

Overcoming the DM Shortcomings of OOB SharePoint

In this paper we look at the various shortcomings of out-of-the-box SharePoint from a document management perspective, and show how MacroView DMF overcomes each of these shortcomings. The paper is useful for responding to questions such as:

- *SharePoint is already a Document Management system. Why do we need a Document Management add-on for SharePoint?*
- *What is the best Document Management add-on software for SharePoint?*
- *What Document Management functionality is covered by the core MacroView DMF software and what requires optional modules of MacroView DMF?*

1. Cannot visualize the structure of the SharePoint document store.

A SharePoint document store is organised as a tree of containers – site collections, sites, sub-sites, libraries, document sets, folders and sub-folders. What users want is to be able to view that tree structure – just like they can view the tree of folders in a Windows file share or in Outlook. The OOB SharePoint user interface does not provide such a tree-view. This leads to comments from users such as:

“I cannot understand how my documents are organised”.

MacroView DMF displays a tree-view of the SharePoint document store that displays all areas of the store that contain documents and / or emails for which the user has permission, or where the user can store additional documents and / or emails. The user simply registers the various SharePoint Servers (actually these are normally registered for each user by the system administrator) and MacroView DMF then automatically checks through all the areas in each server to create the display or areas for which the user has permission. That MacroView DMF display totally respects SharePoint security – via DMF you do not see any content that you would not have been able to see by using the OOB SharePoint web browser user interface (and many more keystrokes). A typical reaction from MacroView DMF users is:

“MacroView DMF makes SharePoint feel as familiar as using Windows Explorer.”

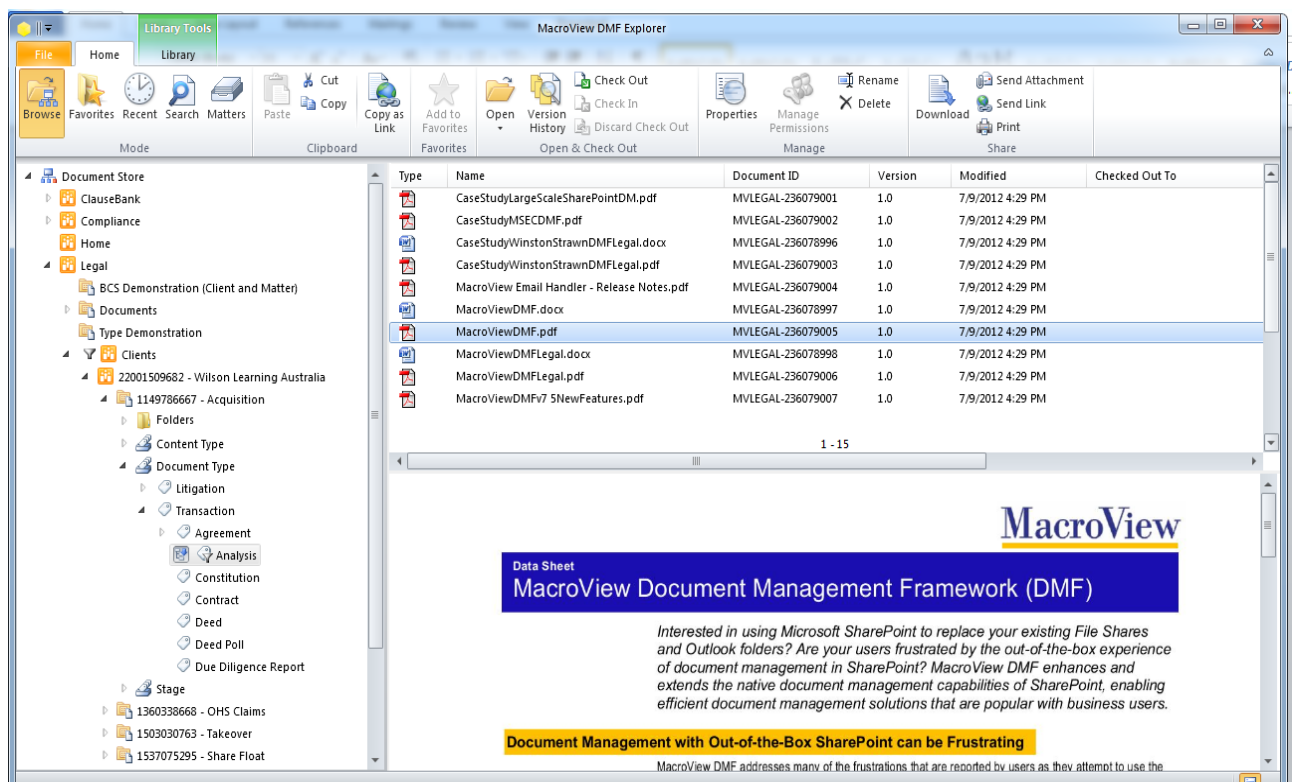


Figure 1: SharePoint tree structure displayed in MacroView DMF Explorer

2. Difficult to navigate around the SharePoint document store.

Unless your DM store is tiny, you find yourself needing to key in URLs in order to move around within a SharePoint document store. Sample comment from a user:

“The browser based SharePoint navigation is useless. For a large document store you will need multiple site collections and it's impossible to navigate...”

MacroView DMF provides a number of ways that make it efficient for a user who needs to navigate to a particular area of a SharePoint document store. These include:

- Filter Site Collections
- Filter Site Collections by Favorites
- Filter Sites and Libraries
- Filter Folders (and Document Sets)
- Search Site Tree
- Favorites
- Subscriptions

MacroView DMF uses a custom web service to make this navigation efficient. Thanks to this custom web service, MacroView DMF copes well even when the SharePoint document store is very large – i.e. there are thousands of sites, sub-sites, libraries, folders etc.

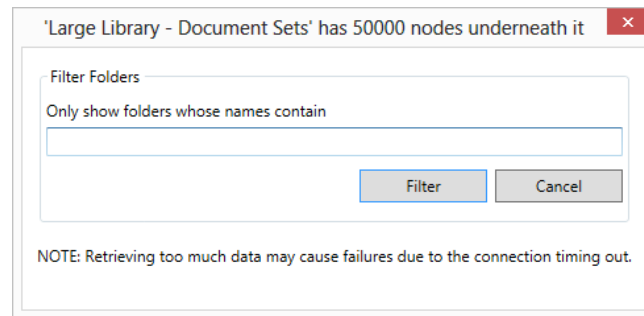


Figure 2: MacroView DMF enables you to navigate efficiently in a library containing 50,000 Document Sets

3. Cannot drag and drop to save emails and documents.

From the viewpoint of a user, the ability to save documents and emails by dragging and dropping is a really important feature. SharePoint 2013 appears to provide improved support for drag and drop saving (Group Mailboxes and ability to drag and drop to a library in the web browser UI) but because there is no prompting for metadata this still falls way short of what users expect – an uploaded document may well not be visible to any other users until the user (or an administrator) edits the properties of the document and completes its metadata.

MacroView DMF provides excellent support for saving both emails and documents by drag and drop. You can drag and drop to save one or multiple emails and as you save, the email attributes are recorded automatically in SharePoint.

You can drag and drop to upload one or multiple files from a Windows Explorer folder. MacroView DMF will prompt for any metadata that is defined in the destination area of SharePoint, so there is no risk that the uploaded documents will not be visible to other users. If you drag and drop multiple documents, MacroView DMF lets you capture common metadata, rather than be prompted separately for each document.

4. Duplicate copies of an email are created when multiple recipients save the email.

If you do struggle through and upload an email to SharePoint using the OOB web browser UI, the resulting MSG file will be named using its Subject. If another recipient attempts to save the same email, SharePoint will name it *Subject 2....etc.* In other words, duplicates are created. This can also be an issue when emails are forwarded and replied to.

By contrast, as it saves an email to SharePoint, MacroView DMF automatically names the resulting MSG file so that duplicate copies are NOT created when other

recipients attempt to save the same email to the same area of SharePoint. Replies and forwarded emails are covered nicely by this automatic naming convention.

5. Sending an email to a SharePoint library causes the attachments to be saved separately and the body to be saved so that it cannot be opened in Outlook.

Email-enabling a document library creates an Email address for that library. You can include this address on the *CC* or *BCC* for an outgoing email, which sounds like a great way of managing outgoing emails, until you realise that the attachments are split off and saved separately, that the body is saved in a format that cannot be opened in Outlook and that these files are named in a way that does not prevent duplicates.

MacroView can supply an optional module of MacroView DMF called MacroView Email Handler which addresses these shortcomings. MacroView Email Handler intercepts emails as they arrive in an Email-enabled library and stores the emails with the same format, naming and metadata treatment as if they had been saved by dragging and dropping using MacroView DMF.

6. File names cannot contain special characters such as # and &

Files stored in SharePoint have to have names, but those file names cannot contain special characters such as & and #. The OOB interface to SharePoint will error if you attempt to save a file whose name contains these characters.

As it saves a file to SharePoint, MacroView DMF can automatically remove any illegal characters from the file name. MacroView DMF can even record the original file name so that it is available for viewing in SharePoint and restored when the file is retrieved from SharePoint and inserted as an attachment to a new outgoing email.

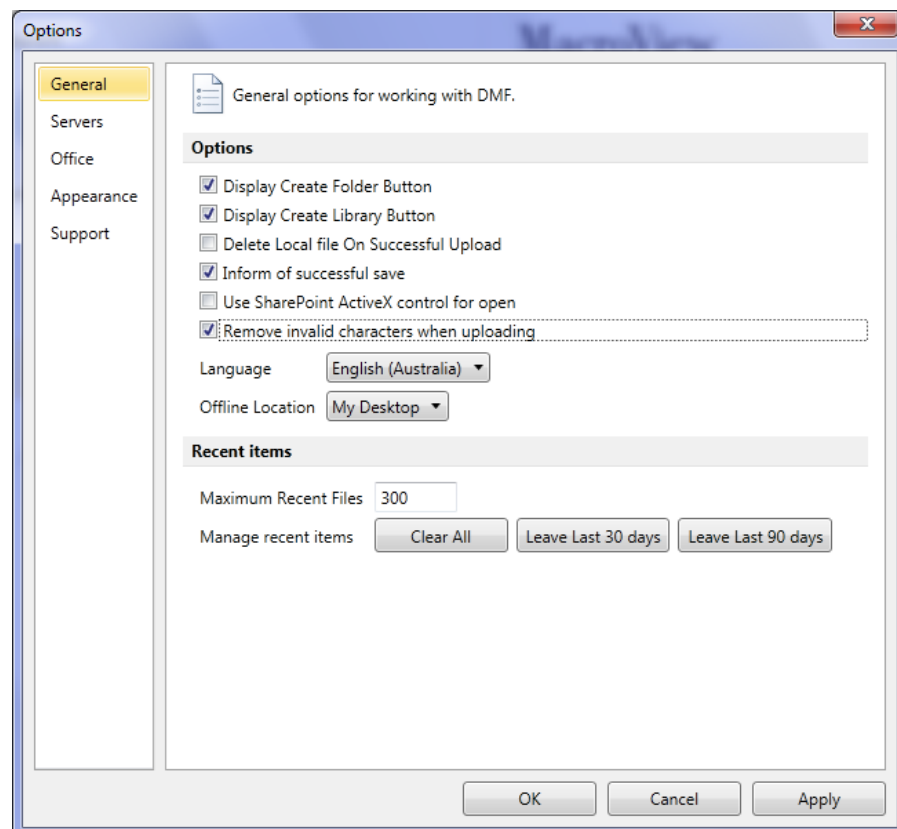


Figure 3: MacroView DMF Options dialog - note *Remove invalid characters when uploading* option

7. Attaching a document from SharePoint to a new outgoing email is VERY tedious

This is a common task that users expect to be as simple as attaching a document from a Windows folder. Instead, when you use the OOB SharePoint user interface you need to a) find the document, b) download that document to a Windows folder, c) go into Outlook and create a new email, d) click the paper clip (or similar) to attach

the document from the Windows folder, e) (ideally) delete the temporary copy of the document from the Windows folder. The process is definitely a very tedious one.

MacroView DMF makes attaching a document from SharePoint as simple as doing so from Windows. You can simply right-click the document in a MacroView file list and choose *Send As, File*. Alternatively you can open a new email and then click *Insert Attachment*, which brings up the MacroView DMF window where you can browse or search for the document, or choose it from the list of recently accessed documents. MacroView DMF also makes it easy to insert a link to the document in its SharePoint location.

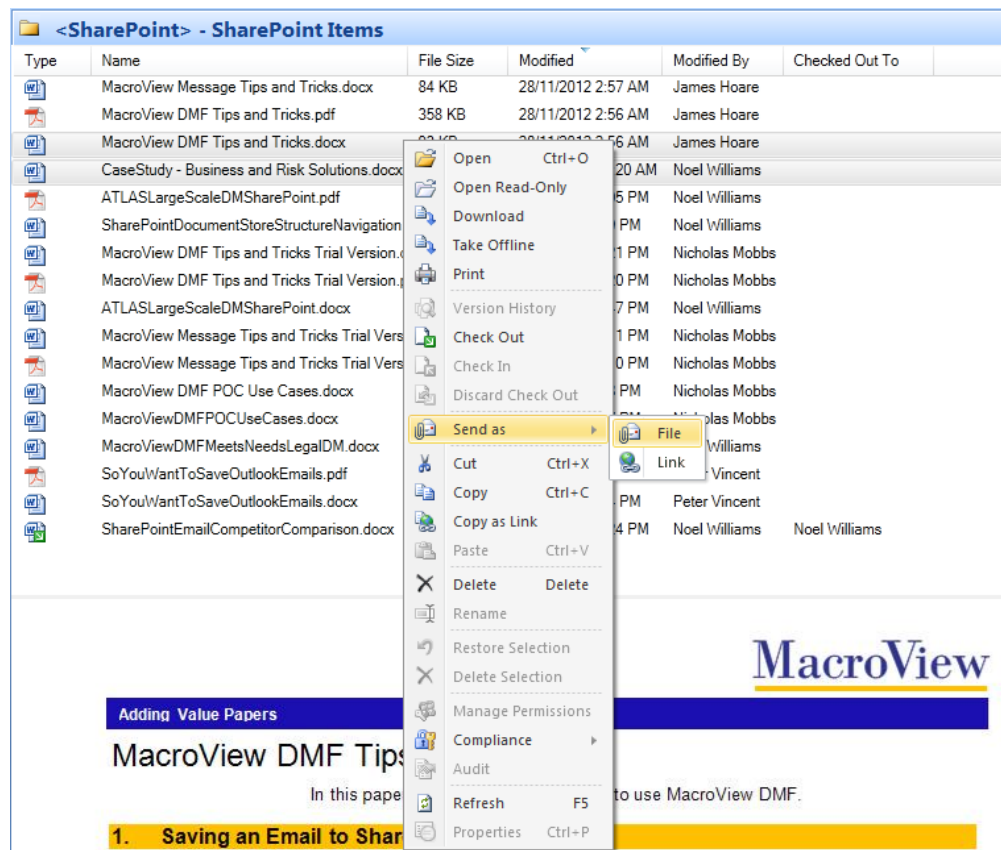


Figure 4: Inserting two documents as attachments using right-click, *Send As, File*

8. Cannot download multiple documents in one action.

The OOB SharePoint user interface does not support selecting multiple files and then downloading them to a Windows folder in a single step. Instead each document must be downloaded individually.

MacroView DMF allows you to select multiple documents in a file list and then right-click *Download* to download them all to a selected Windows folder.

9. Can upload multiple documents in one action, but not very well.

While the OOB SharePoint user interface has an option to upload multiple documents, when you use that option, you are not prompted for any metadata. If any metadata column is *Required* in the destination library the result will be that the uploaded documents will remain checked out and thereby not visible to any other user. The user who uploaded (or an administrator) must edit the properties of the uploaded documents to set their metadata.

MacroView DMF also allows you to upload multiple documents from a Windows folder in a single step. You can select multiple documents in Windows Explorer and then drag and drop to a library, folder or document set in a MacroView tree display in Outlook or MacroView DMF Explorer. You will be prompted for metadata as part of this upload, and even have the option of setting common metadata rather than being prompted separately for each file.

10. Can only move within a Site

If you connect the source and destination libraries to Windows Explorer you can move a file between folders and libraries in the same SharePoint site. However you cannot move to a library in another Site Collection or Web Application. This can be a real issue for users such as when sites (such as Extranet sites) are hosted in a separate Web Application for security reasons.

MacroView DMF lets you drag and drop to move one or multiple documents where the destination library can be located in a different Site Collection or Web Application. As it moves MacroView DMF re-uses any existing metadata that is relevant to the destination library and prompts for any metadata that is relevant to the destination library and not already recorded for the document. If Versioning is enabled, MacroView will preserve existing version history and automatically generate a new version that serves as a useful audit record for the move. Existing unique Document IDs are also preserved if the move is within the same Web Application.

11. Cannot Search directly from Outlook or Word

Users of OOB SharePoint report a key frustration in relation to search, which is that to search for a document in SharePoint you need to jump out of Outlook, Word, Excel or PowerPoint and into the web browser. You then need to open your selected search result. This is particularly clumsy when you are searching for a document to attach to an email (see 7, above).

MacroView DMF makes it easy to search for documents in SharePoint directly from Outlook, Word, Excel or PowerPoint. There is a new Search mode available the allow you to choose the type of search you want to perform (e.g. *Email Search*, *Keyword Search*, *Matter Search*, etc). Each type allows you to search on the basis of content and / or keywords. Search results are displayed in the same Office application – which makes it very convenient to search for and then insert a document as an attachment.

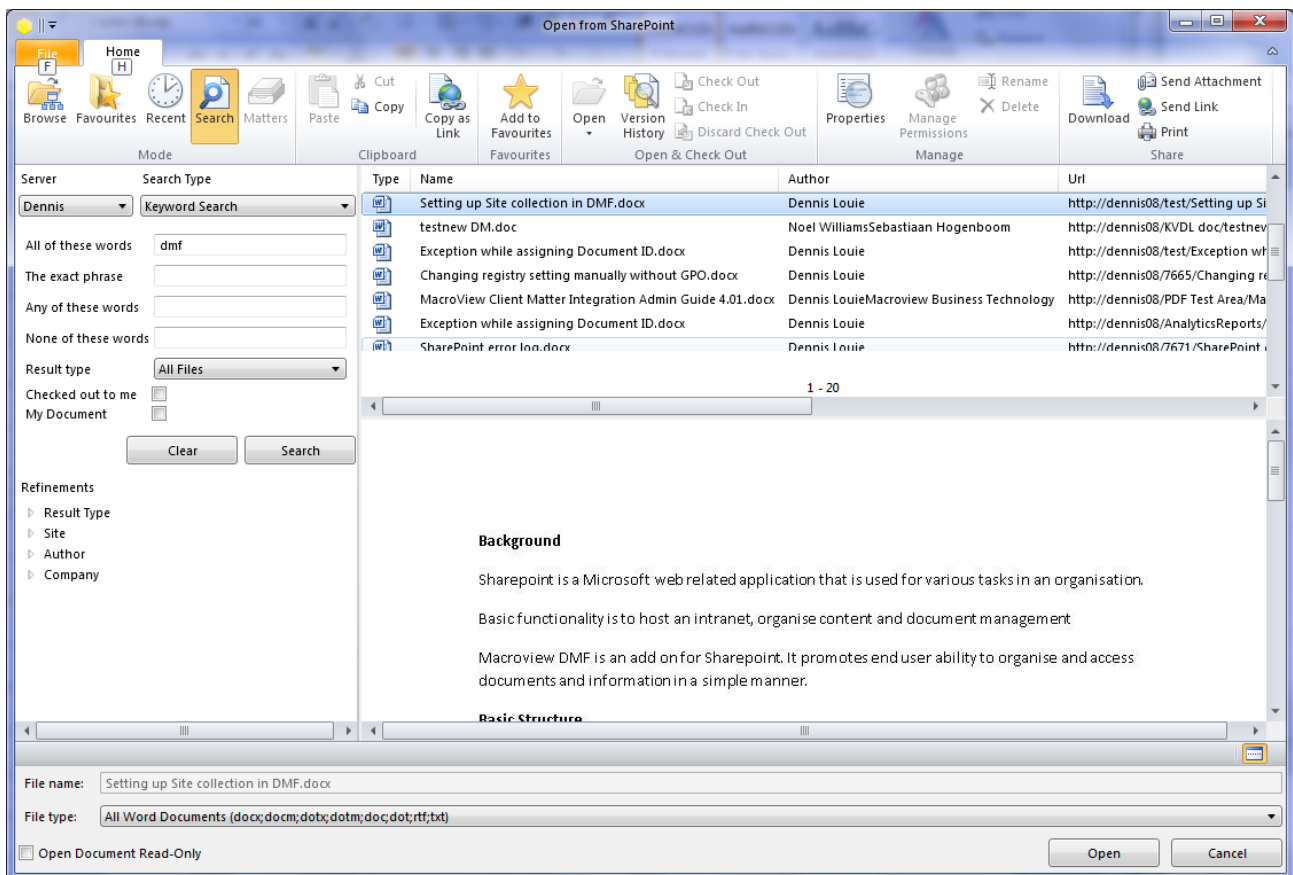


Figure 5: MacroView DMF Keyword Search panel in Microsoft Word

12. The OOB Search user interface makes it awkward to search by metadata.

FAST enables Google-style searching, which is great for finding popular pages on the Internet (or Intranet). However in a corporate document management context you are looking for a specific document - not popular documents. This means that you need to be able to search based on metadata (like *Matter Number*, *Client Name*, etc) as well as content. This metadata-style searching is not well supported by the OOB SharePoint web browser user interface.

MacroView DMF Search panels all allow you to search based on metadata and / or content. These MacroView Search panels can readily be customised to include additional metadata that is relevant to an organization.

See the screen shot for 11, above.

13. Cannot save Searches so that I can easily re-run them at a later time.

The OOB SharePoint web browser UI does not allow you to save a search so that you can easily re-run it at a later date. This capability is present in all the leading traditional DM systems, and so is expected by experienced users.

MacroView DMF allows you to save a search that you have just run to your list of Favorite searches. You can re-run such a search simply by clicking on its name. Favorite searches can also be pushed out to users via Group Policy.

14. Clicking *Discard Checkout* loses all the changes I made to a document since I checked it out, no matter how many times I saved my changes.

This is a MAJOR frustration reported by users of OOB Word and SharePoint. You check out and open a document from SharePoint and edit it in Word. When you close the document the OOB integration of Word and SharePoint displays a series of dialogs, one of which asks if you want to Discard Checkout. A user will select that option thinking that they have finished editing so it is OK that the document not be checked out to them any longer. Unfortunately choosing *Discard Checkout* discards not only their checkout but also all the changes they have made to the document since the document was checked out. In other words the Discard Checkout prompt leads to inadvertent loss of days of work on the document.

MacroView can supply an optional MacroView DMF module called MacroView Advanced Office Integration. MacroView AOI provides a much safer and more intuitive user experience as you close a document that you have opened and checked out and opened from SharePoint for editing in Word. Specifically the MacroView AOI dialog eliminates the risk of inadvertent loss of all changes.

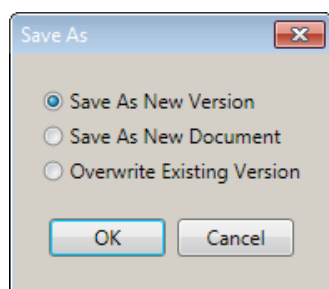


Figure 6: Dialog display by MacroView Advanced Office Integration

15. Cannot replace a Major Version

A key aspect of legal document management is the need to create and track multiple versions of a document. SharePoint supports versioning – indeed it allows both Major and Minor (aka Draft) versions. Legal users typically prefer to use just Major versions, and in certain situations they need to be able to replace an existing major version. However the OOB Word to SharePoint integration only allows the replacement of existing Minor versions.

MacroView Advanced Office Integration (see 14, above) allows you to replace an existing Major version. This is done by simply clicking the *Overwrite Existing Version* option on the dialog that AOI displays. (See Figure 6, above.)

16. Unique Document Numbers are not sequential across the whole document store.

SharePoint 2010 and 2013 support unique numbering of documents as they are stored in SharePoint. This OOB numbering is essentially a set of coordinates to the location where the document was initially stored in SharePoint. The format of the resulting Document IDs is <prefix indicating the Site Collection> - <ID of the library list> - <ID of the item within that list>. However users experienced with traditional DM systems expect that documents be assigned a unique number that is sequential across the whole document store (i.e. the next document stored is assigned the next number, regardless of where the document is being stored).

MacroView can supply an optional module of MacroView DMF called MacroView Unique Document Numbering. MacroView UDN uses the standard Numbering Provider architecture of SharePoint. The MacroView UDN Provider can be configured to assign numbers sequentially across the whole document store. There is also more flexibility around the formatting of Document IDs, including the ability to start the numbering at a certain point (which is useful in migration scenarios).

17. Footers not automatically inserted / updated to display Document Reference details.

A standard feature of traditional DM systems is that footers of Office documents be automatically updated to display Document Reference details – e.g. unique Document ID concatenated with current version number. These systems also display the Document Reference in the caption of the Microsoft Word window, which makes it easy to see this information at all times (i.e. without needing to go to the footer).

MacroView UDN (see 16, above) allows an organization to define multiple Document Reference schemes and to activate the appropriate numbering scheme for each document library within a Site Collection. As Word documents are opened from SharePoint MacroView UDN automatically inserts and updates the Document Reference into the footer and the caption (just like a traditional DM system).

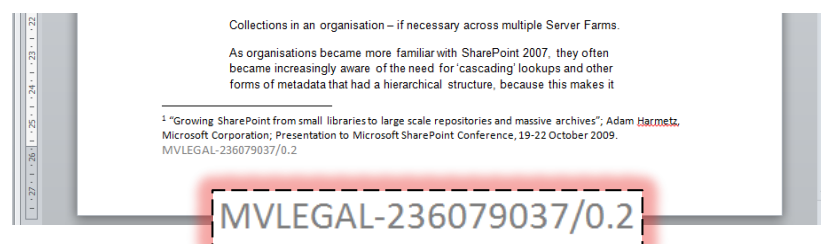


Figure 7: Document Reference inserted in the Footer of a Word document by MacroView UDN.

18. Uploading a document to SharePoint loses file attributes such as Author, Created Date...

File system attributes such as *Created Date*, *Last Modified Date* and *Author* are important in identifying a document that is stored in a Windows file system. As you load a document to SharePoint using the OOB user interface, these file system attributes are lost. Instead the *Created* date becomes the date the document was loaded to SharePoint, the *Created By* the user who did the upload, etc.

As you upload a document to SharePoint using MacroView DMF (e.g. by dragging and dropping to the MacroView tree in Outlook or MacroView DMF Explorer) MacroView DMF will automatically record these file system attributes in corresponding columns (*Original Created*, *Original Modified*, *Original Author*) provided such columns are present in the Content Type selected for the document. When uploading PDFs, MacroView DMF also captures *Original Producer*.

19. Contributor-level users cannot set Document Level Permissions.

SharePoint supports document level permissions, but the OOB SharePoint UI does not allow Contributor-level users to set these document level permissions. This is a source of frustration for end-users (who typically are assigned *Contributor* role) – they need to approach a SharePoint Administrator level user to set or remove document level permissions.

MacroView can supply an optional module of MacroView DMF called MacroView Enhanced Document Level Security. MacroView EDLS allows users (including users with the Contributor role) to simply check a *Private* box on the MacroView Profiling (metadata capture) dialog to set document level permissions for a document being saved to SharePoint, so that that document is 'My Eyes Only'. MacroView EDLS also allows such users to pick other users and groups of users and assign them specific levels of permission to the document, as well as remove document level permissions and revert to the default permissions applicable to the document library.

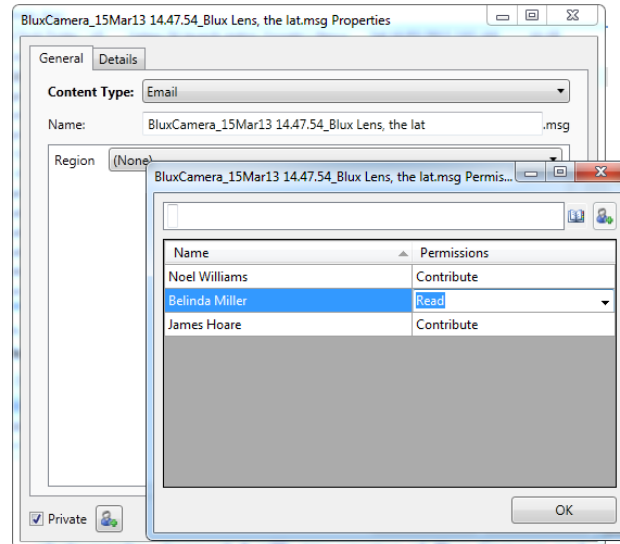


Figure 8: *Private* check-box and *Manage Permissions* sub-dialog

20. Cannot easily see an audit trail of activity related to a document

SharePoint can record an Audit Log of all activity related to documents. However seeing the activity related to a particular document requires the development and running of a report against the SharePoint Logs.

To obtain an immediate report of activity related to a particular document a MacroView DMF user simply needs to right-click the document and choose *Audit*. MacroView DMF will then interrogate the SharePoint Audit Log and display a report of activity for that document. The screen display can be copied to the clipboard, which facilitates insertion into Word or Excel for further analysis.

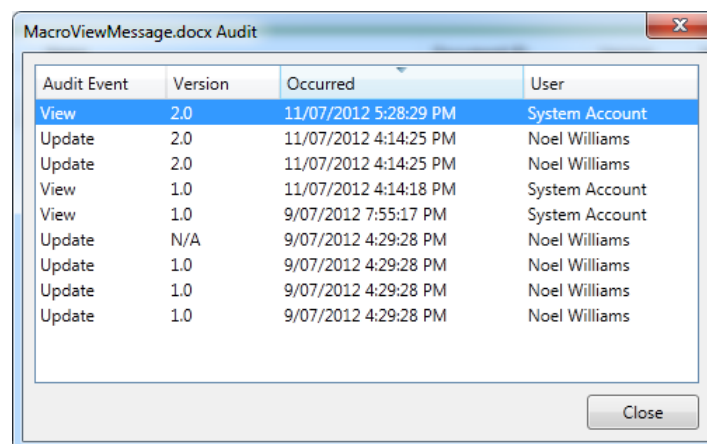


Figure 9: Audit History dialog displayed by right-click, *Audit*