Systems of Insight
Pulling Insight Out of Content - The Next Generation of ECM

By Kevin Craine

The landscape of the Enterprise Content Management industry is changing. Initially born out of paper-and-scanner based *Systems of Record*, ECM grew to encompass broader *Systems of Engagement* using digital repositories and workflow tools. But today, there is a new phase of growth and maturity in content management. Next-generation approaches are evolving into *Systems of Insight* that perform as a wider platform for enhanced decision-making, better service and improved organizational performance.

The Insight Economy

The term "Insight Economy" is a popular way to describe the monetization and benefit of analytical insights, and that is exactly where the next generation of ECM is taking us. Just as money is the basis of the Business Economy, data is the basis of the Insight Economy. And the value of this enhanced insight goes beyond the typical approaches to data intelligence that we have used in the past. It's about more insight…not more information; and the thoughtful and strategic use of that insight and understanding.

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Organizations have for years use content management tools to reduce operating cost, inefficiency and organizational risk. But the promise of next-generation ECM is powered instead by a deeper and wider understanding of information -- both external and internal data -- and its impact and influence on the organization. This requires a more holistic view and a matching strategic approach, along with the right mix of technologies and capabilities.

More Insight, Not More Information

Content Analytics combined with Case Management represents the new frontier of ECM because of the driving need to obtain more actionable insight from information. The key to success is found in helping business leaders sift through the overwhelming stores of Big Data and the swirl of competing perspectives to design more powerful and actionable strategies. As a result, the common notion of ECM as Systems of Information is giving way to the view that Systems of Insight are critical in order to spur more compelling and strategic activities that deliver profitable growth.

Areas of Opportunity

How are organizations leveraging next-generation ECM Systems of Insight? Here are some areas to consider:

Social Media

Social media is a huge, growing and dynamic data store that can provide valuable business insight yet the potential is often left unexplored. How customers perceive your company and what they say about their experience in social media can have a direct effect on your brand in the marketplace, and next-generation ECM approaches are increasingly aimed at leveraging the intelligence and information found in social media. The truth is that companies are no longer in control of their brand perception — the consumer is – and it is important to develop a deeper understanding of your customer's beliefs and behaviors. Gaining insight in this case involves gaining an awareness into the areas where their beliefs and behaviors align with the organization and where they don't – and the reasons why. From there the question then becomes: what would it take for you align your brand with your customers and deliver superior products, services and customer experience?

The Internet of Things

"The Internet of Things" is dramatically changing the paradigm of data capture and content management. Machine-to-machine communication, built on cloud computing and networks of data-gathering sensors, has the promise to make nearly any device in our lives "smart." Organizations are quickly moving to leverage the data and information for increased service and insight. Healthcare is a good example, where the use of electronic sensors that collect biometric data has become an integral part of Chronic Care Management. Blood pressure cuffs, glucometers, and weight scales are equipped with wireless remote sensors that capture biometric readings and send them to a case management system that then acts upon the data; automatically issuing alarms and instructions if readings are out of range. Even commercially available "Fitbit" devices are used to automate the collection of data, trigger case management events and activities, and work as a system of insight to improve the quality care for each patient.

Cloud-based ECM

ECM today is predominantly deployed on-premises, but growing adoption of cloud-based systems has organizations redrawing their ECM road maps. And major vendors are providing compelling reasons for clients to look at the cloud for content services. For example, IBM is moving key ECM applications to its SoftLayer cloud, and announced recently a global partnership BOX that will combine the technologies and resources of both companies. This strategic alliance brings together Box's cloud content collaboration platform with IBM's analytics capability and global footprint, and is only one of the many market indications of the increasing opportunity in cloud-based ECM.

Customer Experience

Every business, from a multinational bank to a local bakery, needs to ensure that customers are happy and keep coming back for more. But it's more than an axiom, it makes good business sense. According to BIA/Kelsey, it costs 6-7 times more to land a new customer than it does to sell to an existing one and a repeat customer spends 67% more than a new one. As a result, organizations are refocusing their strategies to maximize long-term customer experience and loyalty. One way is by improving how they use ECM to support that experience. In financial services, it might mean easing the process needed for a new loan application or for new customer onboarding. In the insurance industry, it might involve speeding the pace of claims payment. Other industry segments like logistics, manufacturing, government, and more, all benefit from increased insight resulting in more thoughtful customer experience strategies that make a difference.

Case Management

Case Management is where Systems of Insight make a transformational difference in an organization's ability to deliver a superior customer experience. After all, both information and strategy is of little use without an action platform to propel improvements. Case Management is a new way of getting work done that helps people gather the content they need to make the right decisions and execute the best actions that lead to better business outcomes. Across many industries, organizations are using case management solutions to improve customer service, speed investigations and manage incidents. Already the leading solution for building Systems of Engagement, Case Management provides a single environment for the application of a wide variety of analytics to both structured and unstructured data, making it an ideal platform for building Systems of Insight.

Content Analytics

Content Analytics is the magic ingredient to obtaining true business insight and ECM is an environment ripe for this opportunity. Classification analytics help document capture systems become cognitive by "understanding" documents based on content and layout. Case analytics help managers oversee teams of workers and identify bottlenecks and balance workloads. And report mining tools like IBM's Datawatch brings analytics to legacy customer communications that are often overlooked in the ECM mix. Investigative analytics, when combined with case management, provides a powerful platform for law enforcement, brand and product investigations. In short, when you pair Content Analytics with Case Management a world of possibilities become available for customer service and many more use cases.

Moving Forward

A next generation of ECM is changing the landscape of Enterprise Content Management. Are you ready to move forward? Work to extend the value of ECM beyond the boundaries of your organization and beyond the confines of process-specific application to include social media, the Internet of Things, and the cloud. Increase your focus on customer experience and leverage the value of customer data to better understand customer needs and stimulate organizational improvement. Embrace Case Management as a platform for transformational process improvement and improved customer loyalty. And maximize Content Analytics for increased insight, decision-making and strategy design. In the end, look for providers and partners with the right combination of capabilities, expertise and vision that will help you make the most of the next generation of ECM.

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About the Author

Kevin Craine is the author of the book Designing a Document Strategy and the host of the Everyday MBA on C-Suite Radio. His books have sold in over 30 countries and he is a respected authority on document management and process improvement. Kevin holds an MBA in the Management of Science and Technology and a BA in Communications. He is the executive director of Craine Communications Group. For more info visit CraineGroup.com.

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