

In This Issue: Searching and Finding
Updates on ELNs and Archiving.

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

Searching and Finding

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We all consume a great deal of our time looking for information. There have been studies that estimate that people spend 15-50% of their work day searching for information. Think about it. For some of you about half of your day is spend looking for stuff. Benchmark it. Take a typical day and jot down how much of your time is spend looking for things. You will be amazed. The perception is that we will be able to find almost anything, given enough time. The problem is that “enough time” can easily become “too much time”.

Searching the Internet is a science unto itself. Google is not the only answer! Internet searching is a topic for another EZine. For now, let's focus on finding things within your personal or shared archives.

Information can be stored in two different ways; structured or unstructured. Structured information normally implies that a database is being employed. This discussion will be confined to documents, not data, which are stored in a database. Normally this is referred to as a document management system (DMS). There are simple document management systems such as Microsoft Access and perhaps a hundred or more vendor products in addition to more complex enterprise systems provided by vendors such as IBM, Oracle, EMC and Microsoft. The key component of these systems is the ability to add metadata fields when each document is captured to aid in the categorization and retrieval of information as well as manage document life cycles.

Unstructured information includes documents found on the web, plus an estimated 80% of the information generated by enterprises around the world. Many business reports and presentations are composed in an unstructured manner using Microsoft Office or similar tools. It is a common practice for organizations to provide space on networked servers where individuals or departments can store their documents. The organization of the folders and subfolders is usually dictated by existing business practices or personal whim. The usual way to find relevant documents is to navigate through the folder structure and hopefully see a relevant file name. The principal challenge in finding specific information with unstructured information is that it needs to be analyzed in order to identify, locate and relate the entities and relationships of interest. Traditionally, full text searching has been the analysis tool of choice. In a full text search, the search engine examines all of the words in every stored document as it tries to match search words supplied by the user. Full text search is often divided into two tasks: indexing and searching. The indexing stage will scan the text of all the documents and build a list of search terms, often called an index. In the search stage, when performing a specific query, only the index is referenced rather than the text of the original documents.

Other techniques are can also be deployed to supplement or augment full text query results. Have a look at www.autonomy.com. They have assumed a dominant position in this market

The best strategy to follow is to place highly used and shared documents into a document management system (DMS). This centralization will steer people to a single repository, which has access controls and tools other than navigation to find information, principally metadata search. Email that has been classified as a business record can also be exported into the DMS. There is currently a strong movement to utilize Microsoft's SharePoint as a DMS.

Please pass on this EZine to those in your network.

To leave list or change email address, scroll to bottom.

A link to the EZine is also found at www-eorganizedworld.com

Contact us (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.

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What's new?
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Archiving

Frost & Sullivan recognizes Hie Electronics, Inc. with the 2009 North American Frost & Sullivan Data Storage Technologies Green Excellence Award in Technology Innovation for its ability to reduce energy costs with its storage technologies. Hie Electronics packs online storage, backup, and archive into the TeraStack(R) Solution, significantly reducing the data management requirement of several racks of equipment and disparate systems down to just one dorm-room refrigerator-sized TBYTe(R).

ELN

Dokuwiki is being used as an electronic lab notebook by some academics. It has all the standard Wiki features, easy links, images and text, with the major advantage over several other wikis that the pages are essentially stored as plain text, making backups, searches, and future proofing relatively easy.

NoteBookMaker is an virtual laboratory notebook that provides authoring and witness routines for laboratory data. The system is fully compliant with FDA 21 CFR Part 11 for electronic signatures and protection of intellectual property. NoteBookMaker can easily handle all your data through simple copy-paste or more modern importing via XML. It supports still images, excel spread sheets, audio and even motion pictures. NoteBookMaker can run as a stand alone single user or in a multi-user FileMaker Pro 7 solution. The demo version is full functioning. Non demo versions begin at \$200. Undergraduate scientists get it for free.

Systat Software, Inc., announced it has signed an agreement with Rescentris, Inc. of Columbus, OH, to globally offer their joint product, SigmaCERF™ - an Electronic Lab Notebook (ELN) and knowledge management platform for life science research organizations.

Symyx Technologies, Inc. announced the signing of a partnership with Thermo Fisher Scientific, Inc. The partnership will focus on delivering to scientists improved workflows meeting their experiment documentation, decision support, and laboratory information management system (LIMS) needs. Symyx and Thermo Fisher Scientific will work closely to integrate applications, and Thermo Fisher will market and sell Symyx Notebook and Symyx Isentris® decision support software with Thermo Scientific LIMS across the world.

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