Information Management: Connecting and Optimizing Office 365

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Process and Survey Demographics

While we appreciate the support of these sponsors, we also greatly value our objectivity and independence as a non-profit industry association. The results of the survey and the market commentary made in this report are independent of any bias from the vendor community.

The survey was taken using a web-based tool collecting responses from 124 individual members of the AIIM community during the month of November 2017. Invitations to take the survey were sent via e-mail to a selection of the AIIM community members and through various social media outlets. Survey demographics can be found in Appendix 1.

About AIIM

AIIM has been an advocate and supporter of information professionals for over 70 years. The association mission is to ensure that information professionals understand the current and future challenges of managing information assets in an era of social, mobile, cloud and big data. AIIM builds on a strong heritage of research and member service. Today, AIIM is a global, non-profit organization that provides independent research, education and certification programs to information professionals. AIIM represents the entire information management community: practitioners, technology suppliers, integrators and consultants.

About the Author

Bob Larrivee is Vice President and Chief Analyst of AIIM Market Intelligence. Internationally recognized as a subject matter expert, and thought leader with over thirty years of experience in the fields of information and process management, Bob is an avid techie with a focus on process improvement, and applying advanced technologies to solve business problems, improve business processes, and automate business operations.

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Introduction

There has been a lot of talk about moving to the cloud, using Office 365, creating content and cloud collaboration over the years, but what is really happening out there? Are businesses really taking these steps and have they taken the initiative to connect and optimize their Office 365 and SharePoint environments in ways that they gain maximum benefit as a result? Or have they just installed another application for the user community to try, potentially use, and let fall by the wayside for the next shiny object that comes along? In some cases they may be using 3rd party applications.

While Office 365 is seen as a tool that provides many functions, it is also one that is perceived as lacking in some areas, needing add-ons to enhance its capabilities, like in the area of workflow and records management. For some, there is a perception that it is not simple to link it to their line-of-business applications, thus becoming yet another silo of isolated content and information that must be somehow managed. To others, it is a gateway to freedom and accessibility that once was a dream of mobility and a remote, enabled workforce that will now take the business to new heights.

The survey sample we conducted in November 2017 is intended to assess the current adoption, use, and implementation of Office 365 in business. Microsoft Office 365 is quickly becoming the new cloud platform for office productivity. Businesses need to identify when to use – or not use - Microsoft OneDrive, and determine the role of SharePoint. They are faced with the decision of upgrading to SharePoint Online or opting for 3rd party solutions for document collaboration, document processing, records management, and archiving. If they choose 3rd party solutions, the decision may be one of storing the content in the Microsoft solutions, in a separate repository, or as a hybrid solution across both.

This report presents our findings on the directions and decisions being made in relation to Office 365, add-on products, and how businesses will store and manage their content assets.

Key Findings

1. **Fifty-nine percent of respondents use Office 365 as a collaboration and file-sharing system.** Forty-six percent are using Skype for conferencing.

2. **Twenty-one percent of respondents feel their Office 365 user adoption rate is stable and has reached ninety to one hundred percent.** Forty-four percent report their users like it.

3. **Thirty-six percent of respondents report there are no set policies or procedures for managing content in Office 365.** Thirty-four percent cite preference still remains for file-shares and network folders.

4. **Fifty percent of respondents report Office 365 is in use by corporate staff and Executives.** Thirty-nine percent report it is in use by HR and 38% by Finance.

5. **Thirty-six percent report that Office 365 is being widely used for email management.** Twenty-eight percent indicate they are replacing their file-shares and network drives with Office 365.

6. **Fifty-five percent of our respondents agree that getting users to manage and share their content in Office 365 and no place else is their biggest on-going issue.** Forty-six percent feel that lack of expertise is the biggest issue.

7. **Sixty-four percent of respondents access content in Office 365 via Outlook.** Forty-seven percent access content from a simulated share/OneDrive.

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Generally Speaking

When you hear the term "Office" in relation to Microsoft, most people immediately think of productivity tools so it is no surprise that most respondents (74%) report using Office 365 for creating content in the forms of documents, presentations and spread sheets. Our research also finds that better than half (59%) are using it for collaboration and file sharing, and also Skype (46%) for live conferencing. Only a small percentage are using Office 365 as their main or secondary Enterprise Content Management (ECM), Document Management (DM), Records Management (RM) system. (Figure 1)

Figure 1. How would you describe the use of Office 365 across your organization?
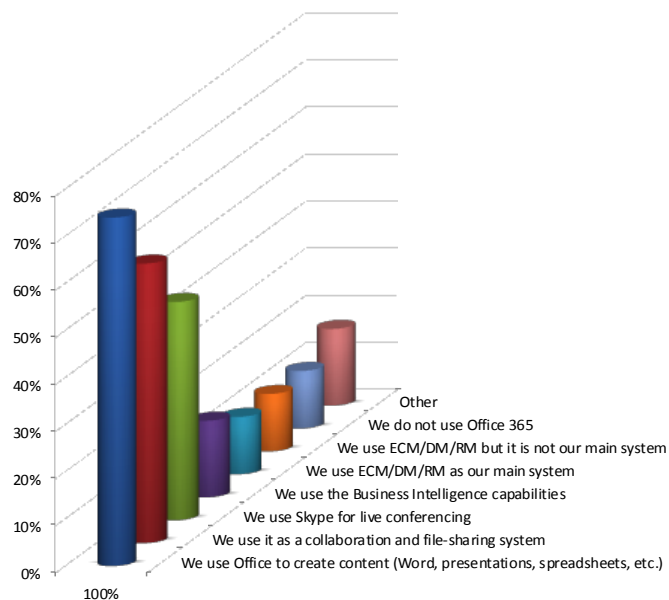
Some of the feedback we received in relation to Office 365 use indicates that there are businesses in the pilot phase for Microsoft Teams, tolls like Yammer are being used to collaborate, Office 365 is installed but there is no official mandate, guidance or training on how it is to be used, and there are still too many options in use that cause distraction from Office 365.

So if there are no mandates, there is no guidance, and there are too many options, this leads to the question of user adoption. As is often said, you can install the application, and it could be the best of the best, but it does not mean users will run to use it; that is a field of dreams mind-set. What we found is that there is stability and a user adoption rate of 90 to 100% reported by 21% of our respondents with rapid increase in adoption rates reported by 15% of respondents. (Figure 2) Some of the challenges we have heard indicate user reluctance, limited implementations, and issues in the implementation process causing user problems.

Figure 2. What is the rate of user adoption for Office 365 in your office?
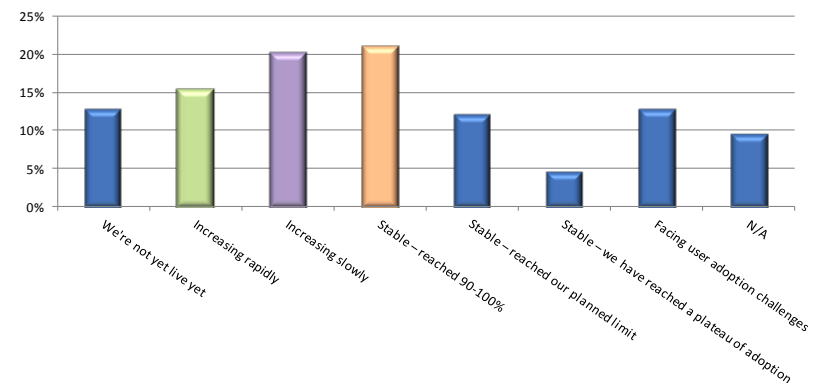
Knowing that there are some shortfalls or perceived shortfalls with Office 365, we asked our respondents about their plans to improve their Office 365 implementations over the next 12 months.

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Records Management topped the list of areas for enhancement for 25% of our respondents with Business Process Management (BPM) and Content Analytics (CA) in a tie for second with 22% of the respondents. This was followed by search as the enhancement of choice for 17% of our respondents. The largest percentage (41%) indicate they are either not doing anything at this time, or in some evaluation stage assessing various aspects of ECM, analytics and Office 365 or add-ons. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Which of the following information management technologies are you planning to purchase to improve your Office 365 implementation in the next 12 months?

Records Management	25%
Business Process Management	22%
Content Analytics Tools	22%
Search	17%
ECM/DM/RM	11%
Robotic Process Automation (RPA)	8%
Other	41%

When discussing elements of an implementation and purchasing it is also important to understand whom one is talking with, and so we asked that very question. We wanted to know what role these individuals played in the decision making process and found that the majority (67%) of our respondents are influencers while 20% are the decision makers. (Figure 4)

Figure 4. What is your role in the decision making process?

No Involvement, 14%

Decision Maker, 20%

Influencer, 67%
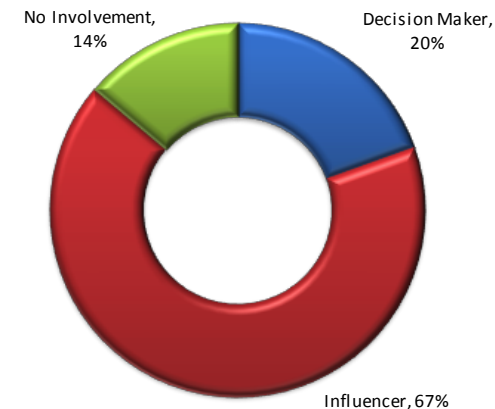
Another element we need to understand is where Office 365 is currently being used, if at all. It is common to find high use in IT and IT Services and this was the case as reported by 70% of our respondents.

We also found that at the Corporate and Executive level, half of our respondents report Office 365 in use followed by Marketing at 40%, HR with 39%, and 38% reporting Office 365 being used in Finance. (Figure 5)

In general, the message we are hearing is that Office 365 will be in use across all departments, and is being rolled out across the enterprise over time.

Figure 5. In which departments is your organization currently using Office 365?
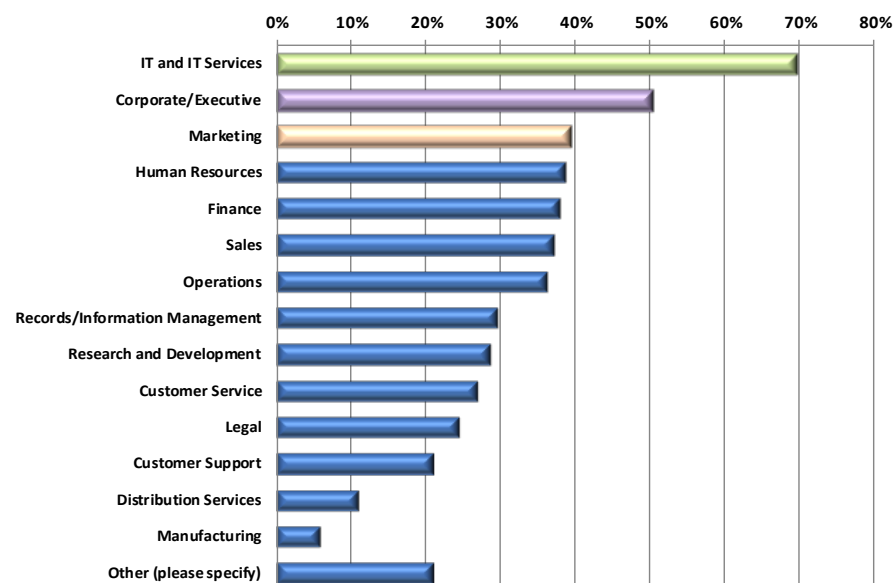

Putting it All Together

There is clear evidence that Office 365 is a platform many businesses are turning to as a tool of choice for content creation, collaboration, and management at some level. It is also evident that there are similar challenges as those faced with other technologies of the past in that user adoption does not come just because we expect it to. There has to be purpose, education, training, and transition from the current way of working to the new. Enhancements will be made that will help in this transition, enabling the user community to be more productive and see grater value from Office 365, in their day-to-day avidities and it is up to the influencers and decision makers to realize this as they assess what, when, and how they approach moving forward with their planned implementations.

Issues and Challenges

User adoption is one thing and yes, there are challenges in getting the user community to embrace change and adopt the new product and ways-of-working, but in general, how do they feel about Office 365? The response was one of liking it for 44% of our respondents, and a sense that there is a good level of user adoption. More than a third (36%) cite there are no policies or procedures for managing content in Office 365 and there is still a preference for using file-shares and network folders (34%). Nearly a quarter say they understand the need to file content in Office 365 and know that some do and don't and that it is seen as just another content silo. (Figure 6)

Figure 6. How would you describe the way your users feel about Office 365?
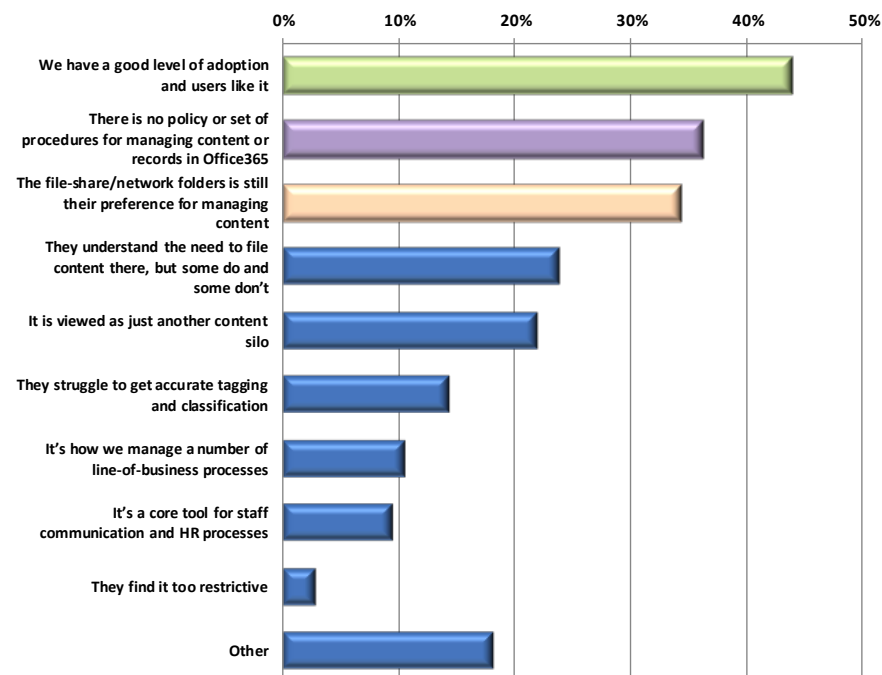
Knowing that generally speaking, many like Office 365, we turn our attention to the collaborative and content sharing aspect of Office 365 and asked the same question. The indications here are that 47% are or have moved to SharePoint online/Office 365 for collaboration support. As a project or team site, 34% feel it is effective, yet 30% feel for them; it is a mess at this time. (Figure 7) Some of the feedback in relation to this indicates a lack of governance, too many layers and options, and lack of focus.

Figure 7. From the collaboration and content-sharing point of view, how would you describe the way your users feel about Office 365?
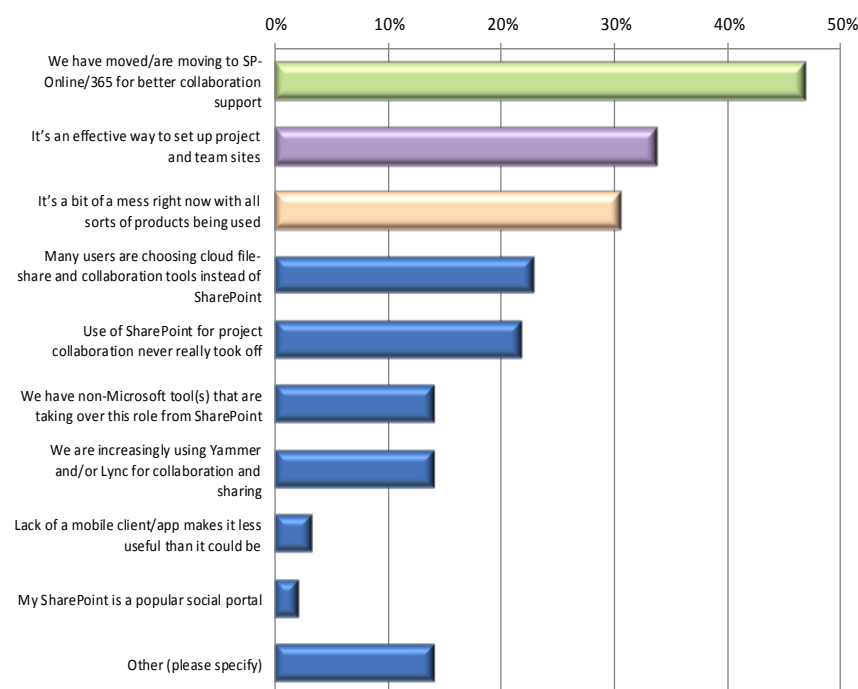
Extending this content sharing to content management, we heard that SharePoint and other ECM on-premise repositories are still in use and that Office 365 is being widely used for email management by 36% of respondents, as a replacement for file-shares and network drives by 28% and for collaboration and team sites by 23% of respondents. (Figure 8)

Figure 8. How would you describe your use of Office 365 in the following content management areas?
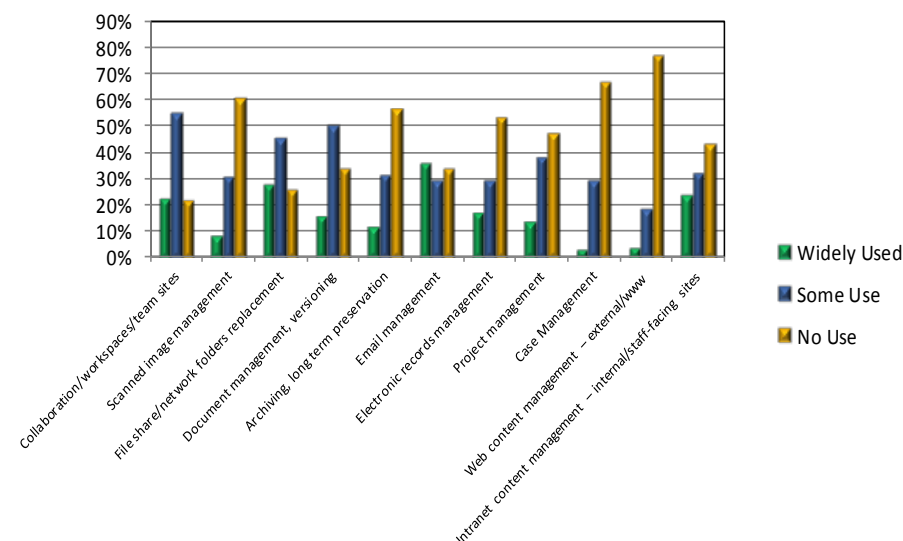
When it comes to performance, nearly a third (32%) feel that the out-of-the-box document management and versioning capabilities of Office 365 are excellent while the external web content management capabilities fall far short and are considered to be poor as reported by 41% of our respondents. Additional areas seen as providing excellent performance are email management, file sharing, and collaboration.

Project management, scanned image management, and electronic records management are all areas seen as lacking and areas for enhancement or where improvement is needed. (Figure 9) In many cases, this is where businesses seek add-on products to enhance their implementations and performance capabilities.
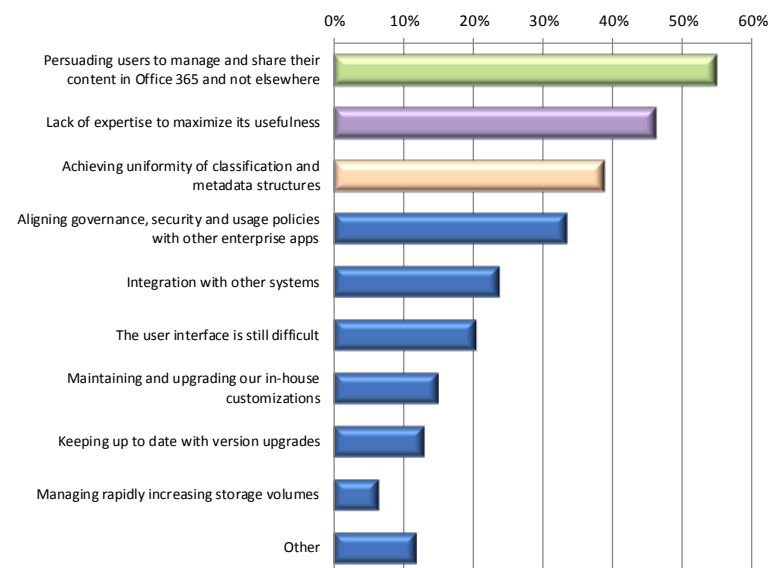
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Figure 9. How would you rate the performance or capabilities of out-of-the-box Office 365/SharePoint in the following areas?

Figure 10. What are the biggest ongoing issues for Office 365 in your organization?
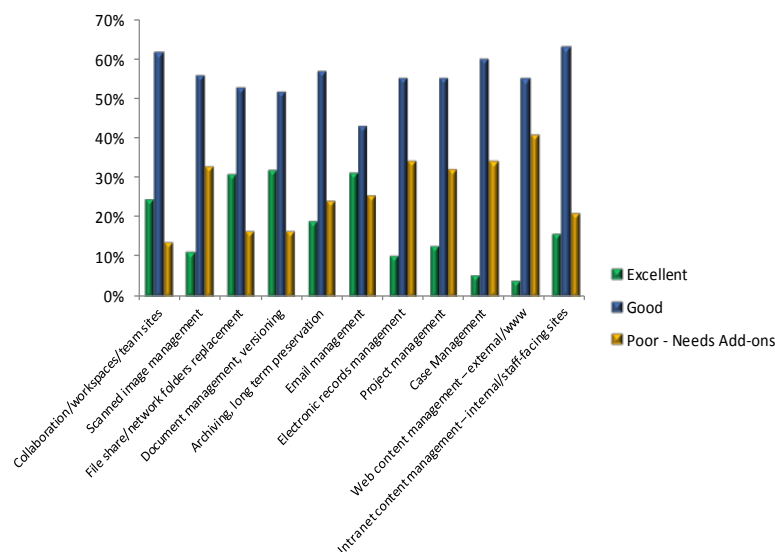
No implementation is perfect, and there are always issues that seem to linger. Looking at those, we asked about the biggest on-going issues related to Office 365 and found that better than half of our respondents feel it is getting their users to manage and share their content in Office 365 and no place else.

This is followed by a lack of expertise to maximize the usefulness of Office 365 (46%) and the ability to achieve uniformity of classification and metadata structures within Office 365 as reported by 39% of those polled. (Figure 10)
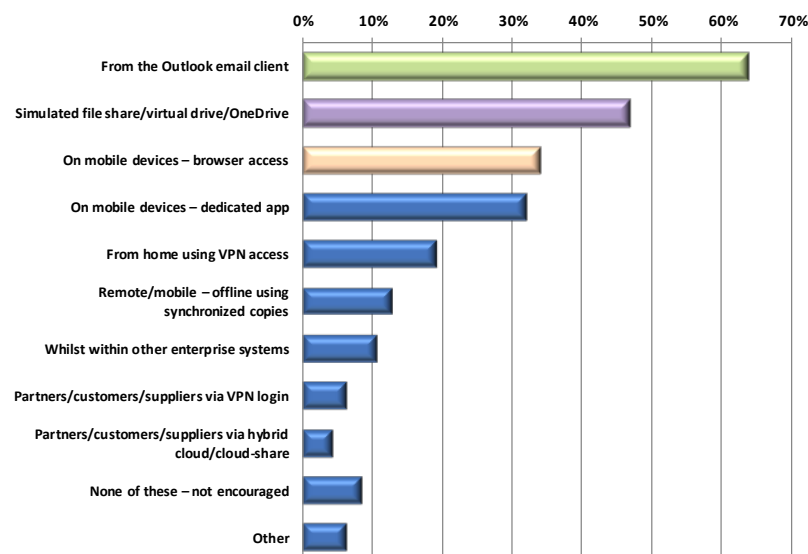
Getting the user community to store and manage their content in Office 365 is one part of the equation; the other is access to it once it is there. When we asked about access, the majority report use of their Outlook client (64%) to access their content in Office 365, while 47% report the use of a simulated share of virtual OneDrive and 34% report access via a mobile device using a browser.

Mobile device use via a dedicated app is the method reported by 32% of our respondents, indicating a focused effort to maximize the value and benefit of their Office 365 implementation in relation to the remote workforce. (Figure 11)

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Figure 11. In which of the following ways do users access content in your Office 365 system?

Opinions and Spend

Knowing there are areas of opportunity to enhance Office 365, we decided to explore where businesses are focused and how they have or are planning to enhance their Office 365 implementations over the next 12–18 months using 3rd party products. Outlook integration is in place now for 27% of our respondents as is Mobile access and collaboration tools for 23% of those polled. Search is in the plans for 32% while 30% are planning to enhance their security capabilities. (Figure 12)

Figure 12. Which of the following 3rd party enhancement products for Office 365 have you implemented/plan to implement?
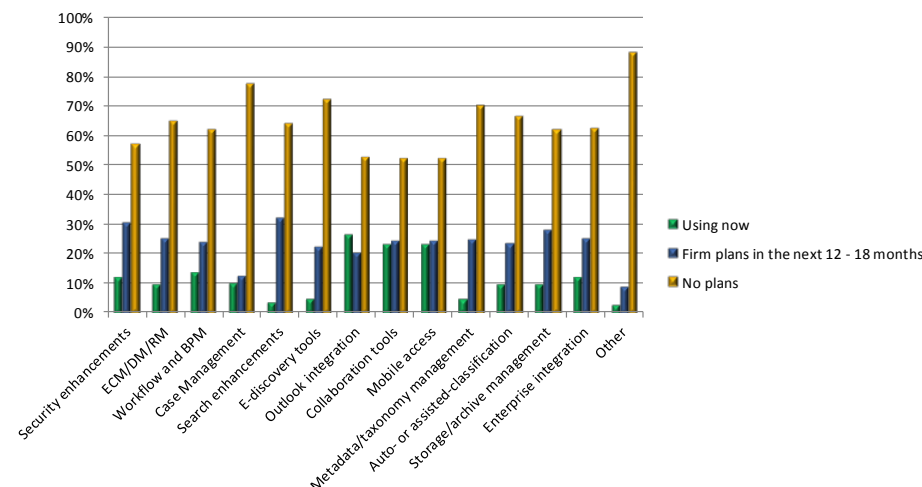

Putting it All Together

There are may challenges and issues regardless of technology and Office 365 is no exception. Typically it is not the technology but a lack of focus, a lack of planning, and a lack of guidance that is the root cause of the challenges and issues businesses are facing. When faced with a challenge or issue like user reluctance to store and manage their content in Office 365, the question to ask is why? Why don't they want to do this and what is preventing them from embracing the new way of working?

 Is it a lack of comfort, or is it a tool that is too cumbersome and so different from what they are used to that it slows them down dramatically and prevents them from getting their job done in a timely manner? Find the answer; fix the problem.

Enhancements can also be accomplished through the use of auxiliary products for Office 365, and so we asked about plans to enhance using these over the next 12-18 months as well. Yammer is currently in use by 18% of our respondents, with 15% reporting the use of Digital Signatures, and 14% indicating current use of migration tools.

While there are strong signs of plans for Digital Signatures and migration tools over the next 12-18 months, content analytics shows the strongest interest with 33% of our respondents indicating firm plans in this direction. (Figure 13)

Figure 13. Which of the following auxiliary products for Office 365 have you implemented/plan to implement?
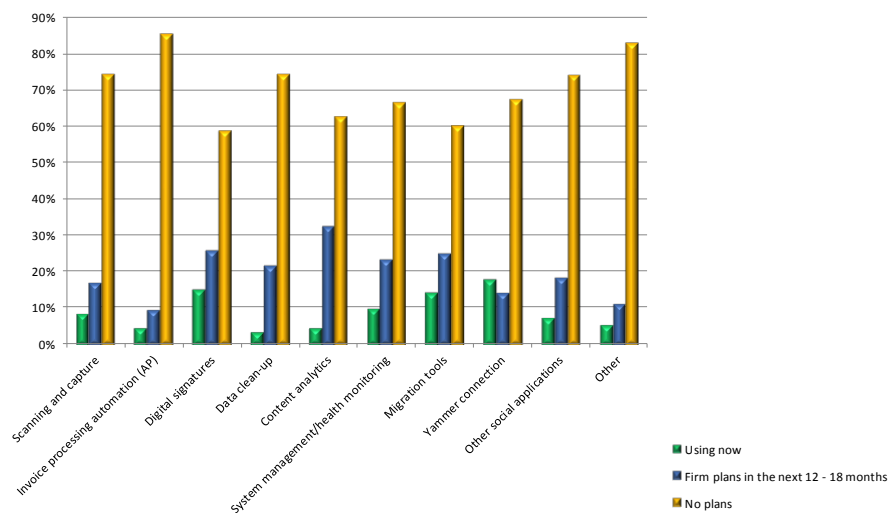
One of the greatest benefits gained by businesses is linking their content and line-of-business systems together in ways that the user community can access all information without having to navigate from system to system in hopes they have found each silo. When looking at bringing these systems together, 24% of those polled report having connected their Office 365 to their email archive, 12% connected to their CRM/service desk applications, and 11% to their Finance, Accounting, and HR systems.

The majority (52%) report not having connected Office 365 to any of their enterprise systems, leaving much room to expand their capabilities and gain more value from their investment. (Figure 14)

Figure 14. Which of these enterprise systems have you connected to Office 365?

Email archive	24%
CRM/Service Desk	12%
Finance/Accounting system	11%
HR system	11%
ERP system	9%
ECM/DM/RM systems	8%
Legal/e-discovery systems	8%
Formal project management system	5%
Web CMS	4%
None of these	52%
Other	3%

Given the large percentage of respondents indicating no connection to their enterprise systems, there must be a reason. So we asked them to identify their biggest challenges. What we found is a lack of expertise as cited by 38%, difficulty aligning data governance and security between the enterprise systems and Office 365 as reported by 33%, and incompatibilities or a lack of API standards as cited by 21% of the respondents. (Figure 15)

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be more responsive to client needs.

Some additional insights here that are no different for Office 365 than they are for other applications and technologies are the ability to maintain connections when upgrades occur on one application or the other, aligning metadata across applications, and managing legal holds.

Figure 15. What have been your biggest issues with connecting Office 365 to other enterprise systems?
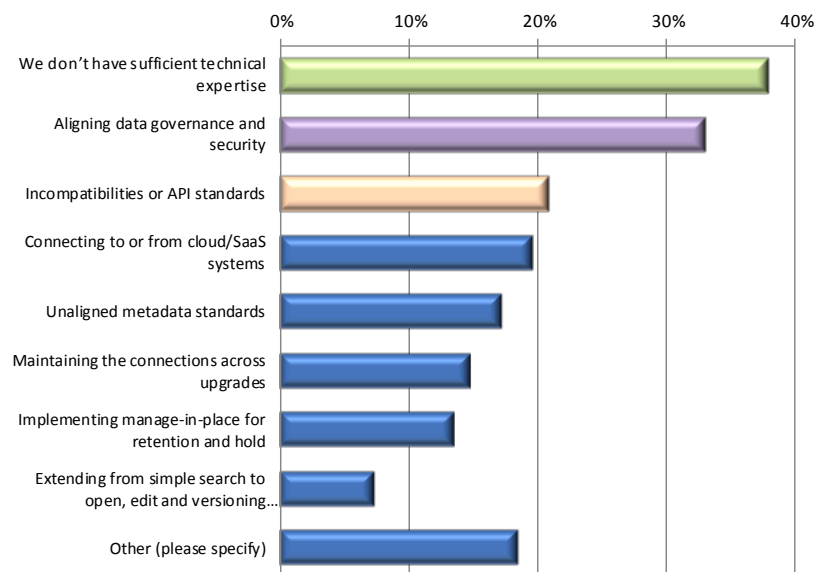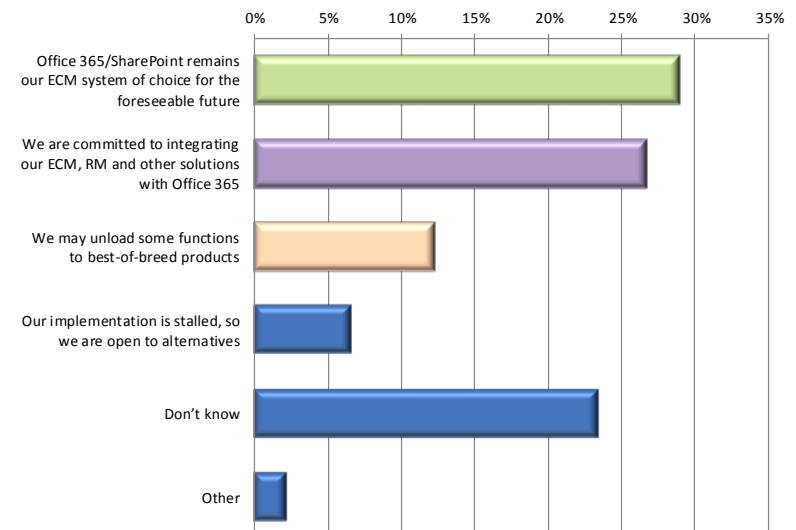

Putting it All Together

Office 365 offers a great deal out-of-the-box, but as with many technologies and applications, there are capabilities that may need enhancements. In these areas, businesses will seek to enrich their implementations through the use of 3rd party add-on products, or other auxiliary products that strengthen the capabilities, add functionality, or provide a means to link their information ecosystem in ways it does not connect today. The result will be one of building an infrastructure that supports the remote workforce, allows for innovative collaboration, and provides a way for the business to

Futures

Whether it is fully realized or not, every business has an information management strategy in place. When we asked our respondents about their strategies, Office 365 and SharePoint were identified as the ECM system of choice by 29%, in the foreseeable future. Better integration between their ECM, RM, and other business solutions and Office 365 is the way of the future for 27% while 12% indicate they may unload some functionality to "best-of-breed" products. Nearly a quarter admits that at this time, they really don't know what the future holds for them. (Figure 16)

Figure 16. Which of the following best describes your likely strategy for Office 365?

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Having a level of comfort with your supplier and technology provider is important and we find this to hold true for 27% of those polled who indicate they will follow the Microsoft Office 365 path and 23% of those stating they feel that Office 365 has met their expectations. Only a small percentage (5%) feel Microsoft is losing focus with Office 365 at this time. (Figure 17)

Figure 17. How do you feel about the following statements?
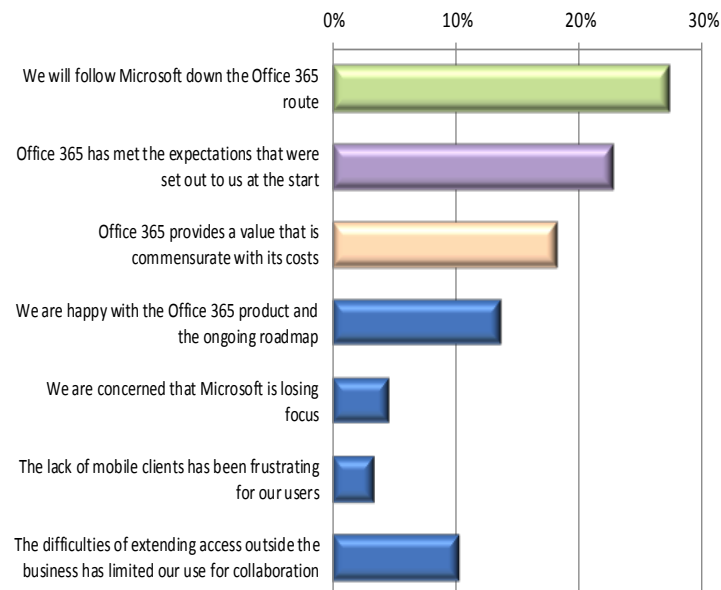
A solid infrastructure is not based on technology alone and requires a sound governance framework. As such, the technology and applications used must align with the governance in order for regulatory, legal, and industry compliance to be met and maintained.

When it comes to the alignment of Office 365 with Information Governance policies, 35% of our respondents recognize that there is still work to be done on their part. There are no policies according to 26% of those polled and 16%
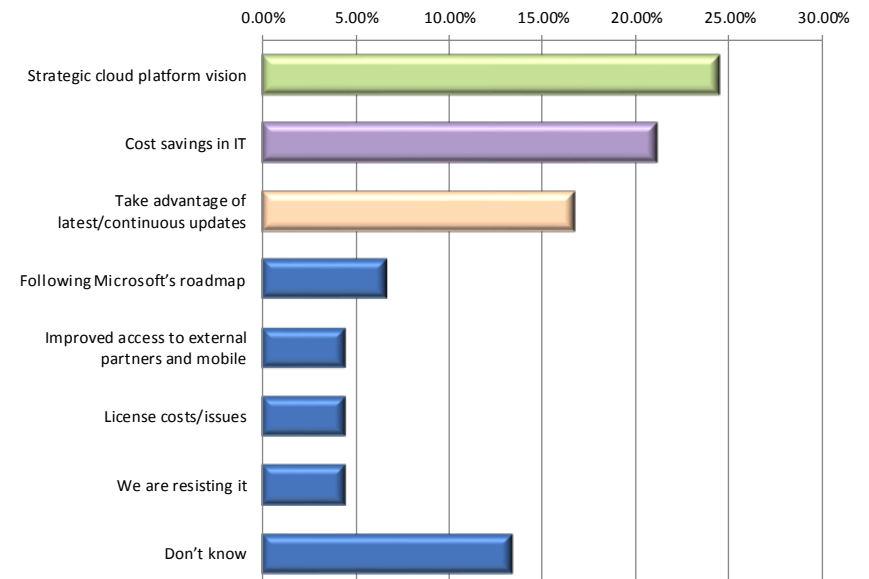
say that Office 365 aligns well enough. (Figure 18)

Figure 18. How well aligned is your Office 365 with your Information Governance policies?

We still have some work to do	35%
We don't have set IG policies	26%
It aligns with them well enough	16%
Not at all well aligned	8%
Don't know	16%

So what would drive a business to use Office 365 now or in the future? According to 24% of our respondents, it is seen as a strategic cloud platform, and for 21% they are looking for IT cost savings, while 17% feel there are advantages to the regular updates associated with Office 365. (Figure 19)

Figure 19. What is your primary driver in moving to Office 365?

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Conclusion

Office 365 is here, it has advantages, and of course, there are challenges. The key, as with any technology or application, is to determine what you are trying to accomplish with it and not just put it in place with hopes that the user community will suddenly begin using it. This approach rarely if ever works successfully.

As we have seen in this report, many have adopted the use of Office 365 into their businesses and found it to be beneficial. We also see that the lack of focus, guidance, and purpose has once again create many challenges, as has a lack of expertise and proper goal setting.

When approaching the use of Office 365, take a step back and look at the business as a whole. Where do you want to use this application, how do you want to use it, and how should it fit into your overall information ecosystem. What connections should be made between your enterprise systems, processes, and people to be the most effective and beneficial to the organization? Would there be benefit gained through the use of 3 rd party add-on products, or other auxiliary products to enhance your Office 365 environment and fill the gaps for your business. Here are several things to consider.

1 Set Your Goals

Identify what you are trying to do with Office 365 at a program and project level. From a program perspective, it may be that the entire company will be using Office 365 to create and share information within the next five years. On a project level, it may be that the Finance department begin creating and managing their spread sheets in Office 365 over the next three months.

2 Educate the Community

Share the vision and goals with the user community. Educate them on what you are trying to accomplish and why. Explain the reason for implementing Office 365, and the benefit expected as a result. This helps set realistic expectations and is a foundation for change management and user adoption.

3 Learn the Limitations

There will be limitations that need to be addressed and they are not just technological in nature. Look at process, people, and technology as a whole to determine where the limitations are and assess how they will be addressed.

4 Enhance your implementation

Use add-on, and auxiliary products and services to supplement out-of-the-box functionality and lack of in-house to maximize your investment and transition to Office 365 and fill the gaps where they are needed.
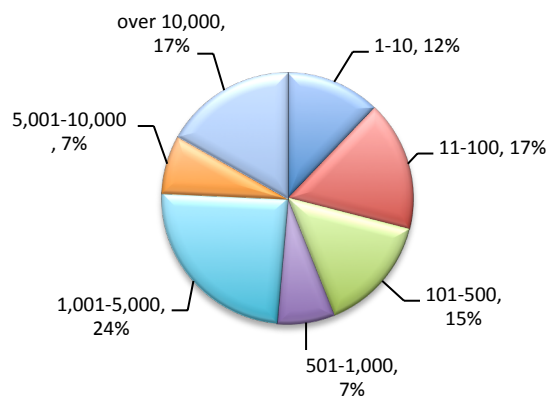
5 Monitor and Refine

Once implemented, monitor your Office 365 environment and seek ways to refine and improve what you have put into place. The end of a project is just the beginning of an on-going commitment and should be a continuous effort to enhancements.

These are a few things to consider and get you started down the road on a successful Office 365 implementation journey. We invite you to reach out to our underwriting partners who have also worked with their customers in developing programs and practices in an effort to meet the requirements of their businesses. The next step is yours.
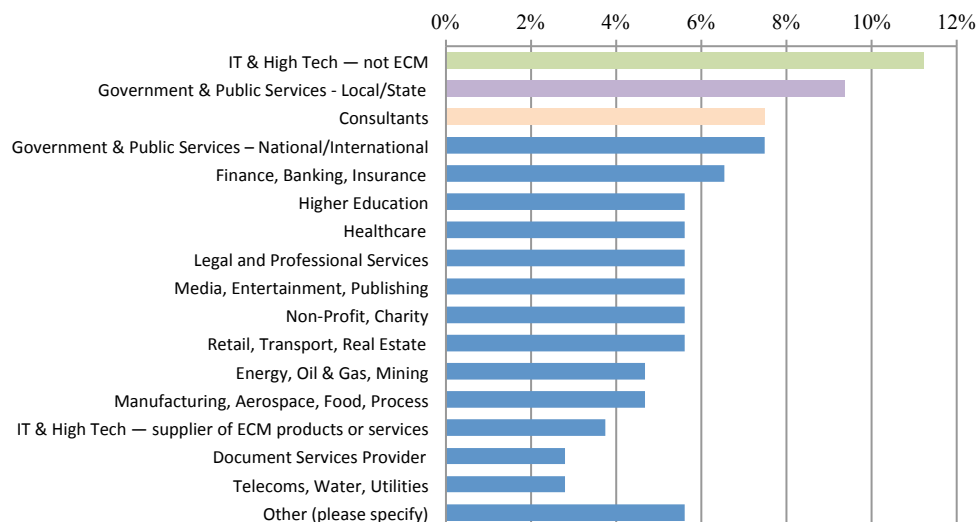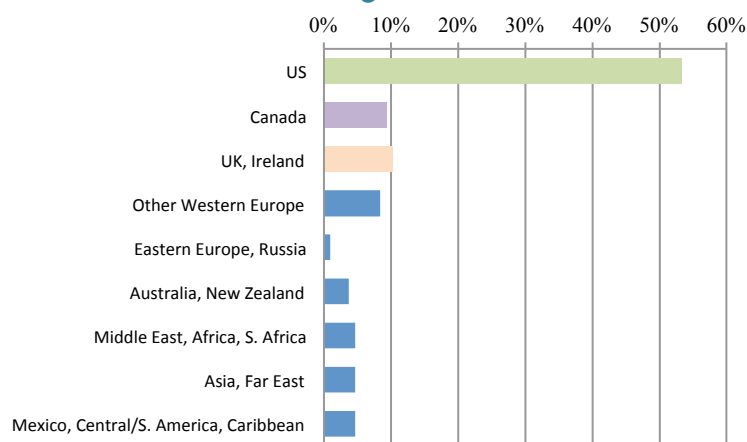
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Appendix 1 – Demographics

Company Size

- over 10,000, 17%
- 1-10, 12%
- 5,001-10,000, 7%
- 11-100, 17%
- 1,001-5,000, 24%
- 101-500, 15%
- 501-1,000, 7%

Industry

- IT & High Tech — not ECM
- Government & Public Services - Local/State
- Consultants
- Government & Public Services – National/International
- Finance, Banking, Insurance
- Higher Education
- Healthcare
- Legal and Professional Services
- Media, Entertainment, Publishing
- Non-Profit, Charity
- Retail, Transport, Real Estate
- Energy, Oil & Gas, Mining
- Manufacturing, Aerospace, Food, Process
- IT & High Tech — supplier of ECM products or services
- Document Services Provider
- Telecoms, Water, Utilities
- Other (please specify)

Region

- US
- Canada
- UK, Ireland
- Other Western Europe
- Eastern Europe, Russia
- Australia, New Zealand
- Middle East, Africa, S. Africa
- Asia, Far East
- Mexico, Central/S. America, Caribbean

Role

- IT Consultant or Project Manager
- President, CEO, Managing Director
- Line-of-business executive, department head or process owner
- Records or document management staff
- Head of records/information management
- Legal/Corporate Counsel/Corporate Compliance IT staff
- Head of IT
- Business Consultant
- Other

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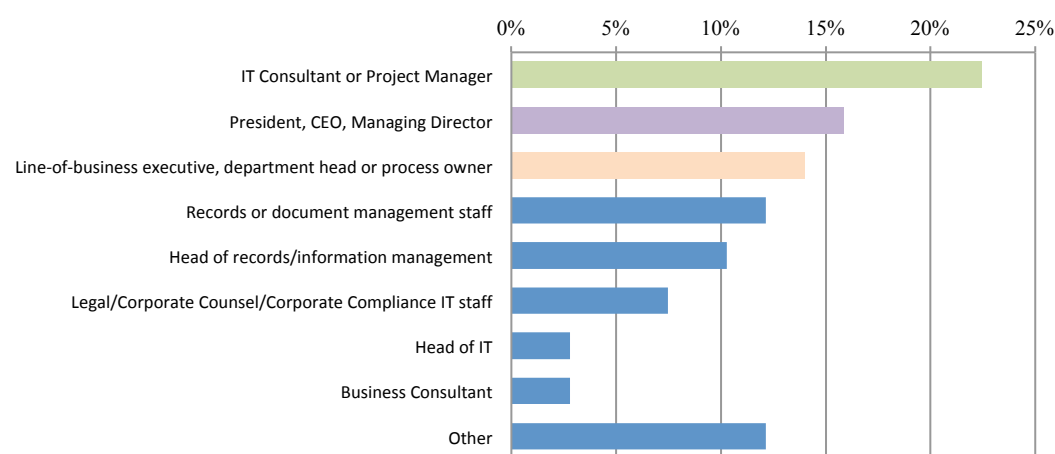
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K2

K2 Software (SourceCode Technology Holdings, Inc.)
1500 114th Ave SE
Bellevue, WA 98004 USA
Phone: 844.4K2.APPS **Email:** sales@k2.com **Web:** www.k2.com

To enable enterprise-level process automation that supports robust mission-critical applications as well as fast-changing, lightweight departmental processes, K2 developed a platform focused on providing capabilities around eight core tenants:

- **Powerful workflow without code:** Deliver workflows, whether complex or simple, using intuitive process and rules designers and on top of an engine that is built for scale.
- **Feature-rich forms:** Design a powerful user experience using forms that connect to workflows and line-of-business data. Design once and reuse across all processes for speed and UX consistency.
- **Integrate with anything:** Point-and-click integration with virtually any line-of-business system. Bring data into K2 forms and workflows, interact with 3rd party systems or connect to processes within custom or 3rd party applications.
- **Deeper analytics:** Rich reports and visual analytics deliver the information needed to identify issues and drive optimization.
- **Make apps mobile:** Responsive user experience that that works on all major devices, whether on or offline.
- **Security and governance at the core:** Comprehensive role-based management tools that provides security and governance on all aspects of the platform.
- **Choice of deployment:** Use K2's cloud platform or deploy K2 on-premises or a hosting/infrastructure provider of your choice.
- **Build apps faster:** Choose from many customizable pre-built processes or use the K2 App Wizard to quickly create a new processes in a few steps.

M-Files® M-Files

6400 International Parkway, Suite 2500
Plano, TX 75093 USA
Phone: 972.516.4210 **Email:** sales@m-files.com **Web:** www.m-files.com

Businesses rely on fast access to current information to make smarter and faster decisions for a competitive advantage. However, content chaos often reigns supreme since many organizations are drowning in a sea of information that grows bigger and bigger each day. An organization's documents are often strewn all over the place—in shared network folders, in emails, in file sharing and sync applications and in other various business systems. As a result, employees waste enormous amounts of time every day searching for the information they need.

M-Files eliminates the content chaos inherent in today's companies by providing an easy to use solution that enables users to quickly locate the exact content they need, regardless of which business application it resides in. M-Files enables enterprises to more effectively organize, manage, secure and share their information, which leads to better decisions, faster results, improved collaboration and the highest levels of security and compliance. With M-Files, companies can ensure that the right content is in the right hands at the right time, which enables organizations to focus on using information to drive growth, value and innovation.

M-Files provides a next generation intelligent information management platform that improves business performance by helping people find and use information more effectively. Unlike traditional enterprise content management (ECM) systems or content services platforms, M-Files unifies systems, data and content across the organization without disturbing existing systems and processes or requiring data migration. M-Files breaks down silos by delivering an in-context experience for accessing and leveraging information that resides in any system and repository, including network folders, SharePoint, file sharing services, ECM systems, CRM, ERP and other business systems and repositories. Thousands of organizations in over 100 countries use M-Files for managing their business information and processes, including NBC Universal, Rovio and SAS.