

The Five Myths of Document Management

Myth #1: You have to re-save documents into a special repository to properly manage them.

Every document management system on the market today has this as its central thesis: electronic documents are like just like paper ones—if you want to find them later, you need to organize and store them centrally. It's easy to come to this conclusion, given it's been true for things like books at least since the original Library of Alexandria (3rd Century BC). But it's not true anymore. Unlike paper documents, electronic files don't need to be kept together to be searchable, as long as the system knows where they are. It's just like the World Wide Web: no one organizes it, and yet you can find almost anything because Google indexes everything for you.

Myth #2: Documents need to be manually tagged, profiled, or otherwise categorized.

Besides manual uploading, the other common feature of all current document management products is that they task users with the chore of filling out profiles for every document entered into the system. The idea is that users need to specify whether something is a contract, or agreement, or pleading, not to mention the name of the client, client number, and the like. Not only is this time-consuming and bothersome, it is also wholly unnecessary. Search technology is now sufficiently sophisticated that documents can be easily and quickly located with simple keyword searches. No longer does a document need to be manually categorized and tagged to be found by the system. Systems that still require manual tagging or profiling of documents are wasting the time of their users.

Myth #3: Taxonomies are the key to organizing documents.

Anyone who has installed a document management system knows that you start by trying to figure out a taxonomy for your organization—the classification system for all your documents. And if you've tried this, you know how challenging it can be to figure this out. Worse, whatever you figure out for your categories gets dated and inaccurate over time, which is a real problem because you can't readily change what you've done in the past. All that need happen for your taxonomy to become out of date is for a corporate client to change its name. So much for all your careful document tagging and categorization. What's the alternative? Just like with document tagging and profiling, the solution is to simply stop doing it. A smart document management system, like Web search, doesn't need taxonomies or categories to find what you're looking for.

Myth #4: You can make people use a document management system.

This is probably the most overlooked problem with current document management systems. It is usually just assumed that when asked, users will put all their documents into the system. But where this takes time and requires multiple manual steps, even the most well-intentioned users will fall behind on compliance. No wonder that when actually measured, organizations typically find that fewer than 50% of their documents ever make it into the document management system.

Myth #5: You can't just let people organize and store their documents however they please.

It sounds like chaos to let people do whatever they want when it comes to naming, storing, and filing their documents. What's counter-intuitive, however, is that requiring users to save their documents a second time in a central document management system is what creates disorder. Users already create, name, organize, and save their documents locally, all of which are easily findable using Smart Document Management. Asking users to upload documents they've already named and saved into a central system with a different organizational structure is inefficient and ineffective.

How MetaJure is Different

MetaJure is the first Smart Document Management System that does all the work for the user. Users don't have to tag, profile, or upload documents into a separate system because MetaJure does that automatically, and without any effort. So unlike traditional document management systems, including Microsoft SharePoint, 100% of the documents in your organization are in the system knowledgebase, not less than 50% as is typical. And finding what you're looking for is as easy as Google keyword search on the Web. Users typically require only a few minutes of training if that.

Contact pgruenke@legalbizsuccess.com for a free Web demo.