Enhancing SharePoint Through Information Governance

Martin Garland, President, ConceptSearching

According to Microsoft, every day for the past five years 20,000 new SharePoint users have been added. As one of the most popular departmental content management solutions, SharePoint silos are now littering the organizational landscape with little or no centralized control. Given the current economic environment and the maturity of the SharePoint 2010 platform, enterprises are seeking to do more with less, leverage what they already own, and take advantage of desirable SharePoint 2010 functionality.

Concept Searching's approach includes our Smart Content Framework that helps mitigate risk, automate processes, manage information, protect privacy and address compliance issues. Technologies are available to transparently tag content, classify it to organizational taxonomies, preserve and protect information through the automatic identification of records and privacy data, and as a migration tool. These "building blocks" work natively in the SharePoint environment and add functionality transparently to the end user.

Building block #1: Metadata. An enterprise metadata repository is the primary building block in the framework, enabling the proactive management of content. This is an enterprise infrastructure component, tightly integrated with the management of the lifecycle of content.

At a fundamental level, enterprises struggle with managing content assets, stemming from the end user's inability to accurately and consistently tag content for search, storage, records identification and archival purposes. Surprisingly, most organizations still focus on relying on the end user for appropriate tagging. Only by eliminating the human factor can viable enterprise metadata management be achieved and subsequently the life-cycle management of content.

Through automatic semantic metadata generation and auto-classification as content is created or ingested, the taxonomy component integrates natively with the Term Store to seamlessly manage the metadata. Eliminating end user tagging, a comprehensive metadata repository can be easily developed, deployed and managed.

Building block #2: Insight. Information access technologies are a powerful business tool. For many organizations, content exists in numerous locations, on diverse repositories and replicated across various silos. Most end users are unable to find relevant information to support business objectives resulting in the inability to re-use, and re-purpose information. All of this leads to impaired decision making and decreased organizational agility.

Whether the enterprise search is SharePoint or FAST, the delivery of meaningful results depends on the ability to effectively index and classify content and utilize taxonomies to better manage the content. The search engine itself provides the features, functions and interface, while the technologies provide the tagging and

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classification structure to deliver relevant results, thus delivering insight.

Building block #3: Governance. The overarching enterprise governance structure allows staff to work in the most efficient and effective way possible by giving them access to information assets in a controlled and secure manner. This building block consists of tools that ensure information quality, maintain the lifecycle of information, address the retention and disposition of records, secure and protect privacy, and establish standards when dealing with information assets.

SharePoint content types, as well as the ECAL suite, provide powerful mechanisms to support governance. conceptClassifier for SharePoint extracts and applies the identification of organizationally defined descriptors, such as records and privacy data, and integrates with SharePoint components to provide a complete solution for the lifecycle of the content assets.

Building block #4: Policy. The application of policy must be deployed from an enterprise perspective and address the entire portfolio of information assets. The technology generates the identification of concepts, records and privacy data and—through the utilization of the inherent features in SharePoint—effectively processes the information to disposition.

Based on concepts and descriptors, assignment of custom SharePoint content types and workflows can be initiated for disposition, eliminating end user involvement. Combined, this solution ensures consistency, is implemented transparently, improves recordkeeping and enables the establishment of monitoring and auditing processes to ensure proof of compliance and data protection.

Building block #5: Privacy. The demarcation of who is responsible for the protection of privacy data is becoming blurred. Each business function may have a unique view of what is confidential, such as legal, human resources and product development. It remains the responsibility of the organization to set the policies and the stakeholders to protect and hold confidential certain information assets.

Leveraging content types to drive information rights management, coupled with an automatic semantic metadata generation and organizationally defined descriptions, unknown privacy exposures can be identified and processed automatically to the appropriate repository for disposition.

Building block #6: Enterprise and Web 2.0. SharePoint provides the technologies to implement collaboration tools. These tools encourage collaboration and link employees, partners, suppliers and customers to share information. The benefits of these tools are also accompanied by inherent weaknesses such as security, unauthorized use and communication noise. One of the biggest weaknesses is losing control of content and loss of brand.

Adding structure to chaos provides more control of collaboration, while still encouraging the audience with the ability to interact and share. Adding control via classification and providing an integrated view of organized content through the taxonomy structure, end users still have the ability to freely contribute and the enterprise can more effectively use these tools as a business advantage. ∎

The Smart Content Framework and the building blocks for the lifecycle management of content together establish a tactical information governance framework that, combined with SharePoint, deliver a comprehensive solution. Many of our clients, such as NASA, the US Air Force, Perkins+Will, OppenheimerFunds and the US Army Medical Command, have leveraged their information as an asset, mitigated risk, established standards and transformed their information into knowledge assets.