Alfresco can be used for building most ECM applications. Aside from the major applications such as document, image, records, digital asset, and web content management, there are a number of specific applications and use cases that add value to the enterprise.

The following are typical ECM applications that can use Alfresco applications as the foundation. Applying programming models lets you extend these applications or you can build your own applications using Alfresco.

**Document management** manages and shares office documents, and incorporates business processes. It can be industry or role-specific. The Alfresco Share is a good foundation for building document management applications.

**Records management** controls important information for retention over time. You would use records management over document management in regulated or compliant environments, such as in managing governmental information or personnel records, or where information is audited. Alfresco is certified to the U.S. Government 5015.2 records standard and is useful for controlling retention and review periods, providing specialized security, and determining whether the records are archived or destroyed after a specified period of time.

**Shared drive replacement** is a more basic form of document management in the enterprise with a content repository that provides easy access points to content. Shared drives are simple to use because users do not need to be trained and all applications work with them. Because Alfresco supports the protocol used by shared drives, Common Internet File System (CIFS), the repository appears to be a shared drive. With rules, actions, and extensions, you can build complete document management applications that are transparent to users while getting the content under control and enabling it to be searched.

**Enterprise portals and intranets** communicate with employees with news and developments in the enterprise. While part of enterprise portals focus on reporting and analyzing data, many are devoted to content and documents. Although folder hierarchies are an easy way to organize information for a portal, classifications and metadata are often a better way to target information in the portal to end users. Thus, there are elements of document management and business process for delivering into the portal; however, the presentation of lists of content and navigation through classifications require programming portlets using web scripts or Java. Portlets provided as part of the Alfresco platform can supplement this development with standardized navigation, search, and content presentation.

**Web content management** manages websites, the content that goes into websites (such as HTML and images), and the processes of building, testing, and deploying websites and content. While Alfresco can be used for simple websites, it is frequently used for creating websites that are web applications, particularly those developed using Java. Some examples of these websites publish a lot of information from multiple sources and integrate e-commerce and back office systems. Surf is a good platform for creating these types of web applications and websites.

**Knowledge management** captures knowledge from employees or customers and provides it in a form that others can use. Content tends to be the best and most reusable container of knowledge in sharing that knowledge with others.

**Information publishing** encompasses real-time publishing of content from different sources to the website and the deployment of that content to the web farm for Internet access. This can be digital assets such as articles, written internally or syndicated from other sources, or photos. Media companies use Alfresco to combine this content and publish it to their websites. This straight-through publishing of information requires both strong content control and performance to aggregate and push out the content.

**Case management** handles information related to a case, such as an insurance claim, an investigation, or personnel processing. Alfresco’s document management capabilities, folder structure, classification schemes, and workflow is well suited to managing cases and distributing work in handling cases. Alfresco incorporates the Activiti workflow engine and can handle sophisticated workflows and queue management. Alfresco has a content-oriented task model that aggregates all the resources required to perform specific tasks within the case handling process.