

The Case for “Going Native”

Solution doesn't use the Term Store? Doesn't support Managed Metadata Properties? Beware.

By Martin Garland, President, Concept Searching



Martin Garland

Martin Garland has more than 20 years' experience in search, classification and enterprise content management. One of the founders of Concept Searching, Garland is responsible for both marketing strategy and North American and international operations.

Recent reports suggest that taxonomy management and auto-classification is one of the top five most popular third-party add-ons for SharePoint 2010. A part of any strategic decision to standardize on SharePoint 2010 is to take full advantage of the Term Store Management Tool—Microsoft's initial building block to enable organizations to natively build taxonomy structures and facilitate the management of large amounts of content—much of which is strategic or of high value to the organization.

The SharePoint 2010 term store does have certain limitations: polyhierarchies are unsupported, term sets with more than 30,000 terms are unsupported and term stores with more than a million terms are unsupported. It is only if one of these three limitations is critical to the business should an enterprise then even consider not “going native” and instead deploy a proprietary solution.

For almost all of SharePoint 2010 deployments, there are significant advantages in utilizing the term store and managed metadata properties, thereby maximizing the investment in the platform, reducing training requirements and reliance on proprietary solutions, and in turn reducing complexity and risk to the organization.

SharePoint 2010, with the Term Store Management Tool and the concept of managed metadata properties, is Microsoft's first release of a true enterprise deployable platform with metadata driven functionality. We therefore believe that organizations making a strategic investment in SharePoint for the future must embrace the term store and managed metadata properties if they are to make use of the platform functionality now and be ready for the next wave of functionality that will be built into the platform in the coming releases. Unfortunately, software vendors still try to push proprietary solutions to prospect organizations. We are seeing these organizations fall into two categories; those still blissfully unaware of the inherent risks and that continue to evaluate proprietary solutions that do not leverage functionality inherent within the platform, and conversely those forward-thinking and enlightened organizations that understand these issues and will therefore not evaluate vendors unable to deliver a natively

integrated term store solution. Ask yourself the question, “Into which category does my organization fit?”

To help answer this question, we suggest it is valuable to consider the following eight reasons to implement a fully integrated term store and managed metadata properties taxonomy and auto-classification solution.

1. Reduced risk and reliance on a proprietary solution: Proprietary solutions are deployed uncoupled from the term store with taxonomy structures developed and managed separately, no support for managed metadata properties and proprietary Web parts deployed to mimic “out of the box” SharePoint 2010 functionality.

2. Reduced cost of development and administration: SharePoint developers can customize the SharePoint interface and write applications using the native managed metadata controls and not have to learn about non-Microsoft controls. SharePoint administrators can configure taxonomy metadata by creating list columns and mapping these to content types and sites using native facilities, not proprietary mapping tools.

3. Reduced training for users: SharePoint users will use the built-in SharePoint facilities to view and edit taxonomy metadata which works with the Microsoft and FAST search engines “out of the box.” No retraining is required on unfamiliar non SharePoint controls.

4. Leverage native SharePoint taxonomy (term set) editing controls: Deploying proprietary third-party solutions will mean that editing of taxonomy (term sets) metadata using native SharePoint editing facilities will be lost. Third-party Web parts have to be used from within SharePoint, which increases risk, training, cost and a reliance on the proprietary solution.

5. Leverage the integration of the managed metadata properties into the search refinement panel: Deploying third-party non-integrated metadata tagging solutions will mean that the integration of managed metadata properties into the Microsoft SharePoint search and FAST search for SharePoint search refinement panel will be lost, and proprietary Web parts will have to

be deployed to deliver the functionality, adding risk to the solution.

6. Leverage the value of your legacy content into your term sets: Legacy content has intrinsic value for the business. Automatically generated conceptual metadata can be extracted from legacy content and used to tag content to the term store. That metadata is surfaced to other applications that make use of managed metadata properties ensuring the value within your content is used and reused.

7. Drive compliance and governance: Applying semantic metadata directly into the term store can be leveraged by the managed metadata service to drive content types based upon that metadata. Documents of record can be automatically declared, tagged with retention codes, content types applied and content work flowed to the records center. Similarly sensitive information can be tagged with content types and information rights management automatically applied and the content locked down appropriately.

8. Drive social applications through managed metadata properties: Automatically generated semantic metadata is also made available to social tagging, people profiling, social networking and folksonomy solutions that all leverage managed metadata properties. Now organizations can combine the subjective tagging together with organizationally aligned taxonomies (term sets).

Concept Searching believes that part of any strategic decision to standardize on SharePoint 2010 must be to take full advantage of the term store—Microsoft's building block to enable organizations to natively build taxonomy structures and facilitate content management of strategic or high value. ■

Concept Searching's conceptClassifier for SharePoint is the only automatic document classification and enterprise class taxonomy management solution that integrates natively with the SharePoint 2010 term store, fully supporting managed metadata properties.

For more information, please visit our website www.conceptsearching.com or email us at info-usa@conceptsearching.com