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Demystifying the Gartner ECM Magic Quadrant

Posted by **Alan Pelz-Sharpe**

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Inclusion in the Gartner Magic Quadrant (MQ) is believed by vendors to have a very positive impact on sales. In the [2007 MQ for Enterprise Content Management](#), published late last month, it's clear that little (in Gartner's view) has changed in the ECM world. Well, we beg to differ: 2007 has been a period of major change! And so rather than harping on perceived weaknesses in this highly influential document, let's point out where the analysis in the CMS Watch [ECM Suites Report](#) differs from Gartner's.

1. CMS Watch recognizes that there are valid and increasingly plausible and popular open source options for ECM making an impact on the market as a whole. [Alfresco](#), [Nuxeo](#), [Knowledge Tree](#), [Jahia](#) and [InfoGrid](#) are all credible options. Yet not even a mention of Alfresco (which has been almost ubiquitous in the press this year) has made the Gartner report.
2. We see regional richness and diversity among ECM suppliers around the globe. Examples include the impact of [NewGen](#) in India, Asia and the Middle East, and [Saperion](#) in Europe. Neither vendor gets a mention in the MQ.
3. We don't grade vendors on the size of their revenue, rather on their viability and the quality of their products. Many vendors make less than \$20 Million a year (a criteria for inclusion in the MQ), yet are profitable, stable and produce very high-quality products.
4. We differentiate vendors by scenarios, i.e., by where its product would be best suited. For example [Cimage](#), [Spescom](#) and [Formtek](#) (only Cimage is included in the MQ) might all be prime candidates in an Engineering DM situation. Vendors have both domain expertise and products that have been designed to excel in some situations but not others. We think it's important that you know those differences and are able to compare like-for-like products before selecting a shortlist based on vague concepts such as "leadership and vision."

There are other things about this report that baffle us, like why [SAP](#) is included in it (when even the report itself states that they do not have an ECM Suite) when others that do sell ECM Suites,

such as those we mention above, are excluded. It may seem unfair to pick on another analyst firm · and, for the record, the authors of this particular report are all experts we have great respect for · but the importance of the MQ in the buying process is so huge that it demands a critical assessment and evaluation.

If there is a problem to identify, it is likely a business model that hinges on such charts, and a public's demand for ever simplified information, along with the vendors' addiction to getting the "right" placement in the chart. It is both the beauty and the curse of the MQ that it dramatically simplifies a marketplace. But ECM tools and choices are far from simple. In short, buyers of ECM beware.

Alan Pelz-Sharpe is a principal analyst at [CMS Watch](#). Write him at aps@cmswatch.com