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White Paper

Legal Document Management - Assisting Law Firms In Managing Risks



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Ever since the realization of Sarbanes Oxley Act in the United States, effective document and records management has become an essential necessity for good corporate governance and financial reporting. Organizations are required by law to retain certain documents for predefined periods. Two key features of document management systems increase the admissibility and evidential weight of electronic documents: (1) the ability to freeze a document so that it cannot be changed and (2) an audit trail so that any changes or actions to a document are recorded in the database.

One of the biggest challenges faced by law firms is the growing number of electronic documents and maintaining the files comprehensively. Various records information is often left unclassified in lawyers' inboxes and personal folders and many of the firms have no way to link physical files with electronic files for a complete matter record. Records personnel and IT staff must work together to make sure that all records, regardless of media type or source of origin, are managed consistently and according to the same taxonomy and retention policies. Without a systematic process for classifying, retaining, retrieving and disposing of all records, firms increase their risk exposure as well as that of their clients.

The majority of work performed in law firms is document focused. Pleadings, contracts, leases, deposition transcripts -- all client/matter work in progress must be readily accessible. Law firms need a secure and scalable document repository that allows the attorney, solicitor or barrister and their support staff, effective access to case information. Other parties such as a litigation team, the client, or the opposing counsel, may also need to participate in legal processes. These stakeholders expect access to electronic documents both during office hours as well as remotely from home or while travelling and so access through a web interface or via hand-held devices is essential.



● Effective document management

Easy access of documents without compromising the security, structured storage of records, alerts and notification of changes, anytime anywhere access, version control and change logs and collaboration possibilities play a vital role in an effective document management system. Designtech's DocumentCoordinator® can take care of all the important aspects of a document management system. Used by thousands users from different parts of the world in order to collaborate and manage their documents and records, DocumentCoordinator® is known as one of the best document management systems available in the market.

- Security is the key

Leaving your records unclassified and not having proper access rights to your records can lead to catastrophe in a law firm. With more than a decade of research and with proven track record, Designtech's DocumentCoordinator® can streamline the security aspects when it comes to document and content management. It enables easy organization of documents with detailed rights management giving the organization complete control over the documents and people who are accessing them.

- Leverage the team concept

Does anyone ever leave your firm? Ever struggle with keeping track of case assignments or case loads? DocumentCoordinator® brings a true team concept to case and workflow management by sharing and integrating the varied responsibilities and work products of attorneys, legal assistants, administrators and staff. With DocumentCoordinator® you have the option of automatically managing people as team members. So you can quickly assign, or reassign, a case to a group of people, monitoring case loads -- all with one stroke.

- Access anytime, anywhere

Whether at home or in a hotel room, having a total access to the data plays important role in the productivity and maximum utilization of time. All the contacts and documents reside in the DocumentCoordinator®. The web-based access enables you to always stay connected.

- Manage your files from Windows desktop with the familiar look and feel

The ability to create a virtual drive on any desktop and makes the Internet into a secure, shared virtual hard drive enable the user to open and edit documents and files stored on the server as easily as if they were on the user's own computer.

- Offline synchronization

Working with the documents and content when traveling or offline is important as it can help in finishing your backlogs and urgent tasks without the regular bustle of an office environment. Many users resort to copying files back and forth between the server and their laptop so that they can continue working while away from the office. The ability to select any number of directories or files that one needs to access when disconnected from the Internet, save these files locally, permitting editing and managing these files while offline, and then automatically uploading next time the user connects to the internet makes DocumentCoordinator® unique when it comes to offline file handling.



- Proper version control

How often have we searched through our file share wondering which version of a document is the latest one? DocumentCoordinator® allows a single document to have multiple versions with users able to view a version history.

- Automatic backup

Automatic online backup provides secure protection of user directories which are not already stored on the server such as user's My Documents folders. IT departments can pre-set a user's backup destination or users can select their own location. Selected files can be backed up on a scheduled basis without the hassle of remembering it each and every time.

- Manage your micro sites yourself

DocumentCoordinator®'s online content management capability with WYSIWYG interface can assist even non-technical users to easily manage the content on the Web Pages and publish it without any hassle on a regular basis.

- Software as a service

Increasingly many organizations including legal firms are using hosted online document management systems. The benefits, particularly for smaller organizations, include speed of implementation and lowered upfront and running costs. DocumentCoordinator® can be hosted by organizations themselves or access it as a service helping them to reduce the total cost of ownership.

Conclusion

There are numerous factors to consider when selecting the right document management software for your organization. For legal firms, particular attention should be paid to ease of use, speed of implementation, document version control, anytime anywhere access, a secure and scalable document repository and efficient storage capabilities. Increasingly organizations are using hosted online document management systems. The benefits, particularly for smaller organizations, include speed of implementation and lowered upfront and running costs. Having a decade of experience in the document management arena and a product developed and designed in close coordination with research institutes keeping in my mind strong security and stable performance, DocumentCoordinator® can definitely assist the law firms in their document management needs and provide assistance in managing risks.

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