

# Modern Managed File Transfer: Enjoy Immediate Benefits While Laying a Foundation for Digital Transformation

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An ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES® (EMA™) White Paper  
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Prepared for BMC



IT AND DATA MANAGEMENT  
RESEARCH | INDUSTRY ANALYSIS | CONSULTING

# MODERN MANAGED FILE TRANSFER: ENJOY IMMEDIATE BENEFITS WHILE LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As enterprises strive to digitally transform business processes and develop new capabilities and business models, increased pressure is put on already-stressed operations, development teams, and legacy infrastructure. Drawing on new Enterprise Management Associates research, this white paper explores the increasing importance of file transfers and how enterprises can invest in improving infrastructure for immediate benefit while creating a foundation to support digital transformation.

## MOVING DATA IS MISSION-CRITICAL

Business today is highly data-driven and data-dependent. Every business needs to connect systems and people with data, both internally and externally. This need crosses all industries. Many important business processes rely on the exchange of data, making file transfers mission-critical. These exchanges can be between systems within the same business, between business partners, with government and regulatory bodies, and with customers. Modern IT relies heavily on file transfers every day to complete the day's activities and prepare systems for the next day. EMA estimates that 20 percent of scheduled jobs include file transfers, with a majority of job streams containing at least one such job. For an enterprise, these are generally automated server-to-server file transfers that take place without human intervention unless something has gone wrong. However, automated file transfers can also include person-to-server or server-to-person transfers. In the case of person-to-server file transfers, the arrival of a file (or multiple files from multiple persons) might be the trigger to begin a process. In the case of server-to-person file transfers, the end of a job stream might include delivery of reports or other files to one or more individuals. With so much riding on the success of moving data, it is critical to have a modern and easy-to-use tool to ensure visibility and control of data on the move.

Managed file transfer (MFT) software improves upon the basic file transfer protocols. MFT brings automation to the file transfer function, orchestrating the timing of file transfers through scheduling and event triggers. Problems can arise during the transfer process, and MFT includes automated error checking and auto-remediation functions to restart or repair errors. Security is also improved with built-in encryption and role-based access, ensuring operators have the authority they need, but business users and customers can only access their own files. MFT consolidates all file transfers into a single enterprise-class system, avoiding the pitfalls of multiple FTP servers scattered across the business. With all activity managed from one central system, visibility is increased with logging, reporting, and audit features. MFT can also improve integration with the applications generating or relying on critical data. MFT is a big step up from directly working with file transfer servers.

## WORKLOAD AUTOMATION NOW INCLUDES NATIVE MANAGED FILE TRANSFER

Workload automation (WLA) software with native MFT capabilities improves upon standalone MFT software. The applications and business processes that depend on file transfers are supported and managed by enterprise-class WLA software. WLA tools carry the primary responsibility for running the scheduled jobs in enterprise IT. WLA tools have been integrated with MFT tools for many years to coordinate file transfers as part of managing end-to-end job streams. Over the past few years, several leading WLA tools added significant native managed file transfer capabilities. Standalone MFT products automate the file transfer function, but do not provide visibility and control across the entire business process. Magic happens when the management of file transfers is natively handled inside a good WLA tool. Just as MFT increased visibility into the file transfer process over file transfer servers, native WLA MFT creates even greater visibility. Generally, a broader group of people have access to WLA dashboards than would have visibility into a standalone MFT product.

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WLA tools have expanded access beyond the operators responsible for running the scheduled work of IT to include business users and developers. Dashboards can be created that provide visibility into the status of job streams, including dependencies on other functions and predicted completion times. Some organizations have even allowed business owners some limited control over starting and stopping processes, including file transfers. When file transfers are monitored and executed within WLA software, it is immediately apparent which file transfers affect which jobs and the overall status of the entire process is better understood.

## FILE TRANSFER SOLUTIONS

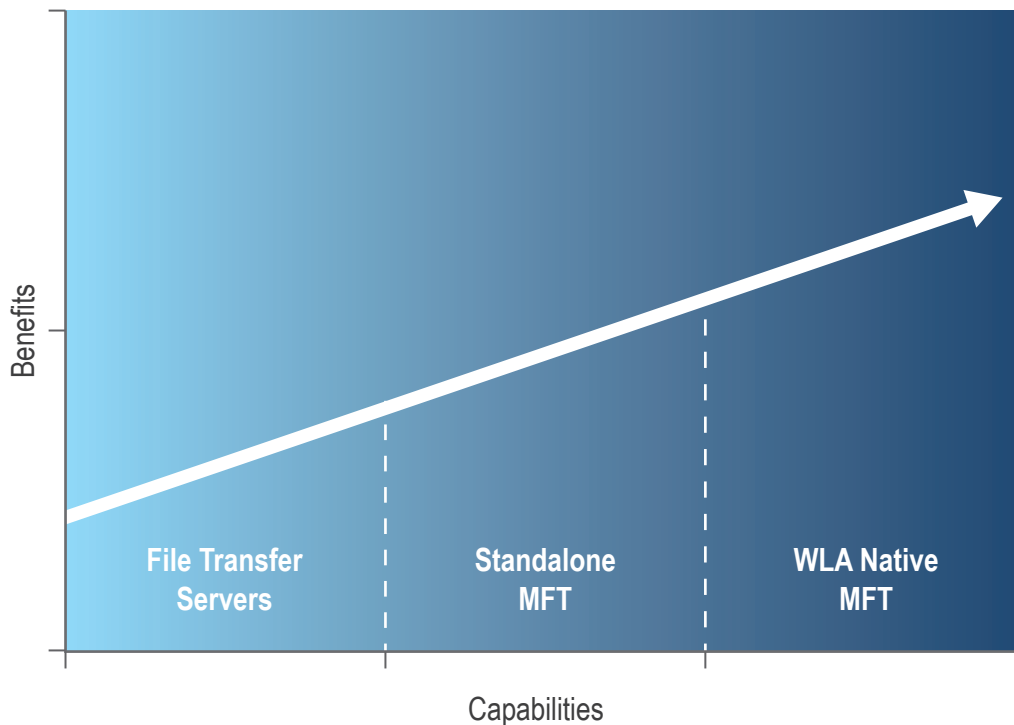


Figure 1

WLA tools also offer great security and audit features that benefit managed file transfer. Existing user permissions are ready to be used for file transfer features. Staff already trained on WLA reporting and audit features are immediately ready to utilize the same logging and reporting they use for broader job scheduling to control and monitor file transfers. WLA tools have significantly more mature governance capabilities than standalone MFT products. Having the complete end-to-end process view makes reporting, SLA monitoring and alerting, and audit functions more powerful within WLA when compared to standalone MFT.

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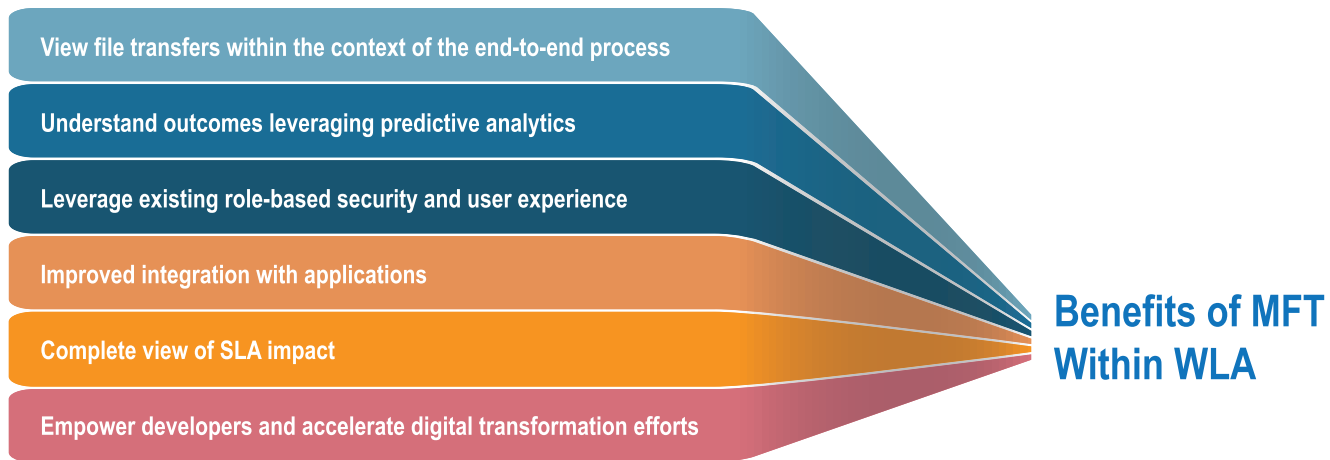


Figure 2

## MFT WITHIN WLA EMPOWERS DEVOPS AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Business users are not the only benefactors of native MFT within WLA tools. Leading WLA tools have been empowering developers with new features to support DevOps practices and enable easier digital transformation. Like business users, developers also benefit from WLA dashboards for visibility and limited control of some jobs. However, there are significant developer capabilities in some WLA products that go far beyond simple visibility and limited control. Developers benefit from REST APIs, custom integration capabilities, and Jobs-as-Code features that allow direct scheduler interaction from within familiar coding tools and practices. Natively managing file transfers from within developer-enabled WLA tools puts tremendous integration capabilities into the hands of developers, speeding digital transformation and other development efforts while improving the manageability of file transfers.

Many organizations are already taking advantage of MFT capabilities within WLA tools. Taken from the EMA research report “The Shifting Role of Workload Automation: WLA Expansion Creates a Foundation for Broader Business Process Automation and Digital Transformation” (published in Q4 2018), the chart shows the forms of automation used to handle file transfers. Workload automation is the most used form of automation for file transfers at 46%, with only 22% using specific, standalone MFT software.

Incorporating the automation of MFT into WLA tools is one example of a broader trend away from task-specific automation tools and toward broader functioning automation tools. EMA research shows that 36% of organizations focus on task-specific tools, but 66% are moving to broader automation tools that support many types of tasks. This makes sense, since there is cost in acquiring, implementing, configuring, training staff, and operating each software tool. With a broader automation tool, more tasks can be automated for the effort, and users gain skill and efficiency because they use one core tool for many tasks. Using a broader automation tool also provides a single point of control for automated tasks.

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## CONTROL-M MANAGED FILE TRANSFER FROM BMC: FROM CENTRALIZED PLATFORM TO A CONSUMABLE MFT SERVICE

One of the leading WLA tools, Control-M, has been working over the past several releases to significantly enhance file transfer management. Control-M had automation for file transfers for some time, but recent improvements raised the bar. With Control-M Batch Impact Manager, the impact of file transfer problems is not just reported, but reported within the context of the entire business process. Users of Control-M can work in a familiar automation interface to gain all the advantages of native MFT within WLA, and where the use case demands, Control-M also supports a standalone server. EMA estimates that 80% of file transfers are internal to the enterprise, with the remaining file transfers with external parties. With the most recent release, BMC added a B2B Hub, a B2B Gateway, and a B2B file exchange to specifically handle external file transfer needs. With these features, a user id can be created for external users to interact with their files and transfers. Control-M allows operations teams to have the best of both worlds when it comes to file transfer management.

Even in standalone server mode, all of the developer benefits are available. Control-M includes significant developer-empowering capabilities. Control-M Application Integrator is a workload automation design tool that connects applications and processes with custom integrations that avoid scripts. An Application Hub exchange allows users to find, use, and share application integrations from a crowd-sourced open community. Control-M Automation API provides a set of programmatic interfaces that gives developers and DevOps engineers access to the capabilities within Control-M with a modern application release process. Job flows and configuration objects can be built in JSON and managed together with other application artifacts in GIT and other source code management systems. Developers can build sophisticated scheduling, flow control, and SLA management in their familiar coding environment and travel with applications as they are deployed in development, test, and production environments. Supporting the DevOps process in this way, Control-M enables teams to move fast and provide automation across the many cloud and on-premises environments that make up modern IT infrastructure.

## EMA PERSPECTIVE ON CONTROL-M MANAGED FILE TRANSFER

Managing file transfers within Control-M brings immediate benefits to operations, business users, and customers. However, there is a far more strategic benefit to managing file transfers natively within such a powerful automation tool. The pressures on IT to support microservices architectures, use agile development methodologies, and move faster to support digital transformation projects are taxing legacy infrastructure. The developer capabilities and the DevOps focus of Control-M create a foundation upon which to build digital transformation. Smart organizations will invest some of the digital transformation budget on infrastructure and process improvements that bring immediate benefits, but more importantly, that empower the operations and development teams to move faster and support the new-world applications. Using MFT within Control-M, existing Control-M customers do not have to install or configure new hardware. The Control-M agents already running within the existing infrastructure can be easily enabled and deployed. MFT comes under the single point of control, along with the broader jobs being scheduled and managed, and the entire IT organization can move more quickly toward the new-world vision. BMC is changing the way enterprises think about MFT, and allowing MFT to be consumed in new ways. With Control-M, MFT is no longer about a centralized platform, but a consumable service to be leveraged by many user types, both internal and external to the enterprise.

## About Enterprise Management Associates, Inc.

Founded in 1996, Enterprise Management Associates (EMA) is a leading industry analyst firm that provides deep insight across the full spectrum of IT and data management technologies. EMA analysts leverage a unique combination of practical experience, insight into industry best practices, and in-depth knowledge of current and planned vendor solutions to help EMA's clients achieve their goals. Learn more about EMA research, analysis, and consulting services for enterprise line of business users, IT professionals, and IT vendors at [www.enterprisemanagement.com](http://www.enterprisemanagement.com) or [blog.enterprisemanagement.com](http://blog.enterprisemanagement.com). You can also follow EMA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

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