



WHITEPAPER

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE WORLD OF INFORMATION SILOS

FORGET EVERYTHING YOU'VE BEEN TOLD ABOUT DEALING WITH INFORMATION SILOS

Since the dawn of the intranet, information management professionals have been looking for ways to both avoid the creation of content silos and break down existing ones. As a result, each year, organizations around the world collectively spend billions of dollars on content migration exercises which is supported by an entire industry developed around those needs. Thousands of tools, and supporting businesses, have been built on the foundational need for information management, information structure, and information findability.

The constant, and often futile, battle to centralize information in a way that ensures governance practices are strictly adhered to is fraught with difficulties at every level. The reason why difficulties arrive, most surprisingly, is ... *human behaviour*.

People take the most direct route to save time, and the same is true of teams and organizations - they take the quickest and easiest route to complete their mission. This often translates to circumventing planned routes or information workflows if the opportunity to gain back valuable time presents itself.

This is especially true if the creator of an information asset associates the workflow or processes with bringing little or no added value. We're talking about the *same* processes that you have put in place to ensure information is tagged, curated and categorized to ensure great search results. And, the *very* processes that were put in place to ensure the information that people use to achieve their day to day goals is up-to-date, findable and accurate.

Without the perceived value a workflow adds to information assets (or value the workflow adds to those consuming the information), the likely story is information is placed in a folder and marked as done.

THAT'S RIGHT, THE GOLD DUST IS LEFT HIDDEN AWAY AND INACCESSIBLE

So, how do we address this behaviour?

In the past we relied upon content migrations, centralization of information, robust governance practices, change management and extensive communication campaigns. All designed to change our natural human behaviour to suit the way our information systems actually work.

WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THAT?

Information silos are like bacteria that become resistant to antibiotics. More pop up, and will continue to do so, because processes were circumvented. We never fully manage to get them all. The creation of new information silos leads to areas where organizational knowledge goes to die. Silos often sit undiscovered for many years and cause future challenges for IT colleagues who wrestle with the decision of how and when information can be deleted.

In the knowledge management world, when valuable information exists but is so well hidden away, the path we take is to recreate the valuable information from scratch which, in addition to being a drain on resources, presents the opportunity to create new information silos.

MULTIPLE MIGRATIONS DON'T IMPROVE SEARCH

An increasingly large proportion of information generated by organizations is unstructured data. This is a growing trend thanks to the evolving landscape of technology. Silos containing unstructured information often span thousands of documents. Based on the nature and content of these documents, if value is seen in the collective, a costly and time-consuming project to cleanse and either move the collective or index it with a search engine usually ensues.

Regardless of which approach is selected (migration or index), organizations waste time and money, generating poor experiences to users, and letting valuable knowledge fall by the wayside – thereby wasting effort spent to date..

WHICH IS BEST? MIGRATION OR INDEXING IT IN SITU?

With unstructured data, both methods prove ineffective. With indexing in situ, search engines struggle to index content properly because they rely on having accurate metadata. Metadata is not required when saving documents in file storage areas, and so in the majority of cases, metadata was never added in the first place. Moreover, indexing data from where it resides presents the challenge of having no way to tag, curate or classify it at its current location.

Moving the data poses its own set of challenges. Not only does the data need to be lifted and shifted, but more importantly, it needs to fit in with the structure of its new home. Automated data migration tools can only go so far and even if perfect migration was achieved, the data still leaves much to be desired having not been tagged or search engine optimized.

COMMON CHALLENGES OF A SINGLE SEARCH INDEX



Clunky Interface

To make the most of search, content is tagged with possible search terms. This is typically done in the original CMS, where the interfaces used to input these tags are often difficult or unpleasant to use. Navigating around these systems to inject valuable information is time-consuming and frustrating for content editors. As is often the case, the content editors are not even the content owners – introducing risk.



Retagging Is A Painful Process

If tagging or taxonomy terms associated to content changes, as is the case during organizational restructuring, a new and painful wound is opened up for Information Managers who must go in and retag everything marked.



Errors and Omissions

The work associated with creating an optimized search experience, when done manually, is a labour intensive and mind-numbing process prone to errors and omissions.

DATA SILOS ARE THE REALITY IN TODAY'S TECH ECOSYSTEM

As daunting as it is to deal with information silos, the reality is that the information silos are a part of today's technology landscape. They represent a pivot point where an organization changed direction to address a new need or challenge. While difficult to deal with, the alternative scenario of a single monolithic information store presents its own disheartening shortcomings. These shortcomings have a larger financial impact as monolithic information stores are traditionally tied to a single very expensive solution provider which also makes a businesses agility to change a difficult task.

WE NEED AN INDUSTRY GAME CHANGER

Organizations must accept the fact that information silos will always exist (while also working to minimize their creation). Once comfortable with this fact, they can move forward with platform and tooling that bring together information from the unique information silos without destructively migrating their content or selective indexing in situ. Organizations need a means to “layer on” metadata, tags, classification and additional content without growing those existing information silos..

Creating a layer on top of information silos is an ideal means to provide a centralized view into information dispersed and hidden throughout an organization, but doesn't necessarily address the need for other systems to consume the newly surfaced information. For that, the layer on which the centralized view is build upon must be designed with enough flexibility to connect with the systems of today and the systems that will evolve tomorrow.

Enter Conscia's Content Intelligence Platform, VUE - an innovative Content Intelligence Platform that provides Content Integration, Enrichment and Delivery capabilities.

HOW DOES VUE WORK AND SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT?

In the time it takes to typically design an information system, VUE is able to bring together content found across different information silos and create an intelligent Content Hub. This intelligent hub surfaces content in a fashion that users and customers alike can search across, delivering relevant information with speed and ease.

When information silos are identified, VUE creates a semantic view of content from those silos and the powerful AI enrichment function automatically tags each information asset with relevant keywords identified from the underlying content. This eliminates the traditional content curation workflow and frees up budget and resources to further enrich and enhance the content.

With unified access to information, users can work to improve the quality of information which yields improvements to search:

Aid Knowledge Workers in Managing Content

- Customize your knowledge worker's user interface to display content in an Excel-like data grid, enabling knowledge workers to access, categorize, improve, enhance, and manage content in the repository. Help subject-matter experts identify relationships, collaborate effectively, and monitor content to ensure governance.

Ensure the Quality and Usefulness of Content

- Create and use 'Inspector Cards' to define quality criteria for your content. Specify validation rules to recognize gaps in content, cleanse content to correct errors and inconsistencies, and standardize content to harmonize data of different formats. Ensure that content is complete, accurate, timely and trustworthy.

Use Artificial Intelligence to Categorize Content Automatically

- Improve efficiency and consistency with AI-powered, auto-categorization. Leverage advanced machine learning algorithms to analyze content, identify patterns, and train systems. Automatically categorize content into domain-specific taxonomies, tag metadata for improved descriptions, and assign synonyms for improved discovery.

Automate the Metadata Tagging of Content

- Assign metadata to content based on business rules. Use metadata that is descriptive (e.g. title, author, keywords), structural (e.g. how information is put together on a page) or administrative (e.g. how and when content is created or deleted) to improve navigation and search, content delivery, or content management.

Extract Insight from Unstructured Content

- Use natural language processing (NLP) to extract relevant text from documents and social media. Determine what's important by identifying relevant entities, concepts, keywords, and sentiment in text files. Use NLP to improve answers to website chat box questions; improve e-Commerce search or extract and synthesize content from a variety of sources.

Analyze Images to Support Visual Search

- Use image analysis to extract labels, colors, and text from images to improve search results.

VUE WORKS WITH INFORMATION SILOS TO STREAMLINE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

VUE was designed with the unique challenges of knowledge management and information silos in mind. The unique approach of constructively connecting information silos creates a single view into information that is so vital to an organization. VUE enables indexing, tagging, and re-tagging of content held in information silos without the need for a traditional content migration exercise. Paired with its beautifully intuitive interface designed with business users in mind, VUE puts you, the information management professional, back in the driving seat.

In addition to bridging the distances between information silos, VUE secondary *raison d'être* is to provide a framework that supports feeding information to downstream systems. Thanks to its schema-less design, VUE's ability to support existing systems and future systems is seamless and compatible.

BOOK YOUR FREE DEMO NOW

To learn more about the Conscia VUE content intelligence platform and how it can help your business, contact our friendly team at sales@conscia.ai

ABOUT CONSCIA

Conscia is a Toronto based SaaS company that offers knowledge management solutions that quickly and easily unifies and enrich data across enterprise silos and makes it consumable by modern digital applications. Conscia automatically tags enterprise information with metadata and domain specific taxonomies, making this information easily findable and browsable. Conscia provides knowledge experts direct access, full control and visibility over their content. Conscia makes it possible to easily combine internal expertise with artificial intelligence to enhance information quality across the entire enterprise making your content easier to find and navigate. www.conscia.ai