



Documentum Acquisition Enriches EMC's ILM Vision

Analyst: Anne MacFarland

In many cases, an event becomes more interesting the closer you get. In the case of EMC's recent purchase of Documentum, there are insights to be derived from stepping back, as well.

- EMC's acquisition of Documentum builds out the differentiation of EMC's Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) vision from the heritage of Hierarchical Storage Management, a concept focused on placing data on the appropriate media based on usage.. **With the Documentum product set, EMC sets its ILM focus on pervasive management of information throughout the enterprise based on usage, business value and other relevant attributes.**
- Organizing text files and even more unstructured data into usable information is clearly a part of Information Lifecycle Management, but the market for software to do this is still measured in niches. **EMC is the first large vendor to stick a fork into a "knowledge management" product and pronounce it not only "ready," but ready to be integrated in a larger context.**
- While this is first and foremost a software play, **Documentum's functionality could reposition the Centera product from a specialty array to a more wide scale enterprise document repository.**
- In the battle for completeness of offering, **this acquisition represents a case of how well the parts are matched, rather than the best or coolest technology.** EMC paid a good price for Documentum, in part because Documentum's customer base was congruent with EMC's. This congruence will ease the path for a joint product offering of extensive ILM going forward.
- While, to many, the EMC purchase of Documentum is just another instance of vendor consolidation and product extension, **it also represents a change on how technology responds to business needs.** EMC has reached outside the storage space – not for more device management, but to cherry-pick a content management capability that seemed embedded in the end-user-facing, server-centric software world, and nestled it with data services (acquired with Legato) to build what will, in time, be a unified information management technology. Sort of takes the wind out of the sails of navigating only by speeds and feeds, doesn't it?
- Looking to the future, our concept of information will only become richer. Agents are contributing to knowledge about information and systems never before achieved. In biology and other sciences, sensors give new insights into physical and chemical processes we had thought that we understood. This wealth of information demands automation, not only in managing the information flow, but in the basic classification and contextualizing that allow us to turn this information into knowledge. Once the early efficiencies of business process automation have been achieved, enterprises will look to these granular sources of knowledge for ways to further enhance what they do and how they do it. **The Documentum acquisition represents an early positioning for a future of even more pervasive information.**

EMC's acquisition of Documentum is good for each company. It is a challenge to their competitors. And it is a telescope aimed toward a future where enterprises will leverage all information – structured and unstructured, static and dynamically-changing, to plot their strategy.

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About the Author

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Ms. MacFarland specializes in strategic solutions offered by enterprise systems and storage vendors, in trends in enterprise systems and networks, and in explaining these trends and the underlying technologies in simple business terms. She joined The Clipper Group after a long career in library systems, business archives, consulting, research, and freelance writing. Ms. MacFarland earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University, where she was a College Scholar, and a Masters of Library Science from Southern Connecticut State University.

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