Workflow

White Paper

This paper is designed to outline FileCM Workflow.
Workflow has been integrated into FileCM 3.0 to provide a simple, non-intrusive capability for managing process flows.
The use of workflow features is optional, and can be overlooked by users who do not require it. Workflow functionality is available in Web and Client versions.

Key Functional Requirements Incorporated Into FileCM Workflow

- To initiate an ad hoc flow from any record
- To initiate a predefined flow from a record as soon as the record is registered
- To create flows based on existing templates
- To provide tasks within flows that allow documents to be referenced
- To provide tasks within flows that allow notifications to be sent to people on distribution lists
- To provide tasks within flows that allow scripts to be run on events to provide extended functionality
- To allow users to Take, Reject, Suspend or Decline tasks
- To enable tasks that require either one or all persons to complete the task before it can move on
- To show flow history

Setting Up a Workflow Template

Generally, an organisation will create a set of “Flows” to facilitate their operations. These will require people to perform “Tasks” along the way. Some Tasks may include editing, creating and deleting documents, while others may refer to external links, require e-mails to be sent, or just prompt users to do something. Furthermore, workflows will apply to certain “Groups” within the organisation, and not be applicable at all to others – this will require security to be applied to restrict visibility.
Once the flows are defined, they are generally saved to become “Templates”, which can be re-used. Setting up templates is done via the “Workflow” administrative menu.
Scripts can be developed within workflow templates that trigger on events such as: “On Current”, “On Start”, “On Suspend”, “On Accept”, “On Decline”, “On Complete” to perform potentially complex tasks. These can include sending e-mails, running reports, opening up FileCM to specific records and publishing the attached electronic documents to sites via FTP.

Activating a Workflow – “To Do” Interface

A “To Do” button has been introduced onto the opening FileCM menu screen. This opens to the user’s workflow screen, showing the user’s “In-Box”, status of active tasks initiated by the user, and providing the ability to initiate new tasks.
In-Box: The In-Box provides a list of all tasks that the logged on user needs to address. The user can choose “Take”, “Done”, “Reject” or “Decline”. Take is used to signify that the user is starting the task. Done is selected when it is completed, to move it on to the next user in the flow. Reject can be used if the current user was not satisfied that the previous user conducted that part of the task satisfactorily. Decline can be used to “close off a task” prematurely, if circumstances change, and conducting the task/flow no longer makes sense.

Active: The Active option shows the status of flows that the current user has initiated. The user can choose to Edit, Suspend, or Delete these.
Done: The Done option shows a history of completed tasks initiated by the current user.
New: This feature allows the user to initiate a new Flow, by defining a series of tasks. The User can choose from a template, or create an ad-hoc flow from scratch.

Record Based Workflow Activation

It is possible to activate a flow from a record stored in FileCM. This can be done in two, non-exclusive ways.

Automated Initiation

This is provided as a new option to the Folder Design Screen. When setting up a Folder key, a new "Workflow" pull-down can be set to any one of the workflows available to the user. When a record is registered within this folder, the flow is initiated. (This feature assumes the flow will be fully automated, and not require user prompting).
This functionality lends itself well to applications where companies want a user to "Request a New File". A FileCM record entry form is designed to allow the user to enter all particular parameters for the new file. The automatically initiated flow will be channelled to the In-Box of a distribution list in a "File Creation and Dispatch Centre", where the first available person can "Take" the task, and complete the request.

User Initiated

A new "Workflow" toolbar button is available against registered records in the "Show Records" screen. Selecting this provides the user with the ability to either "Start a Flow", or "View a Flow" for the current record. "View a Flow" shows all flows where the current record has been associated, present and past. "Start a Flow" will associate the current record to an existing flow template, or a blank flow that needs to be subsequently defined.

Profile Manager

Workflow relies on distribution lists, which contain details of users. A Profile Manager has been introduced to create distribution lists, and add additional details (such as e-mail address) to FileCM and NT users.