Making Information Management Work

An Information Management Policy Framework for organisations and staff

CILIP is committed to supporting members and their organisations to improve information management practice and thereby realise more value from their information and knowledge assets. One component of CILIP's support is the development and sharing of tools and position papers for members and others to use. This guidance is the first of these tools.

<u>Introduction</u>

Gartner predicts in a recent study that by 2017 33% of Fortune 100 organizations will experience an information crisis due to their inability to effectively value, govern and trust their enterprise information[1]. The problems are particularly acute for 'unstructured information' (the management of textual content) though the increased interest in 'big data' demonstrates that both elements of organisational content (structural data and unstructured content) are associated with similar information management issues e.g.:

- The silo issue: the range and volume of information repositories, often each with its own specialised search application and folder structure
- The location issue: the need to know in which repository or application a specific item of information will be located, a particular challenge for employees without a detailed understanding of the organisation
- The search issue: poorly implemented search applications, often with limited support from IT or the business and many specific to individual content stores
- The comprehension and use issue: information presented in many different file formats and languages
- The reliability issue: multiple versions of the information with no indication of which is the 'approved' version – the one version of the truth

Perhaps the biggest issue is the failure of both the private and the public sectors to recognise the value of their information investments and to treat them as organisational assets requiring effective and strategically led management.
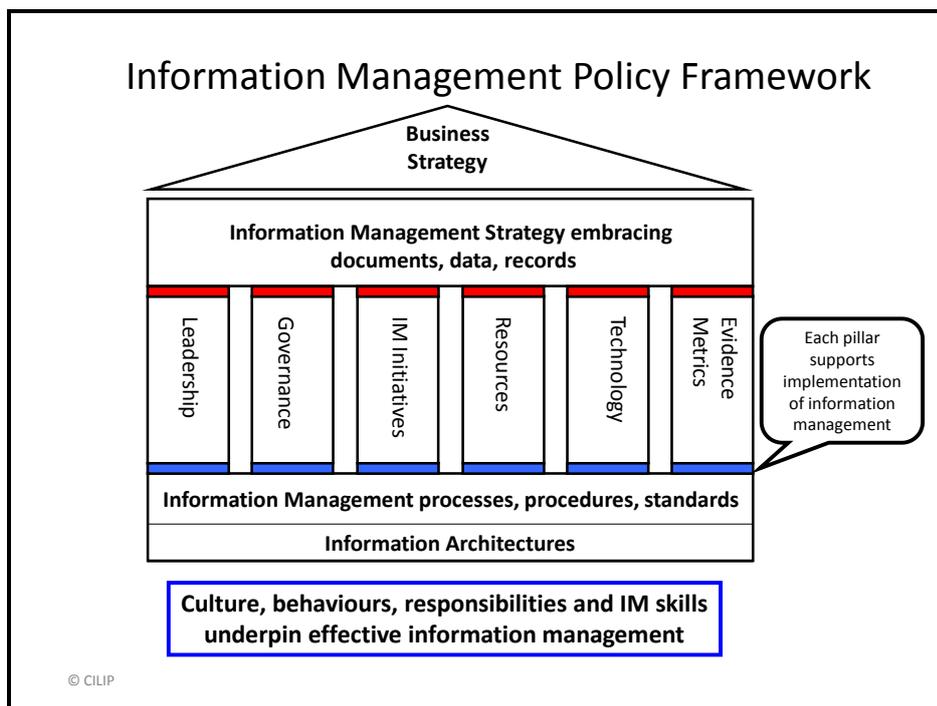
An Information Management Policy framework for organisations

Active information management can make organisations work better and become more effective in all elements of their operations.

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[1] Gartner, '2013 Strategic Road Map for Enterprise Information Management', Further information from: www.gartner.com

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An Information Management Policy Framework is critical for the effective organisation and exploitation of information assets. The framework will enable informed decision making; support the fulfilment of strategic objectives and enable successful execution of work processes.

The following model illustrates key components of the framework of activities that together provide a foundation for effective information management:

Information Management Policy Framework

Business Strategy

Information Management Strategy embracing documents, data, records

Leadership · Governance · IM Initiatives · Resources · Technology · Evidence Metrics

Each pillar supports implementation of information management

Information Management processes, procedures, standards

Information Architectures

Culture, behaviours, responsibilities and IM skills underpin effective information management

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An information management policy framework requires the organisation's executive board to recognise information as a corporate asset, critical to delivery of its vision and mission, and to champion a strategy for its more effective management. Implementation requires leadership, resources and sound information architectures. It also requires recognising the challenges of leadership, change, and culture.

Codes of practice are increasingly common in organisations covering areas as diverse as ethics, sustainability and social responsibility. They are agreed at board level, signed up to by all levels of staff, and adherence to them is built in to role specifications, objectives and appraisals. The importance of good information management means that it can well be treated in this way and this is why we have developed an information management policy template for CILIP members to use in their organisations.

Components of an Information Management Policy Framework

CILIP recommends the following principles/guidelines for inclusion in a core IM policy – to be adapted to the needs of the specific organisation.

IM Policy Template Box 1

The policy of our organisation is to:

> - Establish the role of our information assets and information management in delivering the organisation's objectives
> - Recognise and exploit opportunities to capitalise on our information assets for our advantage
> - Manage information effectively as a strategic organisational asset across the organisation – by providing timely, appropriate, accurate and up-to-date information at the point of need Make information available as quickly and easily as possible
> - Take appropriate measures to protect information, including personal information, which cannot be shared for reasons of security or privacy
> - Assess and manage risks to the confidentiality, quality, integrity and availability of information
> - Ensure that information created, collected and stored is proportionate to the organisational and any legislative or regulatory needs and is retained only for as long as it is needed
> - Ensure information is of the appropriate quality, and in the appropriate media, to support organisational needs
> - Create an information management culture where employees take personal responsibility for managing information and are fully supported by their managers
> - Comply with all relevant statutory and regulatory requirements
> - Provide training and support to encourage the adoption of good practice in information management as set out in these guidelines".

Information professionals are in an excellent position to adapt the key points of this policy template for their organisations. Their challenge is to provide the evidence and secure board and/or senior management sponsorship for the policy; the benefits of the proposed approach should be self-evident to a well managed organisation. Examples of risks and benefits related to IM will support the case for good information management practice. A champion may be needed to present and convince the board of the importance of making this move and to foster understanding of what will be needed to put the policy into practice across the organisation

With such a policy in place it should be much easier for managers at all levels to build on the organisation's vision and secure the resources needed to make progress, on the basis that the Board or Executive Committee has declared its commitment to IM. Managers will need to accept the importance of their role in owning and managing information effectively, as will Board members.

A critical success factor in the promotion of the policy is the designation of a board member and/or a senior executive with responsibility for improving information management functions and providing the necessary leadership to achieve this. This may include the establishing of a cross-organisation steering group to develop policy and procedures, infrastructure (services, tools and guidance), promote change management, monitor progress and ensure the assessment of benefit and value to the organisation. These elements will be covered in the further work of the IM Project Board Team.

Making Information Management Work - Information management is everyone's responsibility

Once the policy is in place, the challenge of educating and convincing employees in their personal responsibilities begins. We have therefore included in this document responsibility statements for staff, managers, and business units.

IM Policy Template Box 2

Employees: All employees will:

- Treat information as a corporate asset
- Take ownership/personal responsibility for the information they create, capture or maintain
- Take personal responsibility for their role in the effective management of the information created and used in their organisational unit
- Make information accessible to those who require it to fulfil their duties
- Ensure that they are always aware of and respect the confidentiality of information they produce, share or receive

IM Policy Template Box 3

Managers: All managers will:

- Take ownership/responsibility for the management of information created and used within their areas of operation
- Ensure that this information is accurate and fit for purpose
- Ensure that the information has appropriate access and security permissions assigned
- Encourage the sharing of information and knowledge through setting a high standard of personal information management that others can then emulate
- Include a review of employee information management in job evaluations
- Pay particular attention to the needs of employees new to the company or to the organisational unit

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IM Policy Template Box 4

Organisational functions: The management teams for each function should

> - Establish a consistent framework for good information management practice within the function based on the Information Life Cycle (create, store, discover, use, share, review, record, dispose)
> - Ensure that all employees are able to allocate the time needed to create and review information
> - Report back on the need for changes and additions based on an assessment of the operational effectiveness of the Guidelines
> - Provide training to develop and improve the information management skills in the organisation
> - Ensure IT platforms are fit for the purpose of effective information management both within an organisational unit and between units

Conclusion

CILIP has an important role to play in the recognition of the role of information management in its constituencies of interest and in the improvement of information management processes across the UK's organisations. This policy and the responsibility statements are tools for CILIP members to use in their furthering of this objective.

Authors: Sandra Ward and Martin White, July 2014