



# Your essential guide to updating your Document Management System

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## Legal practices across the country rely on systems like iManage every day – that means reliably updating and testing your platform is vital

Document management is important in every organisation. But for legal firms, where every word of a contract is meticulously scrutinised, having an easy way to view, create, and edit documents is paramount to working efficiently.

Without an efficient document management system, legal practitioners are stuck managing important files manually. Version control becomes a nightmare and already lengthy processes take much longer than expected. Fortunately, document management systems like iManage exist so people can manage important files more efficiently and securely.

But there is a disturbing trend in legal firms. Time and again, we speak with organisations that run outdated, unsupported and vulnerable systems that aren't fully supporting staff to their fullest. To explore why this is happening, and what you can do to change it, we have to start with the importance of document management systems.



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# The importance of Document Management Systems in the legal sector

Normally, organisations would use file explorer to send, update, and receive files. Imagine working in a team and all having to update one document: a seemingly simple task can become a minefield of version control confusion.

According to iManage, legal professionals spend roughly 95% of their time working with documents and emails. Disjointed communications (email, calls, instant messages) between colleagues as deadlines loom can lead to costly mistakes while clients demand the highest productivity and security from your services.

Document management systems solve these problems. Using a system like iManage, your team can share and update documents with a simple click, while controlling which members have viewing and editing access. Your documents are stored securely in project workspaces, reducing human error when creating documents and minimising risk when storing them electronically.

Another advantage of iManage which is critical to legal firms' customers is the ability to have restrictions in place so only certain teams or individuals can work on files, this is especially important for high-profile cases where leaks could be extremely damaging to individuals or companies.

If the problem persists, the tech gap within the police force will only increase, meaning criminals will always be one step ahead. Lack of training will mean police will be completely ill-equipped as the world moves on, as nearly everything is changing to become digital.

How can they overcome this problem? The main issue is the insufficient training given to the police for digital skills. For this problem to be ironed out, police forces should employ people who specialise in tech roles to manage and analyse the evidence data they gather. Trained professionals who thrive in tech can also assist in training police force members to improve their understanding of digital tools and platforms

## Why aren't document management systems updated regularly?

Document management systems are not updated regularly for numerous reasons. Firstly, it can be costly for companies to hire a developer to carry out the work so they only update the systems when they feel it is essential, rather than regularly updating it.

Companies can feel that they're stuck between a rock and a hard place: they don't have the internal skills to carry out the upgrade, and working with a contractor to complete the work can raise security concerns.

Another reason is the complexity of updating the system itself. Having many connected applications and a lot of data in the system means updating iManage takes a lot of planning and time. Due to this, companies often like to wait for a stable build version before they complete their upgrade.

Finally, there is also the internal concern from Fee Earners that any disruption to their core applications, of which Document Management Systems certainly sit in can disrupt their work, and impact their fees. There may therefore be some pushback or 'inertia', especially when doing full system replacement projects.

# The dangers of not updating your document management system

## **Danger #1: Lack of efficiency**

The Thomson Reuters Legal Tracker Legal Department Operations (LDO) Index report found that driving internal efficiency was the top priority for three-quarters of all legal departments. Not updating your document management system means lacking the latest functionality and features, reducing possible efficiency improvements.

## **Danger #2: Limited cyber security**

Security is, naturally, a priority for legal firms. Running older systems leaves you vulnerable to the latest cyber attacks, which in turn can damage your firm's reputation with your clients and lead to fines for failing compliance standards.

## **Danger #3: Strained internal resource**

Unless your document management system update is coordinated with the other applications it is integrated with, important time can be drained away from your QA team and developers as they reactively look to fix defects that arise. This means important deadlines are pushed back and other projects, meant to improve your firm's efficiency, are delayed.

## **Danger #4: Lack of supportability**

As systems get older, it is common for system providers to stop providing support once an application reaches a certain age. For example, system updates will stop being sent which increases the chance of risks as mentioned above (including cyber security) but also the ability to continue to integrate with other downstream systems such as Practice Management Systems.

## Challenges of updating document management systems

### **Challenge 1: Some features may seem to stop working**

When updating the software, it may seem that some of the features stop working. A known feature that does this is the preview feature. You need to work with a trusted advisor who can advise which features will be affected by the update process and when functionality can be restored for end users.

### **Challenge 2: Technical teams unsure how features should perform**

Sometimes a team is unsure about how some features should perform. It is very important to know how features perform so that they can tell their clients and stakeholders what to expect. It is also important for your Quality Assurance team to know this because they will raise defects and report back to the development team when features are not working as expected.

### **Challenge 3: Required integrated apps updates for iManage**

Some apps, including those part of Microsoft Office, have iManage integrated. For iManage to work, some of these applications will have to also be updated to the latest versions. Sometimes you will not know this until you try and update the document system; when you try to use iManage within the application, the document may not load.



The document management system (DMS) is a central component of a firm's IT systems. When looking to upgrade, a robust test approach will provide confidence that the new system will work effectively.

## Planning your DMS testing

Unlike a practice management system (PMS), client onboarding tool, knowledge tool or client relationship management system (CRM), there is no obvious business unit to own the DMS, so it often falls to an IT department.

This can impact getting decisions regarding the correct behaviour of the system. The first exercise that will need to be completed as part of the testing of the document management system is to understand:

1. All the integration points
2. The custom behaviours that are being implemented within the DMS software
3. The environments the system will be presented from and the types of users accessing it
4. The data migration requirements

This test coverage will need to include all the integrations of the tool, and the firm-specific customisations. It is often the case that integrated applications themselves need to be upgraded in step with the DMS further widening the scope of the testing.

Existing test collateral, such as test scripts may already be in place which will no doubt be a good accelerator. However, significant changes will likely need to be made to the scripts to incorporate new interface designs, updated workflows and new requirements. If no existing test scripts exist these will need to be created.

Scripts should ideally be stored within a test management tool, this will help with structuring the scripts in a way that allows different suites to be run in different circumstances. By taking this approach, you will improve long-term efficiency, for example, it may be the case that an update is made to an environment that only requires a specific set of tests to be executed. If the scripts have been organised well it will be easy to identify these scripts, reducing the effort required in execution.

## Functional testing

With the analysis of what needs to be tested complete, the execution of these tests can begin. To execute the tests, the environmental dependencies will need to be in place. Testing likely needs to be completed against different platforms e.g. laptop build, desktop build, Citrix. There may be different user account types that need to be simulated such as a fee-earner or PA. Test workspaces with test documents will need to be created for each of these user personas.

The data within test workspaces should be as representative as possible, with document security, size, complexity, variety and volumes all being considered. It's at this stage that the security and permission model that is being applied within the firm will make a big impact on the tester. Firms will usually opt for an optimistic or pessimistic security model. Historically, most firms have employed an optimistic model where specific workspaces or documents have had restrictions applied to them to limit who can view them.

More recently, firms have been employing pessimistic models where documents and workspaces are restricted by default and mechanisms are put in place to grant access to only those that have a requirement to view the information. To achieve a representative test data set this security model will make a big difference. The crafting of this test data can take a lot of effort but it is imperative to making the testing comprehensive.

Execution of your testing can then follow normal workflows. With so many variables involved with the data, it is important to follow best practices when raising defects and to contain as much information as possible to enable the technical team to recreate the issue. By including enough environment information, the fixes for defects can be created quickly and efficiently.

Functional testing can only provide so much confidence that a DMS implementation will go smoothly for the end user. It is advisable to undertake other testing to boost this confidence.



## Performance testing

Performance testing of the new DMS will look to provide metrics around the user experience. Where possible, it will be helpful if you can benchmark your new performance testing metrics against the existing DMS to determine whether there has been a performance gain or regression. Only like-for-like transactions must be compared. Should it not be possible to gather metrics for the existing system, performance testing can still provide a good model to help with user engagement and also as a baseline for future implementations.

The performance of several interactions should be considered, and for each of these interactions, multiple parameters can impact the performance.

### **Examples of interactions include:**

1. Launch the main client interfaces of the DMS
2. Check-in/check-out a document
3. Perform a search
4. Navigate around a library

### **Parameters that may need to be considered include:**

1. Document size
2. Document type
3. Number of documents in a workspace
4. Global location of user
5. User load

It is becoming more common for the server-side components of the DMS to be cloud-based rather than on-premises. This new architecture can have a significant impact on performance. It may be the case, particularly for a global firm, that the physical distance between the user and their documents increases. This distance introduces additional latency and can significantly impact the user experience. To be able to manage the expectations of the users as part of user engagement it is important to fully understand where things may be faster and where things may be slower.

Performance testing can also be used to help calibrate advanced monitoring systems. These monitoring systems can provide a lot of data that is abstracted from the user experience. By investing in performance testing, it is possible to correlate how the monitoring systems will report on specific changes to the user experience.

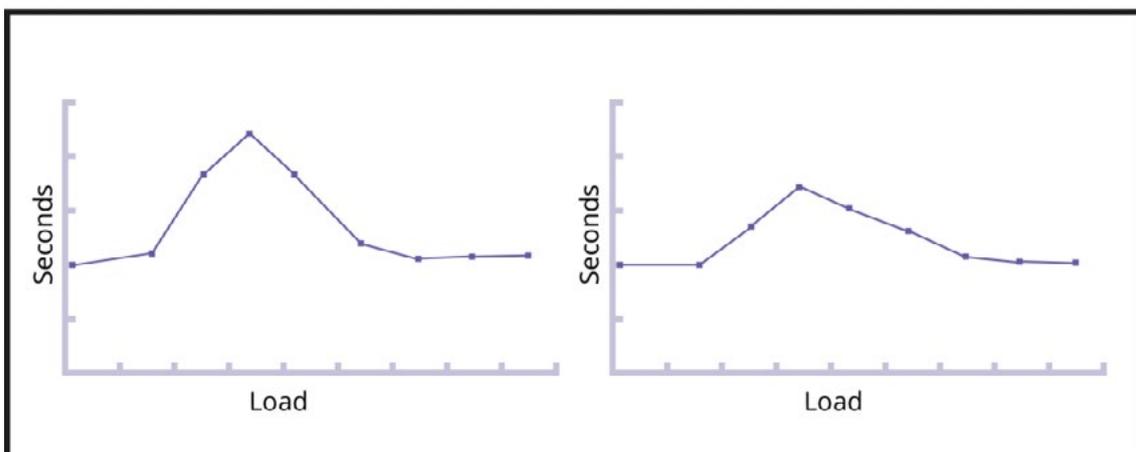
It is always important to conduct performance testing against a representative environment. If future performance testing is to be planned then there needs to be a plan to retain a production-scaled, non-production environment.

## User acceptance testing (UAT)

User acceptance testing is an opportunity to get the new DMS in front of users as early as possible. The purpose of this phase of testing is to ensure that the requirements captured before implementation were correct and complete. By having users interact with the application as early as possible, important feedback will be captured that can assist in a successful go-live. The environment used for UAT is an important consideration. If users are going to be using the upgraded system for real work then the integrity of the data must be guaranteed.

Feedback from UAT can be useful to highlight several different types of problems. Defects that may have been missed as part of functional testing may be highlighted and issues caused by missed requirements may be identified.

Comments around the user experience should be captured, especially those around performance. Training, floor walking and early life support can provide observations of when a user finds it difficult to understand how to do something.



To maximise the benefit from a UAT phase, there needs to be good engagement with the user identified as part of the UAT group. The test team needs to make it as easy and non-intrusive as possible for the users to complete their testing to maximise response rate. Potentially low response rates mean it may be advisable to have multiple users covering each role to still ensure full coverage of UAT scenarios.

## CTA: Make updating your document management system easy by working with a trusted partner

Having gone through the aforementioned test phases you can be confident that:

- The DMS configurations have been implemented as intended
- External applications dependent on the DMS will still work as expected
- The solution is performing to the expectations of the users
- The new implementation can fulfil the needs of the users

Alongside effective user engagement, training, and quality early life support, the go-live should be a success.

The successful go-live of an upgraded DMS is not the end of the testing. As the external applications that integrate with the DMS change then regression testing may need to take place.

The platforms that host the server components of the DMS or the clients used to access the DMS will need frequent patching meaning the DMS should be tested. As a firm's requirements for its DMS change, the DMS may need to be updated, which will need testing. By implementing a solid foundation of comprehensive, robust and well-written test scripts this future testing should be as efficient as possible.

We've helped numerous legal firms update their systems, improve their workflow and remain secure. Our experienced consultants can help you get and, more importantly, stay up-to-date in a cost-effective way so your staff can focus on what they do best: delivering quality services for their clients. [Speak with a member of our team](#) to learn how we can help you today.

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