

Embracing digital transformation: Unlocking the benefits of AI and technology

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Insight from Tim Rushent, director of digital at Crown Records Management

The rapid advancement of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionised the way we work and live. However, recent research conducted by Crown Records Management reveals many businesses still lag behind in harnessing the full potential of these technologies.

Nearly all companies are already on a digital adoption journey of some kind, often they will have pockets or AI, automation, and tech that is implemented in day-to-day activities. However, they often don't know where to start their digital journey and can feel intimidated by the sheer scale of the challenge, even though they are aware of the benefits of digital over paper records.

This article aims to shed light on the challenges and opportunities associated with embracing digital transformation and the impact it can have on businesses.

The Pitfalls of Traditional Paper Filing Systems

Despite the availability of advanced technologies, an alarming 49% of UK businesses still rely on physical paper filing systems. This outdated approach creates numerous challenges, with businesses struggling to locate information quickly (48%) and lacking physical space for storage (46%). Furthermore, concerns over security have emerged, as 61% of Brits express worry about the storage of their personal information, leading to potential loss of business for companies that solely rely on paper-based documentation.

Businesses may have other operational priorities that means they cannot create a strong enough business case to digitise so critical assets are left in storage often beyond their retention period or even without one. With physical records there is a risk of critical information being left behind or forgotten and therefore not fully considered as they can be too difficult to retrieve and slow to access. This is where businesses need help to bring the physical and digital domains of records management closer together – this is often facilitated with smaller; tactical projects such as scanning on demand.

Overall, traditional paper filing systems pose numerous challenges to businesses in terms of accessibility, security, collaboration, compliance, and efficiency. Embracing digital transformation and transitioning to online records management solutions can help mitigate these pitfalls and unlock significant benefits for businesses in the modern technological landscape.

The Fear of Data Storage Online

The research conducted revealed a deep-rooted nervousness amongst businesses when it comes to storing data online or on the cloud. This reluctance is driven by a lack of understanding (34%) about the cloud and apprehension regarding data security and system usage (16%). However, ironically, 60% of businesses already store customer data on the cloud, posing a challenge for the future as traditional cloud infrastructure may not adequately support large-scale AI applications.

Some industries fare better than others when it comes to adopting records management technologies. The finance sector appears to be the most affected industry, with nearly 9 in 10 businesses expressing concerns about data storage. Following closely are IT & Telecoms businesses (77%) and manufacturing and utilities companies (76%).

Why businesses must embrace digitised information management

Digitising physical records ensures efficiency, allowing companies to find files in seconds that previously took hours to locate. Rushent highlights the critical need for businesses to adapt to rapidly evolving technologies, rather than risk being left behind.

- Improved efficiency

With digital records management, businesses can easily search, retrieve, and store documents electronically, saving time and effort compared to manually searching through physical files. Digital records can be accessed and shared with stakeholders from anywhere at any time, leading to increased productivity.

- Cost savings

Despite the potential benefits, a third of UK business owners have never used an online records management tool. One of the primary factors being the perceived high costs. Whilst the first stages of a digitalisation journey can involve an initial investment, moving to digital can save money in the long run.

Digital records management reduces the need for physical storage space, which can be costly for businesses. Storing records electronically eliminates the expenses associated with paper, ink, filing cabinets, and physical document management systems. Additionally, businesses can save on labour costs by automating tasks such as scanning, indexing, and retrieving documents.

- Enhanced security

When it comes to data protection, digital records management outperforms physical records. Encrypted, password-protected, and backed-up digital files can be kept safe from physical harm or unwanted access. Businesses can also implement access controls to restrict document access to specific individuals or roles.

- Compliance with regulations

Many industries have regulations regarding recordkeeping and data privacy. Moving to digital records management can help businesses maintain compliance by ensuring records are accurate, complete, and organised. Digital systems can also provide an audit trail, track changes, and automatically apply retention policies to meet legal requirements.

Looking to the future

Embracing digital transformation and capitalising on AI and technology is crucial for businesses looking to stay ahead of the competition. By overcoming the hurdles associated with paper filing systems and adopting innovative online records management tools, businesses can unlock enhanced efficiency, data security, and regulatory compliance. With the support of partners with expertise in this area companies can embrace digital transformation confidently, ultimately ensuring long-term success in an ever-evolving tech-driven world.