

Content Risk Management Software for Businesses Globally



Norm Thomas - CCO

About Litéra

Litéra is the leader in content risk management software with best-of-breed products to create, collaborate, compare, control and clean business documents. Our technology allows companies to improve productivity, mitigate risk and protect reputation.

Our mission is to be the global leader in content lifecycle management solutions by developing, selling, deploying and supporting innovative and leading-edge technology for customers globally, and to do all of this with responsibility to our environment and a commitment to remarkable customer care.

Our vision is founded in our belief that we live in an extraordinary world that has been divided by artificial borders and boundaries. Our vision is to remove these boundaries, to enable more effective collaboration between people, teams and organizations and to empower ideas that drive business growth.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Thomas, what is the idea behind Litéra®?

Mr. Thomas: Litéra provides content risk control and enhanced productivity for businesses that rely heavily on documents. Information workers currently use a lot of front-end computer applications that inadvertently expose all the hidden information contained in those documents. Worse, they lose control of those documents entirely once they've been sent to other parties. Litéra enables better control over what happens to the information contained in those documents while improving productivity.

CEOCFO: Are most companies aware that they are not doing an adequate job or that they are not using the proper tools?

Mr. Thomas: Yes and no. A great deal of attention has been focused on protecting the back-end IT infrastructure. There has been a gigantic investment in protecting everything inside the firewall which surrounds an organization's vital data. But employees extract and report on that data using Microsoft Office applications, and then collaborate on it by sending it all around to others. That is where tremendous risk lies. There has been far too little attention paid to improving the combined security and productivity from front-end applications people use to get value out of that back-end data.

CEOCFO: When might a company come to you for a solution? Is it typically a crisis time when there has been a breach?

Mr. Thomas: Companies come to us when they understand the negative tradeoff between controlling risk and being productive. Right now, employees have had a lot of "clamping down" upon them in terms of security and content risk. In so many cases, corporations have made it hard for employees to do the right thing to stay compliant and meet regulatory needs, so in order to get work done, they tend to do risky things just to remain productive. For example, they may resort to using their personal email to send attachments that circumvent size limitations, either of the sender or the recipient. Or they use non-secure, consumer-grade, internet cloud-based tools such as Dropbox and Google Docs to get their work done by circumventing IT controls. Litéra eliminates that tradeoff between security and productivity. People don't necessarily wait to come to us until after some big blow up or a reputation-damaging event. They come to us when they recognize that their own controls are becoming so stringent that employee productivity is beginning to suffer.

CEOCFO: What do you offer?

Mr. Thomas: We offer a suite of twelve technologies that do everything from accelerating the desktop productivity of individual end users to placing things which work in the background that happen automatically and invisibly. As an example, everything important has an expiration date: drugs, perishable food, credit cards. So why not your documents? We enable you to "turn off" documents remotely, no matter how long ago they were sent and no matter where in the world they are. Another example of our leading technology is the ability for people to collaborate on documents across firewalls without letting people inside your firewall or your documents leaving it. Currently organizations often set up extranets

(sometimes in the insufficiently-secure cloud), and anyone who has been given access to those extranets can do anything that they want with your content. They can download it onto USB thumb drives. They can repurpose that content for their own uses. They can take control of your documents locally and do anything they want with them. Those people do not necessarily have to be bad actors. They can be honest, well-meaning collaborators trying to do their job but lose complete control of that content. Over six thousand computing devices are left in New York taxi cabs each month. That is enormous content risk right there. Litéra enables all of that productive collaboration attempted with extranets but without any user having unauthorized access to it ever.

CEOCFO: *What do you fundamentally understand about documents that has allowed you to create systems that will do this? What is the secret to your success?*

Mr. Thomas: Litéra's secret sauce is that we do not require changes to what information workers are already doing. Because it's hard to ask them to change how they do their work, what we do is make their way of working more secure and productive. We start from the vantage point of an end user who typically lives in front office desktop tools like Outlook, Microsoft Word and Excel, PowerPoint, PDFs and so on. We work within those tools, sometimes very invisibly, until there is some enhanced need for security or productivity that those tools weren't designed to accommodate. For example, Innova is our document template technology which allows every single document that your company produces to have a similar look and feel. It doesn't matter if it is email, a fax, a contract, a cover letter or a press release. It will have the same authorized look and feel you want that is branded across the entire company and is easy for the end users to adopt. They do not have to go out to a library and then massage a template and try to make it work for their individual uses. That is an example of how we work the way people already work. We just empower them.

CEOCFO: *What is the competitive landscape? Are there companies that have the depth of Litéra?*

Mr. Thomas: We have been recognized as having the most complete suite of products, end to end. Individually there are point solutions that may offer a similar capability here and there, although generally not as robust or complete. There are competitors for different pieces of the puzzle, but no one has it as well integrated as we do. We have a cohesive portfolio of patented technologies that ensures our individual products are many, many steps ahead of those who try portraying their applications as powerful as ours are.

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CEOCFO: *Do potential customers know Litéra? Are they still finding out?*

Mr. Thomas: Companies outside of our traditional markets for the past fifteen years are still getting to know us. Historically, we have been very strong in Fortune 500 legal departments and their major law firms. Because our technology portfolio has grown so much we really do have a great entry into a whole new businesses that rely heavily on documents for their productivity, for their agreements, written specifications, archiving, for their regulatory compliance and so on. Therefore, now our biggest challenge is getting the word out about the capabilities that are available to them through us. Most people are amazed that capabilities like ours are available to them when they see it demonstrated.

CEOCFO: *How are you doing so or do you plan to do so?*

Mr. Thomas: We go to where they go. In the same way that our technology is designed to work the way people are already working and we just make that work simultaneously more secure and productive, our strategy is to go where specific audiences in those companies go to learn about technology. For example, if there is a conference that targets people heavily involved with clinical trials in life sciences that is where we will go too. We also go on listening tours. We go to understand their pains, their problems, their challenges and their risks. Then we help them listen to us in return to understand how well we solve so many of those issues.

CEOCFO: *Are there many industries today that do not have documents as a main part of what they are doing?*

Mr. Thomas: Every aspect of most enterprises has become very document centric. We have research that shows the average corporate document has over eleven people either viewing it or annotating it, editing it, co-authoring it and so on. That is a lot of fingers in the pie. So to ask who this technology doesn't apply to is a very good question. The answer is, not very many industries at all.

CEOCFO: *You have a variety of products. Do people pick and choose? Do many people take the full package? What is the model?*

Mr. Thomas: The best approach is to have access to the entire suite, but deploy the individual capabilities in whatever sequence makes the most sense given their unique conditions, initiatives and timelines. To deploy an entire suite at once may make sense for a new department but it typically tends to be a step by step approach to implementation and adoption otherwise.

CEOCFO: *There does not seem like a downside. Why would a company not want to be able to, for example, have all of their documents look well and be able to protect them?*

Mr. Thomas: The only downside would be to continue leaving your organization exposed and less productive! Sometimes there are distractions and delays where people look at this and deeply desire the capabilities right now but can't get past their current projects. So we make it easy for them to do the right thing. We want to make it simple to take bite-sized chunks of this, one deployment step at a time. We work mutually to understand how we can harmonize our technology with their existing pressures and initiatives.

CEOCFO: *Looking at your website it appears that giving back is important. Why and where do you focus your efforts?*

Mr. Thomas: We believe in being not just good corporate citizens, but engaging in relationship everywhere. In fact, we don't think of clients as customers as much as we do as relationships. It's not just the right thing to do, but it is also beneficial. We learn from those relationships. We go back and say, "What do our products need to do, what adjacent capabilities and technologies do you use that you would guide us toward?" This emphasis we have on relationships spills over into our focus on corporate responsibility, in charity and just being a good global neighbor. We just find the rewards are immeasurable. It has always been a tremendous emphasis by our CEO and founder, Deepak Massand and the benefits from it are everywhere to be seen throughout Litéra.

CEOCFO: *R&D innovative technology is important for you as well. Would you tell us a little bit about where you are focusing your efforts today?*

Mr. Thomas: The way we approach R&D is really a secret weapon of ours. We reinvest thirty percent of our revenue into R&D, which is way more than the industry average. Not only that, but we have a pretty good cost model for getting R&D done. We have round-the-clock development centers and are very able to be amazingly nimble. As a result we quickly eliminate the feature/function backlogs that many independent software vendors are plagued by. We focus heavily on quality assurance as part of the development process rather than afterward, so that the demands placed on our support organization are much smaller. It's something our customers consistently come back and express a great deal of satisfaction about in working with us.

CEOCFO: *What do you focus on day to day, personally?*

Mr. Thomas: I focus on growing our markets. Essentially, getting the awareness and visibility of what our technology can do is my challenge, so that people understand that we are not a "me too" kind of software provider. We have unique technologies and sometimes that creates a challenge for people to wrap their mind around in order to understand what they didn't know they were capable of doing. It is all about market growth, evangelism and penetration.

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic reach today? Would you like to see that change?*

Mr. Thomas: We are already a global firm but I'd like to see us improve market awareness in all the major international financial centers.

CEOCFO: *Address our readers. Why take notice of Litéra?*

Mr. Thomas: You hired smart, talented people. But the computer tools they're using force them to make destructive trade-offs between being productive and being secure. Why not give them the tools they need to be both? Why not give them the software that turbo charges both sides of the equation at once without forcing them to do anything different than what they're already doing? Software is at an inflection point today, where the consumer-centric "app" mentality tends to drive more and more business computing behavior. It's exciting to see this change and there will be winners and losers. Litéra is already proving it is a winner.

BIO: Norm Thomas is the Chief Commercial Officer for Litéra[®], the leader in content lifecycle management with best of breed products to create, collaborate, compare, clean and convert business documents across an organization's entire content lifecycle.

As a recognized industry leader in technology for professional services firms, Thomas spent 15 years with Microsoft as Director of Industry Market Development for the Legal and Professional Services solutions business, focusing on customer engagement and channel-building in the services sector globally. Before joining Microsoft, Thomas was a Client Partner for Cambridge Technology Partners in enterprise-scale project management and client development, and before that was President of Softec Solutions, Inc., a systems integrator for small- and medium-sized manufacturing companies.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from USC and an MBA in Finance from the University of Washington and is a Certified Public Accountant in the State of Washington.



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