Alfresco Records Management

Governance, Retention and Compliance

Over the last few years there has been a significant increase in the number of organizations implementing Governance, Retention and Compliance policies and procedures. Driven by a need to comply with stricter legislation and a desire to show greater levels of corporate transparency and responsibility companies are turning to technology to help ensure compliance with corporate rules and procedures. Records Management (RM) solutions can help capture, control and manage vital corporate information, much of which resides in business documents, emails, financial reports etc. But, as outlined below, traditional Records Management solutions have still not seen wide scale adoption and the realization of the benefits promised.

Traditional Records Management Solutions

Traditional Records Management solutions have typically been implemented as stand alone, siloed applications, disconnected from other corporate Enterprise Content Management applications. This approach has a number of issues:

- Inconsistent Information – The need to transfer information from separate systems in to the Records Management solution leads to out of date information and leads to inconsistencies;

- Lack of Adoption – Designed to be used by record management specialists, typical Records Management solutions are too complex to use for most users, resulting in Records Management being reduced to a dedicated discipline only practiced by a few;

- Inconsistent Adoption – Hard to control the different types of content – Documents, eMail, Web Pages, Images, Scanned Files, etc. – that are all managed in separate systems but need to under the control of a central Records Management solution; and,

- Complexity – Having separate systems to manage different types of information that needs to be synchronized with Records Management system increases the complexity and cost.

- Designed as a simple to use, simple to deploy Open Source solution, the Alfresco Records Management solution removes many of the hurdles associated with traditional RM solutions at a fraction of the cost.

Solution Functionality

Certified to the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) 5015.02 standard, the Alfresco Records Management module provides all of the functionality needed to help any organization capture, classify, control and dispose of a wide range of corporate records.

Capture

The Alfresco RM solution allows the capture of new records from a variety of simple to use interfaces. Adopting industry standards removes the need to install local client applications on an individual's computer. This zero footprint client approach provides support for:

WEB – Alfresco provide a web-based client to allow easy access from any location. Users can upload, declare and manage corporate records via a simple to use web browser interface;

Network Drive – Supporting the industry standard Common Internet File System (CIFS) interface allows the Alfresco RM repository to appear just like a shared Network Drive. This allows all users to simple copy, or drag-and-drop files into the RM solution straight from their desktop;

IMAP – Supporting the IMAP email protocol allows any IMAP compliant email application to access the Alfresco repository through a simple email folder. Users can browse the RM file plan and simply drag new email items into the repository, putting them under the control of the records Management module; and,

Pre-population of Meta-data – The ability to extract and use information inherent in the document and email content to pre-populate records meta-data, reduces the time needed to declare new records.

Manage and Control

Once new records are added the Alfresco RM module provides functionality to manage the lifecycle of records while controlling who has access, and what actions they can take for each individual record. These features include:

- Fileplan – Automatically classify and schedule records based on a pre-existing plan and standardized structures;

- Auto-Numbering – Provides the capability to automatically and sequentially number vital corporate records;

- Type-based Metadata –Classify and schedule records based on configurable records based types;

- Automated Lifecycle Management – Use simple to configure rules to control and schedule content review, cut-off, transfer and archive;

- Configurable Dashboards – Allows records management specialists to configure the system dashboards with pre-defined reports to search and screen records – allowing for the easy identification and resolution of exceptions; and,

- Rapid eDiscovery – Provides users with a simple to use search across full-text content, fileplan structures, records management categories and record types.

Disposition

At some point corporate records will come to the end of their useful life. These records need to be destroyed, archived for long term storage or transferred to another system (e.g. national archives). The Alfresco RM solution provides:

- Full Disposition Support – Controlled and scheduled handling of archiving, holds, transfers, accessions and destruction using configurable rules and automated processing;

- Retention and Archive Policies – Ability to configure different retention and archive policies based on type and fileplan;

- Automated Conversion – Provides routines that automatically convert documents from proprietary formats to a long-term vendor neutral archival format, such as Portable Document Format (PDF/A) and Open Document Format (ODF) and;

- Archive Export – Simple to use export for long term archival.

Although certified to the DoD 5015.02 standard, the Alfresco RM solutions has been implemented on top of a generalized records management metadata model, allowing other standards (such as MoReq2, NOARK, etc.) to be supported.

Technology

The Alfresco solution has been designed and built to leverage a range of modern technologies. As an Open Source solution the Alfresco Enterprise Edition ECM solution will run on both Open Source and proprietary technology stacks. The table lists the currently supported technologies;

Server OS	Linux, MacOS, Microsoft Windows, Unix
Database	MySQL, MS SQL Server, Oracle, PostgreSQL
Application Servers	Tomcat, JBoss, BEA WebLogic, Oracle AS, Webshere
Web Browser	Firefox, Microsoft Internet Explorer, Safari
Client OS	Microsoft Windows (both XP and Vista)
Authentication	Active Directory LDAP, NTLM, OpenLDAP, Sun ONE directory server, Kerboros

Benefits

As the first Open Source Records Management solution to be certified to the rigorous DoD 5015.2 standard, the Alfresco solution provides a number of benefits:

- Increased User Adoption – One solution to support all content, within a single repository, with easy to use clients removes end user complexity and leads to far greater user adoption;

- Single Repository – Allows the management of all electronic files (documents, web pages, emails, images, corporate records, etc.) in the industry's most scalable, CMIS compliant, repository;

- Simplicity – Single system for managing both standard content and corporate records reduces maintenance and removes the need for inter-system integration; and,

- Reduced Cost – No upfront Enterprise license fees. No per user seat pricing. Ability to leverage cost effective Open Source technology stack. Simplified ongoing maintenance through single system. All lead to a dramatically lower Total Cost of Ownership.

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