

Introduction to the Minitrack on Digital Documents in Organizations and the Workplace

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Electronic Document Management (EDM) is getting widespread coverage in the business and technical press, vendor product announcements and IT development projects. The technologies and applications vary widely, including imaging, new printing technologies and strategies, multi-media, hypertext, office document management systems, workflow, groupware and the World Wide Web.

The common thread is they all deal with a set of information, potentially represented by a rich variety of media, structured for human comprehension, stored and handled using digital technologies. EDM suggests we may now be positioned to manage concepts and ideas represented in documents as we have managed facts in data records.

The minitrack consists of 6 papers that deal with various aspects of digital documents in organizations and the workplace. This is one of the six arenas of impact of digital documents identified by a workshop at HICSS-28 in 1995.

Four of the papers describe studies of actual situations in which document technology is used to revise and improve traditional processes in organizations. **Lars Bo Eriksen** describes a pilot study of three World Wide Web publishing cases. **Margaret Elliot** describes a quantitative and qualitative study of the use of personal computers for preparing legal documents in the public defender's office in Los Angeles

County. Another public sector example is presented by **Uijlenbroek and Sol** who describes a case study conducted at the ministry of housing, spatial planning and environment of the Netherlands. The final case is a pilot study of the Peter F. Drucker Manuscript and Archives Project by **Jonathan Palmer**.

The other two papers deal with the attempts to improve the tools which electronic documents are created and managed. **Ulrich Frank** describes an approach for integrating electronic documents into object-oriented enterprise models. **Pal Sorgaard and Tone Irene Sandahl** identifies several problems in converting word processing files to electronic documents for publishing, and suggests possible remedies.

Digital Document systems will continue to play a key role in improving the performance and effectiveness of organizations. The papers this year shed some light on the use and impact of digital documents and offer some guidelines to successful implementation of document systems in private and public sectors.