TechnologyOne

Information Management in the Digital Age

Transforming Local Councils in Australia

By Geoff Moore, TechnologyOne
About TechnologyOne

TechnologyOne (ASX:TNE) is Australia’s largest publicly listed software company and one of Australia’s top 200 ASX-listed companies, with offices across six countries. We create solutions that transform business and make life simple for our customers. We do this by providing powerful, deeply integrated enterprise software that is incredibly easy to use. Over 1,000 leading corporations, government departments and statutory authorities are powered by our software.

We participate in only seven key markets: government, local government, financial services, education, health and community services, utilities and managed services.

For these markets we develop, market, sell, implement, support and run our preconfigured solutions, which reduce time, cost and risk for our customers.

For 27 years, we have been providing our customers enterprise software that evolves and adapts to new and emerging technologies, allowing them to focus on their business and not technology. Today, our software is available on the TechnologyOne Cloud and across smart mobile devices.

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Local government’s information and service challenge

“Local government is no longer just about roads and rubbish – it has become a complex and versatile business that offers many services to the community. It faces constant change imposed by state and federal governments, not to mention community expectations.”

Battista Covolo, Burdekin Shire Council, Queensland

Smart mobile devices have fundamentally changed the way local governments conduct business. What’s more, the types and volume of information we interact with has changed significantly in recent years. Between April and June 2014 alone, Australians collectively downloaded more than 1.3 million terabytes of data, a 52% increase from the same period in 20131.

This information explosion, coupled with the proliferation of devices, is forcing local governments to transform how they capture, store and make information available to meet business, employees and community requirements.

Everyone now expects to be able to access services quickly and from any location through a range of mobile and fixed computing devices. According to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), half of all adult Australians used a tablet to access the internet in the six months to May 20142.

Consequently, knowledge workers are changing the ways in which they interact with information by embracing mobile technology to work away from the office. By 2018 an estimated 35% of consumer owned tablets and smartphones will be used for work purposes3. According to Kevin Glynn, ICT Manager at New Plymouth District Council, “customers are demanding more services be delivered online, and increasingly we are seeing more mobile users working mainly from small form factor mobile devices.”

For local governments this highlights the importance of ensuring that information is readily available, making it easier for employees to provide a fast customer service and for constituents to find the information they are looking for.

In order to keep up with community and employee expectations, local governments must adapt to these challenges, and do so in a way that satisfies their increasingly complex legislative requirements. The solution is to take a comprehensive and proactive approach to all enterprise information, integrating both structured and unstructured content with a holistic information management strategy. Structured content is typically managed in an enterprise business system. Unstructured content is typically managed separately in a document management system. Enterprise Content Management (ECM) incorporates both.

ECM is a way of collecting and analysing all documents and other information critical to an organisation and its business processes. By updating ECM for the digital era, local councils can use it as the foundation for a brand new approach to information management.

An effective digital ECM strategy in local government should focus on:
1. capturing and centralising information
2. ensuring that centralised information can be accessed, searched and used
3. enabling office and field-based employees to work flexibly and remotely
4. securely storing information to meet legislative requirements

By following these steps, local councils will be well placed to enhance efficiency, improve customer service, and better meet employee expectations and needs. This will ultimately enable them to better serve their communities.

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1. ACMA, Communications Report 2013-14
2. ACMA, Tablets take off: take-up and use of tablet computers in Australia, 9 December 2014
1. Capturing and centralising information

Ten years ago, the world of digital information was in its infancy. While email was commonplace, Facebook had only just been established, Twitter did not exist and the first iPhone was still three years away. Then the social media and mobile technology revolution hit. It's now easier than ever to create and share information in numerous formats. As a result, paper documents have been supplemented – and in many cases supplanted – by blogs, tweets, Instagrammed photos, status updates, digitised records and other types of new media.

Councils are now confronted with information that falls into two main categories. First there is ‘structured content’, meaning data that resides in a fixed field within a record or file. This includes data contained in relational databases and spreadsheets. Traditional business applications deal extremely well with this type of information. On the other hand, councils must also deal with ‘unstructured content’, which appears in an ever-increasing number of formats and is, as a result, much harder to index and analyse. Common sources of unstructured content include large graphics files, emails, blogs, geospatial information, photos, RSS feeds, social media threads, spreadsheets, live sensor information, sound files and wikis.

With so much information at hand, it is imperative that councils have access to a powerful ECM system that allows them to collect and centralise all content, be it structured or unstructured. To enable employees to continue using familiar software, it is vital your digital ECM system can also capture information from common applications such as Microsoft Office and Exchange, Google Docs and Lotus Notes.

By collating information and making it accessible via a simple user interface, digital ECM makes it easy for those seeking information to find and contextualise relevant documents. Local councils can further maximise efficiency and encourage the free flow of information by integrating their enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems with a centralised information pool.

Information centralisation benefits council employees and customers by making it easy for them to navigate vast amounts of information in multiple formats. Unlike traditional document management systems, digital ECM can adapt to new information types as they emerge, making it the best choice for knowledge workers in today’s media-saturated and mobile economy.

What is ‘information’?

In the context of this white paper, we define ‘information’ as both structured and unstructured content generated by interactions between council employees, ratepayers, businesses and community stakeholders. This includes:

1. Traditional content – hard-copy and electronic documents such as contracts, invoices, policies, purchase orders and receipts
2. Multimedia content – audio and video files, teleconferencing, photographs, maps and plans
3. Social media content – blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter
4. Structured business system content – data that resides in a fixed field within a database record or file
2. Ensuring centralised information can be accessed, searched and employed

For a digital ECM strategy to succeed, employees must be able to access centralised information quickly and accurately. Doing so requires various software processes, such as capturing (registration), indexing (tagging), searching and retrieving, editing and controlling versions.

Because local councils are complex, multi-departmental organisations, their ECM software should include a faceted classification system that allows users to find the same document from different business policy areas.

For example, imagine you have a purchase order (PO) document for a council vehicle, and several different departments require access. It needs to be referenced in two places – the asset management system and financial management system. Some councils may choose to duplicate the PO document, potentially leading to version control problems, and auditing and compliance issues. Now imagine you have a single instance of the PO document, which can be ‘tagged’ with the asset number and the organisation unit so it appears in both the asset management system and financial management system. Your version control problems are immediately eliminated.

Some councils are also starting to push internal systems and public services to the cloud. Usually the logical place to start is moving to new age email and authoring tools like Microsoft Office 365 or Google Docs. However, this then raises important considerations for an council’s ECM strategy. Will my ECM be able to accept emails and documents from these new systems? What about those relying on plugins and connectors to their ECM? Will they work with the new system or will there be a flood of support calls from workers who are unable to store and access information? A futureproofed ECM system that can cater for information from these and other sources is crucial for councils. One that aids their move to the cloud, rather than acting as a hinderance and forcing constant workarounds.

It is also important to consider additional costs such as training and change management. For instance, local councils should consider choosing an ECM system that can be used by existing employees without the need for significant investment in training.

The value of centralised and widely accessible information

A good example of where a centralised approach to information management can deliver business benefits is with field workers.

From building inspections to road repairs, a large proportion of council work is carried out by field workers. If the council made changes to residential building policy, how difficult would it be to disseminate the new information to ensure every building inspector in the field has access to it?

Most councils would email the new document to each field worker, which is slow and inefficient. It requires double-handling and wastes time due to email follow-ups and confirmations. Additionally, there is no guarantee that the worker will use the latest version.

But what if the council’s centralised document repository automatically updated the document, and field workers could access it from any phone, tablet or laptop? The latest version would be instantly accessible as the single source of truth and no email correspondence would be required. Workers could even compare previous versions of the document to see what exactly had changed.

Furthermore, building inspectors could submit their inspection report from the field along with supporting notes and images. It could be saved centrally, and automatic tagging would allocate the document to the correct business domain. Where required, the council could also automate the workflow to push the tagged inspection report to the next stage in the reporting process. An ECM tool that centralises information makes all of this possible. Employees can access the same pool of information from any device – anywhere, and at any time.

Security is an added benefit. Consider what would happen if a field worker lost their device or had it stolen. What would happen to the inspection report? Would it be lost forever? Centralised information storage removes this issue.

Saving time and money

The need to organise information more efficiently goes significantly beyond field workers.

A recent IDC study found that knowledge workers around the world spend 16 per cent of their time searching for information, and a further 10 per cent consolidating and analysing information from one or more sources. This adds up to 10 hours per worker per week.

Furthermore, 61 per cent needed to access four or more different information systems on a regular basis, while 13 per cent used 11 or more systems, making workers inefficient and increasing the likelihood of human error.

Inadequate ECM systems diminish efficiency in two ways: they force employees to waste time looking for information, and they make it more difficult to review the council’s wider activities. By making structured and unstructured content centralised and searchable, local governments will increase efficiency for council employees as well as those who require council services.

3. Enabling office and field workers to work flexibly and remotely

According to our own research, the majority of local councils in Australia lack a bring your own device (BYOD) or cloud strategy. As a result, employees cannot use their own portable devices – such as smartphones, tablets and laptops – to perform work-related tasks. This is despite the fact that, according to our survey, many local council employees express a desire to use their own devices.

Increased system access makes it easier for employees to communicate and work anywhere, at any time.

There are several ways council workers would benefit from using a system that enables mobility whether via their own devices or council supplied laptops, tablets or phones. Increased system access makes it easier for employees to communicate and work anywhere, at any time.

It is also important to consider the needs of the field workers who are always on the move, to ensure council services run smoothly. These services include road and footpath maintenance, rubbish collection and disposal, and fire and building assessments.

Field workers benefit greatly from a digital ECM strategy that enables them to use mobile devices to collect and manage information. For example, a team of road workers can use a tablet device to access lists of daily repair jobs and log any unexpected service calls. They can also take ‘before’ and ‘after’ photos to show when repairs have been completed. The ‘after’ photos can then be automatically emailed with built-in workflow to whomever requested the repair, providing them with confirmation and full transparency.

But it is not only field workers who can benefit from mobility and flexible work strategies. Office-based council employees would also benefit from a robust digital ECM strategy that enables them to log in remotely to work from home, or access documents when they’re away from their desk.

Several Australian councils are already benefitting from flexible work practices enabled by digital ECM. Employees at Noosa Shire Council in Queensland can remotely access millions of documents via the council’s mobile ECM system. According to ICT Manager Justin Thomas, the powerful metadata search capability in the council’s ECM system makes it easier to find documents than a basic cloud service such as Dropbox.

“All I need is an internet browser on any device,” he explains. “There’s no stuffing around with laptops, special clients or VPANs, or the risk of public cloud services. It has all the benefits of public cloud but with the security and features of ECM.”

7. Noosa takes ECM to the cloud, Image & Data Manager, 25 September 2014.
4. Securely storing information to meet legislative requirements

To meet compliance and regulatory requirements, local governments require an ECM system with highly customisable security settings that allow managers to restrict access to information as required.

Local government councils that intend to introduce mobile access and BYOD must also guard against potential risks to information privacy and security. They must consider how they will monitor, track and capture information from mobile devices used by office and field workers.

In Australia, there are currently more than 80 pieces of legislation regulating information and record creation, maintenance, management, transferral, discharge and disposal. Council leaders must be aware of the potential document privacy and security risks, as a misstep can lead to serious consequences. A flexible and customisable ECM strategy enables councils to efficiently meet regulatory requirements and streamline compliance and auditing processes.

Commonwealth legislation with provisions related to information management include:

- Archives Act 1983
- Australian Information Commissioner Act 2010
- Crimes Act 1900
- Electronic Transactions Act 1999
- Evidence Act 1995
- Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997
- Freedom of Information Act 1982
- Local Government Act 1993
- Privacy Act 1988
- Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013
Is your council ready for the digital age?

To assess the readiness of your organisation’s enterprise content management strategy, we suggest council executives answer these questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constituent representatives</td>
<td>• Can I quickly access the information I need to get up-to-date information on local issues or projects?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(mayor/counsellors)</td>
<td>• Do I know what ratepayers, businesses and other stakeholders are saying about my local council on social media?</td>
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<tr>
<td>General managers</td>
<td>• Do I have visibility across projects, processes and the information being used to make executive decisions?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Does our IM system comply with regulatory requirements?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Can I make it easier for office and field workers to work flexibly and efficiently?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>• How can I ensure business units share information and do not silo information?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Am I correctly capturing all business unit information?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How can I ensure business units use consistent business processes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business unit managers</td>
<td>• How do I ensure my team’s information is protected and only accessed by the right people?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Can I access the information I need from other business units in a timely manner?</td>
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<td>Records managers</td>
<td>• How do I ensure office and field workers follow correct information capture protocols?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Can I quickly and efficiently complete record-keeping processes?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are manual IM processes causing bottlenecks in auditing and other legal discovery processes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>• Can I quickly collate the information constituent representatives require?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Can I collate information from multiple sources and in multiple formats?</td>
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About TechnologyOne
Enterprise Content Management

TechnologyOne ECM is a powerful technology solution that enables organisations to easily and efficiently capture, store, use and manage information contained within their business documents from any device, anywhere and at any time.

ECM centralises the storage of all business documents, creating profiles with multiple indexes to link documents to the business units that need them. It also standardises naming conventions to structure the way information is retrieved. Managing the items in TechnologyOne ECM means you only have to search in one place when you need to find a document.

ECM is an integral part of TechnologyOne’s enterprise software solution, built on a single modern platform with a consistent look and feel.

TechnologyOne ECM enables you to:
- store all council documents in a single, central repository
- access business-critical information from anywhere on any device
- provide office and field workers with the information they need
- share information across work groups and business units
- centrally capture emails from smartphones
- reduce information processing costs
- reduce time spent searching for documents and records
- effortlessly capture and profile information
- support a mobile workforce
- adhere to regulatory and legislative requirements

Learn more
For more information, visit www.technologyonecorp.com/local-government
Our approach

Our enterprise vision

The power of a single, integrated enterprise solution
Experience the power of a single, integrated enterprise solution built on a single modern platform with a consistent look and feel.

Market focus and commitment

Preconfigured enterprise software solutions reduce time, cost and risk
A deep understanding and engagement with our seven key markets means we can deliver to our customers integrated, preconfigured solutions that provide proven practice, streamline implementations and reduce time, cost and risk.

The power of one

One vision. One vendor. One experience.
When you invest in a TechnologyOne solution you benefit from a direct relationship with us every step of the way. We do not use implementation partners or value-added resellers. We take complete responsibility for building, marketing, selling, implementing, supporting and running our enterprise solution for each customer to guarantee long-term success.

The power of evolution

An enterprise solution that adapts and evolves
Substantial investment into R&D each year means we provide our customers a strong, continuing competitive advantage through an enterprise solution that adapts and evolves by embracing new technologies, concepts and innovation.

Simplicity, not complexity

Enterprise software, incredibly simple
Software that embraces consumer concepts and expectations to deliver solutions that are incredibly easy to use and remove complexity.