Accelerate reaching your digital goals.

ACTUM Digital

THE NEW DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

From content crisis to content confidence
How effective content management can transform
the creation, storage and distribution of content for
swift and agile operation.

Executive Summary

The world of business has been radically altered over the past 18 months. The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the process of digitization, not only within the workplace but in setting up new remote working practices. Work processes that were once manual, requiring a series of employees performing a number of different tasks, are now automated, while the number of digital platforms has increased on a weekly basis.

Companies emerging from the chaos of the pandemic are now seeking to improve efficiencies in all areas of their business, and with increasing input costs, they have a strong motivation to implement plans for digital transformation across the board, bringing their systems into the 21st Century and future-proofing their business.

One of the key elements of digital transformation is content lifecycle management (CLM). CLM offers a highly efficient way to organize and optimize your content for use on the right platform at the right time, all stored in The Cloud for quicker, more efficient access. It can also be a content base for your sales and marketing teams, delivering the resources, workflows and analytical data necessary for lead generation and successful product campaigns.
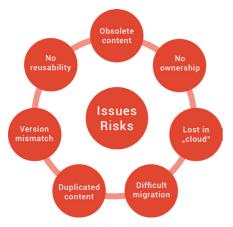
Most companies are drowning in content. Whether it's financial data insights and marketing images for banking brands or logistics information and training manuals for industry, the amount of content is increasing exponentially. And without an effective CLM system, efficiency will go down and operational costs will go up.

"The topic of content is gaining a dramatic amount of momentum, with subjects such as unification, collaboration, and reusability increasingly coming under the spotlight," explains Ratibor Libal, Managing Partner at ACTUM Digital. *"Content as an asset is now just as important as technology and design, and many companies, especially those in the professional services sector, cannot exist with it."*

ACTUM Digital commissioned this special report to understand the content issues that companies currently face and what they require to make their workflows faster and more efficient. It aims to discover how a CLM system would help their operations and their key motivations for implementing such a system. It also

looks at the barriers to CLM integration and suggests ways to get over those barriers.

So sit back and take a moment to digest the findings to our research. And while you do, think about your own content, how that content is organized and distributed, and the improvements that can be made to make that content work harder for you.

The way of the world

One of the main impacts of Covid-19 on businesses has been the rapid shift from office--based work to remote working. Companies suddenly had to develop brand new work systems and processes that allowed staff to perform their tasks from the kitchen table rather than the office

desk. This involved implementing new software, cloud computing, and security protocols, especially when dealing with clients, suppliers and business partners.

However, many companies and employees saw this change as a positive one, regarding it as an opportunity for the future and the start of a new, permanent way of working. The respondents named a number of advantages, including:

• Efficiency
• Digitization and improvement of processes
• Faster pace of work
• Leaner approach to work
• Making work more comfortable
• Cost reduction due to less commuting
• More possibilities for mobile working

Almost all respondents were agreed on one thing: whether it's hardware or software, innovations will be required for the future. *"There is little doubt that content is currently a key priority for companies,"* says Ratibor Libal. *"They understand that it should have the same importance as technology, UX, and design in the digital communication field."*

"We changed from a door-to-door business to a video-to-video business"
B-level manager, sales and acquisition, manufacturing

Every business has a completely unique set of content requirements, processes, and distribution channels. Whether it's logistics firms needing to store and send image files for parcel documents, financial companies relying on PDFs for long-term information storage, or marketing agencies using vast amounts of images, videos, and campaign copy, there's a huge variation across the board. Indeed, the range of content in most companies is so big that, in many cases, respondents weren't actually able to name all the different types of content they use.

However, there were **a few key trends that emerged in our research:**

• Whether created internally or externally, there is always a large number of people who create content on a daily basis.
• Multichannel content gathering and distribution is not considered a specific task, and most respondents find this problematic due to it being a manual operation.
• Where workflows are not defined, people would appreciate any kind of coordination, especially distinct responsibilities of individuals.
• There is a strong tendency to move to the paperless office, with some advocating a move to 100% digital.
• When asked 'How many people take part in the creation of content?', many respondents said it was hard to estimate. Over half answered '100%'.

If this snapshot of content creation seems a little random, then the various forms of content storage used by our respondents is no more defined. Companies use a mixture of several storage locations, ranging from local work stations, a number of different clouds, data servers, and even physical archiving rooms for printed content.

While most companies will have a central storage location, when specific content cannot be found using the usual search terms, the final resort is to ask someone – a situation that can lead to frustration and time wasted.

"Considering the amount of content companies have, there is a surprising amount of underinvestment in content tools and processes," states Ratibor Libal, Managing Partner at ACTUM Digital. "Without a single point of truth, companies face a huge amount of unnecessary cost and stress with their content operations."

"There is no process. Everything runs reactively, not proactively."
B-level manager, sales, logistics

Create, store, distribute

What's the problem?

In medium - and large-sized companies, there are always going to be problems with content. The sheer amount of content, combined with the different formats, the complex workflows, and the number of different people required to create and access it means that navigating your content ecosystem is never going to be smooth sailing.

"Content lifecycle management is not just about technology, but also about efficient processes and working practices," explains Ratibor Libal. *"Taxonomies, collaboration, and content unification are all key topics that deliver significant value to a company."*

Companies expressed dissatisfaction with a number of issues around content workflows, including:

• Respondents working with large volumes of data had problems with storage space, leading to high costs for expanded storage either internally or in the Cloud.

• It's difficult to persuade people to change their way of doing things and to do them in line with new rules or processes.

• Even when a CLM solution is available, users do not use it correctly, filling it with incorrect data and using just 10% of its abilities.

• Manual interventions are prone to errors, such as deletion, overwriting, and badly organized structures.

• Problems arise when different people in different departments cannot work on the same content at the same time.

In the drive towards digital transformation, many companies are finding that the required changes in technology and design put a huge strain on their time and resources – especially when there is no coherent content lifecycle strategy in place. An effective content hub can make any changes much quicker and simpler, requiring less people to spend less time manually updating the system.

"We have several systems where we have to look for information so we spend two-thirds of our time purely preparing for the actual work."

B-level manager, sales, logistics

Motivators for success

When your company is in constant competition with your competitors, it makes a huge difference having the latest information in your hand at the touch of a button or swipe of a screen. And an even bigger one when that information is in the right format, the right language, and mistake-free.

The largest benefit of a CLM solution for our respondents would be the higher efficiency and greater speed of work with content. Some linked this with being able to free up employees for other tasks, while others expected to gain a competitive advantage through faster customer response times or delivering higher quality work.

"*The value of good content lifecycle management can be measured in cost savings, but it has a greater value for the people that use content day in, day out,*" states Ratibor Libal, Managing Partner at ACTUM Digital. "*For instance, having consistent branding and images across all your digital touchpoints has a value that cannot be easily measured.*"

Curiously, most respondents had difficulty in coming up with the benefits themselves, but when asked directly, they confirmed they would expect the benefits of less stressful and more comfortable work.

"When I can get the information to my customer before my competitor can, I have an advantage"

B-level manager, IT, manufacturing

OK, so you understand the reasons why your company needs a CLM solution. You know it would improve a wide range of operations across a large number of departments, increasing efficiency, relieving frustration and cutting costs. You may even have a good idea of which platform you think is most appropriate, and which tools would answer your needs. Now comes the tricky bit: getting the board to sign off the investment.

Most of the respondents detailed a decision process that spanned several stages:

1. Department leaders and general management conduct a cost-benefit analysis to decide whether the implementation is required.
2. A criteria list is prepared to ask possible suppliers for their specifications and quotes.
3. Workshops arranged to assess individual candidates.
4. Shortlist of two candidates drawn up based on evaluation of criteria.
5. Repeated discussions with candidates and final selection.

Once a supplier has been chosen, a key part of the process is testing, which is considered essential, especially when the choice of CLM systems has been whittled down to just a few. In the majority of cases, the testing would involve a broad range of users across a number of departments – not just technical testing for IT compatibility.

"A key challenge with CLM transformation is that it affects a wide range of people and practices – many you may not have even considered," says Ratibor Libal. *"The main cost of implementing a new CLM is actually the inconvenience of the transformation itself. Having a reliable, trusted, and open digital partner will go some way to managing this cost."*

"We looked at several products, while also taking my recommendation into account. The specific provider delivered the best performance and can react to our requirements very quickly"

B-level manager, purchasing, facility management

Conclusion

Our research highlighted that while many companies have ever-increasing amounts of content, created both internally and externally, not many had a clear solution for its storage operations. Some relied on a single person that had to field requests from the entire workforce, while others had vast amounts of different sources, with anyone wanting specific content having to make individual requests – or even spending hours searching an archive room.

This is clearly a hugely inefficient process, not only for accessing content, but for creating clear workflows where everyone involved understands their responsibilities, as well as expected outcomes and KPIs. There were a few exceptional companies, which had set in place some form of content lifecycle management, either for specific workflows or for entire company operations. In both cases efficiency and productivity were significantly improved, with companies implementing the larger solution experiencing the biggest shift in operational efficiency.

But while many companies struggle to cope with their content, they do understand there is a solution, and many have CLM on their to-do list. But as we all come out of a damaging pandemic, businesses have other priorities. However, what many

businesses fail to understand is that the latest CLM systems can transform every area of operations, from sales and marketing to e-commerce, maintenance and customer service – providing the answer to many of the challenges businesses are currently facing.

"Digital content is now an important fact of life for everyone in all areas of a company," says Ratibor Libal, Managing Partner at ACTUM Digital. "Whether it's customer service, marketing, maintenance, or any one of the many departments in a large business, the majority of people will need to access and use content themselves, and not rely on the IT department. A good CLM solution will make all aspects of your business faster and more efficient, placing it in a good position for future changes."

Content lifecycle management gives you and your company the opportunity to assess and improve every area of your business, highlighting bottlenecks and stumbling blocks, and making previously slow processes quick and frictionless. It allows you to personalize the customer experience, improving loyalty and customer satisfaction, while your employees will benefit from easy search, increased automation, and content located in a single point of truth.

Methodology

ACTUM Digital commissioned Jan Kraus and Petr Megela of Insight Lab to conduct research to identify the experiences and needs of companies in terms of content management and CLM solutions. In June 2021, they conducted 19 in-depth interviews with B- and C-level managers from a range of different German companies of different sizes, ages, and industry sectors, with each interview lasting an average of 60 minutes.

About ACTUM Digital

ACTUM Digital is an award-winning digital agency based in the Czech Republic, with offices in Germany and the Netherlands. Founded in 1996, ACTUM currently employs over 250 digital experts who serve the world's largest companies in a range of industries, both locally and internationally. Those companies include Allianz Global Investors, METRO, Société Générale, Conrad Electronic, innogy, SCHOTT, Komerční Banka, La Lorraine, and Škoda Auto.

We offer the full suite of digital services, from digital experience management and web implementation, to e-commerce solutions and content lifecycle management. Other services include cloud migration, business apps, digital marketing, and team outsourcing. We also have long-standing partnerships with many top digital platforms, including Sitecore (Gold Implementation Partner and MVP), Kentico (Gold Partner and Quality Expert), Microsoft (Gold Implementation Partner), AWS (Certified Experts), and Bloomreach (Silver Implementation Partner).

At ACTUM Digital, we pride ourselves on our commitment to our clients and delivering clear, understandable solutions that improve efficiency, cut costs, and increase revenue for your business, placing the control of your digital ecosystem firmly in your hands.

To find out more about our work,
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