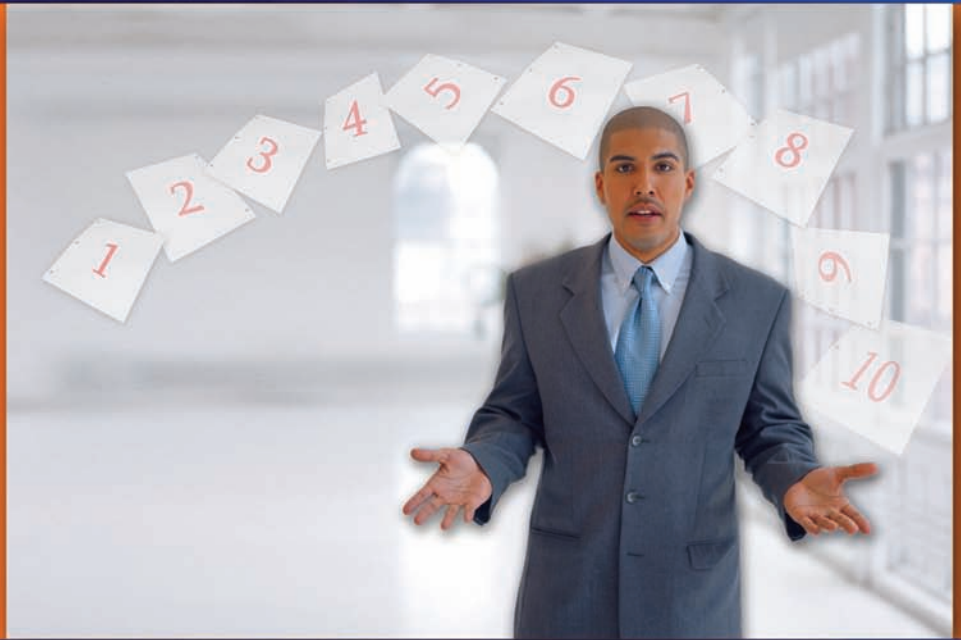


# AIIM Market Intelligence

Delivering the priorities and opinions of AIIM's 65,000 community



White  
Paper

## Top 10 Excuses For Not Considering Document Management This Year and How to Overcome Them

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# #1

**If we need to, we can usually find it.**



## Excuse #1:

**If we need to, we can usually find it.**

We usually can find the information we need when a customer calls. Sometimes it takes a while, but once we send out an email to all staff asking for the information, it usually shows up after a bit.

## Reality:

It's true; given enough time, people usually can come up with the information they need. But sometimes time is a luxury they just don't have ... like when a lawsuit reaches the discovery stage!

Trying to find a particular document in an organization has been likened to everything from locating a needle in a haystack to retrieving Indiana Jones' Lost Ark from the government warehouse into which it is loaded at the end of the movie. Most of the time, it isn't a legal imperative that triggers the search, but rather a business reason. Either way, there is a cost associated with having to do it, and that cost tends to be exorbitant in an unmanaged environment.

Consider that the typical office worker spends 40% of his or her time looking for information, and then do the math. If he had only known, don't you think Indy would have labeled that crate before it disappeared into the maw of the repository? In this way, you, too, should take steps to index your content for ready retrieval – before it's too late. (There ain't no sequel in real-life information management!)

## #2

**No one is ever going to sue us.**



### Excuse #2:

**No one is ever going to sue us.**

Who would ever want to sue us? I'm sure if push comes to shove, we can find whatever we need to defend ourselves. Let's not go looking for problems.

### Reality:

No need; the problems certainly will come looking for you! The sad truth is that you don't have to have done something wrong to have a suit brought against you. But if you can demonstrate to opposing counsel that you can readily produce documentation that counters the claim, the whole matter may simply go away before it ever gets started.

Consider, for instance, a dispute over a beneficiary change made to a life insurance policy, which dictates who is supposed to receive possibly significant sums of money following an accident or death. Being able to prove in a preliminary meeting that the change was properly authorized likely would keep the problem out of court – but this can't happen without a system for tracking and auditing such forms.

Even if the case does go forward, you still must be able to produce court-ordered documents in a timely manner or face fairly significant penalties. Morgan Stanley, for instance, once was fined \$1.6 billion in part for lying about its ability to produce email evidence. No one I know wants to risk that kind of punishment! So if nothing else, consider information management as a sort of litigation insurance policy – if you ever need it, you'll sure be glad it's there.

## #3

**We've got to pick our battles.**



### **Excuse #3:**

**We've got to pick our battles.**

Even if it's true that organizations typically spend \$20 in labor to file a document, \$120 in labor to find a misfiled document, and \$220 in labor to reproduce a lost document, it's chump change to us.

### **Reality:**

Chump change? *Chump change?* There's no such thing, especially in this economy.

Forget the tens of thousands of dollars in wasted labor these figures represent. How about the time wasted waiting for those documents to reappear? The lost productivity of the individuals doing the waiting and/or searching through the files? The customer dissatisfaction that accumulates while the organization chases its tail?

These are costs too, and they will quickly doom to failure any effort you make to "do more with less" – and there isn't an organization today that's so rich it's not interested in improving its bottom line.

## #4

### Green/schmeen.



## Excuse #4:

### Green/schmeen.

Who cares if the average document is photocopied 19 times?  
Not my problem. I've got more important things to worry about.

## Reality:

Sure you do. Until your waste removal company begins charging if you don't recycle. Or you don't have any place to put your new hires because all that "extra" space you had when you moved in is now full of file cabinets. Or your shareholders begin questioning your commitment to environmental stewardship.

As you can see, "going green" involves much more than saving trees and reducing carbon emissions – though these clearly have significant long-term benefits for our planet. Closer to home, it speaks directly to cost control and brand equity, and achieving it requires developing a corporate culture that values sustainability, and adopting technologies that can make this a reality.

The good news is that a large majority of the paper that businesses print out – some estimate as much as 80% – is "born digital" ... that is, the information it contains was originally created electronically (as a Word file, a digital photo, etc.). Because much of the up-front work of document automation thus has been done for you, incorporating the result into your information management strategy should be a no-brainer, and can tinge your operation "green" without really even trying. Never mind the cash and real estate it promises to free up!

## #5

It's good for staff to be busy.



### Excuse #5:

#### It's good for staff to be busy.

We understand that professionals can spend an average of 1 1/2 hours per day processing emails. That's what we pay them for.

### Reality:

No it isn't. You pay them to make good decisions in a timely fashion. You pay them to come up with new ideas for moving the business forward. You pay them to be the public face of your organization. If you don't think you do, then you're in the wrong business – or more likely, out of business altogether.

Having said that, let's be clear that there's nothing wrong with keeping people busy – in fact, most people *want* to be kept busy, or their days drag and they begin to look for new employment. But what they really want is to be *productively* busy: intellectually challenged, fully engaged in what they're doing, and working toward some tangible end. Having them chase information on a regular basis achieves none of these objectives – especially when they know there are technologies available that can do much of this work for them.

Strange as it sounds, information management thus can be considered an employee retention tool of sorts: the kind of enabler people can grab onto to rid themselves of their more mundane tasks in order to tackle more productive, fulfilling work. *Then* watch how busy they become!

## #6

**It's easier to just get everyone together in person.**



### Excuse #6:

**It's easier to just get everyone together in person.**

If my staff needs to work together on a project, we find it more productive to send everybody a draft in advance and then have everyone fly in for a few days and sit together with all of the different versions and just hammer out the details. Plus everyone likes staying in hotels and having nice dinners.

### Reality:

Sure they do! But since when is it your job to dole out working vacations? Plus, people's schedules and workloads grow more taxing with each new economic report, so there's really nothing "easy" about arranging for people to be in one place at one time – especially since doing so takes them away from their regular responsibilities and only makes their problems worse. And with airlines charging extra for everything from checked baggage to snack food, it's hardly cost-effective to "have everybody fly in" anyway.

Electronic document technology makes it as easy to leverage talent around the globe as around the company, all without disrupting your workforce. Thanks to collaborative authoring tools, new delivery channels (Web, email, texting, etc.), and online meeting places (e.g., social networks, Webinars), people can work effectively together to create, access, and discuss materials of all kinds – without being derailed by the logistics of travel or the asynchronicity of time zones.

Getting everybody together at the same place and time quickly is becoming as quaint a notion as meeting for afternoon tea. It can be done, but in these hurried times may require more effort than it is worth. So why not avail yourself of the more efficient alternatives?

## #7

**Our business isn't located on a flood plain or anything.**



### Excuse #7:

**Our business isn't located on a flood plain or anything.**

Sure, when we see all those paper documents floating around after a flood on the news, we feel bad for those people. But we're not located in a place where disasters happen.

### Reality:

Well, that's a relief! Imagine being in a place where rivers never rise, winds never blow, fires never start, and coffee never spills ... must be a real paradise, where nothing ever happens that can destroy your paper files!

Disaster recovery encompasses much more than floods, tornadoes, and wildfires, as leaky roofs, malfunctioning sprinkler systems, and yes, careless coffee drinkers can cause the kind of data loss usually ascribed to "acts of God". So be empathetic to those caught in a maelstrom, but take steps to protect yourself as well. You'd be surprised how fast even a small problem can become catastrophic!

Make backups of your electronic files. Move older and/or inactive paper records off-site – preferably far off-site lest the same storm that wrecks your building take out the backup as well. Set established policies to govern which documents move where, according to what timetable, and for how long before they are destroyed. Then maybe you can afford to ignore the perils that threaten your documents – at least until the coffee wagon shows up.

## #8

### Information security just isn't at the top of our list.



## Excuse #8:

### Information security just isn't at the top of our list.

Yes, we lock the doors at night. And yes, we keep the HR files locked. And yes, we use passwords on our computers. But we need to be flexible. If people want to take information home and work on it on their home computers, that's a good thing. We trust our employees.

## Reality:

Trust is good, but in document circles, it should be practiced the way President Ronald Reagan did when he negotiated with the old Soviet Union. "Trust but verify," he said, and the advice is as solid for securing information as it was for arms control.

Knowing who accessed what, and when, is a big deal in compliance circles. Further, good practice, if not always the law, requires that you maintain and review logs of all system and user activities. Sure, your employees may be long proven dependable. But what about the hacker who tries to break in over your VPN? What about the drug addict who steals a company laptop from a worker's living room – and what about the fence who buys that laptop and all the information on it? At that point, no amount of physical security at your office is going to help, as the cat's already out of the bag.

And by the way – there are other security breaches that have nothing at all to do with people. Consider the tornado, hurricane, or earthquake that breaks your outer office windows and scatters the contents of your files all over the neighborhood. How secure is that information then? For sure, your customers, your legal counsel, and your local, state, and federal regulators will want to know.

## #9

### Change is expensive.



## Excuse #9:

### Change is expensive.

When I need to get an invoice approved, I just put it in the right department's mailbox at the front desk. They usually pick it up in a few days and sign it. We file it and then every few years pack up the old files and send them to off-site storage. Why spend money to automate something this simple?

## Reality:

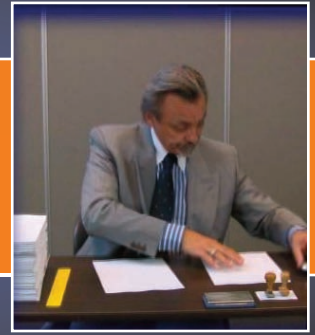
Because it's not really that simple. There are business rules and document policies embodied in this seemingly straightforward process, but they're invisible and thus impossible to document, improve, replicate, teach, or defend if queried by a litigator or disgruntled shareholder seeking better governance.

Who's authorized to grant the approvals? Up to how much money does that authority extend? Who decides when the old files get packed and moved off-site? What are the criteria for moving them, and how long do they stay there? Every one of these questions must have an answer – and if you take the time to pursue that answer, you may find that *not* changing your processes is far more expensive than doing so.

The story is told of a city attorney's office that was so overloaded with work that it had to farm out 75% of its cases, and paid some \$300 per hour for that outside help. Then it started scanning legal documents directly into its case management system, and it began working so much more efficiently that it could handle more of the work itself – at a cost of just \$75 per hour. So while there was nothing wrong about the way the old process worked, the new one is a whole lot less expensive, and generates savings each and every time it is used. Only a true Luddite could object to that!

## #10

**This information management stuff is just too squishy.**



### Excuse #10:

**This information management stuff is just too squishy.**

Managing our financial assets is important to us, so we invested in a top-notch financial system. Managing our people is important, too, so we invested in HR systems. But information is just not as critical. And managing it seems so complicated.

### Reality:

Who says information isn't as critical? Success is all about information – not only having it, but making sure it's accurate, timely, and available to the people who need it to make good business decisions. If you think about it, it's information that gives your financial assets their value, for without it, there'd be no up-to-date price lists to show to prospective customers, no order forms to capture new business, no signature pages to trigger the billing cycle, etc.

While all this may sound complicated, the fact is that information management today is more accessible than ever. Most of the core capabilities can be gotten off the shelf, and little user training is required because most of the interfaces are either Web-based or designed to work as such, and at this point anyone who uses a computer is fairly used to browsers and Google-style search boxes. "Squishy," therefore, would seem to be in the eye of the beholder.

## How to overcome them



## How to overcome them

The aforementioned excuses are frustrating for many reasons, not the least of which is because document and content technology already has well established itself as a means to further your most critical business objectives. Those who offer them up individually or *en masse* really are only forestalling the inevitable, for sooner or later, someone in a position of authority is going to start asking “why aren’t we doing this?”

But then, you already know this, or you wouldn’t still be reading these words! So your challenge is to turn these excuse-makers into fellow agents of change, whether they live above or below you in the organizational hierarchy, or are peers in other departments.

### Identify the major points of pain

The trick to overcoming their objections is to identify what’s causing them the most operational pain, and then to explain how information management technology can alleviate that pain and make them managerial heroes at the same time. You can usually capture their attention by talking about one or more of the following issues:

- Cost reduction
- Efficiency improvement
- Compliance/risk mitigation
- Environmental stewardship
- Security
- Disaster recovery
- Decision support
- Collaboration



## Get educated

Get vendor neutral training in technologies and global best practices for managing and utilizing information assets.

The AIIM Certificate Programs are designed from global best practices among AIIM's 65,000 members, and are available as classroom or online training courses leading to AIIM Practitioner, Specialist and Master designations.

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Learn how to take control of your information assets
- Business Process Management (BPM)  
Learn how to improve your business processes
- Electronic Records Management (ERM)  
Learn how to take control of your electronic records
- Enterprise 2.0 (E2.0)  
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Improve your understanding of WCM technologies
- Introduction to Web Analytics Technology  
Gain a thorough grounding in web analytics technology
- Digital Asset Management  
Improve your understanding of DAM technologies
- Fundamentals of Enterprise Portal Technology  
Gain a thorough grounding in Enterprise Portal Technology
- E-Discovery  
Learn ways to build a successful e-discovery process
- PDF/A  
Learn best practices for preserving your organization's digital documents using PDF/A

## Benchmark your organization

AIMM Market Intelligence provides neutral and unbiased research that helps to spur market understanding and growth. Research topics include:

- Enterprise Content Management
- Email Management
- Collaboration and Enterprise 2.0
- Electronic Records Management
- Business Process Management
- Capture: in house, outsourced, centralized, distributed
- Search/Findability



## Measure everything / measure anything

To make your argument maximally compelling, you must quantify the problems to the greatest degree possible, and drown your would-be allies in data. This means measuring everything about the documents that are central to their activities and interpreting the results in the context of their day-to-day lives. At the very least, you want to be sure to capture essential information like:

- How many documents there are
- How many *types* of documents there are
- How many pages they contain
- How many sides they are printed on
- How they get introduced into the organization
- Who handles them, for what purpose, in what order, and for how long
- Where they are stored, for what reasons, and for how long

If you can't measure everything, then at least be sure to measure *anything*. The idea is to illuminate with the harsh light of reality that your current naysayers are spending a lot more time and money than they think dealing with either poor or non-existent document processes – and as they do, they're exposing themselves to lots of avoidable risk (e.g., from natural disaster, lawsuits, even termination).

## Find out how things actually work

Besides the document accounting, you also want to chart the way your organization actually works – not how people *think* it works! – as well as the technology infrastructure that supports you. In most cases, this is a Stage Two activity since it really can't happen until enough of the right kind of fundamental buy-in (read: from top management) has been obtained. But whether it happens sooner or later, it must happen sooner or later, and eventually will follow three core lines of inquiry:

- Functional: examine your process flows, communications webs, and technology stack(s) for the organization as a whole and by department, current and desired



- Technical: inventory your current environment and list your system requirements, performance specs, and future considerations
- Administrative: record your expectations for rollout schedule, testing, training, documentation, support, and maintenance

### But first: Get help!

By now it probably has become apparent that you can't do all this by yourself. So the first thing you have to do is find yourself a friend, preferably one in a high place because a senior executive automatically commands attention when he or she wants to get something done. But don't despair if you are unable to reach that far, for plenty of good work can be done at the grassroots level to start.

It may surprise you to know that many information management initiatives begin as populist movements, for it is the people who actually push the paper who feel the greatest operational pain and are most immediately invested in finding a cure. Whether you are one of these people or are in charge of a team of them, you have a familiarity with the issues that positions you perfectly to begin affecting change in your organization – whether or not it currently wants to change.

This won't be easy, and it probably won't be fast, but you can make it obvious for all to see that the Top 10 Excuses – plus the dozens more you will run into as you go – are nothing but weak justifications for leaving well enough alone. You know this is not an acceptable answer, and organizations like ours and like AIIM can help you make your case if you need us to. So don't wait another minute: tune in, turn on, and get going!



## About AIIM

AIIM ([www.aiim.org](http://www.aiim.org)) is the community that provides education, research, and best practices to help organizations find, control, and optimize their information. The AIIM community has grown to over 65,000 professionals from all industries and government, in over 150 unique countries, and within all levels of management including senior executives, line-of-business, and IT.

For over 60 years, AIIM has been the leading non-profit organization focused on helping users to understand the challenges associated with managing documents, content, records, and business processes. Today, AIIM is international in scope, independent, implementation-focused, and, as the representative of the entire enterprise content management (ECM) industry—including users, suppliers, and the channel—acts as the industry's intermediary.

### *About the Author*

*Steve Weissman is Senior Sage at Insight Forums, an analyst and consulting firm that establishes business communities for communications professionals in highly-regulated industries. Featuring a unique mix of expert perspectives, live and virtual events, and social media outlets, our mission is to raise the level of discourse between and among both buyers and sellers. For more information, please visit [www.insightforums.com](http://www.insightforums.com)*



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