



Alfresco

Review From A Customer



From IT Central Station, the leading review site for enterprise technology solutions.

Review by a Real User

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WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE?

Document Management, Content Model Manager, MS Office integration, Collaboration & Sharing, Workflow, Digital Asset Management, support for standards such as Content Management Interoperability Interface (CMIS).

HOW HAS IT HELPED MY ORGANIZATION?

We use the Alfresco product to keep track of project information (documentation), being it email conversation or office documents. Content can be easily found via Free Text Search or metadata search. I have also been involved in a lot of Alfresco projects in the publishing area where really come into its best. The publishing area has high demands on a flexible content management solution and business process engine. Alfresco can be used to support full digitalizing of book production and publishing.

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

Alfresco is quite well rounded at this point but if I should pick something it would be to improve the Model Manager further so it supports the full range of content model definition language. Such as support for associations and mandatory aspects.

FOR HOW LONG HAVE I USED THE SOLUTION?

10 years

WHAT WAS MY EXPERIENCE WITH DEPLOYMENT OF THE SOLUTION?

Not really, Alfresco works well on many different platforms either as a cluster install or a single node. However, you have to be experienced with the product for it to go smooth. I recommend training before embarking on any bigger projects.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE STABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

No, but as said in previous question, Alfresco requires an experienced certified administrator to install it properly in production.



WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE SCALABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

No, Alfresco scales very well in the web, application, and database layers. A typical high availability installation would consist of Apache web servers in the DMZ as SSL terminators, caching of static content, URL rewrite, and load-balancing between the nodes in the Alfresco server cluster, which can be scaled separately to the web layer and the database layer. The database layer can also be scaled separately via MySQL Master-Slave or for example PostgreSQL XtraDB cluster. The meta-data (database files) and content (content files and index) is typically stored on a SAN (such as a NetApp), making it easy to support a DR scenario. You provision application files and configuration via Puppet and content files, index, and database files are managed by the SAN.

HOW ARE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT?

Customer Service: Good, Alfresco will try and help out in any way they can to make the customer happy. It is also possible to get a lot of help from the community at community.alfresco.com Technical Support: Average, this might be because I am quite experienced and the questions I have might be difficult to find an answer to quickly as I have probably already exhausted most solution possibilities before I contact support.

WHICH SOLUTION DID I USE PREVIOUSLY AND WHY DID I SWITCH?

Have not used any other ECM system than Alfresco.

HOW WAS THE INITIAL SETUP?

In the beginning, when I started out with Alfresco, it was quite a task as you need to know quite a lot of different areas to setup a proper Alfresco solution, you need to be familiar web server installation and configuration, certificate/https setup, LDAP, CIFS, WebDAV, application server tuning, database configuration, Kerberos etc. But these days we have guides for this, with clear steps making it easy to install the product and provide a robust solution. You would spare yourself a lot of trouble by taking training courses on Alfresco. Check out courses on Udemy.

WHAT ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM?

I was working for an Alfresco partner called Ixxus and I have worked with around 25 Alfresco projects, so my review is based on my experience from these projects.

WHAT'S MY EXPERIENCE WITH PRICING, SETUP COST, AND LICENSING?

Most clients I worked with are migrating from a shared drive setup or a home grown content management system, and they want to migrate existing content into Alfresco and start using CMS features such as free text search, metadata search, rules, fine grained permissions, automation, workflow, collaboration and sharing.

WHICH OTHER SOLUTIONS DID I EVALUATE?

No, Alfresco is the most widely used open source ECM in the world and it has characteristics that I really like such as a Java based platform, lots of integration points, many protocols for accessing it, advanced workflow support, scripting, easily customizable user interface, a concept of a group/team based working area called site.



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WHAT OTHER ADVICE DO I HAVE?

Start with a smaller project and bring in an experienced Alfresco consultant that is either Alfresco Certified Engineer (ACE) or Alfresco Certified Administrator (ACA). Or anyone that can provide extensive experience from deploying Alfresco into production. Preferably the Alfresco consultant should be able to talk you through a network architecture for an Alfresco deployment, content model design, how the system can be customized, how the workflow integration works, and finally how you will migrate existing content into Alfresco in an efficient way.

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