BEACON Newsletter - July 2024
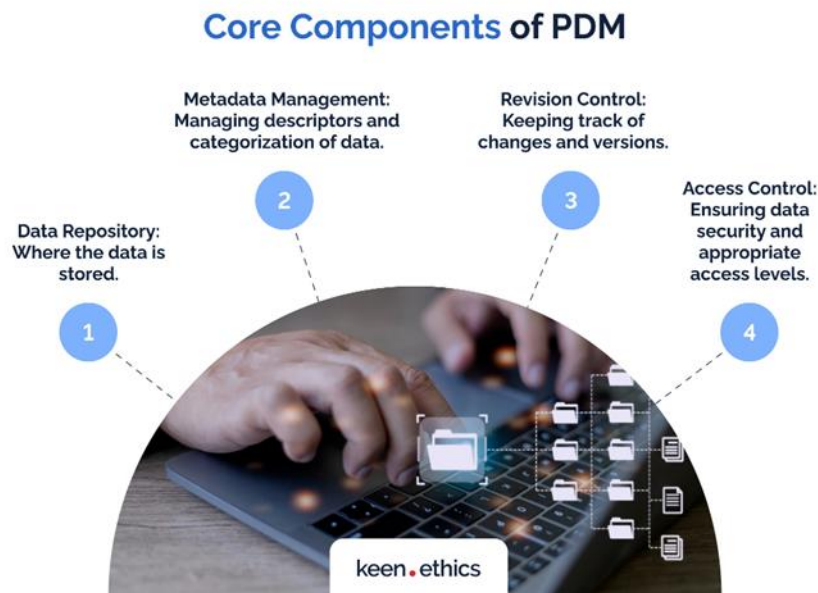
Core Components of SOLIDWORKS Product Data Management (PDM)

SOLIDWORKS PDM (PRODUCT DATA MANAGEMENT):

SOLIDWORKS PDM is a mainstream data management system that stores and organizes engineering CAD data and other documents in a central vault that has a relational database to manage all the information about the files and references, users and group permissions, electronic workflow processes and more. SOLIDWORKS PDM is built into Windows® Explorer so users work in a familiar environment but with much more information and control. SOLIDWORKS PDM uses an organized local cache where files are automatically retrieved from the central file server (Archive Server) and placed in the user's local cache on their hard drive. This vastly increases performance over opening and saving files on network shared folders. If a file needs to be edited, the user will check out the file which gives them rights access to it. After editing is complete, the file is copied back to the Archive Server via the check-in process. The check-in process automatically creates a new version of the file.

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Core Components of PDM:

1. **Data repository: Where the data is stored**

   The primary aspect of an advanced PDM system is proper data storage. Every system of this type is primarily an information repository. Consequently, when choosing a PDM framework, you should understand how it stores data. In this regard, two options exist. Both have their downsides and positives. That are In-house data storage and Cloud storage.

2. **Metadata Management: Managing descriptors and categorization of data**

   A major element in any PDM framework is the data storage format. Every project has a significant amount of data associated with it. Some projects involve thousands of people. For example, large-scale animation often requires genuinely massive teams. In this light, you need to consider a correct standard for data categorization. Otherwise, data storage is useless. If its users can't find the key information, there's no point in creating such a system in the first place. We believe product data management requires active metadata management. In this regard, a PDM framework must have strong tools for working with descriptors. What should it include?

3. Revision Control: Keeping track of changes and versions

Revision control is a major feature in any PDM or PIM (Product Information Management) framework. It's not enough to install a PDM system to track some files. In fact, this use case is easy to organize with other tools. A proper approach to categorizing system data can already be sufficient.

So, how do PDM frameworks distinguish themselves? Above all, they do this through their ability to control revisions. Revision control allows you to review data and track its changes. For example, a full-scale PDM lets you see all versions of an engineering project. In this way, you'll be able to track daily progress in it.

4. Access Control: Ensuring data security and appropriate access levels.

A final element of a potent PDM design is proper access control. Most projects contain a lot of sensitive data. It may become especially sensitive if one can review it in development. As a result, you should have clear access limits. Only select people must be able to access certain aspects of your project. Various firms have newcomers in low-impact positions. Without enough control over them, the risk of data leaks is high. Only top managers should know the most vital information. The possibility of mixing data access levels must be minimal.

Benefits of Effective PDM

1. Efficiency in product development.

2. Reduction of errors and improved product quality.

3. Facilitating collaboration among cross-functional teams.

4. Streamlined operations, leading to cost savings.

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