



Issue Brief

Making an Impact on the Enterprise: The Case for Enterprise Content Management (ECM) in Government

What Is It?

Government agencies are increasingly turning to enterprise content management (ECM) software to control their documents and processes. ECM software helps government organizations deliver and share content and documents. It manages the information lifecycle from initial document creation or capture through management, archiving and preserving, to disposal. Content managed by ECM includes paper and scanned documents, electronic forms, emails, data streams or even screen shots.

ECM can link documents with data by connecting existing departmental systems and databases — such as enterprise resource management, asset management solutions, court or human services case management and law enforcement incident report management systems — to a central ECM document repository, extending the value of these existing software investments. Instead of working back and forth between various

systems and paper files, employees retrieve an electronic copy of a document by clicking on a database screen.

This issue brief from the Center for Digital Government will explain how government organizations benefit from using ECM technology. We give examples of how agencies are using it to improve business processes, and identify long-term trends that are impacted by ECM. Finally, we provide tips on how to start an ECM deployment and explain how to select the best ECM solution.

Why Use ECM Software?

It's no secret that government entities are drowning in paperwork. In times of ongoing fiscal crisis, it's tempting to put the collective agency-nose to the grindstone and move innovation to the backburner. But technology can actually help governments survive leaner times. ECM is a wise investment because it puts agencies back in control of their documents.

ECM Applications

Agencies at all levels of government can take advantage of ECM software to gain control of their paperwork and related processes.

Human resources — ECM in human resources reduces costs and streamlines workflow by eliminating carbon triplicate and other printed forms and the need to file or destroy these forms later.

Judicial department — Clerk of courts departments use ECM to connect key documents with case management solutions, provide audit and security trails, and automate the redaction process. Public safety departments integrate ECM with incident report management solutions to manage paperwork created by officers, and store it in conjunction with supporting documents and files. And correctional facilities manage compliance by securing documents, automating document retention, demonstrating use of state and federal funds, and performing internal audits.

Financial administration — When integrated with ERP, ECM can speed invoice processing and payment in accounts payable and receivable by reducing the need to route paper between departments and offices. ECM prevents document loss and puts supporting documentation alongside an invoice or purchase order for more efficient processing. Financial administration ECM users have experienced as much as 80 percent reductions in processing times and 70 percent lower processing costs.

Central services and administration — ECM lets administrative offices shift personnel from basic level paperwork functions to higher-level work tasks by streamlining administrative functions such as public records requests, agenda management, property valuation appeal, and business permitting and licensing.

Public housing/health and human services — ECM speeds up tasks such as client intake, eligibility determination and re-certification. ECM has contributed to reducing client intake

The below table outlines some document-related challenges faced by governments and how they're addressed by ECM:

Challenge	Without ECM	With ECM
Paper volume	The sheer volume of paper-based files and corresponding processes is overwhelming.	By eliminating paper-based workflows, ECM reduces the volume of paper.
Electronic files	Electronic files must be tracked and managed in tandem with paper files and database information.	ECM automatically tracks electronic documents and connects them to data residing in databases and departmental systems as well as related documents.
Version control	Agencies must manage version control as they create, revise and distribute content. Often, many "final versions" exist throughout the organization.	ECM streamlines version control by centralizing the management of document change, controlling who can revise and ensuring that everyone accesses the most up-to-date version.
Fewer staff; low-value tasks	Layoffs and attrition have reduced staffing levels, and employees spend too much time on low-value tasks such as copying, printing, and manually filing and retrieving documents.	ECM improves employee efficiency by eliminating low-value tasks. In spite of dwindling resources, ECM helps agencies provide higher service levels to their constituents faster and at a lower cost.
Cost efficiencies	Agency budgets continue to be slashed, and personnel are expected to do more with less.	ECM saves money by reducing the cost of physical storage and printing and paper supplies, improving employee productivity and enhancing service delivery.
Compliance and audits	Agencies must manage content with an eye towards maintaining compliance with mandates, audits and initiatives for security, disaster recovery, use of funds, etc.	ECM supports compliance with tools to automate document retention policies and security, find missing documentation, automate processes, and manage redaction and retention requirements. This enables staff to focus on file audits and quality assurance.
Service delivery	Delivery of constituent services is inefficient and frustrating due to manual, paper-based processes.	By eliminating paper, ECM accelerates business processes for efficient service delivery.

and eligibility determination decision times by half and has helped agencies meet existing workloads despite staff reductions of as much as 40 percent. A key benefit is the ability to connect multiple assistance programs and case management systems, which eliminates repetitive application completion while securing documents with confidential information.

Planning and public works — Planning and public works agencies use ECM with existing GIS, asset management and other solutions to provide seamless electronic access to the documents, maps, photos, video, audio and historic papers that employees access every day. ECM users in public works departments have reclaimed staff simply by eliminating the filing duties, reducing the amount of time spent filing by 66 percent and using that time for other tasks like direct constituent service.

Long-Term Trends

Besides delivering immediate short-term value, ECM helps government agencies address several broader government trends for the long term: shared services and collaboration, citizen self-service, open government/transparency and ongoing government cutbacks.

Shared services and collaboration — Many organizations have multiple departments that provide services to the same citizen. For example, a single beneficiary may receive multiple services from different departments in public housing and health and human services agencies. ECM enables the creation of a common, centralized core of documents that can be shared among departments, agencies and jurisdictions to reduce costs and streamline document-based processes. Moreover, shared

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service models — and their cost savings — between jurisdictions, departments and agencies can be supported, helping to enhance the affordability of an ECM solution.

Citizen self-service — ECM enables citizen self-service portals via onsite kiosks, Internet access and mobile device delivery. Self-service frees staff from low-value tasks such as looking up and making copies of public records. By giving citizens control of the task, ECM lowers wait times and increases satisfaction. It also streamlines revenue collection for these services.

Open government/transparency — ECM supports open government and transparency initiatives. For example, it can be used in conjunction with agenda assembly and video minutes systems to create a comprehensive open government solution for public records access. ECM connects relevant documents with video and audio files, allowing agencies to create a constituent portal that provides public records 24/7 via the Internet.

Ongoing government cutbacks — The current financial conditions show no signs of abatement in the near future. In the event that additional budget and staff cuts are on the way, ECM helps reduce the impact. By deploying ECM throughout the government enterprise over time, agencies become leaner and more efficient in response to continuing downsizing pressure.

How to Get Started

Forget niche solutions. A cheap departmental solution or an add-on to your departmental data system might hit the pricing sweet spot, but too often these solutions cannot scale and lack important functionality, such as automatic redaction or indexing. Choose a solution that is truly scalable, that can meet each department's specific needs and can also grow — from 1 to 25,000 users or more — to maximize your savings and the reach of a common document repository. You'll experience the most benefits when you can share documents and information across the organization. You can always start with one or two departments and scale up as budget allows.

Decide how to roll out the solution by first evaluating your organization's priorities:

- **Easy win** — Do you need to establish immediate credibility for ECM technology? Human resources is a good place to launch an ECM deployment, because many applications have a cross-departmental impact. Starting an ECM deployment in human resources helps expose all staff to the benefits of ECM.
- **Most paper** — If reducing the volume of paper is your primary goal, consider starting with paper-heavy departments such as health and human services or the judicial department. Converting a single eligibility process in health and human services will make a dramatic difference and encourage other agencies to sign up.
- **Biggest cutbacks** — ECM helps relieve departments that have experienced big cuts in budget or staff, yet face the same workload. The department will save money and time by eliminating printing, filing, copying and other low-value, paper-related tasks.
- **Recent changes** — Departments with huge amounts of staff overtime and newly created volumes of paper or customer complaints due to changes in timeframes, requirements or economic conditions may be a logical

place to begin an ECM deployment. An example is when the assessor's office experiences a change in the volume of property re-evaluation requests due to real estate market fluctuations.

- **Available funding** — When deploying or expanding ECM solutions, consider departments that have enough funding to support further expansion down the road.
- **Compliance nightmares** — Begin your ECM deployment with a department that is struggling with compliance issues, such as health and human services, public housing or corrections.

After you've decided where to begin your ECM deployment, the following steps can help you identify the information management needs of each department:

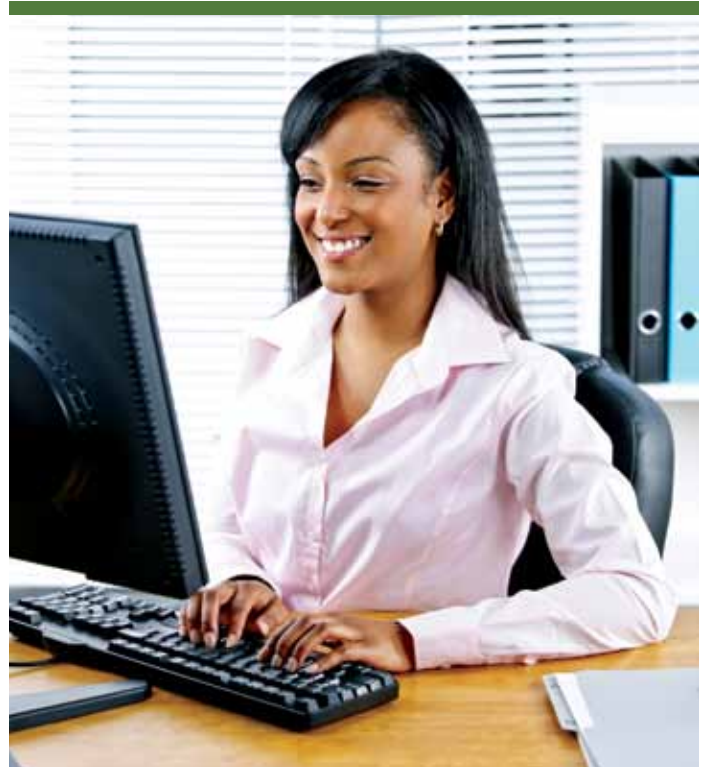
- **Identify paper-dependent departments and processes.** ECM will have an immediate impact by eliminating filing, paper-shuffling, photocopying, printing and paper records storage.
- **Identify cross-departmental paper-bound business processes.** Such horizontal applications show all employees the benefits of ECM and create organization-wide workflow improvements. Examples include invoicing and vacation requests.
- **Look for documents that fuel transparency initiatives.** Examples include agendas, meeting minutes, contracts, payroll, timesheets, and other records that shed light on government spending and decision-making.
- **Look for documents that fuel citizen self-service.** Start by determining the documents most frequently requested by the public.
- **Identify departments that are doing better financially.** For example, parks and recreation departments often have a dedicated funding stream due to fees for parks entry and recreational sports and classes.
- **Establish metrics for return on investment (ROI)** that measure both hard costs and soft improvements.

Evaluating an ECM Solution

When choosing an ECM solution, look for a stable, long-term vendor with a successful track record of public sector deployments. The best ECM solution will:

- Address identified information management needs, meet staff and workflow requirements, and include appropriate workflow automation tools
- Enable shared services, citizen self-service and open government/transparency initiatives
- Include options for software customization, if needed; be sure to understand the cost of customization

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- Include software maintenance and upgrades in cost
- Rely on a single code base; be careful about solutions that have been cobbled together through acquisition and multiple vendors; complicated code makes products harder to deploy and increases integration challenges
- Include vendor-provided training options for future redesign, expansion and deployments
- Be expandable and scale easily from one to multiple departments
- Have flexible technology options, including cloud-based or on-premise software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution options that are sharable among multiple entities
- Have flexible licensing options, to allow response to new budget realities, new deployment options such as shared services and expansion to the enterprise
- Include easy-to-use integration tools that address evolving integration needs; make sure you know the cost to integrate databases and applications

HYLAND[®] SOFTWARE

One of the world's largest independent ECM software vendors, Hyland Software is the developer of OnBase. An award-winning suite of document and process management solutions, OnBase has a proven record of solving problems resulting from time consuming, costly and error plagued manual tasks. Available on-premises or as software as a service (SaaS), OnBase installs quickly, cost effectively and is designed to grow with organizations. Today, people at more than 10,500 organizations in 67 countries have the time to do the things that really add value thanks to OnBase. For these and other successes in its 20 year history, Hyland Software is a Leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Content Management, 2011.

For more information, visit <http://www.hyland.com> and <http://www.hyland.com/government>.