

Digital data everywhere: Now what?

Study sheds light on content management
system possibilities and challenges



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Fortunately, a content management system offers considerable potential for paper and digital content alike.

The amount of digital information coming into healthcare organizations is growing at an exponential pace, according to a survey of 194 healthcare professionals commissioned by Quest Diagnostics and conducted by SourceMedia Research/Health Data Management. The challenge: Finding a way to ride the digital wave toward improved clinical, operational and financial results, instead of drowning under a disparate deluge of content.

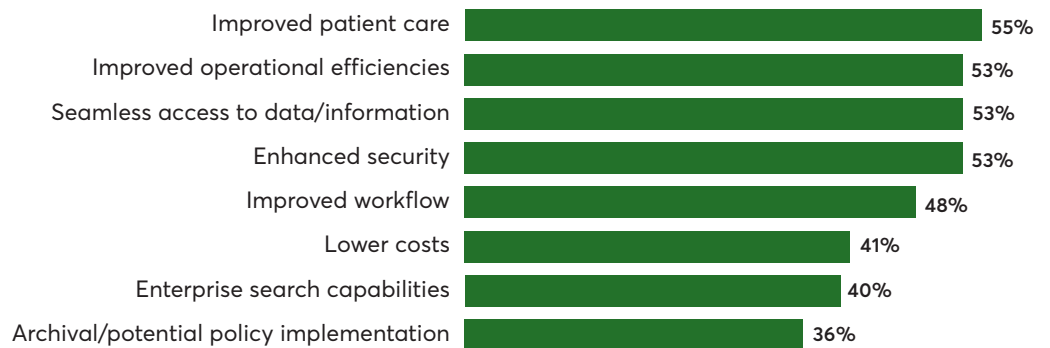
Indeed, 87% of healthcare professionals report that digital content at their organizations has increased in the past 3 years, compared to just 11% who cite increases in paper content, and 7% who note an uptick in fax content. This electronic content is distributed evenly between back office and clinical departments, with 50% flowing into each area, according to survey respondents, who work at hospitals, health systems, and other healthcare organizations.

The rise in electronic content could, in part, emanate from the fact that healthcare organizations are struggling with a variety of challenges when trying to manage paper content. 68% of respondents cite security and storage as top challenges associated with managing paper content, with redundancy at 50%, and productivity at 49%.

Simply embracing digital content, however, does not automatically result in an organizational nirvana. In fact, after automating, many healthcare organizations are left trying to manage what often amounts to an unwieldy tsunami of digital information – leaving them struggling to get a handle on burgeoning amounts of information. “We are undergoing a digital transformation and document content management is something that we need to address,” says one survey respondent.

Fortunately, a content management system (CMS) offers considerable potential for paper and digital content alike. Healthcare professionals who participated in the survey cite several benefits associated with such systems including improved patient care, operational efficiencies, access to data/information and security (see figure 1).

Figure 1 – Top CMS potential benefits

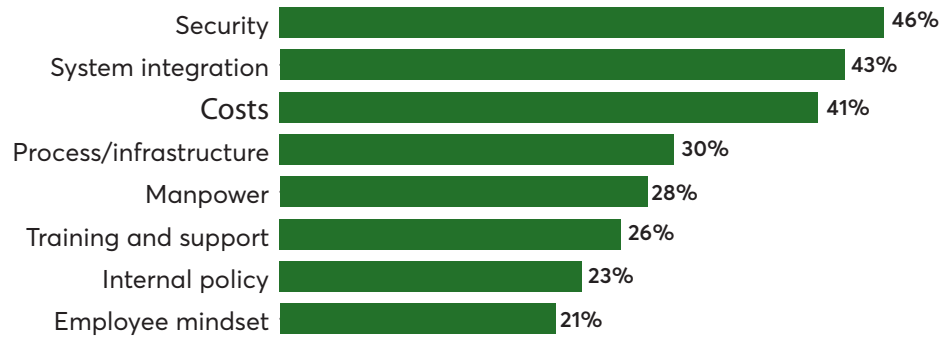


Source: Source Media Research/Health Data Management, September 2018

The problem: Content management systems bring challenges of their own. In fact, less than half of healthcare professionals find their current content management solution effective. According to survey respondents, security and system integration are the top challenges associated with using a content management system (CMS) (see figure 2).

Some healthcare professionals have been known to refer to their data stores as a “black hole” or “the data cemetery.”

Figure 2 - Potential challenges in using a CMS



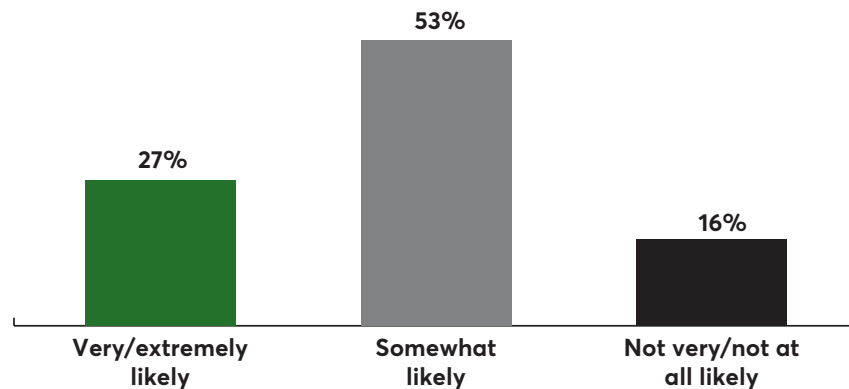
(% of respondents that indicate a challenge as being very significant)

Source: Source Media Research/Health Data Management, September 2018

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In addition, the lack of integration presents a significant challenge when dealing with electronic data. Survey respondents specifically point to “multiple EMRs,” “multiple sites to access,” and “multiple systems from legacy hospitals” as the biggest pain points when it comes to accessing records/content. With some organizations dissatisfied with their current CMS and others looking for their first system, 80% of healthcare professionals say that their organizations are considering purchasing a CMS in the next 2 years (see figure 3).

Figure 3 - Likelihood to invest in CMS in next 2 years



Source: Source Media Research/Health Data Management, September 2018

Getting it right

The key to success, however, is to choose and implement a system that will not just store data but help organizations leverage it for the greater good.

“Everyone understands that legally they have to store and maintain certain data. So, many become frustrated as they simply view content management systems as a necessary cost. They view the system as something that will help them avoid fines when they get audited,” notes an industry professional. “What healthcare professionals need to realize is that the CMS can be used more strategically and can help to actually leverage data to meet organizational goals such as improved care, enhanced patient experiences, and reduced costs.”

A CMS should not only support the clinical side of the house, but should also be able to support non-clinical areas such as materials management or human resources.

For example, when data within a CMS are easily discoverable, clinicians can leverage the information to improve patient care. Consider this scenario: A patient presents in the emergency department and vaguely mentions something about previously seeing a cardiologist. When the physician asks for more details, the patient, who is under considerable stress, becomes confused and can't remember the name of the doctor or the condition that he was being treated for. Typically, searching for the details in paper or electronic files would take too much time and clinicians would just carry on without the information. However, when working with a CMS that offers an effective search function integrated into the EHR, the information can be "discoverable" -- simply typing in the patients name and the word "cardiac" would return relevant documents that could help the physician make more informed care decisions.

With the right CMS, finding this information could take just seconds, whereas it might have taken 30 minutes or more to find the information without the functionality. Without an integrated CMS, the clinician might have even had to call a different department to get the information.

Ensuring that a system has discovery tools (search, optical character recognition, keyword lookup, central repository, naming nomenclature) – is just one part of a comprehensive CMS assessment. To truly evaluate CMS options, healthcare professionals should determine:

► **If the CMS can manage data from multiple systems.** A CMS should not only support the clinical side of the house and be able to bring together that unified or full patient record, but should also be able to support non-clinical areas, such as materials management or human resources. Look for a CMS that can bring legacy data into the new system, easily exchange data with the organization's EHR and ERP, and provide access to multiple offices.

► **If the system offers advanced data capture options.** Some solutions can intelligently capture data from any source – and then use optical character recognition and machine learning to ensure that the content can be quickly captured and, more important, accessed when needed. In some cases, the system can even alert the user to problems such as when the amount on an invoice doesn't match the amount on a contract.

► **If the system is scalable.** While price is often an important consideration, especially for smaller organizations, it's also important to invest in a system that can grow with an organization's evolving needs. As such, organizations should look for a CMS that can offer both affordability and scalability that supports expansion as needs change.

► **If the system has a robust security model.** Part of the need for scalability lends to security. The CMS must have a configurable security model to support multi-facility needs and role-based security along with detailed audit recording and reporting.

► **If the system is configurable.** It's important for a CMS to be flexible to accommodate various organizational needs. Many organizations are simply interested in automating their current processes, instead of adapting to new processes required by a CMS. At the same time, organizations don't want to be saddled with a system that won't allow workflow changes down the line.

► **If the system is well supported.** When you choose a CMS, you want to make sure that the implementation will go smoothly. Ask if there will be experienced people on site to support the transition as you roll out the system, and if training is provided. There should be a customer-centric support model to assist after you are live with the system. Being prepared with these resources in place will ensure that your team has seamless access to data once you go live.

In the final analysis, by comprehensively assessing CMS options, healthcare organizations can ensure that they implement systems that will enable them to go beyond simply storing data and make it possible to truly realize the potential that is inherent in data.

Methodology

Online study conducted by SourceMedia Research/Health Data Management in September of 2018 among 194 healthcare professionals working at hospitals, health systems and other organizations.

About Quest Diagnostics

Enterprise Content Solutions (formerly ChartMaxx) is part of the Quantum technology portfolio from Quest Diagnostics. Quantum Enterprise Content Solutions empowers healthcare organizations to leverage the information needed to help support and improve patient care, drive operational efficiencies, and lower costs. Users achieve 24/7 concurrent access to structured and unstructured content, whether it be the complete legal health record or business records, organized to reflect targeted and proactive data. Enterprise Content Solutions, with its Business Process Management, helps improve workflow across the enterprise and provide seamless access to data from clinical, Health Information Management, Patient Financial Services, supplies and materials management, vendor and payer contract management, Human Resources, and more.

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