



# Advisory Paper

## Digital Workplace and Marketing Technology Predictions for 2015

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## Digital Workplace and Marketing Technology Predictions for 2015

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### Key Takeaways

- The employee digital experience will become the target of traditionally externally focused technologies and methodologies previously honed in marketing environments
  - A continued need for lighter-weight applications that target narrow user tasks (instead of bloated, feature-rich platforms) will cause the DAM marketplace to evolve and the WCM marketplace to split
  - New distribution channels will place more pressure on content producers to build more flexible publishing environments
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### Introduction

Predicting the future is always tricky. We all want to gaze forward, but none of us is consistently prescient. In the list below, we identify ten trends that we think will happen *this year*. As such, they tend to be less “futuristic,” but ideally more practical.

As always, there’s a fine line between prediction and aspiration. In all candor, for some cases below, we cite some trends that we might *wish* will happen.

For a deeper discussion, subscribers should [contact their RSG rep for an advisory session](#) or private presentation on these topics.

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### Ten Predictions

#### 1. DAM Vendors Will Roll out DAM Lite

For the last few years, we’ve been writing a lot about DAM Lite, or basic asset management functionality, often offered by Web Content Management and Enterprise Content Management (ECM) vendors. In 2015, we’ll see a growing realization from DAM vendors that they need to address simple use cases too — primarily by experimenting with lightweight, plug-and-play DAM systems in the cloud. They will then use these applications to try to compete with cloud file sharing players like Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Box, and Dropbox.

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## **2. Hybrid ECM Will Come of Age**

Every organization is investigating the best way to utilize the cloud, but many express a false choice: “Do we go with on-premise solutions *or* the cloud?” When it comes to ECM and enterprise file sharing services, 2015 will bring an increasingly viable third choice in the form of hybrid-cloud ECM. Recent years have seen tentative experimentation with hybrid combinations of on-premise and cloud solutions; however in 2015, we expect to see a significant maturation in vendors’ hybrid capabilities. Done right, hybrid can allow customers to segment different workflows and content types across local and remote environments with the right mix of security and flexibility.

## **3. HR Will Rejoin the Digital Workplace Conversation**

Savvier HR leaders already know that their best employees are increasingly judging the quality of their workplace by the usefulness of their business applications. After years focused on overhauling or replacing aging HR management technologies, we’ll see a broader set of HR leaders re-engage in employee digital effectiveness and satisfaction. Forward-thinking enterprises will create coalitions among HR, corporate communications, KM/innovation, IT, and marketing/product teams to refocus digital workplace investments on employee-centered needs.

## **4. Enterprise Social – Hype around Unified Enterprise Messaging**

Today, most organizations don’t have a single system of record for enterprise communications. 2015 will see greater efforts to integrate multiple channels of communication: email, IM, social, video hangouts, web meetings, and more, with new vendors promising simpler approaches as supplements to — or replacements for — major platforms. Expect a lot of hype and venture finance to chase start-ups in this area. However, be wary of security and compliance requirements — and of course — vendor hyperbole.

## **5. Digital Workplace Will Say “Hello” to Analytics and Big Data**

Recent advances in analytics have mostly targeted external and marketing scenarios. In 2015, we will see greater efforts to apply newer techniques within the workplace. With SaaS HR software vendors now able to aggregate HR data anonymously across organizations, it should be easier and more tempting to try to leverage all of that data. However, it will be a few years before it goes mainstream and gains wider adoption. Meanwhile, watch out for concerns about employee privacy and enterprise overreach.

## **6. A SharePoint 2016 Yawn**

Late 2015 will find Microsoft unveiling a new major edition of the platform, mostly retrofitting SharePoint Online functionality into the on-premise edition. Hopefully, Redmond will address major shortcomings around today's nearly non-existent hybrid model. The biggest surprise? We predict a return of the "portal" — if not in word, then in deed — as SharePoint increasingly glues together lighter-weight services in lieu of providing those services itself.

## **7. Marketing Virtual Data Warehouses Will Go Mainstream**

For marketers today, it's "Data, data everywhere, but not a drop to drink." That is, organizations operate an expanding number of marketing systems that hold relevant marketing and customer data, but it's hard to integrate, validate, and access that data in a consistent way. Enter the "Marketing Virtual Data Warehouse." It's not a single place, but rather a logically connected and available set of core data about prospects, leads, and customers. Leading enterprises have already built them; in 2015, the rest will start playing catch-up.

## **8. Drupal Split Will Characterize WCM Market Bifurcation**

A schism already exists between Drupal's hacker community and the more DevOps-oriented crowd pushing the very enterprise-y Drupal 8 release. In 2015, as the depth of change in version 8 becomes more obvious, the schism will widen into a full-scale divorce. The split was inevitable, and it reflects changes within commercial WCM tools as well; vendors cannot support simple and complex WCM environments from the same codebase. Customers are getting savvier here as well, and sometimes license two WCM solutions: one enterprise and one lite. Vendors will tell you that they can do both, but 2015 will put this fiction to rest, once and for all.

## **9. Enterprise Mobile: Apps Will Get Unbundled**

The first-gen of enterprise mobile saw existing desktop applications get tweaked for the mobile screen/interface. The result was a mini-me version of the older application. The next generation will focus more on user enablement and simplifying tasks. Application functionality will get taken apart and reassembled to accomplish specific tasks by employees based on their work goals. You'll see unbundled (or specialist) apps that will be narrowly focused on a few set of tasks, rather than focusing on all-purpose activity.

## **10. Connected Devices Will Become a More Ubiquitous Channel**

Everyone talks about multichannel publishing, but organizations will need to adapt to channels beyond the traditional web, mobile, and tablet. Increasingly, organizations will be pushed to keep up with demand for optimal experiences for Xbox, Apple TV, Roku,

Chromecast, and more. This will put even more pressure on content teams to create publishing environments with flexible content, templates, and distribution vehicles.

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## **Conclusion**

In previous years, RSG has typically proven only 70–80% accurate with our predictions. So you'll want to cross-check all strategic advice against your own experiences and what you see in the marketplace.

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