



Document Management

Document Management: A Buyer's Guide

IRIS



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Your data is the foundation of your firm, and how you manage it can drastically affect every corner of your practice. Unfortunately, many firms are mismanaging their data to the detriment of their practice. Many professionals lose **50% of their time** every week searching for, preparing, and duplicating work because they don't have the right solution to empower them to do their jobs and focus their time on tasks that matter.

A document management solution (DMS) helps streamline every branch of your firm by making it easy to find the document you need whenever you need it.

If you're new to document management, or you're not quite satisfied with your existing solution, here is your quick guide to help you learn more about whether you need a DMS, the benefits a DMS can provide, and how IRIS is the best DMS solution.



16 Signs You Need a Document Management Solution

You might not know how desperately your firm needs a document management solution (DMS) or how poorly your existing solution treats you.

Here are 16 signs you need a DMS today. If you experience one or two of these on the list, you should consider investing in a DMS soon. If your firm experiences three or more of these signs, you desperately need a DMS.

1. You Prioritize Paper Documents

Rows of filing cabinets storing sensitive personal information are as outdated as using a slide ruler instead of a calculator. With how accessible and cost-effective a DMS is, there is no reason an accountant or firm should ever rely on physical documents.

2. There's Too Many Folders to Organize

For many firms, your organization system creates a digital folder for each client and then stores all relevant information and documents within that folder. This structure is better than nothing, but you shift from searching through an entire database for a single document to searching through the database to find a folder. The folders must also be organized and structured to make it easy to find the information you need whenever needed.



3. You Can't Find the Document You Need

If a client called you right now, how long would it take you to find their information? How easy is finding documents relevant to every entity your clients are involved with? What if they were asking a question about the details of their account that could only be found on a document from last quarter or even last year? Every minute you spend trying to sort and sift through poorly organized documents and folders adds up and leads to you wasting hours every week.

A single employee who spends only 15 minutes every day trying to find documents is wasting over 60 hours annually, focusing on nothing more than trying to find the correct documentation. At a cost of only \$150 per hour, you are losing \$9,000 per employee annually, assuming you only spend 15 minutes a day trying to find the right document.

4. You Can't Find the Right Version

If you've ever faced a series of files that are named "Final", "RealFinal", "FINAL1", "Finalv2", "Final1.5", and "TheLastOne", you know the frustration of version control. You have to sort through all of them to find the most recent version, but there's always a chance that another member of your team is working on a different version and updating information in the wrong file.

Using the wrong version can damage your reputation with your clients as someone they can trust and rely on. It is embarrassing and unprofessional to use the wrong version, and it can lead to costly errors and the potential loss of a client.

Updating documents and ensuring you are using the correct information is essential, but it can be challenging to stay on top of everything without a DMS. You should immediately know which version is the most recent and relevant and not have to spend time working on an outdated file only to learn your mistake too late.

5. Different Projects Are Labeled the Same Way

It's common to feel like you're running out of names when labeling a document or folder. In some cases, you duplicate the name. It's different projects and maybe even different clients, but for various valid reasons, you find yourself with two files saved as "SmithTaxes24". Duplicating file names sets your firm up for the accountant's version of "Who's on First?" complete with mistaken identities, confusion, and wasted time trying to sort everything out.

6. There are Duplicate Files and Accounts in Your System

Duplicate information comes from a genuine place where your team only tries to help. They could not quickly find the account for a client, so they created a new one. Now, your system has both "Triple A Plumbing" and "AAA Plumbing". Notes get left in whichever account the accountant finds first; critical files are attached to one account but not the other, quickly creating a mess of miscommunication.

Duplicating information, files, and accounts only leads to confusion. They need to be consolidated and organized correctly so that all relevant information for a client can be found in one location.

7. Data Goes Missing or Lost

When we're getting ready in the morning, misplacing your glasses or car keys is normal. Missing and finding those things doesn't make for the best day, but we're used to it. When dealing with your client's data, there should never be missing or lost information.

If you've ever worked with a client and then returned to find that you couldn't locate a key file, piece of information, or detail that you swear you know you put in there the last time you worked with them, you need a DMS. You should be able to trust that once a file is in your system and attached to a client, it's going nowhere. It can't be changed; if it is changed, there's a log of who moved it and where it went.

You might be okay with misplacing the TV remote or a bookmark, but you should never be okay with misplacing sensitive client data.

8. Everyone Has Access to Everything

Data security is more than just making sure that people outside your organization aren't able to access sensitive information. It's also about ensuring only the right people inside your firm can access certain files and data. If every user is given the same control and access to information, you need a better DMS that helps protect and control who has access.

9. There's No Standard Format

Each platform has its strengths and weaknesses, but there should be standardization in your firm to choose the best solution for each task. Do you upload a file as a .PDF, .DOC, or .HTML? And what about those random files saved as a .TXT, .DOT, or .ODT? Can you even access those?

Not only should the final file be the same, but the structure of the content should be similar. When you open a document, is the client's name constantly in the same spot? What about their account number or contact information? Key information, files, and folders should be standardized, making it easy for everyone to find the information they're looking for so you can focus on your client's needs, not on trying to find information.

10. Teamwork and Collaboration is Limited

Collaboration is only possible when you have amazing document management. Many firms and organizations choose to avoid collaboration because they don't have the tools to make it easy for team members to communicate and work together on the same project.

11. You Struggle with Remote Work

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, the global workforce made a significant and drastic shift to remote and hybrid work. A staggering **98% of employees** expect remote and hybrid work options. However, without a reliable DMS, remote work is almost impossible. Remote employees need access to the correct document no matter where or when they are working, which requires a secure DMS that creates a standardized solution for everyone.

12. You're Still Using Manual Data Entry

Not only does manual data entry take valuable time that could be better spent on more productive projects, but it also comes with a high error rate. Error rates for manual data entry can be as high as **6.8%**. Each error is a stone thrown into a perfectly calm pond, creating a swarm of ripples. A single error can lead to





miscommunication with the client, billing errors, non-compliance issues, and fines. Automated data entry from a DMS helps save labor time while significantly reducing the error rate and the cost of fixing those errors.

13. One Member of the Team Is Better Organized than the Rest

Without a DMS, each team member is left to sort out their own organization and structure for document management. In most cases, this means that there's one team member who is well organized and has no problems finding the document they need, while other team members struggle to keep documents organized.

Document management should be a standard across your entire practice. Leaving your team to sort it out themselves means the quality of service across your practice is vastly different and that one person is less successful simply because they don't have the same organizational skills. A DMS evens the playing field by providing the same tools and services for your entire team, allowing them to focus more on their billable hours and client projects that matter.

14. Your Size Is Stopping You From Scaling

Your firm can only grow as much as your document management allows. If you spend 20% of your time focused on documents, you only have 80% to focus on your clients. No matter how hard you try, you can't take more clients because you don't have time to do the work. A DMS will help reduce the time you spend managing documents, giving you more time to take on and work with new clients.

15. You're Not Compliant

Compliance is not optional. Non-compliance is accompanied by fines and litigation and can directly relate to client satisfaction and retention. If you have been or currently are non-compliant, a DMS with due date tracking won't just save you a bit of money; it can save your firm.

16. You're Focusing Too Much Time on Fixing Errors

We're only human, and we're going to make mistakes. However, for those who work as accountants or CPAs, a simple error that could be overlooked anywhere else can be a costly mistake.

How Document Management Helps

A DMS focuses on streamlining your firm, helping you do more with your time. Here are some of the most significant ways a DMS can help your firm do more without making you feel burnt out.

Remove Paper Waste

A DMS is a vital part of going digital and paper-free. All of your documents and storage are handled digitally, which can significantly reduce or even eliminate your paper usage and waste.

Reduce Costs

Poor document management comes with a hidden cost. Every hour you spend looking for

documents and trying to organize files is costing your firm. File management is not a billable task, so every hour spent looking for a document is a net loss.

Automatic Data Entry

Manual data entry is a thing of the past. A DMS is more than just organizing and storing data; it also provides an automated system to scan, upload, and automatically generate documents, ensuring data is correctly transcribed and uploaded without any manual input.

Increased Productivity

DMS helps you do more with your day. Rather than worrying about repetitive manual data entry tasks and document management, you get your time back to focus on your clients and projects that directly impact your bottom line. You don't have to work longer hours to do more.

Promote Collaboration

Collaboration and teamwork are powerful tools that help you accomplish more by empowering each team member to highlight their strengths and specialties, but this is only possible when you have the right tools. A DMS empowers your team to collaborate better by giving you a single source of knowledge for every project, helping you know that you're always accessing the correct version with the most recent updates and information.

Improve Security

Integrating a DMS into your existing system improves your physical and digital security. A DMS helps move your documents digitally, making them secure against physical theft and disasters like fires and floods, but it also helps protect against digital threats.

Regulatory Compliance

A DMS helps make and keep your firm compliant with local, state, and federal regulations.



The IRIS Experience

IRIS is dedicated to providing you with more than just a DMS, but with the professional-grade tools you need to help your firm be successful. We work directly with accountants and CPAs to hear what you need most and provide you with what you need. That's why our DMS comes with a built-in PDF reader and editor. You don't need additional licenses or software because we provide you with what you need to get your job done right.

We are your partner during the entire process, from helping you migrate to the DMS to providing unlimited customer support to turn to whenever you have a question.

Your Go-To Option

Find out today why IRIS is the first choice for hundreds of firms. With over 40 years of industry experience, we know what you need and how to help best you reach your goals.

Get started today with [IRIS document management solutions](#).



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