

# Risk Reduction and Innovation Creation

## By-Products of an Enterprise Metadata Repository

By Martin Garland, President, Concept Searching, Inc.

In many organizations, a proactive approach to managing unstructured and semi-structured content has never received the necessary focus or relative importance from within the IT and business infrastructure. Enterprise content management, the phrase of the day in 2000, has lost its luster and has failed to keep up with technology. Knowledge management, once all the rage, is now coming into vogue again. A half-hearted approach to managing content is no longer a viable option, due to unmitigated content growth and the fact that 80% of business decisions are made using unstructured content. A traditional oversight that continues is the inability of organizations to place value on unstructured content as a corporate asset. So content remains marginally useful, with no tangible value assigned to it.

The business value of unstructured and semi-structured data has never been greater. Yet it still remains on the “nice-to-have” list, and not on the “must-have” list. Unfortunately, with this lack of focus and foresight, the business benefits remain unrealized. It is time to refocus on the outcomes of knowledge management and content management, and transform content into usable knowledge assets that can help achieve business objectives.

### Too Much Content

Content overload is a fact of life. Enterprise risk is increasing. These issues will not go away. The end result is that organizations continue to struggle with business challenges that are directly associated with a lack of meaningful metadata. It is the exception for organizations to take a comprehensive approach to capturing, managing and leveraging metadata in order to reduce enterprise risk. Successful search, records management, data security of content assets, migration, text analytics, collaboration, and social business applications depend on meaningful, conceptual metadata, which is structured to enable easy access and realize benefits. Even though these applications share the use of metadata, they are typically approached as single applications. This siloed approach must be

eliminated to achieve business process improvements and reduce enterprise risk.

There is an increasing corporate focus on information governance, text analytics, collaboration and social intelligence. But for most organizations, these are not viable options until an enterprise semantic framework is in place to exploit the inherent value in unstructured content, making it useful to a variety of stakeholders for different purposes and to the enterprise as a whole. Managing content needs a structured approach. An enterprise metadata repository provides transparency

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and accountability and is necessary for proactive content management. The outcome must satisfactorily answer two questions. Can we trust the data? Can we use the data to make investments or sell assets? If both answers are not “yes,” then perhaps the time has come to revise how content is viewed—as a business asset or as a by-product of business activities?

Metadata is at the heart of an integrated semantic platform, and is the core component of the technology infrastructure, so can address a variety of application challenges in the management of unstructured content. This semantic framework can then be used to support a complete range of intelligent metadata enabled solutions. Key to this framework is taxonomy. Content grows, and useful content must be identified, kept as an asset with value, and made available to internal constituents and to an organization as a whole. Semantic metadata and taxonomies, coupled with auto-classification, can help separate the wheat from the chaff.



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Martin Garland, President, Concept Searching, Inc. One of the founders of Concept Searching, Martin Garland has more than 21 years' experience in ECM. His understanding of the information management landscape and his business acumen

provide a foundation for guiding organizations to achieve their business objectives using best practices, industry experience and technology. Martin's expertise has been instrumental in assisting multinational clients in diverse industries to understand the value of managing unstructured content to improve business processes.

### Creating—and Using—Knowledge

Valuable knowledge is gained when information is internalized, shared and reused as a source of innovation. Without a taxonomy, the very basic task of search becomes the weakest link in deriving knowledge, because information that cannot be found cannot be used. If it cannot be used, it has no value. Meaningful content represents corporate memory. Without the ability to access this asset, corporate memory becomes eroded and forgotten. More than ever before, the opportunity exists to capture the knowledge of an often aging and dispersed workforce, to provide the intersection between content assets and knowledge assets.

Enterprise risk can be reduced from the perspective of non-compliance, security and information governance, by using knowledge management technology tools. All these functions can be tied back to the enterprise metadata repository, in order to identify corporate risk and implement business processes that leverage enterprise metadata. This enables taxonomies to maintain and refine corporate memory so that it becomes a highly usable tool, to reduce risk, improve compliance, disperse knowledge assets, and ultimately create innovation. ■

Concept Searching specializes in semantic metadata generation, auto-classification and taxonomy management, and has a Microsoft Gold Application Development competency. Its technologies encompass the entire portfolio of unstructured information, in on-premise, cloud or hybrid environments. Clients are using the technologies to improve search, records management, data privacy, migration and text analytics.

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