

WHITE PAPER

Partnering with HP in Information Lifecycle Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organizations of all types are under pressure to facilitate access to information while protecting it and adhering to regulatory requirements that affect the management of that information. As a result, the need for a well-integrated information management infrastructure is increasing. Such an infrastructure, providing tools for collecting, organizing, maintaining, archiving, securing, and accessing information, has generally been associated with storage systems. An effective information infrastructure, however, goes well beyond merely storing information. It is about an organization's content and that content's continuing life throughout the infrastructure and the organization's ongoing business processes.

Organizations can address this challenge with an information lifecycle management (ILM) strategy that can assign persistent access and use rights, ensure secure access, and provide the tools to collect, organize, maintain, archive, access, analyze, and deliver information.

IDC believes this quickly expanding ILM imperative presents significant opportunity for HP channel partners. As partners move more and more into providing services and solution selling, the ILM opportunities can be seen in the following areas:

- ☒ The market is in its early stages, allowing partners the opportunity to get ahead of an emerging trend.
- ☒ ILM is largely a service and software opportunity, expanding the potential for building service-related relationships revenue and increasing gross margins.
- ☒ Focusing on ILM can provide partners with an entrée into higher levels of the organization.
- ☒ Although the initial focus has been on storage, ILM encompasses hardcopy and expands throughout the organization's information technology infrastructure.
- ☒ The expansive nature of ILM will provide the opportunity for building and extending partnerships across technology areas and market segments.

Understanding the Information Lifecycle

Information has become the fuel that drives today's organizations. Fundamental to any type of business process is information that must be collected, retrieved, acted upon, and stored again to accomplish a task. As a result, organizations require an integrated approach to gathering, organizing, securing, accessing, and distributing information to protect their central business processes, reputations, and brands while still encouraging appropriate use of information both internally and externally.

Decision makers face the constant dilemma of trying to protect their data while facilitating its flow and use both inside and outside their organizations. Making information widely and easily accessible has become a top priority for any organization. Unfortunately, easily accessible information also presents a significant threat to the enterprise, unless it is managed intelligently.

Comprehensive ILM involves a complex set of processes that unite multiple types of information, the applications that gather and consume it, and the people inside and outside the organization who must be linked to the information and to each other. Significant barriers stand in the way of accomplishing this vision:

- ☒ **Security.** Documents and data elements must be simultaneously searchable and invisible to unauthorized users.
- ☒ **Dispersed information.** Solutions must accommodate information in multiple locations on multiple servers, desktops, and laptops.
- ☒ **Information control.** Control of the processes for accessing and protecting information must be centralized to comply with regulations and also to govern the use and distribution of information across all repositories.
- ☒ **Information anywhere.** Solutions must accommodate mobile employees that need to connect no matter where they are or what time of day it is.
- ☒ **Information on any device.** Employees and customers expect to be able to see appropriately formatted and packaged information for each of the multiple devices they use regardless of form factor and available bandwidth.
- ☒ **Information context.** Perhaps most critically, people expect the appropriate information to be delivered within the context of a particular task or role.

To support this complex set of requirements, enterprises need a unified information infrastructure that has the following characteristics:

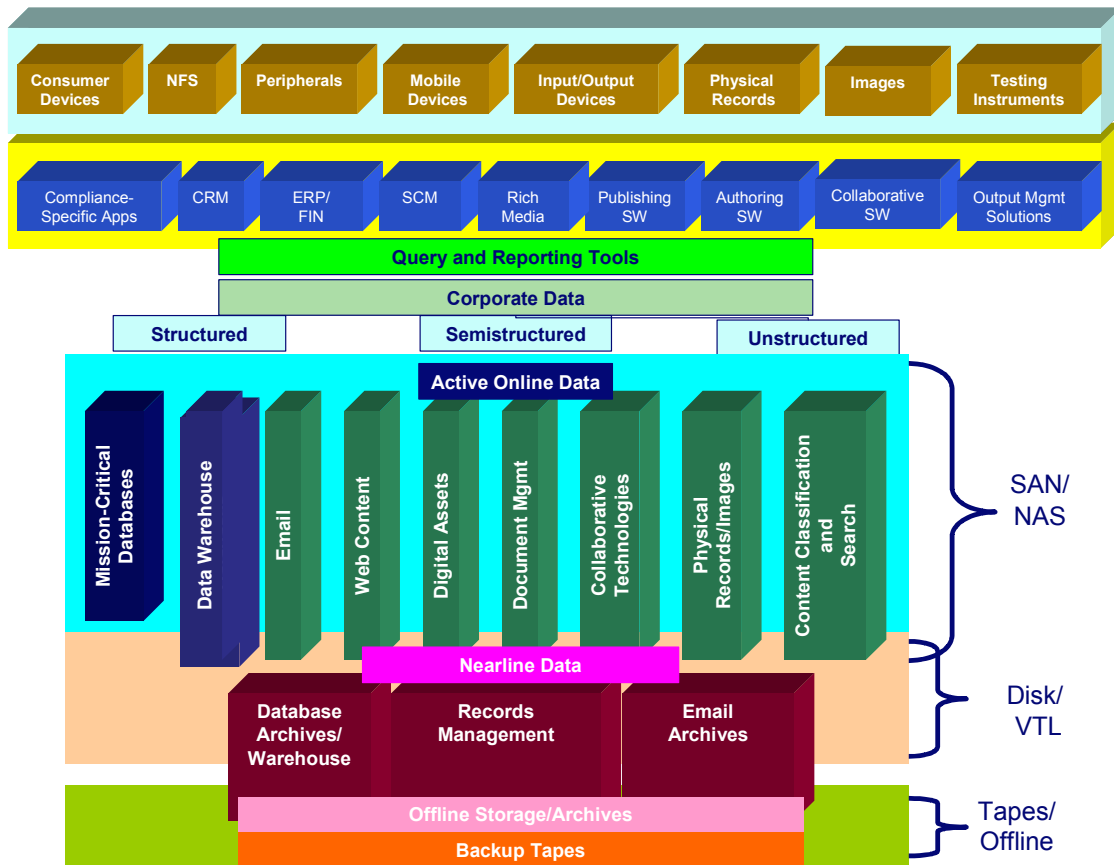
- ☒ Accommodates rapid increases in information types and volumes
- ☒ Ensures that information is available when needed
- ☒ Minimizes the administrative burden on IT and business organizations
- ☒ Streamlines internal processes so that enterprises can focus on strategic versus tactical information lifecycle management

IDC believes that such an infrastructure is emerging. It allows for flexible and modular expansion of capacity, enables rapid and reliable information backup and recovery, and includes centralized systems for managing assets and assigning policies.

Figure 1 shows how an ILM infrastructure landscape might look. The architectural design begins at the physical devices generating and accessing information, moving to the application layer. The subsequent layer provides a high-level view of how content is managed from active to nearline to tiered storage to offline storage.

FIGURE 1

ILM Infrastructure Landscape



Source: IDC, 2006

The challenge for businesses is that this infrastructure architecture is not yet well defined and has yet to become standardized. There is an opportunity for partners to bring together a strong portfolio of software solutions and business services to support information lifecycle management needs in a coherent and effective way. Partners can also help decision makers understand the need for effective information lifecycle management, the benefits and risks, and the technology and processes involved, as they navigate through the complexity.

The Opportunity for Partners

Helping organizations understand, define, and implement an effective ILM represents a tremendous opportunity for partners. Channel partners already have established customer relationships and understand their customers' business challenges. With opportunities to sell additional products somewhat limited, partners are looking for expanded service and solution opportunities. ILM can provide them with an additional, repeatable revenue source while improving customer satisfaction.

With their existing knowledge of customers' business processes, partners have an essential grounding in helping customers scope out their ILM requirements. They must use this knowledge to determine which of their customers might be good targets for exploring an ILM strategy and what the customers' individual requirements might be. Every industry will have specific requirements, as data has different meanings and different values, depending on the organization's business processes. The impact of regulatory requirements will be felt differently from industry to industry as well. For example, a publisher and a pharmaceutical company have different information management needs. Many partners already have the industry-specific expertise or even some vertical expertise that will help customers envision and implement an ILM strategy and infrastructure.

Partners must recognize, however, that ILM represents a new way of selling: a service and solution-led model that is sold into higher levels of the organization than the traditional datacenter. It may very well encompass expertise and products that go beyond what any one partner can deliver. It is essential that partners recognize the need to partner with vendors as well as other partners to form ecosystems that provide the expertise to deliver the end-to-end solution. A storage partner, for example, may need to bring in a hardcopy partner to effectively manage a customer's full range of ILM processes.

Partners should equip their sales forces to handle consultative sales, preparing them to lead with services and software, not products. This is an element of the adaptive enterprise strategy and vision that can be articulated through the value of information. It helps customers start to plan their infrastructure in a measured, methodical manner, which can help them start to realize the vision of becoming adaptive.

HP's Value in the Information Lifecycle Management Opportunity

HP is making a significant investment in the ILM market opportunity and committing to it for both its customers and its partners. HP recognizes that effectively managing information encompasses more than just storage technology. The company's expertise in the hardcopy segment adds tremendous value to organizations seeking to establish a wide-reaching ILM infrastructure.

As a provider of infrastructure, software, and hardcopy products and related services, HP is one of the major contenders in this arena. It has strong server, imaging, printing, and storage products. HP's computer and handheld devices bracket the information process from creation to use. The company's own management software and partnerships with major software vendors contribute the tools that are needed to manage information. In addition, HP has a well-developed services organization that has spent years developing internal information systems as well as solving information problems for customers.

On the product side, HP has all the components of an ILM solution: servers, storage (arrays, network-attached storage, optical, tape), software, hardcopy devices (printers, fax, handhelds), and relationships with key ILM ISVs. The HP solution is bolstered by its comprehensive ILM services. The strength of the HP brand will help to lend credibility as customers begin to understand this complex space.

HP has a strong partner network in place and has begun to establish programs focused specifically on ILM. It recently announced it had expanded its ILM Partner Program to help its storage partners more effectively deal with the broader ILM opportunity. Through this program, HP is bringing in a broad portfolio of products and services to address data management, archiving, interoperability testing, policy creation and management, and regulatory compliance.

This comprehensive approach to managing information is essential to the value that HP brings to this market space. In addition to envisioning the broad scope of ILM, HP is allowing its partners to engage at different levels, depending on their interest and expertise. Different types of partners also have the opportunity to work together, combining their expertise. A hardcopy partner, for example, can work with a partner that knows infrastructure issues, bringing a comprehensive solution to the customer.

Challenges

As with any emerging market space, the ILM opportunity depends on partners understanding what the customer requirements really are and how they can address them. Partners must determine which customers have the greatest need and how to approach that need with a comprehensive solution. Customers need to be educated as well, and partners can benefit from transferring their expertise to their customers.

For all suppliers, there is some risk of channel conflict with direct services. HP, for its part, has done a good job recently of saying where its services organization will play and where it will not, establishing rules to minimize channel conflict.

HP and partners face a challenge in convincing customers that they should think about ILM. They must start slowly and walk the customers into the concept, talking about the value of data, tiered storage, and compliance. Mentioning compliance will get many customers to start thinking that they need to do something. The key is recognizing a customer's individual issues and starting the discussion where it makes the most sense.

Most partners do not have content management expertise. This expertise will need to come from HP and its software partners. HP will need to train partners in consultative, service and software-led sales approaches. The company will need to work with its server/storage partners and its Imaging and Printing Group partners to either create alliances or drive more cross-product coverage within the partner community.

ILM spans the entire infrastructure — products, services, business processes, regulatory requirements. Partners must recognize that they may not be able to meet every customer need. It is essential that they not over promise. Partners must determine what they do well and partner with a company that can provide the other needed elements.

Conclusion

HP's ILM strategy for the channel offers an attractive opportunity for partners driven to grow consulting revenues and strengthen customer relationships. By extending their reach, and in some cases, by developing a more consultative sales approach, partners that have strong infrastructure practices can find new avenues of revenue. In addition, the ILM opportunity broadens the partner community, enabling the idea of complementary partners cooperating to provide customers with solutions to business needs.

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