Concept Searching

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Martin Garland has more than 20 years' experience in search, classification and enterprise content management within the broader information management industry. He has focused on sales, marketing and general management, and has expertise in both startup and turnaround operations throughout Europe, the US and Asia Pacific. One of the founders of Concept Searching, Garland is responsible for both marketing strategy and North American and International operations.

Knowledge Management
Then, Now, and the Future

The past 40 years have seen radical changes in the knowledge management landscape. From the creation of the printing press over five centuries ago, knowledge management has been shaped by the evolution of technology. Historically viewed as a nebulous term, organizations were somewhat reluctant to embrace knowledge management without a strong ROI or the ability to solve a critical business need. As the industry matured, knowledge management became a formalized practice focusing on strategy, process, and measurement. Today it is still evolving but now discrete business objectives can be achieved through managing content and intellectual assets, resulting in improved information access, compliance, and records management. All of which deliver increased organizational performance, risk management, and competitive advantages.

Digital content is exploding and shows no signs of abating. The crux of the problem is that while content may or may not have value, context is invaluable. Unstructured content in an organization is unique to that organization, rich in industry terms and unique nomenclature that can't be replicated. Today, it doesn't matter if you are a government entity such as the US Air Force Medical Service or the NASA Safety Center, or a business entity such as Perkins+Will or Brailsford & Dunlavey, the fundamental objectives are the same. The goal is to manage and control unstructured content and at the same time provide the flexibility to address one or more challenges. Critically important is that the technology can adapt to the unique needs of the organization, as opposed to having the organization adapt to the technology.

The age old problem with unstructured content is the inability to capture meaningful metadata. Often placing the burden on the knowledge professional, it is still at best highly subjective, rendering the metadata meaningless and without context. Without the ability to identify and capture 'concepts within content', provide auto-classification and manage the content with powerful taxonomy tools, the improvement of search, records management, data privacy, and compliance cannot be accomplished.

To achieve this ability to manage unstructured content, a framework to incorporate the logical progression of managing these assets needs to be implemented, which Concept Searching calls the **Smart Content Framework™**. This approach is at its core knowledge management, but is extensible to information governance focusing on unstructured content. An Enterprise Metadata Repository is the center of the framework that enables the proactive management of content. This is an enterprise infrastructure component tightly integrated with the management of the lifecycle of content. From this, enterprise search, compliance, records management, and data privacy issues can be addressed and managed.

The evolution of knowledge management now requires a more sophisticated approach to solve unstructured content challenges, which for many organizations is now becoming a high priority. The ability to integrate strategy, process and measurement, but also proven technology that is powerful yet flexible, is a solution that positions an organization to gain control of its unstructured content. Clients such as the US Army Medical Command, Logica, MarketResearch.com and OppenheimerFunds have realized the value of the **Smart Content Framework™** to control their content assets and maximize the value of unstructured content to meet business objectives.