Information Management: mission critical

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Chartered Institute of
Library and Information
Professionals

An analysis of CILIP's Resources List

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project

In December 2014, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) commissioned Linda Berube to undertake a "small-scale research project". The purpose of this project was to:

- Review the CILIP list of Key Published Information Management (IM) Resources.

- Assess it for evidence of trends in the interest and impact of strategic information management in organisations.

This report of the research is one of the deliverables of the CILIP Information Management Project, the objective of which is for "CILIP to provide an offer to the UK information management (IM) community that is as good and integral to CILIP as other library, information and knowledge sectors and to establish its footprint in the cluster of IM focused organisations".

The Context

We are all information machines. We create it every day, and if our work involves using computing devices of any kind, most likely every minute of our working day. If we cannot fathom the amount of information – visible and invisible – we produce, then others have attempted it for us:

- **The digital universe is likely to grow 40% a year into the next decade.**

- **Every two years it doubles in size.**

- **Data will increase by 2020 to 44 zettabytes or 44 trillion gigabytes.** [1]

But who are the custodians for all this information? Here, we have a bit of a problem:

"By 2015, 4.4 million jobs globally will be needed to cope with big data, but only a third of those jobs will be filled." [2]

Also:

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[1] From *The Digital Universe of Opportunities: Rich data and the increasing value of the Internet of Things.* EMC/IDC, 2014. Available at: http://www.emc.com/leadership/digital-universe/2014iview/index.htm
[2] From Linden, Alexander et al.(2014). *Major Myths about Big Data's Impact on Analytics. Gartner.* Access available by subscription or for a fee at: http://www.gartner.com/technology/home.jsp

"The United States alone faces a shortage of 140,000 to 190,000 people with deep analytical skills as well as 1.5 million managers and analysts to analyze big data and make decisions based on their findings." [3]

The mini-case study of information creating and gathering may at first glance seem like a personal IM problem. Think again: all that information stored on multiple devices were, are, or will be the focus of organisational IM, whether it be purposeful submission of information on a site or the information collected by cookies on a social media photo site, for example.

The case study, is the smallest of examples of the burgeoning growth of the digital universe. Even so, it illustrates how personal information creation and collection is the beginning of the process that often leads to organisational IM.

None of the headlines about the growth of the digital universe are new. Judging from IM literature, this issue hasn't been <u>new</u> news for a while. Consequently, the need for effective IM has never been greater.

The shortage of information professionals, initially to be ascribed to the newness of the field, now on the face of it is caused by the rapid rate of growth of the digital universe outpacing the expansion of a skills base. However, the results from an analysis of key IM resources put together by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) would suggest more complex causes are at play.

> ### *Information management a mini case study*
>
> *I have information coming out of my ears (figuratively, not literally), but the hard part is not acquiring the bits and pieces of information. It is organizing them. Computer hard drives are larger than ever. Mine is perpetually full. So I started using USB drives. I have around 15 of those. When those became unworkable, I moved to external hard drives…then portable external hard drives. All in all, I have about 25 devices storing 8-ish terabytes of information.*
>
> *It goes way beyond the devices sitting in my office. My employer set up "Box" accounts for everyone, including personal and shared folders. I also use "Dropbox". Not to mention my "Drive" account (two of them actually — one for work and one attached to my personal email). I also have a "Live" account. Oh, and how could I forget about "iCloud"? If I have my count right, there are at least a couple more terabytes of data there. (And I am seriously underestimating this!)*
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> "File Not Found 404" from *Fence Post Diaries*. Available at: http://fencepostdiaries.com/2015/02/24/file-not-found-404/

Key Findings from the CILIP Research Project

CILIP's mission, through its Information Management Project Board and its Information Management Leaders Group, is to adopt an evidenced-based approach to policy and

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3 From Manyika, James et al.(2011). *Big Data: The next frontier for innovation, competition, and productivity*. McKinsey Global Institute. Available at: http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/mgi/research/technology_and_innovation/big_data_the_next_frontier_for_innovation

advocacy work. As a result, it commissioned this research, using its own key list of IM resources, to gain an understanding of the current IM landscape – its status, trends, challenges, risks and benefits.

Why is Information Management Needed?

Faced with all this information growth and diversity, wouldn't the response to this question be obvious? Judging from the CILIP Resources, most organisations seem to have a vague understanding of the importance of IM and would probably refer to information growth and risk as a reason for its implementation.

Most often, organisational responses to this question focus on negative reactions such as 'there is too much of it' or 'we don't want any security problems'. However, IM is or should be proactive: organisations should value the information they create and collect and see its support of business priorities as an opportunity for more efficiency and productivity.

Essentially, IM is necessary to all organisations because:

- **Effective decision-making is dependent on good quality, up-to-date information.**

- **Quality information should be readily accessible to all staff members.**

- **The loss of valuable knowledge and information through risky behaviours creates an information environment based on fear and could potentially lead to the loss of business.**

- **Organisations that recognise information as an asset require a roadmap to exploit that value for business success in the most timely and cost-effective way possible.**

This is reinforced in the various survey reports included in the CILIP Resources which indicate the benefits of valuing information as an asset within an IM framework:

- **Half of the executives from companies that significantly outperform their peers financially, in response to an EIU survey on Big Data, say they have a well-defined data strategy, more than four times the figure for those on par with their peers.**

- **Better use of information by FTSE 350 companies suggests a potential gain of £44 billion gross operating profit per annum.**

- For the public sector, the increased level of performance brought about by information opportunity could translate to a £21 billion saving in administrative costs. [4]

In realising the potential of IM, organisations see the direct impact on innovation, meeting customer needs, and reducing costs and overheads.

Other Key Findings

As more and more organisations stockpile information, less and less are either able to exploit this information, or even to manage it. This is a key finding from the CILIP Resources analysis.

But other findings indicate that this state of affairs can be turned around with a change of perspective and culture, acknowledging that:

- The business of all organisations is information, and valuing information as an asset is a key part of their success.

- An effective, organisation-wide IM strategy has to be opportunity-based, not risk-based. Good IM strategies minimise risk and offer greater opportunities for staff to access and exploit the information in a secure environment.

- IM strategies in and of themselves are not based on information, but on knowledge of the information: what it is; how it connects to business priorities; how it is used and accessed; and how it is valued in order to make organisations more effective.

- Knowledge and information professional skills are the key to making the connections between information and knowledge, and knowledge and strategy. If the business of all organisations is information, then the job of all staff members is IM. Staff members are the knowledge base.

- Technology is not the strategy; it is the toolkit that supports the management of information.

- The greater opportunities afforded by an IM strategy include, at once, a more flexible and supportive organisational culture; data-driven executive decision-making; and investment in staff, their skills and the awareness of their importance to business priorities.

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4 Evidence in the first bullet point is from *Big Data: lessons from leaders*. London: Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), 2011 [sponsored by SAS]. Available at: http://www.economistinsights.com/sites/default/files/downloads/EIU_SAS_BigData_4.pdf. Evidence from bullet points 2-3 is from Harji, Ramesh (2008). *The Information Opportunity Report: Harnessing information to enhance business performance*. Capgemini. For other evidence of impact, see: Leganza, Gene et al.(2014) *Focus Your Information Strategy on Business Impact. Forrester*. Available at: https://www.forrester.com/Focus+Your+Information+Strategy+On+Business+Impact/fulltext/-/E-RES116568

The Place of the Information Management Professional

The CILIP Resources demonstrate not only the importance of IM strategy, but also of an advocacy programme for IM professionals in particular. The publications generally overlook the value of the specific skills library, information and knowledge professionals can contribute to organisations. The few that do are not necessarily positive about the profile of these professionals: one report maintains that: "the majority of knowledge providers currently overestimate the level of value they provide. Overall, 55% of knowledge providers say they add 'a lot of value', yet only 34% of executives are willing to say the same of them". [5]

Raising the profile of these professionals within organisations is not only timely but also critical to the successful implementation of organisational IM strategies.

5 *The Evolving Value of Information Management: And the Five Essential Attributes of the Modern Information Professional.* FT/SLA, 2013. Available at: http://ftcorporate.ft.com/sla/.

Find out more

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CILIP is the leading body representing the information professions. We believe in a literate, knowledgeable and connected society. We build the professionalism of our members by supporting the development of skills, knowledge and excellence. We provide unity through shared values and advocate on behalf of the information professions. Our members work in a range of sectors including higher education, schools, public libraries, health, commercial organisations and across government.

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