SAP White Paper
Enterprise Information Management

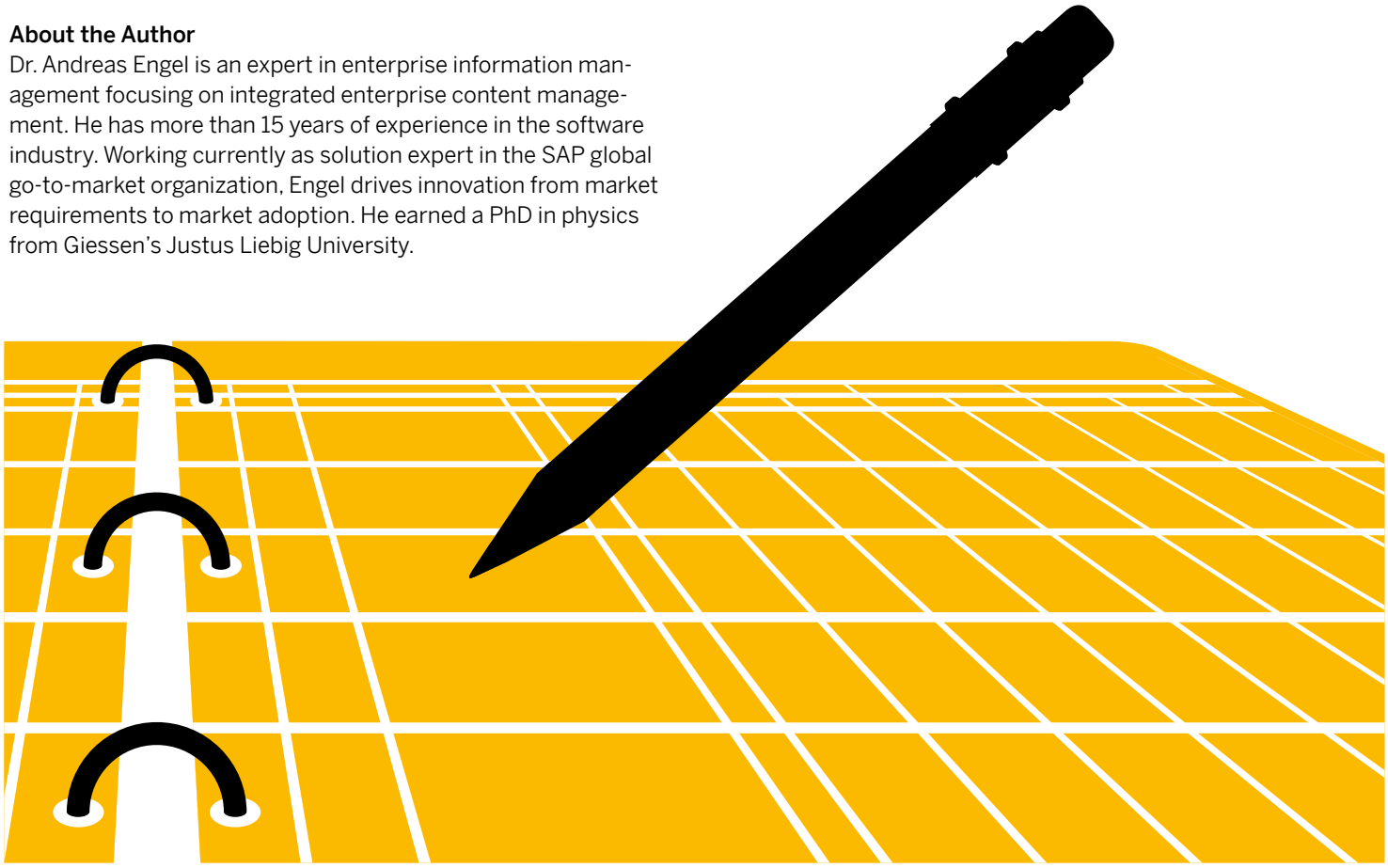
Including Business Content in a Comprehensive Information Management Program

Enhance Efficiency and Compliance Through Process-Centric Information Management

The Best-Run Businesses Run SAP™

Process-centric information management incorporates both structured and unstructured content. It links unstructured content to core business processes, ensures the quality of all content and data, and effectively handles the retention and destruction of content and data. In addition, this approach creates a single, trusted source of information that promotes efficiency, insightful decision making, collaboration, and compliance – while reducing the complexity and cost of IT systems.

About the Author
Dr. Andreas Engel is an expert in enterprise information management focusing on integrated enterprise content management. He has more than 15 years of experience in the software industry. Working currently as solution expert in the SAP global go-to-market organization, Engel drives innovation from market requirements to market adoption. He earned a PhD in physics from Giessen's Justus Liebig University.



Driving Excellence in Operations and Decision Making

Having enterprise information that is complete, accurate, and well integrated can drive operational excellence and insightful business decisions. It can help you comply with internal and external reporting demands and make the most of new business opportunities.

Achieving these objectives requires ready access to high-quality data at the point of impact in each step of your core business processes. You must be able to access data from all of the sources that are relevant to the specific processes, profile that data to assess its quality, and cleanse the data to improve quality.

There must be similar attention to access and quality for e-mails, presentation slides, contracts, photos, resumes, and other unstructured content. This requires identifying all relevant unstructured information and integrating it into the appropriate enterprise software applications.

A single, reliable version of the truth for both structured and unstructured content, with careful version and access control, should be available for any part of a business process or end-user decision point. Both types of content should also be part of a thoughtful strategy for retention management. These principles, which assure compliance and minimize legal fines, are the foundation of effective, process-centric information management.

READY ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY INFORMATION

In most enterprises, data quality is managed at the master-data level. Master data is typically segmented into specific domains such as product information and customer information.

This approach does not satisfy business managers who want total data quality for specific processes, however. Having correct customer addresses is essential. But the customer experience still suffers if product data is not up-to-date on your Web site or if call center representatives do not have all the product information customers want.

INTEGRATING STRUCTURED AND UNSTRUCTURED CONTENT

The applications that most organizations use for enterprise resource planning, customer relationship management, and supply chain management are designed to manage structured, transactional information such as addresses, customer numbers, and order numbers. Few organizations appreciate the importance of the flood of unstructured content they receive.

As you standardize and streamline your business processes, you must connect unstructured content to these processes and manage this content more effectively. By eliminating silos of structured and unstructured content, integrated content management can ensure efficient and high-quality process execution.

A TEXTBOOK EXAMPLE OF HOW TO ANNOY A CUSTOMER

Accurate customer data lies at the core of all successful customer interactions. It is also essential that information contained in correspondence and other unstructured content be readily accessible for these interactions. Consider this example:

Franz plans to demolish and rebuild his house. He writes a letter to the phone company explaining that he must cancel his service to do this. In the letter, he provides an alternate address and mobile phone number where he can be contacted during the reconstruction.

A week later, a phone company call center agent leaves a voice mail message on the line Franz wants to discontinue. When Franz calls back, the agent asks why he wants to discontinue service and whether he has any complaints.

Franz explains that he has already written this in a letter. The call center agent says that, unfortunately, he does not have access to this letter. Franz must restate the reason for discontinuing and provide his new contact information again. The agent updates the order address, but not the invoice address. So the invoice is sent to the wrong address. Perhaps Franz has a complaint to share now.

Creating a Holistic Strategy for Information Management

Many companies begin a process-centric information management program by identifying specific processes or IT issues they wish to fix and then balancing the areas of greatest need against the related remedy cost. They can then determine what structured and unstructured content is relevant for the related processes.

In mapping out the relationships between your structured and unstructured content and the processes they support, you must consider compliance issues related to those relationships. This and other analysis of your information infrastructure requires input from business managers and others familiar with your information and processes.

Once you have analyzed your content, processes, and compliance requirements, you can identify your key challenges in information management. You are then ready to find the right tools for integrating unstructured content into relevant processes and can establish and implement policies for retaining and destroying your information.

ASSURE THE QUALITY OF YOUR STRUCTURED DATA

A carefully planned initiative for guaranteeing the quality of your structured data is essential to a successful process-centric information management program. Assuring data quality might start with an advanced solution for master-data management that helps you centrally create, consolidate, synchronize, and distribute your master data. The solution can also help you build a repository of data for efficiently coordinating customer processes across business units and locations and manage vendor data from multiple sources.

Other elements of a robust data-quality framework include support for:

- **Data profiling** – to improve information trustworthiness and reduce the risk of propagating bad data
- **Data cleansing** – to create and reuse the rules, patterns, and dictionaries that comprise data cleansing packages
- **Metadata management** – to consolidate, integrate, and audit your metadata from all relevant sources
- **Root cause and impact analysis** – to determine the origin of data-quality problems and how they impact downstream processes or information assets
- **Validation rule management** – to define data validation rules against data sources and apply rules continuously to monitor data quality

It's important to understand the quality requirements for each data element at each step in a business process, determine the best source for that data, and establish a process of regular data profiling and cleansing.

INTEGRATE YOUR BUSINESS INFORMATION AND BUSINESS PROCESSES

Integrating content with specific business processes requires tools for managing unstructured content in the context of those processes. Business users should also be able to access the information they need from a single source through a familiar interface.

Applications for integrated enterprise content management can help you automatically capture, digitize, archive, file, index, and manage your unstructured content. They can help you automatically apply records management classifications to content to maintain control throughout its lifecycle. And they can help you track the location of physical objects (such as boxes of files or DVDs), manage the warehousing and circulation of these objects, and connect your content to specific retention rules.

ESTABLISH RULES FOR RETAINING DATA AND UNSTRUCTURED CONTENT

Key to any process-centric information management program is the ability to retain various business records for different periods of time according to policy or legal requirements. Also essential is the ability to preserve records related to a current legal case by collecting and placing the records on hold during the course of the legal action. Such support can eliminate penalties and fines resulting from failure to present essential information.

It's important to enforce retention policies for both structured and unstructured content – the **image** of an invoice in the application database as well as the **invoice record**. This eliminates creating multiple silos of content during the information lifecycle.

Meeting these objectives requires archiving, lifecycle, and records management tools for structured and unstructured information that help you control content volumes. These tools can

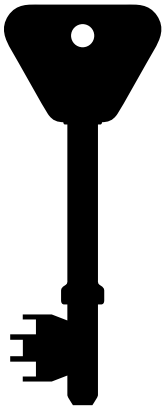
optimize system availability, performance, and resources while reducing costs for disk space and storage administration. Also required are tools for implementing a responsible and transparent strategy for destroying data.

ASSURE A HOLISTIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A holistic information management program should eventually encompass core business processes across your organization. It should provide for regular quality checks to assure, for example, that the data and unstructured content linked to those processes are still relevant and available. It should provide a schedule for data cleansing and profiling.

A holistic program also includes regular updates of the processes, data, and content involved. It accounts for new types of documents, changes in content ownership, or new corporate policies and regulations. It responds to changes in information management suggested by feedback from users.

Once you have analyzed your content, processes, and compliance requirements, you can identify your key challenges in information management. You are then ready to find the right tools for integrating unstructured content into relevant processes and can establish and implement policies for retaining and destroying your information.



Benefits of Process-Centric Information Management

There are many benefits to a carefully planned program for process-centric information management. Creating a single view of information from structured and unstructured sources encourages deeper insights and improves process efficiency and decision making. Connecting content to your business processes can enhance productivity by making content more accessible and encouraging collaboration.

By taking control of the entire content lifecycle, you can enhance compliance and reduce legal risk. By deploying a single solution for data profiling and metadata management, you can reduce the complexity of your IT landscape and free your IT team to focus on more productive tasks. Integrated technology can further increase process efficiency and reduce costs.

A strong information management program with consistent rules and guidelines about who can access, change, add, share, or integrate enterprise information can align content ownership with your organization's accountability principles. A program that emphasizes transparency provides comprehensive visibility into quality at all levels of the information management landscape.

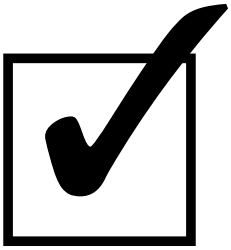
Impact analysis helps you assess the merits of changes in your information structures and sources, reducing risk and improving information quality. Better insight into the origins and lineage of your information makes it more accurate and trustworthy.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about the many ways that SAP® software can help you design and implement an effective and process-centric information management program, contact your SAP representative or visit us online at www.sap.com/solutions/solutionextensions/enterprise-content-management/index.epx.

For more information about SAP, please visit www.sap.com.

By taking control of the entire content lifecycle, you can enhance compliance and reduce legal risk. By deploying a single solution for data profiling and metadata management, you can reduce the complexity of your IT landscape.



www.sap.com/contactsap

50 110 075 (11/12) Printed in USA. ©2011 SAP AG. All rights reserved.

SAP, R/3, SAP NetWeaver, Duet, PartnerEdge, ByDesign, SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, StreamWork, SAP HANA, and other SAP products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of SAP AG in Germany and other countries.

Business Objects and the Business Objects logo, BusinessObjects, Crystal Reports, Crystal Decisions, Web Intelligence, Xcelsius, and other Business Objects products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Business Objects Software Ltd. Business Objects is an SAP company.

Sybase and Adaptive Server, iAnywhere, Sybase 365, SQL Anywhere, and other Sybase products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sybase, Inc. Sybase is an SAP company.

All other product and service names mentioned are the trademarks of their respective companies. Data contained in this document serves informational purposes only. National product specifications may vary.

These materials are subject to change without notice. These materials are provided by SAP AG and its affiliated companies ("SAP Group") for informational purposes only, without representation or warranty of any kind, and SAP Group shall not be liable for errors or omissions with respect to the materials. The only warranties for SAP Group products and services are those that are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services, if any. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty.

The Best-Run Businesses Run SAP™