Datawitness®

Better than the original

Electronic Document Delivery:

Get It There In Minutes, Not Hours Or Days

Adopting a New Method for Document Delivery

Prompt communication is critical to the success of organizations. When documents, correspondence, and notices are delivered to parties quickly and efficiently, organizations reach their goals. However, when movement of critical information is slow and inefficient, valuable time is lost while documents, correspondence and notices are produced and moved between locations. Also, depending on the delivery method, receipt and viewing may be difficult or impossible to track and verify. Selecting and using a record keeping process which guarantees authenticity and integrity, and provides fast and easy access and management, poses additional challenges.

Ideally, business, professional, and government organizations want to get documents and information into the hands of receiving parties quickly, while capturing the contents and tracking the delivery process for their records. Fortunately, solutions exist that deliver key communications quickly, and track and archive both the content and delivery details. Moving documents and communicating without the time lags and costs of traditional methods is possible. This white paper will review emerging trends in document delivery and examine the benefits of adopting a new method for document delivery.

Market Drivers Impacting Document Delivery

Delivering documents into the hands of people is a mission-critical activity for many organizations. Paper is the historical default option

for communicating and delivering important information. But despite numerous drawbacks, paper is still in common use even as new channels for document delivery are introduced and evolve. Creating and printing high quality documents is easy and fast, but getting a document from point A to point B is still a time-consuming and multi-step process. And when documents are no longer active, paper copies still must be filed, stored, and eventually destroyed.

The time and resources needed to move paper between points, the costs of storing paper, and growth in alternatives to delivering paper are a few of the drivers encouraging businesses, professionals, and government to reexamine document delivery practices.

Paper Document Delivery and Storage Is an Expensive Burden

Public and private organizations are under pressure to use every practical and ethical method to drive down costs and increase efficiency. Organizations simply need to do more, faster, for less, to meet targets and stay competitive. Producing and moving critical documents and communications in paper form is a bottleneck. Sending faxes and using courier and postal services deplete significant amounts of staff time and consumable resources.

Transactions, document exchange, and processes like sending out notices to multiple recipients, are delayed while paper is printed, reviewed, signed, packaged, passed to a carrier, transported, and delivered.

Organizations are required by laws, regulations, and best practice guidelines to retain records of work, transactions, and correspondence for years. The price of real estate makes the cost of dedicating office space to storage prohibitive, and drives up the cost of off-site storage facilities and services. Most inactive files will never be accessed. But they still must be kept organized, complete, and accessible, in case the need arises, for internal use or in response to external demands, like court or regulatory requests.

Email Isn't the Solution

Sending communications in the body of emails and documents as email attachments is common practice. However, email is an insecure and limited mode of communication despite its rapid adoption and ubiquity in organizational settings. Email is not built to track receipt or confirm viewing by recipients. Email doesn't provide a secure and unalterable record of communications. Vendors do offer products to manage retention of email traffic which may contain a large share of an organization's collective memory and intelligence. But such products still build on a foundation of technology that has been pushed far beyond its original purpose.

The time and resources drains of paper, costs of long-term storage, and the insecurity of email create a number of critical document delivery challenges. Organizations are taking the next logical step beyond electronic document creation and are evaluating and adopting new methods to move and manage documents electronically. The laws sanctioning paperless electronic methods for common communications activities are aligning with practice to enable gains in efficiency and productivity in organizations.

There are three primary management challenges associated with inefficient document delivery: allocation of staff time, expense reduction, and loss of opportunity.

Producing and Delivering Paper Takes Valuable Time

Producing and preparing paper documents for delivery is a huge drain on staff time and productivity. Consider the path of a typical document destined for external delivery.

Send the document from a computer to a printer. Go to the printer. Check the document for printing quality and completeness. Proofread it again before signing. At this point, faxing is an option. Walk to the fax machine. Dial the recipient's phone number. Load and send the fax. Wait or return later to check whether the document was sent and received properly, and retrieve the pages and fax transmission log for filing.

For delivery using courier or postal services, the path continues. Package the document in an envelope, pouch, or box. If the package will be delivered by courier, prepare documentation and attach a label. Make a phone call or access a web site to arrange pickup. Walk the package to the front desk to leave it for pickup. Or walk the package to a drop box in your building or a nearby storefront.

If the package will be delivered by post, write or print an address label and return details. Weigh the package, then find and affix stamps, or print and affix metered postage. Walk the package to a mail drop or mailbox.

Depending on the delivery method, the package may be trackable while enroute to its destination. Wait for delivery and a confirmation of receipt, or phone or email the recipient to see if the package arrived. If the same or another document will be returned, wait for a response as the recipient goes through a similar process to get a document out of their hands and into yours.

But the work doesn't end there. After documents are created, printed and sent, copies may be routed to people and departments internally. Copies must be prepared for filing. Labels and folders are set up. Documents may be logged into an indexing and tracking system before being filed in cabinets or boxes.

Delivery by courier, post, or fax is successful most of the time but can't be guaranteed. Packages can go astray, temporarily or permanently, as they move through a carrier's system. Fax lines and machines can be busy, offline, or malfunctioning. If a delivery fails, additional time is spent on another delivery attempt. Internal paper copies can be misfiled or lost and unavailable when needed.

Time spent on document delivery tasks is time not spent directly on the work by which the productivity and success of your organization is measured. Fortunately, new tools are available to deliver documents without paper and the related costs, inefficiencies, and risks.

Paper Is Expensive to Produce, Deliver and Store

Paper production and delivery have numerous tangible and intangible costs beyond staff time. Production costs include expenditures for materials including paper and consumables like toner, and for office equipment like printers, fax machines, and scanners. Delivery costs include expenditures for envelopes and packaging materials, courier and postage charges, and extra phone lines. Maintaining paper records has costs for supplies like labels, folders, boxes, storage cabinets, and for off-site storage, retrieval, and shredding services.

Printing documents on paper is not infallible. Printers malfunction at inopportune times. Paper, consumables, and packaging materials run out. Paper records are fragile and vulnerable to loss, damage, or destruction by accident or malice. New tools can slash the cost of consumable materials and office supplies, reduce equipment wear and tear, and reduce delivery and storage charges.

Waiting for Paper to Get Delivered and Return Is Inefficient

Activity on a transaction or matter dependent on results arising from receipt of documents by another party may slow or stop while the documents are in transit. Time elapses, first while a package moves between points, and again when a package arrives at its destination and is routed to the recipient.

Delivery by mail is at least a one day trip and usually takes longer depending on distance and service level. Couriers can be faster than mail, but at a premium price for the speed and convenience. Delivery causes at least a one day delay, unless the recipient is local and nearby. Faxes can be fast, if the recipient is waiting by the fax machine at the other end for the fax to arrive.

Work on other tasks is possible during the wait for actions or results from delivered documents. However, optimizing workload is difficult, and the wait for documents can yield slack times. Work in progress may not always be sufficient to fully occupy all staff time while documents travel and are processed externally. An organization may limit or delay new

work and projects while pending matters and transactions move through workflows involving long distances.

New tools can drastically reduce the time for document delivery and make workflow planning and scheduling more accurate. Delivering documents directly to a recipient's desktop or mobile device is possible.

Electronic Document Delivery: A Historical Perspective

The Evolution of Document Delivery Options	
pre 1970's	Mail
1970's	Large-scale national courier networks
1980's	Large-scale international courier networks, overnight delivery introduced, personal computers adopted
1990's	Proliferation of courier services, Internet popularized, email adopted by business, ecommerce developed and adopted, personal computers ubiquitous, mobile devices adopted, electronic documents replace paper
2000's	Email, ecommerce, electronic documents, desktop, portable and mobile computers in common use enable routine electronic information movement

Organizations are struggling to adapt to the rapid pace of technological advances. Adopting new methods means leaving the comfort zone of customary paper methods for documenting and retaining communications between parties. Satisfying laws, regulations, and guidelines governing long-term record preservation and compliance is complex.

The current environment is a unique period of convergence between computer-based document creation, electronic communication, and the laws and regulations supporting entirely electronic processes for transactions and record keeping.

The Solution: Web-based Electronic Document Delivery

Electronic Document Delivery (EDD) enables delivery of documents directly from computer to computer without paper. EDD removes the obstacles of moving paper documents and information between parties. The result is more efficient organizations with reduced expenses.

EDD can be implemented on a scalable and incremental basis. Organizations can use EDD selectively where they can realize the most time and cost savings benefits immediately. EDD services offering stored off-site copies of documents and communications mitigate the risk and liability associated with retaining paper. EDD by an independent third party captures communications in a managed process, with an audit trail recording a timeline of the sending and receipt of documents and communications.

Electronic documents, email, the Internet and web-based applications are familiar to people in organizational settings. A solution that incorporates these elements has low skill and infrastructure barriers to adoption. An ideal EDD service combines an installed base of existing software, hardware, and Internet service to produce new, added benefits.

Benefits of Electronic Document Delivery

Electronic document delivery provides numerous benefits:

- simplifies and accelerates preparation of documents for delivery
- delivers documents between computers and devices in minutes
- increases workflow efficiency by getting documents to recipients faster
- reduces response time lags in projects, matters, transactions and communications
- enables tighter deadlines and faster resolution of outstanding matters
- increases staff efficiency by freeing time for higher value work
- reduces expenses for equipment, supplies and fixtures used for printing, packaging and filing
- mitigates loss and damage risks of document retention
- reduces use of physical delivery services and related expenses
- creates timeline of delivery, receipt, and viewing for easy tracking of who saw, knew, and did what when
- captures authenticated record of electronic documents and delivery process
- employs existing software, hardware, and Internet services

What to Look for in Electronic Document Delivery Services

Finding the right Electronic Document Delivery solution among available products can be a daunting task. Here are a few things to consider.

Look for a company that:
- leverages the speed and reach of the Internet
- is agile enough to develop custom solutions
- has solid partnerships with established companies
- pioneered their solution in the marketplace

Look for an Electronic Document Delivery solution that:
- uses existing hardware, software and Internet services without requiring any upgrades or new installations
- provides document access from anywhere, anytime you can connect to the Internet

- is accessible with any device that can browse the web, including enterprise thin clients and mobile computers via wireless

- does more than send then save documents and communications on digital or optical media

- captures the complete content, time context, and intent of delivered documents for long-term records compliance

Reasons to Use Datawitness MailWitness for Electronic Document Delivery

Datawitness offers a practical solution to the time, expense, and opportunity cost challenges that arise with use of paper and email methods for document delivery. Electronic Document Delivery by Datawitness MailWitness can reduce or eliminate use of insecure email, and costly courier, postal, and fax services. MailWitness is easy to learn and use so organizations will get more done in less time.

Sending a document or message via MailWitness takes the same amount of time as sending an email via a web-mail account. Datawitness enables an entirely web-based system for managing EDD within an organization. When document delivery is a completely digital process, senders are not tied to fixed locations with access to printers, fax machines, and courier or mail services. MailWitness will reach its destination consistently faster than conventional methods, at a predictable price not dependent on distance, priority, or speed.

Datawitness MailWitness uses your existing infrastructure and Internet services, and requires no new software, hardware, or peripherals. The service is easy enough to use that a few simple steps enable sending a MailWitness in minutes. MailWitness enables secure desktop-to-desktop and mobile device-to-device delivery of documents, correspondence, and notices.

Datawitness MailWitness makes Electronic Document Delivery possible anywhere and anytime senders and recipients can connect to the Internet.

Datawitness MailWitness is backed up in tamperproof analog form on microfilm. The microfilm captures an unalterable record of digital documents and communications on a proven and stable medium. Microfilm outlasts changes in storage technology and prevents loss due to failure of digital and optical storage methods.

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