Foreword

I am delighted to write the Foreword to this book, as its scope and content provides commercial and government enterprises with the essential ingredients for implementing and managing document and Web content systems. Whether the systems are associated with office documents, email management, Web content management, drawing management, or similar applications, they provide crucial support for developing and implementing knowledge strategies within enterprises. The integrative approach is particularly welcome.

These systems play a vital role in assisting enterprises with the complex document control systems required to achieve and maintain ISO 9000 accreditation. They are important elements in reducing risks of noncompliance with regulatory or legal requirements. They also help to support e-business strategies, manage Internet and intranet Web content, provide transactional support for end-to-end business processes, manage administrative documentation, and underpin continuous business improvement strategies.

In my role as President of the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) International, I am able to have firsthand experience with commercial and government personnel who are seeking professional guidance on the implementation of document and Web content management systems. I believe that these people will benefit from reading this book for its extensive analysis of requirements.

The book merges the academic and the hands-on knowledge of the authors, to assist organizations in gaining benefits from both perspectives. It offers the practical knowledge derived from the implementation of document technologies, based on the wide-ranging consulting and project management fieldwork of Len Asprey, and the extensive academic research and consulting assignments that have been performed by Michael Middleton in the discipline of information management.

We often hear vendors and consultants in the document technologies industry make the statement that business users need to "define their requirements" for document and Web content management systems. However, these types of statements may not always be clear, because the users may never before have had to plan and specify requirements for document and content management technologies. They may not have a detailed understanding of the scope and level of definition involved in conducting requirements analysis and preparing specifications, and may not have been exposed to the complexity of cultural implications and change management requirements for these projects.

This book cuts through much of the hype and panache associated with marketing of document and Web content management solutions to help address this conundrum. It provides a thorough examination of business contexts that influence the ways that document systems are managed. It goes on to provide a framework for requirements analysis, along with examples to assist with analysis and specification of document and content management solutions. It also provides extensive checklists and sample templates in parts 2, 3, and 4 to assist organizations with the analysis and specification of requirements.

The book offers a project life-cycle framework for implementing document management systems from business conceptualization of a requirement through to go-live operations of the system. It is effectively a recipe or cookbook that develops the essential ingredients from the initial conceptualization of the requirement for document and content management, through the various phases of planning, feasibility analysis, requirements specifications, package selection, and implementation.

This book will help not only the enterprises that are implementing document and content management systems but also the vendors, in positioning the planning and implementation of the systems within a project life-cycle methodology. This emphasizes feasibility analysis, specification, package selection, and implementation planning strategies that minimize risk. It provides practical guidance that may help organizations to implement document management solutions that facilitate the achievement of overall business plans, support e-business, and underpin continuous business improvement, in a secure managed environment.

It is a vital business primer for organizations that wish to embark on document or content management projects, and those that have initiated or are about to initiate knowledge management strategies, or quality management systems, and view document and content management as a core component of their strategies. It is also a most useful reference for organizations that were early adopters of document technologies, perhaps as pilot projects, and are now considering upgrading their systems to implement increased functionality. This book will help those organizations to progress the implementation of the next generation of systems.

When asked what he thought of Western civilization, Mahatma Gandhi is said to have replied, "I think it would be a very good idea." I think that the same may be said of document management systems. We have them now, but we are as yet some way off what they could really be. This book shows us the way.

I am pleased to be able to commend this book to readers, be they those looking for substantive material on knowledge strategy, those looking to understand an important aspect of information management, or those about to implement or upgrade document or Web content management systems. For this last group in particular, I wish you the very best successes with the implementation of your systems.

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