customer request. In a digital environment, content needs to be linked to metadata (i.e., information that systems use to index, describe, and find content) throughout the content lifecycle. Systems should have the ability to capture metadata and events to support the evolution of content into records. These characteristics provide authenticity, reliability, and integrity to governance-based ECM. However, the critical capability is whether a system can also understand the metadata needed for good governance and recordkeeping.

#### Importance of metadata standards:

The ISO metadata standard (ISO 23081-1:2006) establishes a benchmark for interoperability between systems, as well as for defining metadata in a consistent way so that data can be migrated between systems. An ECM should be capable of receiving content from a wide variety of sources, including scanned images, pictures, voice, and video. It should also be content-agnostic and independent of the source system, so when the source system changes or is replaced, records from the business process have been captured and can be viewed in a non-proprietary format.

#### Governance and records controls:

Records controls help create a governance framework and establish a shared workspace that protects sensitive content. Ideally, control tools are linked, so that by applying and using the classification scheme, the disposal and security schemes are automatically applied to content.

**Content classification:**

Classification confirms that a document or record is part of a business process at a specific time and place, thus providing authenticity. It links the content to the business process that created it, as well as creates links and relationships between other content that is part of the same transaction.

**Disposal guidelines:**

Disposal guidelines standardize decision making about how content should be retained, for how long, and which content should be destroyed or archived. Retention and disposal should be based on policy that supports both regulatory and business requirements.

**Security and access scheme:**

A security and access scheme defines individual privileges to determine who has the authority to view, update, amend, or destroy content and its properties, as well as helps manage accessibility overtime. Contrary to popular belief, a well configured security scheme facilitates more open and flexible access to content.

**Vocabulary controls:**

Vocabulary controls help standardize the use of terminology for naming—such as abbreviations, names of individuals, and business terms—for the purpose of improving content retrieval.

**Use and tracking:**

The ISO metadata standard (ISO 23081-1:2006) establishes a benchmark. Use and tracking relate to the capacity of the ECM system to manage user permissions; access and security status; rights of people external to the organization to access content; and tracking the use, location, or flow of content and records with audit logs.

**Capture and registration:**

Capture and registration define the processes for incorporating content created and received by an organization into the system; recording initial information (metadata) about the content (documents, email, or records); assigning each item a unique identifier; and assigning attributes of the governance and records control tools.

**Implementation of disposal:**

Functionality is needed to ensure that disposal occurs routinely. This process should be documented and authorized. Routine disposal of content is integral to successfully retiring legacy applications by minimizing the volume of content to be archived or migrated. The disposal process must be carried out according to defined policy and be documented for audit purposes to ensure it is defensible.

**Storage and preservation:**

In a digital environment, storage and preservation relate to storing content and records, linked to their metadata, in a way that preserves their accessibility and integrity, even when they are migrated or moved between systems. Support for, and compliance with, standards such as the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy (VERS) facilitates the digital preservation and migration of electronic records.

**Additional Considerations****Enterprise integration:**

If the preservation and accurate accounting of business content and its associated metadata are the goals of ECM, then flexibility is the means of accomplishing it. For a solution to be truly flexible, implementations must consider multiple linkages with business software, which can involve content moving between the ECM application and business systems on a continuous basis. If this cannot be done with ease and certainty, organizations may be stuck with features that are in place within the ECM system. Thus, when integrating systems, organizations should understand the extent of integration possible and what functionality will be supported by connecting systems, and the availability of commercialized integration modules with major business applications.

**Standards and standardization:**

Given that an ECM system offers a near-infinite number of configurations, there is a risk that everyone will potentially do the same thing in different ways. The one-off nature of these random configurations means that finding congruence in metadata elements across multiple systems is a big challenge. Metadata alignment is critical to support interoperability. Businesses may discover that their integration and interoperability benefits diminish because of a poorly designed configuration. Here, organizations need to consider how they are going to adhere to relevant standards and how best to standardize processes within their organization to ensure business records and content are captured and managed appropriately. The ECM system selected must be designed to support relevant industry standards, making it easier to achieve a configurable but consistent approach to managing business content.

**Interoperability:**

Interoperability is the ability to transfer and use information in a uniform and efficient manner across multiple organizations and systems. As the demands for electronic business, cross-agency systems, and Web-enabled transactions grow, the capacity of the ECM system to meet user demands will not only affect the quality and coverage of content, but also may impair the operations of suppliers, customers, partners, and the wider community. Electronic content and records will therefore need to be well equipped to move beyond systems and across organizational and jurisdictional boundaries.

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**Skill sets:**

Acquiring and configuring an ECM system takes a considerable degree of skill, including:

- Technology skills to understand network and bandwidth requirements, and the ability to manage the system traffic issues
- Governance and recordkeeping skills needed to configure the internal components of the software

In the absence of such specialized skills, an organization may simply decide to apply the tenets of a paper-based system to an ECM system, which can negate the benefits of deploying such a system. Therefore, it is critical to take extra care when transitioning to an ECM system. Without the appropriate level of expert guidance, it is possible to not reap the full benefit of the new solution.

**Conclusion**

When assessing and choosing an ECM system, keep in mind a wide spectrum of considerations such as core functionality, capabilities, flexibility and ease of integration, and your business needs and objectives. The right ECM solution should not only deliver productivity improvements, increase compliance state, and reduce paper-related costs, but it should also enable and support the sustainability of records over time, thus minimizing longer-term risks. Configurable and flexible solutions that do not complicate implementation and systems management are critical

requirements for future-proofing digital records, and ensuring the continuation of governance-based best-practices content management.

**Additional Considerations**

While this buyer's guide provides valuable information on how to select an ECM system that will also enable best-practices information governance, it is by no means comprehensive. For additional information on how to choose the ECM system that's right for your organization, please visit the resources listed below.

**Publications:**

[Information Management—2016 and Beyond](#)

[Disposing of Digital Debris](#)

[AIIM Industry Watch: Information Management State of the Industry 2016](#)

[Why is Information Governance too important to be left to humans?](#)

**Online resources:**

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