2015

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

10 must-read articles on ESI lifecycle management

www.SherpaSoftware.com
1.800.255.5155
information@sherpasoftware.com

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Introduction

Within the records management, IT and legal communities there is a broader understanding of what the term information governance (IG) implies and the value that it can to bring to an organization in the form of improved operational efficiency and reduced risk. A common challenge among practitioners is that many of them are struggling in their efforts to launch an IG project. Sometimes those struggles involve framing the economic justification for a program to senior management and often the all-encompassing nature of information governance makes it difficult to know just where to get started. If either of these situations describes your position, then this ebook is for you. These are exactly the reasons why Sherpa's content experts provide articles highlighting industry insights and best practices around information governance!

Included in the following articles is a wealth of information concerning information governance best practices and answers to frequently asked questions. IG knowledge is now at your fingertips. Enjoy! See more at: http://www.sherpasoftware.com/blog/

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About the Authors

Rick Wilson

VP of Strategy and Solutions

Rick collaborates with Sherpa's senior management team to establish the organization's strategic direction and formulate specific tactical steps to achieve those goals. As a certified information governance professional through AIIM and ARMA, he also works closely with Sherpa partners and clients to shape the roadmap for Altitude IG, Sherpa's signature platform for policy-driven information governance.

Rick joined the organization in 2008 and served for several years as a product manager, during which he participated in the overall design of Sherpa's Microsoft Exchange products such as Archive Attender, Mail Attender and PST Backup Attender. Subsequent to that, he was a solutions architect in Sherpa's sales department, working closely with the account managers in formulating solutions to address each client's unique business and technical needs.

Rick holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Geneva College. He is also a certified scuba diver and likes to get underwater as often as possible. He and his wife Debbie reside in the Pittsburgh area, but love traveling to Japan to visit their son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter in Tokyo.

Stephanie DiPaolo

Direct Marketing Manager

Stephanie began working with Sherpa Software in June 2010 as the marketing communications specialist. Since then, Stephanie has evolved into the direct marketing manager, where she is responsible for digital marketing campaigns and strategizing organizational development and growth. She advances the business by understanding evolving industry needs and making appropriate recommendations for inbound marketing tactics.

Stephanie manages the marketing automation system along with Sherpa's multimedia, digital advertisements, and email marketing initiatives. She also assists the software development team with product interface branding continuity and thought-leadership content development. Prior to joining Sherpa, she gained experience in the media field ranging from radio and TV stations to project management for non-profit organizations.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pa., Stephanie attended Waynesburg University where she obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree in communications with an emphasis on electronic media. Stephanie, her husband and their daughter currently reside in the suburbs of Pittsburgh.

Doug Yarabinetz

VP of Marketing

Doug manages the marketing team at Sherpa Software where they collectively set the overall corporate marketing strategy. In this role, Doug focuses much of his time on evaluating industry and competitive trends. He has authored many articles, white papers and blog posts on information management solutions and IT best practices. Doug has more than 15 years of marketing experience in management and leadership positions.

Prior to Sherpa Software, Doug was the director of marketing at Select International, an online assessment technology company. He is also a member of the American Marketing Association, The Business Marketing Association, The Pittsburgh Technology Council and the Association for Corporate Growth.

Doug graduated from Washington & Jefferson College with a dual Bachelor of Arts degree in English and art. He, his wife Elaine and his three kids, McKenna, Avery and Brady, reside in Murrysville, PA.

Jeff Tujetsch

VP Notes Product Development & Senior Consultant

Jeff has more than 35 years of experience in providing information technology solutions. Jeff started developing in Domino in 1993 and performed development and administration as a consultant prior to joining Sherpa. Jeff is also a certified instructor and taught many Domino administration and development classes, as an expert in email management and compliance, architecture, LotusScript/Lotus Notes Formula Language, application design and security.

Jeff created Mail Attender in 1998 and, based upon the success that Mail Attender had after its release, Sherpa Software was formed in September 2000. Jeff continues to support information management solutions and is instrumental in the development and delivery of Altitude IG, Sherpa's signature Information Governance platform.

He graduated in 1979 from Computer Systems Information with a degree in systems analysis. Jeff enjoys playing golf and playing drums for his church. His favorite pastime is spending time with his wife.

Marta Farensbach

Director of Product Support

Marta contributes to the development and growth of Sherpa's products and platforms and is responsible for ensuring customer satisfaction. Since joining Sherpa in 2003, she has done extensive research on eDiscovery while expanding her expertise in litigation preparedness, compliance and content management.

Prior to joining Sherpa Software, Marta oversaw the management of the information technology department for a leading logistics firm. During her tenure, Marta was instrumental in increasing profitability and efficiency of real-time data inventory reporting, while guiding the deployment of a number of web-based applications.

Marta received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Pennsylvania State University. She enjoys Sherpa's team-building activities and is a founding member of the Sherpa Movie Club. She has a zest for travel and takes great pleasure in soaking up culture, scenic beauty and adventures wherever they can be found.

About Sherpa Software

Sherpa Software, a leading provider of technology-driven information governance solutions, has helped more than 3,500 companies worldwide. Sherpa's award-winning software, services and support address information management, regulatory compliance, electronic discovery, PST management, email archiving and more. Sherpa Altitude IG, Sherpa Software's signature information governance platform, connects to more data sources than traditional platforms, leaves your data in-place and offers robust analytics and metrics, while addressing core business issues.

Information Governance Insights for 2015

By: Rick Wilson

Throughout 2014, it became clear that the mandate to implement some type of information governance (IG) initiative was a growing priority for many organizations. Sherpa Software also witnessed strong attendance at information governance-related trade show events and an increased interest in educational resources, such as our Corporate Information Governance Program (CIGP) white paper series. This series explains the four stages of a proper CIGP, including planning, building a roadmap, and implementing an IG program. We encourage you to read these complimentary resources, if you haven't already done so.

If your executive team hasn't approved an IG program yet, here are a couple of key trends to watch in 2015 that might help you convince them that it's time:

1. The amount of unmanaged electronic content will continue to grow. In September, I attended a keynote session presented by Barclay Blair from the Information Governance Initiative (IGI). During that talk, Barclay mentioned that we often compare the explosive growth of digital data to a tsunami, flood or deluge in the natural world. Unfortunately those events conjure up the image of a rather isolated one-time event while the reality of unstructured data volumes is entirely different. The mass of electronically stored information (ESI) is not going to recede over time like flood waters do, rather it is more accurate to treat ESI volumes as a new high-water mark. In other words, there is no going back, managing (or more accurately disposing of) large volumes of data is the new normal.

2. Proposed changes to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP) are expected to be approved in 2015. If your organization is anticipating or preparing for any type of litigation, this is particularly relevant since the FRCP determines what types of ESI are admissible as evidence. Here are three areas where the proposed changes may impact your eDiscovery process.

   - Among the changes to Rule 26 are several shortened periods of time in order to prepare for a pending litigation and preserve information that might be relevant to the matter.
   - When objecting to the mass production of information under a Rule 34 document request, you must provide a much higher degree of specificity as to why that request is unreasonable.
   - Rule 37e updates also contain changes that provide the court with greater sanction measures if it is determined that a party has failed to preserve relevant electronically stored information.

Taken together, these items translate into an increased need to have well-defined policies and procedures in place when managing ESI within your organization. Supporting your policies and procedures with sound technology is a clear requirement when dealing with these large volumes of information. Sherpa's Altitude IG platform provides technology that can help enforce your policies and procedures, automate your legal hold process or allow your in-house team to perform distributed eDiscovery.

Contact us today for a no-obligation demonstration or to schedule an evaluation.

The Power of Visual Data

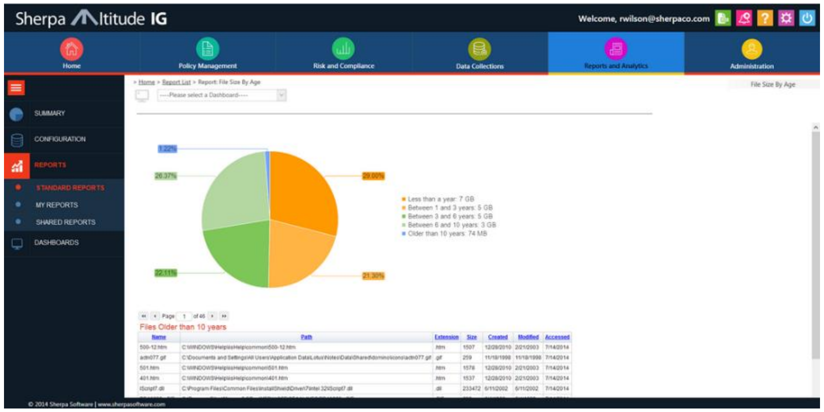
By: Stephanie DiPaolo

Before you can develop a clear, effective information governance strategy, you need to understand the environment where your data resides and then clarify the requirements and goals of your organization. The best way to accomplish this is with effective analysis of your electronically stored information (ESI). Once you have control and an understanding of your data, areas of policy deficiency become apparent.

Our ability to gather, display and interpret data has increased significantly in recent years, aided by tremendous advances in design. As the presentation of information has improved, so too has our ability to effectively analyze a myriad of data points. After all, information by itself is not sufficient if it doesn't tell a bigger story. Enter data visualization. Data visualization is a form of descriptive statistics that presents data as images, such as charts and graphs. It is one of the best ways to present complex ideas by breaking them down into a manageable form. According to Edward Tufte, visual representations of data can assist in learning, reducing overall meeting time by up to 20 percent. This improvement in analysis and reporting is exactly what you want when developing any kind of information governance policy. You want the decision makers of your organization to understand the complete picture, leveraging the best intelligence available.

As an example, it's one thing to say that you were 10 percent below your quota for Q3, but it's an entirely different thing to see that statistic on a graph where the decrease is clearly illustrated. Visualization builds off natural human tendencies to measure and control information; by seeing an unexpectedly smaller slice in a pie chart, the area of concern is instantly highlighted.

Properly visualized data points should jump right out at the team members who view these spreadsheets or presentation bullet points, to show the issues clearly. Take a look at the example below to see how much easier it would be to grasp when your company is expending too many resources on retaining files:



Another instance of the effective use of data visualization is in the creation of an information inventory. This helps to measure your current progress and forecast your future trajectory in deploying an effective information governance policy. Charts and graphs help to articulate the conclusions and clarify the issues (where are items stored, how old are they, are we in compliance with policy), making trouble points easy to identify. However, this information must be analyzed in order to be effective. One of the best uses for visualized data inventory is as foundation to develop policy and auditing.

For all of this to function, however, it's important to make sure your charts and graphs are properly sourced. Data needs to be up-to-date, accurately collected and be structured so changes are immediately apparent. Working with out-of-date, insufficient information can lead to the implementation of unsound policies.

Remaining responsive and current in your reporting can be the difference between substantial gains and significant losses.
This is not to say that data visualization and inventory analysis represent a magical panacea; human intelligence must be used to make sense of data which is being presented. Some problems are too intricate to be jammed into a graphical chart, or the real answers may be hidden under multiple layers of complexity. Further reporting, drilling down of the data or modification of parameters might be needed to make informed decisions.

While reporting and data visualization alone will not solve the fundamental problems of your strategy, it will make any issues more readily apparent. In turn, issues are easier to solve earlier in the process, saving time, effort and money. Visualization makes it easy to grasp trends quickly so you can react accurately and effectively. Additionally, it frees you and your organization to make decisions with confidence and total support.

To learn more about Sherpa Software's data visualization tools, go to http://www.SherpaSoftware.com to register for a free demo.

It’s Not Information Governance, it’s Information Opportunity

By: Doug Yarabinetz

In June of last year, AIIM and its Executive Leadership Council posed a series of information governance (IG) trends to 52 senior information management executives via the Information Governance Trendscape. Subsequently, they published the results (along with a summary of the observations and recommendations) in a research paper designed to outline a set of priorities that would help organizations separate the “hype from reality.” Sherpa Software agrees that information governance is increasing in importance and separating the hype from reality does truly present an opportunity for organizations therefore, this article provides our perspective on the topic and on the report itself.

The views expressed by leading content and information management executives in the Trendscape report suggest the following are high importance and high likelihood IG trends:

- “The siloed nature of content and information management systems will prevent implementation of comprehensive governance plans.”
- “Governance will continue to be viewed through a risk rather than opportunity lens.”
- “Rising privacy and security concerns from customers will force organizations to embrace governance.”
- “Despite experts’ handwringing, we’ll settle for ’good enough‘ for governance.”
- “Organizations will solve the data deluge by buying more storage space, not by establishing processes.”

High importance and low likelihood was also identified with the recommendation to, “keep on the radar; get ready.”

- “Governance will truly become a strategic concern of the enterprise.”
- “Governance will be driven by analytics.”

Still, there is other feedback and debate centered on the transparency necessary to implement an IG program. Should it be invisible to the end users or should there be greater accountability in the process and therefore greater reliance on people to govern themselves?

Information governance today is loaded with contradictions and confusion. That is probably the first observation to surface in the AIIM research and it is the primary focus of the executive summary. Some professionals love the concept of IG while some hate it. Everyone seems to define information governance differently. Many do not fully understand it or know how to implement an IG strategy. This is painfully obvious in the Trendscape. What everyone seemed to agree on, however, is that whatever you call it, governing/ managing your information is critical to the success of your organization. John Mancini, AIIM President, recognized this very point. “Organizations are systems of information networks. They only operate effectively when there are clear and predictable information flows within and between these networks. Without intervention, the resulting information chaos will threaten the viability of the entire system.”

The real problem is that it is complicated and difficult to figure out an ideal information governance strategy. No matter how you define it, unless you are one of the misguided few who think it is no different than records management (if so, please read this blog article), understanding that information assets are similar to other corporate assets and require management, protection, monitoring and response standards and policies from the time it is created until its

ultimate disposal is critical. Allowing the noise and confusion to get in the way is simply a recipe for disaster.
Let's address that noise a bit. First, each of our definitions of IG depend on our role and our perspective within our organizations or even within the industry as a whole. Ask 10 executives to define information governance and you will likely hear 10 different answers. That was clearly my experience last year at the Managing Electronic Records Conference (MER) where a panel of industry experts speaking on the topic of IG all had different definitions as well as different thoughts on who would manage IG and what it would be called moving forward (read this blog post for more on MER).

In addition to this confusing terminology, we have confusing conversations. Managing information has, for a long time, been about managing risk and costs. It is very difficult to flip that discussion to one of value. Part of the reason this is so difficult is because of the proliferation of information across the enterprise and across stakeholders. How do you get records management, enterprise architects, compliance officers, risk managers, board members, department heads, DBAs, the CEO the CIO, the CTO and finally basic information seekers to all view the value of information the same? As we mentioned earlier, they all bring a different perspective to the table.

First Step

My perspective is that we don't have to have a singular definition or approach IG from the same perspective. Every organization is different and there is no ideal formula for information governance, but the process to engineer the ideal formula for your organization is the same for everyone. Elevating it to a strategic level and recognizing that information needs to be managed, protected, monitored and disposed of properly throughout the entire enterprise is the first step.

Second Step

Want to take the next step, and the step after that? I highly recommend reading the complimentary four-part white paper series by Sherpa Software's VP of strategy and solutions, Rick Wilson, on enterprise information governance. This series titled Corporate Information Governance Program (CIGP), helps organizations create a trustworthy enterprise-wide program to facilitate effective management of information authority, control, accessibility and visibility throughout the information lifecycle. Wilson describes a proven process for undertaking an information governance program from understanding and assessment, to planning and documenting, then implementation, and finally the ongoing management.

I also recommend downloading the AIIM report we discussed in this article. In addition to the many opinions shared by information professionals via the Trendscape, they include steps to increasing enterprise IG mindshare and some interesting and helpful facts from the AIIM report, "Automating Information Governance – Assuring Compliance."

Whether you agree with the opinions or prioritization of IG trends by your peers in the Trendscape, there are a few final recommendations in the report for seizing the opportunity that IG presents. Explore these and you may elevate information governance from a tactical to a strategic concern. The three "Levers" include:

1. "Rising privacy and security concerns from customers represent a potential driver for expanding IG initiatives."
2. "Effective IG is a pre-condition for simplifying the complex spider web of unconnected applications and data that plague every CIO."
3. "IG has to be repositioned as relevant to the enterprise mission and a possible source of competitive advantage."

Finally, the report states,

"Information governance isn't just another way to talk about records management. Instead, information governance is foundational to an organization's success in the digital age. To truly transform into a digital enterprise, organizations need to know where their information is for risk, for discovery, and, most importantly, for adding value."

"Information Governance is not simple. From a "doing" point of view information governance needs to be easy for end users. From an organizational standpoint, IG is a project that is never over and will require continual attention and tweaking to encompass new tools, regulations, information, and opportunity."

"Think bigger than risk. Make information governance a core part of your organizational strategy and reap the rewards."

With that being said, are you convinced of this ongoing trend? Do you plan on implementing an IG strategy in 2015? To learn more about retention policies or to speak with a Sherpa representative, contact us at 1-800-255-5155.

Policies for Your Organization's IG Strategy

By: Jeff Tujetsch

Policies, specifically retention policies sound so simple, don't they? The truth is, they are anything but simple. Once you start looking at the data you have, where it is stored, and who owns it, you suddenly realize how difficult it is to assign policies.

Where is your data stored?
The first hurdle with assigning policies is to understand where your data is stored, and this is no small task! Understanding which desktops, servers, products, platforms and locations contain any of your data, might seem too large of a task to start. Once you start this process, it can be very overwhelming and might seem like you will never see a light at the end of the tunnel. Regardless, you must initiate this process because in order to apply policies to your data, you need to know what and where your data resides. It may seem like this process has nothing to do with policies, but trust me, it does. Remember the distance, rate, and time math problems in school? If you recall, you had to have two of the values in order to solve the problem. The same holds true here. You must know what data you have in order to create the proper policies to govern it. If done properly, one of the by-products that gets created from the data inventory process is that you now have a much better understanding of what data exists so you know what policies to enforce.

One of the hats I wear, is being the product manager for Mail Attender for IBM Domino. I have conducted hundreds of demonstrations over the years and rarely is an organization's retention policy set in stone. Once I start asking questions about different types of mail messages and what type of policies have been created, the retention policies are often altered. This is not a reflection of my knowledge. This is more of an example of making policies without knowing about all of the data that exists. So, take something as finite as mail and expand that thinking across your entire infrastructure and suddenly you will realize that no data is created equally. You need to have policies for all data types, including email, files, social software, etc.

Where do you start?
I would advise starting with email. The two reasons that come to mind for starting with email are:

1. You probably already have a great understanding of where email is stored, and
2. Email seems to be the biggest 'witness' in court cases.

Email can help blaze that trail for creating and enforcing retention policies for all data. It will help you understand what types of messages/data you have within your email environment and how that translates to the rest of your data. The old adage "I don't know what I don't know" is very applicable when it comes to your data. The deeper you dig, the more you learn. The wrong approach is to think that you know everything about your data. Old and new systems are being created/modified/leveraged constantly, so your data types will never be stagnant. Even for data that you think you fully understand, changes could be happening and you need to be diligent and adjust accordingly.

Once you feel you have a great understanding of how to govern your email, the next data source I would recommend are loose files. When I say loose files, I mean files that are stored within the file systems on desktops, servers, centralized software, USBs, etc. Typically, this would include files with extensions of .doc, .pdf, etc. Like email, files can be centralized on your servers, but can also be distributed across the user environment. This is the reason that I recommend files to follow email, because they follow the same distribution methodology. It will align nicely with how you created the policies for email.

From there, your company would be the best source for what other unstructured data you want to govern. Just keep building on the knowledge that you have learned and be sure that your policies are in step with any federal regulations regarding your business.
If you are enforcing retention policies on the data in your environment, be sure that any snap-shot formats (e.g. backups) are also compliant with the retention policies. It would not serve you well if all is being deleted after it reaches two years old, but your backup tapes that contain messages are not scratched for five years.

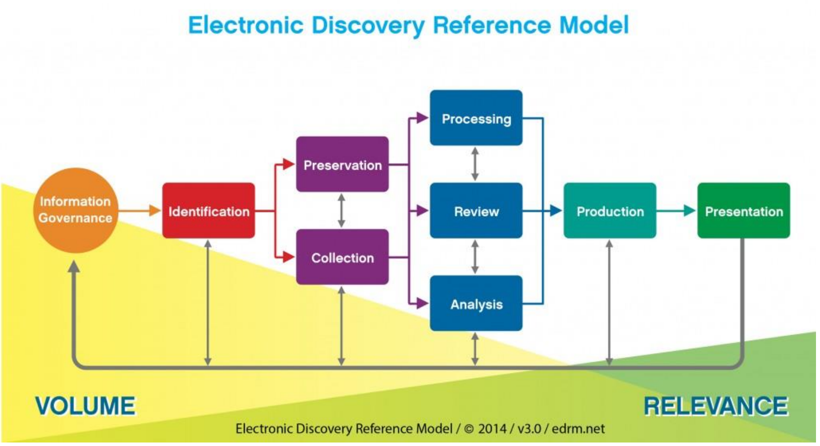
To summarize, living in the state of delusion is not an option when it comes to policies. The argument of “We’ve never had policies before, so why make them now”, might seem valid to some but in reality, not so much. In today’s world of litigiousness and laws/regulations, you must abide by what is expected and required of you when it concerns information governance.

To learn more about retention policies or to speak with a Sherpa representative, contact us at 1-800-255-5155.

Latest EDRM Focuses on Importance of Information Governance

By: Marta Farensbach

Wouldn't it be great if implementing a strong information governance framework at your business were as simple as a software download? The reality is that information governance touches many areas of a business and requires stakeholder buy-in, policy development and enforcement, and a thorough understanding of information management. It's both complex and difficult and that's where reference models come in; they help establish best practices and assign responsibility while also creating a loose workflow for your company to follow. Luckily, a reference model for information governance was published in 2012 improve understanding of information governance (IGRM). But now, the Electronic Discovery Reference Model (EDRM) has also been updated to prominently include information governance as a key part of the electronic discovery process. Let's take a look at the updates:



The diagram's designers describe the changes made to version 3.0 of the model released in May of last year:

"The leftmost item in the model has been renamed "Information Governance" and its shape has been changed from a rectangle to a circle. These edits better align this diagram with EDRM's Information Governance Reference Model (IGRM). The adoption of a circle also is meant to show that every well-managed e-discovery process should start and end with sound information governance.

In addition, the line from Presentation to Information Governance has been widened. This emphasizes that no e-discovery process is fully completed – no matter at what stage it stops – until it has been looped back to IG."

EDRM has created these practical resources to improve eDiscovery and information governance. Launched in May 2005, EDRM was established to address the lack of standards and guidelines in the eDiscovery market. These updated models should help frame discussions and provide a sound starting point for organizations trying to improve their information management and eDiscovery processes.

Not sure where to start? Sherpa Software offers numerous resources with industry insight, knowledge and best practices. Our signature platform, Altitude IG, provides information governance solutions including policy management, eDiscovery and reporting and analytics. Find out more at http://www.sherpasoftware.com or call 1.800.255.5155.

Tomato-Tomahto, eDiscovery & Information Governance

By: Marta Farensbach

The relationship between eDiscovery and Information Governance (IG) is one of shifting perspectives and is often defined differently by diverse experts. Are they two different words for the same thing, can they be used interchangeably and why does it matter?

One opinion seems to be that eDiscovery is based upon or synonymous with Information Governance, while another strong belief is that eDiscovery is, or should be, a subset of a full IG strategy. This distinction tends to be dependent on viewpoints – authors immersed in the world of eDiscovery tend to focus on that process as the mover and shaker of the connection. Stakeholders in other fields tend to take the view that eDiscovery should be a by-product of a stable IG system, not its core.

Dealing with organizations in all stages of IG deployment, it becomes clear that an eDiscovery focus is the reality for many organizations, while the other is the ideal that they strive to achieve. It can't be ignored that eDiscovery is, as the Sedona Conference mentioned, – 'the tail that wags the information management dog'. A recent blog post noted, "… for many organizations, critical policies and procedures are implemented as a reaction to the threat of litigation, rather than with an eye to furthering the goals of the business, agency or nonprofit that is tasked with creating them." This view can also be seen with the EDRM reference model which includes IG as a component and a tieback because 'no e-discovery process is fully completed – no matter at what stage it stops – until it has been looped back to IG'.

Good eDiscovery policy should include defensible deletion, litigation hold notices and good communication between stakeholders. This significantly reduces risk in the face of litigation. But if these eDiscovery steps are the only component of a corporate IG strategy, other problems can arise due to the lack of true data management processes. Suggested approaches from ARMA's GARP, AIIM, Sherpa and others all stress the importance of an overall strategy to handle as Gartner states: "the valuation, creation, storage, use, archival and deletion of information. It includes the processes, roles, standards and metrics that ensure the effective and efficient use of information…" Any organization approaching IG with a narrow view of policy may deploy eDiscovery plans to cover urgent requirements. However, if these strategies were put in place without accommodating overall business needs, the corporation will run the risk of missing warning signs of critical issues including:

- Non-compliance for many industry regulations
- Loss of critical information assets due to lack of oversight and policy
- Security failures including data breaches or introduction of malware
- Unmanaged content creation leading to bloated, redundant systems
- Legacy data with no support
- Lack of insight into corporate information assets
- Unofficial use of company resources

An effective eDiscovery policy place to start is to establish an IG framework. It helps avoid adverse judgment, fines, spoliation of data, stress, time and money. But it is only half of the picture. No matter what the perception, calling it tomato or tomahto, the true goal should be a complete and comprehensive strategy that covers all aspects of managing the information lifecycle.

Information Governance and Records Management – A Question of Strategy vs. Tactics

By: Stephanie DiPaolo

The distinction between information governance (IG) and records and information management (RIM) represents a key element of corporate information management today and is one of the greatest challenges facing many companies. When a company wants to overhaul how it manages information, figuring out the balance between IG and RIM is often the first stumbling block. It starts with a profound misunderstanding of the place and purpose of IG and RIM and their relationship. It really boils down to a question of strategy vs. tactics.

First, to clarify, IG is not RIM. They are two separate tiers of scale. Nor is RIM the only thing that falls under IG. According to David Fleming in a 2013 talk for ARMA, IG is:

“A strategic framework composed of standards, processes, roles, and metrics that hold organizations and individuals accountable to create, organize, secure, maintain, use, and dispose of information in ways that align with and contribute to the organization’s goals.”

Compared to the ARMA definition of RIM:

“RIM is the systematic management of records and information through its various life cycles. It includes the analysis, design, implementation and management of manual and automated systems regardless of format or medium.”

As we can see, the difference in scale means that IG comprises the strategic element of planning, whereas RIM represents the tactical aspect of actually implementing a plan. IG refers to the company as a whole, to the mission of an organization, broad and encompassing language meant to present a unified front. RIM speaks to the practical element of the trench work and individual manual labor and automated systems that manage records and information.

A company may see IG and think of an overall strategy, adhering to laws on information handling and dedicating time and resources to ensure these goals are met, but this may be at the expense of efficient RIM. On the other hand, a company focusing solely on RIM and day-to-day tactics, the efforts taken to effectively manage data, software implementation and security, may fail to see the bigger picture. The key is to have both, something easier said than done.

Information governance, by its very nature, requires the entire company to be behind it in order to be effective. IG is not a policy, a single rule or set of guidelines, but a comprehensive strategy built from the ground up to support the company’s mission, business and compliance goals. Implementing an IG strategy is a company-wide endeavor that affects the entire chain, from the IT department all the way up to the C-suite. An example of this can be seen here, in the Buckinghamshire IG proposal report. Note the number of committees and the subsequent chain of accountability.

Organizing a coherent, effective IG strategy suffers from all the pitfalls any company-wide change might encounter, perhaps even more so as all departments need to voice their concerns and suggestions. This means that apart from dealing with the bureaucracy of corporate politics, individual branches within a company need to be managed. Executives might not feel the return-on-investment for IG is worth it, or a single department might hold too much sway. A common example that we see is when IT and Legal departments are unable to understand the other's needs. The key to establishing an effective IG strategy is through a collaborative approach. Communication is key to building support and social acceptance.

RIM, on the other hand, has undergone an evolution in recent years. In the same talk by Fleming, he notes that there has been a crisis in management where the actual function of RIM has been subsumed by buzzwords and that doomsayers have even announced the end of RIM. RIM is far from dead, however, and it is not being challenged by the growth of IG. It has evolved to reflect the modern needs of companies and has become an integral part of an overall IG program.

Records information management, unlike IG, can be decentralized. A single department's RIM responsibilities might differ dramatically from those of another, and are then dependent on the company's overarching IG framework. RIM is built on software implementation, securing records and implementation of policy and retention. This decentralized nature can make it easier for individual departments to assess a situation and develop a solution. Traditionally they don't have to worry about the overarching strategic objectives, all they have to worry about is managing their responsibilities. Get the records, do what needs to be done, let the committees sort out the strategy.

This works until the realities of business start to be felt. The decentralized nature of RIM requires departments to compete with one another – for budget, for time, for any resources available – often at the expense of one another. When one department doesn't get what it needs, the entire IG plan suffers. This is why understanding the distinction between RIM and IG is so important. They should support one another through a balanced approach.

Striking a proper balance between an effective IG framework and RIM tactics is not an easy task and there is no magic bullet to solve a company's information challenges. Part of our mission at Sherpa Software is to help companies meet their IG and RIM goals, but we can only achieve that if a company fully understands their own needs. Combining traditional RIM tactics with an overall IG strategy is the future of how companies will manage their information. They will only be effective if they fist understand the real difference between RIM and IG, strike the right balance and have the best tools for the job.

If you'd like to speak to a Sherpa representative, contact us at 1-800-255-5155 or complete this brief form.

Teamwork is Key for Information Governance and In-House eDiscovery

By: Marta Farensbach

Teamwork is one of the critical building blocks for handling eDiscovery requests for in-house talent. Without teamwork, time, expense, stress and risk can find their way into the collection processes. Additionally, having full cooperation among team members is essential in order to avoid disruption and chaos in critical day to day business operations. This article will highlight the process of building a solid in-house eDiscovery team by placing importance on collaboration and teamwork.

There is a legally-mandated duty imposed upon opposing parties by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, specifically the 26(f) meet-and-confer guidelines. There are many resources covering this topic with knowledgeable commentary, but less prevalent in the literature is advice on creating and deploying an internal eDiscovery team to help with in-house collections.

The goal of an effective eDiscovery collection is to help the process run smoothly while reducing cost, friction, and potential liability or risk. To have a trouble-free process in place, two important components must be present – 1.) Proactive planning, and 2.) The practical necessity of implementation. Collaboration, among all, is key in both areas.

Defining information governance policies

Many organizations grow organically and never have the time or the impetus to define their formal information governance policies. Yet, these policies are essential when preparing for the defensibility and effectiveness of any type of search or collection, not just eDiscovery. It is very helpful in any company, let alone those under the threat of litigation, to have practical, operative plans in place to manage their information assets. Preemptively strategizing is essential; once the threat (be it impending litigation, subpoena, FIOA, compliance, etc.) becomes a reality, it may be too late to follow an optimal approach. This is the proactive aspect of information governance planning and the formation of a wide ranging team collaborating with each other is essential to success of any deployment effort.

The planning phase

In the planning phase, the creation of policy and definition of an overall information governance strategy is paramount and input is needed from representatives in critical departments. The right mix of expertise – business needs, technical experience, records management and legal understanding of requirements – should be present and have the influence to force buy-in of policy, including an eDiscovery plan. Other types of planning can and should include defensible deletion, internet use strategies, security assessments, data mapping, and with all the above being well documented, audited and communicated to staff.

Regular team meetings

This information governance group should meet regularly, ideally beginning with a realistic assessment of the current state of process, technology and requirements (regulatory or otherwise) for the organization. This team should have a hand in crafting strategy before moving on to overseeing deployment of policy, selection of technology, and personnel. The members should meet regularly to discuss and organize auditing and any policy changes that are necessitated by new technology, regulation, or business needs.

Implementation of eDiscovery plan

Once litigation (or subpoena) becomes a reality, a smaller, more nimble team should be formed to organize and execute the eDiscovery plan for the matter at hand. It is essential that both legal and IT are represented in the lineup and that they understand each other's processes, tools, syntax, data maps and restrictions. As a recent article noted, once litigation is anticipated, the team should work together to:

- Define the scope and requirements
- Identify relevant custodians
- Initiate and manage legal holds
- Locate potential sources of ESI, whether active, legacy, or backup
- Address outliers such as encrypted files or corrupt data stores
- Search, filter, and collect relevant data
- Anticipate potential problems
- Document and validate the methodology

Provide constant feedback

To effectively manage the process, an eDiscovery liaison should be at the forefront to provide communication and feedback between the critical legal and IT functions. This key resource should guide the process, establish parameters, protect defensibility, and inform 26(f) meet-and-confer sessions. A successful liaison will understand the structure of the company, be knowledgeable about the matter at hand, and have good judgment to make prompt decisions while balancing the constraints of technology, litigation and personnel.

With a collaborative team in place, your company will be better equipped to handle the challenges of eDiscovery requests. The process may vary from one organization to another, but the need for a collaborative in-house eDiscovery team remains the same. Above all, having a plan prepared and agreed upon will not only align your team, but it will safeguard you from future problems while reducing your long-term risk and exposure.

For questions on this topic, feel free to call us at 1.800.255.5155 or information@sherpasoftware.com

Records Management, Legal and IT:
Can't we all just get along?

By: Doug Yarabinetz

In any organization, when the conversation turns toward electronically stored information (ESI), it almost always revolves around three core groups. These individuals are the lucky few whose daily routines center on the management of that information. The three core groups are legal and/or compliance, records management and IT. Despite the fact that they all, at some point, have responsibility for an important business function associated with this data, they are seldom on the same page. This begs the question; *how do we communicate and collaborate better to ensure we all get along when it comes to better information management and eDiscovery processes?*

You may want to read Rick Wilson's article Building a Collaborative eDiscovery Team. The tips he provides are the basic cornerstones of building a collaborative eDiscovery team and come straight from Sherpa Software's customer best practices. The purpose of this article is to reinforce the importance of his foundational message but also to see if we could expand the concept to improve communication and collaboration across the entire enterprise information management strategy. Let's start the discussion by looking at these groups of employees and their roles, responsibilities and the challenges they face for team collaboration.

Let's start with records management or RIM, our data retention specialist. Often, these individuals come from a background of managing paper records. They sometimes aren't familiar with the strategy for managing electronic data often because they weren't involved, surprisingly enough, in the process for where it resides, how it got there and how best to access it when necessary. Our IT team is more frequently involved but can be so involved they run into bandwidth issues. They are focused on storage management, security, policy enforcement, reporting and analytics, search and collection and trying to maintain a data inventory. Likewise, legal has their core responsibility for lawsuits and litigation, internal investigations, legal holds and eDiscovery. And if you have a compliance officer or team, they are involved with regulatory compliance, data leakage, internal policies and risk management. As you can see, there are a lot of moving parts that overlap and don't naturally integrate. This is why communication and collaboration are so critical when it comes to the operational issues associated with ESI.

Over the past 14 years or more, we have been fortunate at Sherpa Software to work with many great individuals in each of these departments. Every organization is different and most have varying levels of integration within these teams. Furthermore, much of the landscape is shifting under their feet as ESI proliferates and as the emphasis on information governance continues to get traction. You can start to see why there is a bit of disconnect when it comes to the data that is the backbone linking these individuals and groups together. Why so many challenges? Well think about it, these individuals have all the respective responsibilities mentioned earlier, as well as their other diverse daily initiatives and responsive tasks that always arise. On top of that, there are preservation obligations, data destruction, departing employees, cyber security threats and updates, new technology, legacy repositories, data mapping and the list goes on and on. So, how do you deal with all these concerns and get these groups working together? Answer: with a corporate information governance program (CIGP).

Gartner defines IG as, "… the specification of decision rights and an accountability framework to encourage desirable behavior in the valuation, creation, storage, use, archival and deletion of information. It includes the processes, roles, standards and metrics that ensure the effective and efficient use of information in enabling an organization to achieve its goals." Simply put, IG is a set of interdisciplinary policies and procedures used to regulate the electronic assets of an organization from creation to disposal. Think of it as the administration of the electronic information lifecycle. The first step in creating a CIGP also happens to be the most critical in creating a collaborative environment amongst the teams we are discussing.

In order to be successful, an IG program should be viewed as an enterprise-wide initiative that is endorsed by senior management and supports the overall business objectives of the organization. Since IG will ultimately touch every area of a business, it's important to have an IG committee responsible for its implementation and ongoing management and auditing. Rick Wilson, Sherpa Software's VP of Strategy describes an ideal IG committee, "IG committee members should represent a cross-section of the organization in order to bring diverse expertise and knowledge to the project.

Typically, the committee will be represented by various departments that have direct knowledge of, and potential responsibility for, handling your organizations internal and external data requirements. This may also include regulatory requirements. Most IG committees have representation from the executive team, compliance, IT, HR, legal, records, and/or security. The IG committee members should know where the organization's data is kept, what information needs stored, how long it should be stored, what information should be deleted, when it should be deleted and how information is accessed and moved within the organization. Treat your committee as a group of trusted advisors; they will have the knowledge to help you identify which areas of the business can benefit most from an information governance project, what the degree of difficulty will be to implement that initiative and how best to socialize the project within each segment of the business."

Creating an IG strategy isn't easy and neither is organizing a team of individuals this diverse across your organization, but if you are able to build a consensus that information governance can successfully reduce risk while increasing the value of your electronic assets, you'll be well on your way to integrating your teams and creating a collaborative environment in your organization. An information governance committee, along with the overall strategy for handling electronic information that is inherently part of the IG process, will help records, legal and IT not only get along but prosper.

To learn more, go to http://www.SherpaSoftware.com or call 1.800.255.5155 to speak with a Sherpa representative and receive a free demo of our services and solution offerings.

Using Classification in your IG Strategy

By: Rick Wilson

I recently returned from the ARMA 2014 show in San Diego. Aside from a chance to visit this beautiful city, it was a great opportunity to connect with our customers and industry professionals within the records management community, and also to learn about the information governance challenges that they are facing on a daily basis. In many of those conversations, the need to effectively manage content residing on network file shares was a recurring theme. Often, organizations have well-formed policies in place to manage the lifecycle of electronic content contained in areas such as email and ECM repositories; however, network file storage has been largely untouched from a records management perspective, and this content is particularly problematic for the following reasons:
First, most (if not all) employees are assigned a 'home drive' storage area on the network for business-related documents so a lot of content tends to accumulate in these locations.

Second, this content has been created by a lot of different source applications, so it is often difficult to police it from a records management point of view.

Sherpa has been working with our clients to develop technology that will help them manage these network file storage areas. Today, our Altitude IG platform offers agents that can be deployed to monitor file content on either network file shares or user hard drives. These agents gather metadata-related information about the files, search for particular keyword content and statistically analyze content (for example by file age). While this level of oversight can be helpful, it does not fully address one of the fundamental questions records managers often ask: "Is the information important?" In order to fully answer that question, it is requisite to analyze the content of the documents. That is why we are excited to announce our newly-formed partnership with Content Analyst who has pioneered the use of latent semantic indexing (LSI) technology in their CAAT product.

CAAT eliminates the time-consuming requirement for knowledge workers to focus on content classification or categorization by taking an entire collection of information and automatically sorting it into folders and subfolders by conceptual topics, even creating titles for each folder. This quickly organizes information in a logical fashion based on what it is about, not the words it contains. This analysis is accomplished by LSI, a machine-learning technique that enables CAAT technology to identify, represent and compare concepts that exist within a collection of documents or data. Sherpa is currently integrating CAAT into our Altitude IG platform to provide automatic classification and categorization capabilities. Once that integration is complete, customers will be able to point their Altitude IG agents at a network file share and automatically classify the documents based upon their content (i.e. contracts, engineering specifications, or lunch menus).

This classification process also reveals the relationships between documents helping managers uncover hidden insights, and ultimately apply policies to govern documents based upon their content. If you think that automatic classification and categorization could benefit your organization and would like to participate in our technology preview program for these Altitude features, please contact me either by email (rwilson@sherpasoftware.com) or Twitter (@sherparick). In the meantime, stay tuned to this blog for more information about how classification and categorization will extend the capabilities of Altitude IG.