



Instant Insight
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Getting from Here to ILM: EMC Documentum CSS

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EMC has announced the new Documentum Content Storage Services (CSS), which the company described as the first storage-aware enterprise content management solution designed specifically to enable organizations to adopt an information lifecycle management (ILM) strategy. According to EMC, Documentum CSS enables organizations to define and execute storage policies that allow content to be automatically migrated to optimal storage platforms that reflect the value of that content and related business needs, which aims to help companies cost-effectively meet information access, retention, and compliance requirements.

Key features Documentum CSS offers are:

- ◇ The automated movement of data based on business policies that utilize standard and user-defined attributes, including content type, access control level, lifecycle state, sharing permissions, industry regulations, or archiving requirements, as well as date last accessed, size, related transactions, or related documents;
- ◇ Automatic policy execution as a result of a system event (such as the completion of a workflow activity), ad-hoc, and in batch;
- ◇ Migration logs and audit trail capabilities so that content movement can be monitored and internal accounting charge backs easily reported;
- ◇ Support of all EMC storage platforms, as well as arrays from other vendors, including Hitachi, IBM, Hewlett Packard, and Network Appliance.

In addition, Documentum CSS can be utilized to complement and extend traditional hierarchical storage management (HSM) solutions that store data according to standard file- or disk-level information.

Pricing/Availability

EMC Documentum CSS is immediately available. No pricing information was included in the announcement.

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Over the last year or so, ILM has become the rallying cry of virtually every enterprise storage vendor for reasons that are fairly simple. During the past decade, enhancements of data storage solutions have typically surpassed the stunning evolution of CPU technologies, with the end result that IT customers of every sort are gagging on a surfeit of mostly unstructured information. But what qualifies as simple indigestion for lowly consumers can translate to perforated gastric ulcers for information-reliant businesses. The concept of tiered storage, which offers a variety of solutions designed to meet the changing business value of information, is considered holy writ within many enterprises, but even the best tiered storage solutions can be seduced by the devilish details of how to migrate information efficiently and cost-effectively.

ILM solutions propose to beautify such ugly scenarios by establishing and assigning the business value of corporate information, and by assigning or migrating information through automated, business policy-based processes. HSM solutions can be efficient tools for migrating files based on size or age, but are less effective for dealing with the unstructured information such as rich media, images, email and attachments, documents, contracts, PDFs, and instant messages that some surveys claim make up more than three-quarters of stored business information.

However, given the plethora of ILM solutions currently available or in process, what makes EMC Documentum CSS different or even unique? First and foremost, rather than organizing documents according to file system location or separate classification schemes as most ILM solutions do, Documentum is capable of managing both documents and discrete content within those documents including (but not limited to) security classifications (of sub-document content), information (not just words or files), and XML/SGML classification schemes. As a result, Documentum allows enterprises to work on and with company content from a document perspective rather than the file perspective, a particularly critical issue in dealing with unstructured information. In essence, Documentum CSS appears to be the first ILM solution that actually deserves the name, since it integrates document-level content management with automated, policy-driven storage management processes.

Additionally, Documentum CSS, which is the first discrete solution to be developed and delivered by EMC's new Enterprise Software Group, should put to rest the ongoing grumblings about the company's long term product strategy. During the past two years, as most IT vendors were either treading water or just trying to keep their heads above the waves, EMC made a half-dozen high-profile acquisitions of software companies including Prisa, Astrum, Legato, VMWare, and Documentum. Most all of these deals were viewed with open scorn by other storage vendors who claimed that since EMC was first and would always be a hardware vendor, such software adventuring was a bad fit and a waste of time and resources. Those arguments have quieted noticeably as EMC expanded its software capabilities and market share, and today's announcement places the company's ILM solutions uniquely in a class of their own. In our view, EMC Documentum CSS is likely to be seen as a balm for organizations with enterprise-class cases of information indigestion. The opposite, however, is likely to be the case for EMC's ILM competitors.