



Review of Vignette Solution for Enterprise Content Management



Vignette Corporation (Vignette), a long-time leader in the enterprise content management market space, has a solid reputation for providing solutions that increase the efficiency of doing business. The Vignette V7 product family is designed to support overall strategies and solutions that improve business efficiency by allowing you to create, share, manage, and present information to any user, anywhere, at any time. Vignette's enterprise content management suite includes portal, web content management, capture and imaging, document and records management, collaboration, interaction management, and enterprise content integration capabilities that support rapid development, deployment, and maintenance of configurable, content-rich web applications. The Vignette product family is built on a foundation of industry-standard open technologies that can be deployed in a modular fashion.

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Vignette at a Glance

Vignette Corporation <i>Austin, TX 78746</i> <i>888.608.9900</i> <i>www.vignette.com</i>	
Year Founded	1995
Stock Symbol	NASDAQ: VIGN
Last Year's Revenue	\$177.9 million
Customers	Vignette does business with 52% of Fortune 100 companies, and provides commercial product technology for 15 of the 50 largest internet sites and 6 of the top 10 sites (source: JupiterResearch). Vignette has more than 1,700 customers across all major industries.
Employees	730 (2004)
Office Locations	Corporate headquarters in Austin, Texas; regional offices throughout the U.S., Latin America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific

The Case for Enterprise Content Management

Organizations are more concerned with managing their content than ever before. More than 80 percent of the information in the average organization is “unstructured” information, such as office documents, paper documents, images, graphics, multi-media files, computer-generated reports, e-mail, and web content. Given the explosion of this unstructured information, organizations need strategies and solutions to help them control and leverage this information as an asset, deliver it in context to various constituencies, manage its risk as a liability, and reduce the costs of keeping it.

As defined by the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM), enterprise content management (ECM) consists of “the technologies and tools used to capture, manage, store, preserve and deliver content across the enterprise.” This definition is fairly high level. A better way to think about content management is that it:

- Manages multiple types of content, including unstructured content such as file-based Microsoft Office documents; semi-structured dynamic content types such as web content; fixed content types such as images, e-mail, and computer-generated output; and structured content such as databases
- Manages this content throughout its lifecycle stages, from creation and capture, to management and archival, and to retrieval and delivery
- Encompasses process management and integration to put the content to work, in the context of existing business processes and technology environments

While there are many reasons why organizations invest in ECM and related technologies, all of these drivers can essentially be categorized into one of three areas: offense, defense, and IT.

Organizations that are driven by “offense” strategies seek to use ECM to improve the business in some meaningful way. This includes reducing operational costs and improving efficiency and productivity. It can also include improving customer service and satisfaction, providing personalized communication, enabling self-service and improving customer acquisition and retention. Finally, “offense” includes growing the business.

Organizations use ECM to improve operational efficiency and facilitate growth by digitizing content and automating manual processes.

Organizations driven by “defense” strategies are seeking to use ECM to protect the organization and mitigate risk. This includes addressing regulatory compliance and litigation (and their costs), as well as business continuity and security. The importance of this “defensive” driver has escalated in recent years, as fixed content has come under increased scrutiny as a result of existing and emerging regulatory requirements, compliance mandates, and stringent records management demands in the wake of corporate accounting scandals.

Finally, organizations for which IT is a significant driver seek to deploy and support appropriate technologies to fulfill the organization's offensive and defensive requirements and enable future strategic business initiatives. Organizations need to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of their IT operations, and thus require systems that are straightforward, work well in existing environments, and provide clear value for the cost incurred. Organizations also require solutions that deploy quickly and require minimal administrator and user training. Such IT drivers are critical for mid-market organizations with limited IT resources.

In the past few years, the market has seen an increase in drivers in all three areas. For example, the recent economic downturn forced organizations to look at their operational efficiencies and find ways to eliminate redundant information and enhance support for business processes. New regulations have led to an increased emphasis on risk reduction and records management, and deliberate attacks on business and natural disasters have elevated the importance of business continuity and disaster recovery. Finally, IT organizations continue to evolve their strategies to optimize their environments and leverage existing technology investments.

Vignette's Approach to Enterprise Content Management

Vignette Corporation (Vignette), a long-time leader in the enterprise content management market space, has a solid reputation for providing solutions that increase the efficiency of doing business. The company currently has more than 1,700 customers that span a wide range of industries, including financial services, manufacturing, high tech, media and entertainment, and the public sector and education.

The Vignette V7 product family is designed to support overall strategies and solutions that improve business efficiency by allowing you to create, share, manage, and present information to any user, anywhere, at any time. Vignette's enterprise content management suite includes, portal, web content management, capture and imaging, document and records management, collaboration, interaction management, and enterprise content integration capabilities that support rapid development, deployment, and maintenance of configurable, content-rich web applications. The Vignette product family is built on a foundation of industry-standard, open technologies that can be deployed in a modular fashion.

Enterprise Content Management, the Vignette ECM platform that encompasses the six products listed in the table below, provides capabilities to control, manage, and share information, optimize business processes, integrate with enterprise applications, eliminate redundancy, and mitigate risk for compliance.

Product	Description
Vignette Content Management	Web Content Management allows users to access and manage all types of content created by a variety of authors, and to publish the content to the right user at the right time through a variety of channels.
Vignette Records & Documents	Document and Records Management provides capabilities to capture, store, process, and manage virtually all types of information; automates repetitive processing, reducing risk and brings silos of documentation under control while providing comprehensive records management capabilities.
Vignette Portal	Portals provide secure and personalized online access to all types of services, applications, and content drawn from multiple sources within an organization
Vignette Collaboration	Collaboration provides capabilities to facilitate communications among colleagues, customers, prospects, and partners to securely share knowledge, information, and documents
Vignette Business Integration Studio	Enterprise content integration integrates structured and unstructured content from disparate sources and applications through pre-packaged integration modules and technology adapters
Vignette Dialog	Extends the immediate interaction model of the web and provides for long term dialogs with measurement and auditing, improving relationships and customer loyalty, and enforcing compliance requirements

The following subsections discuss the differentiating capabilities that Vignette V7 provides as an enterprise content management solution.

Breadth and Depth of ECM Capabilities

The Vignette V7 platform offers a complete solution set for authoring, management, integration, analysis, and delivery of information under a common architecture and user interface.

In addition to offering comprehensive, deep ECM capabilities, Vignette offers several products whose potential are only now beginning to be realized by the user community. These include Vignette Business Integration Studio for enterprise content integration, Vignette WebCapture for creating records of web transactions, and Vignette Collaboration. Vignette Business Integration Studio allows organizations to quickly and easily integrate structured and unstructured content from disparate sources and applications. Such remote, virtual, or federated repository management is beginning to be a hot area in ECM today, but Vignette has been doing it for years.

Vignette's WebCapture is designed to efficiently capture, manage, and provide records management functionality to the sequence of events or actions that a user performs while visiting a web site. Very few vendors offer this type of capability, and organizations are now beginning to recognize it as required functionality for risk mitigation.

Finally, Vignette's collaboration capabilities provide a welcome alternative to the inexpensive but superficial collaboration provided by the infrastructure vendors, and the more robust but resource-intensive capabilities provided by some of the other ECM vendors.

Comprehensive Open Approach Provides Flexibility

Vignette V7 was implemented from the ground up using standards-based J2EE and XML technologies. Vignette V7 was developed as a true J2EE application, using the core server-side J2EE specifications and APIs such as EJB, JMS, JMX, JAAS, JTS, Servlets, and JSP, as well as a host of XML-based specifications and frameworks. This approach enables the product to utilize the functions and services of application servers, such as clustering, load balancing, performance, and security, thus speeding application development and helping organizations avoid the effort and expense of creating crucial services on their own.

Flexible Packaging to Address Today's Demands

Vignette's approach to packaging the Vignette V7 solution is very flexible and greatly facilitates the adoption of the product for new or "green-field" customers – as well as meeting the deployment requirements for the rapidly growing population of which require a modular system that can fit into an existing ECM "ecosystem."

At the highest level, Vignette offers Content Management, Portal, Document and Records Management, Imaging, and Collaboration solutions, as well as Analytics, Integration, and Process services. Each of these can exist as a standalone component in an overall ECM solution. For example, a company might use Vignette Content Management for the core content in a system, but present some of the content via a different packaged portal or a “homegrown” solution.

The vision of a common architecture for the product suite is at the base of the strategy. Without a modular, standards-based architecture, it would be difficult to add and remove components from a componentized solution without rewrites across the different permutations of product configurations.

To assemble the core offerings, Vignette has a suite of modular solutions that together comprise the Vignette Enterprise Content Management Suite. This provides a very flexible choice for organizations that may not want to jump into the entire offering all at once, but rather build as they go. For example, an organization may have a homegrown content management system that it would like to present using a portal framework. Using Vignette Portal, it can do this. Later, when its content grows to a level that requires a more robust management system, the organization can add on Vignette Content Management and leverage the core process services, knowing that these will integrate with each other, as well as with the portal.

Total Cost of Ownership

When one looks at the overall costs associated with managing enterprise content, Vignette V7 makes good economic sense. First of all, the fact that Vignette V7 is an open standards-based system means that any current investment in web application servers, such as WebLogic or WebSphere, can be leveraged. Vignette can coexist with other applications on the application server without issue as long as they are tuned correctly. Repository integration is a significant factor as well. With its virtual repository strategy, Vignette can use as its content any current content repository, leveraging current operating content definitions. This can be a permanent, ongoing usage, or as a transition period while newer content is developed using Vignette Content Management.

Solution Review

This section presents Doculabs' assessment of Vignette V7, including discussions of its differentiating functional components, its architecture, and its administrative capabilities.

The Modular Components of Vignette V7

Following are brief overviews of the modular components of Vignette V7, focusing on areas where Vignette has recently enhanced the product.

Vignette V7 Platform

Vignette has been a major player in the content management market for many years, and the platform has evolved to become a remarkably comprehensive J2EE-based solution; full integration is an objective that many other ECM vendors are still striving to accomplish. This approach has many benefits, including vast scalability, providing a multi-tiered distributed application model, the ability to reuse components, an integrated and open XML-based data interchange, and a unified security model.

The base platform provides the core content management capabilities “under the hood,” and Vignette defines these as:

- ***Content Management*** – Vignette’s information hub that defines, collects, and organizes content
- ***Portal*** – a portal framework used to unite the content applications and present them through a flexible web-based interface
- ***Integration*** – a content integration mechanism that provides the primary mechanism to transfer and transform content between sources and delivery channels
- ***Process*** – a “traffic manager” that routes content through systems and applies business rules
- ***Analysis*** – a detailed logging and reporting tool of content usage and activity
- ***Collaboration*** – an application for managing interactions and communication between users and the sharing and exchange of content and discussion
- ***Documents and Records Management*** – a strong imaging, archival and storage retention management application
- ***Interaction Management*** – an application for managing proactive dialogs, based on personalized interactions through integrated, automated business processes
- ***Imaging*** – an application to capture, store and process high-volume images for efficient electronic access

The modular components of Vignette V7 integrate with the base platform and can be procured individually, based on organizational or departmental requirements. The modular components include:

- Vignette Content Management
- Vignette Portal
- Vignette Records & Documents
- Vignette Collaboration
- Vignette Business Integration Studio
- Vignette Dialog

The following subsections discuss each of these components in detail.

Vignette Content Management

One of the strengths of a robust ECM solution is its ability to allow re-use of content across multiple channels. Delivering content to the web – whether in the traditional sense, such as customer self-service external web sites, or for use internally in an intranet or partner extranet – is an essential requirement in today’s publishing environment. A key strength of the Vignette solution is its ability to provide web content management (WCM), a capability that extends back to Vignette’s roots as a WCM vendor and today is a fine example of an easy-to-use, full-featured web content management solution.

Vignette’s WCM capabilities are similar to those offered by its competitors, with a few notable exceptions. First, Vignette Content Management is fully integrated with the Vignette V7 platform, allowing content created or captured in any other Vignette application to be easily reused on a web site or intranet. Many ECM vendors today, including the larger ECM vendors, are still struggling with the full integration of their WCM solutions with the rest of their platforms. In some cases, this is due to the vendor’s heritage; those that began in the imaging or document management industries have had to “bolt on” WCM solutions to meet market demands. Vignette’s origin was in WCM; thus it is no surprise that its product excels in this arena.

Vignette Content Management met or exceeded our expectations in the following ways:

- ***Dynamic Delivery*** – Content such as electronic documents, web content, and even structured data can be ingested, stored, and reused for delivery to a web site and other channels. Content can be created within the Vignette application itself, extracted from a structured or unstructured content source, retrieved from the web, or authored in a desktop application or other program. Content can be then transformed and delivered to a variety of formats (PDF, images, HTML) or presented through a specific channel (web, print, or inserted into a database destination).

- User Experience** – Vignette provides a polished user interface (UI) and has paid attention to the details. Doculabs believes that the quality, simplicity, and consistency of a solution’s UI translates directly into the level of user adoption that results after deployment. The Vignette user interface is best of breed, including floating editing palettes that always remain within reach of the user’s mouse pointer (as opposed to being placed at the top or bottom of an editing page, requiring a user to repeatedly scroll up or down to reach a menu bar when editing long pages of content).
- Editing Tools** – Vignette Content Management can provide in-context editing – the ability to edit a web site or intranet page just as one would see it if going to the real site. The content editor simply clicks on an icon at the top of each section of text or content, and it immediately becomes active, or “editable.” This approach differs from that of many other solutions, which employ an “edit-and-publish” process that requires a user to edit the web site text in a text window, with or without style tools, and then publish or preview the changes in a new window to see how the changes are represented on the real web site or intranet.

The advantage of Vignette’s in-context editing approach is that content editors can see exactly what is being added or changed to the web page while they are working on it – saving time, producing more accurate and consistent content, and providing a far more pleasant and efficient user experience.

Vignette Content
Management In-context
Web Content Editing
Interface

The screenshot displays the Vignette Content Management In-context Web Content Editing Interface. The interface shows a live view of the New World Bank website with an editing toolbar overlaid on the left side. The toolbar includes options like 'Page View', 'Full Page', 'Open Template', 'Refresh', 'Approve', 'Enable Markup', 'Disable Markup', 'Start Workflow', 'Page History', and 'Editing On'. The main content area displays the New World Bank homepage with sections for 'Welcome to New World Bank', 'SOLUTIONS', 'PRODUCTS AND SERVICES', 'PRESS RELEASES', and 'WE VALUE OUR CUSTOMERS'. The editing toolbar is positioned over the 'STOCKS' section of the page.

Vignette Portal

Vignette has tightly integrated the Vignette Portal into its Vignette V7 platform, adding significant value to its ECM offering compared to the non-integrated portal solutions of other vendors. Combined with its content integration capabilities and unified UI across its other suite of applications, the Vignette Portal Solution is designed to consolidate access to disparate applications and content sources and to allow the construction of new and useful applications through its Vignette Builder module, requiring little, if any, programming skill.

Vignette Builder is a visual environment in which users can build applications that connect to content, databases, and enterprise applications. In Doculabs' opinion, this is a powerful and time-saving tool that allows organizations to reduce their reliance on IT programming resources and to make faster changes to applications that have been built within this environment. In addition to its visual portlet designer, which allows developers to drag and drop controls (labels, fields, columns, buttons, links) to create the portal interaction with a back-end system, Vignette Builder offers pre-packaged connectors to major business applications, such as PeopleSoft, Lotus Domino, Siebel, and SAP. Also supported are JDBC-based data stores such as Oracle, DB2, Sybase, and Microsoft SQL.

In Doculabs' opinion, Vignette Builder is still a tool for a developer – although the level of skill required is far less than that of a conventional programmer. Advanced business users may also feel comfortable using Vignette Builder to create or modify applications. Regardless, the tool drastically reduces the time required to develop a portal application.

The screenshot displays the Vignette Portal Solution Interface for a Customer Information Application. The main content area is titled "Composite Customer View" and features a table of customer records. Below the table, there is a "Customer Details" section for "Lampson-Merkel GmbH" with various fields like Address, City, Postal Code, Customer Number, Main Phone, State, and Entered By. To the right of the details is a "Project Status" section with a bar chart showing the progress of project phases: Preliminary, Investigation, Construction, and Final Phase. On the far right, there is a "Google Web Service" section with a list of news items related to construction strikes and deals.

Customer Name	City	Postal Code	Country
Nelson Tax & Associates	Philadelphia	19115	US
Walt Tru	Kansas City	64101	US
Congem Co.	Austin	78701	US
Pressington, Ltd.	Bristol	81737	UK
EuroGo	Paris	60386	FR
Bedker Berlin	Berlin	12467	DE
Lampson-Merkel GmbH	Frankfurt	65936	DE
Omega Software, Inc.	San Jose	95101	US
Barrington and Associates	Boston	02121	US
Kizumi HRK	Tokyo	12444	JP

Customer Details

Customer Name: Lampson-Merkel GmbH
 Address: Auf der Schanz 54
 City: Frankfurt
 Postal Code: 65936
 Customer Number: 000001001
 Main Phone: 069-467983-0
 State: DE
 Entered By: BALLER
 Industry: TRADE
 Annual Sales: 19000000,000
 Num of Employees: 000230
 Create Date: Dec 1, 1994

Project Status

Project Status Report

Cumulative Sales Orders

Volume

Google Web Service

- View: CHL.com - German construction strike over
- View: Turner Construction Company Selects CIO and Oracle for Security
- View: CHL.com - Holzmann Construction files for insolvency
- View: CHL.com - Construction strike cripples German air traffic
- View: CHL.com - Lampson posts surprising gain
- View: CHL.com - Babcock Construction fails to reach deal

Vignette Portal Solution Interface

Vignette Records & Documents

For most organizations today, the reasons for which they consider ECM have shifted in priority. Just a few years ago, companies were looking to content management solutions primarily to help them reduce costs and reduce the volume of paper. Today, organizations commonly cite the need to enhance productivity and facilitate compliance with regulatory requirements as significant drivers for investing in the technology, making Vignette Records & Documents a key component of the Vignette ECM suite.

Reduction of paper through digital capture and the diligent application of a records management policy for all content types (including paper, images, electronic documents, and web content) requires a robust content management solution with records management functionality.

Vignette Records & Documents, a modular component of the Vignette V7 platform, is also included in the Vignette ECM Suite that provides the ability to centrally manage image files, electronic documents, e-mail, and computer output to laser disk (COLD) content through a unified interface. The document management capabilities are up to par or exceed those of the leading ECM vendor solutions available in the market today, and the records management capabilities are sufficiently robust to provide compliance with even the most stringent requirements, such as those of HIPAA, Sarbanes-Oxley, DOD 5015.2, and many other regulatory requirements.

Doculabs assessed the functionality offered by Vignette Records & Documents against that of competing products, as well as the features that organizations now demand. Overall, Vignette Records & Documents met or exceeded our expectations in the following areas:

- ***Capture, Input, and Authoring*** – Vignette Records & Documents was able to capture, extract, or accept content from all commonly used sources; the content creation tools were excellent and integration with existing tools such as Microsoft Office applications was exceptional. However, the solution did not have a WebDAV integration in the release we reviewed, which would allow direct integration into the Windows file system.
- ***Imaging*** – Vignette provides capabilities to capture, store, and process high volumes of images for efficient electronic access.
- ***Process Automation*** – The solution includes specialized workflows allowing paper to be converted to electronic images and be automatically managed through all the steps of a business process.
- ***Security*** – Vignette Records & Documents offers exceptional security on content objects, including the ability to define access to a single document or record based on a user's role. This level of security is extended to the search mechanism, which prevents the display of sensitive content to unauthorized users.

- ***Repository Management and Content Transformation*** – Vignette Records & Documents allows the storage of all common content types, including digitized images, e-mail, electronic documents, and web content and provides tools to transform these content types for use in other delivery channels. Vignette Records & Documents provides excellent flexibility in choosing where and how content is stored; content can exist anywhere in the organization and is not forced into a proprietary database or format.
- ***Records Management and Library Services*** – Vignette Records & Documents has a broad set of records management capabilities that can be applied across all content types being managed, including the ability to assign retention and disposition schedules, and library services such as check-in, check-out, and version management. Additionally, the solution supports useful capabilities such as history reporting, auditing, and version rollback. The records management capabilities are certified compliant with US DoD 5015.2 and The National Archives of the United Kingdom’s PRO specifications.
- ***Access by Search and Presentation Services*** – Most of the platform is fully integrated, allowing Vignette Records & Documents to be accessed by other Vignette products such as search (provided by Autonomy), collaboration (the one application that is not yet fully integrated), and the portal interface (through JSR168 portlets). This allows Vignette V7 to present a unified view of disparate content types – particularly useful in customer service applications.
- ***Visual WebCapture Capabilities*** – Leveraging its experience with web content management, Vignette provides a unique capability to capture visual records of web transactions. Its WebCapture application is designed to provide records management functionality to a user’s online behavior – as opposed to the content that the system is managing.

In other words, Vignette Records & Documents and WebCapture work together to record the sequence of events or actions that a user performs while visiting a web site. This is a key differentiator for Vignette; other market solutions record only an image or snapshot of the state of a web page at a certain point in time, but Vignette WebCapture can record a visual transaction log for selected activities, satisfying regulatory obligations and lowering the risk when conducting sensitive transactions online.

Vignette Records & Documents Search Interface

VIGNETTE RECORDS & DOCUMENTS

Search Work Tray Records Management Report System System Administration You are logged in as: demo Logout Help

Search Collection

Search Advanced Saved Search

Collection: Projects

Text in records: agreements

Search Clear Help

Records

Request Modify Details Finalize Checkout Copy Move Delete

1 to 7 of 7 Show Page All Print View CSV

	Description	Capture Date	Title	Unique Record Identifier	Record Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Web application	08/03/2005 15:15:10	Project Web Form	1000003455	Not finalized
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final Agreement	12/04/2005 14:08:35	Agreement with Tower	1000004111	Not finalized
<input type="checkbox"/>	New blank document	20/04/2005 10:35:00	TTWS	1000004409	Not finalized
<input type="checkbox"/>	Correspondance	20/04/2005 12:19:34	Correspondance	1000004417	Finalized
<input type="checkbox"/>	Demo document	21/02/2005 13:32:11	This is a new document	1000004628	Finalized
<input type="checkbox"/>	Order spreadsheet	01/08/2005 14:01:58	Order Sheet	1000005110	Not finalized
<input type="checkbox"/>	Embedded Spreadsheet	01/08/2005 14:13:16	Monthly Orders	1000005115	Not finalized

1 to 7 of 7 Show Page All Print View CSV

Vignette Records & Documents Browse Interface

VIGNETTE RECORDS & DOCUMENTS

Search Work Tray Records Management Report System System Administration You are logged in as: demo Logout Help

Browse File Plan

File Plan Path: / VRDFP / Legal Services / Agreements

Details Content Expand Content Add Move Delete Finalize Records Delete Unfinalized Records Relationships History Create Part Request

Containers

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Container Name	Container Description	Container Status	Unique Container Identifier	Classification Code
Tower Agreement	Tower Agreement	Open	1000004286	0009
ABC Agreement	ABC Agreement	Open	1000004384	0012
Agreements 001	Agreements	Closed	1000004225	050413113025

Add Record Add Physical Record Modify Details Checkout Copy Move Finalize Delete Request

Records

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Title	Subject	Unique Record Identifier	Record Status
homeloanapp	Tower	1000004425	Not finalized
Correspondence	Tower	1000004429	Not finalized
homeloanapp	Tower	1000004435	Not finalized
Ref: 872341	Tower	1000004613	Not finalized
This is a new document	Tower	1000004628	Finalized

Vignette Collaboration

Increasingly, organizations are realizing that workgroups can be far more productive when they have centralized access to shared files and content that focuses on a particular project. In companies with a case-based work model, such as insurance claims processing, or mortgage loan processing, or client audits in an accounting firm, storing related content for a specified cycle or case (and providing search, collaboration, and workflow capabilities on the content) can be an effective way to increase efficiency. This approach also encourages employee interaction, decreases the difficulty of finding the latest versions of work documents, and increases the speed of delivery to the client.

Collaboration products are proliferating in the market, and most major ECM vendors have already added this capability or have partnered with companies that can provide it. Microsoft's recent acquisition of the Groove collaboration product from Groove Networks may serve to validate the market need.

Vignette Collaboration provides online and offline communications among co-workers and partners, customers, and prospects. It supports all content types available to the Vignette repository, including e-mail, documents, images, and even structured content. But rather than provide a generic collaboration workspace environment that must be fully customized for each project or client engagement, Vignette has built three templates available to its collaboration tool, each designed to particular business needs.

Vignette Collaboration offers templates for strategic account management and project management. Each template is tailored to the major tasks of these general groups, and Doculabs found that the choices of functionality for each is sufficient and in line with the tasks that are generally required of these groups. In any case, if one of these predefined collaboration spaces lacks a necessary tool or function for a specific group, it can be added by an administrator from the Vignette Collaboration product toolset, creating a customized environment to meet a specific group's needs. Like all Vignette products, functionality can be defined by a user's role within an organization, and the same holds true within the Vignette V7 collaboration environment.

Vignette Collaboration interface, featuring status reporting, project management and administration capabilities

The screenshot displays the Vignette Collaboration Project Dashboard. The interface is organized into several sections:

- Navigation:** Top, Up, Explore tabs; Search bar with "any type" dropdown; "My Page" and "Help" links.
- Left Menu:**
 - Add:** New Project, Document, Web Page, New Folder, New Discussion, New Workspace.
 - Manage:** Link This, Add To Offline, Paste Here, Edit Properties, Delete.
 - Manage contents:** Link Items, Move Items, Remove Items.
 - Inform:** Subscribe, Tell People.
- Main Content Area:**
 - Project Dashboard:** Shows "1. Open Projects (3)", "2. Completed Projects (1)", and "3. Canceled Projects (1)".
 - Open Projects Table:**

Name	Business Owner	Project Manager	Week Ending	Overall Status	Schedule Status	Technical Status	Budget Status
Project Delta	John Doe	Michael Brown	9-Sep-2005	Yellow	Green	Red	Green
Project Gamma	John Doe	Karen Holmes	5-Sep-2005	Green	Green	Green	Yellow
Project Phi	Jim Wang	Michael Brown	7-Sep-2005	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
 - Completed Projects Table:**

Name	Business Owner	Project Owner	Project Manager	Start Date	End Date	Week Ending	Overall Status
Project Epsilon	Michael Brown	John Doe	Karen Holmes	09/03/2005 21:00	09/03/2008 21:00	4-Sep-2005	Green
 - Canceled Projects Table:**

Name	Business Owner	Project Owner	Project Manager	Original Budget	Start Date	End Date	Overall Status
Project Theta	Karen Holmes	Jim Wang	Michael Brown		Last week	09/05/2008 21:00	Red

With the exception of a few capabilities noted below, the solution lacks no major features compared to competing solutions, providing a robust set of tools such as check-in and check-out, approval workflows, annotation of objects within the space, and a robust discussion-threading capability that even allows the use of a standard e-mail client for topic posting and responses. Users can subscribe to content and be notified of changes within the workspace or via e-mail.

A major strength of Vignette Collaboration is its ability to provide search within a space and across spaces – a somewhat obvious need, but one that is not provided in even the most visible collaboration solutions today, such as the previously mentioned Microsoft Groove and Microsoft SharePoint products.

However, Vignette's collaboration capabilities are being extended to integrate several features that one might ordinarily associate with a collaboration space, such as the ability to conduct a virtual "whiteboard" session within a workspace, to create a broadcast meeting (such as Lotus's QuickPlace or WebEx meetings), and to provide an instant messaging component within the workspaces. Vignette is providing integration points for Microsoft Live Communication Server so that these important capabilities can be included within the overall collaborative application.

Vignette Collaboration is the only Vignette V7 application that remains to be fully integrated with the platform; some differences in the underlying architecture remain to be consolidated. To the end user, however, the experience is seamless, and the collaboration component operates and behaves in the same manner as the rest of the Vignette V7 modules.

Vignette Collaboration supports searching for content across multiple collaboration workspaces.

The screenshot displays the Vignette Collaboration search interface. The top navigation bar includes 'VIGNETTE' and 'COLLABORATION'. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for 'Top', 'Up', 'Return', 'Explore', 'My Page', and 'Help'. The main content area is titled 'Search for "RFP"' and contains a search form with the following elements:

- Search terms: RFP
- Search type: any type
- Search button
- Advanced Search button
- Look for: Proximity search (all words and phrases)
- Search within: ACME
- Start Over button

The search results section shows 3 results, with the first three items listed:

Title	Added or Modified
Collaboration Group Memory	
Communities	
Account Communities	
ACME Account	
Official Documents	
ACME RFP Presentation Template	09/15/2005 15:08 John Doe
ACME RFP Response Template	09/15/2005 15:07 John Doe
ACME Tasks	
Supplier Extranet RFP Response	09/15/2005 15:06 John Doe

At the bottom of the search results, there are instructions for saving items as links and organizing results:

- Save links to the desired results by marking them (check the boxes to their left) and press the "Save Items as Links" button.
- Organize the results by "best matches first" or "most recent first", using the "View:" menu.

Vignette Business Integration Studio

To build effective enterprise applications, an organization must quickly and easily integrate structured and unstructured content from disparate sources and applications, and then choose the appropriate delivery mechanism or channel through which the content consumer will receive it. Additionally, integrating disparate sources of information can extend the lives of investments in legacy applications, allowing companies to leave content where it currently exists, instead of replacing entire systems.

Integrating these applications is expensive and time-consuming, and often requires developers with specialized knowledge. Vignette Business Integration Studio (VBIS) is Vignette's answer to this problem, allowing the integration of content with very little programming.

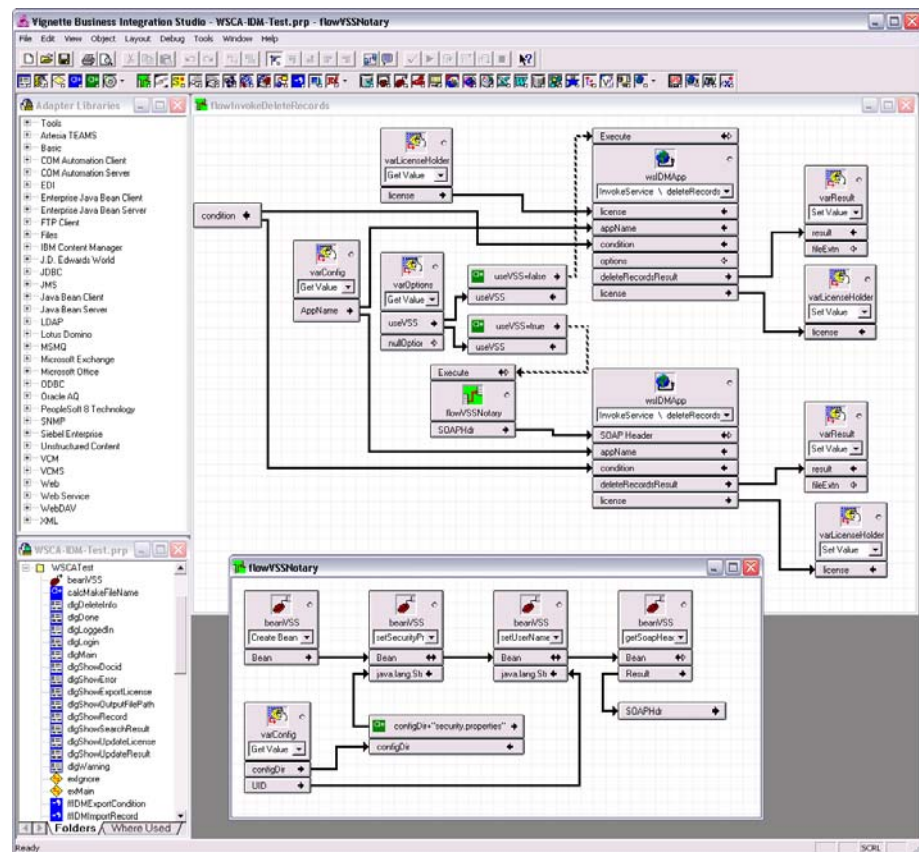
Vignette Business Integration Studio represents a major differentiator for the company. A predecessor and cousin to Vignette's Builder application, the goal is the same: to provide a visual means to accomplish what previously could be accomplished only with the services of a skilled programmer. Although Doculabs has not seen a visual development environment from any vendor that can construct applications that meet 100 percent of an organization's needs, Vignette Business Integration Studio is a highly intuitive and advanced solution. Most organizations should find that VBIS is an effective way to reduce the workload of application developers, while allowing advanced business analysts to build applications themselves.

Vignette Business Integration Studio provides 70 pre-packaged adapters that allow a developer to connect to a variety of data sources, content stores, and enterprise applications. Using the VBIS metadata-driven interface, a developer can specify the source content or information, its transformation, and its destination under a certain set of conditions.

Besides the obvious use to extract employee and customer self-service solutions from Human Resources and other legacy products and present them into a unified presentation interface through a web site or portal, Doculabs sees Vignette Business Integration Studio as a solution to the integration and sharing of the many "one-off" databases that appear in today's organizations. Most organizations have dozens or even hundreds of custom data sources (many of them built in Microsoft Access, Excel, or other desktop applications) which are used at the departmental level but are not shared across the organization or managed/archived in a repeatable, organized fashion. Using Vignette Business Integration Studio, a company can leverage this information and effort and share it, when appropriate, across the enterprise.

Vignette Business Integration Studio operates exactly as Microsoft Visio itself does, with no special skills required beyond the ability to use the application. A special tool palette appears within Visio that displays the Vignette-specific connectors and modifiers. This approach to content and data integration is extremely easy to use – although, like the Vignette Builder product, it will provide the most gains in productivity and timesavings when placed in the hands of an experienced application developer.

Vignette Business
Integration Studio
Interface



The Architecture of Vignette V7

The evolution of ECM platforms over the last five years or so has been primarily by means of acquisition. Many of the major ECM solutions today are the result of one vendor buying another vendor in order to acquire the features and functions necessary to remain competitive in the market and to be able to quickly bring new capabilities to its ECM suite, without having to design, develop, and test these capabilities from scratch.

This market consolidation has resulted in a smaller circle of vendors to choose from, but each now has a far wider set of tools to offer. The situation presents certain problems to IT buyers in today's enterprise: they are now buying not one platform, but many – a “single” ECM product that actually comprises a variety of different technologies, databases, and interfaces. The result is that deployment, management, and user training for the total package are all much more difficult and expensive. In the worst case scenario, the end user of an ECM platform may confront different interfaces for each type of content they wish to manage. Documents may require the use of one program, and web content may be created using another. Such scenarios inevitably result in low rates of user adoption, and potentially the swift degradation or failure of an organization's entire ECM strategy as well.

The leading ECM vendors have, for the most part, succeeded in integrating these disparate applications – and Vignette is no exception. It has focused on providing a single architectural framework upon which all of its content applications are built, and its choice in vendor acquisitions has been shrewd, with careful consideration of the technical interoperability between the Vignette core platform and any new applications it acquires.

The Vignette V7 platform is a standards-based solution built around Java, XML, and web services. This approach is ideal for organizations that have a J2EE-based strategy and staff expertise with Java-based development and application servers. The application server approach can offer the greatest scalability, and Vignette V7 is designed to leverage this through its use of Java components (EJBs) that run within the application server environment.

Doculabs found Vignette V7 to be highly open and extensible, with better-than-average options for exposing its content and functional components to other applications through standard SOAP web service interfaces.

While some ECM vendors require that content and documents be stored in their repositories in a proprietary database and format, Vignette ingests and stores content in its original format or as XML documents, allowing the content to be reused for just about any application or presentation.

Doculabs did not closely examine the set of traditional APIs available for the Vignette V7 platform, but an inventory provided by Vignette reassured us that the platform could be easily extended through the use of either APIs or a robust set of web services.

Administration of V7

All ECM systems must be managed effectively in order to maintain a smooth running system, provide customized tools to users with varying needs, administer users and groups, define workflow processes, and ensure security across the organization.

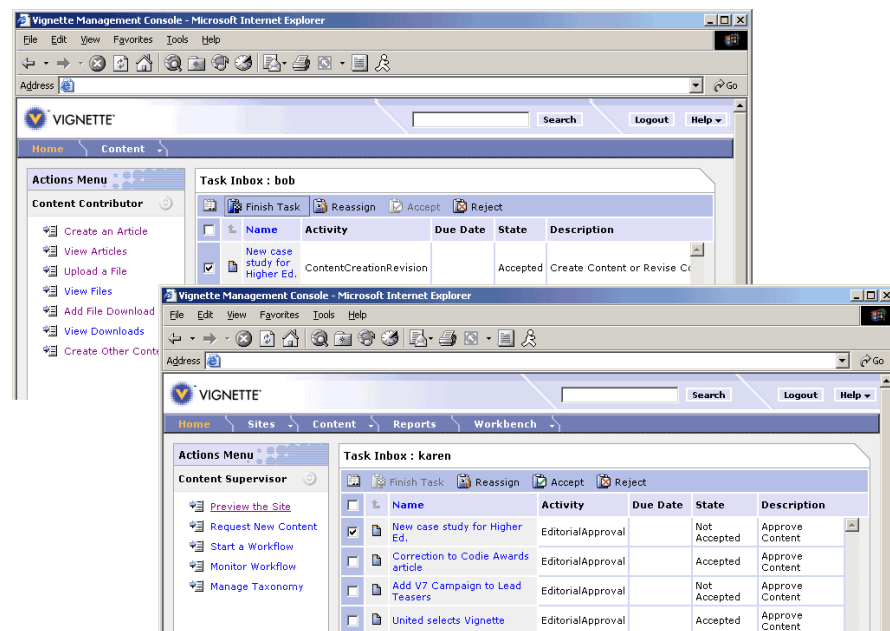
Because of the inherent enterprise-wide nature of ECM platforms, the ability to reduce the amount of effort required to manage thousands of users' access to content across an organization can be daunting. In many instances, users are restricted not only to the types of information they can access, but also to the operations they are permitted to apply to content. For example, a person in the Sales Department may be allowed to create and update product specifications for a particular product and to publish it to the internal intranet, but be denied access to publish the information to the corporate external web site, which needs approval from Marketing.

ECM solutions have traditionally done a poor job of centralizing these administrative capabilities. The ECM market consolidation discussed previously not only created a patchwork of differing products within single ECM products, but has also complicated the task of administering them from a central location. Like the end users, many administrators must use different interfaces to manage content repositories; to add, edit, or remove users from groups or roles, or from the system entirely; or to design workflow processes.

Vignette is among the few vendors that has managed to unify the interface almost completely, with an exception or two. The consistent Vignette V7 interface is used to manage all aspects of the solutions operation, with the exception of workflow development and application development, which is accomplished using Visio (or Case Management) or Vignette Builder, respectively. This appears to be by design, however. Of the other solutions that Doculabs has assessed which attempt to integrate a workflow or application development environment within a web-based interface, most generally fail and are actually used by non-IT personnel most of the time anyway.

All of the major system- and user-based configuration options are available to the administrator through a single interface, Vignette Command Center. Audit and activity logs from all services (application, content, and workflow) are viewable from within the interface. System set-up and monitoring are also centrally located, with a variety of visual, e-mail, and pager notification options.

Vignette Command Center offers a much-needed capability that is not easily addressed in most ECM suites today: the ability to distribute administrative and configuration tasks to departmental or business units so that they can be in control of their own content. The benefit of distributable administration is most apparent in larger organizations, where each unit or department may have a different business objective, philosophy, or even a different brand. Vignette V7 allows an organization to grant access to sub-administrators, who can then define the content tools, user roles, permissions, interface design, and other attributes of the content management experience for his or her group of users.



Vignette Management Console (Command Center) Interface

Business Benefits of Vignette V7

Considering once again the reasons for which organizations choose to invest in ECM and related technologies, Doculabs believes that Vignette V7 addresses the key business drivers for ECM, providing a wide range of business benefits to organizations seeking a way to more effectively manage their information assets. Chief among these benefits are the following:

- ***Comprehensively Addresses “Offensive” Requirements*** – Vignette’s suite of capabilities helps organizations reduce operational inefficiencies, improve productivity, meet customer demands, and facilitate growth. Vignette V7 provides a common environment and common approach for managing and delivering a wide range of content management types (including web content, images, e-mail, enterprise reports, and many others) in a consistent manner. Vignette V7 also differentiates itself with its advanced capabilities to enhance business improvement, particularly in enterprise content integration and federated repository management (Vignette Business Integration Studio), advanced collaboration (Vignette Collaboration), and portal capabilities (Vignette Portal).
- ***Comprehensively Addresses “Defensive” Requirements*** – Organizations have broad and deep requirements for reducing their overall risk and for reducing the cost of that risk. Such defensive requirements include regulatory compliance, litigation, information security, and business continuity. Most ECM solutions fail to adequately address defensive requirements because they are insufficiently broad (for example, addressing e-records but not e-mail) or are insufficiently deep (providing only rudimentary records management capabilities, or cannot effectively address a company’s offensive requirements at all. Adequately addressing all of these areas typically requires deploying solutions from multiple vendors, or stumbling along with a single vendor whose offering can’t deliver the goods.

Vignette, however, succeeds in all three areas where most other vendors fail. It addresses all types of records in a unified fashion (whether they are e-records, e-mail, or paper). It provides rich records management capabilities. And, as indicated above, Vignette V7 can effectively address an organization’s offensive requirements as well.

- ***Effectively Addresses IT Requirements*** – To be successful, an ECM deployment must be cost-effective over its lifecycle; it must minimize the impact on IT resources and leverage existing investments; it must be adopted by users; and it must be flexible enough to address the organization’s changing needs. Doculabs was impressed with Vignette’s ability to meet such requirements, particularly with Vignette Records & Documents. But Vignette V7’s main strengths lie in its openness. From almost every angle, Vignette V7 is extensible – from its web services interfaces, to virtual repository storage of content as XML, to its pre-packaged adapters to enterprise applications, including other content management systems. In an IT world where standards are of growing importance, Vignette hits the mark dead center.

The table below presents a summary of the major business drivers for more effective management of content, and how Vignette V7 addresses these business drivers.

Driver	What Organizations Need	How ECM Can Help	How Vignette Addresses These Needs
Business Improvement (“Offense”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take full advantage of the information that exists within the organization ▪ Reduce inefficiencies ▪ Save time; save money ▪ Improve customer service ▪ Identify new business opportunities ▪ Expand market share and penetrate new markets ▪ Strengthen brand and product equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eliminate or minimize manual or paper-based processing ▪ Help users quickly find the information they’re looking for, irrespective of format or location ▪ Provide fast access to frequently-retrieved information ▪ Simplify information distribution to internal and external parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a centralized store of content for rapid access by users globally ▪ Offers tools to business users to encourage collaboration, reducing redundant work, improving communications, and speeding the work process ▪ Specialized applications allow companies to extend content to customers through new channels and allows them to measure the success of those channels
Risk Reduction (“Defense”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compliance with industry or government regulations ▪ Security and protection of sensitive information ▪ Business continuity ▪ Reduce pain and cost for discovery that can be required for legal inquiries or audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy-based management of information categorization, retention, and disposition ▪ Information profiling and search to accelerate discovery ▪ Ensure information integrity and protection, promoting business continuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a platform that can track and manage the use, distribution, and lifecycle of any piece of content ▪ Provides tools that can record customer interactions with company web sites for legal risk reduction and quality assurance purposes ▪ Offers specialized compliance applications and industry-specific solutions including highly regulated industries such as healthcare
IT Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost-effective approaches for information management ▪ Minimize impact on IT resources; ability to leverage existing IT investments ▪ Solutions that will be adopted by users and do not require extensive training ▪ Flexibility and scalability to address the organization’s changing needs over time ▪ Security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A common infrastructure to manage and control multiple types of fixed content ▪ A solution that can be acquired and deployed in as-needed modules ▪ Ability to handle content generated by existing systems ▪ Intuitive methods for business users to find information ▪ Ability to scale as volumes grow ▪ Secure retention of all types of content in their native source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An almost fully integrated J2EE platform provides extensibility, scalability, and reliability ▪ Single skill set required to deploy, maintain, enhance, and support the solution means lower cost of ownership ▪ Integration with existing security and authentication systems extends existing security levels to content within the organization

Final Word

Although it has been three years since the redesign of the Vignette V6 platform into the Vignette V7 platform of today, we see no indication of any lack of effort on Vignette's part regarding its commitment to enhancement of the platform's capabilities.

Vignette seems committed to not only providing a highly open, standards-based and scalable content management platform, but to minimizing the impact of ECM on the lives of the people who must manage it. A best-of-breed user experience; visual tools for workflow creation and content integration; easy-to-use, in-context editing; and a distributable administration system all add up to reduced effort and enhanced reliability and confidence in the platform's ability to deliver. Strategic acquisitions of key technology companies, combined with rapid integration of their products, are proof of Vignette's deep understanding of business needs.

Vignette V7's main strengths lie in its openness. From almost every angle, Vignette V7 is extensible – from its web services interfaces to virtual repository storage of content as XML, to its pre-packaged adapters to enterprise applications, including other content management systems. In an IT world where standards are of growing importance, Vignette hits the mark dead center.

Vignette V7 offers a robust security model, and supports Active Directory as an authentication method. This allows organizations to leverage their existing ADS directories and lets users use the system without requiring separate user IDs.

We believe Vignette would benefit greatly by adding digital asset management (DAM) capabilities to Vignette V7. It would expose Vignette to new markets, which are currently specialty concerns for most organizations. The open framework of Vignette V7 would ease the integration with a third-party DAM system, if necessary.

Vignette has consistently demonstrated that it is a visionary company that can anticipate the needs of organizations and quickly, yet carefully, provide solutions to meet these needs. Its integrated J2EE platform, in-context editing, and Vignette Business Integration Studio set its product apart from much of the competition. Vignette is also aggressively introducing new horizontal solutions targeted at providing case management, patient record imaging, e-learning, insurance claims processing, and compliance capabilities.

In the past, Vignette has always been known for its ability to provide web content management tools, but today's version of Vignette V7 incorporates innovative features and capabilities that are worth a serious assessment for organizations that seek to better manage their content enterprise-wide.

Strengths and Challenges of Vignette V7

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best-of-breed user interface; should minimize training efforts and encourage user adoption • Appropriate focus on collaboration, records management, document and web content management – the components needed by most organizations • J2EE architecture is open, standards-based, and highly scalable • Powerful content integration tool, Vignette Business Integration Studio, that can save valuable time and resources • In Context editing with bi-directionality, scalability, comprehensiveness • WebCapture is a differentiator • Vignette Dialog • Delegated administration a significant value-add 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should address gaps in digital asset management (DAM) • Should continue to integrate collaboration into ECM suite, particularly focusing on common user, administrator, and developer experiences among collaboration and other Vignette process management pieces • Should continue to differentiate Vignette Collaboration from Microsoft (Exchange, SharePoint, and Groove) collaboration offerings • Should continue to enhance capabilities of e-mail management, particularly those required for legal discovery, holds, filtering, and review

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