

Premium Content Integration: Capitalize on the Opportunities Now

By LexisNexis

Organizations today face unrelenting pressure to achieve greater productivity, higher revenues per employee and smart responses to clients and competitors. To realize these objectives, business professionals need access to content resources that enable them to answer questions and to quickly make informed decisions. While there is a staggering amount of content available from different sources and in different formats, all the content in the world is of little value unless it is trustworthy, easy to access and integrated into the user's work flow.

For the past 30 years commercial search services have invested tremendous resources to license a broad set of content and fine tune the search software, so that professional researchers can obtain either a specific answer to almost any business question or background information to support business decisions. They have successfully built large repositories of premium content underpinned with solid information architecture. Development continues in both of these arenas—more high value content and advanced technology to store, search, and deliver that content.

Now these commercial search services also face the dual challenges of helping client organizations identify a manageable amount of content pertinent to their business to feed into enterprise work flow processes, while making the search interface even easier to use for a client base comprised of knowledge workers cutting across all industries and all functional areas. The extent to which the *complexity* of a myriad of information acquisition and integration tasks is masked from the ultimate consumer of the information will determine how much of the publisher's or aggregator's content actually surfaces at the desktop of the user and is evident in his/her work products.

A recent Deloitte Consulting study, "Enterprise Content Management: Taming Content Chaos," claims that "the average corporate database carries 100 terabytes, the same amount of space required to archive

all the pages posted to the World Wide Web between 1996-2001." The same study also notes: "Smart organizations have realized that success rests not on getting content *into* a database, but on *getting the right content out*—to the people who need it, when and how they need it."¹

Understanding Organizational Information Needs

What is the principal cause of failure to achieve the expected return on investment (ROI) for information services? It is the lack of focus on needs of users in the initial selection and deployment of resources or services.

Content buyers may understand information needs of certain functional groups, but it is increasingly difficult to have a handle on the needs of all potential consumers of premium content in an organization since their needs may vary drastically. In order for users to perceive content as strategically valuable, buyers must be disciplined about probing for specific needs before acquiring and launching external content; they must be equally as disciplined when checking utilization rates and user satisfaction when it is time to renew subscriber agreements.

At the same time, content buyers should be active participants on a team or teams responsible for the enterprise content strategy. Why is content being amassed? What are the costs involved? How will it be used? Who will use it? How will it be maintained? Is the infrastructure scalable?

The enterprise content management strategy should define content requirements for employees, business partners and public Web sites. At one time, principal content buyers were information professionals; now, content acquisition is a critical business strategy and necessarily involves many departments. This team must develop a rigorous methodology for evaluating content quality, vendors and technology solutions so that the tools and resources selected actually fulfill

the promise of enabling distinct user groups to access and use content they need.

For these reasons, content buyers have every right to anticipate working with vendors who understand content in context, understand how it fits into the workflow of various user groups and understand technology options for delivery and integration.

As an example, LexisNexis has several groups of specialists outside of the sales organization dedicated to helping clients with the challenges of providing access to the content set that best meets their needs. They have worked closely with various functional groups over the years to understand how these groups buy and use content. Their insights and direct customer input fuel the bulk of product development efforts today.

With an increasing number of platforms, software packages, standards and interfaces deployed for content management, it may be in the clients' best interest to work with a content vendor who trains and certifies integrators that are intimately familiar with its content structure and with enterprise applications and technology platforms. Rather than building an integration department and developing competencies to cover all aspects of integration, some aggregators are choosing the training and certification path. As part of the methodology content buyers use to evaluate information provider partners, they must carefully assess whether or not they will have access to the technical support they need either directly from the vendor or from partnerships certified by the vendor.

Content Acquisition

Information aggregators need to consider content acquisition from two perspectives:

- What high-value content sources must still be added to the core service in anticipation of ever-changing user requirements and to round out its global offering?
- How can aggregators help clients select and acquire slices of content to meet requirements of specific subsets of users?

In years past, the corporate philosophy of the traditional search services appeared to be an effort to acquire *everything* in terms of digital business content. With a substantial base of key publications across a range of industries, the strategy has now shifted to focus on licensing global content in multiple languages and content sources in particular areas that align with a more narrowly defined corporate strategy. Current initiatives at LexisNexis, for example, include licensing

more business and financial sources as well as enhancing public records data.

Clients today expect help from vendors to select and acquire slices of unstructured content matching particular business processes to feed corporate portals or intranets. They also expect that vendors have negotiated broad distribution rights, enabling them to serve up the content in various ways once it is in the client environment.

Content Integration

One of the beauties of current technology stems from the ability to line it up with human processes to expedite business processes. It can be matched up with cognitive functions of humans (via graphical user interfaces) and applications to help users find answers based on what they are doing or work processes in which they are engaged, such as finding company information to complement internal information in CRM, ERP or knowledge management systems.

Content integrators are just scratching the surface in terms of learning how their content can be integrated into enterprise applications. It can be:

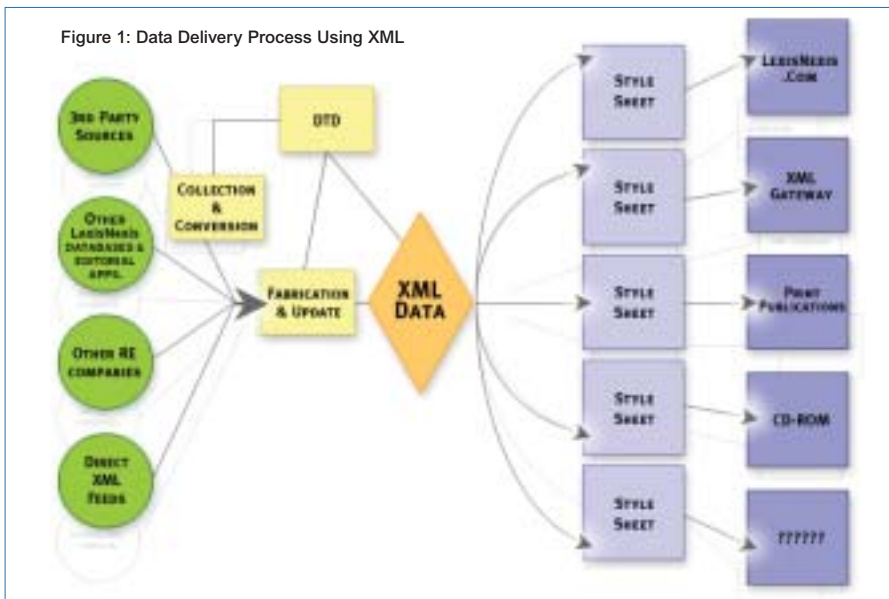
- Packaged topically—e.g., any news about the oil industry—and quickly pushed via e-mail or wireless devices to a user or group of users.
- Tailored to information needs of a business unit, practice area, corporate-wide department or geographic location and easily delivered to intranets and portals with XML coded records.
- Prepackaged for industry or functional areas with search forms, templates and plug-in search interfaces or interface screens customized for the client.

It is certain that many more integration techniques will be imagined and created as storage options are simplified, as clients demand access to multimedia formats, as bandwidth increases and as users begin to realize a positive impact to their productivity.

Some questions remain: What information resources do mass markets really need? What are the opportunities in those markets? What is the value proposition for the client?

Commercial search services have some of the answers. It is clear that back-end preparation and structuring of the data are extremely important to the customer—even though the customer may never see or understand how much care is taken with these processes and how much leading edge research is applied.

The client needs to be able to sort through overwhelming amounts of information to find



what is relevant, authoritative, timely and actionable to perform his or her work or to share with a team of individuals working in related areas. The user does not particularly care about the source of the information as long as it is trustworthy and accurate, so some answers may come from internal content repositories and others from external services. To help with obtaining answers and then navigating within the answer sets, information users can expect to see increased use of:

- Linking technology (e.g., Smart Tags)
- Taxonomies for indexing and categorization of content (e.g., SmartIndexing). Taxonomies must be carefully developed and maintained to accurately reflect the substance of content published in various languages to a global audience. Classification schemes or taxonomies will come to be essential for managing structured data as well as unstructured content if users are to successfully search across content repositories.
- XML tagging of records for platform-agnostic delivery of content to the user for on-site customization or personalization (e.g., LexisNexis Direct).

XML tagging, which explains both the content and structure of a document, has quickly become the standard for enabling data exchange between business systems; in fact, it is now considered the common denominator format for sending and storing data and information. XML promises greater flexibility for formatting documents being requested and viewed in a Web browser, on platforms such as mobile devices or in other enterprise applications. Published business and news items with XML tags can

be transferred to various internal repositories and customized for display in portals, corporate intranets, electronic collaboration workspaces or other knowledge sharing—giving buyers of this type of content much more value for their investment in the content and giving IT departments more return on their investment in portals or other content distribution destinations (see Figure 1).

Evolving content management and deployment technologies provide wonderful career development opportunities for information professionals. Where information professionals once primarily pulled documents and content from commercial services, they can now also apply their expertise to help with navigation. They can take advantage of tools provided by content providers or aggregators to analyze and categorize content for internal systems, prioritize, add editorial comments, push appropriate content to specific user groups, monitor use and train their colleagues on specific applications to maximize agreements with vendors. In addition to helping a single user at a time make a good business decision, they can extend their reach to helping their companies gain seamless access to a wealth of resources that enable good business decisions. □

1. Deloitte Research, "Enterprise Content Management: Taming Content Chaos" ©2002 Deloitte Consulting and Deloitte & Touche LLP. All rights reserved. ISBN 1-892384-21-7. <http://www.dc.com/research>.

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