



Flash

Laserfiche Empower 2014 – Embracing Web, Mobile, and Social

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IN THIS FLASH

This IDC Flash provides highlights from Laserfiche's Empower 2014 event, the company's annual partner, reseller, and end-user training conference held January 14-17, 2014, in Anaheim, California.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Laserfiche hosted more than 2,000 customers, partners, and resellers at Empower 2014, its annual conference held January 14-17, 2014, in Anaheim, California. Attendance was up significantly from last year's 1,600 attendees; this year's event was sold out nearly a month ahead, and many of the sessions were standing room only.

The overarching theme continues to be empowering users and democratizing content – making content accessible to business users in the context of their business processes. As in prior years, the conference kicked off with a day of pre-conference workshops, followed by three days of keynotes and sessions. This year's event featured 9 tracks and over 240 sessions; attendees could choose sessions based on their roles, the Laserfiche products they are using, and their skill levels (e.g., basic, intermediate, advanced). Laserfiche employees led approximately two-thirds of the sessions; customers and partners led the rest. Laserfiche trainers also hosted a variety of hands-on labs during the conference.

Laserfiche's product portfolio comprises Avante, Laserfiche's ECM offering for small and medium-sized businesses, and Rio, which addresses the needs of large organizations. Laserfiche 9, released in January 2013, was the big topic at last year's conference. In a major new release, Laserfiche 9 introduced Laserfiche Business Processes (uniting ECM and BPM) and Laserfiche Forms, which make it easy for business users and IT in organizations of all sizes to extend business processes to the point of information capture using Web-based forms. Laserfiche 9.1 debuted in December 2013 and added Laserfiche Web Accelerator, search enhancements, enhancements to Laserfiche Forms, Laserfiche Workflow Web, and enhancements to Laserfiche Web Access. This year's keynotes also provided a glimpse of what's to come in Laserfiche 10, which is still in development.

Karl Chan, Laserfiche CTO, elaborated on the impact of Web, mobile, and social media on business in his day 1 keynote. Chan stressed that the principal aims of Laserfiche remain easy information access and collaboration – even as the tools and processes utilized by business are changing. Firms are using the Web as a conduit to business, and Laserfiche has provided Web versions of Laserfiche's

traditional desktop products (such as Workflow and Quick Fields) to cater to customer needs. Overall, key product themes included enhanced Web capabilities; a simpler, more intuitive user interface; mobility; capabilities that help people collaborate and share best practices; and social platform integration. Chan highlighted several recent and planned new features:

- Laserfiche Forms, which has seen tremendous uptake among Laserfiche customers
- Laserfiche Web Accelerator, a new component included with Rio in release 9.1 that improves performance in Web Access by caching images, thus preventing repeated server requests (A distributed processing module, to be released in 1Q14, will enable customers to distribute processing across multiple servers to improve the performance of resource-intensive activities such as optical character recognition [OCR].)
- Single sign-on for all Web-based Laserfiche products (Workflow, Forms, etc.), which is under development
- Laserfiche's mobile app (for mobile support), which is now available on Android in addition to iOS (Laserfiche gave a short demo of an expense management app illustrating how easy it is to create new mobile workflows by configuring Laserfiche on the server – with a single click, a user could take a picture of a receipt and kick off a reimbursement workflow.)
- Social media integration (For example, using Laserfiche Forms, users can submit tweets; once approved, these get posted with relevant credentials.)

Users were also given a preview of some of the enhancements slated for Laserfiche 10:

- Laserfiche Web Access 10 provides a unified UI across all products and form factors. Users will enjoy a simpler, cleaner interface without extraneous fields or data, and they can choose to customize dialog boxes, panes, and interactions. The new UI also makes it easier to work with documents and search results.
- Laserfiche Answers is a new online question-and-answer Web site, which replaces Laserfiche's support site forums. It is a storehouse for community knowledge and a portal where users can ask questions and share expertise within or across organizations.

A major focus of Laserfiche 10 will be cloud, and we can expect to hear lots more about that at next year's event.

The keynote on day 2 showcased customer success stories. Featured speakers discussed their use cases, challenges, and success with Laserfiche, as well as their future plans, and offered tips for other users.

Sam Dunn, CIO of Babson College, discussed the college's journey with Laserfiche from initial deployment in undergraduate admissions to (planned) rollout to all administrative departments. Babson College has taken a strategic, "enterprise" approach to ECM: it put together a steering committee to envision the full scope of deployment and established a Laserfiche center of excellence to implement the governance structure, identify and prioritize opportunities, and help departments build their business cases and obtain approvals. Key to Babson's choice of Laserfiche was its ease of use for business people, reducing reliance on IT.

Mike Re, CIO of Avis Fleet Services in South Africa, described how Avis is using Laserfiche in conjunction with its core fleet management system to manage a fleet of 300,000 vehicles. With Laserfiche, Avis has automated the processing of 85,000 invoices per month; recently, Avis also rolled out an automated quote system. Laserfiche has seen "organic adoption" during the three years since Avis brought in the automated quote system. Before, Avis' offices were cluttered with piles of paper; today, users perform all their activities from a single screen. Avis has recouped 20% of its total office space, reduced storage costs by 75%, and reduced printing costs by 40% – reducing paper by 5 tons per year. The company has also increased productivity and grown its customer base without increasing head count. So far, Avis has digitized its core customer processes; future plans include rolling Laserfiche out in support of the entire life cycle of the vehicle and automating customer contract management and HR processes.

Finally, John Barragan, COO of Girard Securities, spoke about his company's upgrade to Rio and the challenges of process automation in a business that has strict security and distributed offices. Girard started with Laserfiche in 2006 to build a search and retrieve system, replacing paper files that lacked automation and introduced the risk of losing or misfiling documents. Says Barragan, "Laserfiche has changed the entire way our advisors do business with us." Girard's Laserfiche system supports the new customer onboarding process including enrollment forms and transfer of assets – dossiers that easily grow to 50 pages. Laserfiche captures all metadata, ensuring compliance and smooth SEC audits. Girard is working on several additional business process automation projects and also plans to incorporate Laserfiche into its Web site so financial advisors who want to join Girard can apply online; Laserfiche will automate the overall workflow through to final approval and push documents to Girard's CRM system. Barragan sees ECM as the root of organic growth for Girard, noting: "Within two years, Laserfiche will become a revenue source for us."

Customers leading sessions at the event were very upbeat. Interesting use cases included NorthStar Financial, which undertook a major conversion from a competitor ECM system and is leveraging Laserfiche Forms and Workflow to automate processes in legal, IT, and other departments; SUTEL, in Costa Rica, which regulates telecom providers and has digitized 2 million images, reducing internal requests for physical documents by 95%; the University of Ha'il, in Saudi Arabia, which has moved to Laserfiche and iPads for paperless approvals and document workflows and is now 100% paperless across 4 campuses, 97 departments, and 650 users; Tompkins County, in New York, which indexed/digitized 198 years of physical records using Laserfiche as part of a sustainability program, eliminating the need for a new building; and Eaton County, Michigan, which is using Laserfiche in 25 departments to support 350 employees.

Other Announcements at the Event: Epson

Epson, a Laserfiche Empower 2014 sponsor, debuted three new desktop scanners at the conference:

- WorkForce DS-510 – \$399
- WorkForce DS-760 – \$899
- WorkForce DS-860 – \$1,099

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Laserfiche has posted strong revenue growth over the past several years – at roughly three times the growth rate for the overall content management market – and if this year's Empower conference is any indication, it should continue on that trajectory. The company has remained focused on its core value proposition, which is clearly resonating with its customers. Laserfiche continues to talk about "democratizing content" and the importance of ease of use for business users. The company also understands the importance of ease of implementation and deployment as it has served small- and medium-sized businesses for many years – organizations that often lack formal IT departments. Easy integration with existing business systems is also an important capability for ECM solutions today.

We see plenty of opportunity for Laserfiche to grow its customer base in the verticals where it has traditionally seen strong adoption, including state and local government, federal government, financial services, healthcare, and education – and expand its presence in additional verticals. The company is clearly doing well overseas and will find additional market expansion opportunities abroad. The attendance at Empower 2014 and the enthusiasm of the users who presented at the event certainly suggest Laserfiche can leverage its loyal customer base to grow share of wallet.

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