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Information rights management secures Asian Paints' critical data

Knowledge sharing, information exchange, and collaboration have now become the most critical business requirements in the globalised organizations. However, ensuring information security during such collaborations has become a major issue for enterprises. India's leading color and paints company Asian Paints faced a similar dilemma.

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In 2008, Asian Paints felt the need to introduce document security for its intellectual property (IP), legal agreements, specific formulations, and research and development (R&D) whitepapers, as it undertook an organization-wide information management overhaul. Asian Paints procured a document management system (DMS) solution (FileNet from IBM), and felt the need to deploy a solution to provide document protection. "People leaving Asian Paints carried a lot of confidential and significant business information. Hence, we felt the need to protect our knowhow with strong controls like information rights management," says Maulik Desai, the senior manager for system development at Asian Paints.

Asian Paints' R&D department published and shared several whitepapers for internal use. It was impossible to monitor how many times these physical copies were accessed, copied or forwarded. "Although our R&D department was open to the idea of digitizing these documents, it feared that the soft copies would be easier to share, copy or edit," remarks Desai. This impelled the company to [deploy an information rights management solution](#), which could protect its documents with granular rights.

Evaluation criteria

Asian Paints evaluated three products — FileSecure from Seclere, Microsoft's Information Rights Management and EMC's Documentum Content Management solutions. The solution from Microsoft provided protection only for Microsoft Office documents, while EMC offered a DMS with a rights protection feature.

The company was mainly [looking for an information rights management solution](#) that could be easily integrated with its recently procured DMS and active directories. Other evaluation criteria included providing offline user access, as well as the vendor's domain expertise. After much deliberation, Asian Paints decided to opt for [the information rights management solution](#) from Seclere. "Among all the evaluated solutions, FileSecure provided us with maximum flexibility and integration capabilities," notes Desai.

Implementation and workflow

Asian Paints initially acquired a few user licenses (just over 20) and the software deployment took two weeks. However, it took time to [integrate the information rights management solution](#) with Asian Paints' DMS. Asian Paints was convinced that the information rights management tool could be used most effectively when

integrated with the existing DMS. “We felt that if you leave it to an individual to protect the documents on an ongoing basis, it will become user dependent. It was critical to create a central repository, where there will be credentials and security will be ensured in the workflow by default,” explains Desai.

Seclore's FileSecure solution enables enterprises to retain control over the usage of a document even after it's shared. This [information rights management solution helps](#) an organization control the copy, print, edit and forward rights on any kind of document. It also helps an organization create granular rights for controlling the document with features like who, what, when and where. The information rights management solution supports over 115 document formats, including Microsoft Office, Open Office, image- and text-based formats.

Asian Paints has tie-ups with several body shops and service centers that provide automobile coating services. The company offers royalties to such body shops. Information about these amounts needs to be protected, as its leakage could result in serious business loss. The company has saved all such agreements on its DMS repository and ensures blanket security through the [information rights management tool](#). Only the central legal system and certain field users have access to this information on a need-to-know basis.

Although overall implementation of the information rights management tool was smooth, Asian Paints faced certain issues while deploying the client on desktops and integrating the solution with the DMS. Although internally, the company managed the deployment of Seclore client on user desktops, it was difficult to ensure it for external users. Seclore helped Asian Paints integrate [the information rights management](#) tool with the DMS.

Boost in user confidence

According to Desai, Asian Paints has seen significant increase in user confidence while sharing critical documents within as well as outside the organization. Apart from protecting R&D documents, the company has started using its information rights management solution for sharing legal and other strategic business documents, and been successful in protecting its IP from rivals. Going ahead, Asian Paints plans to adopt an enterprise scale license of the information rights management solution, where every user will get the right to protect his documents.

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