

Content in the Cloud with Feet on the Ground

By **Tori Woods Ballantine**, Product Marketing Lead for the OnBase Cloud at Hyland

Does your organization handle content? Of course it does. All businesses handle content in some form or another. Managing that content is a critical business function that can make or break operations—and an effective enterprise content management (ECM) solution directly drives that success. But there is an opportunity to take this even further by using a cloud-based ECM software solution, which truly helps your content soar.

Many fundamental elements of ECM—including ensuring an organization's documents, business processes and mission-critical data are available to all stakeholders at any time—are uniquely powerful when deployed in the cloud. Keeping content in the cloud is strategically strong, and it's even stronger when your system keeps its feet on the ground by considering the whole information lifecycle.

Realistically, even if your organization stores all of its content in the cloud, there will still be elements of your business that take place on the ground. Pieces of paper will arrive in the mail, and someone has to open the envelopes and scan the contents using a tangible scanner. For a cloud-based ECM solution to be practical and all-encompassing, it must account for the fact that paper still exists. It should smoothly incorporate data extraction from physical documents into the cloud alongside its digital data capture that takes place online.

Similarly, an ECM solution has to play nicely with your other business systems. There are legacy applications, some in the cloud and some not, that an ECM solution must integrate seamlessly with to be effective. Systems like your CRM, ERP, HRIS, email and payroll will need to work with your ECM solution from the ground up.

The best cloud solutions also rely on solid ground, using their "feet" to climb hitherto impossible inclines. One foot is an inclusive capture solution that leads to seamless influx and governance of paper and digital assets, and the other foot is a robust integration capability that extends the abilities of an ECM solution beyond its own boundaries.

Safety Dance

When you store items in a secure, reputable private cloud, you know your data is safe. Really safe. Think of your data like money. You have to put it *somewhere*. Is it safer in a box under your mattress? What happens if you are burgled or your house burns down? Or, is it safer in a bank, where

keeping it secure is someone else's full-time job? The same goes for your data.

Entrusting your data to a managed cloud that operates accredited and certified servers is an excellent way to keep it secure. With a reliable vendor, your data is backed up in multiple locations, meaning that a power outage, weather incident or catastrophic event won't keep your data from being available to you when you need it.

Stories abound about organizations whose premises were incapacitated, and all systems and channels were down except for their cloud solutions. Consider the case of ROM Reinsurance, located in downtown Manhattan.

When Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc on her way across the Eastern seaboard three years ago, ROM lost electricity, connectivity to its IT systems and access to its essential business functions. At that time, the company used an on-premises installation of OnBase by Hyland for its ECM needs.

ROM reached out to Hyland and rapidly switched its on-premises solution to the OnBase Cloud. This enabled ROM to access its critical data and documents, even while its other IT services remained unavailable. Digital file storage—a huge benefit of cloud ECM—also protected ROM's records, which were previously paper-based. With three feet of standing water in the lobby, this would have been catastrophic.

"Without the assistance of Hyland's cloud solution experts, we wouldn't have been able to function and I truly don't know what we would have done," says Marianne Petillo, president and CEO of ROM.

Somewhere Over the Content

Effective ECM isn't a silo. It can't be. Managing content inherently means integrating with other systems. Content has to come from *somewhere*, and it often has to be routed *somewhere*. And it will need to be stored *somewhere*. In the cloud, ECM makes sense of all of these "*somewheres*" by seamlessly connecting with existing solutions and staying up-to-date through included product refreshes and updates. This ensures the solution will be future-proofed. It will be able to integrate with systems that might not even exist today.

When your data is fragmented across several disconnected systems, it is vulnerable to corruption, errors and losses—as well as being overlooked. The best systems allow for full, real-time integrations with existing core



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applications. Often, integrations can occur at such a fundamental level that users might not even know when they are and are not working in an ECM solution. Proper implementation ensures smooth connection to a variety of different applications.

Capture the (Content) Flag

When included as an element of a cloud ECM deployment, capture technology speeds up the entire process of the content lifecycle, from classification and extraction to delivery and retention.

When content is coming from *some-where*, that can mean digital files, paper records, or a combination of the two. Capture systems must extract data from a variety of content, and automating this process speeds up the entire cycle significantly. Automated data entry accelerates the classifying of all kinds of documents—structured, semi-structured and free form.

These documents, once processed, must be stored *somewhere*. And where better than the cloud? Rather than taking up an entire room of filing cabinets or even several hulking servers in your break room, all of your data can be safely stored remotely. Your IT team doesn't have to worry about protecting it from attacks and losses. Your facilities team doesn't have to worry about storing, transporting and figuring out where to put paper documents. Even your cleaning crew doesn't have to worry about dusting it.

Such Great Heights

Documents and business data that are stored via ECM in the cloud are safe, secure and instantly available to approved users. This isn't a far-off dream, but reality today. Cloud-based ECM that is rooted in extensive and far-reaching integrations and inclusive document and data capture capacities offers the opportunity for organizations to scale new heights: to reach somewhere entirely new. ■

Hyland is the creator of OnBase, a single enterprise information platform for managing content, processes and cases. Connect with Hyland at +1.888.495.2638, ContactUs@OnBase.com, and www.OnBase.com.