

Decoding Automation Acronyms: Do You Need an ECM or a DMS?

What's the difference between an ECM and a DMS solution? The distinction is blurry because the terms “document management system” (DMS) and “enterprise content management” (ECM) are sometimes used interchangeably. *DocuWare is accurately referred to as both an ECM and a DMS solution.* Why? Because “enterprise content management” is a set of capabilities that enable an organization of any size to control and understand their business information, and this is what our solution does. “Document management” is a subset of these capabilities.

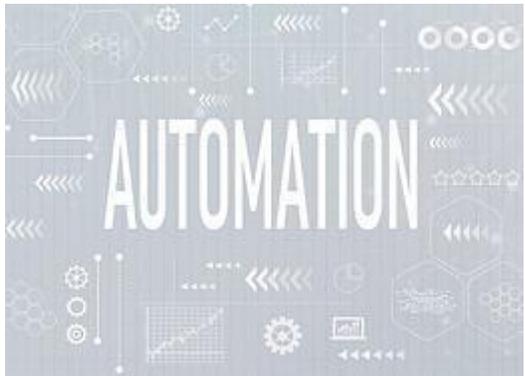
Some ECM systems also manage information from web content, social media accounts and other sources that are outside the boundaries of a document. This broad-reaching functionality may make sense for larger organizations, but it's expensive to implement and maintain. For most organizations, ECM systems that focus on document management offer all the functionality they need.



A document management system offers core features that include capturing, indexing, archiving, automating and controlling information, and integration with line-of-business software:

Capturing and storing: A mechanism to easily process documents from a variety of sources such as email, digital documents, scanners, and printers to store them in a central digital repository

How a DMS meets business challenges for small- and medium-sized organizations



Control access and security: Smart rules control who has rights to access certain documents. This is particularly useful for confidential documents.

- Indexing and retrieving: Enable automated scanning or digital upload and indexing of documents for easy tracking and retrieval. Indexing assigns descriptive, searchable tags.
- Sharing: Share any document safely without fear of misfiling or loss.
- Collaborating: Collectively work on documents while avoiding multiple versions.
- Business intelligence: Manage, organize and access business-critical records and information.
- Integration: Workflow modules can integrate with other systems to automate processes and reduce inefficiencies. Sharing data between a document management solution, line-of-business systems and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software maximizes the functionality of the technology infrastructure. It also reduces the need to buy additional disconnected applications.

What is a content service?



You may also have heard the term content services referenced by industry analyst reports and articles in technology publications. In 2016, Gartner introduced the concept of [“content services”](#) as a replacement for the term “enterprise content management.”

Gartner's point of view is: “The term ‘enterprise content management’ no longer reflects market dynamics or the organizational needs for content in digital business. For applications leaders in charge of content management projects, this means casting aside previous notions and rethinking their technology approaches.”

This new concept attempts to move the industry away from the single-system, one-size fits all thinking of ECM to a more modular, cloud-first approach that offers a broad variety of integration capabilities. Other analyst firms like Forrester have also adopted this terminology. DocuWare is a document management and office automation solution that can also be characterized as a content service.

In practice, the term that is used to describe [digital workflow](#) and office automation capabilities doesn't really matter. The point is to find a solution that meets your business needs and enables your organization to take the next step on your digital journey.