

# Automating Mission Critical and Business Critical Processes

Prepared by Kinetic Information

*Verity White Paper*





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Publisher's Note: Information contained in this document is intended for guideline purposes only. Verity product documentation supersedes information contained in this document. The situations described in this document are offered as examples; actual configurations and results will vary from system to system.

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# Automating Mission-critical and Business-critical Processes

## Overview

Verity LiquidOffice™ (formerly Cardiff LiquidOffice) smoothly meets the value requirements of customers and partner-seeking vendors as an affordable, accessible solution for e-forms management. The system sets out to deliver efficiency to enterprises in the dynamic environment of modern business—saving companies time and money in the shift from paper-based forms processing to the fast-paced realm of ‘e’.

Businesses will take note of LiquidOffice’s attention to standards and operative simplicity. As a server-based Web application that can be used and managed via an Internet browser, it is usable both on- and offline, and targets a broad base of users across multiple industries and markets.

Enterprise solution partners serving mission-critical functions in the areas of content management, workflow, document management, and enterprise resource planning may look to LiquidOffice to complete their end-to-end solutions. With a powerful set of APIs and Java-based architecture, the product can round out a content and data management solution by providing a full range of forms management functionality.

Kinetic Information believes LiquidOffice is well positioned to assist organizations in the efficient capture, tracking, and management of e-forms information. Its support for multiple data formats and ability to connect with software solutions from myriad other technology providers can help enterprises efficiently and cost-effectively make the transition from paper to ‘e’.

## Section I: Managing Business the ‘E’-way

While organizations all over the globe grapple with the ‘e’-way of doing business, most agree that process change is far from easy. Tools abound for converting, streamlining, tracking, and managing electronic documents, but nobody would call the paradigm shift “painless.” Rather, businesses recognize that change is necessary to compete in the fast-paced global economy, but no one surmises that the typical corporate overhaul is easy—or fun. Nonetheless, the gains of process efficiency, quality data (i.e., error reduction), and improved communication with customers, partners, and satellite offices are worth the trouble.

Forms are a proverbial thorn in the corporate side. They represent a voluminous opportunity for paper-to-electronic conversion, but pose an equally challenging task for electronic process management.

An organization’s value to its customers, suppliers, and distributors hinges on continual information exchanges and verbal or written “transactions” that take place on a daily basis. If companies are to make the leap away from the paper majority—

and at least take steps toward a greater percentage of ‘e’—then there must be tools not only to do the job, but to help users do the job as simply and as efficiently as possible. Organizations must consider both their internal and external users, as well as the resident systems in place. Questions such as “How much security is needed?” and “How long will it take to deploy the system?” frequently muddy the waters of any system roll-out. In addition, the techie discussions of platforms, software, standards, and the like can turn an already hefty climb into Mount Everest in the eyes of corporate decision-makers.

Cost is another factor altogether. Even in the best of economies, few companies like to waste money. Even more so in today’s climate of increasing layoffs, post-September 11 trauma and market hesitation, financial wisdom and frugality is paramount. Companies will invest in technology, but they want to preserve existing technology investments and stretch the utility of their spending to optimum gains. While new systems do, indeed, cost money to purchase, deploy, license, and maintain, the cost of NOT converting to electronic document processing could ultimately be fatal to an organization’s viability in present-day business.

## The OEM Partner Perspective

Similar dynamics are at work on the supplier side of the market as well as vendors seek to address these customer issues either on their own, or with OEM partners. Their goal, of course, is to round out their product offerings in a quest to provide end-to-end solutions to their customers. The list of criteria used to identify “good” partners is a bit subjective, but there are some universal characteristics that nearly every firm looks for in forging savvy alliances; these include such business and market-oriented attributes as:

- industry experience
- a strong customer base
- financial stability
- a solid service reputation
- respectable brand recognition
- quality of product

On the technical side, key qualifications include:

- technology leadership
- powerful APIs
- standards compliance
- support for enterprise security

Stability is especially key in today’s climate of uncertain economics and tenuous global relations, as most companies want to “play it safe” and avoid entering into deals that could tarnish their reputations—or damage their bottom lines. Creative alliances that would not have drawn a second glance in the boom times of the late 1990s now could prove fatal, for investors and customers today are on high alert for any hint of what we might now call “dot-com disease.” This conservatism, by the way, should not be construed as either good or bad; it simply is, and must be dealt with merely as the mindset of today’s business executive.

From a product perspective, this all translates into the need to develop relationships with firms whose features, functions, and target markets match up well by filling in coverage gaps and extending core capabilities. Vendors with vision must look for partners with whom they can meld to tackle larger opportunities in broader industrial areas than either party could on its own.

Ideally, such companies will have technologies and philosophies that address both the customer issues and partner requirements outlined here, and provide value to both audiences—and in the end, this may be the hardest task of all.

## Section II: Putting Value Into Perspective

But what is “value,” anyway? While dollars and cents are easily aligned in left and right columns in a corporate ledger, technological value is a bit more nebulous. A bit in the eye of the beholder, as in the value of a given technology, is evaluated in its ability to solve problems in the workplace. Technology can help a company increase its profits by attracting new customers or expediting a product’s time-to-market. It can also serve as a time- and energy-saver, by enabling workers to perform tasks in a faster, more efficient manner.

### Beholder Clash: IT vs. The Worker

While IT personnel and workers as a whole agree on the “big picture” that technology to save time and effort is a good thing, the two groups often disagree on the details. IT folk see technology as valuable when it is functionally versatile, technically flexible, and relatively agile.

- **Functional versatility:** the openness and elasticity needed to extend or change systems as a company’s needs emerge and evolve. Programmers despise hard-coding systems that cannot later be changed, if there is indeed another way. Systems must meet the needs of multiple applications, for multiple users, for multiple purposes.
- **Technical flexibility:** the ability to be updated and enhanced to reflect new and emerging technological innovations. IT personnel want to use the best solutions and not be tied down to old solutions that cannot accommodate the new.
- **Competitive agility:** the ability to keep pace and out-step market competitors. Let’s face it—companies are in the market to win, make a profit, and “beat out” their competition. It’s key that technology not stand in the way of the ability to turn on a dime.

The general worker population, conversely, deems a system valuable if it does all the good (i.e. helps me do my job faster, better, more easily) with none of the bad (i.e. inconvenience, something new to learn, any change at all). Workers want to continue business as usual and naturally resist change of any kind. Kinetic Information calls this perception “My-Ness Mania”—vis-à-vis the need to do things my way at all times.) KI ascribes the certain attributes to users as they seek value in the IT products they are given to use:

- **Empowerment:** Of paramount importance, empowerment incorporates timely access to information as well the ability to share it with others and store it for later accessibility.
- **Familiarity:** Resistant to change and ever-insistent on maintaining their comfort levels, workers want to continue their jobs in the manner they historically have always done. They don’t want to be inconvenienced,

and virtually any change—however good in the longer term—represents some degree of inconvenience, at least in the short term.

- **Personalization:** Individual presentation and style often separate departments and user groups from each other. Workers may use the same application across a company, but many prefer to “brand” their group’s output with a special look and feel to retain the loyalty of their customers, partners, and employees.

### Maximizing Total Value: The MaxTVSM Perspective

Maximum total value is all about getting the most bang for your buck. Organizations seek to leverage their existing system investments by ensuring that systems talk to each other and can accommodate new software as needed. At the core of these considerations is the focus on improving business processes. In short, companies want IT tools that help their teams work better, faster, and increasingly—together.

This thinking is central to Kinetic Information’s MaxTVSM value methodology, which takes its name from maximizing total value. This should be what every organization ultimately strives to achieve. Departing from traditional Return on Investment (ROI) or Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) calculations, MaxTV recognizes the fact that process analysis and communications enhancement are critical business objectives as well as hard-line numbers alone.

Emphasizing process improvements and communications can do a great deal much to bolster a company’s economic return, and total value truly represents the product of economics, process change, and communications. Thus, a system’s ability to facilitate change and foster communications—and thus to be maximally valuable—hinges on how well it performs and accommodates myriad functions:

- Reconcile and integrate data that is captured directly or incorporated from other systems
- Deliver this data to the user in the appropriate context
- Provide the data in a format that is accessible and readable by all applicable users and applications
- Operate effectively regardless of the medium over which the data is to be collected and distributed (paper, Web, CD-ROM, etc.)

These factors comprise a system framework, from which economic, process, and communication considerations must be evaluated. Next, organizations must find a product that addresses all of these factors. The product under consideration must support data delivery in the appropriate format and over the most effective delivery medium. If this is achieved, the value domain is within reach—as information is accessed by the right people at the right time to perform businesses processes critical to an organization’s success.

## Section III: Two Sides of LiquidOffice Value

Verity’s LiquidOffice ably meets the value requirements of both customer and partner-seeking vendors. A server-based Web-based application that can be used and managed via an Internet browser, it is usable both on- and offline, and targets users with the easily-understood message: it’s an affordable, accessible solution for data capture and response that

saves organizations time and money over paper-based forms processing—and moves these kinds of transactions into the realm of ‘e.’

LiquidOffice directly addresses a tightly-defined and well-understood business problem: the efficient capturing and unified processing of forms-based information that arrives both on paper and via various ‘e’ solutions. It also appeals to the financial conservatism of the day by doing its job in a tightly-focused fashion that works very well unto itself, and yet interoperates cleanly with the broader enterprise infrastructure. And its foundation on industry standards means it can be readily supported and extended as necessary. Thus, it provides an attractive mix of value propositions for customers and partners, and deserves a closer look.

LiquidOffice is a comprehensive e-forms management system for critical functions in medium-sized organizations or departments. At the same time, it features an open architecture and extensive APIs so it can seamlessly connect to the mission-critical applications found in larger organizations or entire enterprises. An XML-based solution, it automates electronic forms both within and outside an organization, and the business processes they support.

LiquidOffice is superbly well positioned to provide two classes of organizational support, which Verity defines as follows:

- business-critical functions, which are central to departmental and line-of-business operations, but not responsible for the enterprise as a whole, and
- mission-critical functions, which are the organization’s life-support system and whose efficiency and productivity is of paramount strategic importance.

This twin capability is where the product’s ability to meet partner and customer needs really comes home to roost, for LiquidOffice is well able to provide business-critical support in and of itself—and yet is readily integrated or ‘OEMable’ with mission-critical applications as well because it interoperates well with comprehensive enterprise solutions. Walking this line is no mean feat, and Verity has done it well.

As a result, providers of such technologies as knowledge management, enterprise resource planning, document management, and workflow can readily integrate with LiquidOffice and thereby provide end-to-end solutions that support the design and tracking of e-forms, information/data capture, XML integration, and the generation of personalized PDF documents with pre-filled forms.

### **Customer Attractions**

In an age where value means everything and trimmer budgets have forced organizations to scrutinize every purchase, technology must meet a more demanding set of criteria to find industry-wide success. Verity has set out to deliver a product whose functions are core to virtually any company or organization, across multiple vertical markets. LiquidOffice, backed

by a strong distribution channel and cool branding, is finding success among organizations seeking effective forms management and processing solutions.

### **Simplicity**

As the proverbial ease-of-use requisite continues to top the wish list of IT and user folk alike, LiquidOffice is the exception. The product requires no desktop client software other than a web browser, reducing the cost and easing the learning curve for the user. Workers access LiquidOffice through Outlook or Notes (so email, calendar, and forms are all in one environment). IT administrators embrace any chance to streamline compatibility issues with existing in-house applications and LiquidOffice helps them reach this objective.

LiquidOffice operates with server-based deployment. Forms reside in a repository based on XML. Thus, users can put paper forms online in a “filler-free” environment. This one-less-thing-to learn/one-less-thing-to-do approach enables users to make the paper-to-electronic leap with fewer headaches and workers are now able to see those forms to which they have authorized access on-screen.

### **Forms Processing**

That Verity originally created LiquidOffice to provide forms processing for mid-size organizations is evident in the product’s broad array of easy-to-use features. An out-of-the-box solution for end-to-end e-forms management, it’s capabilities range from the creation of forms and processing of business rules to the storage of documents when the process is complete. Other features include Web-based design functionality that lets companies quickly create, deploy, and automate the routing, tracking, and approval of electronic forms to support all of their business- and mission-critical processes.

One distinguishing feature is called the In Box, which enables workflow routing without requiring special downloads or a desktop client. All the user sees is pure HTML and the form itself. LiquidOffice allows tracking even at the user level, to see where forms are in the process while administrators can track changes to a given form and at what step in the process the changes took place. LiquidOffice keeps a record copy and tracks the action or steps in the form’s “travel” across the organization—from origination to completion.

Online forms tracking for the user is speedy and easier than trying to find a paper form that has to go through 10 steps in processing. It is PDF-supported for originators—so the creators or “launchers” of the forms can see where their particular forms are in process. Even without a client desktop, forms can be saved onto a local server (like an e-mail box) that lets users know a form has arrived in a way that resembles e-mail notification. This message includes a link that which brings the user directly to the form and then provides the ability to move the form on to the next user in the process.

The Profile Field enables users to pre-populate forms with names, addresses, account numbers, shipping addresses, and other repetitive data so standard information for a given account never needs to be re-keyed, reducing errors and saving time. A database lookup function pulls information from other files, to serve as another re-entry time-saver.

All form functions—such as pre-fill, etc.—are performed in the Designer component of LiquidOffice, requiring no scripting or programming. Rather, the Designer interface is all point-and-click, allowing for decreased training requirements and time. Automated calculations are another feature, providing the capability of totaling receipts, purchases, and other numerical data.

### **Strong Baseline Security**

LiquidOffice's digital approval capability creates an audit trail of digital signatures that provides a strong baseline security by confirming that a user wants to approve a given document, and then locking and time- and date-stamping the fields with the signature of approval. The user then submits the form electronically to the workflow routing page for further processing. The user's entire system can be viewed in PDF or HTML. This level of security is just fine for any number of applications where the risk of forgery or other unauthorized use is comparatively low, and/or the amount of money at stake in the given transaction is relatively small. Examples of these "lower security" applications include time-off requests from employees and personal purchase orders.

In cases where more sophisticated security is required, customers can readily use Entrust or Verisign public key encryption software to enhance the security of LiquidOffice. Interestingly, however, only 10% of customer organizations have Entrust or Verisign in use within their organizations; most simply want to know the ability to interoperate with these products is available to them in case they need it later on. This flexibility is not simply a convenience, but a requirement to compete effectively in today's corporate environments.

### **Ready-Aim-Fire!**

LiquidOffice is well suited for customers seeking a complete e-form management system as well as those that need to tightly integrate with backend enterprise applications. LiquidOffice can also be easily 'OEM'd' by partners when it is critical to tightly track documents as a way to guard against legal action. These include the government, finance, manufacturing, and health care arenas. Government is especially well suited for the technology because it is so standards-intensive and desirous of a simple way to let citizens use electronic forms without requiring special software.

The financial industry is another suitable home for LiquidOffice, to no small extent because of the product's ability to expedite loans, for instance, by using auto-fill capabilities instead of requiring the tedious filling out of repetitive fields on the

application forms. Manufacturing is a third opportunity area for LiquidOffice-style forms processing because of the need to speedily and accurately route properly-approved work orders to the production floor. The Web-based design is especially nice since it allows enables multiple users to share a terminal and handle forms as needed right from a shared browser, simplifying the process and eliminating the expense and space required for individual PCs.

In the health care arena, LiquidOffice system can expedite the filling and routing of patient and insurance forms by processing them electronically rather than on paper. Eliminating the need to rekey repetitive information greatly reduces the opportunity for error, and patient privacy can be protected by using digital signatures and approval functions—key pieces of functionality that are right in line with the new HIPAA requirements that are coming down the pike.

### **ROI & Maximum Value**

Today's sluggish economy is forcing organizations to "do more with less" in terms of both numbers of employees and expanded technology systems. This drive to maximize productivity and efficiency is actually working well, and by many accounts is what has kept the economic picture from worsening. It also has led to a renewed focus on process improvement and worker collaboration that is entirely in line with the principles of MaxTVSM described above, and the end result is a fixation on value that we haven't seen in some time.

The good news from the Verity perspective is that LiquidOffice addresses all three value elements very well: it's highly cost-effective, dedicated to process improvement, and greatly facilitates forms-based communications. Customers could do worse than to look to the product as a way to improve their performance through technology.

### **Bridging Departments & the Enterprise**

Verity positions LiquidOffice as an affordable forms tracking product that helps customers move from paper to electronic forms, or provide a centralized directory for all electronic forms in an organization regardless of the technology with which they were created. The product is well suited for smaller-scale environments in which users often have no need for the heavy-lifting provided by higher-end document management systems, and would rather do nothing that over-buy. But LiquidOffice also plugs nicely into those upmarket systems and thereby provides a natural path to the enterprise when the user requirements grow. Thus, it can be a sound corporate investment because it does what a customer needs it to do today and can serve as a springboard to a larger solution in the future.

### **Standards, Standards, Standards!**

LiquidOffice supports XML, PDF, and HTML, and is a co-editor of the XForms Working Initiative. This embracing of open standards enables users to readily enable the system to oper-

ate within their existing infrastructures and interoperate with enterprise systems. Additionally, the attention to standards support helps ease the corporate reluctance to buy into a system that may back them into a proprietary corner.

In turn, this is key to saving time and lowering costs for IT personnel, who revolt at the notion of having to “start from scratch” in order to achieve the desired gains in forms management. Java-based on the server side and supportive of Web services, LiquidOffice will “play well with others” and can be an important piece of the modern enterprise’s interoperability strategy.

### **Partner Benefits**

LiquidOffice’s partner appeal stems from this same ability to simultaneously meet mid-market customers’ needs and still interoperate with larger-scale technology systems. With an installed base of 20,000 customers, Verity brings a well-established foundation to the table and an earnest attitude toward collaboration and synergy that prospective partners would do well to pursue.

Featuring a turnkey e-forms repository and sophisticated functions for forms routing, tracking, and electronic approval, LiquidOffice is wrapped in a cloak of efficiency for customers and partners alike. Its capacity for intranet and extranet server installation via Web clients eliminates the need for Java applets or form-fill plug-ins, dramatically lowering implementation cost and time. And the system’s point-and-click Form Designer, optional conversion tool (which supports static PDF, Quark, Microsoft Word, and PageMaker formats, among others), and routing capabilities deliver comprehensive functionality that expedites use and shortens the time to value.

In the same vein, an Enterprise Access option unlocks the door to unlimited forms access, fill, and submission into the LiquidOffice Web Desktop via any standard Web browser. Thus, companies are saved the expense of purchasing extensive client licenses simply to access and fill in forms. Full user licenses offer more robust functionality such as forms approval, review, and customized data access, while a Public Access option provides form-fill access to LiquidOffice e-forms for public users lacking accounts on the system. A natural target for citizen or broad-based public usage, this feature uses HTML and PDF formats to access, fill, and submit forms for future routing without requiring a system client or special software.

### **Collaboration, Not Competition**

Though fully-complete on its own, LiquidOffice can be an effective front end to other systems as well, leaving room for OEM and other partnership arrangements in the areas of high-end workflow, content management, document indexing, and collaborative authoring. For example, while it does contain a repository, it does not “manage documents” in the way the existence of a repository might suggest. In fact, the product does not include any sophisticated document management or indexing functionality in the mode of the higher-end document management systems. Verity recognizes that existing players simply “do it better”

and have more experience with that sort of functionality, and is eager to partner with other firms to serve customers with that kind of requirement.

Verity’s Connect Agents support XML, ODBC, and JDBC-compliant applications, and enable LiquidOffice forms to connect to various data targets. In addition, PDF copies of completed forms can be stored, along with XML index data, via Archive Connect Agents. Custom Connect Agents are simply assembled to automate forms processing into systems from FileNET, Microsoft, Documentum, Lotus, and other technology providers.

LiquidOffice also has a software development kit (SDK) that gives customers and partners a complete and well-documented set of APIs to facilitate rapid integration with all enterprise applications. The SDK ships with LiquidOffice and clearly shows different calls and methods available, sample JSP pages, sample XML descriptors, and a sample installer for Custom Connect Agents. Among the many available APIs are Connect Agent API, Single Sign-on API, Workflow API, and SOAP API.

### **Value Enhancement, Not Price Cutting**

Part of LiquidOffice’s value proposition certainly is its relatively low price, which can be as little as 10% of the price of alternative systems. However, Verity’s stance is not to compete with providers of enterprise systems by offering “basic” functionality at a cut-rate, but rather to complement those offerings by enhancing their functionality—and thus their potential appeal—at incremental cost. Verity’s story is steeped in value from the perspective of enterprise interoperability, and as such, it has a vested interest in ensuring it develops successful collaborative partnerships.

### **Tuning into the Channel**

Verity has built a global distribution channel whose loyal participants are selling solutions that represent further avenues through which Verity’s partners can expand their businesses. The company’s Channel Partner Program assists with lead generation, trade show participation, cooperative marketing, volume discounts, and advance communication about emerging products and future enhancement releases. Partners also receive Application Development Consulting during project development and are provided with an annual conference. Working closely with the firm enables partners to continually improve their businesses and elicit customer feedback in the market. The fruits of this intelligence network obviously could be available to technology partners as well.

### **Standards, Standards, Standards!**

The fact that LiquidOffice supports XML, PDF, and HTML. Verity is also a co-editor of the XForms Working Initiative which means all of Verity’s technology will incorporate this emerging standard out of the box. OEM partners therefore can enjoy the same peace of mind customers do when it comes to utilizing the offering because they won’t risk backing into a proprietary corner. They also can minimize their costs of integration because

they won't have to train their existing personnel in an entirely new environment. As in the customer scenario, LiquidOffice will play well with other solutions and therefore can be an important piece of a software vendor's go-to-market strategy.

## Section IV: LiquidOffice MaxTVSM Value Indicator

Kinetic Information's MaxTVSM Value Indicator rates the general ability of a technology solution to solve enterprise business problems. Rooted in the MaxTV philosophy presented above, it gauges an offering's ability to address customers' economic, process change, and communications issues relative to that of other offerings either entering or already in the market. The underlying principles are that solving business problems is the primary objective, and that more than one technology or combination of technologies usually can be used to solve the same problem.

After exploring LiquidOffice and evaluating its strengths in light of other solutions available to enterprises seeking to electronically convert and track paper-based forms, Kinetic Information has reached the following MaxTV conclusions:

- **Economics:** LiquidOffice's Web-centricity and standards foundation promise to heighten the efficiency and reduce the cost of processing forms, and to facilitate interconnection with other technology systems.
- **Process Change:** LiquidOffice's ability to handle paper and e-forms, and to readily interoperate with larger-scale systems, position it well to allow customers to unify and optimize their information capture processes, and to enable partners to enhance and extend their own core offerings.
- **Communications:** LiquidOffice's inclusion of basic workflow functionality, tracking capabilities, and support for multiple data formats allow users to readily interact with the system, and the system itself to interact with other systems in the enterprise.

MaxTVSM Indicator: +9.8

Note:

- MaxTV Indicator ratings of +9 or better indicate solutions we believe belong on users' "must-see" list of potential solutions.
- MaxTV Indicator ratings of +5 to +9 indicate solutions that are definitely worth considering in most situations.
- MaxTV Indicator ratings of less than +5 may well be worth investigating depending on the business problem being solved.

## Verity and Intellectual Capital Management

Headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, Verity provides software that enables organizations to maximize the return on their intellectual capital investment. The company's intellectual capital management (ICM) solutions provide integrated search, classification, recommendation, monitoring and analytics across the real-time flow of enterprise information, along with question and answer interfaces for effective online self-service. Other Verity ICM solutions capture content and drive automated business processes. Verity technology also serves as a core component of more than 260 applications from leading independent software vendors.

Around the world, more than 11,500 organizations of all sizes and types rely on Verity to manage their intellectual capital. In the private sector, these include ABB, AT&T, AXA, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, Capital One, Cisco, Deloitte Consulting, EDGAR Online, Ford, GMAC, Hewlett-Packard, Kaiser Permanente, KPMG, Mayo Foundation, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Roche Diagnostics, SAP, UBS and Verizon. In the public sector, customers come from all levels and branches of government, including the U.S. General Services Administration, the U.S. Air Force and Army, the U.S. Department of Defense, including the armed forces units, and the U.S. Departments of Energy and Justice. Independent software vendors that integrate Verity include Documentum, FileNet, Lotus, PeopleSoft, Stellent and TIBCO.



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