2015

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY HANDBOOK

10 must-read articles on managing ESI

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Introduction

When it comes to electronically stored information (ESI), IT Teams are always at the heart of the discussion. Most organizations now employ predominantly knowledge workers who routinely create, process, and disseminate information as a primary job function. Today's many technological advancement and the associated data, now estimated to be doubling every two years, has the spotlight on IT Managers and their staff. Information is an essential corporate asset and like any other corporate asset, it has a few requirements from the time it is created until its ultimate disposal. Today's IT teams are focused on storage management, security, policy enforcement, reporting and analytics, search and collection and trying to maintain a data inventory (among other duties). They need to be able to manage this process without putting undue burden and stress on day-to-day operations.

To efficiently and effectively manage information, IT needs to organize and automate their information management strategy. This strategy and the associated technology are a core component of a successful information governance program. The benefits include: reduced storage and infrastructure costs, shared knowledge across the organization, faster response to events, more personalized and accurate service to customers, support for big data initiatives, control over social media, reputation management and much more.

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

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About the Authors

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.

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.

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.

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.

Srinivasan Balaji

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Balaji has been a part of the Sherpa team since 2002 and is responsible for analyzing the market and industry to develop Sherpa's product strategy, as well as managing the short and long-term roadmaps for Sherpa's SAAS platform. Additionally, he oversees the design, development and delivery of Sherpa's information governance solutions.

Prior to Sherpa Software, he spent eight years as senior software developer and project manager for a Pittsburgh-based consulting firm. Duties included consulting, managing and building IT solutions for companies in a variety of industries.

He received his Bachelor of Science degree in computer systems from Grove City College, and a Master of Science degree in information security from Carnegie Mellon University.

Balaji considers himself a "gadget geek" and a jock at heart. He loves tennis, running, golf, biking, travel, reading and classical music.

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.

Running with Scissors, or Legacy Data

By: Marta Farensbach

A myriad of articles have been written about 'Big Data' – the exabytes of electronic information that is created daily, along with the rush of ever-changing technology. This proliferation of electronically stored information (ESI) has caused a radical shift in information governance strategies that address how data is processed, categorized and stored. Less newsworthy, but just as important, is Big Data's older cousin, legacy data.

Organizations of all shapes and sizes play inadvertent host to servers clogged with swathes of inactive data. Those virtual reams of untouched and often ignored ESI cause headaches for even the best intentioned information management strategies. There are many risks and downsides to holding on to this data, yet rounding it up for regulation can be challenging.

What is legacy data? According to the Sedona Conference glossary, legacy data is defined as "ESI which can only be accessed via software and/or hardware that has become obsolete or replaced." This data is often unclassified and uncontrolled. Another definition refers to ESI which is "stored in physical or electronic format and is not currently understood, used or managed." This latter definition gets to the crux of the problem – without strong information governance policies in place, this unused (and sometimes unusable) data will flourish in corporate IT systems. However, per the Sedona guidelines, "information should be retained as long as it has business-related value to an organization, or is required by law or regulation to be retained." In other words, if you don't need it, get rid of it!

In the era of Big Data, with the costs of storage decreasing, and volume of ESI increasing, an outside observer might ask why fix what is not broken. If storage is cheap, why bother fiddling with the legacy data at all? While on the surface this sounds reasonable, this argument minimizes the significant disadvantages that come with keeping ESI that has no organizational value. Primary amongst the potential negative consequences is that companies are responsible (i.e. liable) for all data stored on their systems.

A good information governance strategy helps companies to reduce this liability while increasing compliance; however, there is often a roadblock when it comes to implementing policy on older systems. Often, these strategies are made to address data going forward, but the legacy systems are ignored or relegated to an afterthought. This is a big mistake as grandfathered data carries just as much of a liability burden as an email sent yesterday when seen in terms of eDiscovery, compliance or governmental regulations. If older ESI is ignored and remains unregulated, it falls outside of corporate policy and becomes challenging to search, move and manage. This, in turn, ends up counteracting the goals of information governance, costing the organization time, money and potential litigation.

But the risks are also apparent when looking at legacy systems which are in active use. Let's say you have mission-critical applications running on a timeworn hardware or software that is no longer supported, or whose original developers are long since out of business. Where do you find 'parts' if something goes wrong? Who will help you troubleshoot if the programs or machines stop working? How do you access your information when key personnel leave your organization?

Even without these risks, there is added expense in both cost and productivity with maintaining legacy systems. Short-term savings achieved by delaying much-needed upgrades mask the additional costs that will accompany the migration's older data off of complex, antiquated systems. Personnel who support many older machines are few and far between – and they charge a premium for their services. In addition, there are the hidden costs due to loss of productivity. Legacy systems don't have nearly the advantages in bandwidth, speed, flexibility, communication and interoperability that are inherent to more modern solutions.

Cost aside, legacy systems are often difficult to access and assess, which makes them even more challenging to administer. We've talked often about how important a sound information governance program is to a well-run company yet, legacy data is one of the most troublesome areas for many organizations. It is difficult to analyze, map and identify the data contained in older systems. It is also difficult to apply retention policies or keep them patched against malware or viruses. As new systems come on line, these older systems become even more obsolete, further compounding the difficulties in regulating them.

Concerned stakeholders have a number of choices in dealing with legacy systems. The first, and most hazardous, is to ignore the problem, punting the potential liability down the pike. Another option is to maintain the older systems while selectively upgrading them and bringing them into compliance. The best option, however, is to be proactive in regulating legacy data.

As noted in the Sedona Commentary on Inactive Information Stores, any proactive solution will need to look backwards to clean up historical data and forwards to head off the creation of more inactive data.

Here are some suggestions to help with the process:

- Craft an effective information governance strategy to manage any new data from inception to elimination so the problem does not repeat itself. Communicate the goals to all stakeholders.

- Identify and analyze the legacy systems. This can be challenging with older tools, but the more information you can gather about the size and complexity of the problem, the easier it will be to solve.

- Preserve what information is needed and don't forget any legal hold obligations therein. Make sure you migrate any critical data to more usable formats and update systems as appropriate.

- Eliminate the remainder of the legacy data in plan that is both well-thought-out and well-communicated.

- Make sure your current data is in no danger of becoming legacy data. Audit your policies to verify that they are being followed to eliminate unneeded information from your systems. This also helps to make sure that the fast-paced changes of the technology world are not leaving any of your data behind.

Beginning with these steps, you can work towards getting control of your legacy data and successfully implement a strong and effective information governance strategy. 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.

Risk Assessment: It is Worth the Work!

By: Jeff Tujetsch

Imagine that you are sitting on a tree stump in a quiet forest next to a gently running stream. The birds are chirping, squirrels and chipmunks playing, and all seems right with the world. You are in your refuge; the place you go in your mind when someone mentions peace. Sounds great, doesn't it?

Unfortunately, the next thing you hear is the voice of one of your co-workers waking you from your daydream, telling you that your company is involved in litigation and there is an immediate need to determine the company's exposure.

Harsh reality sets in. The next thought you have is that your company's failure to analyze what data they have and where it is, might be its undoing.

You start to sweat. The panic overwhelms you.

You realize that if litigation is imminent, you will have no choice but to uncover all data on your servers, clients, backups, etc. Opposing counsel will demand that all evidence be turned over to them and you have no idea what risk and exposure you have.

This litigation could cost your company $100,000,000+ all because they decided that there was no "cost benefit" of performing the proactive tasks of assessing your data and mitigating the risk.

Now let's replay the scene with some tweaks.

For the past year, your company decided to put forth the effort and cost of assessing what data you have, where it is located, why it exists and how long it should be retained. This initiative spans all departments within your company – security, legal, HR, IT, records management, lines of business, etc. Representatives from each department worked on an assessment of the information needs that they must provide individually, and their employees helped with this process.

Once each department gathered all necessary information, the representatives met collectively to collate all of this information and categorize the types of data, locations, etc. Once all data was catalogued, the next step was to assign retention to each data type and ensure that the policy was strictly enforced; not only on the 'live' data, but also on backups, etc. Knowing that automating the enforcement of these policies, the company researched, purchased and configured software to perform all of the assigned retentions.

Decisions were also made on where data should not be stored; users should never archive email or business-related files (e.g. Word, Excel, etc.) locally. Knowing it is difficult to enforce policies in an automated fashion, a decision was made to inform all employees that storing any information locally is a violation of the company policy and that not adhering to this policy has severe consequences, including possible termination.

For the past three months, the automation of the policy enforcement and adherence of the user policy had become routine. Even the random spot-checks of users' compliance had proven that all employees were on-board. Backup tapes were being scratched based upon the policies as well.

Rewind.

So once again you are reveling in your thoughts about the forest when your co-worker tells you that litigation is occurring. You simply take a deep, cleansing breath and realize that all of the work your company has done over the past year, has proved worthwhile. The old adage, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail” no longer applies to your company. The risk assessment analysis has been done and is ready to provide you with everything you need.

Which version of the story would you rather experience? Make sure your company is prepared for litigation by taking the appropriate actions now.

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

Spring Cleaning: Scrub Away the ROT

By: Stephanie DiPaolo

Spring cleaning – a time when everyone is ready to rid themselves of the winter months and refresh their homes, cars, workstations and even wardrobe. During this time, you probably received multiple online deals for carpet cleaning, auto-detailing, and personal cleaning services, and while all of this is most likely needed, we can't help but ask, "What about cleaning your data?" We know this isn't the most common project that comes to mind each spring, but what do you expect from an information governance solution provider like Sherpa Software?

ROT (redundant, outdated, or trivial information) is a common phrase used within the industry. Basically, it consists of all the information that a company keeps but doesn't necessarily need, including:

- Email conversations between coworkers
- Outdated contact information
- Broken links and missing web content
- Duplicate information

Chances are, your organization has more than just four months of ROT built up over the course of a long winter. In fact, according to AIIM.org, as much as 80% of electronically stored information is ROT. That's a lot of non-essential information taking up vital storage space. This can cause a ton of issues for organizations including information risk, storage costs, and wasted time and resources.

Although ROT is a major problem, we like to refer to it as the "low hanging fruit" of content analysis. This type of data can easily be found and removed, as long as you know what to look for and where. Your organization just needs to dedicate some time towards scrubbing away ROT, rather than throwing more money into storage space. So, where do you start? First, know your options. There are solutions available to organizations of all shapes and sizes, such as Sherpa Altitude IG®. Altitude IG's Reports & Analytics technology will locate and inventory unstructured data throughout your organization. Then, it will help you visually assess core areas of information governance concern, including ROT, intellectual property and risk, and data inventory. Altitude IG's visual reporting offers standardized views into these areas of concern. From here, your organization knows which data to eliminate first.

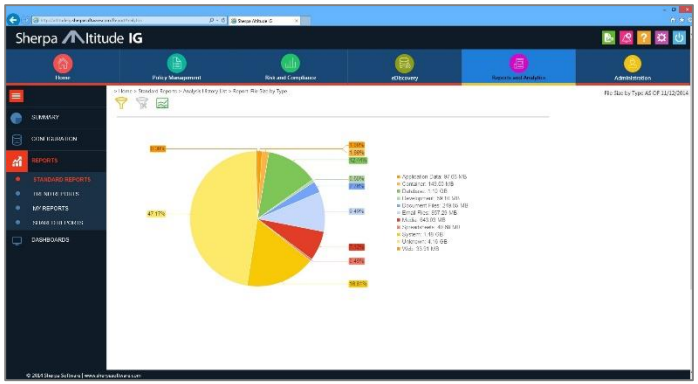

Figure 1: Altitude IG's Reports & Analytics module

It's time to scrub away ROT with this year's Spring Cleaning! Register for a free preview of Altitude IG's Reports & Analytics module to see for yourself just how easy and efficient this task can be.

File Management: Inventory and Classification

By: Jeff Tujetsch

Emails are by far the primary target for companies performing retention policies and/or eDiscovery; in fact, many companies don't consider other types of data when these topics are discussed. Not yet anyway. But all companies need to be aware that emails are not their only IT risk; attachments must also be considered. Attachments within messages were originally files that someone created and stored within the permanent storage area of your company. In addition, many of the mailed attachments are saved within that same permanent storage meaning that attachments of every shape and size probably exist somewhere, even if you don't know exactly where.

The question here is usually, "What kind of files are these?" Some are software files (e.g. PowerPoint, Excel, etc.), others are personal, such as pictures of kids, and others could contain valuable information, such as Word documents, PDFs, and more. Regardless of the file type, they need to be managed via a retention policy – which is easier said than done.

Email is definitely easier to get your arms around. It is centralized on your mail, archive and journal servers. There might be user-initiated data leakage to other locations, but mostly it is stored in a minimum number of locations. Files, however, can be anywhere – and it is a large challenge to manage them.

The most difficult aspects of file management are knowing what files exist, where they are stored and what kind of files they are. What kind of files doesn't simply mean the extension – it involves the content. For instance, let's say you have two PDF documents – one is a contract, and the other contains assembly instructions for a toy. It is a mistake to classify these two files together just because they have the same extension. What I recommend is to classify files based upon their content, not what software was used to create/update them.

Is this difficult? Absolutely. Will it be very time-consuming? Most definitely. But once you have been able to create a full inventory of your files, you can then start the process of not only classifying them by content, but also applying retention periods to those files. I am not condoning the automatic deletion of all files older than 90 days, but what I am saying is to create a strategy that in the end, is a retention policy for files. Some might never be deleted, but as long as that is an intentional decision by the powers that be in your company, it is a retention policy.

So which do you do first, inventory the files or create the file classifications? Classifications for every company will be very similar. Of course, one company could refine classifications more than another, but the basic classifications will be the same. With that said, create the classifications, while also being open to augmenting your list as needed. Once you have created the initial classifications, it is time to create your file inventory. Though this appears daunting in a way that may confuse you on where to start, it is vital that you create a methodology and then start the process. The obvious locations would be the file servers and the user laptops/desktops. Though typically, I prefer to do the more difficult task first to get it behind me, I recommend starting with the file servers, since the files are centralized. This will allow you to have a sanity check on your classifications, as well as build momentum for your file inventory. Once that is done, then it is time to move onto the users. This could be very time-consuming, but it is a necessary evil. After that, there are tapes, other data stores, and more that can contain files.

In summary, managing files will not be easy and will be a time-consuming and resource-intensive process, but it will benefit your company in the long run. Start managing your files today! For information on how Sherpa Software can help with this endeavor, give us a ring or email information@sherpasoftware.com

Building an IT Dream Team

By: Doug Yarabinetz

Information technology (IT) has been around as a recognized business function with associated personnel since the 1950s, but the value placed on the department, functions, and employees today are much different than they were 50+ years ago. The role of IT primarily focused on computer and telecommunications equipment management. Most organizations now employ predominantly knowledge workers who routinely create, process, and disseminate information as a primary job function. The advancement in digital technology and interconnected devices with ubiquitous connectivity and the associated data, now estimated to be doubling every two years, has the spotlight on IT and its staff. So, what type of leader do you need to create a modern day IT Dream Team?

You will notice the word *leader*. That is an extremely important point because it all starts at the top. Whether it is a CIO, IT Manager, or even the President or CEO in a smaller company, creating a center of excellence around IT is dependent on the individual at the top. What traits should you look for in this individual? What makes them so special and will allow them to develop and grow their team into IT all stars? Of course they need to keep the daily business operations running smoothly; that is a critical function that has to be within the skillset. We are talking about finding a leader for our dream team and for that we need vision. This means both his or her vision for the information management strategy as well as his or her view of the value, opportunity and risk inherent in the electronic information and systems he or she manage.

Thanks to the Sarbanes-Oxely Act (SOX), the Federal Rules of Civil Procedures (FRCP), and other legislation, along with the startling rate of accumulation of electronic data and its proliferation across the enterprise, most people in IT view information or data as a risk and potential expense. That said, in order to be successful today, organizations need an IT leader who can make sure the organization also sees information for its value and not just as a cost center. Therein lies the opportunity and the competitive advantage necessary in the digital age.

Information is an essential corporate asset and like any other corporate asset it has a few requirements from the time it is created until its ultimate disposal, including:

- Availability – easily accessible when necessary
- Security – protected, tracked and managed to mitigate risk and exposure
- Value – viewed at a strategic level, opportunity versus risk
- Disposition – disposed of on schedule at the end of its useful life

This lifecycle management is critical to reduce the amount of redundant, outdated and trivial information (ROT) within an organization. Awareness and understanding of this type of information lifecycle is a critical attribute necessary in the ideal IT leader. Their view must elevate information to a strategic level.

The ideal IT leader must recognize that it is no longer information management but information governance (IG). Information governance is a program they should view as an enterprise-wide initiative, endorsed by senior management and it should support the overall business objectives of the organization. To do this, the IG program needs to extend beyond IT, but it is the IT lead who should drive the strategy.

IT needs to be led by an individual who:

- Understands user needs
- Understands the value of stored information
- Puts the proper governance processes and procedures in place.

The IT lead needs to ensure that both the strategic and tactical plans can be developed but also hold people accountable for their execution and success. He or she needs to be able to manage this process without putting undue burden and stress on day-to-day operations.

This is no easy task and no particular interview question will find you this ideal IT leader. But if you find these qualities, an individual with this type of perspective, you are well on your way to building your ideal IT Dream Team.

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

Information Governance: What IT Pros Need to Know

By: Rick Wilson

EDiscovery and computer forensics expert Karen Schuler, along with Rick Wilson, VP of Strategy & Solutions at Sherpa Software and an AIIM-Certified Information Governance Practitioner, discuss the fundamentals of what a good information governance (IG) strategy should include. The video to the right will provide you with a better understanding of the key roles that IT professionals play in delivering corporate-wide governance initiatives and managing eDiscovery efforts.

In this webinar archive, Schuler and Wilson go over defining:

- Information governance programs
- Key factors for initiation
- Implementing and maintaining IG programs
- Information governance roles and responsibilities for IT pros
- Practical ways organizations can prepare for information governance

Make sure to keep an eye out for our future webinars that discuss information governance, as well as our white paper series on establishing a Corporate Information Governance Program (CIGP).

Policies for Your Organizations IG Strategy - *Where Do I Start?*

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.

Is it Information Governance or File Analysis?

By: Marta Farensbach

Anyone researching Information governance (IG) will encounter the topic of File Analysis. Initially, these disciplines were related but not equivalent. However, as technology grows more all-encompassing, a new class of tools has been deployed which offer end-to-end file analysis, classification and remediation (FACR). These processes form an essential building block for establishing an effective IG strategy. However, solid information lifecycle management is made up of more than file analysis. Key components such as stakeholder involvement, policy creation and enforcement, eDiscovery plans, security and storage management must all be addressed to establish a complete framework. But none of these steps can happen without the most essential element – knowing where data resides, who uses it, and what form does it take. Without these key details obtained through comprehensive file analytics, it is impossible to control or manage corporate information assets.

File Analysis is a term used in many technical disciplines, including forensics, anti-virus and records management. For the purposes of IG it can be defined as the process of locating, highlighting and classifying information assets of an organization. In the past, these assets would have been paper based. In today's interconnected world, they are almost entirely electronic, and this so called ESI (electronically stored information) grows exponentially every year.

It is this unchecked growth of ESI that makes sound IG policy so important to an organization. Surveys highlight the fact that "69% of all information … has no business, legal or regulatory value". Think of how much this redundant, outdated or trivial data costs a company in wasted time, money and operational resources. To address this problem an organization must first gather information regarding the data assets (and detritus) of an organization including the size, age, location, type, and distribution of electronic and physical files. By scrutinizing these basic statistics, organizations can determine severity and priority for compliance, storage constraints and bottlenecks. Gartner further states 'IT, data and storage managers use file analysis to deliver insight into information about the data, enabling better management and governance to improve business value, reduce risk and lower management cost. '

File Analysis can be used to shed the light on so called 'dark data', information assets that are generated or stored by corporations on a day to day basis, but which are not used in other contexts. This can include legacy data, records stored in BYOD, mobile and cloud based stores. Like other types of corporate data mentioned above, dark data is rarely disposed of in a defensible manner. A thorough analysis of all these areas can disclose how much expense, clutter and risk any and all of these areas pose to an organization.

As noted by AIIM, '…all of these good things flow from accurate metadata'. An inventory of files and other electronically generated data is necessary to effectively organize and prioritize IG tasks. More intensive analysis and remediation can be performed to identify duplicates, measure growth rates and classify files which act as agents to increase efficiency of searches, reduce redundancy, inform defensible deletion, streamline records management and generally provide context for the data. This, in turn, feeds the overview and control of data and can be a boon to establishing effective Disaster Recovery efforts. Furthermore, any poor handling of highly regulated or confidential data (e.g. PHI, PII, PCI) can also be uncovered with this effective scrutiny.

It is important to maintain and automate a file analysis process. This will assist companies to proactively audit policy, recognize business value and pinpoint trouble spots before they flare up, tasks which are nearly impossible to do manually. File Analysis provides a starting point to understand the nature of information assets and forms the bedrock for all policy and procedure. It is a key component in fulfilling and preserving the goals of any effective Information Governance plan.

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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.

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CIOs Finding Business Value in Structured and Unstructured Big Data

By: Srinivasan Balaji

CIOs recognize how valuable both structured and unstructured data is to their organizations, however, the process of recognizing this value differs for each data type.

Structured Data
As its name suggests, Information Technology (IT) knows what type of data is stored and where it is located, due to the schemas that define data types, values, etc. To extract value in the structured data, one needs to have the proper mining techniques and technology in place. This enables the CIO to make the proper business decision regarding the challenges that face the IT department.

Unstructured Data
This is more difficult, because the data is free-form and harder to locate and utilize. Understanding how it should be classified and where it is stored is the first step a CIO must take to extract value from unstructured data. This is very important in that the data helps various lines of business create revenue where lines of business are the profit centers. CIOs should realize that if the lines of business are not given access to the proper data when they need it and how they need it, the data becomes useless. CIOs that treat their unstructured data as an asset rather than a liability are able to add much more value to the data content.

There are several skills and technologies to develop that can change big data from a cost to a revenue center. Revenue centers traditionally generate profit through sales and marketing-related activities, while cost centers typically eat into profit by generating expenses against a budgeted target. The volume of data or information created today, often referred to as big data, and its importance to the organization, has many CIOs looking for technology and processes to leverage the opportunity that data presents and change big data from a cost to a revenue center.

Technologies that can be used for turning big data into a revenue center include ones that locate and mine data from numerous customer touch points. These technologies can gather data from disparate locations, bring it together, and decipher meaning from it which can then be used by an organization's marketing and sales teams. The data will be automatically categorized and clustered and can be used for targeting customers around their patterns and behaviors to leverage sales opportunities.

These technologies also cross over to post-sale customer touch points and can show if the customers are having a positive experience that can later turn into opportunities for reference and word-of-mouth sales. The method for accomplishing this isn't easy, as there will be a great deal of work, but once that task is complete, companies can leverage that customer information and benefit from it.

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