

Voyager

Voyager: A New Approach to Portals

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Work Locally, Share Globally

Many organizations have embraced the vision of sharing resources with others in their community. To accomplish this, they have opted for a top-down architectural approach calling for centralization of content and high standards for metadata. But this architecture ignores the controlled chaos at work in most knowledge-centered organizations.

Here we find professionals armed with powerful software, a PC and an Internet connection will create, store and share content through myriad unofficial channels. The data manager of the centralized repository wages war against an onslaught of undocumented, broken, duplicated or, simply, bad content. The executive asked to report on how much of the organization's available content has been shared, can do little more than shrug.

Sharing content is not only a noble goal but it is also critical to our economy, environment and national security. But the architecture of centralization and top-down control does not leverage the power — and expertise — of the workers on the ground. At Voyager Search, we have taken a different approach.

Voyager is a commercial, off-the-shelf product. It is the only enterprise search solution that speaks spatial natively. Voyager is easy to use out-of-the-box, while being highly extensible. Voyager offers a connector framework that allows it to tap into other data repositories; it can index almost any file type; and it offers a robust API. Voyager is also open and scalable, but with advanced security which will be integrated with Active Directory.

While Voyager certainly can index data at a single location and publish those results to internal and external customers; can manage data by pointing out broken links and duplicate content; and can make that content accessible even if it doesn't have any metadata, it seems more powerful vision is to make all of the data within an organization discoverable, accessible and usable no matter where that data reside. Voyager is a decentralized solution that provides a single unified search result: local content side by side with whatever is found elsewhere in the organization or across the Internet and enterprise level security where restricted access is needed. It is the best of both worlds.



The important architectural distinction between Voyager and a typical cloud solution is that Voyager doesn't copy data. Voyager examines data as it creates an index. Voyager skims the landscape of files extracting every tidbit it can about the document, file, executable, or whatever, so that this information can be searchable. Then, the item is closed. The data is never moved, copied or touched when a search is performed. There is no upload to make data available, and indeed file systems can be set to record changes so that it is always up to date.

In contrast to approaches that call for building large data infrastructures for storing this content and fast bandwidth to move the content, we require that an instance of Voyager be located close to the data it is indexing on a reasonably fast computer. If centralized, users will pay a "bandwidth tax" when creating or updating and index, because Voyager will have to find and explore data across the network sometimes a world away. Large files may time out and bandwidth outages will effect the indexing time. By placing small instances of Voyager in regional offices, the data indexing will be very fast and very thorough. And then data managers can be decided what of that data should be published nationally to internal and external customers. Also in contrast to a typical portal, an organization doesn't need to stand up a data center to host all of the content, it simply needs to host and backup a small index of that content.

Where centralization exists, Voyager can create an awesome, easy-to-use, searchable index of the data known on a macro level, but the smaller sites will be flying blind when they go to contribute data to a centralized database or make recommendations about what they have to support the larger initiative.

In closing, whether you choose to publish your data on the Voyager platform or simply discover and manage your data using Voyager and then publish it to another platform, don't you want to start with the peace of mind that you know what you have and you are putting your best work out there? We believe you do and will wonder why you didn't discover Voyager long ago.