Chapter 2
Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Maturity Models:
Utility for Practitioners

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ABSTRACT

A maturity model in the enterprise content management (ECM) sphere serves to evaluate an organization's performance against an assessment framework, and to determine roadmaps for optimizing that performance. Such tools are developed typically by academics, informed by considerable research, or by consulting firms that use their maturity model tool to promote the sale of their own products and services. Therefore, the experience of practitioners with using ECM maturity models is underrepresented in the literature. Practitioners require tools that are quick to implement whilst providing useful insights. This chapter explores two case studies in which the author conducted quick assessments using a maturity model as a guide. The case studies indicate that while quick assessments are useful, they need to be included as part of a maturity tool to ensure that the implementation method is repeatable and the results consistent.

INTRODUCTION

Maturity Models have been developed across a wide range of domains as management tools to evaluate an organization's performance against an assessment framework, and to determine roadmaps for optimizing that performance. Enterprise Content

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Management (ECM) is an example domain in which many maturity models have been developed. Known as ECM Maturity Models, such maturity models seek to assess the degree to which an organization's employee behaviours concerning information capture and usages are optimised in support of the organisation's goals and aspirations. ECM Maturity Models provide invaluable "current" and "future" state analysis to inform technology transformation projects.

An ECM Maturity Model comprises a sliding scale of levels to assess an organisation's current state with regards to ECM maturity. At the lower end of the scale, information is not regarded as a corporate asset with information captured and managed by individuals and individual work teams in uncoordinated ways. In contrast, at higher levels, information is assessed as being managed across the organization under a coordinated regime with information actively captured and exploited to further the goals of the organization.

The benefits of ECM Maturity assessment notwithstanding, internal improvement programs and project budgets are often developed without preliminary analysis of an organization's current state. In that context, how does a practitioner operationalize an ECM Maturity Model without undertaking comprehensive investigations into the organisation? This chapter will explore the extent to which an ECM Consultant can use a maturity model as a "quick assessment" tool. The intention of such assessments is to integrate familiarity with the principles underlying ECM Maturity assessments into day-to-day project discussions to influence stakeholder understandings of the improvement activities being undertaken and to contribute to the overall success of the improvement works.

Two case studies are presented based on the author's own experiences. Both case studies relate to Australian government agencies undertaking technology improvement activities. In the first case study, the author was engaged by an Australian federal government agency to deliver a workflow automation system to support a quality management initiative, intended to consolidate approximately 34 quality management systems used across the agency, into a single system. The second case study, with a state government-operated water authority, the engagement delivered planning assistance with the decommissioning of various legacy automation tools as a part of a wider program of infrastructure replacement.

STATE OF THE LITERATURE: ECM MATURITY MODELS

A maturity model, also known as a capability model, "is a tool to systematically assess and improve capabilities or critical success factors to reach a goal" (Looy, 2014, p. 5). Such tools comprise a development model in which behaviour is categorised into sequential levels of maturity, from low maturity to high. Typically, there can be

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