Information Governance

Basics, Principles, Importance

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Information governance is growing in importance

When it comes to information and communications technology, all of us have by now developed an allergy to new acronyms and catchwords - often they're just hype, or the same old thing in a new package. Not so with information governance. in our increasingly technical, electronic and virtualized world, information governance is more and more important.

What information governance is

Information governance means being in control of information. With the flood of information, the resurgence of issues like Big Data, the growth of online commerce, rights in the digital world, demands for compliance and transparency, calls for confidentiality and personal data protection, and the ubiquitous availability of information with always-on mobile devices, information governance is gaining a new dimension.

Governance exists in different forms in companies and other organizations. The word is derived from the Latin gubernator, or steersman, and today means to rule, direct or control in many contexts. In the enterprise management context, corporate governance means transparent, responsible guidance and control. Information governance is part of this overarching strategic function. IT governance is part of it, but is by no means the same thing as information governance. IT governance is about systems and their operation, while information governance is about the information, the knowledge, the immaterial virtual assets of the company itself.

PHIGs: Principles of Information Governance

In 2013 Canadian ECM specialist Chris Walker defined 10 "Principles of Holistic Information Governance" or "PHIGs," which he considers the basis of any information governance (PHIGs http://bit.ly/PHIGs). The 10 principles in brief are:

1. Information is an asset
2. Information has purpose
3. Information has sources and targets
4. Information has deadlines
5. Information has consumers
6. Information carries obligations
7. Information carries risks
8. Information has many forms
9. Information isn't immortal
10. Information demands accountability

What information governance demands of companies

Information governance refers to the processes a company uses to manage, control and monitor its business information. In the opinion of PROJECT CONSULT, that includes:

- Knowing and documenting what information is held, where and in what quality.
- Knowing the value of the information and what is required for its use and storage - whether for long-term archiving or temporary use followed by quick disposal.
- Clear communication of responsibilities for the creation, updating, capture, use, quality, correctness, traceability, availability, administration, security, documentation and disposal of information.
- Ensuring that information is accessible, quickly available and secured so that it can be used as legal evidence if needed.
- Availability of information at all times, in context, regardless of location, time, source, format and source, but in such a way that only authorized users have access and confidentiality is maintained.
- Control of the life-cycle of information, from its creation and orderly storage to its destruction, with constant auditability of its condition and value based on legal requirements and internal policies.
- Preparation, implementation, communication and follow-up on policies for information governance.

If these things are not done, information has little value for a company. Considering the vital importance of the fast availability of high quality information for business success today, information governance often does not get the attention it merits. Even in large corporations there is seldom a CIO - Chief Information Officer - and if there is such a position, it is often focused more on IT than on information management.

Information Governance + Records Management + Compliance

Two other factors always immediately play into information governance - records management and compliance.

Records management is a software-supported process that enables the orderly management of information. It is a part or subset of information governance. The big difference is that records management is more static and does not deal with all of the information in a company - just the records. It is reactive, and depends on information being made available to it for orderly management. Records management focuses on managing the life cycle with retention periods.

Information governance, on the other hand, should actively support the organization's business or activity. Its purpose is less to document, trace and store, and more proactive. Information governance encompasses all of the information in the company at all times, and focuses on its value and application. Thus, there is much more to information governance than records management. The latter is an important element, but information governance goes beyond the operative level to be a strategic function.

In the Governance, Risk management and Compliance or GRC model, compliance is at the lower, operative level and is concerned with the specific implementation of the measures laid out by governance. These address primarily statutory requirements, but also industry guidelines and internal policies. Business process management, records management, audit trails, logging, eDiscovery and archiving are software systems that support this task. Information governance needs to be implemented consistently with the same quality throughout the organization. Policies, guidelines and work instructions are helpful (and necessary), but only work with constant follow-up, examination and training. Information Governance is an ongoing process that affects all areas of the company.

Challenges and future of the information society

Information governance was formerly primarily a concern for companies and other organizations, but the borders are crumbling. Mobile information use, apps, the Cloud, collaborations on joint systems, surveillance of communications and users, the use of

public platforms, BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and BYON (Bring Your Own Network), ubiquitous computing and the Internet of things are dramatically expanding the scope of information governance, although we currently do not have the right means and methods to execute and sustain it at this overarching level. Mandates and rules alone are not enough, especially when they are simply followed without reflection using available technical tools. There needs to be an information management culture that all employees buy into. A sense of responsibility and an awareness of the importance of information governance are extremely important. In fact, information governance is one of the information society's greatest challenges, inside and outside of companies - as is thrown into sharp relief by the current crisis in online data security through Prism, Termora and other surveillance programs.

About the author

Dr. Ulrich Kampffmeyer has been an authority on information management for over 30 years. As CEO and consultant at his company PROJECT CONSULT (http://www.PROJECT-CONSULT.com) he advises corpora-tions on EIM (Enterprise Information Management) strategies, concepts, implementation, expansion and migration.

He co-founded and has led professional organizations, and has worked on standards committees. Dr. Kampffmeyer was an international proponent of the ECM and EIM visions from the start, and his many publications and presentations have enriched the information technology and management market. He is considered the mentor of the industry in Europe and is sometimes called the "German ECM pope."

Dr. Kampffmeyer is a recognized congress leader, speaker and moderator on topics like information management, information governance, electronic archiving, records management, enterprise content management, document management, workflow, knowledge management and associated legal issues. He has been a keynote speaker at many national and international congresses and conferences.

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More information about Information Governance: RMFT 2013

This year's PROJECT CONSULT Records Management Fachtag (RMFT) takes place on the 26.11.2013 in Offenbach/Frankfurt (Germany) and is all about Information Governance.

For more information visit the PROJECT CONSULT Records Management Website. Already interested? Register here: http://bit.ly/RM-Fachtag-2013.