

THE 2019 INTELLIGENT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BENCHMARK REPORT

M-Files[®]



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INTRODUCTION

The way organizations manage company information sits at the crossroads of just about all business processes. Day after day and week after week, employees are wasting a significant amount of time dealing with the myriad of challenges related to working with company documents — across the entire document lifecycle. That wasted time is a silent killer to productivity, which can cost organizations a tremendous amount of money in opportunity costs.

In a recent study, IDC revealed that the unproductive time workers spend as a result of information management inefficiencies amounts to a loss of 21% of the organization's total productivity, which costs the organization an astounding amount — nearly \$20,000 per worker per year.¹

Early American colonist William Penn embodied this sentiment best when he said, "Time is what we want most, but what we use worst."

The research project in the proceeding pages was commissioned by M-Files to better understand how companies across the globe are managing their growing store of company information. With resounding clarity, the consensus is that document management remains a challenge.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

While intelligent information management (IIM) encompasses so much more than the catch-all term of 'document management', a core functionality of any IIM platform is the ability to store, manage and track documents. It's that core functionality that we focus on with this research. Particularly, we wanted to know the ease with which workers can find the documents they need, where information is typically stored, and the proliferation of mobile devices in managing company information.

The cruel reality is that poorly-filed and badly-named documents are difficult to locate and,

in some cases, will never be located. It has become a status quo that information workers are quickly understanding to be a huge problem. As you read this report, ask yourself where your organization stands. How difficult is it to find the information you need? Can you get the documents you need when you're offsite? How large is the reliance on paper documents? Do you suffer from under-automated processes?

DATA REPOSITORIES

Call it information sprawl. Call it content chaos. Whatever you call it, the problem is only growing along with the rise in data volume, velocity and variety. The challenge is primarily caused by company information scattered across multiple data repositories. The problem can only be remediated if organizations heed the call to tame the sprawl in a systematic and intelligent way, perhaps as a leg of their overall digital transformation strategy. It's a status quo that remains alarming — the organizational penchant for storing and managing content across several information silos — ERP, CRM, network folders, email inboxes, file-sharing applications... the list goes on and on.

Worse yet, these common information storage locations generally lack the ability to interact with one another. This creates issues like version control, time-consuming searches through multiple repositories, and other issues that are productivity-killers. While the development of a single "data lake" remains a hot buzzword, it seems too many organizations have gone the opposite direction and developed numerous "data ponds" which has impeded overall productivity and created a "data swamp."

This intelligence paper drills down to the heart of document management, surfacing statistics on how organizations in nine different countries are managing company information and how they are facing the challenges presented by their ever-increasing store of data.



DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Information is king when it comes to doing business. More and more, organizations seek to become more sophisticated in the way they manage company information. Poor document management practices steal productivity from companies and cost them money and time.

The most basic functions of document management platforms include: the ability to easily find documents; proper version control; storage control (preferably in a single user-interface); and the ability to review, sign, and approve documents. But how many companies are faced with challenges around these most basic tenets of functional document management?

Poor document management practices steal productivity from companies and cost them money and time.



Finding Documents

Over the last two years alone 90% of all the data in the world was generated.² With this growing amount of information to manage, the question then becomes: How easy is it for workers to find the most pertinent version of the document they need? Workers were asked:

When it comes to searching the repositories/ systems for documents and information while working in the office, what is your general experience?

46% say it's challenging or always challenging to find the right information.

Disturbingly, nearly half of workers report that searching their repositories and systems and finding the right information is burdensome and time-consuming.

This seemingly small problem can have a huge impact, considering how it's amplified throughout a large workforce. Most of an office worker's life is spent working with various company documents. Thus, it can be reasonably concluded that the pervasive challenges from that 46% of respondents in finding documents must be having an impact.



46% of workers find it sometimes or almost always challenging to find the information they're looking for.

Document Version “Hide and Seek”

The previous section elucidates that simply finding documents within an enterprise information ecosystem can be challenging. The survey looked at this “hide and seek” from another angle: What about finding the right version of a document among the tangled web of email strings and disconnected repositories?

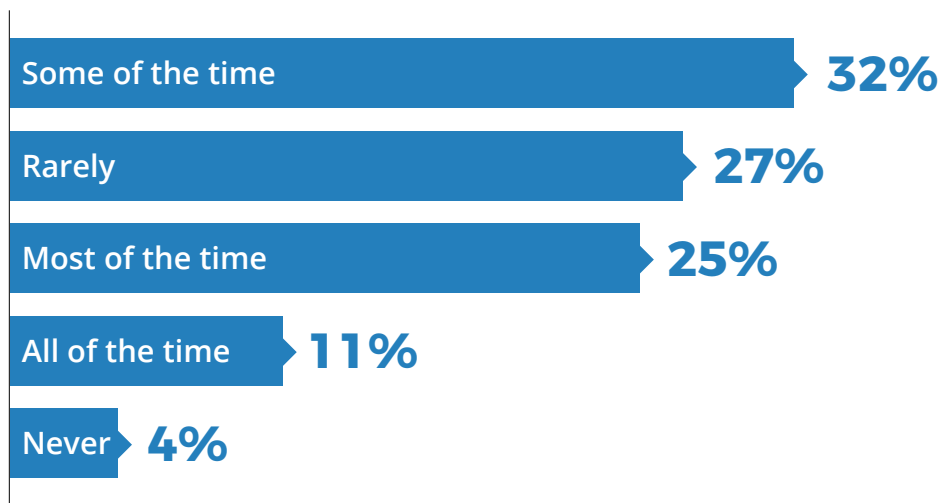
It’s all too common for workers to spend unneeded time poring over emails and through file folders trying to find the latest, most relevant version of the document they need only to find that a colleague has amended a previous version. In fact, a Perforce survey of over 1,000 employees found that 83% of workers lose time to versioning issues every day.³ Just how prevalent is this issue?

Over two-thirds of respondents (68%) stated that it’s either always, mostly or sometimes

difficult to find the right version of a document. Only 4% of respondents report that they never find it difficult to reliably find the most recent version of a document or file. Alarming, of those who have found it difficult, more than eight in ten (83%) say that they’ve had to recreate a document which already existed because they were unable to find it on their corporate network.

Given that over nine in ten respondents (91%) agree that their job would be easier if they could quickly find and access the most current version of a document without having to worry about which system or repository it resides in, having to recreate documents is obviously a familiar frustration and worse than being an annoyance, in the aggregate, it slows down productivity and costs companies millions.

“ON AVERAGE, HOW OFTEN DO YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO RELIABLY FIND THE MOST RECENT VERSION OF A DOCUMENT OR FILE?”



83% of workers have had to recreate a document which already existed because they were unable to find it on their corporate network.

Information Storage

The increasing store of company information continues to be scattered across multiple systems and repositories, a topic covered in-depth later. But where exactly do companies tend to store their company documents? Which systems and repositories dominate the enterprise landscape?

Respondents were asked:

“TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SYSTEMS AND REPOSITORIES DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION USE TO STORE AND MANAGE DOCUMENTS AND OTHER INFORMATION?”



69%

Store and manage documents out of their email inbox



55%

Rely on shared network drives and traditional folder structures



Only **24%**

Use a document management system



4 repositories

On average, respondents indicated that their organization uses 4 repositories to store and manage documents and other information.

Predictably, the most likely location used by respondents' organizations is email, cited by 69% of respondents, followed by shared network drives and folders (55%) and/or information saved locally to desktop or laptop (54%). Needless to say, using email as a makeshift storehouse for company information presents tremendous inefficiencies in searching for and finding the right document at the right time, as email systems tend to be inherently primitive in their contextualization of attachments and documents.

Only around one in four (24%) report the use of enterprise document management systems within their organization. On average,

respondents identified four systems and/or repositories that their organization uses to store and manage documents and other information.

It's interesting to note the correlation between an enterprise document management solution and lower levels of difficulty in finding recent versions of a document. Respondents from Switzerland (33%), Finland (32%) and Sweden (28%) are the most likely to report the use of an enterprise document management system and are among the most likely to report less difficulty in finding the correct version of a document, displaying the positive impact such a system might have.



Email — arguably the least-equipped system to manage large volumes of company information — is the most prevalent repository for company documents.

Challenges of Document Management

This is an era where inefficiency is no longer an option. Long gone are the days of “taking it slow” in the constantly-connected, fast-paced world that will soon be dominated by digital natives. According to Deloitte, 33% of the current workforce is made up of digital natives⁴ — the young generation that doesn’t know life before the internet. Companies are forced to deal with the pressure of keeping up with the demands of this generation, a generation that could use iPads before they could write. They are indelibly entrenched in technology and have become accustomed to having instant access to information at their fingertips as consumers. They have the same expectations in their professional lives. Companies that want to stay ahead of the curve will find more efficient ways of managing information.

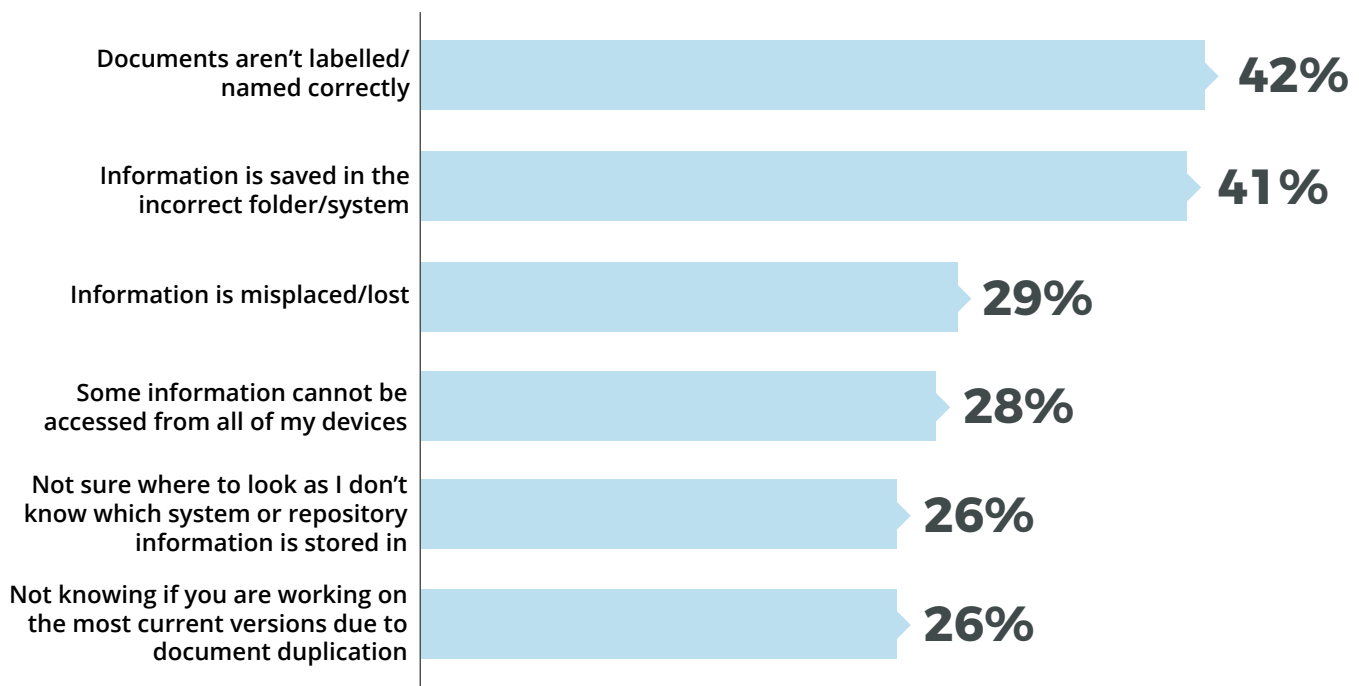
While the entry of digital natives into the workforce is one reason why companies need

to take a hard look at digital transformation, there are other strong drivers towards a more efficient workforce — not the least of which are productivity increases and a desire for workers to spend less time searching for information and more time focusing on strategic tasks. If efficiency in finding company information is the goal, which challenges surface as the most common culprits thwarting efficiency?

The most likely challenges faced include documents not being labelled or named correctly (42%) and information saved in the incorrect folder or system (41%).

While these are the most common challenges, they are by no means the only ones, and the array of reported difficulties highlights that document management is still a big challenge for respondents’ organizations and is a likely thief of productivity, time, and money.

“WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU EXPERIENCE WHEN SEARCHING FOR DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION YOU NEED TO DO YOUR JOB?”



86% respondents indicate that they experience challenges when it comes to searching for information they need to do their job.

Reviewing, Approving and Signing Documents

From invoices to service agreements to internal documents and everything in between, document workflows are irrevocably linked to the ability to review, approve and sign documents. How often do employees find themselves having to print a document, sign it themselves or get it signed? Pretty often, it seems and thus should become an integral component of document management in the context of digital transformation.

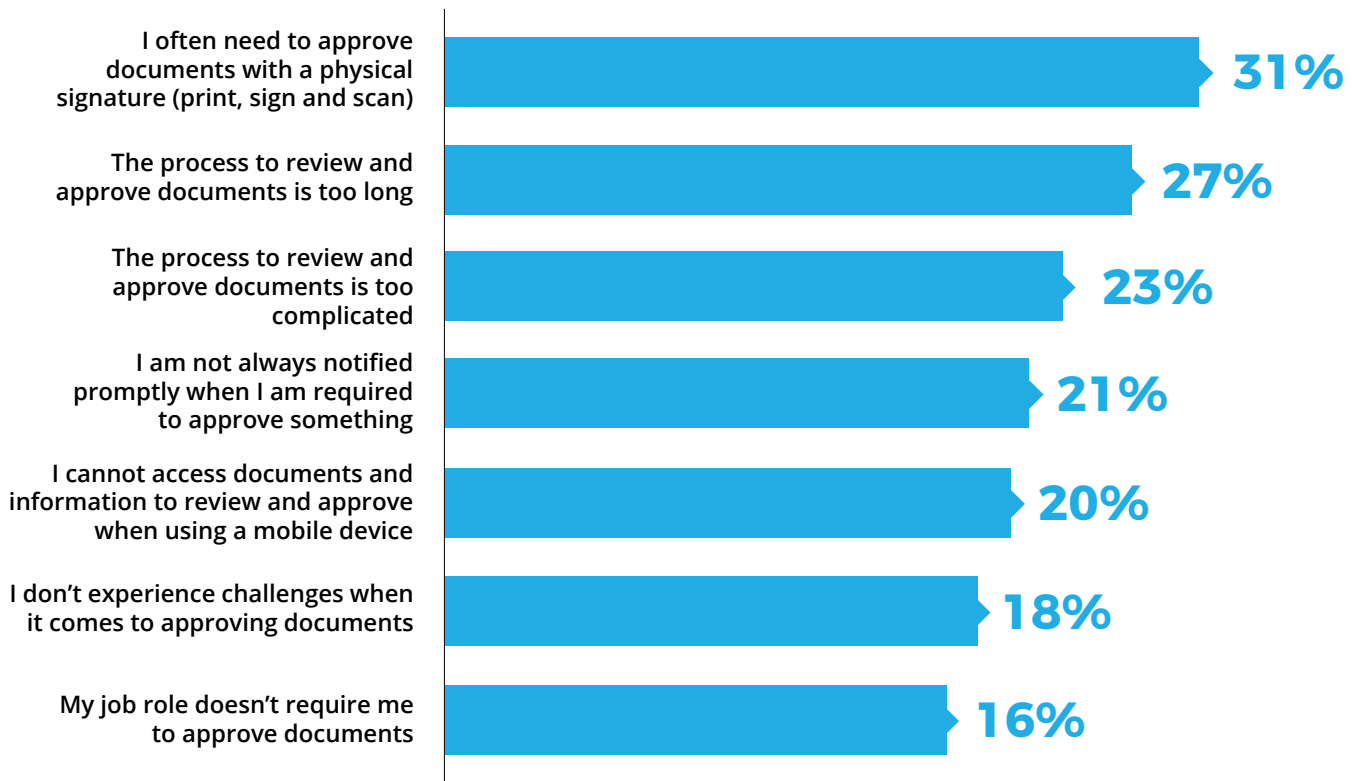
Two-thirds (66%) of respondents indicate that they experience challenges when it comes to reviewing and approving documents.

While the digital workplace of the future is one that is less reliant on paper documents, the need

for physical signatures leads the pack in terms of the most cited challenge experienced by workers, coming in at 31%. A close second is that the process to review and approve documents takes too long (27%).

With only 18% of respondents stating that they don't tout any major issues in document approval processes, organizations are clearly experiencing a range of challenges when it comes to reviewing and approving documents including areas such as efficiencies, notifications, and access. Realistically these are challenges that should not be too difficult to overcome but can all-too-easily have negative financial and productivity implications.

“WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU EXPERIENCE WHEN IT COMES TO REVIEWING AND APPROVING DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION?”



65% Nearly two-thirds of respondents indicate that they experience challenges in reviewing, approving and signing documents.

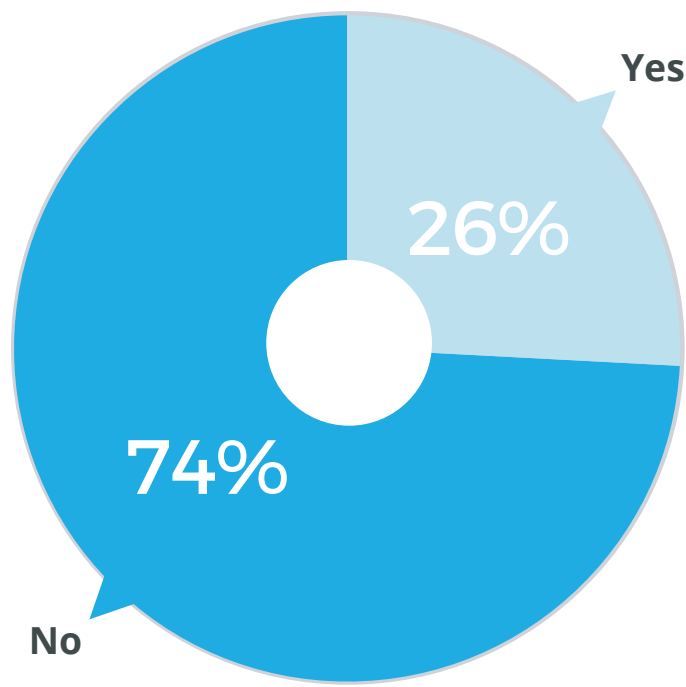
Ability to Approve Documents on a Mobile Device

Research shows that over 40% of the global workforce will be mobile by 2020, and in advanced economies like the EU and the US, that number will soar to 75%.⁵ With that paradigm shift comes the necessity to enable mobile workers to complete critical tasks — like reviewing and approving documents. Although sufficient technology exists to make that a reality for most, progress seems a bit slow in mobile signature enablement.

Only 26% of those respondents who need access to corporate documents using a mobile device report being able to sign documents using such a device.

The survey provided a follow-up question to the challenges experienced when it comes to reviewing and approving documents. When asked to identify the action workers were missing that would be the most likely to benefit them, the ability to sign documents from a mobile device was cited most at 39%.

“ARE YOU ABLE TO SIGN CORPORATE DOCUMENTS ON A MOBILE DEVICE, WHEN NEEDED?”



26% The reported percentage that can sign documents from mobile

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT RECAP: BY THE NUMBERS



46%

say it's challenging and time-consuming to find needed information.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



Only **4%** never find it difficult to reliably find the most recent version of a document.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



8 in 10 workers have to recreate documents that already exist because they're unable to find it.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



The most likely company information repositories are **EMAIL, SHARED NETWORK DRIVES AND FOLDERS, and INFORMATION SAVED LOCALLY TO DESKTOP OR LAPTOP.**

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



When searching for documents, the most likely challenges faced are (1) mislabeled documents and (2) information saved in the incorrect folder or system.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



31%

cite the need for a physical signature as the most common challenge in approving documents.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



74%

can't approve corporate documents on a mobile device.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



Only **1 in 4** report the use of enterprise document management systems in their organization.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT ON THE MOVE

Information at every company is growing — the quantity of documents, version control and various data stores all present unique problems and no two tactics for document management are the same. Now attempt to take those challenges on the road with some version of document management on mobile devices and the issues compound.

It sounds so straightforward: use your mobile device to access, store and manage documents from the cloud and work with them much like you would on a desktop. Most believe this should be easy for all workers, but many technologists have tried to tackle the issue with some success yet challenges still remain.

...many technologists have tried to tackle the issue with some success yet **challenges still remain.**

Accessing Documents from a Mobile Device


The most elementary of all document management functions is the ability to access documents — to retrieve them from wherever they may be stored. Increasingly, the ability to access information away from the office on a mobile device is becoming more and more important as the mobile workforce continues to grow.

Work is increasingly becoming a thing you do rather than a place you go. The modern worker demands efficiency of information access for several reasons — to work remotely, make use of commute time or hot desking. Companies can realize massive efficiency gains by enabling staff to work with critical information from anywhere, anytime, on any device. How simple is it for workers to search and retrieve documents when away from the physical office location?

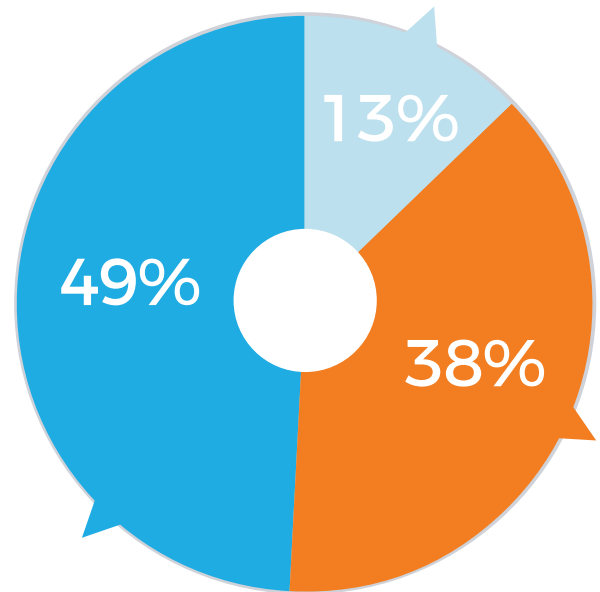
The vast majority (81%) of respondents report that they need access to corporate documents and information on their mobile device with only 38% of these respondents reporting that it is quick and easy to find the information that they are looking for on a mobile device.

Many business workers utilize more than one device for work and personal use. They need a simple and secure way to access files from each of those devices without having to save a local copy on each one. And it's not just access. People need to be able to work normally — as they would if they were in the office. Sharing, editing, approving and signing documents are all critical capabilities when working remotely. Providing access to information from any device, anywhere unlocks tremendous productivity. But to what extent can remote workers use their mobile devices for document management?

We asked survey participants:
Using the systems/tools provided by your company, which of the following are you currently able to do using a mobile device?

 **62%** of workers find it challenging and time-consuming when searching for documents on a mobile
45% of workers can edit documents on a mobile device

“WHEN IT COMES TO SEARCHING FOR DOCUMENTS USING A MOBILE DEVICE, WHAT IS YOUR GENERAL EXPERIENCE?”



- It is quick and easy to find the information I am looking for
- It can sometimes become challenging and time consuming when searching for information
- It is almost always challenging and time consuming when searching for information

Of those respondents who need to access corporate documents and information on a mobile device, 43% cannot access company documents and files and 54% don't have the ability to share or collaborate on documents (46%).

One in ten (10%) respondents report that they can't do any of the actions using the systems/tools provided by their company.

Given the high percentage of respondents (81%) reporting that they need to access corporate documents and information on a mobile device, addressing this functionality gap is key to the success of mobile document management.

Use of Personal Devices and File-Sharing Apps

As many IT departments struggle to keep up with yearly technology changes, company employees increasingly want to use their own devices to access and share corporate data. It's part of a growing trend dubbed Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). This trend is often paired with file-sharing apps — like Dropbox, Box or Google Drive — to enable workers to pass files and documents between one another.

But the advent of BYOD and file-sharing apps has brought with it a new set of concerns — not the least of which are lack of monitoring and security and loss of full data control.

The survey asked respondents: **Do you use your own personal device and/or file-sharing apps to access and share company information?**

Over six in ten (61%) respondents report that they use personal file-sharing apps and/or their personal device to access and share company information.

It all alludes to mounting concern with shadow IT, where information technology is managed outside of (and without the knowledge of) the company's IT department. An Avanade survey reports that "one-third of tech purchases in a company are made by people who don't report to the CIO."⁶ Employees bringing in consumer grade products opens up a host of problems for a company. In fact, 96% of Americans surveyed see employee negligence, such as user low-security products or infected removable storage media, as a contributor to data breaches.⁷

Organizations should be keeping a keen eye on employee use of personal devices and file-sharing programs and regulating it where necessary to limit any unnecessary security

concerns and breaches. Taking it one step further, many employees are using their own mobile devices and turning to these apps because their company doesn't offer a suitable alternative. With robust document management systems that provide mobile information management capabilities, organizations could potentially mitigate these risks entirely.

COMPANY-SANCTIONED USE OF PERSONAL DEVICES AND FILE-SHARING APPS

In the context of shadow IT, the use of personal devices and file-sharing apps to access and share company information is a practice that is, in recent years, been scrutinized by organizations. Companies are realizing that BYOD and file-sharing open the organization to IT-centric challenges like a lack of change management and data security.

Of respondents who use their own personal devices and/or personal file sharing apps to access and share company information, large proportions report that employees are officially permitted to do so (personal devices – 83%; personal file share apps – 81%). However, the use of personal devices and file-sharing apps is discouraged in 38% and 33% of respondents' organizations respectively.

5% of respondents admit to not knowing if they are officially permitted to use their personal devices to access and share company information and 5% admit the same for personal file sharing apps. Given the strict data protection rules which are currently being enforced around the world, organizations could be exposing themselves to unnecessary risk and a host of document management issues.



61% report that they use personal file-sharing apps and/or their personal device to access and share company information

MOBILE DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT RECAP: BY THE NUMBERS

8 in 10

say they need to access corporate documents on their mobile device.



[CLICK TO TWEET](#)



62%

say it's challenging to find information they need from a mobile device.

[CLICK TO TWEET](#)



43%

can't access documents on a mobile device.

[CLICK TO TWEET](#)



54%

can't easily share or collaborate on documents from their mobile device.

[CLICK TO TWEET](#)



60%

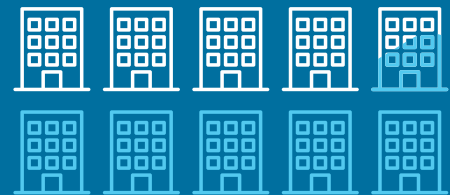
Over 60% use personal file-sharing apps and/or personal devices to access and share company information.

[CLICK TO TWEET](#)



Over **half** of companies discourage or prohibit the use of personal devices.

[CLICK TO TWEET](#)



46%

of organizations discourage or prohibit the use of file-sharing apps.

[CLICK TO TWEET](#)



...workers are dealing with several different interfaces, which slows user adoption and **decreases efficiency and productivity.**

DATA REPOSITORIES

Information stores are growing at an exponential pace. If dealing with large and growing amounts of information wasn't difficult enough, that information is often scattered across a variety of different systems and repositories — including shared network drives, email, traditional document management and enterprise content management (ECM) systems, file-sharing services, ERP and CRM just to name a few.

Many older legacy systems are essentially on life support and being phased out, while others are new services with frequent updates. Confusing matters further, workers are dealing with several different interfaces, which slows user adoption and decreases efficiency and productivity. In short, today's business information environment is messy, complex and expensive, both in terms of the costs of the actual systems and the necessary IT resources to maintain them.

Number of Systems and Locations of Information

On average, respondents must search 2 different repositories to find the most current version of a document or file with the majority (82%) of these respondents reporting that navigating through different systems and locations to find and verify the most current versions of documents or files has a negative impact on their productivity.

Furthermore, 91% agree that their job would be easier if they could quickly find and access the most current version of a document without having to worry about which system or repository it resides in.

By all accounts, workers are almost unanimous that benefits would be realized if all documents could be searched for in one place, and it makes perfect sense. With an intelligent information management platform, information could be contextualized and presented in a single interface rather than strewn across the information ecosystem. Documents could then be accessed in the same place, regardless of where they are physically stored.



2 Average number of different systems or locations that respondents have to search to find the most current version of a document or file.

82%

Say navigating through different systems and locations to verify the most current versions of documents negatively affects productivity.



91%

Agree that their job would be easier if they could quickly find and access the most current version of a document without having to worry about which system or repository it resides in.



Number of Systems and Locations of Information

Just under nine in ten (88%) respondents would find it beneficial to be able to reliably search for documents in one place, regardless of where they happen to be stored. This is also reflected across respondents from all countries, with the highest proportion (93%) being respondents from the US.

It is perhaps not surprising then, when looking at the reported use of enterprise document management systems, that only 22% of respondents from the US report that their organization uses an enterprise document management system. There is an obvious need to simplify document search capabilities for employees, which will have benefits not only for the company but for its employees too in their day-to-day functions.



88% Would benefit if they could reliably search for their documents from one place, regardless of where they happen to be stored.



24% percentage of companies who reported use of an enterprise document management system.

Document Access in Line of Business Applications

The typical company, large or small, depends on several different enterprise applications to ensure that employees can complete critical, daily tasks. Apps like those for enterprise resource planning, customer relationship management, HR solutions, and accounting software have become commonplace in corporate settings. Doing things any other way is archaic, at this point. But SaaS sprawl leads to information sprawl. There are no two ways about it.

Microsoft Office Suite is the business application that respondents are most likely (61%) to be using in their day-to-day role, and 42% use file-hosting systems. On average, respondents identified three line of business applications that they use in their day-to-day role.

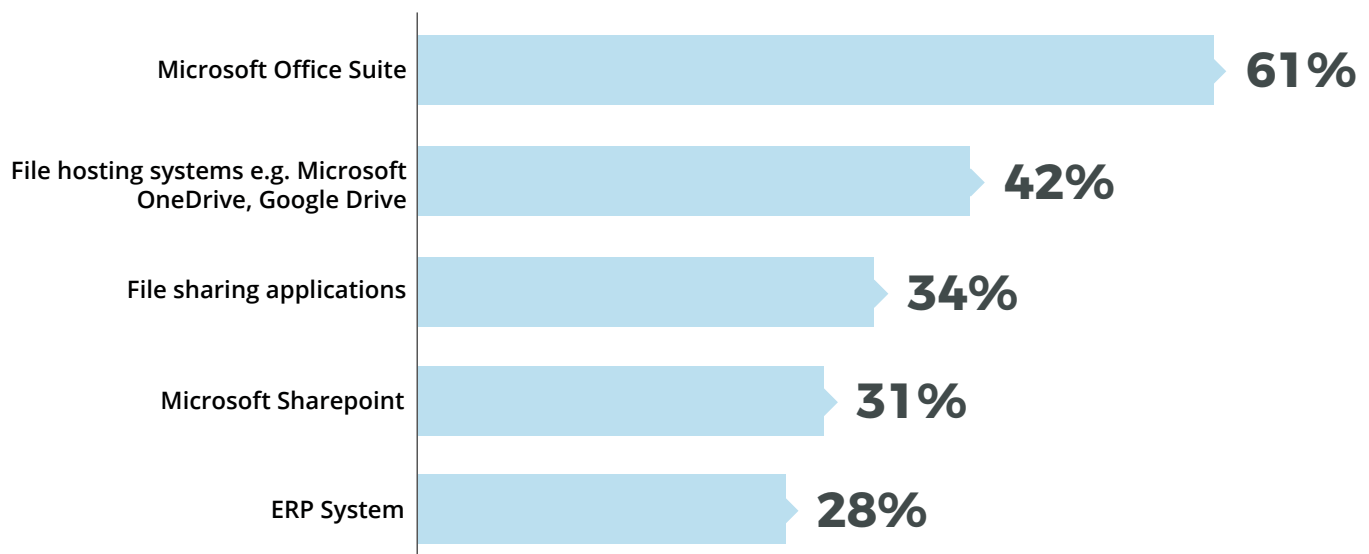
Aside from the obvious user-level inconvenience of having to navigate between several different systems and applications to manage information, the problem of multiple information repositories can be more far-reaching and drastic. Usually, separate data repositories are not effectively integrated with one another. This creates an information ecosystem governed by independent, disconnected silos.

It may, on the surface, make sense to have similar content exist in multiple systems — as a customer contract, for example, may reside in

the CRM with another copy saved in an ERP that Accounts Receivable uses to track payments. But, in the absence of a unified enterprise information system that connects disparate repositories, this duplication of information can become burdensome and unwieldy. Users are left to search multiple systems and then wonder if they have the latest version. In addition, from an IT standpoint the problem becomes the unnecessary use of information storage and an overall disparity in information systems.

Furthermore, organizations with multiple disconnected systems fail to get the best value out of their information due to the lack of context. These systems fail to share metadata characteristics with each other and thus further the divide between them. The solution to these problems often lies in an information management platform with a unified metadata layer that connects and contextualizes information across multiple repositories. As an example, with a sophisticated document management platform, a stored document can draw context from multiple data locations — customer information from the CRM, related documents from network folders, assigned employees from an HR system. It seems intuitive that anything organizations can do to make their employee's lives easier will surely benefit not only the employee, but the organization as a whole also.

“WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING LINE OF BUSINESS APPLICATIONS DO YOU USE IN YOUR DAY-TO-DAY ROLE?”



DATA REPOSITORIES RECAP: BY THE NUMBERS



Employees have to search through at least **two** systems to find needed information.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



82%

say that navigating through different systems/locations for the most current versions of documents negatively affects productivity.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



91%

say their job would be easier if they could quickly access the most current document version without having to worry about where it resides.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



88%

say they'd benefit if they could reliably search for their documents in one place, regardless of where they're stored.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



81%

say it would be beneficial to see documents in context.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



83%

say it would be beneficial to link documents back to the information stored in line of business applications.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)

The most likely line of business applications used are **Microsoft Office Suite** (61%), followed by **file hosting systems** (42%).

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DOCUMENT CONTEXTUALIZATION

Whether you're aware of it or not, artificial intelligence (AI) has a ubiquitous place in our lives today – think personalized playlists on Spotify or the 'Recommended for You' lists on Netflix, both of which use AI to curate a selection tailored just for the user. Now its presence is being felt in the area of document management, with AI and cognitive computing set to revolutionize the ways in which we store, archive, process and extract information.

Smart document management systems are making healthy use of AI for a variety of functions — including automatic classification, processing and data extraction. Primarily, AI has opened the door for powerful contextualization of an organization's information. AI can 'read' a document and, based on past iterations of similar documents, suggest properties that might be included in the metadata for that document — enhancing the user's ability to find exactly what they're looking for in information searches. How powerful would it be to enter an invoice and have AI suggest which account it should be tagged to, which employee might be responsible for processing it or which expenditure category to place the invoice in? AI makes companies more efficient, consistent and increases auditability — primarily by reducing user error and misclassification, and by properly coordinating the best context for a document based on its contents.

AI makes companies
more **efficient**,
consistent and
increases auditability...



Badly-Named Documents and Finding Company Information

The old way of categorizing documents involves naming them the best way you can and putting them into a folder that hopefully matches the context of that document. But that process is wrought with challenges, since employees probably work differently when naming and foldering documents.

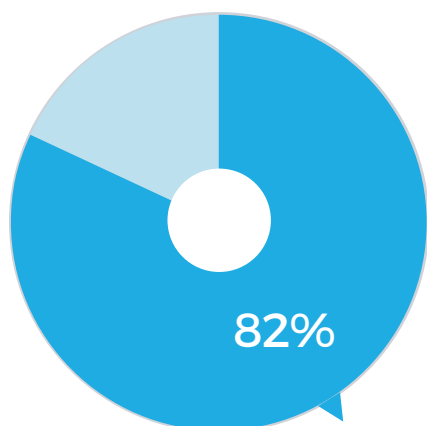
One piece of content can have valid reasons for being stored in multiple folders or locations; in traditional folder structures, an invoice, for example, could be placed in a folder for sales documents, a folder for that client, an invoice folder, or several other sensible folders. But then how does everyone find that invoice, when they need to? Where do they look? Furthermore, when it comes to naming that file, how can the company ensure a consistent naming convention that will make sense to the next member of staff who comes along to find that document?

The newer way is based on metadata — and the resulting ability to find and manage information by what it is rather than where it is stored. Metadata is “data about data.” Although it may seem pithy, this is a pretty accurate definition. The main goal is to enable users to quickly

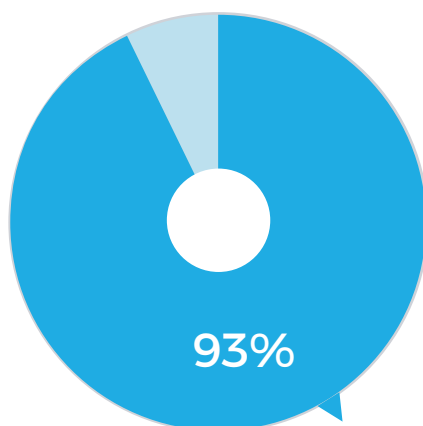
determine which document they need to view from their search results — based on the context of that document. While traditionally metadata has been entered manually, some document management systems are now making use of AI to intelligently suggest context cues that should be included in the metadata for a file. This ultimately reduces error-prone manual entry and provides for a consistent method for organizing documents to make them easily classifiable, and thus findable.

Just over four in five (82%) respondents find it challenging to name or tag a document when saving it to ensure that it can be easily found by their colleagues and over nine in ten (93%) report that at some point they have been unable to find a document because it had been badly named or tagged when filed.

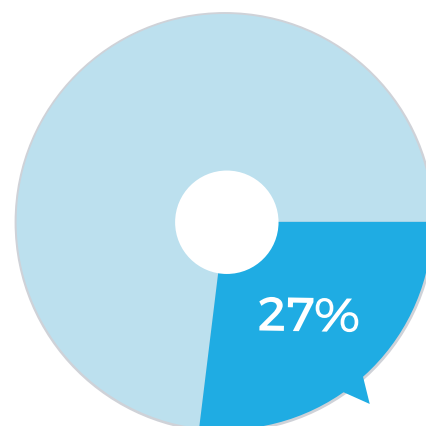
This is not a surprise given that only 27% of respondents report that their organization has completely clear guidelines in place as to how a document should be labelled when saving to a system, showing that organizations have work to do if they want employees following the same process.



FIND IT CHALLENGING TO NAME OR TAG A DOCUMENT WHEN SAVING IT TO ENSURE THAT IT CAN BE EASILY FOUND BY THEIR COLLEAGUES



ARE UNABLE TO FIND A DOCUMENT BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN BADLY NAMED OR TAGGED WHEN FILED



REPORT THEIR ORGANISATION HAS COMPLETELY CLEAR GUIDELINES IN PLACE AS TO HOW A DOCUMENT SHOULD BE LABELLED WHEN SAVING TO A SYSTEM



The Benefit of AI-Enabled Contextualization

Respondents were also asked if it would be of at least some benefit to them and their colleagues if the system they used could automatically name or tag the document for them.

It is hardly a surprise that more than eight in ten respondents report that it would be a benefit to have a system which could automatically name or tag a document. The benefits of AI-enabled contextualization in document management are self-evident and far-reaching:

Automatic document classification and processing: By virtue of suggesting metadata context for documents, the process becomes less error-prone and more automatic. In one use case instance, optical character recognition (OCR) has made document capture a breeze, but AI takes this a step further by being able to “read” the information on that document, classify it appropriately and automate workflows based on that classification – at a fraction of the speed a human could. While the AI-driven metadata engine is initially directed by a set of rules, its identification and processing capabilities continue to advance using machine learning. In other words, it is able to learn from frequent exposure to similar documents, as well as

from the actions taken by personnel on those documents.

Data extraction: By being able to precisely read information and understand context, an AI-powered document management system can take data extraction to the next level — a capability that is crucial as organizations are besieged with more and more data.

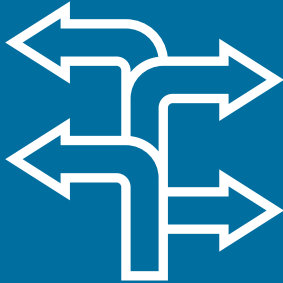
Document clustering: With AI, documents can be easily grouped by common themes, fields or topics. This can help organizations recognize how documents relate to one another within a broader context and help them find parallels and make inferences that might not have otherwise been possible.

Advanced security: Companies can enhance security and protect customer data with an AI-powered document management system. The technology can detect sensitive and personal identifying information and flag those documents for special handling or enter them into a specific workflow. Automatic classification and processing also mean that documents aren't assigned to an unsecured file location, waiting to be actioned.



82% of workers report that it would be a benefit to have a system that could automatically name or tag a document.

AI AND DOCUMENT CONTEXTUALIZATION RECAP: BY THE NUMBERS



82%

say it's challenging to name or tag a document to ensure that it can be easily found by colleagues.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



93%

are unable to find documents because they're badly named/tagged when filed.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



73%

say their organization has no clear guidelines on how documents should be labelled.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)



82%

say it would be beneficial if the system they use could automatically name/tag documents for them.

 [CLICK TO TWEET](#)

CONCLUSION

Clearly the research supports the notion that workers across the globe still have nagging issues when it comes to the most basic document management functions — issues that will worsen as time goes on and the store of information gets larger. Businesses face a multitude of pressures — some of which can be mitigated by a simple information management strategy. A few of these challenges that could be assuaged include the weight of:

- Keeping up with the demands of an everchanging workforce, one that includes millennials and digital natives that carry expectations of a flexible/mobile work environment.
- Gaining a competitive advantage through the ability to attract and retain the best young talent.
- Optimizing productivity, especially by freeing up key personnel to work on mission-critical or strategic tasks rather than spending an inordinate amount of time searching for the correct information.
- Ensuring compliance and auditability in an environment of mounting regulations like GDPR.
- Safeguarding quality standards with a traceable and auditable document trail that can be called upon in minutes rather than days.

Unless information management issues are addressed in an intentional and meaningful way, companies will continue to suffer from less-than-optimal productivity.

The Solution to the Problem

The good news is that there is a solution for organizations seeking to modernize the way they manage documents. All the challenges faced by the employees surveyed in this research and those billions of others around the world can be mitigated by an intelligent information management system. Think about the issues cited in this research:

- Finding documents easily
- Locating the most recent version of a document
- Document chaos caused by scattering of

- information across several repositories
- The process for reviewing, approving and signing documents
- Enabling the mobile workforce to manage documents away from the office
- The risks of personal device and file-sharing app use
- Contextualization of documents

Every single one of these issues has a single solution — an intelligent information management platform. Documents are the lifeblood of an organization and fast, secure access to the correct versions of documents can be the difference between success and failure. Research from Forrester suggests that 70% of organizations have a poor content strategy — if at all. Companies cannot afford to settle for the status quo and let the problem get worse.

Document Management: Integral to Digital Transformation (and the ability to compete) Information systems are the foundation of modern IT. Thus, integral to any digital transformation initiative is the implementation of a flexible and intelligent information system. Yet, while digital technology is opening the door to completely new ways of doing business, some organizations flounder in their ambitions and instead stand pat without improving existing ways of operating. Some \$2 trillion dollars will be spent annually worldwide on digital transformation technologies, according to analysts, while as many as 70% of enterprises polled admit that they don't have a coherent plan.⁸

Over the past few years, document management strategies have progressed significantly, driven by other trends in the IT market and the more widespread use of intelligent information management systems. Organizations that do not embrace digital transformation will be less likely to outclass competitors and reach the pinnacles of their markets. Modernized document management is central to the digital workplace and the adjustments necessary to compete.



METHODOLOGY

M-Files commissioned a survey of 1,500 office workers to understand several factors related to how their organizations manage company information and the challenges encountered when accessing and managing corporate information.

The survey was conducted by independent market research firm Vanson Bourne. Respondents' organizations varied in size, ranging from small-to-medium sized businesses (SMBs) to large enterprises, and came from a broad range of industries. In addition, the respondent group represented constituents from nine countries and a variety of business departments.

Specific lines of questioning were deployed around four primary areas of interest:



1. **General Document Management:** The overall end-user experience of managing company documents



2. **Document Management on the Move:** Accessing and managing company information from off-site locations with mobile devices



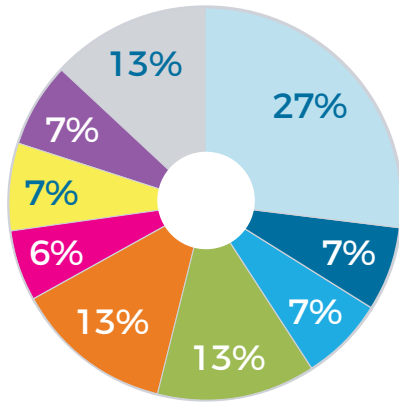
3. **Data Repositories:** Managing company information contained in multiple systems and silos



4. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The perception and use of AI to contextualize company information

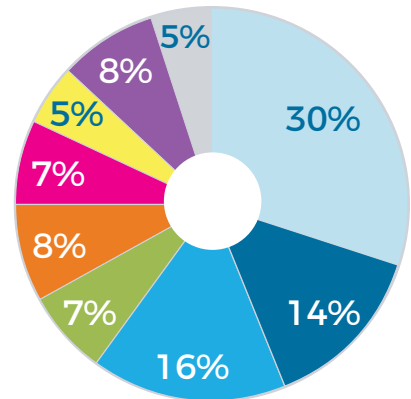
DEMOGRAPHICS

1,500 TOTAL RESPONDENTS



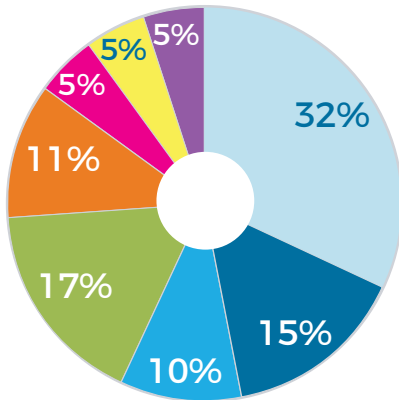
RESPONDENT COUNTRY

- USA
- Finland
- Sweden
- UK
- Germany
- Australia/New Zealand
- Switzerland
- Austria
- France



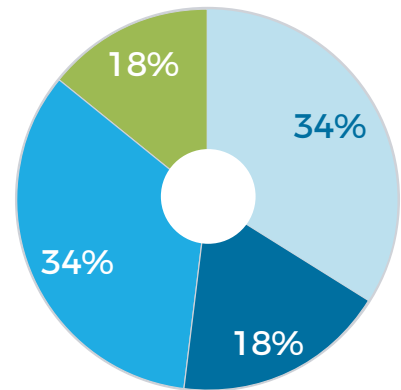
COMPANY INDUSTRY

- Professional Services
- Construction/Property
- Consumer Services
- Energy/Utilities
- Manufacturing/Production
- Public Sector
- Retail/Distribution
- Technology/Telecom
- Other



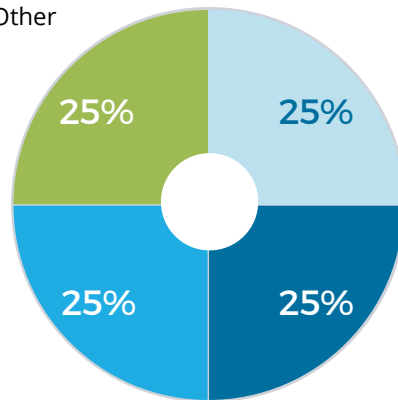
RESPONDENT DEPARTMENT

- Operations
- Quality/Compliance
- Sales and Marketing
- Finance/Purchasing
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Legal
- Other



WORK EXPERIENCE

- 1-5 Years
- 5-10 Years
- 10-20 Years
- More than 20 Years



COMPANY EMPLOYEE COUNT

- 101-250 Employees
- 251-500 Employees
- 501-1,000 Employees
- 1,000-3,000 Employees



SOURCES

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⁵ Luk, Gina. [*Global Mobile Workforce Forecast Update 2016-2022.*](#) Strategy Analytics, 2016.

⁶ [*Global Survey: What's Creating Tension between IT and Business Leaders?*](#) Avanade, 2014.

⁷ [*State of the Industry: Information Security.*](#) Shred-It, 2018.

⁸ [*Kimura, Akihiro et. al. Worldwide Semiannual Digital Transformation Spending Guide.*](#) IDC, July 2018.



ABOUT M-FILES

M-Files provides a next-generation intelligent information management platform that improves business performance by helping people find and use information more effectively. Unlike traditional enterprise content management (ECM) systems or content services platforms, M-Files unifies systems, data and content across the organization without disturbing existing systems and processes or requiring data migration. Using artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in its unique Intelligent Metadata Layer, M-Files breaks down silos by delivering an in-context experience for accessing and leveraging information that resides in any system and repository, including network folders, SharePoint, file sharing services, ECM systems, CRM, ERP and other business systems and repositories. Thousands of organizations in more than 100 countries use M-Files for managing their business information and processes, including NBC Universal, OMV, Rovio, SAS Institute and thyssenkrupp.

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