The problem with shared drives is one of the most significant information management challenges facing corporations today. Gigabytes, terabytes, and increasingly even petabytes of documents and other unstructured content have been accumulating on corporate shared drives over the last two decades, and the pace of growth shows no signs of stopping.

Organizations are now beginning to understand that continued reliance on shared drives presents enormous costs, in the form of operational inefficiency, increased legal and compliance costs, and higher IT costs. It also presents enormous risks: operational risk, legal and compliance risk, and IT risk.

In this white paper, Doculabs assesses the magnitude of the shared drive problem and outlines an effective solution: moving from shared drives to Microsoft SharePoint. Then Doculabs provides a proven methodology that you can use to get the shared drive-to-SharePoint migration right.
The Shared Drive Problem

The problem with shared drives is one of the most significant information management challenges facing corporations today. Gigabytes, terabytes, and increasingly even petabytes of documents and other unstructured content have been accumulating on corporate shared drives over the last two decades, and the pace of growth shows no signs of stopping.

The cost and risk of these digital landfills is enormous:

- **Operational inefficiency.** Highly skilled, highly paid knowledge workers spend increasing amounts of their time searching for documents, recreating missing documents, and participating in manual document management processes rather than doing their real jobs and creating value for the organization.

- **Operational risk.** Documents and information required for the day-to-day running of the business are difficult to find, lost in a maze of folders and subfolders; the latest and greatest versions are mixed in with drafts and older versions, making it difficult (or impossible) to determine which version is the right one, leading to less-than-optimal decision-making.

- **Compliance risk and cost.** Documents and information needed both to ensure and prove compliance are inaccessible to employees, auditors, and regulators, increasing the likelihood that an organization will be out of compliance as well as be face penalties for noncompliance.

- **Legal cost and risk.** Details about the high volumes of unstructured content on shared drives are largely unknown (and likely unknowable), so when responding to litigation, organizations must leverage the tools and expertise of third-party legal firms—and pay astronomical costs to do so; information is retained for years after the organization has any legal or operational requirements to do so, increasing the likelihood that damaging information may be included in the mass of over-retained shared drive content.

- **IT cost and risk.** Year over year, we’ve seen a general decrease in the price of raw storage. Yet any gains IT might realize from these lower prices are wiped out when you consider that the typical annual compound storage growth at most organizations is 20 percent or more. Consider, too, the increasing all-in costs of storage (FTEs, energy, and real estate). Finally, the sheer volume of content stored on shared drives at the typical large organization makes it increasingly difficult (if not impossible) for IT to meet mission-critical SLAs for disaster recovery, business continuity, and backup.
From Shared Drives to SharePoint: A Methodology

Enterprise Content Management Has Failed to Solve the Problem

For years now, organizations have been trying to fix the shared drive problem using advanced document management systems or enterprise content management (ECM) platforms. Many organizations have at least one such system, and larger organizations are likely to have multiple systems and platforms installed, offering their employees sensible alternatives to shared drives for working with their documents and information.

Despite that, and despite the expenditure of millions of dollars and thousands of hours to procure, deploy, and maintain these systems and platforms, the document management system of choice within the vast majority of organizations remains shared drives—often overwhelmingly so.

It’s not difficult to understand: Given the choice between what users already know (no matter how bad it might be) and a new system that requires training, discipline, and a new way of working (not to mention trust in IT that they can deliver on its promises), it’s a miracle that we see any level of adoption of document management and ECM systems at organizations.

SharePoint Offers Hope, But Has Yet to Deliver a Solution

Beginning in 2007, Microsoft SharePoint seemed to be a bright spot in this otherwise slow evolution of information management. Easy to deploy, with a familiar Windows user interface, seemingly inexpensive to buy and low on IT overhead, SharePoint had all the makings of a winning replacement for shared drives at most organizations. And with the release of SharePoint 2010, things seemed even brighter, as Microsoft evolved the product to include capabilities that made it competitive in many areas with full-featured ECM platforms such as OpenText, IBM P8, EMC Documentum, and Hyland OnBase.

However, few organizations to date have been able to realize the full document management benefits promised by SharePoint, to the point where they can consider decommissioning their shared drives. There are several reasons for this failure:

- **Having it both ways.** Users still have access to shared drives for creating and managing documents after SharePoint is deployed, so content lives in both places, increasing costs and risks associated with each system and with document management as a whole.

- **Lift and shift.** In many instances, SharePoint has been deployed just like shared drives, and content has been “lifted and shifted” over to SharePoint en masse, with no attempt to clean it up or enrich it, transferring all the problems associated with shared drives over to SharePoint.

- **Dumbing it down.** At many organizations, IT declines to enable SharePoint’s more advanced document management capabilities (e.g. version control, check-in/check-out, workflow, and metadata) for users because these features are considered “too complicated,” which in effect turns SharePoint into a shared drive on steroids—i.e. presenting higher cost and risk, while providing few if any real benefits over shared drives.

Going Rogue

The advent of solutions and services such as Box, Dropbox, and Google Drive has resulted in easy ways for users to squirrel away documents that may never make their way back into a proper repository.
The result is that most organizations that have rolled out SharePoint to the enterprise now have substantial volumes of unstructured content not only on corporate shared drives, but on enterprise SharePoint deployments as well, and so their costs and risks, far from being reduced, are only being compounded.

**The Solution: SharePoint – Done Right**

Despite the fact that corporations have been struggling for many years now with high volumes of unstructured content on shared drives, and despite failed efforts to address this problem with document management systems, ECM platforms, or SharePoint, a promising solution is beginning to emerge among some forward-thinking organizations.

Through a combination of process redesign, information architecture, information lifecycle governance, and agile SharePoint development practices, some organizations are now successfully migrating their users off of shared drives and onto SharePoint—that is, *SharePoint done right*: SharePoint with the right level of process automation, the right content organization, the right compliance and governance, and the right document management capabilities in place to support what users need to do and how they need to do it, while also enforcing better practices around records management and information management.

This approach to “SharePoint done right” isn’t a silver bullet; in fact, it takes considerable planning and effort to accomplish. But there are significant benefits to doing so, and these benefits are apparent across a wide range of industries. For example:

**Improved operational efficiencies and reduced operational risk**

- **Decreased time and effort for plant turnarounds and maintenance** due to improved management of asset and process documentation (Manufacturing)
- **Decreased service disruptions to field operations** due to better document sharing and document-based collaboration between home office and field office (Energy, Mining, Construction)
- **Reduced time, cost, and error rates for rush orders** due to improved document sharing and collaboration along the supply chain (Logistics, Retail, Manufacturing)
- **Reduced time spent by sales and marketing on low-value processes** (e.g., searching for and recreating lost documents), leading to increased direct sales and higher margins (Insurance, Financial Services)

**Reduced legal and compliance risk and cost for organizations – in all industries**

- **Lower unit costs for collection and analysis per discovery event** (litigation, audit) as a result of reduced volumes of unstructured content and thus lower volumes of likely discoverable information
- **Ability to demonstrate compliance with recordkeeping regulations and standards** due to better management and organization of unstructured content and systematic retention and disposition of electronically stored information
Doculabs’ Methodology for Getting SharePoint Right

Doculabs has developed a methodology that it has successfully used to help clients get SharePoint right and begin addressing their shared drive problem, enabling these organizations to realize the very tangible benefits described above.

At its foundation, Doculabs’ methodology embodies the belief that *if you build it, they won’t come*—i.e., if you roll out a one-size-fits-all, generic SharePoint environment, it will fail in a number of ways:

- Adoption will be low
- End-user needs won’t be met
- SharePoint’s functional limitations will encourage end-user workarounds
- All of the above

Instead, we advocate developing built-for-purpose SharePoint sites, tailored to meet the range of “need-to-have” end-user document management needs across the enterprise. The goal is to utilize standard SharePoint functionality (configuration, not customization) wherever possible, and to look for common patterns of use across the organization that can be supported with reusable SharePoint components (from discreet configuration settings, to web parts, and even whole site templates).

Figure 1 provides a high-level view of Doculabs’ approach to getting SharePoint right. The next subsections of this white paper present discussions of each of these phases and the activities and outputs associated with each.

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**Figure 1: Doculabs’ SharePoint Development Methodology**

- **Phase 1: Process Review and Triage**
  - Identify document-centric business processes and key documents involved
  - Evaluate suitability for moving each process to SharePoint to determine in-scope processes

- **Phase 2: Process Mapping**
  - Document as-is map for each in-scope process
  - Document to-be map for each in-scope process

- **Phase 3: SharePoint Prototyping**
  - Facilitate the iterative development of SharePoint templates to support each in-scope to-be process, including the development and execution of test scripts

- **Phase 4: Rollout and Migration Planning**
  - Develop the rollout plan, including training and communication and migration
  - Develop a recommended approach to legacy documents for the in-scope processes (i.e., purge, migrate, or manage in place)
**Phase 1: Process Review and Triage**

Just because you have SharePoint, and just because you can give SharePoint to users to manage their documents doesn’t mean that you should, at least not in all cases. Instead, take a step back and do a review and triage of your users’ business processes to determine 1) which processes are currently being supported by shared drives and 2) whether those processes are in fact suitable candidates for moving to SharePoint.

This triage process can be accomplished using as few as three criteria, or as many as ten (or more). The right number of criteria depends on your organization and the level of capabilities you plan to deliver in the target SharePoint environment. While the specific criteria should be tailored to each organization, here are some that Doculabs has used successfully in working with our clients:

- Number of end users
- Level of process complexity
- Level of workflow required
- Level of system integration required
- Degree of upstream or downstream process dependencies
- Level of operational risk associated with process failure
- Level of compliance or legal risk associated with process failure
- Level of positive organizational impact of moving the process to SharePoint
- Level of negative organizational impact if the process isn’t moved to SharePoint

Once you have your set of triage criteria, list them in a scoring matrix like the one shown in Figure 2 and use that to drive the decision-making around which processes to move to SharePoint and what order to move them in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Name</th>
<th>Criterion 1</th>
<th>Criterion 2</th>
<th>Criterion 3</th>
<th>Criterion 4</th>
<th>Criterion 5</th>
<th>Criterion 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Process 1</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process 2</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process 3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2: Example Process Triage Matrix*
Phase 2: Process Mapping

Having determined which processes will be moved to SharePoint, you now need to determine what they will look like once they get there. Doculabs strongly cautions against taking the time and effort to migrate processes, only to lift and shift them as-is, with all their existing inefficiencies. After all, one of the key benefits of moving to SharePoint is the ability to support process improvements through capabilities such as workflow, check-in/check-out, versioning, document templates, etc.

Determining how best to improve processes in SharePoint requires some process mapping—not to a Six Sigma, Lean level of detail, but simply walking through the high-level steps in the process. As an example, consider the project initiation process. The “as-is” project initiation process might look like this:

1. Email project initiation request to Project Management Office (PMO) Coordinator
2. PMO Coordinator assigns Project Manager and sends project initiation email
3. Project Manager creates documents from previous versions and emails them to project team members as attachments for feedback and approval
4. Project team members review documents and send feedback via email
5. Project Manager collates feedback, updates documents, and sends out final version to project team members

It’s clear that this list of high-level process steps includes a number of inefficient, sub-optimal document management processes: sending attachments via email, creating documents via cut-and-paste from previous versions, and manual version management, to name a few.

The next step is to define the improved, “to-be” steps of the project initiation process that will be enabled in SharePoint. Again, nothing too complex is required to capture this information; Doculabs recommends compiling a simple, two-column table to capture all steps of the process, as in Figure 3.
As-is Process | To-be Process
--- | ---
1. Email project initiation request to PMO Coordinator | 1. Submit InfoPath project request form to PMO Coordinator
2. PMO Coordinator assigns Project Manager and sends project initiation email | 2. PMO Coordinator assigns Project Manager; workflow kicks off to create a project site and send Project Manager a link
3. Project Manager creates documents from previous versions and emails them to project team members as attachments for feedback and approval | 3. Project site is prepopulated with template documents, which Project Manager can customize and send links to project team members to review and approve via document workflow
4. Project team members review documents and send feedback via email | 4. Project team members check out documents from project site for review, provide feedback from within the documents using SharePoint/Office integration, and make updates to the latest version (visible to other team members upon document check-in)
5. Project Manager collates feedback, updates documents, and sends out final version to project team members via email attachment | 5. Project Manager reviews version history and workflow audit trail to ensure all feedback is received and accounted for, publishes major version of documents, and sends links to project team members

Figure 3: As-is and To-be Process Steps for Example Project Initiation Process

**Phase 3: SharePoint Prototyping**

Now that you’ve identified which processes are moving to SharePoint and have determined how you need to transform them to best leverage SharePoint’s document management capabilities, you need to actually build sites that support these improved processes.

The best practice for doing so is not the typical waterfall software development lifecycle (SDLC), which distinguishes sharply between requirements gathering, system design, system development, and system testing; relies on extensive documentation; and can take months (or years) to complete. Instead, the best approach to SharePoint development is grounded in agile methods of software development.

At a high level, agile methodologies value:

- **Individuals and interactions over processes and tools**
- **Working software over comprehensive documentation**
- **Customer collaboration over contract negotiation**
- **Responding to change over following a plan**

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1 Source: Manifesto for Agile Software Development (agilemanifesto.org)
Given this list of values, when you develop SharePoint sites using an agile approach, the focus is on bringing all the relevant stakeholders together—end users, IT, Legal, Records Management, and Compliance—so that they can collaborate on the end-state solution in joint application development (JAD) sessions.

During these sessions, no distinction is made between requirements gathering and solution development. In fact, the main goal of the sessions is to develop iterative, rapid prototypes to demonstrate the capabilities and functionality of the proposed SharePoint designs to participants and to do so in real time, so that those participants can deliver immediate feedback and so developers can respond in the moment to evolve their designs.

The result is a SharePoint end state that more accurately reflects user requirements and is delivered more quickly, and with fewer defects, than traditional SDLC methods could ever be.

**Phase 4: Rollout and Migration Planning**

Once you’ve gotten your target-state SharePoint sites prototyped, you’re not quite done: you’ve still got to plan for rollout and migration, and that means attending to a number of mission-critical areas:

- **Test plans and scripts.** What use cases will you need to test to ensure the SharePoint site functions as intended? What needs to be in place to enable you to run those tests?

- **Training, communication, and organizational change management.** What skills will end users need in order to function effectively on the target-state SharePoint environment? How can you best develop those skills? What messages need to be delivered to what groups of stakeholders at each stage of the project? What organizational change management activities need to be performed (and when) to help ensure a successful project?

- **Migration strategy.** Which legacy documents need to be migrated to SharePoint as of Day 1? Which can remain in place, but as “read-only” documents? Which can be purged from shared drives because they’re past their legal, recordkeeping, or operational lifespans?

- **Post go-live support.** What activities will be required to support go-live, and with what resources and level of effort?
Final Word

The shared drive problem is a big one for most organizations, and SharePoint is not a silver bullet. But done right, the shared drive-to-SharePoint migration can provide a workable solution to the shared drive problem—a solution that delivers significant benefits to end users and the organization as a whole.

The methodology presented here is one way to get SharePoint right at your organization, an approach that organizations across a wide range of industries are adopting to solve their shared drive problem and put in place the foundation for SharePoint success.
About Doculabs

We are experts in social collaboration and content management. We help our clients by delivering highly actionable and comprehensive strategic plans and roadmaps, helping our clients achieve their business goals and create competitive advantage. Our consulting services also help our clients improve their records management and information governance approaches to facilitate compliance, reduce risk, and reduce the cost of e-discovery.

Founded in 1993, Doculabs has an established track record in helping its clients bring content under control and improving the ways they collaborate. Our engagements focus on guiding our clients with our expertise, analysis, and in-depth market knowledge. And we’re independent; we don’t sell software or implementation services, so our clients can be sure that our recommendations are objective.

Our consultants are highly experienced, averaging more than 20 years of relevant professional background and many years of working together as part of the Doculabs team. We’re recognized thought leaders in the industry, frequent speakers at industry events and webinars, and active contributors to leading publications, social media sites, and organizations such as AIIM.

Hundreds of Fortune 1000 organizations and agencies of state and local government have turned to Doculabs for assistance with their information management strategies. For more information about our services, visit the website at www.doculabs.com or call (312) 433-7793.