MARKET NOTE

ASG Technologies EVOLVE20: A Modern Approach to Governance-First Content Services

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EXECUTIVE SNAPSHOT

FIGURE 1

Executive Snapshot: ASG Technologies EVOLVE20 — A Modern Approach to Governance-First Content Services

This IDC Market Note highlights announcements from ASG Technologies EVOLVE20 virtual customer conference held in October 2020, with a focus on product capabilities to automate and digitize critical business activities via cloud-based digital content services.

Key Takeaways

- Product announcements, such as the latest release of the content services platform ASG Mobius 11, focused on enhanced governance policy management, Microsoft 365 integration, and content federation in the cloud.

- ASG-Zenith, a process automation cloud-based solution, integrates ASG Mobius into the Zenith Studio for content and process orchestration.

- ASG Technologies' partners and customers share their approach to managing content in the cloud, integrating data intelligence and process automation with content services from ASG Technologies.

- Organizations in transition to a fully digital business will find a broad set of content services capabilities from ASG Technologies that include content life-cycle management, governance, low-/no-code process automation, and intelligent decisioning services as well as federated search and in-place management of connected data across business applications and storage devices.

Source: IDC, 2020

This IDC Market Note discusses the ASG Technologies virtual conference, EVOLVE20, held in October 2020. ASG approached its virtual event in the same manner as a live event with a highly interactive venue, a live moderator, keynote speakers, and breakout sessions available both live and on demand. ASG also held its third Women Leaders in Technology talk and provided virtual sponsor booths with product demonstrations and networking opportunities within the online event platform. The conference also provided an important perspective on how ASG is supporting digital transformation initiatives accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic that support a remote work environment. This document provides IDC's analysis of ASG's product updates, based on our attendance of the event.

Product and Strategy Update

With the theme of the event "See the Future – Be the Future: Leveraging Traditional Solutions While Embracing a Modern Approach," it was fitting that CEO Charles Sansbury shared ASG's vision of the future for its Data Intelligence, Content Services, and IT Systems Management solutions. Sansbury stated in his keynote address, "We aren't in the 'new normal,' we're in the 'normal now.' The world just underwent an Industrial Revolution-scale change in a matter of months, rather than years." To assist organizations through this digital revolution, ASG's chief product officer Swamy Viswanathan and VP of product marketing Kyle McNabb reviewed the latest additions to the ASG innovation framework and announced a new product, ASG-TMON PA Scope, a cross-platform performance management solution.

ASG continues to deliver innovative new features in its flagship content management products ASG Mobius Content Services and ASG-Zenith for digital automation. ASG demonstrated numerous new features available in Mobius 11 designed to improve knowledge worker productivity through enhancements in collaboration governance, policy administration, and content visibility in the cloud. A selection of ASG's technology highlights include:

- **Integration to Microsoft 365:** Embracing a theme of fluid content-driven collaboration, ASG enhanced its integration with Microsoft 365 to provide a native view of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint within the Mobius user interface. ASG Mobius Microsoft 365 supports parallel coediting, which is becoming a common requirement for remote work. Content within Microsoft can be synchronized to Mobius Web or desktop clients and managed centrally for revision control according to established policies and roles-based access controls.

- **Governance and data protection:** ASG released geographic-based governance policies to support country-specific data residency and regulatory requirements using location and distance parameters. Time-based policies can restrict content access by time of day (e.g., use by shift workers). In addition to the ability to automatically redact personally identifiable information (PII) within Microsoft 365 content, Mobius can redact PII within images (JPG, PNG, etc.) as well. Mobius extends its governance capabilities to managed content residing in other repositories through its content federation function.

- **Mobius for Docker Desktop:** Building on ASG's modern architecture support for Docker, ASG Mobius for Docker Desktop strives to simplify the deployment and maintenance of new software releases in a secure environment. Mobius administrators can preview and deploy releases directly from the desktop resource. ASG also supports both Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud deployments.

- **Intelligent document processing:** First introduced in Mobius 10.1, native optical character recognition (OCR) uses machine learning to automatically extract data elements from unstructured document images. ASG Data Miner includes a "Smart Suggest" feature that uses

analytical algorithms to automate the data extraction task. ASG also continues to support capture partners such as Ephesoft and Kofax.

- ▪ **Audit and analytics:** ASG enhanced its event-driven content workflows by automatically triggering them with its low-/no-code audit and analytics service. The continuous data monitoring service can be used to automate, audit, and visualize common financial tasks (e.g., purchase orders to invoices, billing verification, journal reconciliation, or accruals recording) or data compliance activities (e.g., ERISA compliance or BCBS 239 risk reports).

ASG presented its road map for Zenith and Mobius, which focuses on faster creation of content-centric user experiences and content automation, enhancements to its event-based architecture for real-time changes, and improved deployment experiences. Proposed architectural enhancements address: new user interface controls; simplified role administration; unified packaging and distribution with Docker; and a new Mobius data source access in the ASG-Zenith Studio. ASG also promoted its migration services to encourage organizations to adopt or upgrade to the latest ASG Mobius content services solution.

Partner Highlights

ASG EVOLVE20 showcased its sponsors ArkCase, BigID, ibi, Zia Consulting, JEMS Group, Atos Maven Wave, and Carahsoft in their demo showroom. ASG also announced the winners of its annual Excellence Awards naming Zia Consulting its Partner of the Year. Zia Consulting, a partner since 2017, was selected based on its aligned vision with ASG to solve complex content problems and bring value to its clients as they transition to a digital business.

Another ASG partner, BigID, led a breakout session about the integration of its advanced data classification and automated indexing with Mobius Information Governance. BigID expands upon ASG's native privacy policy and governance capabilities to deliver what it calls "privacy-aware governance." In particular, BigID focused on ways to automate identification and classification tasks to reduce risk associated with unprotected sensitive data that is sprawled across open shared drives.

ASG develops and executes its partner program to go beyond simple technical training to assist them in delivering custom solutions in a way that leverages ASG technology to its best advantage.

Customer Case Studies

Finally, two data and content-centric customers with very different backgrounds and use cases shared their stories at EVOLVE20. The first was Citizens Bank using the ASG Data Intelligence platform to automate data tagging and register content assets for regulatory verification. Citizens Bank created a data marketplace where users can "shop" for items within the data lake domain. A user places requested data items in a shopping cart that is then validated for permissioned usage, and once approved, the elements are shipped from the data lake to the user's local folder for analysis or visualization.

The second featured organization was Philip Morris discussing how it transitioned 99% of its applications to the cloud. Philip Morris consolidated more than 1,500 on-premises applications over a two-year period. The stated benefits of deploying ASG Mobius included extreme flexibility of the platform, a reduction in IT infrastructure costs, maintained business continuity, and the ability to administer compliance in the cloud.

From a continuous learning perspective, ASG announced it will now host its Mobius virtual user group on a quarterly basis and directed users to visit its BrightTALK Channel to view 16 on-demand content sessions.

IDC'S POINT OF VIEW

ASG continues to invest in the cloud and take advantage of its unique position to offer digital content services that bring data intelligence and end-to-end business processing together. Organizations transitioning to a fully digital business can leverage a broad set of content capabilities that include content life-cycle management, governance, low-/no-code process automation, and intelligent decisioning services, as well as federated search and in-place management of connected data across business applications and storage devices.

ASG is making positive progress in delivering governance-first content services via the cloud. Its commitment to support both Microsoft Azure and AWS gives its customers greater choice in cloud deployments. ASG's alignment with Microsoft 365 in the cloud will bring content under control with in-place governance capabilities; a leap forward in federated capabilities that few enterprise content management platforms have undertaken.

However, to effectively address the rising interest in cloud-based content management, ASG will need to deliver more than incremental feature enhancements to its heritage Mobius product line. To truly federate content across the entire organization, ASG will need to expand its business application connectors, either natively or through partners, to a wider variety of systems that house sensitive or auditable data.

In addition, the ASG-Zenith Digital Automation Platform announced at last year's EVOLVE conference was not as prominent this year in context of the Mobius 11 release. The ASG Mobius road map plans incremental development with respect to ASG-Zenith in 2021. The digital automation platform has the potential to integrate with content services to drive down costs in repetitive tasks, improve employee experience, and bring higher-value data-driven decisioning to the forefront. The customer case study with Citizens Bank is a prime example of tying data intelligence surrounding compliance validation to the higher-level business processes that depend on permission-verified data. While not every business task will be fully digitized, anywhere digital content services can better leverage automation and data intelligence in tandem with human collaboration, the end-to-end process will benefit from the effort.

Finally, to break out of the enterprise content management lineage and showcase its forefront technical position in data trust and digital automation, ASG must expand development of its marketing capabilities around factors such as brand recognition and its progress as a cloud-based governance-first content services vendor. IDC feels there is more to be done at a strategic level to articulate the synergies between the three distinct offerings (content services, data intelligence, and IT systems management). The company has a short window of opportunity to elevate its exposure to audiences that value the investment ASG has made in streamlining content governance tasks to rise above competitive solutions that approach data trust from only a security level.

Related Research

- *Market Analysis Perspective: Worldwide Enterprise Content Strategies, 2020* (IDC #US45394920, September 2020)
- *Worldwide Enterprise Content Management Applications and Content Sharing and Collaboration Applications Software Forecast, 2020-2024* (IDC #US45394720, June 2020)
- *Worldwide Enterprise Content Management Applications and Content Sharing and Collaboration Applications Market Shares, 2019: Delivering Agile Content Management in the Cloud* (IDC #US46398020, June 2020)
- *Technical Considerations for Adopting Cloud Content Management* (IDC #US45813920, January 2020)
- *IDC MarketScape: Worldwide SaaS and Cloud-Enabled Content Applications 2019 Vendor Assessment* (IDC #US44752819, September 2019)

Synopsis

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