5 Reasons Why Integrating with the Windows File System Makes ECM Software Better

According to a recent AIIM webinar, 61% of workers operate in environments where there is no connection between their Enterprise Content Management (ECM) platform and other business programs. In addition, AIIM found that 80% of a business's content per quarter, is not accessible through their existing ECM system. But it simply doesn't have to be this way.

Just about all business users use the Windows File System as their file management system to manage and store your digital documents. From Microsoft Word®, Excel®, Photoshop®, Illustrator® and more, all these file types are seamlessly stored and accessible here. Now, what if there were a way to establish an easier, more effective approach to content collaboration and document management? That's where integrating the Windows File System with the power of ECM comes in.

So how will ECM integration with the Windows File System improve document management?

By integrating ECM software with the Windows File System, employees have the ability to save time that would normally be spent filing, retrieving and recreating existing information. Not only will users be able to search, view, edit and add documents directly into the ECM platform without opening it, but added benefits include improved accessibility and document security, as the same ECM access permissions are applied in Windows Explorer. With so much to offer, let's take a look at the top five benefits of integrating your ECM system with the Windows File System:

1. **Automatic Indexing:** As soon as a document is saved into an ECM archive from within the Windows Explorer, the user will be automatically notified to index its data. This step ensures your documents and their data will be accurately stored in your ECM system for efficient bookkeeping while simplifying future document retrieval. That way, documents can easily be located going forward by keyword, date, name and more.

2. **Access Multiple Drives:** Whether you're working in the Adobe Suite, Microsoft Office Suite, or any other popular business program, files of various formats stored in the ECM platform (.xls, .pdf, .docx, etc.) can be accessed through the Windows File System tray with a simple double click. While they may look like normal Windows folders, the archives found within the Windows Explorer retain your ECM file structure, with the added search, index and document security functionality included.

3. **Quick Searching:** Another benefit of integrating with the Windows File System is the advantage of immediate search and retrieval - without needing to open the ECM platform! For some, a default document search will already be set, but users can also create a user-specific search that crawls the content within stored documents before displaying results within the Windows Explorer. Whether it's a keyword, static, variable, or multi-archive search, finding all associated documents within the drive is effortless.

4. **Extended Saving Capabilities:** Saving your documents has never been easier. Users can save Microsoft Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PDF files and more into the ECM database with the same process used to save content today. Not only can you use the standard "Save As" function, but there's an added benefit of drag and drop storing. As mentioned previously, users will then be prompted to fill out index fields for filing the document away.

5. **Revision Control:** If you're using document history features of an ECM platform, like track changes, markups, annotations and more, integrating with the Windows File System, enables users to continue managing revisions for automated change tracking outside of the document management system. This leads to faster decision making and much simpler collaboration. If there's been a date change, signature, or content edit, all changes are saved to both the ECM and Windows systems. In addition, document versioning and history logs allow administrators to see who made the edits and when, while keeping previous versions accessible.

Whether you're looking to maintain your documents native format or capture files easily and immediately into a document management system, ECM integration with the Windows File System provides time-saving benefits for improved content management. By accessing documents from their original business application, this integration provides a structure to manage documents more efficiently, without changing the way you work. To learn more about Windows File System integration, contact Square 9 Softworks, today!

Digital Marketing Specialist, **Alyssa Anderson,** is the voice behind Square 9 Softworks's weekly blog articles. Committed to communicating today's common challenges in paper based processes, Alyssa provides in depth analysis into the document management industry and the solutions that accommodate the needs of end user communities. For additional information, please contact Alyssa at aanderson@square-9.com.