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## E-record gets back on track

The arrival of the MoReq2 standard is expected to rejuvenate RM

**Martin Veitch**  
[Information World Review](#), 06 Feb 2008

Like other forms of content handling, records management (RM) lost some of its lustre in the post-Enron explosion of corporate governance rules and regulations. Now it would appear that the MoReq2 framework for RM — aided perhaps by amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP) in the US and a recent spate of data-loss cases — could reinvigorate the sector.

MoReq2 is the latest version of the Model Requirements for Electronic Records Management specification, the de facto standard in electronic [content management](#) (ECM). MoReq2 is expected to change functionality, certification, procurement, auditing and education in the sector. Marc Fresko, consulting services director at Serco, a company that led the work to define the specification, sent the final MoReq2 draft specification for approval in late January and expects to have it rubber-stamped this month.

### Put your money where your moreq2 mouth is

"We're pleased with how it has turned out," Fresko says. "[Enterprise content management giant] Open Text publicly announcing support came as a complete shock as we never lobbied the company. The rest of the leading software companies have supported us through this process, so now it's time for them to put their money where their mouth is [by actively supporting MoReq2]. We have two ex-Soviet bloc countries adopting it as a national standard. It's an international phenomenon and it's already influential in other countries."

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MoReq2 will be supported later this year by an XML (Extensible Markup Language) schema that should boost interoperability between RM systems.

"If you need to change suppliers, merge with another company or demerge, you will be able to import or export [MoReq2] data," Fresko says. "These are projects for which today you can be quoted millions of pounds."

Mike Davis, an analyst at research firm Ovum agrees that MoReq2 will be highly significant and adds that FRCP changes could generate fresh interest. Introduced a year ago, the FRCP amendments bring new rules for the discovery and preservation of electronic records in the US.

"There may be a second blip for RM [after the post-Enron corporate governance rules] through the data losses news, but the big push I see happening in the next two years is FRCP," Davis says.

Davis believes that in the same way as the US Sarbanes-Oxley corporate governance law was felt in other countries, FRCP changes could affect other jurisdictions.

However, Alan Pelz-Sharpe of analyst CMS Watch is not so sure: "It would be nice to think that [news of] data losses will boost enterprise content management, but backup, archiving and discovery are the biggest winners. RM has become trapped in a bit of a ghetto. The principles of declaring and managing a record through its lifecycle remain, but the sheer volume of information that needs to be sorted through to do that means that the technology has been left a little behind.

"It made sense to ask a worker to declare a record when they were maybe dealing with five or 10 a day, but when they are dealing with literally hundreds of messages, it no longer does."

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Fresko suggests there is mounting doubt over what exactly constitutes a record. Emails as well as blogs, wikis and other social media can be included, as can voice communications or older, more traditional forms of record such as paper documents, spreadsheets and text files. It all leads to a requirement to save and catalogue far more forms of information.

**Format-indifferent**

"If you have a legal discovery process against you, the investigators won't say they only want your email," Fresko notes. "It could be written on the back of a fag packet for all they care." He adds that while the emphasis on records management may go away, the underlying requirements don't change.

However, Ovum's Davis believes RM retains a distinct fiefdom.

"It's under the ECM umbrella but it's still managing content in a very specific way," he says. "RM is not the same thing as archiving. It's all very well checking your stuff into an archive but if you don't hold the tools to purge records or keep them, then you don't have enough."

Pelz-Sharpe believes that RM is moving closer to other areas.

"As a distinct entity, RM is shrinking but only partially into the world of ECM," he says. "It is popping up in e-discovery and archiving and more general compliance areas. RM focuses on documents but, for most firms, email is the priority these days. ECM vendors don't do email well, or in most cases at all."

Such is the demand for various approaches to controlling data that the competitive landscape is changing at a rapid rate through mergers and acquisitions.

Late last year Autonomy acquired both e-discovery firm Zantaz and RM firm Meridio, for example.

The frenzied deal-making of the last five years is likely to see giants emerge with a cocktail of search, content management, and discovery capabilities to answer the increasingly stringent requirements of lawmakers and regulators.

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