

# DOCSVAULT WhitePaper

## A Guide to Document Management for Legal Industry

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## Overview

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Law firms and professionals in legal industry often find themselves overwhelmed by the number of documents they have to deal with. They either operate in an ad-hoc environment using simple word processors, insecure repository and emails or adopt a streamlined process of document capture, storage and workflow.

### *Why legal document management?*

Legal document management helps:

- ✓ Convert paper documents to digital files
- ✓ Retain document for long case cycles
- ✓ Access to documents simultaneously for peer review, revision and approval
- ✓ Find case-related documents instantly
- ✓ Prepare for discovery requests

**Legal professionals have to juggle multiple tasks and cases, which requires constant collaboration.**



Being an information-driven field, legal firms have to be careful with their data. Legal professionals have to handle confidential client data, juggle multiple tasks and cases and make a note of most minute changes, which requires constant access to documents and smooth collaboration.

Legal professionals have to spend significant time on a regular basis reading statutes, agency rules, court decisions, zoning laws and other regulations to stay abreast of changes. Most importantly, they need to store all the client data and research work in such a way that it is secure and easily accessible.

Managing documents effectively is critical in legal industry. A failure to effectively manage and control documents can result in loss of employee productivity, legal judgments, reputation and clientele. Legal document management technology allows individuals to manage documents efficiently and securely, and at the lowest possible cost in terms of both direct expenses and personal productivity.

Law firms adopting technological solutions can offer clients more for less, stay abreast of changes and collaborate without bearing additional costs. Legal industry is no longer neglecting the need to incorporate software like legal document management, which allows them to do more in less time.

## Scenario in Legal Industry

Majority of documents in legal industry are created using MS Office applications. These documents are sent to other users in organization via email for review. Many revised versions are created on various computers resulting in loss of original version and a mishmash of documents.

Poorly managed documents can result in low employee productivity, failure to comply with regulations, problems in preparing for e-discovery and dissatisfied customers. Let's take employee productivity for example. If we assume on the conservative side that an average legal employee earns \$60,000 a year wastes 30 minutes a day searching for information, dealing with versions, waiting for information and other document-related problems, a legal organization of even 10 such users will lose \$37500 annually in employee productivity.

Some of the key document management challenges specific to legal industry are:

### Document management and control

- **Ad-hoc document storage and organizing policy results** in employees wasting many billable hours simply looking for information. Legal firms are also at risk of losing important documents.
- In absence of a **Version Control** system, legal firms often spend time on procuring the latest version, making changes to the same versions and reconciling multiple, edited versions.
- While some documents can be shared with some users, some can't be shared. Lack of user/group based security rights can lead to **security breaches** and unauthorized use of data.

### Workflow and sharing methods

- Without a **centralized repository**, employees don't have access to latest versions or files and spend a lot of time recreating documents.
- **Outdated communication and sharing methods** translate to lost time, productivity and reputation.
- **Unstructured workflow results** in chaos amongst employees, as they are not aware of the right course of actions to be taken.

### Maintaining document lifecycle process

When document lifecycle process is not maintained or followed, companies can fall into a lot of troubles. Employees may accidentally delete or misplace some important document, which may result in problems during e-discovery request.

### Preparing for e-discovery

Courts ask not only for documents but even proof of documents like associated metadata, communication related to documents as well as their versions.

### Use of complicated and costly technology

Legal technology is often complicated, which is why most organizations fail to implement technological software even after investing heavily in them.

## Key Challenges

- Document management and control
- Workflow and sharing methods
- Maintaining history of document cycle
- E-discovery preparedness
- Complicated technological solutions

## Why Legal Document Management?

*The key to managing information no matter where the source is known as information control. With the ability to define policies to manage, secure and control documents, law firms can enforce strict policies. Whether it's monitoring users with routine audits, entering metadata or following a workflow, document management is one of the best practices to follow in legal industry.*

## The Case for DMS

- Manage documents better
- Document risk control
- Teams can collaborate effectively
- Getting prepared for e-discovery
- Enhance employee performance
- Increase customer satisfaction

## Why the need for legal document management system?

Keeping a track of all inbound and outbound information sent via emails, documents and other sharing methods is very important in today's environment. Also, it is important to have policy-based operation for document sharing, control and workflow, so that the security policies are not violated. From preserving metadata, allowing collaboration between users, user-based security to preserve insider lists, legal industry needs end-to-end solutions for document level security, sharing and management

### **Manage documents better**

Legal document management allows law firms to preserve metadata through document profiles, make multiple versions of documents, and set relations between documents for faster search and recovery that allows them to manage documents better.

### **Document risk control**

Having a controlled environment, where users or groups of users are pre-authorized to view or modify certain documents; role-based rights to allow viewing and editing but not exporting or deleting documents; ownership overrides to maintain the ownership of files created by other users all form a part of information risk management.

### **Improve collaboration between employees**

Collaboration tools such as email, shared repository, concurrent access to documents improve collaboration between employees. Simple workflow features such as document routing, task notification and alerts help in quick collaboration.

### **Getting ready for e-discovery**

Metadata and tagging, quick search and document relations are all essential features during e-discovery.

### **Enhance employee performance**

Tools like MS office integration, easy import methods, PDF editor and integrated scanning boost employee productivity so that they can focus more on other productive jobs during their billable hours.

### **Increase customer satisfaction**

Quick file retrieval, information at hand and quick collaboration tools of legal documents allow law firms to handle their clients more effectively and keep them satisfied.

## Ad-hoc Document Management

*Many firms are resistant to technology and believe that its cost, installation and implementation can overshadow its benefits. They also believe that their current policy of storing, sharing and securing documents suffices the needs of their organization.*

## Why not Legal Document Management?

Some organizations are slow to accept technology whereas some are resistant to it. Legal industry is one of the first few industries that acknowledged the benefits of technology and embraced it. However, there are law firms that still do not show readiness to adopt software technology. The rationale behind it is that they have managed to do work efficiently without fancy and expensive software solutions, so why would they need it now. This is also the justification behind not accepting document management software. Some other detailed explanations for the case against DMS are mentioned ahead.

### **It is too expensive**

The main reason some people in legal industry do not favor DMS is that it involves heavy investment. Most technologies including DMS technology cost nothing less than \$1000 to \$50000 and offer low return on investment.

### **Employees need to spend time to learn it**

Technologies also require a steep learning curve. The time and resources spent in mastering the new technology can be substantial because not all employees are eager to adopt changes.

### **Installation and implementation can be complex and lengthy**

It can take anywhere between a few days to weeks to install and implement new technology. Also the process to install is quite complicated and needs tech savvy people for installation.

### **Current ad-hoc management is adequate to meet needs**

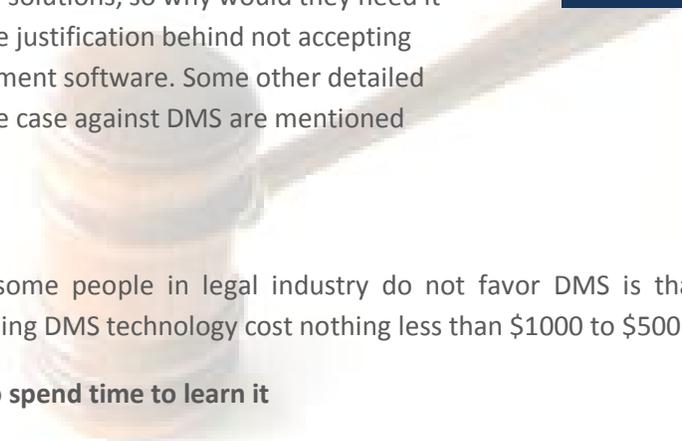
The most overpowering theory amongst technophobic lawyers and legal professionals is that if something has worked for us for years why take the risk of changing it. They are afraid that new technologies will upheaval their carefully balanced processes.

Only an affordable Document Management System that offers full range of useful features and enhances an organization's efficiency and business can influence this industry's decision.

## The Case against DMS

- Can be expensive
- Users need to spend time to learn it
- Installation process can be complex
- Files can be managed without DMS

**Besides cost, implementation and installation can form a case against document management.**



## What should you ask your vendor?

*The features that legal industry must seek in Document Management Software to help manage documents depend on the number of documents they create and share every year, the size of the organization, and the significance of the documents. Find a list of features that should be considered when looking at a DMS.*

## Must-have features

- Productivity tools essential to lawyers
- Management tools for quick information
- Fine-grained security for documents
- Collaboration and communication features

Document management, as the name suggests, helps manage documents with the help of its salient features that make the task of creating, sharing, storing, retrieving, securing and reviewing documents easier. These features enhance productivity of employees, help manage documents better, secure documents against misuse and leakage and improve in-house collaboration and customer communication.

### Document Management tools

- Metadata and document profiling for structured organization and e-discovery purposes
- Document versioning and relations to quickly find right documents to edit and review
- MS Word and Excel to PDF conversion and PDF manipulation

### Critical Productivity Tools for Lawyers

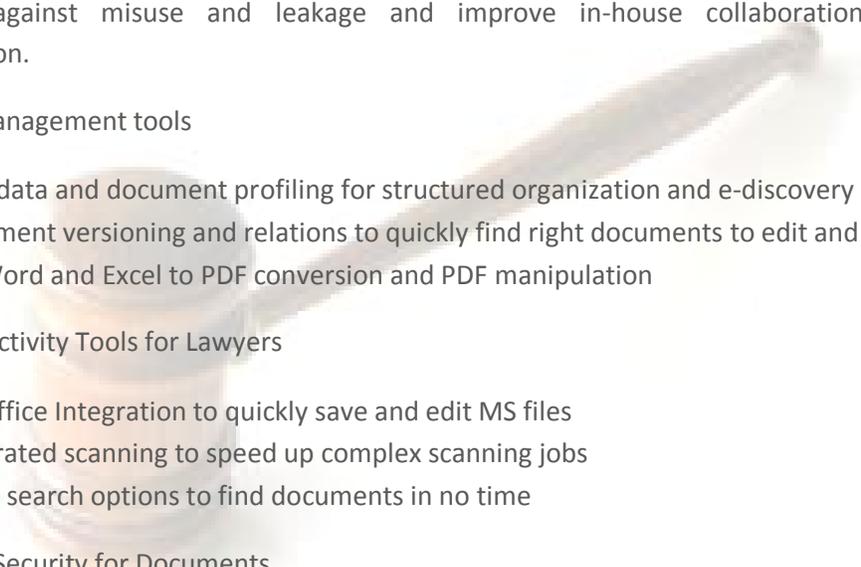
- MS Office Integration to quickly save and edit MS files
- Integrated scanning to speed up complex scanning jobs
- Quick search options to find documents in no time

### Fine-grained Security for Documents

- User / Group based security to keep your most sensitive documents safe
- Audit document change history to stay aware about changes happening to your documents
- Document export prevention to prevent data theft and leakage

### Collaboration and communication features

- Simple workflow management with features like document routing and task flow
- Document notes and task notes to communicate briefly
- Email alerts and notifications to meet all deadlines on time



## Possible Scenarios

- What happens when software is not easy to use?
- How much should one spend on DMS?
- Do we really need it?
- How can DMS help?

## Docsvault as a Solution

*Any firm that deals with a lot of documents and wants to improve client satisfaction needs a DMS. Docsvault emerges as a viable solution for legal industry because it fulfills needs specific to this industry and has many salient attributes such as affordability and ease of use.*

### What happens when DMS is not easy to use?

Many law firms and corporate legal teams invest heavily in expensive document management software only to find that it is very complicated and most users prefer to manage their documents traditionally rather than spending their valuable time learning and using this technology.

#### • How much should one spend on DMS?

The price of document management software ranges anywhere between \$500 to \$2000 for 3 users. How much should one spend on DMS depends on the needs of organization. However, expensive always does not mean better and one must not discard any option before carefully weighing its pros and cons.

#### • How does DMS help in preparing for e-discovery?

The process of e-discovery is quite complicated and needs highly skilled people. DMS helps ease the process of e-discovery with the help of features like easy search function, version control, metadata, security and audit trail.

#### • Do we really need DMS?

The most common fear amongst lawyers and legal professionals is to invest in technology that is not going to help them. Technology is often likened to white elephants. However, many firms have been using DMS for years and affirm its benefits. Briefly explained, you can do without DMS, but you can do better with DMS.

#### • Can DMS improve productivity and enhance customer satisfaction?

DMS can improve productivity of employees by cutting down their monotonous jobs, making information readily available, speeding up regular tasks and smoothing internal communication and collaboration. All this cumulatively has a positive effect on customer satisfaction. Also some features directly influence customer satisfaction.

## Docsvault: Most Favored Legal DMS

Docsvault is one of the most favored legal document management software because it is as simple as using Windows. It helps prepare for e-discovery with features such as easy search function, version control, metadata, security and audit trail.



## Conclusion

Managing documents effectively is more critical in legal industry than in any industry. Being an information-driven field, legal professionals have the responsibility of juggling multiple tasks and cases, which requires constant collaboration. They have to spend significant time on a regular basis reading statutes, agency rules, court decisions, zoning laws and other regulations to stay abreast of changes. Most importantly, they need to store all the client data and research work in such a way that it is secure and easily accessible.

Technology that provides document capabilities that will permit legal professionals to manage documents efficiently and securely, and at the lowest possible cost in terms of both direct expenses and implementation costs is needed. Legal firms need document management software that is affordable, easy to implement, simple to use and with full range of features that enhance productivity and prepare firms for e-discovery is essential in legal industry.



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