5 Essentials for a Modern Content Services Platform

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Sean Furrh has been developing enterprise software solutions for over two decades. His ability to find clever solutions to complex business problems while integrating multiple and various other systems has made him a leader in the enterprise content management realm.

As new privacy regulations emerge, moving to modern content services platforms is high on the list for chief executives. The recently passed CCPA, or California Consumer Privacy Act, allows consumers to increase control of how their personal information is being accessed, used, and misused. Organizations reliant on outdated or underperforming ECM systems are taking note of these new privacy laws and are looking for ways to bring their policies into the modern era with proper compliance. But with all the available solutions to choose from, what makes a content services platform stand out above the rest?

I am often asked that question as Director of Systemware's Solutions Delivery team. Systemware has been providing content management solutions to some of the world's largest organizations for a very long time—almost 40 years. Our team partners with clients to carefully identify critical business needs and develop strategic plans to move organizations forward into the next generation of content services.

Here are five things to consider when looking for a modern content services platform to manage your organization's valuable information:

1. A Robust User Experience

User experience is a big deal. UX is focused on the overall satisfaction and usability of a product or service. Modern content services platforms should be designed with the user in mind delivering fast, secure access to critical business content anytime, anywhere. Solutions providing automation capabilities allow repeatable processes to be streamlined with a decreased risk of users being impacted by manual intervention. Organizations should strive for an all-in-one platform where they can seamlessly access and extract content across a variety of connected systems through a modern user interface.

Users should be able to quickly find specific information contained within their repositories, all the way down to the document line-level. Solutions with open APIs allow organizations to develop custom applications and service modules to integrate with their existing systems and satisfy their specific needs. These capabilities all contribute to the successful delivery of a desirable user experience.

2. Deployment Flexibility

Organizations have varying circumstances and business requirements. No two situations are ever quite the same. Hybrid cloud offerings provide flexible deployment options for organizations, enabling customers a choice when deciding on a solution to best fit their current digital ecosystem and personalized needs.

To provide the true level of flexibility that current organizations require, a content services platform needs to be able to deploy any individual piece of the system on the appropriate infrastructure. Perhaps your organization needs every service deployed on-premise but wants to utilize less expensive cloud storage. Or, maybe you need an entirely hosted solution, except the customer data must be housed on-premise. Hybrid deployments leave the decision up to the customers on how to best leverage their environment for maximum cost savings and efficiency.

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3. A Quick and Easy Migration Path

Legacy ECM systems are not uncommon and, while they once were king, now introduce an increasing level of risk, as well as dwindling reliability with outdated support. This is not breaking news. Companies relying on legacy ECM are aware of the risks but as with any large project, barriers such as budget, time to market, and data integrity exist. A quick and easy path to content migration is essential to prevent organizations from being held captive by solution providers when the time comes to move forward. Migration to new platforms can be done with minimal impact to your customers and users, and contrary to popular belief does not take years to complete

An essential feature for a modern content services platform should allow for parallel access to content during the migration process to minimize disruption. The migration process should not leave behind important business knowledge or information around the content itself—metadata, process, retention policies, and events. It should accommodate user acceptance testing with seamless access to both systems.

4. Mitigate Risks by Satisfying Current and Future Compliance Requirements

Adhering to all the compliance regulations and providing necessary oversight can be like hitting a moving target in today's rapidly changing environments. The improper handling of personal information is a dangerous practice and can result in fines, harsh penalties, and a damaged reputation. A modern content services platform should provide security features such as data masking and encryption, both during transmission and when stored, to protect sensitive personal information from being accessed or shared by unauthorized users.

The CCPA regulation is the first of its kind in the US and has been referred to as "just the beginning." This legislation gives consumers the right to erasure, or right to be forgotten, and places limitations on businesses for storing information beyond necessity. In cases such as this, organizations must be able to locate a specific piece of information across multiple repositories in files that are often enormous in size, and securely delete that segment without affecting the integrity of surrounding content. Solutions should offer capabilities that help mitigate these risks to satisfy current and future compliance requirements.

5. Exceptional Customer Support

Not all support is the same. You probably know that from your own personal experience. Customers expect a partnership that provides lasting support above and beyond the point of sale and deployments. Base implementations often require additional custom development and integration after being installed, as well as end-to-end user training. It is imperative to have a business partner who thoroughly understands your goals and takes ownership of their commitments. Support can make or break an organization. Your provider should believe in their products and support a partnership with a shared focus towards success, and in doing so will deliver the peace of mind and exceptional customer support you deserve from your investment. ∎

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