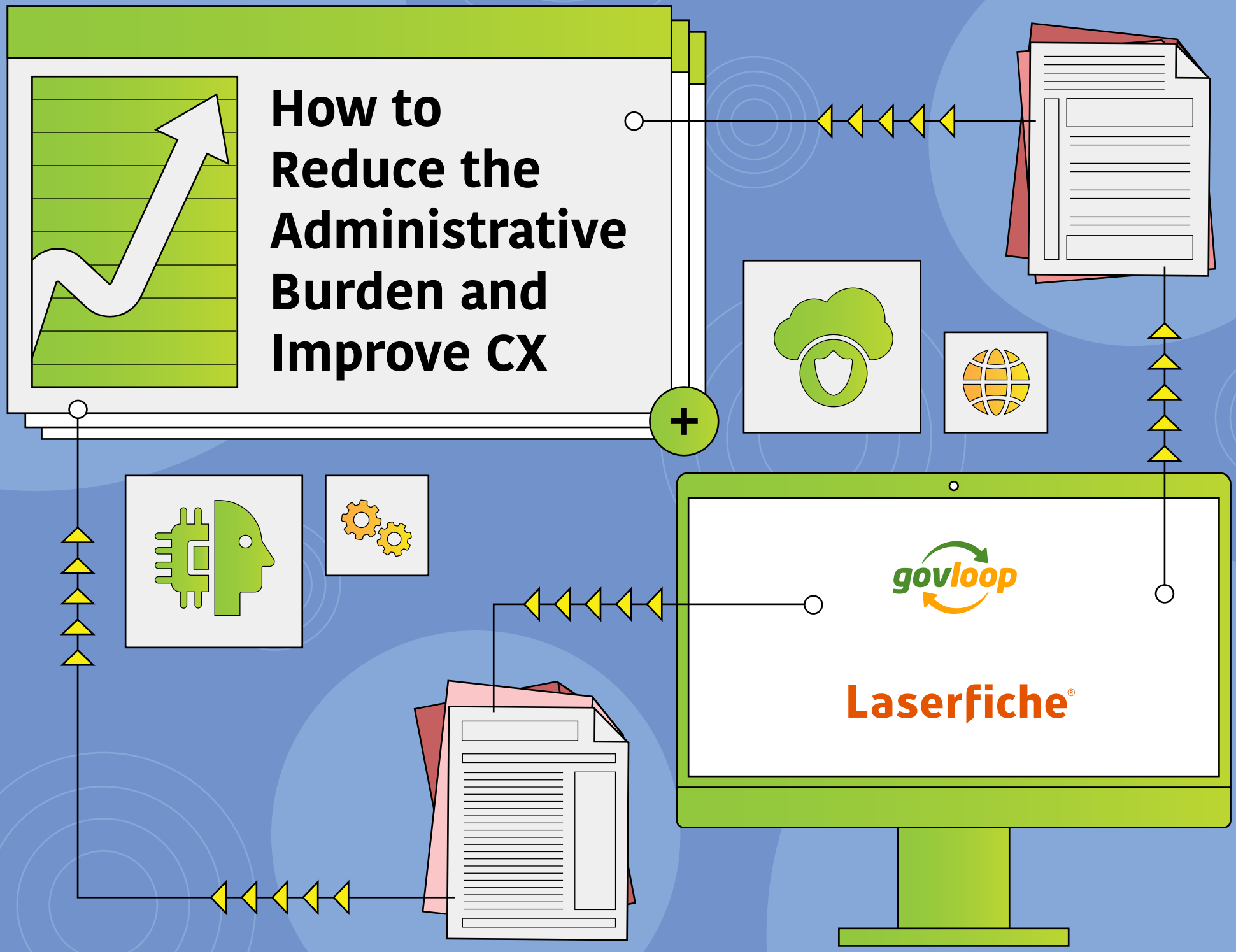
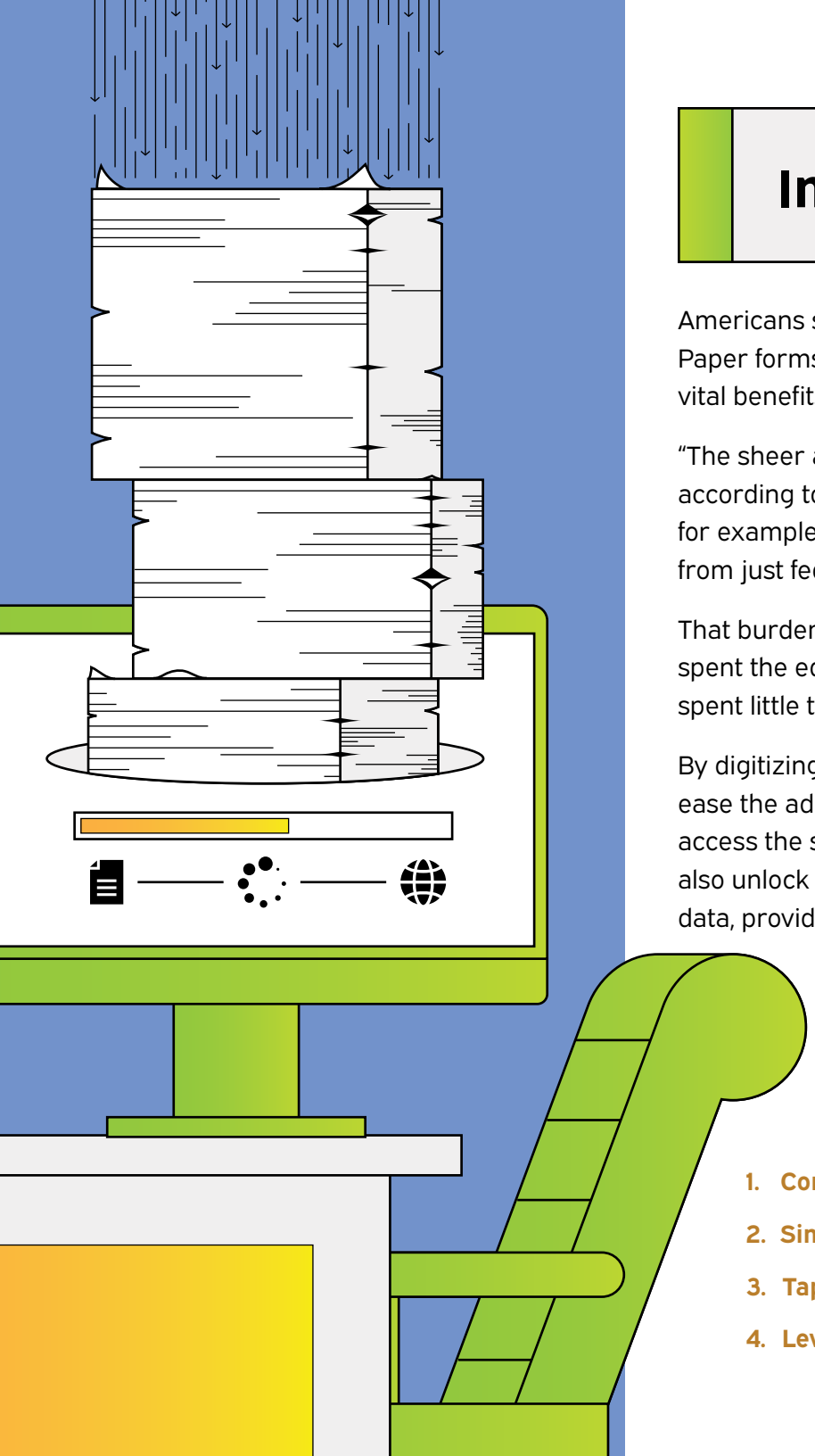

How to Reduce the Administrative Burden and Improve CX
govloop
Laserfiche®



# Introduction

Americans struggle with government processes that sometimes can seem frozen in time. Paper forms don't just cost people time and money: They may cause some to miss out on vital benefits.

"The sheer amount of paperwork frequently results in errors and unfinished applications," according to a recent report from the Center for American Progress. In one recent year, for example, "Americans spent a collective 11.5 billion hours on paperwork requirements from just federal agencies — an average of 45 hours per adult."

That burden "is unevenly distributed," the authors note, "as it is likely that many people spent the equivalent of two full work weeks or more filling out paperwork, while others spent little to no time at all."

By digitizing manual, paper-based processes, government agencies at all levels can ease the administrative burden on constituents, ensuring they are better able to access the services and benefits they need. A shift to digital content management can also unlock the information contained in those documents: transforming it into valuable data, providing insights about constituents' needs and informing future work so that agencies can have a real impact on peoples' lives.

To learn more about how to leverage digital content management, GovLoop collaborated on this report with Laserfiche, which provides enterprise content management and process automation. The report highlights **four key factors** for success:

1. **Connecting** physical and digital content
2. **Simplifying** data access through system integration
3. **Tapping** the power of digital forms
4. **Leveraging** artificial intelligence (AI) to streamline access to data and insights

# Need to Know

## Defining Administrative Burden

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines an administrative burden as "the costs associated with applying for, receiving, and participating in government benefits and services."

> *"For some individuals, families or small businesses, these [administrative] burdens — costs like the 'time tax' required to learn about a program, fill out paperwork, assemble required documents, and schedule visits to government offices — completely prevent access to much-needed benefits. Others may succeed in accessing benefits, but pay a heavy cost through lost time, additional stress, stigma, or more."*
>
> **Burden Reduction Initiative**

## The Cost of the Administrative Burden

Through the Burden Reduction Initiative, the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) is working with federal agencies to more accurately estimate all of the different burdens faced by the public when attempting to access public benefits and services, and to mitigate those burdens. The administration points out that manual, overly complex paperwork can be a significant obstacle for constituents in need of government benefits and services.

The White House notes that there is a lot of work to be done. **Three stats stand out:**

**2%**
The amount of federal forms that have been digitized — that is, offered as a dynamic online form, not just a fillable online PDF

**11.5 billion**
Hours the public spends each year completing government paperwork

**$140 billion**
Government benefits that Congress has authorized that go unclaimed each year

Likewise, the Center for American Progress looked at the administrative burden associated specifically with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). **A survey of people eligible for but not participating in SNAP found that:**

**40%**
were deterred by the paperwork involved

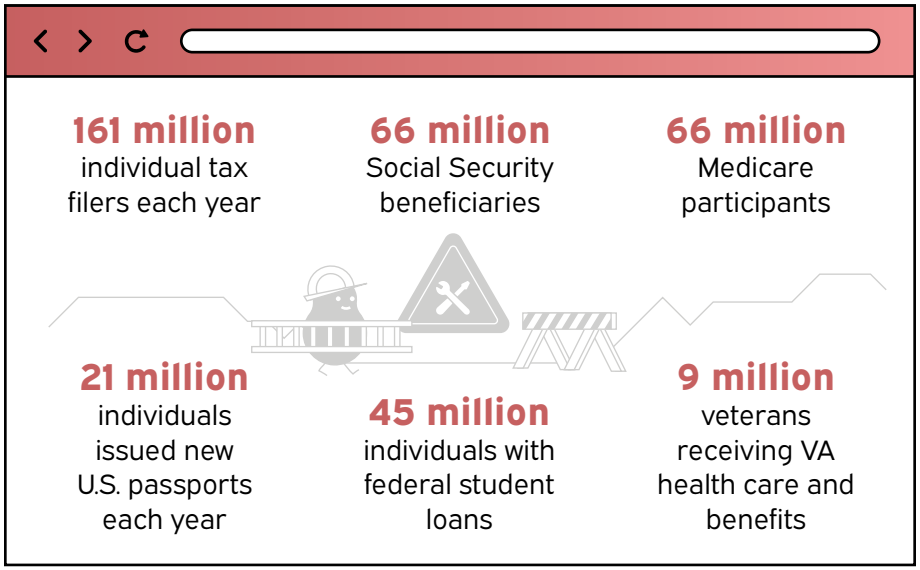
**37%**
noted that the application was too time-consuming given their family and work responsibilities

OMB's suggested strategies **for reducing administrative burdens in public benefit and service programs include:**

- Provide additional methods of submitting applications
- Use existing administrative records to automatically enroll individuals, populate application information or determine eligibility
- Simplify by permitting more flexibility or eliminating unnecessary reporting, documentation and other requirements

## White House Prioritizes Building Better Digital Experiences

In the recent Office of Management and Budget policy fact sheet, Building Digital Experiences for the American People, guidance is offered on how improving government websites and digital services will directly impact millions, including:




The White House fact sheet also shared that federal websites and digital services weren't meeting the public's needs and expectations in myriad ways, including:



**45%**
of federal websites are not mobile-friendly



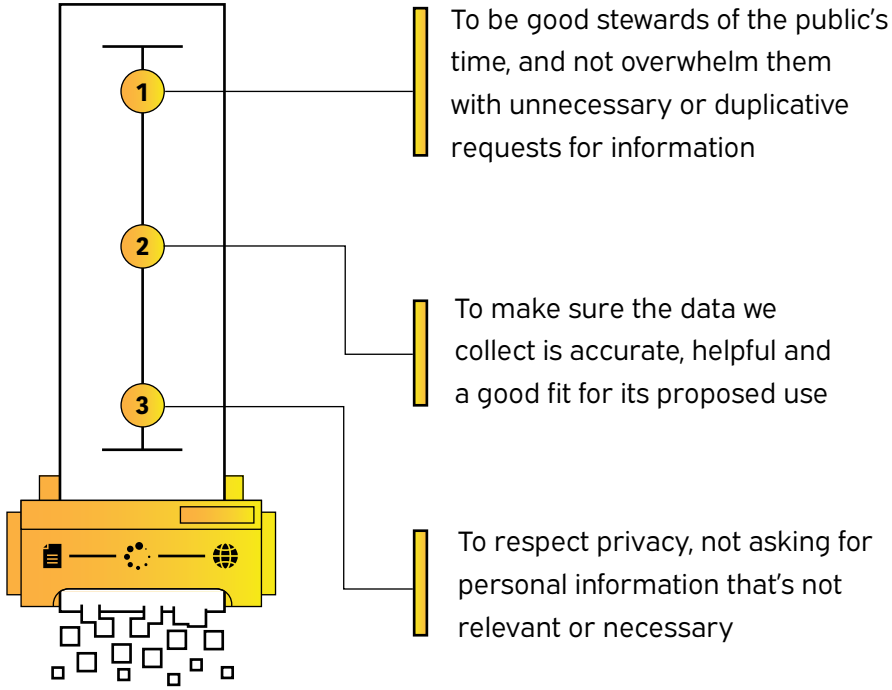
**60%**
of federal websites have a possible accessibility issue



**80%**
of federal websites do not use U.S. Web Design System code

## Three Guiding Principles of Paperwork Reduction

Many current efforts to reduce administrative burdens focus on digitization, but that is just one solution. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 identified three key principles:

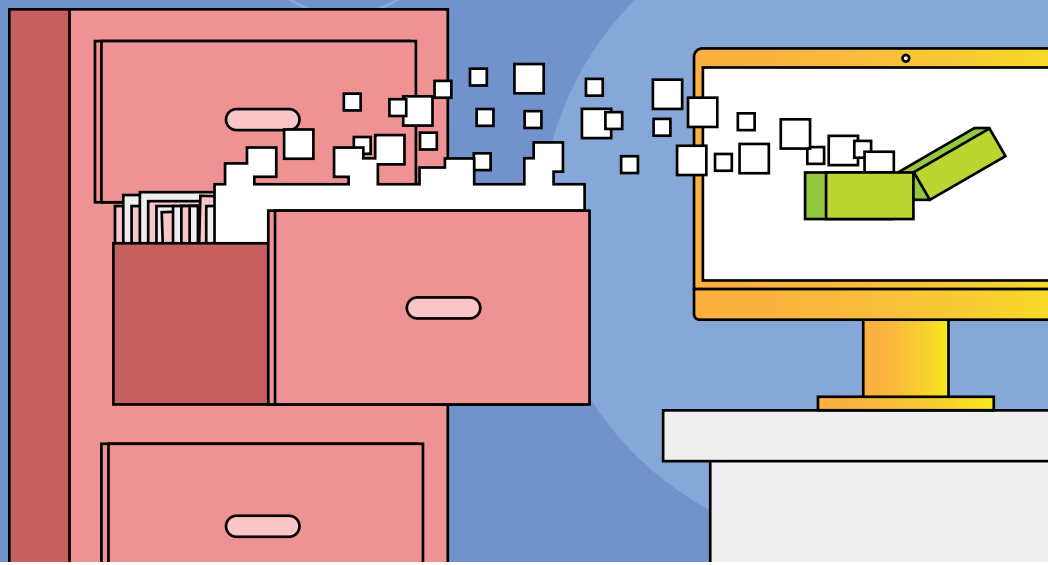



*"The administrative burden of proving eligibility for government programs is shown to undermine program equity and effectiveness. Means-tested programs are often associated with compliance burdens, such as significant paperwork and documentation requirements to confirm that would-be recipients meet program eligibility requirements."*

**The Russell Sage Foundation, Journal of the Social Sciences**

THE PLAYBOOK

# How to Simplify the Constituent Journey



A modern enterprise content management system (ECM) gives government agencies at all levels the power to streamline and simplify the constituent journey. Today's systems go far beyond what previous solutions had to offer.

"People will often think about 'content management' as simply a place where they store something. It's like a box where they put all of their documents and then someone can access it," said Noel Loughrin, Senior Solutions Manager for Public Sector at Laserfiche.

A modern ECM is much more than that. "Now it's all about the intelligence," she said. "It's not just storing, but rather making all of those documents or records intelligent. It's using technology to help you manage that information."

With modernized ECM, agencies can search the data contained in their forms. They can create reports for improved insight. And they can automate workflows. "When a document isn't just a piece of paper anymore, it elevates everything that you can do with that document," Loughrin said.

"Now, public entities can save money via eliminating the need for physical records storage, increase compliance with applicable laws and requirements for funding, improve access to records and so much more," she said.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health saw this come to life when it modernized in support of the records-management requirements of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The department partnered with the state, which was already using Laserfiche, to procure a new records management solution. In doing so, it eliminated the need to build a warehouse for patient archives, created efficient processes to automatically digitize and organize charts and integrated document management with the agency's medical system, thus eliminating repetitive data entry.

**Here are four ways in which ECM can help agencies reduce the administrative burden and provide a better constituent experience.**

# 1 Connect Physical and Digital Content Journey

Agencies collect vast volumes of information, mostly via paper forms. That slows the constituent journey and creates time-consuming processes for government workers who are providing the services. Additionally, paper represents a security risk. Anyone can open a file drawer, after all, and paper documents are susceptible to environmental hazards like fire, water and heat.

Moreover, agencies struggle to glean insights from paper-based information: It takes time and effort to cull the data these forms contain, and even then, agencies are likely to get only a partial picture. This can impact compliance-related document-discovery processes and even interfere with key missions.

In health care, for example, "the certificates for nurses or certain physicians have to be updated every few years to ensure everybody stays within license," said Grace Nam, Strategic Solutions Manager for Health Care at Laserfiche. When agencies struggle to locate the relevant documentation, "there can be bottlenecks in that process."

Paper creates other issues as well. "Many agencies still have to keep their physical documents, per laws or guidelines. But when you have a massive warehouse holding a lot of different documents and records, it can be challenging to locate that information," Loughrin said.



To move forward, agencies need an ECM system that connects physical and digital content. The idea is to retain physical documents where needed for records-retention compliance and a digital document for discovery purposes — and to map the digital document to the location of the physical document.

## Use Case: Simplifying Medicaid Billing

The Southeast Kansas Education Service Center in Greenbush supports schools, students and families in 117 school districts and 18 infant/toddler networks across the state. One critical service the organization provides is helping districts maximize their Medicaid reimbursement through special education programs.

Acting as a third-party biller, Greenbush helps process claims accurately, while managing the information-gathering and billing requirements of Medicaid. But a legacy online storage and file-sharing system was complex and lacked searchability. Users found it difficult to navigate, and manual effort frustrated employees and school districts.

The Greenbush Medicaid billing team replaced its system with a Laserfiche content services platform, connecting physical and digital content.

The new system gives the Greenbush team the ability to search across folders and document batches. It streamlines collaboration between the school districts and Greenbush's Medicaid and business offices, increasing accuracy and transparency while reclaiming time for staff.



# 2 Simplify Data Access Through System Integration

When agency staffers need to bounce between multiple technology solutions to access information, it slows down service delivery. And it raises critical questions: How frequently is the data updated? How is it updated? Is it accurate?

Fragmented information systems add to the administrative burden and cause frustration for constituents. A common refrain may be, "I already answered this question — why do I have to repeat myself?" The experience can be daunting, and it feels disconnected and cold for constituents, who may be facing stressful or challenging situations.

"People interact with government because they have a challenge that they need help solving, and they often encounter complicated processes," Loughrin said. "If there are multiple agencies — in the justice system, for example, or in human services — they may need to interact with multiple information systems."

A modern ECM can serve as a backbone for content and records across the entire organization, simplifying data access as agencies look to integrate their business systems. Agencies can streamline service delivery, using a single solution to collect and store data. By connecting that solution to a constituent relationship management (CRM) system, a public health solution or a student information system, they give staff a holistic view of that constituent, patient or student.

"If you have a central repository where a lot of this data is stored, then you have the ability to search that data and to get historical context. When a constituent calls asking for help, you can answer their questions without leaving them on hold while you go out and investigate in all of these systems," Loughrin said.

Beyond just easing the administrative burden, such an approach creates an authoritative source for records, documents and data. This helps ensure data is accurate and current. "When you are looking up information for a constituent, all the relevant systems are talking to one another, so you know you are seeing the most accurate or relevant information," she said.

## Use Case: Surfacing Data Quickly and Easily

In recent years, the Isle of Man (pop. 86,000) has undertaken various modernization efforts, bringing more services online and increasing efficiency with digital records management, electronic forms and workflow automation. Integration of disparate records systems plays a key role here.

By transitioning from a legacy records system to Laserfiche digital records management, the local government safeguards and centralizes historic records and ultimately provides better customer service.

Thanks to systems integrations, the public portal makes it easy to search multiple records repositories, for example, in support of land use queries. Integration with ESRI, a mapping tool, means users can interface with the Land Registry to search an online map for properties and view all available documents related to those properties.

By integrating documents management and ArcGIS technology, the local government has been able to speed the constituent journey, empowering people to get timely and accurate answers to their questions around land use.

# 3 Provide Digital Forms for 24/7 Service

Government needs to make its processes and services accessible to all, but outmoded processes can get in the way. Paperwork "can often be inaccessible if it is not clearly written in plain language; if translated versions are unavailable; if it does not consider the needs of people with specific vision, auditory, or cognitive impairments; or if staff are unavailable to offer assistance in a timely manner," the Center for American Progress reports.

"Accessibility is important because constituents' lives happen 24/7. Life happens on Sunday afternoon, it happens for everyone all the time," Loughrin said. "People need to be able to access the agencies that are tasked with supporting them, when they need them."

With digital forms, data and processes can be accessed from anywhere at any time, with an option for real-time translations. There, forms are more than just electronic versions of paper documents: They can include tools that support access for people who have vision, auditory or cognitive impairments.

In tandem with lowering the administrative burden, accessibility via digital forms supports government's need for near real-time reporting. They help deliver faster insights for public programs, allow for swift updates to data and enable agencies to pull constituent or community data from a database and populate fields in forms, making workflows smoother and more seamless both for government workers and constituents.

Given that the digital divide remains a burden for many, agencies can still leverage physical or paper data collection while benefiting from digital forms. Those paper documents can be scanned, stored and shared across business systems through integrations.

## Use Case: Improving Accessibility in Public Records Requests

Although Tompkins County, N.Y., was committed to improving its records management practices, it had been using an old building to store millions of archived records and was set to construct a new building to the tune of $5.5 million.

In the legacy system, citizens making public record requests encountered red tape and long wait times. The county began its Laserfiche implementation by digitizing documents in the county seat of Ithaca, and then quickly brought on other municipalities.

The new system elevated accessibility, enabling citizens to submit records request forms online, 24/7, without having to travel to government offices. Laserfiche's workflow system automates the intake of requests and routes them to the appropriate clerk or department for processing.

The county saved $5.5 million by not having to build a new records facility, while the ready accessibility of digital documents improved transparency and made records more readily available to constituents.





# 4 Augment ECM With Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence has the power to transform the constituent experience and reduce the administrative burden. But there's still uncertainty about what that means in practice. "CIOs often expect AI to add value to the business, but must be clear on what's feasible," according to Gartner analysts.

To build that business vision, and take advantage of AI's potential benefits, organizations will need to make data more readily available. The most promising AI use cases "require access to a sufficient amount of reliable data that is relevant, logical and high quality," Gartner notes. "Getting more value from solutions at scale may require deep business process changes, and new ways of working between AI teams and software engineering, because AI is difficult to integrate into existing systems."

A modern EMC can help accelerate an agency's AI journey, giving agencies the means to train the AI applications on data that is consistent and reliable. With the right permissions in place, digital assistants can then access that data to provide answers in real time, simplifying interactions for constituents and easing the burden on staff members.

This approach helps alleviate many of the security concerns around AI capabilities. When using third-party AI applications in the absence of centralized data, "somebody is storing that data — it is no longer yours to own," Loughrin said. With an ECM system that has built-in AI capabilities, "you are querying your own data. It's not going out into the web to do that query."

Agencies get greater control and can use those built-in AI tools for things like handwriting recognition, turning handwritten documents into digital data that can be shared across business systems.

In the near future, AI embedded in an enterprise content management system will be able to deliver document summaries, allowing staff to search for content and read a summary without having to read the whole document to discover its relevance for an intended purpose.

## Use Case: Using AI to Elevate Constituent Service

In Cabarrus County, N.C., federal funding through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) offered a way to help residents tackle economic uncertainty, rental debt and housing insecurity as a result of the pandemic. But the county needed a modernized approach to determine eligibility and get the funds out as soon as possible.

To that end, the county's IT team created an online Laserfiche form that would capture applicants' information and route it to the relevant departments and systems. The form was integrated with a chatbot to walk people through eligibility requirements and provide an intuitive experience.

The chatbot helped guide applicants through specific eligibility requirements and provided immediate answers so that people did not have to wait to find out whether they were eligible for ERAP assistance.

Chatbot integration also helped immediately redirect people who were not eligible, saving time for county employees who otherwise would have had to spend time reviewing hundreds of ineligible applications.



# **Solutions Spotlight:**
# The Recipe for a Modern ECM

A number of key capabilities within the Laserfiche solution help government leverage the power of ECM to reduce the administrative burden.

## Laserfiche Forms

Unlike conventional scanned documents, Laserfiche Forms are digital documents that agencies can scan or query in order to surface needed information. "It's no longer just a static PDF form that someone has to physically go and read," Loughrin said.

Laserfiche Forms is a web application that allows organizations to collect, process and route information. Users can create web forms to collect or work with information, as well as business processes to define how that information is routed, interacted with and managed.

"A Laserfiche form makes data more actionable. It extracts that data so it can be functional, searchable, reportable — and it can be automated," Loughrin said. "A form comes in and you can automate how it gets reviewed and how information gets sent back out to a constituent."

## Laserfiche AI

Laserfiche implements AI capabilities to elevate document management. Optical character recognition (OCR) is built into the platform to ensure paper forms convert to digital accurately and seamlessly. Handwriting recognition speeds and simplifies intake of a variety of government forms and documents.

Moreover, AI elevates an agency's ability to put data to work. "You can use these tools to extract metadata information," making it easier for agencies to find information faster, and to utilize that document-based data to drive actionable insights, Loughrin said.

"You can say — I need metadata that meets this criteria, I need these folders to have this type of documentation — and then let these AI tools automate all that for you," she said. "You no longer have to have a human doing all of that, and it makes those insights far more accessible."

## Laserfiche Integrations

Laserfiche Integrations enable an agency to scale business transformation, synchronize data and improve operational workflows.

"This is about pushing information in and out of a system," Loughrin said. "If you use Laserfiche as your record and documents management backbone, then with integration you can point all of your other systems to Laserfiche, to extract the information you need."

The goal of modernized ECM "is to enable your whole organization to have access to information," she said. "These integrations help do that. Information can be distributed across systems based on the need, and on the constituent side, integration reduces the administrative burden. Rather than the person having to fill in the same information multiple times, you can pull from other systems to pre-populate fields."

This, in turn, changes the dynamic when it comes to constituent experience. "They feel like they're already known by this agency or this entity. They can just put in a little bit of information, a Laserfiche integration can help populate the rest and then someone can just get right down to solving their problem," she said.

## Conclusion

For over 40 years, the Paperwork Reduction Act has mandated that federal agencies handle information in an efficient, effective and economical manner, and many in state and local government have tried to follow suit.

Now, technological advancements are making this easier to achieve, improving constituent experiences and simplifying tedious and time-consuming processes. These tools lessen the administrative burden for constituents while taking some of the weight off government employees.

With AI advancements pushing the boundaries of what is possible, agencies can and should move now to take advantage of modernized document management. This will help them stay ahead of the game as they look to streamline and simplify constituent interactions.

**Learn more about Laserfiche's solution for reducing administrative burden here.**

**Thank you Laserfiche for their support of this valuable resource for public sector professionals.**

# Laserfiche®

Laserfiche is the leading SaaS provider of intelligent content management and business process automation. Through powerful workflows, electronic forms, document management and analytics, the Laserfiche® platform accelerates public service delivery, enabling public sector leaders to focus on innovating the citizen experience.

For over 30 years, Laserfiche has partnered with federal, state and local government agencies to accelerate transformation, simplify compliance and build digital resilience. Today, Laserfiche's cloud-first development approach incorporates innovations in machine learning and AI to serve the world's most innovative governments that continuously seek ways to make government more efficient, more effective and more responsive to citizen needs.

Learn more at laserfiche.com.

govloop

GovLoop's mission is to inspire public sector professionals by serving as the knowledge network for government. GovLoop connects more than 300,000 members, fostering cross-government collaboration, solving common problems and advancing government careers. GovLoop is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with a team of dedicated professionals who share a commitment to the public sector.

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