

“final.final.v2.truefinal.doc” – How Multiple Contributors Can Produce a Clean Final Document

Introduction

Enterprise organizations work with a great amount of data. But the challenge often times is not just collecting the data; but the ability to output data in highly complex, high-value documents. Depending on the industry and organization, documents like proposals, regulatory submissions, and compliance documentation can be of critical importance to the enterprise. The trouble is that creating and co-authoring these high volume, big stakes documents can be overwhelming and often painfully disorganized. The resulting chaos leads to poor communications, expensive mistakes, and wasted opportunities.

File Sharing is Not Co-Authoring

Many popular systems are very good for file sharing, but they are not well-suited for the task of co-authoring. Most lack the document control tools necessary to manage mission-critical content through each step in the co-authoring process. As a result, organizations are searching for a better way. According to the AIIM 2018 State of the Industry study, 50% of the companies we surveyed were either “actively searching” for or “evaluating” new content integration tools and 49% said they were looking for better collaboration platforms.

A Different Approach – Database-driven Co-authoring

If your organization is struggling to find a different approach, database-driven co-authoring is a best practice to consider. Unlike file sharing, database-driven co-authoring employs a single source repository where all your content is managed. The database contains all of the objects and information like tables, macros, and forms that your documents will need; all stored and are accessible to those who will work on the various stages of document creation. Better still, whenever anyone enters data or modifies the design, those changes are reflected throughout the document as they interact with all the features available on the database. This enables automatic formatting and layout, and composite content management where the same content can be used and updated in different documents. Master data management ties everything together.

Moving Forward – Three Tips for Success

More and more enterprise organizations are adopting a database-driven approach to co-authoring. How can you move forward productively? Here are three transformational tactics to consider.

1 Analyze your process.

Any process improvement initiative should start with a complete understanding of the current process. Start by asking questions like: How do authors collaborate today? How does information flow, and what are the gaps and bottlenecks in the process? What is the desired outcome, and how does that differ from the way things are currently done? This type of process analysis is needed to determine system requirements and to clarify gaps in the current process that need improvement.

2 Standardize your content.

Organizations that standardize their content and make it available in an authoring database take a giant step in streamlining content authoring across the enterprise. Every proposal team longs to salvage content from one proposal for use in the next, but that can be difficult to do with fragmented repositories, home-grown work-arounds. Standardized content, database-driven and enterprise-wide not only saves time, effort, and money in the document authoring process but also ensures higher quality and integrity of the content.

3 Put content authors in control.

Traditional document controllers are focused on the process, not necessarily the content, and that approach can lead to a sub-optimal result. Avoid the temptation to funnel content through a select few and instead have as many authors responsible for their own content as possible. This will ensure that the content is kept fresh across the enterprise

and provide the ability to leverage that live content with more agility and success. Author/controllers paired with the right authoring tools are a powerful tool for process improvement.

The benefits of adopting a more strategic approach to co-authoring are compelling, especially for enterprise organizations working with highly complex, high value documents. Look for providers and partners with the right mix of expertise, capabilities, and vision that will allow you to make the most of the technologies and approach.

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This Tip Sheet is underwritten by [Xait](#).

XaitPorter is a complete all-in-one co-authoring software solution for teams to collaboratively create, manage and produce documents. Streamline and optimize your document production to maximize your revenue from bids and proposals and other business-critical documents.

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