



fumsi Report

Folio on Workflow Integration

Selected articles from the FUMSI database,
plus editor's commentary and additional resources

'Workflow integration is the nuts and bolts of FUMSI - 'find, use, manage and share information'. In some industries compliance and audit features high on their list, and in other sectors administration, management and exploitation of 'insider intelligence' are important.'

May 2010



[SAMPLE]

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"Managing workflow content and integration issues for complex industries such as pharmaceuticals, insurance and the finance sector has always been a niche market."

"...the audit trail is a highly prized process - trackability and traceability of information for approvals and processes is an integral tool for success."

In this Folio

By Joanna Ptolomey,
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Managing workflow content and integration issues for complex industries such as pharmaceuticals, insurance and the finance sector has always been a niche market. For example, the life sciences sector depends on high risk, high gain research and development and has always required tools and processes for compliance solutions for managing governance, process, workflow and risk [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e28960>].

In 'managing information chaos' the question of the legalities of managing, sharing and ownership in the electronic age is hard to answer, and can cause headache-like symptoms even thinking about it [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e27856>].

There are other issues of integration related to technology and there are some who believe that managing and 'marrying up' of external and internal information is still a key concern for the information industry. But we do know that some folk out there are finding solutions such as Drupal which allow information to be updated automatically, but also allow for some manual input from users via vehicles such as Yahoo! Pipes, iGoogle and wikis [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e27852>].

However it is not only the dynamic, fast-paced, high risk industry sectors that need to manage workflows. Yes, at the top end of the scale some organisations are looking at compliance and lifecycle management for all document types and stages. For them the audit trail is a highly prized process - trackability and traceability of information for approvals and processes is an integral tool for success. But almost any organisation has business process needs with a requirement for administration and reporting.

In the academic sector we are seeing a shift in tools to manage the administration of the workflow. This has a dual purpose in that it also brings with it the ability to 'leverage the intelligence' of the institution [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e28577>]. Peer review bibliographic content is already available, but by extracting the richness of this data into intelligence it brings great rewards. As an institution, or perhaps even a geographic region, you can begin to explore

About the Editor

Joanna Ptolomey is a freelance information consultant and analyst. Joanna started her career in information as a librarian in the NHS before moving to a worldwide consultancy group to work in business information. Prior to working in libraries and information Joanna was a planning engineer in the construction industry for 10 years. She is currently Chair of the Scottish Health Information network (SHINE) and is a board member of the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), the independent advisory body to the Scottish Government and Scottish Ministers on library and information matters. You can follow Joanna's blogs on [Twitter](#) and on Facebook.

the resources at your disposal visually.

Semantic based technologies are helping us to explore our workflows even more. What we are seeing are products that have the potential to go beyond their intended audiences such as AIP UniPHY [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e24639>] and [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e25323>]. Also included is another Collexis Holdings, Inc product, BiomedExperts.com, that has been reviewed and has similar broad market appeal.

Further developments are leading the traditional bibliographic databases, such as [Scopus](#), to being integrated with semantic technology to develop a state-wide research platform. This is a smart move - having your 'insider intelligence' facing outward is a great pull factor for inward investment, clustering of technologies, and more efficient collaborative working arrangements.

Workflow integration is the nuts and bolts of FUMSI - 'find, use, manage and share information'. In some industries compliance and audit features high on their list, and in other sectors administration, management and exploitation of 'insider intelligence' are important. In this Use Folio we highlight some recent FUMSI articles that may help you identify, manage and develop your workflow processes, and give insight into some practical tips and tools.

One of the most important issues surrounding managing workflow content and processes is organisational culture. It is perhaps one of the biggest drivers of success or barriers to success [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e27859>]. Gillian Paterson presents us with evidence from the utilities sector - a national water services

organisation where cultural change played a key part in the successful implementation. Like the highly regulated industries, such as pharmaceuticals, they need information to drive their business but also need to integrate regulatory issues and compliance. Workflow content management is crucial to the operational efficiency and strategic development of this business, but any organisation can learn from their processes.

There is also the question of the inexactness of managing information - it is far from a nice neat obeying entity, including the people that use it. That would be you and me. As Mark Field delivers his 'inforant' on the state of information management today we are reminded that, whilst there are platforms available such as SharePoint and Drupal, we are still very much in the infancy of these systems. It also goes back to the 'changing of culture' idea suggested by Gillian Paterson.

"I have first hand experience of how organisations approach and implement workflow integration and I'm sorry to report that many believe that buying into a product such as SharePoint will address their workflow issues."

I have first hand experience of how organisations approach and implement workflow integration and I'm sorry to report that many believe that buying into a product such as SharePoint will address their workflow issues. Unsurprisingly it brings a whole host of other problems. I agree with Mark that they require regular guidance and regulation processes - oh and perhaps someone to direct and manage the content and communities would be good too.

And then there are 'Pipes' and mashups - so how do they fit into the workflow equation? Well they have been around for a couple of years now and basically provide a graphical interface for building data mashups by aggregating RSS feeds, web pages etc and creating and publishing a web application. 'Pipe in' the content that is most relevant or useful for your organisation.

Feedback from the Content Workflow 2010 event [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e27852>] shows that Pipes have a valuable role in the workflow integration within organisations, even in highly regulated industries such as the pharmaceuticals and biotechnology sectors. We have two great articles with tips to get you started with Pipes - Scott Brown's 'Yahoo! Pipes' and Nicole Engard's 'Using Mashups'.

Copyright is very much at the heart of workflow integration. I was at a meeting last week looking at a national e-journal collection in health for the National Health Service (NHS). The issues surrounding what you pay for with electronic content are complicated, and perhaps that suits the publishers for the moment. Are you paying for access to content and can you share it with others? What if you withdraw from a scheme, do you still have rights to view what you have paid for. So, for example, if you are the NHS and have content for a country or a region, how do you share between organisations, health authorities and individuals, how many times can you download an item and does anyone actually own anything?

Copyright is both the 'magic key' to unlock workflow content integration and also the 'Fort Knox'. Many industry insiders believe it makes managing workflows clunky and ultimately disappointing for us all [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e27871>] and [<http://www.vivavip.com/go/e28480>]. Copyright in the digital age has still a long way to go and, as Martin Belam points out in his interview with ACAP project director, Mike Bide, that use and reuse of e-information still needs careful consideration. Full discussion of the ACAP model and fiery questions around ideas such as creative commons provide extra insight.

"Managing content and workflow integration can mean quite different things to different organisations."

Managing content and workflow integration can mean quite different things to different organisations. If you are a highly regulated industry such as pharmaceuticals or water then you need fully customised solutions to manage risk and have a clear and transparent audit trail. You cannot survive any other way. We have also seen the importance of being able to 'manage and exploit' your 'insider intelligence' in an academic setting, with knock-on third party benefits for regional economic growth. Even in the single business organisation we look to manage workflows - and there are products but do be mindful that they need careful direction and management.

This Folio gives you a slimmed down version of a huge issue - for products (bespoke, off the shelf and do it yourself), for cultural shifts required in implementing, and for managing content use and reuse. Welcome to a very interesting problem.

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