

Saving money by managing content more effectively

True stories of success from managers on the front
lines of document collaboration

Whitepaper

Xythos

Executive Summary

Where can I cut IT costs when revenues are down? How should I respond to management's increasing demands to improve service quality with ever-smaller budgets? What can I do to ensure our organization's vital information is protected and we're not going to be sued for a data breach or some other compliance failure? Even if I can address these issues, will I still have a job?

IT executives deal with these types of concerns every day – probably even more so during tough economic times. Some believe that the best approach is to increase security policies to reduce risk and find ways to get the most utility from existing business processes and technologies. While this response may appear valid and possibly suggests that last one standing “wins”, the cost of “doing nothing” may actually impact organizations more than they recognize. Worse, it may leave them at a competitive disadvantage once the economy begins to improve.

Consider enterprise content management (ECM) technology as an example. Industry analysts estimate that four trillion documents are stored in physical file cabinets each year and that the average document is copied about nineteen times. If a document is lost, organizations spend an average of \$220 in labor alone to replace it – and that does not include printing and re-filing costs. When it comes to managing documents, business as usual isn't necessarily a recipe for cost savings.

In fact, saving paper documents can be expensive and risky. Not only is paper easily lost, it is also fragile and easily destroyed. In the case of a flood or a fire, vital records can disappear leaving an organization unable to present evidence in court or pass its next Sarbanes Oxley (SOX) audit. For example, as a result of the Oklahoma City Courthouse bombing in 1995 about 40,000 records were destroyed. This ultimately caused the settlement of about 100 cases due to lack of evidence. Printed documents stored in file cabinets increase the risk that companies will expose themselves to potentially significant fines, expensive discovery procedures and litigation.

Web enabled solutions that focus on the needs of businesses and users are most likely to provide the cost-savings benefits organizations are seeking. Solutions designed to work closely with common desktop applications and offer the ease of consumer Web 2.0 services are also most likely to enjoy rapid adoption. They represent a distinct departure from traditional ECM systems and are well suited to the service oriented environments of today's modern enterprise.

This combination of ease of access, use and integration is a hallmark of new ECM applications intended for the masses such as Microsoft SharePoint and Xythos Enterprise Document Manager. Their low cost and ease of deployment practically ensure that any employee can enjoy advanced collaboration capabilities. This helps magnify the cost savings potential of ECM while reducing the risks associated with physical document storage.

Behind the friendly faces of this new breed of ECM applications lies tremendous opportunity for organizations to consolidate content, organize it for improved

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value and manage it more consistently in response to increased security and compliance requirements. The cost savings that can be derived from a truly enterprise-wide ECM initiative can be compelling.

Department-level file servers can be replaced with virtual file systems. Email based file storage and exchange can be virtually eliminated. Document link exchanges can replace physical document exchanges and delivery fees, just as Webex has helped reduce employee travel expenses. The cost savings from user friendly ECM are measurable, and immediate. The business process transformation can be strategic and long lasting.

Clearly there are process efficiencies to be gained from deploying ECM solutions; otherwise it would not be a \$7 billion per year industry. So why are some organizations still hesitant to take the first step towards ECM? Perhaps in today's tough economic environment no one wants to risk spending on IT unless they can be absolutely certain the benefits will truly add up. After all, being known as the champion of a failed project doesn't look good whether it occurs in good times or in bad.

One of the best ways to avoid the pitfalls of ECM and begin realizing the cost-saving benefits is to learn from real world experiences of those who have already begun the process. In the next few pages you will discover how three very different institutions came to depend on their ECM systems to respond to challenging economic realities while advancing their ability to deliver much needed collaboration and document management services to their user communities.

"In times of challenging budgets, you need to focus carefully on delivering the fundamental requirements that your customers need
Bruce Maas, CIO
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Requirements-based decision making yields ECM cost savings

Often, budget cuts force IT Departments to move in different directions and investigate creative solutions. That was certainly the case for the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee's (UWM) IT Department when, in 2003, a \$1 million budget cut left the management team scrambling to try and maintain service levels for their faculty, students and staff.



Lucky for the university, CIO, Bruce Maas, had already begun to champion the idea of standardization of IT service delivery across the large campus. "In times of challenging budgets, you need to focus carefully on delivering the fundamental requirements that your customers need," said Maas. His department had recently conducted "customer" interviews intended to document user requirements within various campus departments that it served. "We found that many of the services that IT was providing could have better economies of scale through standardization. These included items like desktop services, hardware and even content management and collaboration."

Maas' team discovered that commonly used technologies could be delivered as 'leveraged services' more cost effectively by standardizing service delivery, training and support across the campus. Software licenses could be consolidated, hardware costs reduced overall and select IT support personnel could become service experts while freeing others for alternate tasks. However, "none of these advantages could have been realized if we had not focused on customer requirements first," Maas added.

During the team's user requirements gathering sessions, they discovered that the way content was managed and shared was technically the same, regardless of what school or program users were associated with. Collaboration between classmates, faculty and other campus users was virtually ubiquitous and it consumed a considerable amount of IT resources in many different departments. It also had created its own set of challenges including confusion about where to locate data and a lack of regular procedures to protect and backup the systems.

Faculty and students had no single point of reference to begin seeking the information they needed like they do using Google on the web, for example. "This was not cost or time efficient," Maas said. "Furthermore, our faculty and students are fully mobile today and the learning process takes place 24/7. They can't be restricted by a LAN or the location of a server when it comes to accessing and sharing information." It was becoming clear that storage needed to be more elastic, security needed to be more policy-driven and access to content needed to become much more flexible.

The team's research helped them to determine that 85-90% of the university's ECM needs could be addressed via an enterprise service delivery model. This would allow them to introduce a common content repository for storing and sharing files which could be accessed using standard web browsers and desktop applications. "Previous systems just weren't designed to address mobility or modality," said Maas. "We knew we had to do something different in order to respond to increasing expectations of our students and the needs related to the multiple roles of our faculty and staff."

Maas later became aware of the International Institute of Business Analysts (IIBA) and has fine tuned campus methodology related to business requirements management. "When you know what all stakeholder requirements are and what you are trying to achieve, you then have a better position to acquire a solution that will meet those needs," said Maas. "That allows you to best align budget availability with organizational needs and project goals."

Maas associates the concept of cost avoidance with "taking the road less taken" in the sense that many organizations often just consider the least expensive solution to reduce costs rather than examining what the organization and its users ultimately need to be successful. "If you are truly interested in cost avoidance from a total cost of ownership perspective, you must take business requirements into account," he said. "When the decision making process is based on cost or familiarity with a technology solution alone, in my opinion, you will likely end up dealing with unforeseen consequences. That's precisely what we attempt to avoid."

Focusing on accessibility and ease of use

Nonetheless, the team had to make decisions about what costs needed to be eliminated. “We wanted to be strategic yet we had to act swiftly. We decided that it made most sense to approach content management and collaboration on a comprehensive basis because the process was so integral to the overall goals of the institution. We knew that if we could deliver ECM as a commonly available web service that over time significant cost savings could be realized,” Maas recalled. The key would be to find a technology accessible to the widest variety of users and which required the least amount of support and maintenance.

While the team’s primary goal was to improve process efficiencies, their first order of business was to improve content accessibility for campus users – no matter where they might happen to be. “If students want to work off campus, they should be able to do that. Our legacy file servers were simply not intended to support remote collaboration for wireless devices,” said Maas. It was changing user needs like these coupled with the project’s overall requirements that resulted in the selection of Xythos and its online document management software.

Another prerequisite was ease of use. “We have a wide variety of individuals who would need to access the new solution,” remarked Maas. “Any service we offer has to be simple enough for the most “computer challenged” individual to collaborate with as our typically tech savvy freshman.” Like many higher education institutions, UWM supports users who work in multiple environments often including different computing systems. The requirements interview data confirmed that users wanted to be able to collaborate from these systems the same way, regardless of whether they were using Macs, PC’s or even mobile computing devices. “Why should we force one device platform on everybody if we don’t need to?” Maas remarked. “It only made sense to create a requirement for fully web-based services and then fit the solution to that requirement.”

Risk quantification a factor

Quantifying risk is always an important factor and one that Maas knows well. He goes back to the focus on requirements – if an organization is willing to go the extra step in identifying what risks are inherent in a particular environment, it can then be quantified. “Consider Social Security numbers as just one example,” said Maas. “Obviously unsecured SSN numbers are a significant risk for universities and our students, faculty, and staff.” Maas indicated that he uses a working number of \$300 per compromised piece of personally identifiable information. “If you do the math, a breach of information for 1,000 individuals could have an overall fiscal impact of \$300,000.”

Unintended data loss and data theft aren’t the only content security risks the IT team needed to consider. Email and data transfer security was another critical issue. “Users often don’t realize the risks they take when they email file attachments,” said Maas. “Once messages and their attachments leave our network they can be exposed to all sorts of threats.” A secure centralized content management system enables users to exchange links to documents rather than sending the information itself. Links can also be password protected for added security. Solutions like Xythos also can track all activity related to content, helping IT teams better monitor system use and potential misuse.

Because Xythos enables the organization to determine the level of security needed for content based on the business requirements, UWM can customize its environment to fit just about any constituency. Maas said. "With PantherFile, we now have a way to distribute highly-sensitive information in full compliance with our campus security policy."

Cost Savings become green in more than one way

UWM's Xythos system has begun to pay back in other cost-saving ways as well. For example, administrators and staff have been processing search committee and other committee meeting records electronically. Instead of wasting clerical resources printing and distributing the results of hundreds of these meetings, the university is storing them electronically and sharing links to the record and associated addendum via email or wiki postings. According to researchers at Gartner, time spent printing, updating and distributing these kind of documents physically can cost an average of \$4,500 per employee per year.

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Gartner

While not printing documents may seem like a nominal step towards becoming a greener institution, Gartner also estimates that actively managing office printing can lead to a potential reduction of 10% - 30% in recurring spending on document output. For a campus the size of UWM, that can add up fast. However, the greatest cost savings benefits UWM has experienced are really related to employee efficiency "Xythos makes it easier on our faculty and our staff," Maas remarked. "Searching becomes a lot more viable because users do not have to remember where things are, especially with the content tagging and other metadata support that Xythos provides. Xythos is a huge productivity booster. Users are simply better organized, which means they're getting more done in less time, with higher security levels, and that's a good thing"

Learning from an Infoworld 100 Winner

For UWM, the goal was to provide a secure enterprise content management service. "What we found was that by becoming more efficient and leveraging common web services, we were able to better manage our costs," said Maas. So what does Bruce recommend for other organizations seeking to gain cost savings advantages from ECM? Here are his top tips:

1. Understand your organizational culture. Get to know how your constituents work and what they need to be successful. Simply forcing new applications on knowledge workers is not the answer; you have to get to know what their business requirements are and how they work first.
2. Take an aggregate from your constituents and leverage those services. Chances are, you'll discover that a majority of departments manage content in similar ways. Although they may have different ways of describing their processes, they can often use the same technology to meet their needs.
3. Take the time to work through business processes with the goal of simplifying where it makes sense to do so. Avoid what doesn't make sense from a global perspective, but be sensitive to localized unique needs which need to be part of your services.
4. Help your customers to understand that consistency and doing things in common ways actually helps to foster creativity. You will be amazed at the

new uses that very smart people will find once you let them have access and work together.

5. Use the International Institute of Business Analysts (IIBA) requirements guidelines and then map requirements to potential vendor options.
6. Driving costs to the bottom line is not always the best approach. “A leading analyst group has cited that your total project costs can be reduced by an average of 19% if you use a rigorous requirements management process” said Maas. “That is if you get the requirements done right from the beginning, the likelihood of re-work or suboptimal fit with user needs is reduced. If it becomes a decision based on cost alone, then it can become a short-term band aid with long-term consequences.”

Bruce has words of advice for any organization seeking to avoid unnecessary costs. “Approach ECM from a point of view that this is your institution’s knowledge and it’s intellectual capital,” he recommends. “By having content in a manageable location you can protect it. You can ensure compliance with policies and regulations while improving accessibility and collaboration. These are the things that are going to reduce your long-term total cost of ownership. Focusing on requirements-based strategy will get you there.”

Fairfield University

Content consolidation yields improved security and unplanned savings

Saving cold hard cash with an enterprise content management (ECM) system often is the result of related IT initiatives such as file server consolidation. “Our initial strategy was not directly related to budget concerns,” said Jay Rozgonyi, Director, Computing and Network Services (CES) at Fairfield University. “We just wanted to try to bring content together into one place or at least fewer places than what we had. When I think about the multiple servers, multiple accounts and the resources required to manage them it was clear that we needed to change. Centralizing content storage would also permit us to better manage security policies as they related to content access and preservation.”

Like many institutions, Fairfield had a hodge-podge of management policies governing system access control and where various types of files should be stored. This was largely the legacy of department-initiated installations. Complicating matters was the fact that these file servers regularly exceeded capacity limits, as more and larger files were stored in them. “Faculty and administrators were becoming frustrated waiting for my staff to help provision more storage for their content,” said Rozgonyi. From a storage perspective, individual file servers are costly to operate. Energy, maintenance and backup costs easily top \$16,000 per month per server. What’s more, these costs don’t include hardware costs or the cost of staff managing and maintaining each server.

Putting the proverbial foot down appears to have worked in Fairfield’s situation. “We got the entire IT staff together in one room and said, ‘look, we have to figure something out because we cannot keep adding network servers and maintain any sense of control or security.’ When one of my staffers suggested Xythos, we decided to test the technology as a pilot project for our campus staff and faculty.”

Fairfield's IT team conducted a collaborative assessment with content owners so that the team could understand how staff and faculty each interacted with their information. "By beginning the assessment with stakeholders first, we were able to determine that the number one concern was collaboration with outside organizations and with students." This understanding enabled the team to develop baseline recommendations about what types of content should be better protected and how Xythos could be configured to address those requirements.



Fairfield
UNIVERSITY

In order to ease the data migration for its CES team, Fairfield limited pilot participation to campus faculty and staff. Individual users received their own accounts and each department was provided its own shared directory with subfolders that could be modified as needed by the end user – no CES team assistance was required. A self-service configuration like Xythos enabled Fairfield to free IT resources for other mission-critical projects.

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Jay Rozgonyi
Director, Computing and Network
Services, Fairfield University

"The staff participants provided us with extensive feedback particularly when it came to the 'self service' configuration," said Rozgonyi. "When the Vice President of Student Affairs said that Xythos should be deployed for the student population, I knew we had a winning combination of powerful technology and ease of use. Plus, Xythos helps give our constituents the perception that the CES group is doing innovative things to keep the campus in synch with the times."

Cost savings by any other name...

At first, Fairfield's interest in Xythos resulted from the open standards-based nature of the technology and the ease in which the entire system could be expanded. "With Xythos, we can add terabytes of data storage whenever we need it. The flexibility is really amazing and frankly, that's one of the huge advantages Xythos offers." Xythos also provides significant benefits that network file shares alone cannot provide. For example, users can create all-inclusive ad-hoc teams and groups to work on projects, assignments, research and other types of collaborative activities from a single set of data rather than multiple versions of the same document.

Also beneficial, Rozgonyi reports that Fairfield staff is now exchanging fewer email attachments which not only aids in version control, but also in helps protect the content being shared. Entire teams can now safely share documents and content with a complete audit trail of who accessed the content and what they did to it. "You don't have a chance to achieve that level of collaboration service unless you consolidate your storage," stated Rozgonyi, "Absent a common content repository, there is no standard mechanism to control the access to user information or achieve these other benefits we've begun to experience with Xythos"

What Rozgonyi's team discovered was that the initial project for consolidating enterprise content created new opportunities to increase efficiency and reduce

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operating costs across a variety of departments at the university. With the self-service capabilities of Xythos, faculty members do not have to wait for the CES group to set up user accounts, shared workspaces or even migrate data. "Those mundane and repetitive tasks are now put squarely in the hands of the user," said Rozgonyi. "Things like uploading files into Xythos and exchanging secure file links rather than taking time to setup FTP sites for university staff has had a beneficial impact on our overall resource spending."

Content Management combined and streamlined

Rozgonyi's department is already enjoying the cost savings resulting from server consolidation. "We are literally able to shut down file servers and fold the services they provided into Xythos. We used to have to support three different types of servers, we now have just one standard with Xythos. We gain the near-term benefit of fewer machines to manage and less software to license."

We will recognize the hardware cost savings over time, particularly as existing file servers are coming up for renewal," Rozgonyi stated. "Our preliminary estimates are to save about \$500,000 over the next two years in hardware related costs alone. Xythos is helping turn file management and storage essentially into self-service procedure, allowing our network administrators to pursue other tasks. It's really a win-win for everyone."

And the cost savings don't end with the CES department. Other groups at Fairfield are also beginning to achieve collaborative advantages with Xythos. "Our public relations, printing and graphics departments really love Xythos," Rozgonyi said. "Rather than printing and delivering drafts and samples for review, they simply upload the files into Xythos and send a link to their project group. Not only have we saved money on printing and distribution costs, we're cutting a lot of elapsed time from the review and editing process as well." The improved organization and content search capabilities provided by Xythos also helps these groups to be more responsive to their on campus "clients" and offsite vendors.

The Fairfield University Library is benefiting from Xythos' easy-to-use interface as well. It uses Xythos to provide a common location for reference materials, study guides and other academic materials for faculty and students. "They've really organized the heck out of Xythos," remarked Rozgonyi. "Librarians find it incredibly easy to create the file structures that make sense to them. All of these study guides and policies would have been placed in file cabinets in a back room; and that does no one any good. Now, all of these documents are stored in Xythos where they are cataloged and tagged so that users can find what they need, all on their own."

Fairfield is enjoying additional money saving benefits from Xythos by actively managing office printing. Gartner estimates that organizations can achieve between 10% to 30% reductions in recurring spending on document output by choosing more cost effective print management or by eliminating printing altogether. "This is certainly the case in our department where we used to print everything. Now we just don't print; it's really that simple," Rozgonyi stated. "We found that this content consolidation project has not only expanded collaboration,

but it is reducing printing-related costs. With Xythos, we can distribute on-demand forms and other communications and usually eliminate bulk print orders that are often outdated the moment you fulfill them.”

A recipe for moving ahead with ECM

However, with all of these cost-saving benefits, organizations seeking to embark on a server consolidation project should be forewarned. “Absolutely resist the temptation to move the data and update access rights all together,” Rozgonyi stated. “Each of the servers you consolidate will have different shares because they are administered by different people using different rules. As a result, you can’t just do a wholesale dump of different server’s content into one centralized location because there isn’t any standardization.”

He recommends spending time in advance developing a common set of policies and templates to guide how data should be stored and shared with different types of users based upon identities and roles “This permits a more trouble free deployment and migration and helps establish standard system user procedures from the very beginning,” he said. If time permits, migrating individual departments at a time can also help minimize transition headaches.

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Rozgonyi has big plans for Xythos. “Right now, we’re using Xythos as a common content repository to support our network file server consolidation project, but I can see the potential for expansion,” he said. Plans include incorporating Xythos workflow capabilities into administrative processes like student employment, housing and career assessment training. His group also plans on customizing their deployment to incorporate the Xythos Wiki, and further integrate the system with Fairfield’s enterprise portal and ERP system. “Xythos has created entirely new avenues for us to explore,” Rozgonyi said, “and that is why I love what I do.”

Santa Barbara City College

Getting Enterprise Content Management to pay for itself and more

Gartner

While it seems like businesses will try anything to reduce spending these days, sometimes sticking with tried and true processes can yield unexpected cost-saving benefits too. For Paul Bishop, Vice President of IT at Santa Barbara City College (SBCC), the traditional technology procurement rule was “something old has to be replaced with something new using the same budget”. So when administrators requested a new enterprise content management (ECM) system, Bishop decided that it might also be the right time to find a more effective alternative to the college’s aging file servers.

SBCC had relied on Novell’s iFolder software to manage and store files for several years, but as faculty and staff began to use more mobile technology and collaborate from beyond the campus, that software was becoming less functional. Bishop had heard about Xythos being used on other campuses and was curious to learn if it would be able to meet the school’s administrative document management requirements, as well as its more common file server and storage needs. If so, he might have the right answer to the department’s procurement rule.

Bishop's evaluation ultimately proved correct, but that was really just the beginning of his ECM costs savings story. What he soon learned was that a common document and file management solution could be used by departments throughout the campus to streamline a wide variety of business processes resulting in multiple cost-saving opportunities. That the Xythos application could pay for itself by helping retire out-dated file servers simply helped get the project started more quickly.



New operational efficiencies became evident almost immediately once the Xythos system was introduced. For example, Bishop soon discovered that system support and maintenance required only an extra five hours per month for one of his existing administrators. In fact, the entire process

of deploying Xythos and integrating it with existing SBCC infrastructure was completed by sharing the project responsibilities among existing IT team members. The project didn't need an additional system administrator or even require overtime pay for existing staff.

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The ongoing benefits from Xythos haven't all been added up yet, but some are already obvious and measurable. "The initial investment was small, but our payoff has been huge," Bishop remarked. "We have fewer overall helpdesk calls, less staff time needed to maintain the system and better integration with our campus IT infrastructure." Bishop estimates the campus will be saving more than \$160,000 a year; not just from deploying Xythos but by streamlining inefficient processes and providing a more feature-rich document management experience. "Almost half of our campus population was underserved because we did not offer a web-enabled document collaboration service," Bishop explains. "With Xythos, we've leveled the playing field. Xythos helps us to better support our high-mobile community with a solution everyone can use."

Migrating to the web yields unintended benefits

"The common factor shared by each school we've examined is that saving money was not in their strategic plan. Believe it or not, cost savings is not one of our strategic goals either," said Bishop. "We just wanted to provide better services to our customer base – administrators and students alike – to improve job satisfaction and increase productivity by delivering an easy to use ECM solution that could be accessed from just about anywhere our users happen to be located."

However, once again these lofty goals provided some down to earth business process improvements. The introduction of Xythos proved particularly appropriate because SBCC had begun the self-study phase of its accreditation acceptance with the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), a branch of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The process had been paper intensive and time consuming, but was necessary in order for the school to retain eligibility for funding and continue to attract students. Bishop

credits Xythos ECM for giving his team the long-term strategy for managing ACCJC related documents so that whoever conducts the process during the next accreditation cycle will not have to “reinvent the wheel.”

According to Bishop, previous years’ accreditations were fraught with reams of documents that needed to be catalogued, manual collaboration processes that took months to complete, and poor overall quality of the finished report. “For the first time Xythos gives us a real document management and collaboration solution,” reports Bishop.

Electronic documents once gridlocked between a few contributors can now easily be shared among twenty or even thirty writers, enabling a better final product. The team uses version control within Xythos as well as “ticket” features to ensure that accreditation teams are working on the correct set of documents. “The reports really reflect a true collaborative effort,” said Bishop. “It spreads the challenge of review process among a larger group of people and just makes the whole process better.”

The SBCC accreditation team is also using Xythos to tackle the piles of physical documents associated with its review as well. Almost every day they scan documents into Xythos using a variety of scanners and multi-function printers (MFPs) on campus. Scanning documents into an ECM solution is quick and easy way to cut costs, but as Bishop points out, it’s not the reason why they use scanning. “We classify documents when we scan them. That makes it easier to perform content searches and generate the reports for the accreditation board,” he said. “Scanning documents into Xythos really saves time, especially when you’re dealing with portable file folders filled with documents that are easily mixed up. Plus, we don’t have to hire temporary staff that needs to be trained. Our own staff handles this process much more efficiently than any contract worker could.”

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According to Bishop, accreditation has helped Xythos adoption tremendously because it is a paper-based process. “The ease with which Xythos enables distributed collaboration helped expose staff to the benefits of ECM who probably wouldn’t have considered it otherwise,” said Bishop. “Administrators who were ‘too busy’ to be bothered with new technology now are excited about content management. They’ve decided Xythos can be a valuable tool because it’s making their jobs easier. Heck, it’s already made my job easier too.”

Cutting down on wasted time and paper

SBCC supports a wide variety of document management processes across its campus from complex admissions reviews to simple recording of meeting notes. According to Bishop, Xythos now enables administrators to streamline the admission process with its built-in workflow - accepting scanned submission forms and automatically routing them through financial aid assessments and once accepted, into the student information system. “We couldn’t afford to scale our legacy admissions system to manage other campus document processing requirements, but we can with Xythos,” Bishop said.

Even simple document storage tasks can benefit from content management. Faculty and staff attend a wide variety of meetings and many continue to record meeting notes by hand. “Transcribing handwritten notes can be time consuming and expensive,” observed Bishop. “It was unexpected for us to encounter scanned handwritten notes, but if staff members wish to do so, they can now store them electronically and share without hassle.” The same benefit applies to meeting minutes, which used to be printed and distributed on paper documents. ‘Applying Xythos to common, everyday tasks helps staff appreciate the power and simplicity of content management on a broader scale. The fact that it helps reduce waste and improves efficiency just helps everyone feel even better about using it,’ said Bishop.

The SBCC community is now using Xythos within each of its committees. Instead of distributing printed meeting agendas and supplemental documents, meeting information is created in desktop applications and then shared via the built-in email capabilities of Xythos. Meeting participants can read the information online or, then print it at their own discretion. Committee members use projectors to share content during meetings, which is more environmentally correct, according to Bishop. “We just feel better because what we’re doing is more respectful of the environment and helps us minimize our impact upon it.” While Bishop cannot report the specific cost savings resulting from print reduction, he did mention that SBCC had saved enough money to purchase 52-inch displays for about ten of their class and conference rooms.

Like many good things, the transition to electronic document management hasn’t happened overnight at SBCC. Bishop confessed that it is taking longer than he would like to adopt Xythos across the campus just because people are so accustomed to paper. However, what is promising is that the process is occurring organically. Staffers are learning that it’s safer and easier to access documents online and when it comes to finding them Xythos is almost just like using Google. “They don’t have to wait for someone to email an attachment to them,” Bishop said. “The advantages to documents stored online is remarkable, version control is better, collaboration is better and we’re greener in the process. It’s changing our culture for the better.”

Improving process efficiency drives cost savings

While saving money was not their strategic plan, Bishop says that they are working on ways to streamline their printing and workflow processes, which, in turn, can help, preserve cash. For example, he expects 25% of SBCC forms will migrate online within the next twenty-four months using a combination of Xythos and workflow solutions such as Pershing. However, he reiterates that cost reduction was not the motivating factor – the institution simply wanted to improve service performance.

“We had so many Adobe PDF forms that people had to print out, complete and return. Our staff is too busy already these days. Why not offer them an online form if it’s possible? Moving these kind of document processes online can save a lot of time and help reduce the risk of losing valuable information.” Bishop adds that administration staff now has more time on more meaningful projects rather than chasing paper documents around. “Does it save us money,”

Bishop remarked. “Maybe, but it sure makes the process a whole lot faster and provides our campus with an elegant and cost-effective solution to a number of old problems.”

Leveraging ECM for the future

Bishop has about 120 projects on deck that could each benefit from some of the efficiencies offered by Xythos. He reports that he sometimes learns about new Xythos related projects ‘in the halls’, which he attributes to the self-service nature of the solution. Projects like the new digital media archive spearheaded by SBCC’s Art Department are a good example. For the first time, the department has enough storage to upload all of their slides, images and other media in one common content repository. By using Xythos classification features content of just about any type can then be easily searched for and re-used. “I still have one problem with Xythos though,” Bishop concluded. “It’s so efficient that I don’t have to think about how I’m using it. In fact, it’s so intuitive that I don’t get many ‘how can I do that’ phone calls anymore. That’s just fine with Bishop, he says. Maybe that’s why the Maytag repairman always seemed so happy too.

About Xythos Software

Xythos Software is a leading developer of document management and collaboration software. Its online services and products are licensed to millions of users at commercial, education and government organizations around the world for managing and sharing content throughout its lifecycle. Try Xythos on Demand today at www.xythosondemand.com or visit www.xythos.com to learn more about how Xythos is making online document management safer and easier for everyone.

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