



End Content Chaos and Unify Systems in the AEC Industries



ProjectReady™

Part 1 - Document Control

Managing Governed Documents Across
Thousands of Projects

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Overview

The Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industry's expansive projects produce massive amounts of documents and data that, gone unmanaged, can result in wasted time, legal issues and ultimately affect the bottom line. Fortunately, with implementing a robust and easy to use document control program those problems can be solved.

Introduction

The Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industry (AEC) has seen expanding and rapid growth on a global level. With the use of computer and virtual systems, AEC firms can now work on multiple and varying projects at a rate never done before. Many single firms today have multi-geographical locations and many projects can bring together dozens of companies from around the world. Producing 2.5 quintillion bytes of data in a single day¹, managing this ever-growing expanse of information while collaborating on project execution with firms from all corners of the Earth is not only difficult and expensive, but can have severe impact on profitability. The ability to manage and secure projects, as well as organize and access the vast content created across a project's lifecycle in a timely and efficient way is problematic to say the least. There is a clear and definite need for a unified application and portal to a project's documents and information in order to end the content chaos and move projects forward.

The Problem With Hidden Data

Whether a job is multinational or local, project remuneration is driven by mile-stone payments based on deliverables validated through extensive documentation. These transmittals are driven by deadlines, complex approval chains across organizations, and must adhere to security and compliance standards. However, the amount of disparate data silos and varying applications impedes the ability

to find the information a user needs at any time. This can hold up the transmittal process, that then hold ups accomplishing the mile-stone within the project itself. As companies rely on multiple applications and sources to track their content and documentation, the task of just finding, let alone managing, this content can be chaotic and daunting to anyone across the project chain.

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According to Beth Mayhew of AIIM, "For many years organizations have neglected their information assets, particularly those that live in email, documents and rich media. The resulting "content chaos" has inhibited growth and increased risk. Today, the sheer volume and variety of information that fuels critical business processes demands attention and care."² Information lodged in email is perhaps the most difficult content to find, track, assess and manage. Critical information is often within or attached to an email that is inaccessible to users outside that individual's account. In his book, Records Management: Making the Transition from Paper to Electronic, David O. Stephens states that "up to 60 percent of business-critical information – the greater part of an organization's knowledge base, its intellectual assets, and institutional memory – is stored in its electronic messaging." To make matters worse, "56 percent of all digital data resides in single-user systems in the desktop environment...and as few as 30 percent are ever stored."³ Without quick and easy access to a needed form, photograph, drawing, chart, invoice or other critical data, work on one project or many can come to a horrifying halt.

Susan Smith, in her article "Managing Your AEC

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Content" in AEC Weekly says that "the AEC industry has been slow to adopt computerized document management. Although there is a great need for it in AEC, since projects are long lived and generate an enormous volume of documents and content, there has not been much development from engineering document management vendors for AEC firms." She adds that "the way people are handling information is just not working anymore and they're overwhelmed."⁴ Current offerings addressing content management within the AEC is highly fractured. It ranges from single solution, niche applications to comprehensive application suites. Throughout this ecosystem, these products and services frequently overlap as well. What is needed most for Architecture, Engineering and Construction industry firms is a single, user-friendly and affordable solution that can converge the multitude of data and information in a practical, expedient and adaptable way.

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The Remedy To Content Chaos

ProjectReady is a suite of products created especially for the AEC and is driven by the business professional. It is designed to consume and replace the endless silos of disparate applications and content. ProjectReady leverages industry standards to unify and traverse processes and procedures across the extended AEC ecosystem and its scalability is safeguarded by the Microsoft Cloud. ProjectReady ensures a consistent, repeatable taxonomy, security, process automation and collaboration, without the need for IT. This vastly reduces administration costs and empowers the end-user with a modern "retail" experience to create and manage Project Sites in a governed and secure way.

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Integration from applications already in use, such as SharePoint, Office 365, Microsoft AX, Deltek, CRM or any SQL data source is done with seamless synchronization. With ProjectReady's SQL Connector, any changes made on the backend does not affect the end-user experience, ensuring continuity and seamless data integration. As ProjectReady leverages the Microsoft Cloud, there are no proprietary systems where data lives and cannot be accessed if that system is no longer used or needed.

The Document Control Suite provides organization, management and retrieval of thousands of documents across multiple projects. Whether content lives in project sites or on local file systems, ProjectReady allows for simple access and the ability to keep the systems already in place even for storing drawings and large files. With an easy to use interface, users can pull or create RFI's submittals, transmittals, etc. from any library on their computer or mobile device and create industry standard packages. Microsoft Outlook integration allows for a familiar user experience without delays in adoption or time needed for training.

ProjectReady's Line of Business Integration brings in authoritative taxonomy and meta-values that categorize and track critical descriptors that insures conformance and standards. Information is no longer in an email silo, as emails are saved directly to the appropriate project site. Without the use of multiple project management applications, ProjectReady allows for reporting by individuals or groups, no matter where or when the reports are needed or generated. The exchange and delivery of document packages and processes used throughout the AEC industry are the key deliverables that drive milestone

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payments to the project. The ability to easily prove receipt of project information and documentation internally and externally with vendors and clients is essential. Receipt and sign-off of document packages are managed while the security and governance of project sites is maintained. ProjectReady delivers flexibility and control for delivery of content with multiple pre-defined workflow options, and the ability to easily set expiration and due dates that comply with the project definitions.

Advantages of document control in time saved, ending of user frustration with the ability to find and access the required content for one's project is imperative to the smooth flow of work needed for a successful outcome. According to Building Design and Construction Magazine, the majority of AEC firms saw revenues grow in 2015, and an even greater number expect earnings to rise.⁵ As the Architecture, Engineering and Construction Industry continues to grow, the need for true document control and will grow as well. ProjectReady brings together project information, documents, emails, workflows in one unified system and is the remedy to content chaos.

Sources

1 - IBM 2012

2 - <http://community.aiim.org/blogs/beth-mayhew/2011/04/11/content-chaos---all-organizations-suffer-from-it-but-what-do-you-do>

3 - Stephens, David O. Records Management: Making the Transition for Paper to Electronic. Overland Park, KS: ARMA International, 2010.

4 - http://www10.aecafe.com/nbc/articles/view_article.php?section=Magazine&articleid=339070

5 - <https://www.bdcnetwork.com/majority-aec-firms-saw-growth-2015-remain-optimistic-2016-bdc-survey>

About ProjectReady

ProjectReady™ and its parent company Gig Werks, an award winning business solution provider, has serviced clients and customers throughout the United States and across the world for over 15 years.

As we worked with our customer base in the Architectural, Engineering and Construction industries to address their unique needs, we recognized the need for business to have the freedom and power to access the information they require to efficiently and easily manage entire project portfolios, while controlling documents, automating process and maintaining security and governance.

To answer this need we developed a host of best practice based workflows, taxonomies and a database that eventually grew into our cloud based Software as a Service (SaaS) solution suite ProjectReady.

ProjectReady addresses the particular needs of the AEC, delivering collaboration, document control, program and project management solutions built on the Microsoft cloud – all without any reliance on IT.

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