



DocuXplorer® vs. Microsoft SharePoint

“Why can’t we use just Microsoft SharePoint as a document management solution?” This is a question that is asked of DocuXplorer on occasion when an organization is seeking a platform to organize and store their electronic and paper files. SharePoint allows groups to share information amongst one another for project management but it was never intended, as DocuXplorer is, to be used a long-term solution for records management. Additionally, the upfront and long-term costs to incorporate SharePoint far exceed the affordable costs of a document management solution such as DocuXplorer. This industry brief looks at both the product differences and cost comparisons of DocuXplorer versus SharePoint.

Collaborative Document Management versus Records Management

Microsoft’s SharePoint is a collaborative *platform* more than it is a collaborative *product*, in the same way that Lotus Notes can be positioned as a messaging platform. Both have their core competencies and solve particular types of problems. However, they can also be customized and sophisticated applications can be built upon the foundation they provide.

The term “document management” is often misused and/or misunderstood. It is simply a generic concept that needs to be broken down into sub-definitions or sub-genres. Collaborative document management (SharePoint) is very different from the more structured form of document management known as records management (DocuXplorer). Records are defined as “information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business”.

Records Management (such as DocuXplorer):

- Management of the record is more important than the content of the record
- The record never changes (although its properties might)
- Records require access controls, lots of them.
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Document Collaboration (such as SharePoint):

- Without content there is no document
- The document changes a lot – that’s the whole point of collaboration
- Access controls restrict and impede collaboration; the fewer there are the better.

As indicated in the bullets above, both have some common characteristics, but have different goals and outcomes. SharePoint is sufficient as a stand-alone product if an organization is simply looking to collaborate and share documents for a particular project. But, at the end of the day, that organization will still need a much more robust document/records management solution to ultimately store, archive and retrieve the specific files for the long-term.



Cost Implications

The cost of incorporating SharePoint into an organization's day-to-day operations may prove to be prohibitive for a smaller organization. SharePoint is far too complex for most small- and mid-sized customers. Along with the complexity, the cost could also prove to be quite high, and implementation also requires expensive hardware, multiple SharePoint Server licenses, and "SharePoint experts" to install and maintain it. SharePoint was built for large enterprises with thousands of employees and mega IT budgets. SharePoint is also on premise software. Since you need to set up servers in-house, SharePoint total cost of ownership (TCO) is actually much higher than SharePoint license costs, since you also have to pay for hardware, ongoing maintenance and IT staff.

DocuXplorer is a much more low-cost alternative to SharePoint and offers clients several low cost advantages - DocuXplorer requires no expensive consultants, hardware to set up or manage, and clients can access their files anytime and from anywhere in the world. SharePoint, on the other hand, needs "highly trained consultants, administrators, and technical support staff to deploy and run it, which all add to the total cost of ownership." A 2008 Forrester study found that "SharePoint is a pure Microsoft server stack that closes off any opportunities to substitute third-party databases, Web servers, and other products for Microsoft components."

Conclusion

SharePoint's core competency is its functionality that allows users to collaborate and share information within workgroups; it does not serve as a long-term records management solution for users to quickly organize and retrieve data when needed. DocuXplorer, either as a stand-alone product or in conjunction with SharePoint's collaboration technology, provides the long-term document management solution for the effective archiving and retrieval of an organization's files.

For more information about DocuXplorer, please contact sales@docuexplorer.com or call +1 212 496 9871.