Simplify Your SAP Landscape
and Reduce Costs with a Modern Content Management System

Q&A with **Dr. Werner Hopf** and **Vishal Awasthi** of Dolphin

Legacy enterprise content management systems not only sit on a separate infrastructure with associated maintenance costs, but these aging systems also generally yield additional license, training, and support requirements. An upgrade to a modernized, streamlined SAP-centric solution can both simplify your landscape and create an agile environment for future growth and change. During a recent SAPinsider Online Q&A, Dolphin's Dr. Werner Hopf, CEO and President, and Vishal Awasthi, Chief Technology Officer, answered questions on how a service-based approach to content management can reduce the cost and complexity of retaining unstructured data.

The following is an abridged version of the questions that Hopf and Awasthi fielded. The full transcript is available on SAPinsider Online at **bit.ly/SimplifyYourSAPLandscape**.

Q: What does a service-based approach to content management mean?

Werner Hopf: Traditional enterprise content management (ECM) requires setting up a standalone system outside of the SAP system. From SAP's perspective, these external systems are just storage repositories. All metadata is always maintained in the SAP system.

A modern, service-based approach means content management functionality is implemented as a service within the SAP system, instead of in an external system that comes with complex administration requirements and high cost. Integrating content

management functionality as a service within the SAP system pulls content management functionality completely into the SAP system and eliminates the need for complex, external systems.

Q: Is an ECM system the same as a document management system (DMS)? If not, how do they differ?

Vishal Awasthi: DMS is a generic concept that typically corresponds to the systems that help organizations manage documents. The most common functions are document upload, indexing/taxonomy, and search. For living documents, you may also need

status management, versioning, check-in/out, and workflows. DMS is also a component within SAP Product Lifecycle Management, and is geared toward engineering documents. For static document storage and linkage to the SAP transaction, or even standalone search, you do not need DMS because that interface may be too complex for simple document storage and retrieval needs.

A traditional ECM system joins some of the DMS concepts in a standalone system outside of an SAP system. Such systems are also not ideal for the management of documents that relate to business processes, as it creates another user interface and system infrastructure layer outside of the main system of record.

Q: For companies that already have a standalone ECM system in place, what would be involved in moving to a service-based approach?

Hopf: The first step is to set up the content management service within the SAP system and connect to either the cloud or to local storage. This is done by importing an SAP-certified transport to the SAP system and taking a few customizing steps. Next, change the customization for existing content management scenarios to point to the new repository. Third, you typically want to migrate content from the existing ECM system to the new environment to reduce cost and complexity. The migration process runs in the background and is seamless to the end user.

Q: What are some best practices for migrating information out of legacy ECM systems without disrupting day-to-day business?

Awasthi: Once the migration method is established, it is better to use a migration process that can be managed right from within the SAP system. This would allow you to use SAP's batch job scheduler and plan the specific time window for migrating the documents, typically in non-peak hours. It is also important to pick a migration tool that has fail-safes in place, per session document limits, time limits, and various document selection options (doc type, date, repository, business object, etc.). You should also take into account the parallel read/write operations supported by the source and target repository because that can help you determine the number of parallel migration threads, reducing overall time. It's always best to plan your migration strategy in a tracker upfront so you get a good estimate of the overall execution and the ability to track against it in real time.

Q: What risks are associated with a service-based approach to content management, and how are they best mitigated?

Hopf: The primary risks with any content management system are 1) loss of information, and 2) exposure of sensitive information to unauthorized users. For risk number one, a service-based approach reduces the effort to mitigate by using the SAP system — where you already have backup and high-availability in place — to maintain all metadata. You just have to make sure your actual storage location is secured against data loss. Most cloud services deliver replication out of the box; for on-premise storage, you can use a low-cost network-attached storage (NAS) server with replication.

For risk number two, a service-based approach simplifies the task of securing sensitive information against unauthorized access, since you can take advantage of SAP's very robust authorization concept. Because there is no metadata replicated to an external environment, as it is with traditional ECM, access control with a service-based approach is much easier.

Q: What are some secure and cost-effective storage options?

Awasthi: In a lightweight service-based approach, you want to pick storage options that are aligned with the overall simplicity objective. Up to the last decade, compliant storage options were limited to the optical write once, read many (WORM) disks. With advancements in disk technologies, such WORM features now can be implemented at the software layer in the storage device itself. So for an on-premise installation, many storage area network (SAN) or NAS devices offer such options.

Cloud "storage as a service" is a good storage option as well, particularly for archived content, as it allows you to match the value of your data with the cost of the storage. Most cloud storage providers also provide archive-class policies that come equipped with WORM features. The infinite elasticity of the cloud, combined with an SAP-based retention management and service-based ECM option, makes it a great, low-cost, simple, and agile framework for managing documents and archived data. ∎

Dr. Werner Hopf is CEO and President, as well as Archiving Principal, at Dolphin. Dr. Hopf is responsible for setting the company's strategic corporate direction. With more than 20 years of experience in the information technology industry (14 years focused on SAP), Dr. Hopf specializes in SAP Information Lifecycle Management initiatives, including data and document archiving, SAP ArchiveLink storage solutions, and business process solutions.

Vishal Awasthi is Chief Technology Officer at Dolphin. He brings more than 15 years of solution architecture, product management, and professional services background to Dolphin, and oversees the development of Dolphin products. Awasthi specializes in designing, implementing, and supporting SAP-centric enterprise business and information management solutions and has brought many of these products to market.