

Connecting Enterprise Content to SAP® Business Suite

Improve Productivity and Mitigate Risk with Open Text Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions

As organizations move to standardize and streamline core business processes, they increasingly find the need to interconnect unstructured information with those highly structured operations. Open Text Extended ECM *for SAP® Solutions* can help you meet this challenge.

Why Connect Unstructured Content to Structured Processes?

Enterprise applications have transformed large companies and government agencies by streamlining business processes, enabling efficient operations and managing highly-structured transactional information. Enterprise resource planning, customer relationship management and supply chain management have proven highly valuable, and in many ways are essential to supporting core business processes.

Following this trend, Enterprise Content Management (ECM) has emerged as the next critical piece in the enterprise applications puzzle. A deluge of unstructured information, including e-mail, presentations, contracts, photos, résumés, and much more has forced companies to turn to ECM to help users share, store, archive, collaborate on, and eventually destroy this flood of content. ECM is a valuable and necessary tool for dealing with unstructured content.

However, until now, the worlds of structured business processes and unstructured content have existed in parallel isolation from one another. In almost every customer- or partner-facing process, extensive unstructured information is exchanged. At the moment it arrives or is created, its author and recipient understand its full context, and thus its importance. But soon that memory fades, and the content, stored haphazardly on desktops, shared drives, or standalone applications, is effectively lost to the organization. Even if an individual recollects its existence and location, there is no connection maintained between the content itself and the context of the business process that made it relevant in the first place. What is needed to avoid these critical problems is a way to tie unstructured content to the functions of the enterprise — content-enriched business processes that are enhanced not only by the content, but the context in which it was originally created or received.

Open Text Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions

To overcome the disconnect between structured processes and unstructured information, SAP offers a groundbreaking solution. The Open Text Extended ECM application is integrated with SAP Business Suite software such as the SAP ERP application. Open Text Extended ECM thus enables management of unstructured content in the context of the processes and transactions supported by your enterprise applications.



Content-Enriched Business Processes with Open Text Extended ECM

As shown in the figure, key functionality includes document management (version control, access control, and approvals); collaboration (with shared work spaces, approval workflows, and records management (for the full lifecycle of both electronic and physical records); and enterprise archiving (for access to archived information across any storage medium).



With Open Text Extended ECM, users of SAP software can attach unstructured documents and entire ECM work spaces to transactions in SAP applications, and no longer have to log into multiple applications to find information. Users of other applications can be given access to SAP information via the Open Text Extended ECM interface, allowing them to leverage SAP content without extensive training.

Open Text Extended ECM is also designed to minimize total cost of ownership from the IT perspective. The product is powered by the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform, and uses SAP user management tools to minimize administrative overhead. The following are just a few ways that you can benefit.

Improving Productivity – Making Content Accessible

In many environments, business users must log into multiple systems and search them independently for all of the pieces of information relating to a particular transaction. This inefficiency can have huge impacts on organizational responsiveness.

Open Text Extended ECM improves productivity by providing unified 360-degree access to structured and unstructured information in a choice of interfaces. Users of SAP software have access in their standard SAP interfaces, making it easier for them to learn and use the full range of Open Text Extended ECM functionality. You can also extend access to users of SAP content and non-SAP content via the Open Text Extended ECM Web interface, empowering users who need to be part of the overall process, but who don't need (or shouldn't have) direct access to SAP enterprise applications.

Empowering Teams - Collaboration Tools

Business processes can run across departments, divisions, regions, and even between different organizations outside its boundaries. Open Text Extended ECM allows you to include all appropriate stakeholders, both within and outside of the organization, in collaborative processes.

For internal projects, Open Text Extended ECM enables team collaboration with features such as project team work spaces, discussion forums, collaborative approval workflows, tasks, and polls. For projects including external stakeholders, Open Text Extended ECM expands that capability, allowing you to set up a secure extranet environment and work spaces in which to share documents. Because the interface is Webbased, all your partners need is a browser and their user name and password to be integrated into your processes.

Reducing Legal Risk – Managing Corporate Records

The exponential growth of unmanaged, unstructured content is a growing regulatory and legal risk for many organizations. If you don't know where your unstructured content is, who has access to it, if it still has value, or whether it should be destroyed – these uncertainties poses a tangible risk to your organization. Valuable content might not be fully leveraged, or the wrong people may have access to it, or it may be lost in a disaster. Obsolete content may be kept unnecessarily, driving up storage costs and becoming discoverable in the case of litigation. Auditable content control and retention is also necessary to comply with various regulations.

Open Text Extended ECM mitigates these risks by applying records management classifications to content to control its entire lifecycle from creation through archival

Business Challenges

- Bridging the gap between structured information in SAP Business Suite applications and related unstructured information
- Improving the efficiency of content-centric steps in business processes managed within SAP applications
- Reducing the risk associated with the lack of control over unstructured content across the enterprise

Business Benefits

- Increase content-centric process efficiency by making unstructured content easily accessible within the context of SAP business processes and transactions
- Increase the productivity of business users by eliminating the time wasted to find or recreate unstructured content related to business processes, and by fostering collaboration
- Minimize the risk associated with unstructured content by controlling its complete lifecycle
- Reduce costs by digitizing paper documents, reducing storage requirements, facilitating database backups, and optimizing system performance
- Exploit the power of SAP software by using the SAP master data to deliver precisely the right content from across your organization into your business processes

to destruction. Open Text Extended ECM lets you apply records management classifications to all unstructured content, whether it is added by users working in the ECM interface or in native SAP interfaces. It can be configured to apply records management classifications to documents automatically, eliminating the need for users to classify documents manually and helping ensure that the classifications are performed consistently and accurately. This records management function is certified to be compliant with the U.S. Department of Defense 5015.2 regulation on records management.



But of course, not all enterprise content is electronic. Open Text Extended ECM also enables you to track the location and manage the circulation, manage the warehouse space, and control the lifecycle of physical objects, such as boxes of files, DVDs, magazines, books, or any other type of physical object.

Reducing Storage Costs – Digitizing Paper Processes

Even though Open Text Extended ECM provides the means to track and manage boxes of paper files, you can achieve even greater cost reductions by digitizing paper files and integrating the content of those documents into core business processes. By digitizing paper, the cost of physical storage space can be eliminated; the risk of loss due to fire, flood, or other disaster is greatly diminished; and the content is made available to all users electronically at the same time.

Open Text Extended ECM supports the digitization of paper by scanning documents directly into the SAP business process. This allows you to connect a scanning device and release digitized versions of paper documents into the central ECM repository, where they can be controlled and used more effectively. The function also supports bar code recognition, enabling quick input of paper-based information.

Reducing IT Operating Costs – Archiving Data and Content

Another very expensive challenge for IT organizations is managing the huge volumes of information (both structured and unstructured) being generated daily by their customers. Open Text Extended ECM includes archiving functionality that allows you to offload data and documents from your production SAP databases into an archive.

This archiving compresses the content, eliminates content duplicates, and abstracts storage management. This way, you can leverage low-cost storage devices while continuing to make archived content accessible to end users. The result is that content storage costs are significantly reduced, production database backup times are minimized, and production system performance is optimized.

Finally, if you are planning to upgrade your SAP applications, or decommission an old one, you can use the archiving functionality of Open Text Extended ECM to archive data and documents from your production SAP database before you upgrade. This minimizes system downtime during the upgrade, minimizes the size of the upgraded database, and optimizes the storage requirements and performance of the upgraded system. Open Text Extended ECM is certified for the SAP NetWeaver Information Lifecycle Management component and is the preferred archiving solution to complement that data extraction method.

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