



8 things

you wanted to know
about SharePoint
- but were afraid to ask

*document management, records management, email management,
enterprise 2.0, imaging, scanning, SharePoint, BPM and ECM*

Copyright John Mancini 2010

License Notes:

Links to this free e-book (<http://www.aiim.org/8things>)
may be copied, distributed, reposted, reprinted and shared.

About this e-Book

My thanks to all the guest bloggers who contributed their work to this e-book.

The intention of this e-book and the other e-books in the series is NOT to provide a set of detailed technical requirements for how to create a strategy for managing information. There are other places for that -- the [AIIM web site](#) and the [InformationZen](#) site and [AIIM training](#) and [AIIM webinars](#) and [seminars](#) are good places to start.

Rather, the purpose is to increase awareness across a broad cross-section of organizations and industries about the kinds of issues you need to think about when you begin to adopt a more strategic approach to managing information.

So the purpose of this series is *educational* and *evangelical* rather than technical.

You are free to share the link to anyone to download the book -- and we encourage you to do so.

License Notes: Links to this free e-book (<http://www.aiim.org/8things>) may be copied, distributed, reposted, reprinted and shared.

8 Things You Wanted to Know About SharePoint -- But Were Afraid to Ask



It's a pretty complicated world out there for those seeking to create an information management strategy.

The good news is that there are a lot of content and document options out there. The bad news is that there are a lot of content and document options out there.

Of course, the elephant in the room in a lot of information management discussions is SharePoint. Since its launch, SharePoint 2007 has demonstrated phenomenal growth. Recent AIIM surveys have indicated adoption rates of over 65% across multiple geographical regions and different verticals, and Microsoft is positioning SharePoint as the "Information Operating System" for organizations. It seems like many organizations using Microsoft products will over the next few years implement SharePoint *somewhere*. And the elephant will get even bigger with the release of SharePoint 2010 later this year.

In many ways, "SharePoint" has become somewhat of a noun in the content space (like "Kleenex" for tissues or "Xerox" for copying), describing for many end users a cluster of functionality that begins as a replacement for shared drives for Office documents and a collaboration platform and extends into other more complex areas as the platform spreads. Even competitors to SharePoint in the collaboration space tend to increasingly use SharePoint as the reference point, essentially saying, "We can do 'SharePoint-y' things, but in a different infrastructure." A number of the solution providers who are focused on transactional content and the mission critical processes associated with this content are increasingly positioning their capabilities as the "stuff" that SharePoint does *not* do out of the box.

All of this is transforming the document, content, and records management industry. SharePoint 2010 will consolidate the ECM repository business. A great deal of collaboration-driven and Office application content in organizations will be housed in SharePoint repositories.

At the same time, there is a growing realization in organizations of both the perils and opportunities associated with constructing a strategy on a particular

vendor stack. We are seeing a growing interest in open source content solutions. This is particularly evident in Europe (witness the European Commission white paper on open source solutions), but is increasingly the case in the United States (witness the recent decision to host the White House site on Drupal). Tom O'Reilly offered these comments on the implications of the Drupal decision: "While open source is already widespread throughout the government, its adoption by the White House will almost certainly give permission for much wider uptake...There are huge opportunities for open source, web 2.0, and new media companies in government, but there are also challenges reaching that market."

The more "traditional" ECM players (e.g., IBM, Oracle, EMC, Hyland) increasingly focus their value on managing a broad continuum of content that often includes -- but is not limited to -- information in SharePoint repositories. They focus their robust capabilities on mission critical content intensive processes, imaging and capture, and records management and e-discovery, areas that are still relatively immature within SharePoint. These solutions typically entered organizations within a single department and then spread. Early implementations were focused on the needs of document-intensive process owners and specialists rather than a broad base of general knowledge workers.

The larger of these companies (and Microsoft as well) are increasingly focused on the blurring lines between

structured and unstructured information and the desire of users to manage *all* of this content and information, regardless of its type. The smaller ECM companies are increasingly focused on departmental and process specific document management and building their value on their low cost, ease of adoption, and domain expertise.

So that brings me to the point of this e-book. It is perhaps easier to say what it is NOT.

It is not a recipe book for implementing SharePoint.

It is not an endorsement of SharePoint.

It is not a technical manual.

Here's what it IS.

It is intended for business people to provide a vehicle to help understand some of the issues associated with SharePoint.

It is intended to help you frame the right questions.

It is intended to be a stepping off point to get more information.

AIIM is one place for such information.

There is a wide variety of information available from AIIM at our [SharePoint Microsite](#).

There are two quite good [Essentials courses](#) available from

AIIM.

- [Evaluating SharePoint](#)
- [Evaluating SharePoint for Enterprise Deployment](#)

A more comprehensive SharePoint course is in development. Click [HERE](#) if you would like to be on the advanced distribution list for that course.

The role of SharePoint in an information management strategy will be discussed at [AIIM's Spring 2010 seminar series](#).

In most of our end user studies/surveys, we touch on questions related to SharePoint deployment. AIIM research available [HERE](#); all that is needed is registration -- no charge.

Table of Contents

Here are the titles in this e-book. Enjoy. And thank you to all of the contributors.

- [8 things you need to know about SharePoint governance](#) -- Doug Schultz, Access Sciences
- [8 reasons SharePoint 2010 looks like a true ECM system](#) -- Greg Clark, C3 Associates
- [Another 8 reasons SharePoint 2010 looks like a true ECM system](#) -- Boyd Collins, SAIC
- [8 more things you need to know about SharePoint](#) -- Mike Alsup, Gimmel Group
- [8 things to consider when implementing SharePoint with another ECM engine](#) -- Michael Elkins, Kestral Group
- [8 ways to use SharePoint for social computing](#) -- Joe Cromer, Risetime
- [8 reasons you should consider automatic classification and automatic metadata tagging in SharePoint](#) -- Juan J. Celaya, COMPU-DATA International, LLC
- [8 things to do to make content more findable in SharePoint](#) -- Bill Bither, Atalasoft
- [8 ways SharePoint helps in enterprise governance, risk and compliance](#) -- Thomas Bahr and Michael Neumann, BearingPoint
- [8 things to consider when choosing an application to scan and capture documents to SharePoint](#) -- Stephen Boals, PSIGEN Software, Inc.
- [8 ways SharePoint 2010 moves toward "ECM for the Masses"](#) -- Andy Hopkins, Chrysalis BTS
- [8 things you should know about transactional processing in SharePoint](#) -- Rutherford Wilson, Atalasoft
- [8 ways to benchmark your collaboration strategy](#) -- Rob Koplowitz, Forrester Research
- [8 ways IT politics can wreck a SharePoint project](#) -- Anonymous contributor
- [8 Ways to Make Things Easy for Your SharePoint Development Team](#) -- John Keadle, Sapeient

8 Things You Need to Know about SharePoint Governance



Doug Schultz of Access Sciences has a broad Information Technology background that covers 25 years in Global Fortune 300 upstream Energy companies, with previous experience in systems analysis and design, systems development, technical infrastructure and customer service center. He has focused the last 7

years on enterprise content and records management technologies, including development of best practices, assessment and evaluation of various software packages and Web 2.0/Enterprise 2.0 Technologies.

It shouldn't be a big surprise that Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS) is incredibly popular and powerful as a basic content repository. Microsoft claimed \$1 billion in revenue from sales of the software in 2007. A recent survey by AIIM (State of the Market: Microsoft SharePoint) indicates that SharePoint is indeed rapidly becoming pervasive within the enterprise.

Of those responding to the survey, 83% said they either currently use or likely will be using Microsoft SharePoint.

There are also many reports of SharePoint deployment projects being derailed or having less than desired results. Some of these are related to a lack of features necessary for an organization such as more robust records management or a more controlled repository, but many are because of the lack of SharePoint governance.

A SharePoint Governance model has the following components put in place to guide the development and use of a solution based on SharePoint:

- People – roles and responsibilities
- Policies – a collection of principles and guidelines on what is and isn't allowed
- Processes – a how to guide for common processes, such as site creation, changing site themes, etc.

Here are eight things you need to know about SharePoint governance:

1 -- There is no easy button.

Unlike the popular office supply company's commercial where you push the button and get the comforting message, "That was easy," you can't push the easy button and SharePoint governance suddenly appears. While there

are tools and templates available (from both Microsoft and others) to help guide the process, it will take resources – people and time – to create a governance model for SharePoint in your organization.

2 -- One size does not fit all.

A SharePoint governance model for a Fortune 25 organization is different than one for a small business. A governance model must be adapted for the size of the organization. There are no "cookie cutter approaches" for developing the governance model. You can certainly repurpose a governance model intended for a different size organization into your own, but it again takes people and time.

3 -- It's not rocket science.

On the other hand, creating a governance model for SharePoint is not an impossible task or one that will take months of effort and armies of consultants. You simply need to treat it like any other project - dedicate adequate resources to it and then decide what needs to be governed in your organization and how you want to govern it.

4 -- You can do it now, or you can do it later – but you will do it.

SharePoint governance is like the old TV commercial where the greasy mechanic says you can pay me now or you can pay me later, inferring that you will pay me eventually. The SharePoint governance model can be created while you have a new, pristine SharePoint farm or site collection or you can do it after you have hundreds of sites and document libraries with no clear indication of what content exists in the various sites or why. It will take require more resources to do it later.

5 -- Some options don't have an "undo" button.

Creating a SharePoint governance model will ensure the organization has thought through the various options and capabilities available in SharePoint and made intelligent choices based on their goals for the software. An organization has only one shot at several installation and configuration options unless a total reinstall is performed.

6 -- Less silos instead of more.

Many organizations implement SharePoint for basic content services and to gain better control of the content on their shared drives. The same AIIM survey referenced earlier indicated that 60% of the respondents use SharePoint for file sharing. Without SharePoint governance,

there are no clear standards on the creation and use of sites and document libraries. Organizations can find themselves with more information silos after SharePoint instead of less than they planned for.

7 -- It's not just about the technology.

Implementing new technology is certainly hard work, but the harder work is in changing the way people work. A governance model will help from the change management and usability standpoint of implementing SharePoint.

8 -- You can have governance or you can have chaos.

Chaos in SharePoint looks like what many have called content sprawl – sites, sub-sites and document libraries with junk and no clear ownership. It may also resemble the same content types with slightly different names or with different metadata. A governance model with some basic information architecture can help ensure consistency across

the entire SharePoint site and guide how sites are commissioned, used and decommissioned when no longer required.

Resist the urge of the IT department to just install it like any other Microsoft application – insert the CD and install with the default settings. You need a governance model to:

- Ensure the system is used as intended and aligns with business objectives.
- Reduce or eliminate replication and duplication of content and SharePoint sites.
- Leverage existing content and promote reuse.
- Ensure the system is sustainable and scalable over time.
- Define responsibility for system management, administration and use from individual users to roles and groups.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Reasons SharePoint 2010 Looks Like a True ECM System



Greg Clark is from C3 Associates, located in Calgary, Alberta. C3 exists to solve a problem faced by most organizations; how to take advantage of the vast amounts of content (documents, email, engineering drawings, web pages, presentations, photos, rich media files, etc.) generated every day in your organization. Greg earlier posted on his perspectives on [8](#)

[things SharePoint 2010 needs to be a true ECM System](#) -- this is an update to that article.

With the release of [SharePoint 2010 in beta](#) and the anticipated production release sometime in the first half of 2010 (one source says it will be released late in Q1 but that's a full-blown rumor, so don't hold me to that), it is time to provide an update on the latest incarnation of Microsoft's collaboration and content management and business intelligence and portal and ECM and records management tool.

In an earlier post I listed [Eight Things SharePoint 2010 Needs to be a True ECM System](#), and, at first glance the new version looks very encouraging from an ECM perspective. As I've said before, I get excited by anything

that can help my clients better manage their information and SharePoint has the potential to be a transformative platform bridging structured content, unstructured content and social computing in one flexible package. SharePoint 2007 does a decent job of this but it has some deficiencies when it comes to managing all content in the enterprise.

I'll also give you the same caveat I gave last time; While this post focuses on SharePoint as a technology, technology is about the very last thing that should be considered when an organization sets out to manage its content more efficiently.

Information management should start with a good business case, appropriate sponsorship, choosing the right areas of focus then building capacity within the organization to truly succeed. Technology is only the last piece of this puzzle.

All of that said, there has been an incredible amount of interest in SharePoint (as illustrated by the 7,500 people who attended the SharePoint conference from October 19 to 22 last year) and many of my clients have questions about where (or whether) this tool should fit into their ECM strategy.

Finally, the updates below are based on my attendance at the SharePoint conference. I went to as many breakout sessions as possible and chased down beleaguered Microsoft staffers to ask questions in what must have felt like a trip to the old Roman Coliseum (with the lions, not with Caesar). I tried to focus on attending ECM-specific sessions and have done as much reading as I can but as a vendor-neutral consultant Microsoft hasn't seen fit to furnish C3 Associates with a pre-beta version of SharePoint 2010, so I haven't actually used the system myself. As always we will continue to learn as much as we can about all of the ECM tools and technologies that are of interest to our clients but in the absence of actually working with SharePoint some of our understanding will be incomplete or possibly incorrect.

I have used a five point scale to evaluate how well I think SharePoint 2010 meets my "Eight Things" criteria for inclusion into the ECM club. Remember that these are based on only my first look at the tool and are subject to revision as I learn more about how the new features and functions actually work.

Initial Ranking Scale

1. Feature exists.
2. Feature exists with some minor shortcomings.

3. Feature exists but doesn't satisfy all use cases.
4. Feature may exist but satisfies only a narrow use case or feature does not exist but can be created through a customization.
5. Feature does not exist.

With all of that out of the way here are the eight reasons I think Microsoft has moved towards a more complete ECM solution.

1 -- Persistent links.

The single biggest shortcoming of SharePoint 2007 is the inability to link directly to a unique object ID. One of the greatest benefits of ECM systems is the ability to send content via a link rather than relying on email attachments. In traditional ECM applications this isn't a problem; each content object has its own unique ID that doesn't change regardless of where it lives in the repository. In SharePoint 2007, links break if you rename or move a file. The other benefit of persistent linking is that it enables the management of compound documents (a container that stores multiple documents like the chapters of a book) and the ability to link directly to an older version of a document.

SharePoint 2010 Update: Yes, they've finally done it; Document ID provides absolute reference to objects regardless of file renames or content moves. Doc IDs have

a default format that's alphanumeric (e.g. FCHGRTB1209309 or something like that) but this can be configured to use whatever format you want. There is a possible "gotcha" here in that this can be turned on or off on a site collection level (I don't know if it is defaulted on or off) and this could cause issues if it is inconsistently applied. You also need to think through what your numbering protocol will be and take steps to ensure you don't create duplicate document IDs. One open question is whether each version of a document has its own unique ID, allowing links to specific versions.

Initial Rating: 4

2 -- Store once, use many.

SharePoint 2007 had a nasty habit of copying content throughout the system rather than using pointers to a single source of the truth (because content links might break as noted above). Perhaps the best example of the misguided use of "copy" capabilities in SharePoint is the "Send to...Records Center" feature where a copy of a document is sent to the Records Center while leaving the original in place rather than either moving the document and leaving a pointer or changing the state of the document to indicate its changed status (see point 3 for more on the RM capabilities of SharePoint).

SharePoint 2010 Update: This concept seems to have made its way into SharePoint 2010, although it doesn't

seem that Microsoft has fully embraced this concept. The new records management capabilities of SharePoint allow records to be managed in place (locking declared records so they cannot be changed), copying records to a records center or moving the file but leaving a link behind (for more on records management see the next point). However, the ability to create a "document set," where selected content is added into a new object type that is managed separately still relies on copies of content moving into the new object rather than links. There are likely some legitimate use cases for this feature; gathering documents for disposition or a legal hold, but I get nervous any time a system wants to copy content rather than link it to a source document.

Initial Rating: 4

3 -- Honest-to-goodness Records Management.

I recognize that that SharePoint 2007 is DoD 5015.2 certified but the statement from the product development team that the DoD 5015.2 components are "not intended for customers...who would like to enhance the records management functionality of MOSS 2007 with particular 5015.2 oriented features but are not required to run their system in a certified configuration" doesn't exactly inspire confidence. Add to this the fact that SharePoint doesn't allow users to efficiently manage physical objects out of the box and it is clear that Microsoft needs to decide if they are really serious about the records management space or if

they will leave it to partners.

SharePoint 2010 Update: As I hinted above, Microsoft appears to have made some significant strides towards the including true records management capabilities in SharePoint 2010. It leverages the persistent linking capabilities to enable in-place management of records and takes advantage of the contextual ribbon user interface inherited from the Office 2007/2010 suite to allow authorized users to declare records. Perhaps most importantly, SharePoint 2010 allows for the creation of hierarchical file plans. The system leverages the greatly-improved connection to the underlying SQL Server 2008 database to allow for the creation of lists that run to the millions of items; handy (necessary) if you want to manage physical objects on any sort of scale.

SharePoint 2010 records management likely isn't going to replace traditional ECM applications when it comes to meeting stringent compliance requirements and I suspect this is where these vendors will focus their "embrace and extend" strategies when it comes to SharePoint. Although Microsoft says industry standards like DoD 5015 and MoReq were considered when the RM capabilities were designed, I doubt very much that organizations with strong requirements in this area will find that SharePoint 2010 meets their needs and I also suspect that this current incarnation of records management in SharePoint 2010 is about as far as Microsoft will take this capability.

Initial Rating: 3

4 -- Better metadata management.

Metadata in SharePoint 2007 took a quantum leap forward with the introduction of Content Types. However, managing metadata in SharePoint 2007 can be difficult especially when dealing with multiple site collections.

SharePoint 2010 Update: One of the most impressive features of the new SharePoint is the introduction of Managed Metadata Services, which allows administrators to centrally manage metadata and share it anywhere in the SharePoint farm (across many site collections). Microsoft has done a nice job of including "folksonomy" tagging capabilities alongside traditional managed metadata lists. This means that users can add their own tags or keywords to documents (pre-filled with suggested key words both from the official metadata library and based on what other users have done like a YouTube or Google search). While this is configurable on an attribute-by-attribute basis, when enabled it looks to be a very useful way of refining the metadata model over time based on user input because administrators have the ability to add popular user-created tags into the formal managed taxonomy.

Initial Rating: 5

5 -- Reusable search templates and stored search results.

There is no question that search is a focus for Microsoft based on their acquisition of FAST and their push into public internet search with the recent launch of [Bing](#). Search in SharePoint 2007 is reasonably good but the tool does not have the ability to either store a "snapshot" of search results for future reference nor does SharePoint 2007 allow users to create reusable search templates. This feature would save users time by allowing them to create a search query then either re-execute that query in the future or add new criteria without having to rebuild the entire search.

SharePoint 2010 Update: One thing I can say for sure; FAST takes SharePoint search to another level. FAST brings some of the best of internet search to the enterprise. Allowing users to filter searches based on slider bars common to e-commerce websites and metadata search appears to be both faster and more comprehensive given the closer connection to the SQL Server database. Although I don't know the licensing model for SharePoint 2010, I strongly suspect that FAST is licensed separately and is likely a relatively expensive add-on. In terms of whether this gets SharePoint 2010 where it needs to be in relation to some of the search capabilities of other ECM tools is unclear at this point, but Microsoft has clearly advanced in this area.

Initial Rating: 4

6 -- More granular security.

This is one area where SharePoint was already reasonably strong but truly deep ECM systems include advanced security features like the ability to deny permission to certain objects on an as-needed basis. The current process for managing security is a bit cumbersome but I expect this is something Microsoft is working on. It will be interesting to see if what changes, if any, make it into the final release of the product.

SharePoint 2010 Update: The security model in SharePoint 2010 appears to be fundamentally the same as in SharePoint 2007. Additional security parameters can be set using the latest [SharePoint Admin Toolkit](#) and this is an area where SharePoint didn't need a huge amount of improvement anyway. As my colleague John Meilleur pointed out, you have to be careful what you wish for when applying security; too much granularity or breaking the inheritance model can lead to administrative headaches.

Initial Rating: 4

7 -- Surface the audit trail.

One of the things I like the best about established ECM applications is the ability to see who has opened my documents. I find this particularly handy on status report day when I inevitably discover that I've made a mistake in

the document I've just sent out (as an unbreakable persistent link of course). I can check the audit trail to see if anyone has opened the document and if not, make my changes without anyone knowing I'd messed up in the first place. While SharePoint tracks most major audit events, the list of events is not as extensive as in a traditional ECM application nor is this information surfaced through the function menu of the content object.

SharePoint 2010 Update: This is one area where Microsoft appears to have not caught up with traditional ECM vendors. In all of the sessions I attended and in all of the demonstrations I have seen to date SharePoint 2010 doesn't seem to have surfaced the audit trail in the function menu. In SharePoint 2007 some events are logged but not all; files opened in the browser don't necessarily trigger a "view" event where MS Office files do when opened using "Edit In Microsoft Office xxxx". It isn't immediately clear whether this issue has been addressed in SharePoint 2010 but I hope a closer inspection of our brand new Beta install will answer this question. Audit information can be added to the function menu of a document by applying some relatively simple custom code or you can buy a third-party application but again, any customizations or vendor modules need to be managed and these costs add up.

Initial Rating: 2

8 -- More and more mature line-of-business integrations.

This should be a strength of SharePoint given the sizeable .NET developer community as well as the extensive Microsoft partner ecosystem, but SharePoint still has a lot of catching up to do in this area. Organizations deploying SharePoint won't be able to hold a single vendor to account for a series of modules (or Content Enabled Vertical Applications, as Gartner likes to call them). This may or may not be a bad thing depending on your perspective but established ECM vendors have offerings that satisfy a variety of industry verticals and business functions. To achieve the same thing with SharePoint customers will need to research, purchase and deploy modules from a variety of Microsoft partners. CMS Watch offers a good summary of the issues associated with third party add-ons for SharePoint.

SharePoint 2010 Update: This is still an issue with SharePoint 2010 and will continue to be given the way that Microsoft relies on its partners to extend its products. There were over 200 partner exhibits at the 2009 SharePoint conference and countless hundreds more beyond this so it is likely that most content management scenarios can be met through the purchase of a vendor add-on but as before this adds to the complexity of a SharePoint deployment and increases the total cost of ownership of SharePoint, likely to a point not that different from the prices charged by traditional ECM vendors.

Initial Rating: 2

To sum up, it is clear that SharePoint will continue to have a significant impact on the ECM landscape. The question is whether the functional improvements evident in SharePoint 2010 mean that organizations with significant commitments to other ECM platforms have to start all over again with SharePoint? In the short term, I think the answer is no. In many cases, the true benefit from the investments made in traditional ECM can be realized by surfacing some of this content through SharePoint interfaces; done well this can significantly enhance the user experience while still ensuring that the strong compliance engine in your existing ECM system keeps your content safe and your CEO out of jail.

I suspect that any changes in the ECM world will be

evolutionary rather than revolutionary. SharePoint is a disruptive technology to be sure, but given its breadth, relative lack of maturity and a widely varied partner community Microsoft will help the overall ECM market grow and likely take established ECM vendors with it. As they (used to) say on Wall Street, a rising tide floats all boats.

This is not to say that things will be easy for the makers of FileNet, Documentum, Livelink and others; they have a significant challenge ahead in trying to position their products not relative to one another, but relative to SharePoint (whether they like it or not). The vendors that do this well will continue to thrive and any that choose to ignore SharePoint or do not recognize the significance of the changes in SharePoint 2010 could be in trouble.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Another 8 Reasons SharePoint 2010 Looks Like a True ECM System



Boyd Collins is a senior consultant with the Enterprise Content Management practice for SAIC. He has over 15 years of Web development experience for a wide variety of corporations, including major oil and gas companies, Continental Airlines, and Reliant Energy, and many others.

Currently, he is implementing a company-wide content management system for a major pipeline company. His current area of practice is content management systems using a variety of platforms, Web site usability and information architecture. He obtained a master's degree in library and information science from the University of Texas at Austin.

Before SharePoint 2010, Microsoft provided an attractive entrance to its Enterprise Content Management (ECM) edifice, but much of the foundation was missing. During its organic growth over the past eight years, it remained unclear if the SharePoint product architects had really thought through the underpinnings necessary to support a true ECM platform. To many SharePoint pros, it appeared that Microsoft was simply adding new features to the product without tying them together into a unified ECM

infrastructure.

With SharePoint 2010, that infrastructure has risen to the surface. In Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS) 2007, the fundamental unit of content management was the site collection. But even average implementations could have hundreds of site collections. Content types offered an apparatus that might lead to effective metadata management, but the inability to cross site collection boundaries meant that we were still stuck on islands of metadata lost in the oceans of content. Fundamental questions concerning metadata consistency seemed not merely unanswered, but unasked.

With SharePoint 2010, Microsoft appears to be asking the right questions and providing answers that often exceed expectations.

1 -- Managed metadata.

Companies often require the use of approved terms from a centrally controlled taxonomy. The SharePoint 2010 response is managed metadata, which is the ability to create, manage, and publish term sets across the enterprise from a single point of reference. Term sets are hierarchical trees, internally connected structures that display parent-child relationships. Term sets and content type galleries are

available to any site collection that can securely access the url for the managed metadata service. With the new service structure, we have finally connected the metadata islands into a coordinated lattice of consistent terminology.

2 -- Document sets.

Individual documents often belong to a larger construct that is what the organization really needs to manage. Consider the typical proposal. A proposal is actually an ecology of documentation, containing PowerPoint presentations, Microsoft Word documents, qualifications, case studies and so on. What matters at the end of the process is the complete portfolio of documents. The Document Set allows multiple items to be treated as one in terms of workflow, compliance, and versioning. Versioning is applied to the Document Set as a whole, allowing us to capture snapshots of the version of each document at a point in time in case we need to roll back. Workflows can operate against the entire Document Set to automate the process of integrating component documents into a master deliverable. Each document can be routed to different approvers. As each part passes through the review process, the master deliverable can be assembled from subsidiary workflows spawned during the approvals.

3 -- Document IDs.

When a major piece of ECM infrastructure turns up missing, many of the guests in the SharePoint house start

staring anxiously at the ceiling, wondering what else might have been forgotten. In MOSS 2007, moving or renaming documents changed their urls because documents were unbreakably tied to the library they inhabited. With SharePoint 2010, documents are free to roam across site collections, secure in their identity, which is now stamped with a unique ID. This is an enabling technology behind Document Sets, since all the component parts must have persistent links. Rather than scattering copies of business records across the site, record content can now represent a single source of truth.

4 -- Content organizer.

In MOSS 2007, content organization was largely a matter of individual upload decisions. Administrators could help guide those decisions, but ultimately, it was up to the contributors to decide where the content ended up. The new Content Organizer allows routing decisions to be centrally organized. It takes these decisions out of the hands of users and ensures that items are well organized. Users are guided to enter appropriate metadata rather than being allowed to dump documents wherever they like.

5 -- Location-based metadata defaults.

In MOSS 2007, folders had no function other than to act as dumb containers. "Dumb" here means that they couldn't pass values to their contents or add any help to browsing and searching other than their names. Folders are now first-

class objects. Documents and subfolders can inherit metadata from their parent folder. How much easier it is to find documents when metadata is automatically added, instead of forcing users to add the same value over and over to the hundred documents they just uploaded.

6 -- In-place records management.

MOSS 2007 records management was more a rough draft than a real product. The most noticeable oversight was the lack of support for a usable file plan. Records could not inherit metadata or information policies. You could not route documents to a specific folder in a records library, but only to the records library itself. With SharePoint 2010, folder-based inheritance enables hierarchical file plans to be created in the Records Center (or anywhere else for that matter). We can now create policies that propagate across the inheritance hierarchy for a set of nested folders. In addition, record management can now take place anywhere that the feature is activated and compliance details for any item are only a click away.

7 -- Search.

The new search system keeps track of how often search results are clicked on and feeds these metrics into relevance ranking. The more popular the link, the higher it rises in the results list. The new Refinement Panel sorts results into facets such as Author, File-type or Location. Even better, it also organizes the results by metadata attribute such as

Proposal, RFP, or Update Notification. It may not be the holy grail of automatic classification, but it makes the benefits of tagging immediately obvious to the user.

8 -- Auditing.

In SharePoint 2010, full-featured auditing is as close as the Compliance Details screen, a new menu item added to every document. It brings many useful details to the surface, such as who opened, edited, checked out, moved, deleted or even searched for the document in question.

Though this is only a sampling of the new ECM features, it is enough to respond to the frequently-identified gaps of SharePoint as an ECM platform. Whether SharePoint 2010 will start to eat into the market share of the ECM goliaths is another question. My sense as a long-time SharePoint implementor is that many large organizations are now evaluating SharePoint 2010 as a possible replacement for more high-end platforms, but the decision hangs in the balance at the moment. In the small and mid-size market, despite many worthy competitors, SharePoint has been the default choice of many because its Microsoft Office integration capabilities give Microsoft an obvious advantage. While Microsoft's ship may not sail to the front of this flotilla, it may soon be accepted, grudgingly perhaps, among the major ECM carriers.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 More Things You Need to Know About SharePoint



Mike Alsup is Founder and Sr. Vice President of Gimmel Group, an ECM and RM systems integrator. After positions with Accenture and Booz Allen, he was a founder of BSG, Align Solutions, and Gimmel, three ECM and RM integrators. Mike was an Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year in 2008. He has spoken numerous times at the AIIM Conference and is

presenting on SharePoint and RM at the SharePoint Conference in Las Vegas. He can be reached via e-mail at malsup@gimmel.com and can also be found on LinkedIn.

1 -- Most users like SharePoint in spite of some weaknesses.

You already knew this, but strong user preferences for SharePoint sites translate into value in many ways. SharePoint is intuitive, especially after you learn your first SharePoint application. SharePoint provides much more familiarity and consistency through its user interface than competing applications. SharePoint makes it easy to build and administer sites for many types of user groups. Most

SharePoint users implement SharePoint in ungoverned sites that give them flexibility and ease of use that are unlike many of their prior deployments of document management or collaborative tools. This favorable response and acceptance is a strength that you can leverage in your SharePoint deployments.

2 -- SharePoint can do everything -- given enough time and resources.

Like most myths, this one contains a kernel of truth. SharePoint is a software development platform. Similar to many competing software development platforms, anything can be built in SharePoint. This does not mean that everything should be built in SharePoint. There are some things that SharePoint does really well, such as collaboration and knowledge management sites, and some things that require endless customization. Building a large corporate website with complex data integration requirements took our team much more work than we expected in SharePoint 2007. Make sure you are using SharePoint for the right tasks and applications.

3 -- Management expects SharePoint to win the standards battle.

This conclusion is a little less expected. It is surprising how many management teams, both on the business and IT sides of organizations, expect SharePoint to become the standard for enterprise content and document and records management. Because of the incumbent SharePoint siblings (Microsoft Office, Exchange and Windows) management teams give SharePoint much more of the benefit of the doubt than they gave the competing ECM or EDM or WCM or BPM or RM products that provided similar functionality. You know a product is important when it is expected to triumph in areas where its current capabilities are not yet as competitive as they should be. Make sure you understand your management team's biases and perspectives on SharePoint.

What can you do to make SharePoint more of a success in your organization? Here are several recommendations:

4 -- Take advantage of the job Microsoft has done in positioning SharePoint to replace shared drives.

Replacing shared drives with SharePoint is an obvious killer application. SharePoint provides features, including robust search, filters and views and a browser interface used to locate and manage content, that are much better than navigating through badly governed share drives with

Microsoft Office or Windows Explorer. A well-planned migration from share drives to SharePoint sites delivers value almost immediately. Because of the large volumes of content to be reviewed and ingested, there is more work to establishing these SharePoint sites than many users expect. Investments in indexing, categorization, tagging and auto-classification tools to improve the accuracy of content metadata will save you time and money. It is also critical to decide how the sites should be standardized across the organization, so that the needs of both individuals and departments are satisfied, while the enterprise compliance and records management needs are fulfilled.

5 -- Establish an information lifecycle: one key to effective governance in SharePoint implementation.

A standard lifecycle establishes states for all content types from their creation or receipt through their ultimate destruction. Information lifecycle standards ensure that content is managed consistently in SharePoint sites across the organization. The reason that a standard information lifecycle is so important is that it enables the management of SharePoint content using classification, file plan, and retention rules. This allows for much better enforcement of standards and governance across SharePoint sites and site collections.

6 -- Establish SharePoint site auto-provisioning: another key to the consistent implementation of SharePoint sites and site collections in large organizations.

If you are going to have thousands of sites, it is important that they be created with the SharePoint standards embedded within them, including navigation, search, content types, information policies, lifecycle management, retention management, governance, and many more. Provisioning tools that rapidly create sites with standard components embedded make the management of an enterprise full of SharePoint sites so much easier.

7 -- Understand that SharePoint has the potential to be one of the biggest and most difficult challenges in the history of IT.

One way to think of SharePoint is as a logical successor to the functions to which Lotus Notes aspired 15 years ago. Anyone can use the free SharePoint components to build a site and begin to collaborate or share information. Unfortunately, it is going to be difficult to find, share, and manage information across thousands of SharePoint sites that were built inconsistently with non-existent or incompatible content types and information policies. The

logical result is that information governance will be more difficult instead of easier. On a really big scale. It is critically important to plan thoroughly to take full advantage of all that SharePoint 2007 and 2010 have to offer.

8 -- Plan now for the migration of current sites to SharePoint 2010.

Early planning is the key to taking advantage of all the new things that SharePoint 2010 has to offer. In many ways, the "euphoria" phase is over with SharePoint 2007, and we are in the "rehabilitation" phase, where people are taking a harder look at getting this tool under control. We believe that planning and implementing SharePoint 2010 is going to be a big event in many organizations. An understanding of the architecture, capabilities and limitations of SharePoint 2010 will help you guide the implementation of SharePoint 2007 applications and infrastructure. The best way to ensure the long-term sustainability of your SharePoint sites is to make sure that they are consistently implemented from the first one. It is too late for most organizations to do this from the first site for SharePoint 2007, but 2010 is a new ball game!

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Things to Consider when Implementing SharePoint with Another ECM Engine



Michael Elkins (melkins@kestralgroupp.com) is an independent consultant with over 17 years of experience helping global clients with the design and deployment of enterprise wide content management systems. His clients benefit from his ECM experience including strategic guidance, information architecture and ECM/data governance

programs. His company, Kestral Group LLC, is based in Denver, Colorado.

With any ECM deployment, it is important to have a solid implementation plan to be successful. When combining multiple content solutions, it is critical. Unfortunately, many SharePoint implementations are more organic than well thought out. SharePoint sites are often created with little thought with respect to long term use. As a result, when it comes to linking into another ECM solution, users are hit with unexpected changes and restrictions to sites they have become accustomed to. Understanding the functionality people use, or expect to use, from each system is vital to the successful blending of the capabilities. This

list of things to consider is not an exhaustive list, but is intended to help get the planning process started.

1 -- Determine SharePoint's role in the organization.

For some companies, SharePoint is the chosen collaboration and social networking engine and all collaborative content resides in SharePoint. For others, SharePoint is more of an end-user experience and Intranet platform. If implementing SharePoint with another ECM solution, it is important to truly identify what role SharePoint will have in the organization to ensure proper planning for the implementation. There are a number of features within SharePoint that need to be taken into consideration before you implement.

For example:

- What aspects of the Microsoft Office integration are or will be deployed?
- What areas of overlap exist between SharePoint and the ECM solution?
- Will SharePoint be the primary access point for all content or one of multiple access points?
- What vendor integration capabilities are provided?

- How does SharePoint fit into the corporate records management program?

The more that can be identified before the deployment, the lower the implementation costs will be. The project charter should clearly identify the reasoning behind the decision to combine the technologies.

2 -- Identify the repositories.

Most SharePoint installations begin with the assumption that people will collaborate and store content within a SharePoint document library, at least for a period of time. When collaboration efforts such as projects are finished or when the documents become records, companies often require users to move the content to an existing ECM repository. It is important to identify what content will migrate from SharePoint document libraries to an ECM repository.

If content will migrate, there's much to consider including:

- What metadata will migrate with the content?
- Is the metadata defined consistently across systems?
- Does the content need to be available from both SharePoint and the ECM system?
- Should all information in the ECM repository to be available from SharePoint or just the content that has been migrated to the ECM from SharePoint? (Note:

- This may impact your backfile conversion strategy.)
- Do SharePoint Lists need to be saved as content/records in the ECM engine?

It should be noted that there are some users who choose not to implement SharePoint document libraries at all. Instead, these companies have decided that the ECM vendor's Web parts provide all of the document and records management capabilities. This approach can reduce the complexity for the end users, while still maintaining many of the social networking capabilities of SharePoint.

3 -- Know where your records reside.

For many companies, the reason for implementing SharePoint with another ECM solution is related to records management initiatives. This is often due to previous investments in records management with existing ECM solutions. Unfortunately, the records program is often an afterthought to the deployment of SharePoint sites.

For some companies, there is a clear distinction between records and non-records. For others, all content is considered a record and must be managed. Regardless of the school of thought, the implications on the implementation are great. It is important to identify if records will be stored in SharePoint or not. If records will reside in SharePoint, consider the following:

- The records management policies must be applied to content within SharePoint and managed directly by SharePoint
OR
- The ECM vendor's records management solution must be able to manage-in-place all content within the SharePoint repository

If records will not reside in SharePoint, great care must be taken to ensure that the process of declaring a document as a record and moving it to the ECM system is not so cumbersome that it discourages users from doing so, opening the company to increased risk.

4 -- Have a comprehensive information architecture.

In most cases, content will reside in both SharePoint and a separate ECM engine. As a result, all efforts should be made to ensure that metadata and vocabularies are consistent across platforms in order to facilitate functions such as content migration, tagging and search. Many SharePoint systems are implemented with little or no metadata beyond the default system fields. Most ECM systems are implemented with more robust metadata definitions.

Without proper planning, content in SharePoint that is moved to the ECM solution could require additional tagging which could discourage users from migrating

content, defeating the purpose of blending the systems. A comprehensive information architecture will drive data quality, improve the end-user experience and save money in ongoing implementation and support costs.

5 -- Study the vendor's SharePoint interface capabilities.

Nearly every vendor has some level of SharePoint integration built into their solution, but not all solutions are equal. It is very important to identify exactly what capabilities are available from the vendor before beginning the implementation. In most cases, vendors have developed Web parts that allow for search, browse and the ability to move content from SharePoint to the ECM engine.

The following is a list of elements to consider when evaluating vendor solutions:

- How much of the needed ECM functionality is available through the Web part?
- How many Web parts are needed to meet requirements?
- Most solutions handle documents. Does the solution also handle SharePoint lists?
- With all of the merger and acquisitions in the ECM industry, it's also important to determine if the supplied Web parts are available across the product portfolio.

6 -- Plan for effective search.

When a user performs a Web search and obtains a result, they don't care where the resulting content resides as long as they find what they need. Companies need to consider search as a key element in the implementation plan, and the user's requirements play the key role. Search plays a key role in end-user satisfaction. Consider the following:

- What enterprise search standards, if any, exist?
- What search capabilities are provided by the ECM vendor versus SharePoint?
- Is full-text search available and consistent in each platform?
- Do the users desire to have a separate search result from SharePoint and the ECM repository or a blended result?
- What advanced search capabilities are required from each repository?

7 -- Align security requirements.

There are features within SharePoint and features within

the ECM system that are unique to the system, and as such, will have security implications. A user that may have site administration capabilities in SharePoint may have "read only" rights in the ECM system. Most vendors have single sign-on (SSO) capabilities, but care must be taken to ensure that the capabilities a user has on each system are well thought out and understood.

8 -- Incorporate both SharePoint and the ECM into a unified IT governance plan.

There is a lot of focus on IT governance related to SharePoint, and with good reason. Without proper oversight, SharePoint can get out of hand very quickly. When SharePoint is blended with an ECM system, uncontrolled change can have a very negative impact. Because most ECM vendors do not provide templates for the oversight of their systems. Take a look at the free examples at <http://www.sharepointgovernance.org> and adapt them to meet the needs of both systems. Lastly, make sure to incorporate the business community into the governance process. Oversight without buy-in from the business creates stress.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Ways to Use SharePoint for Social Computing



An integral part of Risetime's Managing Consultant Team, Joe Cromer enjoys the challenge of staying up on the latest Microsoft technologies. Joe and his team have completed a wide variety of Microsoft SharePoint consulting projects. A few notable clients include, as Dollar General, Ariel Investments, Suzlon Wind Energy, Global Lead, McHenry County, and Lake County.

Since 1984, Risetime has been serving the needs of organizations looking for a strong partner to provide business and technology solutions and services. Headquartered in Chicago and a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Risetime focuses on a wide range of IT consulting services as well as business process management, content management, and web solutions.

You probably are aware that SharePoint is a great fit for most organizations document management and collaboration needs. What about social computing? SharePoint gives you a good starting point. What do you do when SharePoint falls short?

Here are 8 ways companies can extend SharePoint's out-of-the-box capabilities to better fit their social computing vision.

1 -- SharePoint My Sites.

SharePoint's My Sites functionality encourages interaction among employees and offers a very basic, but corporate equivalent to a Facebook profile. My Sites let employees learn about each other's interests and expertise. However, My Site can also be pretty underwhelming and stale for the avid Facebook user.

To make it a viable social computing tool, organizations should consider extending them past their out-of-the-box limitations. Consider installing third party products like nGage by OI Software. nGage gives My Sites a real WOW factor such as a visual "reputation," scoring user contribution using criteria such as their openness, creativity and contribution level.

2 -- SharePoint Team Sites.

Team Sites provide a centralized collaboration tool to manage teams and projects and include tools such as document libraries, lists, group calendars, tasks, contacts, and announcements. It is possible to extend this functionality with products like Kiiro collaboration

software. This extends the basic SharePoint team site to allow Twitter-like status notes by team members giving instant updates as well as an impressive "Who's on What" type of dashboard.

3 -- SharePoint blogs.

Blogs can be a top source for up to date expertise from subject matter experts. User generated content often provides in-depth knowledge garnered from individual interests and subject matter experts. Harnessing this knowledge within the organization can provide a wealth from untapped resources. Within SharePoint, every My Site includes a blog. Individual blogs, as well as blogs associated with Team Sites can be archived and indexed for searching, becoming a resource for collective organizational knowledge.

As internal blogs become more successful you'll quickly outgrow SharePoint's standard functionality. With a little technical help during implementation, leverage Community Kit 2.0 available for free on CodePlex. Extend SharePoint's basic blog with Tag Clouds, friendly URLs, multiple categories for postings, and even comment spam detection if you want to implement this on your public facing website.

4 -- SharePoint People Search.

Another key desire for many organizations is to easily locate users within the organization by searching their profiles for specific keywords. NewsGator can extend search past the keywords and find experts your coworkers have scored as the most knowledgeable. Extend SharePoint's people search to display these traits in the results, enhancing SharePoint with a very efficient way to track down the top experts for any challenge.

5 -- SharePoint wikis.

Wikis created within SharePoint are an excellent alternative to share knowledge, allowing others to edit and contribute through a simple interface. SharePoint wikis incorporate all of the features of SharePoint to secure and control the content: permissions, version history, document check-out and in, and approval workflows. Again, we recommend the Community Kit for SharePoint. Add custom page templates, tools for importing content from other wikis, and a web part that shows pages ranked by hits/popularity. It's easy and free.

6 -- SharePoint community sites.

SharePoint gives you the ability to create community sites and invite or give access to users. SharePoint security groups control access to the content in the community. Blogs, discussion groups, and Wikis can easily be added and

monitored using basic SharePoint functionality. NewsGator offers a powerful tool to quickly create and facilitate community sites around new ideas and innovation inside a company's SharePoint Portal. Encourage quick and lightweight conversation with features like MicroBlogs. Automatically populate community sites with content related to their community site topics. NewsGator is also already boasting how they extend SharePoint 2010 features and seem well ahead of the pack on the R&D side with their product development team.

7 -- SharePoint announcements of new employees.

If a SharePoint Portal is in place, adding new employees and posting an announcement to your landing page is quick and easy. Asking everyone to fully complete their My Site profile on their first day also allows information to be instantly available to co-workers and more fully integrate them into the organization right away.

Add key data to new employee announcements using products like [AASoftech's OrgChart Webpart](#) . Integrating directly with SharePoint, this web part adds a great resource for an HR department to add further detail to a new

employee announcement. Instantly update your company's org chart and announce how they fit in by just adding the new employees to Active Directory.

8 -- SharePoint social computing outside your network.

SharePoint Groups are an efficient way to control user access to all your SharePoint content. As security models go, SharePoint is a pretty effective security structure for controlling how your Social Media features are viewed and used inside your network. But what if you want to involve your customers, partners or vendors?

Trying to design and maintain an efficient security strategy can be overwhelming when planning for a large quantity of external users and groups. If you're looking to extend your social computing strategy to include customers, partners and vendors, [Awareness Social Media Marketing Software](#) offers you tools for handling security as well as extending your strategy to include users outside your organization.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Reasons You Should Consider Automatic Classification and Automatic Metadata Tagging in SharePoint



Juan J. Celaya founded COMPU-DATA International, LLC in 1988 and has been successfully delivering "Content and Data Integration" solutions for ECM implementations through the use of capture, administration, collaboration, retrieval technologies and solutions. Juan has a

broad Information Technology background covering 30 years of experience with successful system implementations with Energy, Healthcare, Pharmaceutical and Transportation companies, the U.S. Department of Defense and the National Nuclear Security Administration. Juan can be reached via e-mail at jcelaya@cdlac.com and can also be found on LinkedIn & Twitter.

It should not be of great surprise to anyone that Microsoft's plan for SharePoint is to provide the foundation for access to all information in the enterprise. With SharePoint's tightly coupled integration with the Office product, SharePoint's popularity in collaboration and openness for developers and integrators, SharePoint is positioned to touch every single byte in your corporate network.

Therefore based on what SharePoint's future looks to be

the importance of being able to properly manage your data within SharePoint is very important. So, are you having problems in the areas below? If you are, then you seriously need to stop relying on your users to tag your content.

- Inability to find relevant and precise information using search
- Organization of content from diverse repositories in a single interface
- Enforcing corporate governance to apply metadata to all content that is created
- Continually struggle with managing an ineffective Records Management process
- Reducing the costs associated with eDiscovery and litigation preparedness
- Privacy data or confidential business information may be exposed on unsecure servers or repositories

Term definition – A digital asset in this document is defined as a document, electronic file, database record or any electronic information with textual content that is stored or accessible by a computer.

1 -- Corporate metadata.

Of course, this is the foundation to your implementation. You may already have it and don't know it -- your corporate taxonomies are your Corporate Metadata! Yes that's right. Use your company's hierarchical classification of its terms of interest to tag all the digital assets in your SharePoint system.

2 -- Forget about manually tagging.

First ask yourself how well has manual tagging worked and be objective in your answer.

- Have you been able to get two or more people to agree on the same metadata for the same digital asset?
- How much time are you willing to spend forcing people to enter metadata vs. doing their job?
- How can people in one department know if a specific digital asset is important for people in another department?
- Can you guaranty that all digital assets are being tagged according to corporate governance policies?
- Is a person really objective when deciding on what tags to use?
- How many tags do you require today and how many tomorrow?

- How many SharePoint templates are you willing to administer?

I can go on and on with questions but the best one is – As your business changes how are you going to retag your existing digital assets? The bottom line is that as much as we would like for the users to tag digital assets we can't ensure it is happening properly or happening at all.

3 -- Automatically tag your SharePoint library's content.

Let me agree with the fact that this method is not perfect but I believe it is much better than manual tagging. An automatic process will get you a long way to your goal and with the proper implementation and the use of your corporate taxonomies you can tag, in an objective manner, your digital assets using their content as the basis for applying the rules.

4 -- Let your automatically generated metadata drive your SharePoint content type.

Would you like to automatically update SharePoint Content Types based on the presence of corporate defined metadata that has been automatically tagged to digital assets contained in SharePoint? This functionality exists and enables organizations to effectively process all digital assets in accordance with information management, records

management and data privacy and security standards.

For instance, use this technique to identify digital assets with Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Protected Health Information (PHI) that have not been assigned the correct content type. When information such as a social security number is identified within the content of a digital asset the Content Type is automatically changed. You can then take the next step and lock the item down in the MOSS Records Center and make it available to selected users using Windows Rights Management for further disposition and analysis.

5 -- Create data transparency and share the knowledge.

By having digital assets tagged with different corporate metadata and with the appropriate security, digital assets can be delivered to the desktop through RSS feeds or accessible through the user's knowledge of the terms used on a daily basis.

Remember that:

1. Untagged, improperly tagged and not fully tagged digital assets equal "Untapped Resources."
2. The time gap between information requests and discovery is directly proportional to the volume of digital assets.

6 -- Drive records management.

Your Record Policy is implemented by tagging digital assets with Record Policy Codes – aka metadata! This means that Records Management can automatically apply corporate Record Retention Schedules to all digital assets in SharePoint and shush – don't tell anyone but it can also be done for those outside of SharePoint.

7 -- Improve search precision.

How so? You ask. The obvious answer is that you are adding metadata that is commonly used within your organization to every asset and this metadata is indexed. Therefore when searches are done people use the common terms of the organization and more precise hits are returned.

8 -- What if I am wrong?

I had a conversation a while back with the head of a records management organization responsible for records across the world. His problem is that despite of the very strict policy that every digital asset must be tagged, users are not tagging them or worse they are tagging them with the first thing that comes up on the screen regardless of its relevance to the digital asset. In reviewing the automatic metadata tagging concept he stated that if he could get a

50% tagging ratio based on the established rules he will be 50% closer than right now.

I told him that consistency was the biggest advantage of this method. Once the rules are defined that drive the

tagging process the rules are enforced equally across the organization and if the rules are wrong they are changed and again equally applied across the organization.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Things to do to Make Content More Findable in SharePoint



Bill Bither is the Founder & CEO of Atalasoftware. Atalasoftware publishes DotImage, a .NET Imaging SDK and Vizit, a Document Viewer for SharePoint. He can be reached via email at bill@atalasoftware.com, on Twitter (@billbither) or via his [blog](#).

SharePoint supports document searching out-of-the box, but with some simple customizations, you can greatly improve the findability of documents.

1 -- Use SharePoint content types.

Content types allow you to segregate your documents and provide document specific meta-data. For example, you can give invoices and purchase orders their own content types and later search on just invoices.

2 -- OCR images and convert them to searchable PDF.

If you are scanning documents into SharePoint, don't just store the images. Use scanning software that can

automatically create a searchable PDF so that all of the text content of the image can be indexed. Then install a free or commercial PDF iFilter as MOSS 2007 does not support indexing PDF documents out of the box.

3 -- Index your documents.

Create a taxonomy for each content type and index documents as they are being scanned or saved to SharePoint. Third party software can be used to help index and classify documents as they are being scanned or after they are stored in SharePoint.

4 -- Display a thumbnail preview in search results.

When viewing search results, it's important to quickly identify the document you are looking for. Configure search results to show appropriate metadata, and add a thumbnail by using a 3rd party add-on or upgrading to Fast Enterprise Search.

5 -- Search on specific columns.

Sometimes keyword searches are too broad. For example if you know you are looking for an invoice for a specific customer, you'll want to direct your search to specific

content type columns, not all of the indexed text. Use a 3rd party add-on that supports column-based search.

6 -- Sort and filter the results.

If you've gotten too many results, you can still find what you need if you can further filter the results or sort them. SharePoint can filter search results out of the box, but you can add result sorting through customizations with SharePoint Designer or third-party add-ons.

7 -- Use the correct icon for the file type.

In your search results, it's nice to quickly see what type of

documents you have. However, SharePoint only has icons for Office formats. [Microsoft KB Article 832809](#) describes how to customize SharePoint to show the correct icons for all the types you care about.

8 -- Use faceted search.

Faceted search looks at your results and finds categories based on the content types and meta-data. Then, you can filter the results by these automatically determined facets. SharePoint 2010 will include this out of the box, but you can have it now through a free add-on available on [CodePlex](#).

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Ways SharePoint Helps in Enterprise Governance, Risk and Compliance



Thomas Bahr and Michael Neumann work on projects for Enterprise Content Management within the Information Management Competence Group of BearingPoint. They have more than 10 years experience in ECM software. BearingPoint is an independent management and technology

consultancy. Owned and operated by its Partners throughout Europe, BearingPoint is offering its clients the best possible value in terms of tangible, measurable results by leveraging business and technology



expertise. The company currently employs 3.250 people in 14 European countries and is serving commercial, financial and public services clients.

BearingPoint's Enterprise Governance, Risk and Compliance (EGRC) solution is designed to help organizations better identify, understand and manage the dynamic

interrelationships between risk and compliance and incorporate those disciplines into daily business activities.

1 -- Learn how to manage risks and compliance.

Managing business risk and achieving regulatory compliance are among the greatest challenges that enterprises face. There is increasing pressure to comply with evolving legislation, mandates, standards and regulations designed to protect against an array of risks that span different industries, disciplines, governments and geographies.

Yet in many organizations, compliance and risk management have been treated as silos of responsibility, supported by reactive point solutions that can introduce new cost burdens and complexity. Constant fire drills, regulatory pressure, organizational anxiety and even outright confusion are not uncommon. Despite large investments in this area executives believe their organizations have inadequately addressed the processes and systems dealing with risk, compliance and security.

Top challenges in risk management are:

- Prioritizing risks.
- Defining control objectives and control activities.
- Measuring potential risks and control efficiency.

- Constantly being in reactive mode when dealing with risk.

2 -- Become "risk adept" rather than "risk-averse."

Take a results-oriented, execution-driven approach to become "risk-adept" rather than "risk-averse." A best-leading-industry approach has these elements:

- Use strategies and processes that drive value (access, execute, monitor, remediate and report).
- Establish effective processes integrated with automated workflows to make sure nothing important is skipped.
- Maintain a library of tested risk indicators and control activities.
- Remain current with new and emerging risk factors and compliance issues.
- Leverage insights about leading practices from many industries.

The approach should be designed to help your organization better identify, understand and manage the dynamic interrelationships between risk and compliance and incorporate those disciplines into daily business activities. Build up a global, unified risk and compliance framework that can be vertically tailored to your specific needs, allowing your organization to assert more control over

complex and ever-changing risk and compliance dynamics. With this approach, you can achieve greater levels of compliance and better manage risk at less cost with degrees of efficiency and precision not possible with a traditional siloed approach.

3 -- EGRC comprises strategy, business process and technology.

An enterprise wide governance, risk and compliance implementation (EGRC) comprises strategy, business process and technology to give your organization an enterprise-scale platform configurable to address a host of regulatory requirements, industry standards and controls and internal policies. It should help managers and auditors assess the potential effect of threats and vulnerabilities on compliance—including the risk of noncompliance itself—by covering:

- Regulatory compliance: providing a comprehensive framework for managing Sarbanes-Oxley, Japanese Sarbanes-Oxley, Basel II, Markets in Financial Instruments Directive, OMB Circular A-123 and other compliance initiatives.
- Internal policies and procedures: configuring the solution to your organization's specific needs.
- Enterprise risk management: assessing and managing business risks using key risk indicators that measure risk likelihood and effect, then translates

those effects into control objectives and monitors effectiveness through compliance.

For companies based in the United States, the EGRC solution should align with the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board's Auditing Standard No. 5, which encourages a risk-based approach to compliance under Sarbanes-Oxley Section 404. It gives public companies greater flexibility to focus compliance initiatives on areas that present the greatest degree of risk, such as financial-closing processes or fraud-management controls, rather than on myriad Sarbanes-Oxley-based controls without regard to the importance to their business.

4 -- EGRC is aware of end users needs.

Based on our experience the primary end user wants to...

- Store, access, search, track and manage risk and compliance data, e.g. by a survey functionality that helps users in making a realistic assessment of their current state and also chart out the course of action for their risk or compliance program.
- Automate workflow processes and information routing.
- Prioritize, assess and manage remediation of control deficiencies e.g. by entering Risk, KRI and Compliance data into libraries or link attributes through a hierarchy.

- Collaborate atop a familiar standards-based platform.
- Monitor risk and compliance with metrics, alerts and analytics e.g. by reviewing status of risk and compliance metrics.

5 -- SharePoint offers features and capabilities for EGRC.

Why? Here are some reasons:

- Rapidly acceptable. The familiar Microsoft "look and feel" increases the speed of adoption and reduces users' resistance to change, while implementing standard libraries for COSO, CoBIT, ISO and ITIL.
- Configurable versus customizable. Taking advantage of the extensive and flexible software functionality of Microsoft's applications enables business requirements to be met through configuration instead of the development of custom code. Best examples: are versioning, audit logging, multistage workflow, survey, search, reporting and dashboard functions.
- Practical and cost-efficient. Most organizations have already standardized on Microsoft and have most of the necessary applications to run the solution, thereby reducing acquisition costs and freeing up resources for more value-added activities.

6 -- Tips for implementing an EGRC platform.

In order to adequately address ongoing business risk and compliance, organizations need a transparent view of their enterprise. A leading-edge approach has these elements:

- Use strategies, processes and technologies to proactively manage risk and compliance enterprise wide.
- Use automated workflows to increase efficiency and reliability.
- Provide a comprehensive enterprise risk and compliance management framework.
- Build a library of identifiable risk indicators and control activities.
- Stay current with new and emerging risk factors and compliance issues.
- Leverage insights about leading practices from many industries.
- Create a "one size fits one" risk-based compliance solution that will drive business value and reduce costs and complexities.

7 -- Realize the benefits of integrated risk and compliance management.

By introducing an EGRC solution you will realize the following benefits:

- Reduce costs.
- Reduce audit fees, fines and penalties through integrated systems, controls, processes and audit trails.
- Save internal costs and gain efficiency by redeploying resources from manual and duplicative controls.
- Reduce complexity.
- Replace silos of risk and compliance activities with an overarching, integrated view.
- Reduce risk and compliance complexity by integrating and de-conflicting risk requirements.
- Increase Business Value.
- Align a comprehensive risk strategy with specific execution controls through transparent processes and technology.
- Make better, informed decisions with forward visibility into risk and compliance through data transparency and real-time reporting.
- Improve risk and compliance management with a solid governance structure.

8 -- What you need is a governance model.

We believe there are 4 key competencies in a governance model: 1) Guiding/Strategizing, 2) Designing and Coordinating, 3) Executing and 4) Monitoring.

- A Steering Committee with executive sponsors will

guide the company by defining a policy for EGRC and aligning it with the Information Management policy.

- Project teams will initially design and coordinate processes to enable each business to consistently fulfill their execution obligations for EGRC; and Working Groups will monitor these for continuous improvement.

- Each business will execute and enforce the policies and processes for EGRC.
- Internal Audit will audit and monitor adherence to the policies and processes as part of routine audits of EGRC.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Things to Consider when Choosing an Application to Scan and Capture Documents to SharePoint



Stephen Boals is the V.P. of Sales for PSIGEN Software, Inc. His broad background includes over 8.5 years as a Naval Flight Officer, "Big 4" Consulting with Ernst & Young, and various managerial/director level positions in IT, Technical Security and

Professional Services.

1 -- Do you need a scanning application or a capture application?

The marketplace is filled with applications that provide a means to convert paper to digital form, and I like to divide the offerings into two distinct silos: scanning applications and capture applications. If all you need to do is load paper and scan to a document library, and your volume is fairly light, scanning applications provide a simple, easy to use interface for these types of operations. Capture applications focus on efficiency, standardization and automation. They provide enhanced feature sets like 2D barcode reading, zone OCR, data extraction, enhanced backend integration and more. There is a gray area between the two silos, as most scanning applications have some

basic capture features. Choose wisely young Luke Skywalker, and if you can, select an application that can live in both silos.

2 -- Standardization is King...and Queen, and Duke.

We have all seen the typical file server within our organizations, and it looks like a war zone. The lack of folder and file naming standards allows every user to use creative license, and save things "the way they like."

Scanning is no different, and putting in a scanning and capture process without standardization allows the end user to take their paper mess and recreate it digitally. We have all seen the studies on the early adopters of SharePoint that are pulling their hair out at the absolute mess that has been created within their libraries. It is paramount to select an onramp application that provides document library, folder name, file name and content type standardization through custom rule sets.

3 -- Hardware agnostic – what about my 3-in-1?

Golly that's a mighty big word. Today's imaging landscape

includes all different types of devices: desktop scanners, scanning copiers, scanning fax machines, etc. A scanning/capture application needs to work with just about anything out there that can be directly connected, or that can create an image file. Leveraging the investment in existing hardware is important not only from a financial perspective, but also from a user familiarity perspective. If you give users a simple, familiar way to scan, they are more likely to adapt to new technology. Also, it allows flexibility in deployment and usage scenarios, and also gives you some hope any future hardware purchases will play nicely in your capture ecosystem.

4 -- OCR, ICR and OMR – feature overkill?

Okay, I just had to delve into the imaging acronym soup. Probably the most important here is the capability to create searchable PDFs. Install the PDF iFilter, setup your crawl rules, and you now have a fully searchable repository. ICR and OMR? Aren't those a little overkill for a SharePoint implementation? I see a number of organizations using OMR routing sheets to create a simple and effective cover sheet to route documents to a particular library and folder structure. Organizations can pre-print these, place them next to copiers, and provide onramp capability from any networked scanning device. ICR, not so much, but it has its possibilities.

5 -- Barcodes – Aren't they just overcomplicating things?

Barcodes can do more than just dazzle techies. As organizations build out their entire document management strategy, the ultimate is the incorporation of barcodes into generated documents. Take for example the HR Director who has barcodes placed on all her forms to provide separation as well as form identification. Now when scanning employee packets, the capture software does the work, reading barcodes and routing documents to the appropriate library folder. With 2D barcodes, we can now place 1,000 characters into a thumbnail size area, and automate the process further by embedding data into our contracts, forms, applications, etc.

6 -- SharePoint integration – Sure we can scan to SharePoint!

The SharePoint train has arrived, and everyone is getting on. Integration means something different to everyone. To one vendor, it means just dropping a TIFF into a library, to another it means full lookup capability, content type mapping and folder standardization. Dig deep into what goes on under the hood to make sure you get all that you want in an application. Make sure that they are using the SharePoint API, and that all the connectivity is done through standard communication formats.

7 -- The Sandbox – Do you play nicely with others?

Every organization has multiple repositories across departments and groups. Maybe it is the Accounting Department that uses SharePoint for AP, but also wants to dump check images to a folder. Or the Law Firm that has a custom built MOSS Application, but also needs images scanned to their case management system. Finding a flexible and extensible scanning/capture application that can fulfill multiple needs is an absolute requirement nowadays.

8 -- Usability – "It just doesn't work for me."

I have seen it time and time again, the end user revolt. Put in a difficult, painful application, and it will soon have virtual cob webs everywhere. The application needs to be user friendly, but should have some power user features as well to please the masses. Along with this, and most important, is training. End-user training on the use of the application and its capabilities can speed up the process, and overall adoption rate of the solution.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Ways SharePoint 2010 Moves Toward "ECM for the Masses"



Andy Hopkins is a 20 year veteran in the information management space. Andy is currently a founder and Principal Consultant at Chrysalis BTS, which focuses on vision and strategy, development and deployment, and process management of Information Management solutions for their

clients. Prior to Chrysalis BTS, Andy spent 9 years at Microsoft assisting their global alliance partners in developing their solution strategies around SharePoint technologies.

Microsoft recently released the beta version of SharePoint 2010. From a content management perspective, their goal was to provide "ECM for the Masses." But what exactly does that mean and how does Microsoft expect to achieve it? I spent time over the last few months test driving the beta and the technical preview versions with an eye toward "ECM for the Masses" and below are my opinions on key investments Microsoft has made in Enterprise Content Management (ECM) that will bring this quest closer to reality.

1 -- Traditional ECM capabilities.

Traditional ECM vendors have generally focused on solutions for a targeted set of users within the enterprise such as information managers and records managers. Microsoft's goal of "ECM for the Masses" is about changing the landscape of ECM to provide capability and access to the wealth of information across the enterprise as a whole. The 2007 product introduced the first set of "out of the box" Records Management features and integrated the Web Content Management capabilities that were previously in their Content Management Server product line. When you combine these features with the strength of the collaboration platform, the ease of use, and the integration with the Office client applications, Microsoft had the basis for an ECM platform that could span the enterprise and provide tools to end users that would cross the entire content lifecycle. Even still, the product had its limitations. Enter SharePoint 2010...

Recognizing that most large organizations have implemented more than one ECM product, Microsoft teamed up with other large ECM vendors (including IBM, EMC, Alfresco, OpenText, SAP, and Oracle) to define an ECM standard called Content Management Interoperability Services (CMIS). The goal of CMIS is to define a standard

for interaction between ECM products. This will allow the enterprise to surface and act on content in a broader way regardless of where the content actually resides. CMIS 1.0 entered OASIS public review on October 23, 2009. Microsoft announced that they will support CMIS in SharePoint 2010.

2 -- Taking the "tax" out of taxonomy and metadata.

Microsoft is introducing the Managed Metadata Service in SharePoint 2010. This service will provide the basis for organizing and managing the "language" that end users will use to describe and categorize their content. The service will provide the ability to synchronize the corporate managed taxonomy and the metadata model across the enterprise thus ensuring a consistent view and usage. Further, the service provides end users with the ability to add additional context by allowing them to describe the content in their own language (folksonomy) that will also be synchronized across the enterprise.

3 -- Bringing "social" to content.

Microsoft is investing heavily in the social aspects of content management. When the corporate taxonomy, user defined folksonomy, and corporate metadata model are applied to the content, it gives the content more context and increases the relevance to the end consumers. This additional context can be surfaced in a variety of ways such

as tag-clouds, enterprise search, and My Sites. When you add in user defined content ratings, content organizers, and people search, I think Microsoft is achieving the end goal of making it easy for consumers to find and act on the most relevant content in the enterprise.

4 -- Document sets.

Also introduced with SharePoint 2010 is the concept of document sets. This will allow the enterprise to define and treat multiple content items as though they were one entity. This is true for all of the standard content features including digital rights, business process, policy, retention, etc. Microsoft has finally provided the enterprise with a means of managing multipart content.

5 -- Flexible compliance.

In addition to providing enterprise scale to their records management (RM) capabilities through a corporate defined hierarchical file plan, in-place records, and location based policy, Microsoft has extended their RM capabilities directly to end users in a manner that does not impact their existing work habits. The content author and content consumer do not need to know the details of their corporate content policies in order to participate in the process. All of the RM details can be managed behind the curtain through workflows and policy. Additionally, content holds for compliance and/or litigation can now be applied across the

entire SharePoint environment and include many new content constructs such as wikis, blogs, conversations, etc.

6 -- Process transparency.

Microsoft had a mantra when looking at Business Process in SharePoint 2010 of "process transparency." This means that business process is surfaced everywhere with the goal of providing simple participation. You will see that the underlying workflows are surfaced through the Office clients, browser, and even through the contextual ribbon. To put a fine point on it, Office clients are now aware of SharePoint constructs defined for the enterprise thus allowing the end user to interact and participate in business processes from within the context of the tools that they are most familiar including metadata capture, workflows, policy, document library locations, and more. Lastly, the workflows themselves are now visualized in the browser so the user can see the status of the content in the context of the entire business process.

7 -- Discovery and action.

Microsoft has invested heavily in extending the discoverability of enterprise content. Many of the topics already discussed provide building blocks that allow the end user community to discover the most relevant content within the enterprise, act upon it, and collaborate throughout its lifecycle. You will see extensions in the

SharePoint platform targeted at assisting end users in this discovery such as content ratings, search navigators, and social context. For the enterprise with the most demanding search needs, Microsoft also offers FAST Search Server 2010 for SharePoint that extends the search platform with features such as deeper search refinement, broader language coverage, and more extensive visualizations of the results.

8 -- Ease of use.

A conservative failure rate estimate of ECM projects within large organizations is 50% and the number one reason for failure is low end user adoption (Source: Doculabs). One of Microsoft's key pillars in developing SharePoint 2010 and Office 2010 is ease of use, which has direct impact on user adoption. The features outlined above are implemented to fit into the end user's existing work habits with minimal extraneous impact and maximum productivity gains (example: integration of metadata model into Office client applications so the user doesn't have to switch context or applications to capture metadata, initiate workflows, or publish content to SharePoint).

Conclusion...

Microsoft has implemented a set of content management features in SharePoint 2010 that will help them drive toward the goal of ECM for the masses. The integration of

client and server, the ease of use, the transparency of business processes, and adherence to the CMIS standard will enable the end users within the enterprise to participate independent of their role. The ability of any user to collaborate, develop, publish, discover, and use the content

of the organization will help increase the overall user adoption and satisfaction with the underlying implementation.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Things You Should Know About Transactional Processing in SharePoint



Rutherford Wilson is the VP of Application Product Strategy at Atalasoftware. Atalasoftware publishes Vizit, the Document Viewer for SharePoint and DotImage, a .NET Imaging SDK. He can be reached via email at rutherford.wilson@atalasoftware.com

or on Twitter (@rutherfordw).

SharePoint is making inroads as an ECM or Records Management system, primarily because of its document library features, price, and integration with Office. But, for SharePoint to move beyond that and become the system to do document-centric transactional processing, you'll need to customize and plan your SharePoint installation more carefully.

1 -- Design your document taxonomy.

Before you even start using SharePoint for your document-centric workflows, create content types for each type of document, taking care to define the meta-data that must also be captured with this document. Think about the full life-cycle of the document and what data will be needed at each step.

2 -- Scan your paper documents into SharePoint.

Many transactions start as paper, so get them into SharePoint as soon as possible. Advanced image processing techniques, such as forms recognition and OMR, can detect the content type and kick off the correct workflow automatically.

3 -- Extract information with OCR, barcodes, and manually.

Documents that start as paper need to have their meta-data extracted from the document image that results from the scan. This can be done automatically with OCR and barcodes or manually. Even if it's done manually, OCR can assist the data entry.

4 -- Automate your workflows as much as possible.

Building workflows can get complicated very quickly so start with simple processes first. As your workflows become more complex the key is to minimize the need for manual intervention as much as possible.

5 -- Use document viewers that are SharePoint-aware.

When you do need view documents in a workflow, use a document viewer that is SharePoint-aware. When you open a file with Office in SharePoint, it knows that the document came from SharePoint and can save modifications and follow your checkout procedure. But what about other types? There are third-party viewers that are SharePoint-aware, or even better, are integrated right into SharePoint's web interface.

6 -- View documents in context.

When working on a document, use viewers that can show you more than just the document. To efficiently work on a document you need to see its meta-data, its location in SharePoint, and any outstanding workflows.

7 -- Use side by side comparison.

Many transactional workflows need to view two documents at the same time. For example, in accounts payable, you need to see the invoice and the purchase order simultaneously in order to pay the bill. Use document viewers that can support side-by-side viewing with some kind of page synchronization.

8 -- Plan for archiving and retention.

The full lifecycle of a document includes its transition into a record. Design your content-types so that different policies are represented in the documents meta-data and use workflows to trigger the transition automatically.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Ways To Benchmark Your Collaboration Strategy



Rob Koplowitz is a Principal Analyst at Forrester Research, where he serves information & knowledge management professionals. He is a frequent contributor to Forrester's Blog For Information & Knowledge Management Professionals.

It used to be that a company-wide collaboration strategy was a nice-to-have. No more. Now, it's a strategic necessity.

Even in the current economic climate, 37 percent of organizations surveyed in Forrester's Q4 2008 enterprise and SMB software survey consider implementing a collaboration strategy important in 2009.

What's driving the collaboration wave? Forrester sees two broad trends driving this: there is a critical need to drive information worker efficiency and to manage the unstructured content artifacts they produce and, while the value of improved collaboration is clear, the path to success has become more complex.

Collaboration strategies today need to encompass a broad

array of organizational and technical criteria. The potential benefits can be substantial, and the risk associated with poor management of collaborative content and communication artifacts can be costly.

1 -- Assemble stakeholders.

Collaboration has broad implications, and the stakeholders who you will need to drive the strategy must represent various organizational and geographical parts of your organization. Expect to work with a broad array of business and IT users, including users representing broad business perspectives and other representing broad geographic requirements, IT professionals representing broad business capabilities, infrastructure and operations professionals and human resources and legal professionals.

2 -- Determine collaboration objectives.

A collaboration strategy needs to be anchored by business requirements. Key business objectives that require assessment are workers' ability to find relevant information and to identify expertise within the organization. Once information and expertise are identified, what mechanisms are in place to facilitate efficient interaction and knowledge reuse?

3 -- Conduct a workforce assessment.

Not all workers will want or require the same collaboration capabilities. Forrester recently published its Workforce Technographics data, a survey of over 2,000 information workers on what enterprise tools they are using. Some will need specialized capabilities like extensive mobile support or the ability to collaborate across organizational and firewall boundaries. Provisioning the correct level of capabilities for each segment of a heterogeneous workforce can drive down costs associated with a broad collaboration project.

4 -- Pay attention to organization and policy.

Collaboration software requires special attention in regard to organization and policy. The ad hoc nature of collaborative interactions opens the door for breaches in security, privacy, and regulatory compliance. While some of these can be handled programmatically through one or more technical solutions, many will require specific policy. With proper diligence, introduction of new collaborative technology to the environment does not increase risk. In fact, it can aid in significantly lowering risk. Further, collaborative technology is increasingly integrating with other business applications. To that end, the organization supporting a collaboration environment needs to include stakeholders to represent those systems.

5 -- Select a collaboration technology.

While technology is only one component of collaboration success, it remains the biggest slice of the collaboration budget and an important lever for business productivity. The landscape of available collaboration technology is rich, and choosing and integrating the right technology for an organization is a challenge. The assessment instrument provides detailed guidance on every major collaboration category: information-sharing, communications, social networking, and an integrated user experience across all tools.

6 -- Develop a service delivery model.

Collaboration requires enterprise-scale services to manage team sites globally, use a single network that allows global presence or search, and implement global standards for the tool kit. In best practice, this means implementing a service delivery model that encompasses operating globally for consistency, access, and governance; deploying servers regionally to lower latency and to allow incremental deployments; and pushing administration and needed control down to local administrators to empower the needs of specific groups and regions. Our assessment tool will help you prioritize and assess gaps in these areas.

7 -- Develop a change management strategy.

The old saying, "If you build it they will come," has not always been true for collaboration solutions. Many organizations have struggled to drive adoption of technologies like workspaces, instant messaging, and knowledge management systems. Information workers have a great deal of autonomy in carrying out their jobs and may be hesitant to adopt new tools if they doubt the value. A change management strategy is needed to assess the requirements of tools by workforce need and ensure proper adoption.

8 -- Measure the impact.

To link technology investment to business impact, a collaboration strategy will mandate metrics on adoption, use, and impact. A collaboration strategy will help you prioritize metrics in four tiers: adoption, activity, cost avoidance, and productivity improvements.

The road to success can be complicated, but is definitely manageable. The greater the rigor that can be applied to the process of developing a strategy, the greater the chances of success.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Ways IT Politics Can Wreck a SharePoint Project



This was an anonymous posting. I can vouch for the credibility of the author, but am sworn to protect his identity. This article focuses on the obstacles encountered by external consultants as they work to implement a SharePoint project -- and how they can avoid these pitfalls.

Before consulting on any SharePoint project, a little detective work on the IT department can really pay off. One reason for this is that SharePoint has the reputation for being a "disruptive" technology. Let's deconstruct what this term means with respect to IT office politics before getting to the wrecking strategy detailed below.

First, we must acknowledge that SharePoint doesn't really fit any of the standard categories used to manage IT applications. It's not an ECM system in the sense of being exclusively focused on that function alone, though it can be used to manage content. It's not a search engine, though it can search across many types of content. It manages web content, but it manages lots of other content too. And finally, the straw that we always grasp at, it's a "collaboration" platform that is fuzziness itself when bean

counters try to measure its ROI.

The ability of SharePoint to break IT boundaries is often at the root of the fear and loathing it inspires. For many, SharePoint challenges the inherent constraints that give IT processes whatever security and predictability they currently have. SharePoint lays bare these constraints, or, more diplomatically, standardized controls, in a way that often causes IT pros to deploy passive-aggressive strategies that sabotage their own ship. These strategies resemble those carried out by those disgruntled French railway workers who brought the whole train system to its knees simply by following a few neglected bureaucratic rules, like carrying out thorough bridge inspections before any bridge could be crossed.

It's a form of organizational jui-jitsu designed to stall projects that threaten the IT comfort zone. So, what are the key practices that foster such disasters? First, a couple of definitions. The "infrastructure team" means the permanent enterprise operations staff. The support team signifies the permanently staffed technical personnel that supported and maintained enterprise applications, as well as developed new functionality during on-going projects as assigned by management.

So what are the most likely mistakes that are made in dealing with internal IT staff?

1 -- Use a non-technical term to describe your server when conversing with the system administrator.

It takes only one mistake like this to land you in the same bin as project managers and sales people -- those who have to be heard but never listened to. If you find that your emails no longer get responses, even when you request specific operations, this may be the reason. Once you are marked in this way, it will take much more effort than is available in a high-pressure SharePoint project to get you out of the bin.

2 -- Imply that network issues may be the root of SharePoint performance problems.

Performance and stability issues always move the project team into the bulls-eye of suspicion.

Who knows what can happen once untested code leaks out. And aren't you the same goof-ball that already confirmed your lack of systems knowledge? What an interesting idea you have. We'll discuss it among ourselves at the next Change Board meeting and get back with you.

The solution to this dead-end is to find a procedure that allows you to identify the network bottleneck. Unfortunately, this means troubleshooting a network that you played no part in setting up and whose documentation

is safe from your prying eyes. Fortunately, the system administrators will usually realize at some point that the network really is the issue and come up with a fix, usually right after you have lost 5 days of project time searching for nonexistent object disposal errors.

3 -- Explain to IT that SharePoint is a single application rather than a collection of separately maintained applications.

Because of the way application boundaries are drawn, it is often impossible for IT to comprehend that SharePoint sites are not separate applications. They are polite, but they plainly don't believe you when you say that separate sites all share the same database, security, components, and configuration files and really don't require completely separate sets of architectural documentation.

Such documentation, you say, would merely repeat the same descriptions over and over again for each separate "application." They nod their heads, smiling that smile that says, "We understand how lazy you developers are, and we sympathize, but we can't make an exception for you just because this will result in a monumental waste of time and eat into the functionality you are required to create for your customer."

4 -- Involve the support team in the detailed design of your SharePoint solution.

Though infrastructure and support people may have no

SharePoint experience, they often insist on being included in the detailed design of your solution.

During these discussions, they will ask penetrating questions such as "Have you thought about what will happen if documents are added to the system?" or "What will happen if users don't use the system the way you trained them to?" This latter question is always asked with a menacing glare that suggests that you have failed to devise a sufficiently severe method for punishing disobedient users.

5 -- Form a governance committee by getting your developers to convince end users to join.

Professional .NET developers tend to have the social skills of Vlad the Impaler. However, if the project managers don't accept the responsibility to form a governance committee and the business owner doesn't have time to do it and it's not the IT department's responsibility to help (in any way), then it's up to Vlad or Vladessa to add this vital ingredient for any successful SharePoint project. Vlad's RESTful web services are likely to be much more effective than the results of this assignment.

6 -- Make sure that high-level team managers never communicate with each other.

If managers don't communicate about what their teams are doing, then everyone feels less threatened and can carry out their jobs with lots more "Cheers" at the ends of their

emails. So be sure to identify the most-overworked developer on your team, the one who does most of the actual work of creating solutions, and assign him or her lots of extra communication tasks. Use any means necessary to keep his or her attention off improving the quality of the code so that they are not such narrow and dull bar companions. By pushing communication duties down the chain, you ensure that those with the least overall sense of company dynamics have the most influence. And in a double win, you ensure that no synergies between teams can be leveraged.

7 -- Make sure no one on the support team has time to read project documentation.

The less they know about your project, the easier it will be to criticize.

Therefore, since the goal of the support team is to duplicate as much existing functionality as possible, keep them so busy on competing projects that they can never learn the project's applications. That way, when they're asked to support it, they'll have the ironclad excuse that they are too busy on another project that meets the same requirements already implemented by the SharePoint project team. Customers love to hear that the expensive project they just paid for needs to be redone correctly.

8 -- As soon as the support team sees that SharePoint is gaining acceptance, set up as many competing projects as possible.

Nothing succeeds like success. If users like the functionality SharePoint provides, then they'll like it even more if it's provided on an obscure, unfriendly platform that only the support team can maintain. Therefore, do development the right way by dividing up the previously delivered SharePoint functionality into parts that fit neatly into your pre-determined IT application types and make each new application into a six month's project. That way you'll prove to those cowboys on the project team the value of proper controls.

So what are the lessons derived from this disaster?

1. Get buy-in early from the infrastructure team by anticipating their questions and concerns and making sure that they hear your questions in their language.
2. Clearly communicate the infrastructure requirements, expectations for operational support, and other project issues. Get the necessary feedback about key project enablers such as network support. The time to identify network issues is at the beginning of the project, not the morning after the first release to production.
3. Demonstrate how SharePoint works by giving the support team a virtual image that they can study to attain the necessary comfort level with what your

team is producing. Once they begin to buy into the SharePoint model, whole categories of bureaucratic meddling can be eliminated.

4. No matter how busy you might be on project work, communicate and over-communicate with the support team, but do it in a way that maximizes both of your strengths. Your strength is your detailed knowledge of the team product. Their strength is their knowledge of the organization and the history of previous projects and what it takes to support them.
5. Governance is not only crucial to a successful SharePoint implementation, but it can be a major enabler of user commitment to the platform. Having said that, the politics involved in gathering together a worthwhile working committee are often beyond the influence of anyone on the project team. The lack of commitment of organizations to governance best practices is one of those issues inherent to the way modern corporations are structured. In most cases, the best hope is that one of your team is persuasive enough to make someone at the C-level support the initiative. Governance is something they understand and service on the governance committee can be rewarded in many ways.
6. Lack of communication between team leaders is very difficult to remedy at the lower levels. Someone needs to coordinate across teams to ensure that they

are not competing with each other in a destructive way.

7. Rather than creating voluminous documentation, find ways to demonstrate the product through demonstrations. In the modern IT environment, the chances of anyone reading project documentation other than in an emergency are close to nil.
8. Make sure that the support team understands that your project will add to existing applications -

not replace them. Your team's very existence may be interpreted as a sign of inadequacy. A persuasive case must be made that your team has been brought in to add new functionality that can best be provided by the SharePoint platform - and that the support team can use this as an opportunity to expand their skill set. Any planner worth his or her salt will make sure they thoroughly appreciate this.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

8 Ways to Make Things Easy for Your SharePoint Development Team



John Keadle works as a Manager of Technology at Sapien in Atlanta GA. After many years of database and application development, he began working on SharePoint solutions in 2002. In

addition to a number of successful print publication efforts, he shares much of his SharePoint work on his blog, SharePoint from Scratch, which you can find at <http://12Hive.com>.

1 -- Establish a clear “sandbox” mentality.

SharePoint developers need robust environments where they can develop, debug and troubleshoot sophisticated solutions that integrate resources supported anywhere on the internet. This includes domain controllers, Active Directory, external databases and Office clients. Without this solid foundation, the user-centric, social value that SharePoint provides will remain out of reach. In addition, without a robust 64 bit 4+Gb host, your developers will spend hours looking at an hourglass and any developer with any ADD will quickly lose focus.

2 -- Allow for developers to segregate their personal workstations from their development environments.

Anybody with full-time use of a specific workstation will grow comfortable with its configuration. If your developer must support his development efforts on that same machine, he or she will hesitate before venturing into unfamiliar territory. To maintain the delete and revert option, the developer's personal machine must not be vulnerable.

3 -- Store and maintain a number of VM images and snapshots.

Deploying a “Greenfield” farm should not take more than 20 minutes, enough time to download a VM and enter its admin password. Once site design and configuration tasks are completed, take snapshots so subsequent efforts can continue without fear of breaking something that already works. Development add-ons, third party solutions, troubleshooting and community sourced artifacts often lead to dead ends. Delete and revert can be substantially more efficient than backing out.

4 -- Support frequent machine rebuilds.

Once solutions are packaged and deployable, they can be off-loaded and stored elsewhere and the host machine can be restored to Greenfield state ready to support the next development effort.

5 -- Provide a development network.

As development efforts mature, they need to be socialized. A universally accessible network supports this demand in a virtual team setting. Populated with valid accounts, real people and real work is the only way to be sure a “model office” can meet production demands. Likewise, with access to network resources and internet connectivity, all the content on the www is within the developers' reach.

6 -- Support frequent functional reviews demonstrating generic solutions.

Developers should be steered toward solutions that can be deployed without involving the customer's brand or intellectual property. These elements should be deployable at runtime at the site collection level. This way, a solution can be installed and demonstrated using Fabrikam-like design and content. Network users and potential stakeholders can discover and experience the solutions as they operate in a real-network setting.

7 -- Explore and adopt best practices aggressively.

When a successful solution is deployed and its ROI measured, be sure the entire development community learns its objective and becomes familiar with the solution's approach. Allow the community to compare that approach with others and comment on suitability and alternatives.

8 -- Keep and update links to virtual community content.

As developers explore and identify applicable content on the internet, make it clear that they should post the link, with subject matter tags and comments, in a master link list. This way, SMEs on one topic can leverage the experience of SMEs on other topics.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)