

Best Practices for Governing Information Lifecycle Management

Introduction

According to new AIIM research on Information Governance, 79% of organizations realize that they must transform into a truly digital businesses in order to survive. As a result, there has been a shift in the importance organizations place upon effective Information Governance. And as the volume and variety of enterprise information continues to grow, so does the need for well-thought strategies and approaches to information lifecycle management.

Risk and Opportunity

At AIIM, we believe that information is the lifeblood of businesses today and properly managing and governing its collection and use is a fundamental corporate imperative. Information carries great risk to be sure – data security, information privacy, regulatory compliance, and legal discovery are just some of the important factors driving policies and procedures to control corporate records and data. But there is great opportunity as well, often overlooked, in using enterprise information in ways that improve the performance of the organization – customer experience, process improvement, and new, digitally-enabled ways of working all depend on using information in ever-expanding and more strategic ways.

Governance and Strategy

As a result, there is a new paradigm emerging; something bigger – an increasing connection between information governance *and* strategy. Indeed, the real value of information governance may be found by building capabilities that focus on increased strategic opportunity and business

performance, not just on averting risk and maintaining security. Doing more with data to improve processes and products, boost brand satisfaction, and enable more effective and strategic business decisions are just a few of the benefits of this expanded approach and good reasons to adopt a new approach to information lifecycle management.

Information Lifecycle Management

How can you begin? One way is by adopting a more ardent line of attack to Information Lifecycle Management. According to [Gartner](#), "Information Lifecycle Management is an approach that recognizes that the value of information changes over time and that it must be managed accordingly... seeking to classify information in line with its current business value and establish policies to migrate and store that data appropriately."

Best Practices

What does this mean for information managers today? You might say that the "secret sauce" isn't complete without one last ingredient: a plan for the overall lifecycle management of your information. Here are some best practices to consider.

1

Audit Your Information

The first step is to understand exactly what information you have, how much, and where it is all located. After all, if you don't know what you've got, it's impossible to manage it. This becomes increasingly

important as the amount of information that we must manage continues to increase. [AIIM research](#) tells us that, on average, organizations expect the volume of information coming into their organizations to grow from X to 4.2X over the next two years. Over 60% of information sprawl is unstructured, so it becomes critically important to thoroughly audit your information.

2 Get Rid of ROT

One way to battle content growth is to get rid of “ROT” – redundant, obsolete, and trivial information that an organization continues to retain even though the information has no continued business or legal value. ROT can be found on individual desktops, on networks, on SharePoint servers, on tablets and mobile devices, on mainframe computers, and in the cloud. All of this useless information takes a toll on the organization, making it easy to misplace or overlook sensitive data, putting the organization at unnecessary risk of litigation or non-compliance, and prompting a general loss of productivity, efficiency, and agility overall.

3 Author Policies, Automate Governance

Effective information lifecycle management requires a fully focused approach rooted in formal governance policies and procedures. From beginning to end, the entire information lifecycle must be considered in strategic planning. Process design efforts should include a cross-functional team that, along with IT, includes departments and stakeholders with an interest in how information is stored, used, and managed. Adoption of technologies

and solutions should work to automate the governance process with tools that extend the value and effectiveness of information to boost organizational performance.

Moving Forward

AIIM believes that Intelligent Information Management practices and methodologies are critical to digital transformation success. Use these best practices to help map your strategies and actions for governing Information Lifecycle Management. Look for providers and partners with the right mix of expertise, capability, and vision to help you make the most of your efforts.

Authored by:

Kevin Craine
Content Strategist, AIIM
Host and Producer of *AIIM On Air* Podcast



This Tip Sheet is underwritten by [Access](#)

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Here at AIIM we've always focused on the intersection of people, processes, and information. We help organizations put information to work. AIIM is a non-profit organization that provides independent research, training, and certification for information professionals.

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AIIM
8403 Colesville Road, Suite 1100
Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA
+1 301 587 8202
www.aiim.org

AIIM Europe
Office 1, Broomhall Business Centre,
Worcester, WR5 2NT, UK
+44 (0)1905 727 600
www.aiim.org