

# Forging a Partnership with IT to Build a Solid IG Program

**Blake E. Richardson, CRM, CIP**

**C**orporate information vacuums and silos continue to be a point of employee frustration, the cause of ineffective business decisions, and, ultimately, an inhibitor to revenue growth. This issue is not exclusively related to technology; it also involves having a “turf” ownership mentality and not understanding the benefits of collaboration. Finally, after years of departments working in parallel, infrequently reaching out to others for advice or assistance, this is beginning to change.

Companies are surveying the in-

formation landscape and realizing that today’s complex records and information management (RIM) issues, such as e-discovery, e-mail management, storage, backups, structured data retention, and migration, are growing. They are beginning to understand that to meet these challenges, they not only must control the information explosion, they must manage information properly as an asset to generate value, reduce expenses, and increase corporate compliance. The reality is that no single department is equipped to address

these challenges; it takes a group effort.

## **IT and RIM Must Partner**

The needed collaboration between RIM and IT, in particular, is in stark contrast to the traditional stereotypes for their roles, where RIM was tucked away in a centralized file room concentrating on managing physical information, while IT focused its efforts on electronic application and network availability and backups. In those old roles, there was no logical need for interaction.



Today, IT and RIM must rely on each other to ensure the proper management of all information. They can no longer base the success of their respective operations on network availability and the management of paper records – their paths have crossed and are now intertwined.

### Forging an Effective Partnership

If you have not forged an effective partnership with IT, you must be the initiator to open the lines of communication. Once the dialog begins, it should not take long for IT to understand the benefits of partnering on RIM-related issues. IT should be hungry for RIM guidance, and you, as a RIM professional, need IT insight to ensure a compliant RIM program.

Once you understand how the department is structured and what its various responsibilities are, you will see there are several opportunities for approaching IT. Typically, the IT department will be configured in the following sub-departments or sections with a few typical responsibilities:

- **Hardware** – Configures and installs hardware products and supports network printers
- **Software**: Conducts planning and feasibility studies pertaining to the development and implementation of organizational software solutions
- **Database Administration**: Ensures the proper performance of the organization’s databases and conducting prescribed maintenance
- **Infrastructure**: Designs, implements, and monitors the performance of information solutions, including hardware, software, and communications systems
- **Architecture**: Establishes policies, principles, services, common solutions, standards, and guidelines for deploying and using technology to ensure technical compatibility
- **Information Security**: Ensures electronic security of sensitive organizational data
- **Data Center Operations**: Oversees

### Benefits of a RIM/IT Partnership

IT	Records Management
Awareness of data retention requirements	Increased understanding of data applications
Deletion of expired information	Increased RIM compliance
Reduced backup and restore time	Compliant application design and implementation
Guidance for active, semi-active, and inactive media storage	Increased RIM policy adherence
Increased understanding of e-discovery requirements	Creation of data maps
Establishment of data migration requirements	Establish foundation for information governance
Reduced storage needs	Enhanced e-discovery response

technical and IT issues, including computer- and server-related matters, and manages application-related issues

- **Field Services**: Assists end users in resolving IT-related computer and application issues
- **Help Desk**: Takes employees’ calls for help with computer and applications issues, attempts to resolve them by remotely accessing their computers, and – if unsuccessful – assigns a field services representative to remedy the problems
- **Communications/Telephony**: Deploys and maintains land-line communication, telephone systems, and mobile telephony devices

Initially, your goal for collaboration is to begin to understand each other’s issues and “pain-points,” not to get immediate resolution. This will help build the foundation for effective collaboration. To break the ice, ask to attend an IT staff meeting or schedule an introductory meeting with the objective of discussing each other’s roles and responsibilities. This will be enlightening for you and for IT professionals who may be unaware of advancements in the RIM discipline and still view its members as the “paper and box people.”

### Collaboration Opportunities

Following are some specific areas where you will find common ground for collaboration.

#### Retention of Data

An area of primary importance to IT operations is data retention, and partnering with IT to gain control of the retention life cycle of data will enhance the organization’s effectiveness, comprehensiveness, credibility, and compliance.

Typically, IT has ensured network, application, and data accessibility for organizational business units without being provided guidance as to how long the data needs to be retained. This results in information being kept indefinitely, which has many negative consequences:

- Extended backup and restore cycles
- Acquisition of additional storage
- Increased total cost of ownership for additional storage

With electronic information doubling approximately every 18 months, (according to a June 2011 EMC-sponsored IDC Digital Universe study), many IT departments are now seeking assistance from information owners and the RIM department for managing this growing volume.

## ...there are records management issues to consider when migrating digital information

The RIM department, with its appraisal, research, and retention scheduling expertise, can help. Even if the organization's retention schedules were developed to manage only physical and unstructured electronic records, you can leverage them to create a starting point for managing structured data found in enterprise resource planning (ERP) and other database applications and backup tapes.

For example, your accounts payable department may retain paper or imaged invoices for seven years, but in the ERP financial application, the corresponding structured data may not have an assigned retention period. This issue provides a great opportunity to collaborate with IT to initiate an appraisal of structured data and determine if the retention periods for the physical, unstructured information can be used to manage the retention of structured content.

You could also work with IT to develop a documentation tool for all existing applications, upgrades, and new application implementations. It would include the following elements:

- Application name
- Project number if applicable
- Application owner(s)
- Application owner contact information
- Backup frequency of the application
- Maximum downtime of the application
- Total retention period of data
- Active period of data
- Semi-active and inactive period of data
- Application server name

The document should be completed and approved by IT, RIM, and the respective business sponsor prior to any upgrades or new implemen-

tations. It will provide IT with the tools it needs to effectively manage applications going forward and RIM with the information needed to ensure comprehensive retention schedules.

### **Media Storage**

Another area of concern for IT is determining the active period of information – when it needs to be readily accessible to business owners – and the semi-active (if applicable) or inactive period, when it needs to be accessed less frequently and can be migrated to near-line or offline storage on less expensive media. You can call on your physical records management and archive experience to assist IT with this.

For example, the active period of an accounts payable physical invoice is typically several months, usually not to exceed one year. During this period, invoices reside in departmental file cabinets where they are readily accessible. After one year, physical invoices can be placed in boxes and stored onsite or offsite and still be accessible within 24-48 hours.

There are clear parallels between managing a physical invoice and managing the electronic invoice data in an ERP application. Just as a physical invoice is typically active and stored in a departmental file cabinet where it is immediately accessible for up to a year, electronic data should be available on a server, providing expedient retrieval for the same time period.

After one year, just as a physical invoice would become semi-active or inactive and boxed and stored onsite or offsite where it would be accessible within 24-48 hours, an invoice's electronic data enters a semi-active period and can be migrated to other forms of less expensive storage. This allows

server space to be managed efficiently but still provides the business user access to the information within a reasonable time frame.

If it is determined after two years that the invoice's electronic data is now inactive, IT can digitally archive the information until the retention period expires, at which time the data can be deleted.

You and your RIM department can work with IT and business owners to develop and document the active, semi-active, and inactive electronic data periods.

### **Migrating Data**

Hardware, software, and operating systems become obsolete, requiring the migration of data from one storage type to another, to a different format, or to a different operating or computer system. However, there are records management issues to consider when migrating digital information, such as preserving authenticity and accessibility.

In the 2012 *Migrating digital records a guideline for Queensland public authorities*, the process is referred to as “digital continuity”:

...the ability to ensure that despite organisational, business and technological change, the access, readability and the authenticity of digital records is maintained for as long as they are required to be kept for business, legal and/or archival requirements.”

Data migration creates another RIM/IT collaboration opportunity. You should work in tandem to understand the data migration process: determining what information is targeted for migration or is at risk of loss or becoming inaccessible, identifying the targeted data's retention requirements, and evaluating the results of the migration.

### **Backing up Content**

Magnetic backup tapes, which are still widely used for system and file restores, disaster recovery, and

archive backups, are considered by many to be the nemesis of an effective and compliant RIM program.

Although tapes used for basic recovery and disaster recovery are overwritten on a scheduled basis, those used for digital archiving are typically sent to offsite storage – often without adequate information about their nature and date ranges. It is not uncommon for large organizations to have in storage more than 100,000 backup tapes spanning two or three decades of activity, resulting in retention and deletion issues.

As digital information continues to grow, IT departments are looking for guidance on managing the volume of information that is backed up. Working with IT to apply RIM principles to this electronic content can not only reduce the existing volume, it can control the rate of accumulation, make information easier to identify

and retrieve, and ensure that it is appropriately disposed of.

Determining what needs to be backed up and how frequently requires a group effort.

### Using the Cloud

Whether your organization is considering or is already moving information to the cloud, it is imperative that you partner with IT to educate others about the benefits, risks, and things that must be considered. RIM and IT can help the organization assess information types and risk levels to determine if specific content is a good candidate for a cloud solution or whether it is best suited to be managed within the company's IT infrastructure.

Work together to create internal and external checklists for evaluating the organization's integration points, risk sensitivity, and bandwidth, the

provider's security and accessibility, and the information's retention requirements.

### Information Governance

Both RIM and IT play a vital role in the success of the organization's information governance (IG) program. Though each contributes different skillsets, when working together they are a team that possesses a comprehensive and proficient understanding of the organization's information management needs, including for identifying structured and unstructured information and repositories, data retention time frames, regulatory requirements, e-discovery obligations, and potential risks. By working together, RIM and IT can create a solid IG foundation. **END**

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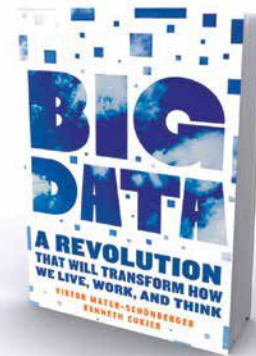
## IN REVIEW

# Shifting Information Analysis: Big Data's Implications for the Information Sciences and Professions

**Marc Kosciejew, Ph.D.**

In *Big Data: A Revolution That Will Transform How We Live, Work, and Think*, Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier present the emerging trend of big data and its various political, economic, social, and professional implications. This book is intended for a diverse academic and professional audience in various disciplines. It should be of particular

interest to scholars and practitioners in the information sciences and professions because of its focus on the information concepts and practices inherent in, and influenced by, big data. The chapters are divided by big data's major components, thereby providing a clear framework in which to approach and understand this emerging trend. A detailed section



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