



A Guide to Improving Productivity Throughout All Project Phases

Unify, protect, and control documents and data



Introduction

Today's AEC firms face a continuous battle against eroding project profit margins – challenged with finding new ways to remain competitive while reducing project costs and mitigating risk. As traditional processes collide with hybrid work environments, many firms are rethinking their operations in order to stay profitable during times of uncertainty, and are turning to technology to achieve productivity gains amidst a complex work environment filled with efficiency gaps.

IT STARTS WITH DATA

It is not unusual for AEC firms to experience project delays due to the lack of easy access to information. Having the right data in the right team member's hands at the right times is critical to making timely, educated decisions on how to proceed. However, this is only possible if project teams can parse through hundreds, if not thousands, of project files and access the latest information at a moment's notice— a challenge for any company.

The need for speed and efficiency in today's business environment has never been more critical. In order to keep up with project deadlines, AEC firms need reliable solutions that accelerate project delivery and help teams work remotely, even in locations without connectivity or access points — all while maintaining document control and protecting sensitive information from falling into the wrong hands.

This paper discusses common use cases for tackling data challenges, and looks at the benefits associated with employing a unified solution to handle the demanding needs of a highly collaborative yet distributed workforce leveraging numerous systems.

CHALLENGE

Challenge: Multi-Cloud Sprawl

As AEC firms adopt cloud solutions like Dropbox, Box, and SharePoint for sharing project files, the burden on project managers to manage and work with multiple clouds for any given project greatly increases. To further complicate matters, a project manager may utilize one solution while project stakeholders like Architects and Engineers utilize different clouds; and consultants use yet another -- inevitably leading to issues with getting a clear picture of project progress. Without careful planning and management of these cloud systems, projects suffer from duplicated efforts, increased costs, and security vulnerabilities.

SOLUTION: CONSOLIDATE DATA AND DOCUMENTS ACROSS INDUSTRY SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS

A critical part of any project's success is integrating data from multiple software tools into one unified platform. This helps ensure everyone is on the same page regarding the project's progress, what has been accomplished, and what still needs to be done. Benefits for consolidation include:

- Accurate data collection and reporting
- Quick and easy access to the most up-to-date information for every team member
- Minimize mistakes and rework

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"We have reduced the challenges we had in the field with accessing and creating large files, as well as storing and archiving project documentation by integrating our existing apps with Egnyte. This supports our team's ability to efficiently plan and execute projects."

– **David Pratt**, *Director of Corporate and Operational Technology • Robins & Morton*

CHALLENGE

Challenge: Document Sprawl

As project team members work in different cloud tools, they work with different file types. Across multiple applications and between document versions, revisions, and updates, it can be difficult to keep track of all the critical information related to a project. This not only leads to confusion and delays, but it can also compromise the integrity of the project if important documents go missing or are not properly updated.

SOLUTION: STREAMLINE BUSINESS PRACTICES WITH A CENTRALIZED FILE REPOSITORY

A single platform for accessing and collaborating on documents of various file types is the best way to ensure companywide and project stakeholder visibility. Having a master cloud-based project folder that all stakeholders can securely access eliminates the need for multiple copies of the same project documents, which easily become out of sync. The benefits of a centralized repository include:

- One place to keep files organized and accessible from multiple devices at any time
- Consistent management of file versions
- Confidence in knowing file collaboration will not result in an overwrite of recent changes



"There is no longer the need to request files or handle requests from partner firms to send files. We add partners as another team member to our data source, giving them access to the project structure."

– **Mike Rensing**, *Director of Technology • GBBN Architects*

CHALLENGE

Challenge: Jobsite Connectivity

Accessing and updating project files remotely can be a huge challenge for job sites with poor internet connectivity. In addition to hindering communication between team members, it also prevents the quick access to important documents such as project drawings and budgets required for team members to do their job. Without timely access, decisions on the job site may be delayed or even incorrect, leading to potential problems down the line.

SOLUTION: REMOTE TEAM FILE ACCESS AND UPLOAD OF LARGE DATA SETS

Quick and easy access to project files from remote project locations often requires hybrid solutions - a combination of on-premise and cloud-based project file storage. With a hybrid solution, team members can store, access, and work on project files locally in areas of low connectivity, and sync in-process files back to the master project folder in the cloud, once they regain connectivity. The unique combination of these capabilities provides teams with the best of both worlds, ensuring quick and easy access to project files from remote project locations. The benefits of hybrid architecture include:

- Faster data retrieval from a centralized location
- Accessibility for stakeholders not located on the jobsite
- Minimizes cost and time to migrate data between sources



“Key criteria that Egnyte had that really excited us was that it wasn’t strictly cloud based. We could have a hybrid solution that allowed us to synchronize files to the cloud. If you lose connectivity on a construction site and you’ve lost access to your files because you were in a cloud-only system, that could be detrimental to the operations of our business.”

– **Mark Bryant, CIO • PCL**

CHALLENGE

Challenge: Uncontrolled Sharing of Files

Uncontrolled sharing of project documents can lead to serious security risks. Without proper controls, documents containing sensitive information, such as designs or contracts, can easily be misplaced or accessed by unauthorized individuals. This also means that important updates may not be disseminated promptly, leading to potential errors in the construction process. In order to protect both the firm and the client, it is vital to implement strict document control procedures and use secure software for storing and sharing documents.

SOLUTION: SHARING CONTROLS AND CONTENT SAFEGUARDS

By storing project data on a centralized platform, controlling who can access files can also be centralized and simplified. Tracking documents with this level of transparency ensures proper compliance for government regulations such as the Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC). To further safeguard valuable data, adding password protection can help ensure that only authorized parties have access to the valuable information - something which quickly gets complicated when hosting or sharing on multiple platforms. The benefits of sharing controls and content safeguards include:

- Prevents unauthorized access to data
- Reduces costs associated with data breaches
- Increases client confidence



“With Egnyte's security features, we can be more proactive than reactive... Egnyte's been super easy to use to the point where we just sign our guys in. They have a shared drive, so it's very simple for them to access what they need when they need it.”

– **Arthur Reed**, Network Administrator • Barnhill Contracting Company



When exploring solutions, it's essential to identify your specific business challenges and then define the platform requirements that will support key use cases, whether they are unifying teams and project documents, providing remote teams' easy file access and upload capabilities, maintaining document controls, or ensuring document security.

Connect with Egnyte to learn more about building a unified platform to support growth and accelerate project delivery.

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"One of the main challenges of having files stored in five different places is that you start losing governance and it becomes impossible to manage, especially with a large team. When you have one centralized system you can ensure it's highly secure and the right people have the right access."

- Steve Buchanan, Head of IT • BW Workplace Experts

EGNYTE

Egnyte provides the only unified cloud content governance solution for collaboration, data security, compliance, and threat prevention for multi-cloud businesses. More than 17,000 organizations trust Egnyte to reduce risks and IT complexity, prevent ransomware and IP theft, and boost employee productivity on any app, any cloud, anywhere. Investors include GV (formerly Google Ventures), Kleiner Perkins, Caufield & Byers and Goldman Sachs.

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