Whitepaper
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IBM FileNet P8 and Microsoft SharePoint: Complementary Technologies for the Enterprise

Overview

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Executive Summary

The pressures to conduct business faster, with a myriad of entities around the globe, are making knowledge worker collaboration more critical than ever before. Optimizing these vital human resources by integrating people, processes and enterprise content into a productivity solution is one of the greatest organizational imperatives of our time. With the advent of Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies, many organizations are enabling their knowledge workers to create, manage and easily build their own userguided collaborative document management sites leveraging SharePoint.

IBM FileNet P8 and Microsoft SharePoint technologies are complementary solutions that, when used together, provide an environment where business users can easily collaborate on work-in-process documents and tasks yet comply with content and compliance initiatives across the enterprise. SharePoint users can continue to use SharePoint's easy-to-use and familiar interfaces while FileNet P8 provides a robust content, process and compliance infrastructure that is transparent to users. With this approach, business users can leverage Windows SharePoint Services sites and SharePoint Portal for the majority of daily content, process and compliance activities without having to learn new applications or perform additional content or compliance management tasks.

FileNet P8 embraces and extends SharePoint Products and Technologies to allow SharePoint content to interoperate with an enterprise's existing heterogeneous computing environment. Additionally, FileNet P8 enables organizations to rapidly deploy SharePoint to address key enterprise business and IT requirements surrounding collaboration, while providing a powerful content, process, and compliance infrastructure to ensure SharePoint activities are accessible to authorized users, completely secure, and placed under full lifecycle and compliance management.

Microsoft SharePoint Overview

Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies are comprised of two distinct offerings that work together to facilitate the creation and sharing of content within Microsoft environments. These tools and technology enable the creation of team and meeting sites, and facilitate collaboration on documents tasks, contacts, events, and other information via an easy-to-use and intuitive interface that is customizable to meet end users' specific needs.

SharePoint Windows Services (WSS) is a Web site-based team collaboration tool for ad hoc collaboration of work-in-process and lightweight document management. SharePoint Portal Server (SPS) aggregates and presents content from WSS sites and other information sources. Organizations can choose to deploy just WSS or both WSS and SPS.

WSS allows business users to upload Microsoft Office documents to a mini Web site targeted at their respective teams and related workgroups. The WSS Web site provides a common workspace for document collaboration and support for basic document management capabilities such as check-in/check-out, linear versioning and approval. WSS has a flat security model that allows common access to content across the group with the ability to create a child site for a subset of the group, or additional users if different levels of security access are required. WSS users can typically create new sites without IT involvement.

SharePoint Portal (SPS) is a portal solution that aggregates and presents consolidated views of content across multiple WSS sites. SPS creates an index of content available in the various WSS sites and allows users to search for content based upon their security, rights.

As SharePoint Proliferates, Enterprises Look to Meet New and Emerging Enterprise Requirements

Many organizations are seeking an effective way to "roll up" or share content that has been created and stored in disparate WSS repositories across teams, groups, divisions, and geographical boundaries. This is especially challenging for IT organizations with portal standard outside of SharePoint or who have heterogeneous IT infrastructures. Even for organizations with a Microsoftcentric infrastructure, there still exists the challenge of ensuring high availability/disaster recovery provisions are in place, and data retention, archiving and long-term storage policies are followed.

Many customers have found that content generated via WSS team use, while beneficial from an immediate point of view, can inadvertently create new content silos. Many organizations find that content in WSS sites quickly becomes stale or is essentially duplicated by other teams working in disjointed WSS sites. This challenge is made worse due to the tendency for WSS sites to spread without proper controls when business users are set loose to take full advantage of the flexibility that WSS offers. The unplanned and unmanaged growth of WSS content silos can work against enterprise goals to control content and compliance risks.

Further, since WSS is a team or workgroup targeted solution, it inherently encourages team-based thinking based upon the specific local group assembled rather than a focus on content as an enterprise asset. This approach results in overlaps, duplication, and silos of content since teams are only aware of what they have created themselves. Further complicating matters, many WSS deployments by their very nature are tactical and thus difficult for IT to control.

IBM and Microsoft: Working Together to Solve these Issues

When used in conjunction with Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies, IBM can help address these content management requirements essential for IT and compliance policy enforcement. IBM can help assure content in WSS sites is fully categorized and accessible to the enterprise. IBM can enforce appropriate content, process and compliance management disciplines on WSS content while keeping business users in the highly familiar and productive SharePoint environments. IBM can also provide SharePoint users access to content managed outside of SharePoint all together.

IBM's unique, event-driven platform, FileNet P8, makes content an active part of an organization's business processes. By linking business processes with the creation, management and delivery of content, IBM facilitates and accelerates information exchange, enabling organizations to quickly respond to business or transaction events. FileNet P8 runs on, and can leverage, nearly all existing enterprise standards, which in turn allows SharePoint content to be made available across the entire organization. In this scenario, FileNet P8 provides an infrastructure layer to normalize content, process and compliance needs, so organizations can manage content at a single point as opposed to facilitating siloed content creation.

FileNet P8 also provides a reliable, scalable and highly available enterprise platform that enables organizations to capture, store, manage, secure and process content created or managed in SharePoint to increase operational efficiency and lower total cost of ownership.

FileNet P8 provides a single enterprise catalog for content, processes, records and email throughout the complete lifecycle– from creation through final disposition – regardless of where they are created. IBM connects existing repositories to better manage content and mitigate compliance risk across the enterprise.

IBM's Single Source Paradigm

IBM provides the infrastructure and integration necessary to repurpose content to serve multiple purposes and for consumption by multiple audiences from a single instance of the document. This ensures the most current and relevant version is accessible to those users who need the information, and that there is always a single version of the "truth." IBM calls this a single source paradigm, and it is a critical concept in managing vast amounts of enterprise content across a distributed and heterogeneous enterprise. IBM's SharePoint integration extends the single source paradigm to WSS and SPS. For example, a single document may be created in WSS but consumed by a business user interfacing with a Java portal such as BEA, Plumtree or WebSphere. A single document created in SharePoint can be published to an Intranet via IBM FileNet Document Publisher, linked to by an external customer-facing Web site managed by IBM FileNet Web Site Manager, and attached to a cross-solution workflow managed by IBM FileNet Business Process Manager.

Extending the Value of SharePoint with IBM FileNet P8

FileNet P8 works with WSS and SPS to provide a full range of ECM capabilities. FileNet P8 embraces and extends SharePoint

to offer enterprise-class heterogeneous ECM capabilities and address enterprise business and IT requirements surrounding collaboration, such as enforcing guidelines for corporate best-practice execution and regulatory compliance. Additionally, FileNet P8 ensures content remains easily accessible to authorized users, completely secure, and under full lifecycle and compliance management to support critical business initiatives.

For the business user, these capabilities can be accessed from the familiar Microsoft Office environment -- nearly all integration between SharePoint and FileNet P8 is invisible to users. This enables organizations to leverage the best of both solutions -- leveraging SharePoint Services and SharePoint Portal as a user interface; leveraging FileNet P8 to address the full range of content, process and compliance activities.

Providing Security and Auditing Features

IBM ECM manages security and monitors access to diverse content repositories, including desktops and network drives. IBM's role in managing content and processes across organizations can be leveraged to deliver significant value with regard to setting security controls and assigning access and user rights to that information; creating monitoring processes, and measuring and reporting on activities associated with information. FileNet P8 enables organizations to assign role-based security across all workgroup documents.

And, as noted earlier, full auditing capabilities provide the means to understand business outcomes and gain insight into processes so enterprises can track how and why decisions were made, while meeting compliance and corporate governance requirements.

Integration Nuts and Bolts: How it Works

FileNet P8 provides three integration modules; the Transfer Agent, WebParts and the Protocol Handler. These modules have specific functionality and can be run separately from each other, but also work in tandem. The Transfer Agent and WebParts work in conjunction with WSS, and the Protocol Handler works with SPS.

The Transfer Agent and WebParts provide native integration with WSS to allow the SharePoint user to conduct all of their document management tasks from within the SharePoint environment but actually have the content under FileNet P8 management. The Transfer Agent sweeps content into IBM FileNet Content Manager based on administrator-configured metadata and then synchronizes indexes with SharePoint Portal so content behaves as if it is in the local SharePoint repository. This allows for more robust content, process and compliance policy enforcement while making content available across the entire enterprise, irrespective of the IT application source or environment.

The Transfer Agent allows the Microsoft document libraries to be extended to the FileNet P8 managed repository. Once a document is complete and approved in SharePoint Services, it is then swept into a managed repository by the Transfer Agent, based upon a configurable document metadata state. The Transfer Agent can be triggered automatically based on metadata state, or this can be done manually as needed.

Content that is placed under IBM control can benefit from all of the Active Content capabilities FileNet P8 provides, including triggering events and processes, once the content is placed under IBM management.

The Transfer Agent has the ability to connect to multiple different object stores (document repositories). The integration also allows SharePoint to be connected to multiple FileNet P8 systems. This allows an enterprise to be very flexible and specific about what content from SharePoint is stored in a specific IBM location. Enterprises can use the Transfer Agent to store SharePoint content in multiple different object stores or repositories, and/or multiple FileNet P8 systems. This offers customers the flexibility to store content from SharePoint sessions within specific IBM repositories, and/or physical storage systems.

The SharePoint integration also provides for automation of many common document management tasks that are specific to the type of document or team that is conducting the work. For example, documents from one specific team can be stored in IBM only upon being marked "approved," while another team's document can be stored in IBM regardless of status. SharePoint documents can be swept into entirely different object stores or even physical storage systems based up the degree of re-use and archiving needs.

SPS offers configurable Web Parts to support the integration of line-of-business applications. WebParts for FileNet P8 makes live calls to a IBM application programming interface (API) and exposes what actions can be taken. Since these are live calls, the status of content will reflect the current state of the FileNet P8 content and task/event handling. Document management portlet capabilities available to SPS users include:

- Author
- Inbox
- Browse
- Public Inbox
- Quick Search

The FileNet Protocol Handler extends the capabilities of the Microsoft SharePoint Portal Search to include content from FileNet P8 Content Engine object stores. The Protocol Handler crawls the specified object stores, retrieving file content, metadata, and security data. The files and data are added to the SharePoint Portal search indexes. End users can then execute a SharePoint search and display a list of documents from FileNet P8. Users will only see the documents they are allowed access to, according to the FileNet P8 role-based security parameters.

Following a search, the resulting list is displayed and users can open and view the documents with all functionality available to documents stored natively in SharePoint.

Closing

More and more companies are realizing their knowledge workers and resulting knowledge base can be a formidable competitive advantage. With Microsoft SharePoint Services, organizations can easily facilitate collaboration among work groups and project teams. And with IBM FileNet, they can gain more control and leverage over that vital content through an integrated content and business process approach, increasing productivity while meeting enterprise security, storage and compliance requirements.

For more information on how your organization can leverage SharePoint Services with IBM FileNet P8, please contact your local sales team or www.FileNet.com.

About IBM ECM

As the clear market leader in Enterprise Content Management (ECM), IBM's ECM solutions help organizations make better decisions, faster by managing content, optimizing business processes and enabling compliance through an integrated information infrastructure. IBM's ECM portfolio delivers a broad set of capabilities and solutions that integrate with existing information systems to help organizations drive greater value from their content to solve today's top business challenges. The world's leading organizations rely on IBM enterprise content management to manage their mission-critical business content and processes.

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