

GOVERNANCE-FIRST CONTENT IN CUSTOMER-FACING PROCESSES

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GOVERNANCE-FIRST CONTENT IN CUSTOMER-FACING PROCESSES

Gaining control over end-to-end customer-facing processes is an essential part of modernization initiatives that seek to improve customer satisfaction and operational performance. Although simple customer-facing processes can be completely driven by structured data, more complex processes can include a variety of unstructured content provided by the customer or third parties, or created internally. This content may be documents such as application forms, letters and contracts; or multimedia such as photographs and video.

Process automation typically provides control over what specific tasks and structured data are available to each participant in the process, but the content that drives and supports the process must also be served up to participants when necessary for completing a task. This requires governance policies that control who can access what content at each point in a process, based on security rules, privacy laws and the specific participant's access clearance.

In this paper, we examine what is required for a governance-first approach to content within customer-facing processes, and finding the "Goldilocks balance" of just the right amount of information available to the right people at the right time.

THE LINK BETWEEN PROCESS, CONTENT AND PEOPLE

Process, content and people are the how, what and who of businesses.

Process is anything related to how the work gets done, whether it's an automated process or completely manual. Process includes workflows, which outlines how work moves from one step to another. It also includes procedures, which are what happens at the steps in the workflow. Lastly, it includes rules, which can control how work flows through the workflow and automate or guide procedures at steps along the way.

Content is the information that is related to a process. It may be structured data collected in a form, such as name and address, and entered into a transactional system or database. Or it may be unstructured content, including letters and emails that don't follow a specific format, and non-textual media such as photographs, audio and video.

To summarize, a process can include multiple people as participants, both inside and outside your organization, and may collect content from those people or present content to them at a particular step in order for them to complete a task. The important thing with process, content and people together is making sure that the right people see the right content at the right step in the process.



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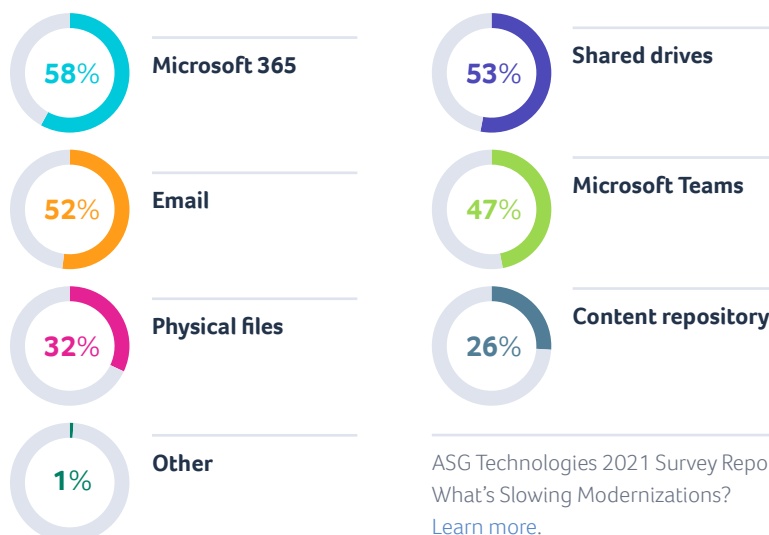
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CONTENT GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

The challenge with governing access to content is that the content related to a single process may be stored not just in many different systems, but in several different types of systems: content management systems, network file shares, individual local drives, or as attachments to workflows, emails and line-of-business systems. Each of these types of content storage has its own access control mechanisms:

- Content management systems are made specifically for storing unstructured content, adding metadata, applying fine-grained access permissions, and tracking who accesses which content. Content management systems may also apply even finer-grained access control through redaction, where part of the content is obscured (e.g., tax ID numbers within a report) if the reader doesn't have sufficient access permissions.
- Network file shares can also apply access permissions, but they are usually quite coarse-grained and based only on the folder location of the content, not metadata for a specific piece of content.
- Process management systems and line-of-business solutions often support unstructured content as attachments to a transaction, but that doesn't mean that it's a good idea to store your unstructured content there, since the makers of both of these types of systems usually don't include content governance safeguards. The content will likely be inaccessible to anyone who is not viewing that particular transaction, yet may be visible to process participants who shouldn't be able to see it.

WHERE DOES CONTENT LIVE?





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WHAT CAN GO WRONG WHEN MAKING CONTENT AVAILABLE TO THE PROCESS PARTICIPANTS?

First, the participants could be able to access too much information, which risks violating the customer's privacy or company confidentiality. Remember that your processes may include customers and third parties, it's not just people within your own company. You need to think about what content is available at each step in a process, who will be performing the activity at that step, and if you're giving them more information than they should have.

The opposite problem is not giving the participants enough information. If you've assigned a certain task to someone but they don't have enough information to do it properly, then you have the risk of low-quality work, poor decisions, or even the inability to complete the work.

Companies that create their processes originally as completely internal processes, then extend them to include customers and third parties, usually haven't done a thorough job of designing information privacy into those systems. Access to structured data is often properly controlled by presenting only certain data in a form on the screen, but the unstructured content, such as attached documents, often aren't considered in the overall privacy design. The processes end up either giving too much access to the wrong people, or not enough access to the right people.

Many companies will err on the side of too little information, thinking that this reduces their risk. But if someone really needs some of the information on a document, they will find someone who has access to the document and that person will email them a copy. In other words, they throw information governance out the window and open the company to huge privacy concerns.

In addition to risking productivity and compliance problems, exposing too little or too much content in a process can have a direct impact on customer satisfaction. Customers need to be sure that you're safeguarding their private information, but also may want direct access to that information themselves.



Only one in ten (11%)
respondents say
all their content is
governed.

CONTENT GOVERNANCE WITHIN CUSTOMER-FACING PROCESSES

To have optimal content governance within customer-facing processes, content management systems must work together with the process management systems to provide an appropriate level of access to content, even when there are multiple content and process management systems.

The balance lies in the Goldilocks Principle of information access: not too much, not too little, but the “just right” amount of access. That will not be the same for everyone within a process: a customer may see certain information, a third party a different set of information, while an internal worker sees most or all information.

If you have a process that includes people in different roles, especially customers or third parties, then you need governance of the content that’s related to that process.

Otherwise, you’ll end up giving the process participants too much access to the content, which risks privacy and compliance, or too little access, which means that they can’t do their job properly. Either way, it impacts both customer satisfaction and operational performance.

The Goldilocks balance of just the right amount of information is extremely context-sensitive and is dependent on the role that the participant is doing in the process: the same person doing different tasks at different points in a process may see different information.

Designing content governance directly into processes is what allows you to achieve that balance.

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