



"We needed a document control management system – a simple and affordable solution for the company at this early stage, yet scalable and sophisticated enough to handle the challenges down the road. M-Files fit the bill perfectly."

**-Dr. Sridhar
Kasichainula**

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Success Story

Silicon Valley semiconductor innovator adopts M-Files for management of digital documentation

Tabula is poised to make an enormous impact in the high-tech world of programmable logic, memory, and signal processing. The company name is borrowed from the Latin, tabula rasa, or "blank slate." This refers to its patented Spacetime™ architecture, which allows for re-writing of semiconductor logic after manufacture, while at the same time setting new industry benchmarks in density, performance, and affordability.

Long before the new semiconductor was announced this spring, the venture-capital startup had already amassed several years' worth of documentation, not only relating to product development, patenting, and manufacture, but also the digital office infrastructure for 110 employees in its Silicon Valley headquarters.

"Tabula had a number of means of keeping track of everything, but they weren't really adequate," explains Dr. Sridhar Kasichainula, Senior Manager, Quality and Reliability. "For example, employees built an internal wiki to organize our content to some extent, while most of the other items were just placed in a traditional hierarchy of Windows folders. In the beginning, everything was stored rather informally on the server."

In the middle of 2009, when the folder structure began to show signs of unmanaged sprawl, Tabula began the hunt for software that could track all of its Windows-based documents company-wide as it kept growing.

The balance of price and capability

"Even though our company is making a revolutionarily complex product, our file handling requirements were pretty much a textbook case, and not much different from any other company," explains Kasichainula. "We needed all the very typical, common features of digital document management, like version control, access permissions, workflow for file changes and approvals, archiving, and history logs. Basically, all the classic bullet points of a document management system."

Kasichainula used content management systems at previous companies that all contained variations of the features in M-Files, and most were much bigger, more complicated, and more costly. "In the market when it comes to price for capability, M-Files is totally the best. The solution was really a very nice fit for our situation."

M-Files operates on a basic foundation of metadata keywords, rather than folder systems, to uniquely identify and classify Windows-based files. These metadata tags are generally common-sense search terms, so employees can usually type in a simple two- or three-word description of what the document is and retrieve it instantly.

Besides simple and fast retrieval, the same metadata functionality also maintains discipline over files in terms of version control, process monitoring, and security.



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One remarkable aspect of the M-Files system, says Kasichainula, is that it is wholly integrated into the Windows operating system, and by extension, any business or technical application that runs in Windows.

"We needed something that new people can just jump into without any training. At a startup, nearly everybody could be said to be a new employee — I'm fairly new myself," he says. "And as the company continues to grow rapidly, we'll have even more people coming aboard, needing to understand where to find information and how to use the system."

"Most people are familiar with Windows, and M-Files' Window-like approach is very much in tune with what employees would naturally do to save or find files," he says. "Among the users here who are fully up and running with M-Files, I don't hear of any issues. The best feedback of course is no feedback, meaning that there's a bare minimum difference between M-Files and the interfaces they're used to in a standard Windows environment. I think that speaks volumes on the level of comfort and ease of use."

Scalability and flexibility for future possibilities

Another advantage is that companies do not have to implement all of M-Files advanced capabilities all at once, but can develop different parts as needed, in response to business demands. A sole proprietor could use M-Files as just an easy way to keep a desktop organized, while a large organization can customize very sophisticated workflows to automate recurring document-related business processes among many departments.

"I can envision that as Tabula grows, not only will M-Files scale seamlessly with what we are doing currently, but it will also offer additional aspects to implement down the road to handle new developments. The features are there — waiting. That's the great thing about it," says Kasichainula.

"We want M-Files as the key document control system for the company. That has not happened yet at this stage," says Kasichainula, who says that licenses support about half the staff, those most closely involved in the technical development. "Right now much of the focus has been on product qualification. Our top priority is to finish technology qualification and validation as soon as possible and get the product in the customer's hand."

In M-Files, Tabula has set up custom metadata tags to indicate the level of documentation completed. Searches on these tags give administrators a birds-eye view of workflow progress. Query results immediately show which processes have documentation completed, and which are still outstanding.

More licenses are planned to expand the role of M-Files as an everyday office tool for all business documentation, and with it, the possibility of building in more custom tags to measure progress and route workflow.

The semiconductor business is complex and evolving, with quality and time to market dependent on efficiently and accurately following specific processes. M-Files rich feature set and ease of use is helping Tabula do just that, while also providing a flexible platform that can be extended to meet new needs as Tabula grows.

About Tabula

Tabula is a privately held fabless semiconductor company developing 3-D programmable logic devices. Its ABAX family of 3PLDs, based on Tabula's patented Spacetime architecture, sets new density, performance, and affordability benchmarks for programmable logic, memory, and signal processing. Headquartered in Santa Clara, California, Tabula has assembled a leadership team consisting of industry veterans and successful entrepreneurs. The company is backed by top-tier investors with a long-term view toward enduring market leadership. For more information, visit: www.tabula.com. ■