

In This Issue: Getting started with eLabNotebooks (ELNs)  
Updates on Records, ELNs, Archiving and Organizing.

eOrganizedWorld  
the Online Information Management Newsletter  
for Information Professionals  
from Charlie Sodano

Please pass on this EZine to those in your network.  
To leave list or change email address, scroll to bottom.

=====

## Getting started with eLabNotebooks (ELNs)

=====

Are you still using paper laboratory notebooks? A great many people are. They do have some advantages; low purchase cost, easily transportable, relatively small size, etc.

However, there are a lot of things wrong with paper notebooks. First, take a good look at the handwriting skills of yourself and your colleagues. Do you have trouble reading your/their notes? I guarantee that you do most of the time. The importance of cursive writing skills in our society has been in decline since the 1930's. This has reduced writing by hand to activities in which the writer is his or her own audience such as note taking, making its legibility and style to be less important to them. It's a challenge to compose a significant amount of information via handwriting because we get so little practice at doing it. A typical lab notebook being authored today consists of pasted in print-outs from word processors or lab instruments with occasional penned-in comments. It's a big chore to compose one of these pages and frequently a lot of information is not included because of the associated tedium. The end result is that it's very difficult for a stranger to reproduce a recorded experiment. One needs to talk with the author to interpret the recorded information.

The largest benefit of ELNs is the huge improvement in legibility and understanding. Since ELNs are meant to be shared as well as function as a personal diary, authors take much more care in composing and interpreting an experiment. It used to be that you scribbled just enough information in your notebook to be able to remember what you did. The real effort was put into preparing your work for publication or a company status report. The trend now is to make your eNotebook entries so good that you can just cut and paste parts of it right into your publication or report. It's a lot more efficient to do it this way and everyone who reads your notebook gets a much better understanding of exactly what you did and accomplished. Everyone wins!

There still is some controversy about how much functionality you need in an eNotebook. This can vary from no functionality (text entry) to a product that does many calculations, links to LIMS results, order reagents and registers your compound, etc. It's best to start with a simple system and see if it's worthwhile before making any additional investments. There is a trend to utilize Microsoft SharePoint for ELNs. General Mills, and others have already launched their systems.

Don't forget that your ELN records should be preserved for at least 30 years; ~20 years patent protection + 10-15 years to support litigation. Preserving records for this long in electronic format is complex. We'll talk about this next month.

Started up a project to get your own ELN is fairly straightforward

Contact us ([consultants@eorganizedworld.com](mailto:consultants@eorganizedworld.com)) for additional information about getting your records management program started. We'll give you more free advice and explain how we can continue to work together.

=====

## What's New?

=====

### ELN:

SelectScience Scientists' Choice Award for Best Drug Discovery Product 2008, was awarded to IDBS for their flagship E-WorkBook product Suite. The E-WorkBook Suite is a scalable, fully searchable enterprise data management solution,

handling access to all research data from compound through to candidate. Symyx Technologies, Inc. announced the availability of Symyx Notebook—an enterprise electronic laboratory notebook (ELN) that is configurable to meet the needs of biologists and analytical chemists out-of-the-box.

The 2008 Frost & Sullivan European Laboratory Information Systems Company of the Year Award was presented to LabWare. They provide configurable laboratory information management systems (LIMS). LabWare has been increasing its market share consistently over the years, registering an annual growth rate of 28.73 percent for the fiscal year 2007.

Labtronics Inc. announced the latest release of Nexxis ELN, their Electronic Laboratory Notebook for routine analyses, featuring the introduction of ReDI (Rapid eForm Development and Implementation) a technology that creates electronic forms from paper documents - in minutes.

There has been a lot of chatter in the academic community about transforming blogs to function as ELNs. Interesting concept that should work and enable researchers to share their work with colleagues.

#### **Archiving:**

U.K. National Archives responded to an inquiry concerning a proposal to convert its electronic records to Open Document Format rather than Microsoft Open XML Format, in order to make them accessible to users. They responded by stating that documents transferred in Microsoft Office formats are converted to Portable Document Format for online access. PDF is an international standard (ISO 32000-1: 2008). They do not currently plan to convert any records to Microsoft Office Open XML format.

Archiving email via Acrobat is ready to use out of the box. This is a PDF based solution that can be used to convert emails and entire folders from MS Outlook into searchable PDF files. Lotus Notes is also supported.

#### **Records:**

AXS-One Inc., a provider of records compliance management (RCM) solutions, announced that the AXS-One Compliance Platform(TM) has been recognized by KMWorld magazine as a "Trend-Setting Product" for the fourth straight year.

#### **Organizing:**

According to a recent study by AARP, more than 60 percent of U.S. companies are currently bringing back retired workers as consultants or contract workers. A more permanent solution is to invest in technology that fosters and helps automate the knowledge management process. U.S.-based companies will spend an average of \$1,224 per employee—or about \$5 million per company— on knowledge management software in 2008, AMR predicts. This year, total corporate spending on knowledge management systems, consulting services and internal support is expected to be about \$85 billion.

ZyLAB announced that its ZyIMAGE Information Access Platform (IAP) has been named to KMWorld Magazine's "Trend Setter" list for 2008. ZyIMAGE IAP is a complete XML-based system that provides a robust foundation for the archiving and long-term management of organizations' critical information assets, including digitized paper documents, electronic files, e-mail and attachments, and multimedia.

**PRIVACY and SPAM POLICY:** I never rent, trade or sell my email list to anyone for any reason whatsoever. You'll never get an unsolicited email from a stranger as a result of joining this list.

To unsubscribe or change subscriber options contact us at [ezine@eorganizedworld.com](mailto:ezine@eorganizedworld.com)

---

---