

## Enterprise Content Management Systems Cross Departmental and Functional Boundaries

What is content? What does content management involve? And what is special about enterprise content management? This introductory article will seek to answer these questions.

In today's context, content means digital information. This information typically resides in text documents, audio or video files and other kinds of digital files. Digital information is easier to manage compared to paper-based information (even though it is vulnerable to its own special kinds of risks).

Content management involves managing the different stages in the lifecycle of content. The lifecycle stages of content are Creation, Updating, Publication, Translation, Archiving and Destruction.

Capturing data in an electronic form creates content. This could be through direct entry of relevant details at the time of a transaction or through transcription from original paper-based transaction documents into data entry forms.

In some cases, such as contracts, the paper documents are converted directly into a digital form through electronic scanning, and then made into an editable text-document with the help of Optical Character Recognition - OCR - technology.

The major management task in creation of content is ensuring that only authorized persons can do it, and they can do it in a convenient manner, with a minimum of cost to the organization.

Created information often needs to be edited or updated in the course of the business. This is the second lifecycle stage. Managing this stage involves restricting access and edit rights to authorized persons, and making the tasks of retrieval of the original document, its updating, and saving the updated version, convenient and easy.

The third stage of publication could mean different things. It could mean that supervisory persons review the suggested content and authorize it for final transfer to the content repository. It could also mean granting access rights to individuals and groups. Finally, it could mean making the content available to others (including the world at large).

The publication stage needs to be managed carefully to ensure that only properly authorized information is published, and published in an authorized manner.

Translation and localization might become necessary to make the content available to intended target groups. Managing this stage mainly involves finding competent persons to do the tasks of translation and localization.

When the content has been replaced by new content, or has become old or obsolete, it is archived and put beyond current access. Some information needs to be retained for specific periods, but might not be used for current operations. Such content is best archived.

When content is not needed either for operational use or for complying with legal requirements, destroying it is the best option. Clear policies need to be formulated regarding which content is archived/destroyed, and how the archiving/destruction process is carried out.

The brief description above defines content management. Content management was traditionally exercised at departmental or functional levels with the help of standalone software.

Enterprise content management crosses departmental and functional boundaries and seeks to manage all content generated by an enterprise--wherever it is generated. Modern large enterprises are global in their reach and operations, and content might be generated on the other side of the globe.

Modern enterprise content management systems provide access to this content for those who need it for decision support or other authorized purposes. Internet technologies are typically used for such enterprise-wide content management systems.

Separate articles will describe specific issues involved in enterprise content management systems.

### About the Author

Based on user experience, Ademero's flagship product, Content Central™, is a browser-based document management software, [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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