



Digital Transformation of the Businesses in Saudi Arabia: Adapting an ECM/DMS Solution

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Andrew Robertson, BBDO: “My hope is that at some point in the future, we will get to the point where we, in our business, are paid neither for the time that we buy for our clients, nor for the time that we spend doing the work, but instead for the impact that our work has. It would mean that our interests were totally and utterly aligned with those of our clients.”

Abstract

This paper focuses the need of digital transformation strategies to take the content management of most businesses in KSA to a next level. It highlights a gap between the traditional content management strategies and the modern Enterprise Content Management (ECM) strategies. It highpoints the fact that people resist to the change due to the "fear of the unknown". The survey in this research proves that participants from a local organisation show satisfaction with old system whilst suffer from the old systems problems. In a detailed discussion on the objectives of the research relevant literature by various authors was referenced and reviewed to prove the facts highlighted in the study .Survey method was adopted and was carried out in a higher education institution in Riyadh. Results of the survey consists answers by participants to the research questions. Demographics are drawn in this paper to clearly suggest a change request to adopt new ECM system for document management. The collected data highlights the document handling challenges that the end user faces in the organisations of Saudi Arabia and assesses the need of a modern substitute that can replace the old and traditional methods of document management. Those challenges can be increased costs of operations with increase of population, loss of information due damages and paper miss deliveries. Same is the story in every second business and organisation in Saudi Arabia.

The problem of study: Organisations and businesses are still relying on traditional and old methods of document handling and archiving.

Aim of the study: is to highlight the fact that the businesses in Saudi Arabia need an ECM system for business content management.

Sample Target: A University in Riyadh with a large infrastructure of deanships and administration.

Place and Geographical Region: KSA

Year of Study: 1434-5 H (2013-14 B.C.)

Keywords: Digital Transformation, ECM, DMS in Saudi Arabia. Challenges of Traditional Management Systems.



Introduction

With the arrival of digital transformation and automation technologies and solutions of the present age Saudi Arabia's market has moved to a next level. E-Government is the major example of facilitating public sector by digital solutions. E-Government has stepped in and is likely to stay as a tool for public administration and policy implementation (Abdullah A. Al-Tameem 2009). Behind all business processes in E-Government there is a major role of content which can consist of documented information. Nevertheless, in most organisations and businesses the content management is still standing on an old and traditional platform. Many big organisations and businesses in corporate, educational and government sectors have transformed their businesses on modern systems of management. Nevertheless, most of them including government organisations are relying on traditional methods of document communication and archiving. This research highlights the need of adapting modern methods of document communication through selecting from a variety of DMS (Document Management Systems) /ECM (Enterprise Content Management) solutions available in the world. When people think of Saudi Arabia, they focus on oil and petrochemicals. They should know that there is now a great focus on different technologies. (Dr. Sultan Al-Mubarak, Oct 6, 2013) It is obvious by the above statement that by the arrival of emerging technologies we can see organisations in Saudi Arabia adopting ERP systems, MIS solutions and a range of digital solutions for technological transformation. Therefore, at this important stage of on-going digital transformations this research papers wants to attract the attention towards adopting ECM solutions, which can be integrated with almost every other MIS, or ERP solution and hence making the security and availability of documented information optimum. (Bjørn Erik Munk 2006).

In Saudi Arabia, the organisations and businesses are still relying on traditional and old methods of managing their content. The management methods and strategies mostly consists paper based document archives. We can say the traditional techniques are quite efficient and developed after a century of business experience. Nevertheless, there is a need automating the



way. There is a need of applying modern management strategies to meet the modern trends. AIIM the global community of information professional's states in an article on ECM systems.

“It's not enough to "manage" content. Of course, the ability to access the correct version of a document or record is important, but companies must go further. Content must be managed so that it is used to achieve business goals.”[5]

Research Objective

This research is to attract a common businessman to digital transformation and specifically the content management automation. Objective is to educate the reader about the need of a solution and an ECM system for content management. This research aims to spread the word that organisations and businesses in Saudi Arabia should digitally transform their analogue content management system by adapting modern ECM systems available in the market.

Where the world stands now in current ECM market Introduction of ECM as Digital Transformation strategy: The Association for Information and Image Management or AIIM (pronounced aim) is a non-profit organization of information professionals. AIIM provides education, market research, certification, and standards for information professionals. [6]

The Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) International, the worldwide association for Enterprise Content Management, defined the term in 2000.

ECM Defined

Enterprise Content Management (ECM) comprises the technologies used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver content, and documents related to organizational processes. ECM tools and strategies enable the management of an organization's unstructured information, wherever that information exists. [6]



Enterprise content management is a modern way of content management which achieves organisational goals of information capture, search and networking of documents through digital archiving, document management and workflow.

In these digital archives, enterprise content is kept in the form of electronic repositories. These electronic repositories are speedily accessible through a secure network based user interface. Scanned images are indexed based on the metadata provided during capture and are quickly searchable. Workflows are the software, which vendors provide with the ECM solution to automate a business process of an enterprise. Workflows automatically route the document through organisations and save a lot of communication effort involved in manual routing of the documents.

Statement

This is a time to be aware of the fact that Saudi Arabia businesses and organisations should digitally be transformed into a modern system of Electronic Content Management. It will reduce the cost of document search and routing. It will optimise the security of document information. It is the need of our business sector as well the end user.

Research questions

Is there a need to transform the old traditional document management into a digital ECM solution?

- As compared to modern technologies, Does the old technique of document management efficient and secure enough?
- Do we not experience a loss of documented information?
- Do we not suffer from delays in the completion of our business processes?
- Do not we see better business performance through digital ECM?

Method

This study has performed a survey in Imam Saud University (where there is no ECM strategy adapted yet for document management and routing) to gather some answers to the research questions. The demographics given below are self-explanatory.



By selecting the survey method, it is easy to highlight the aim of study. Demographics were prepared based on the survey data.

Many different questions were asked in the survey but following two questions have been selected to highlight the fact that we need an ECM System but we do not demand it. A detailed debate has been done in the discussion section below by referencing scholarly views and explaining the gap of this research with the referenced researches.

Here are the two major questions:

Is the method of exchanging and archiving the documents efficient enough? Fig 1.1

More than 98% response was received on this question.

Answered by the staff: 168, Skipped 4

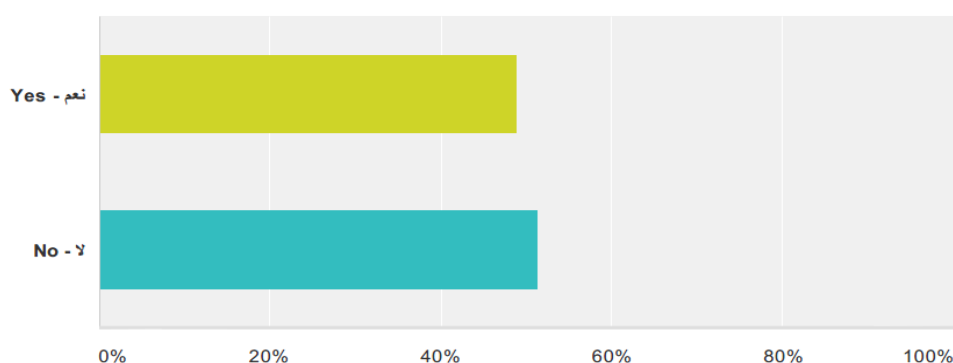


Figure 1.1

Explanation of the data in Fig 1.1:

The statistics against this survey question clearly indicate that 51.19% majority of the staff know the fact that the manual or analogue document management is not efficient. The rest of the 48.81% are satisfied with the traditional system.

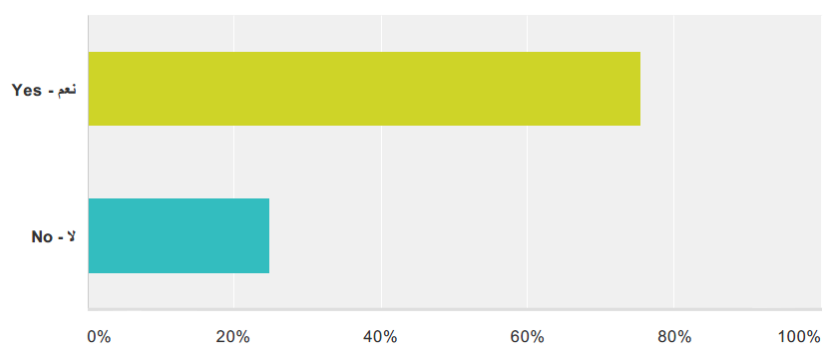
Do you experience a loss of documents due to paper loss or paper damage or virus attacks?

Fig 1.2

More than 97% response was received on this question.

Answered by the staff: 166, Skipped 6

Figure 1.2





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Explanation of the data in Fig 1.2:

The statistics against this survey question clearly indicate that 75.30% majority of the staff know the fact that they suffer from information loss. Only 24.70% have experienced any paper loss or damage and e-document loss due to virus attacks in their computers.

Discussion

Documents are the most important part information in an organisation. Capturing of the information becomes an essential need in large business processes (Angèle Boyd 2005). Like other technologically developing countries in the world, business processes in Saudi Arabia involve proper documentation against each business process. Organisations like the one we have selected for a sample target undergo a huge communication, archiving and storage of such documentation and all this is done through a large number of staff. In the methodology above the respondents to the survey questions were the staffs who handle the paper work.

Their views clearly indicate the demand of automation in the **business process management**. [11]

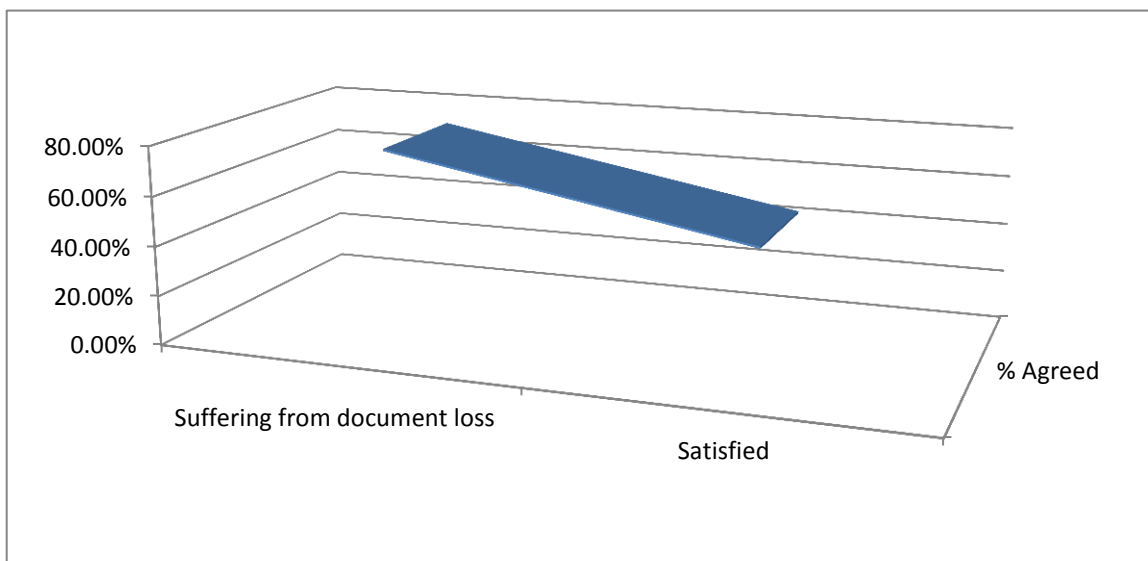


Figure 1.3

The slope in **fig 1.3** which is going downwards from “suffering information loss” to a comparatively low level of satisfaction. This shows a common behaviour of resisting the change. People resist to new changes. They know that they are suffering by not adopting the change but still they resist.

The gap of opinion with the reviewed literature is the slope shown in figure above. The literature highlights the benefits of an ECM system but it does not indicate the ”resistance to a new change” factor emphasized in this study. EMC paper (Adaptive ECM and the Future of Enterprise Content Management 2008) states that “it lets users do their work exactly the way they want”. While in this study it is shown clearly that people (End Users) suffer from document loss but still they resist to a new change. This is due the unawareness and ignoring this major part of the digital transformation strategy being adopted by most of developed businesses in the world.



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This paper suggests spreading awareness about the emerging technologies and modern digital transformation strategies for document management to replace the traditional paper analogue system in the businesses in Saudi Arabia. A modern research on resistance to change and ways of reducing resistance in educational.

Organizations (Derya Yılmaz a and Gökhan Kılıçoğlu b 2013) maintains the point of view of this research that **fear of the unknown** is the major factor that causes the people to resist. They should be given enough knowledge to publications and newspapers advertisements to know about the new ways of managing their content in the organisation.

More specifically talking on the purpose of this research paper is to spread awareness to eliminate the resistance by the user to a change that can revolutionise the way they handle their content. In addition, to automate the business processes through workflows is a worldly proven strategy.

Result

The table 1.1 given below contains complete data collected against various important survey questions. The bolded 99.37% gives a clear indication on the demand of new digital transformation strategy of the enterprise content. Adaptation of an ECM/DMS solution is the best suitable and proven strategy to satisfy this question.



About current manual/traditional document management	Yes	No	% Agreed
Satisfied by manual documentation	82	86	48.81%
Document search is too much time taking in archives	155	14	91.72%
E-Document search is too much time taking in computers	24	144	14.29%
Documents are secure in paper archives	64	103	38.32%
E-Documents are secure on a network location	89	78	53.29%
Suffering from document loss	125	41	75.30%
Current method is costly	140	21	86.96%
Adapting ECM can increase performance	146	14	91.25%
Modern ECM should replace the current method	157	1	99.37%
Willing to demand ECM solution from management	143	13	91.67%

Table 1.1

The results as shown in **Table 1.1** are self-explanatory and emphasize the demand of new system, which can facilitate, secure and organise the content. However, the shy response (48.81% VS 51.19%) on the satisfaction level of staff in the sample organisation is due the “Fear of new change” discussed in above section. The overall statistics are in the favour of the objective of this research paper. Other very high conformity response (Table 1.1) was the inconvenience and delays to search information in manual document archives (91.72%). Adapting computerised systems can improve performance (91.25%). Willing to demand a new solution (91.67%).



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Conclusion

Adapting a modern ECM/DMS is a need of the businesses in Saudi Arabia. As 99.37% feel the need a substitute for the old methods of content management. Although there was a reluctant response of only 51.19%, who were not satisfied by old method of archiving and routing yet this emphasized an expected resistance to a new change. This is why we want to educate and avoid "fear of the unknown". This is why most of our organisations are still relying on traditional methods.

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