

The Next Frontier for RIM Pros

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This article provides highlights of the Forrester Research and ARMA International Records Management Online Survey, Q1 2017.

It identifies as major challenges:

- 1) the volume of digital information outside of records and information management control, including newer content sources;
- 2) aligning policies and priorities with IG stakeholders;
- 3) and attracting and helping millennials develop needed skills.

2017 marks the eighth year ARMA International and Forrester Research have surveyed records and information management (RIM) decision makers in an effort to track the key trends and challenges facing the profession. More than 200 respondents from around the world shared their perspectives in the survey, which ran in January 2017 as a follow-up to the mid-2015 survey. Here is a quick summary of the respondents' profile:

- North America once again dominates the survey responses, with U.S. participants at 73% and Canada at 24%.
- Government tops the list of vertical industries represented at 35%.
- Large enterprise – those with more than \$1 billion in revenue or budget – is represented by 19% of respondents.
- 16.6% of RIM programs report to IT (down from 20% in 2015), 18.5% into legal, 12.2% into a corporate services group, 10.2% into compliance, 6.8% into lines of business, and 29.8% report to others.

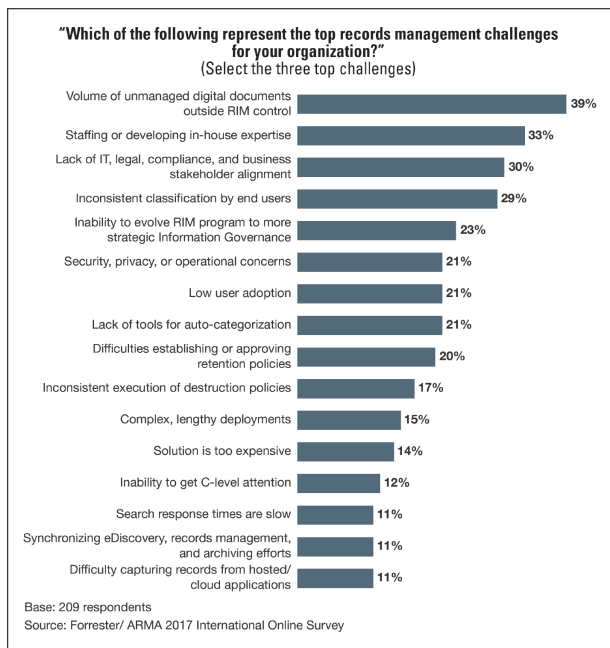


Figure 1: Top Records Management Challenges

The Shift to IG May Have Plateaued

RIM professionals are instigating change in their organizations, but the pace of evolution is slowing. In 2015, Forrester posed for the first time the question: "Have you restructured or re-organized your RIM and/or IT programs to support an information governance [IG] strategy," and 32% of respondents indicated they had. But in 2017, only 25% reported they had re-organized their programs. Twenty-eight percent of respondents expect to make this shift 2017-18 (down from 34% in 2015), but 39% expect no change in the foreseeable future.

Governance Structures Are in Flux

Governance structures for RIM programs also remain in flux. While 19% of survey respondents replied that they had "a steering committee of senior stakeholders" to guide decisions – down notably from 28% in 2015 – 25% reported no formal governance of their programs at all, similar to 24% in 2015. "Other" responses included 17% saying they had a center of excellence or dedicated program team – up from 11% in 2015 – and 9% reported they had "multiple, coordinated cross-role committees." Eight percent of respondents said they rely on legal to make decisions (up from 4% in 2015), and 3% let IT run the show.

IT, Legal Remain Top Sponsors

Executive sponsorship for RIM programs continues to be heavily influenced by legal or IT: 32% reported that the general counsel or most-senior legal decision maker was the key executive sponsor (down from 41% in 2015), and 33% of programs were championed by the CIO or other most-senior technology decision maker.

Alignment with IG Stakeholders Lags

Forrester notes a small slip in the number of RIM programs aligned to IT: 18% of RIM programs report into IT, down slightly from 20% in 2015. This is a signal that more coordination and alignment of policies and priorities may be stalling. Two of the top three challenges selected by survey respondents continue to be stakeholder alignment and skills development, with 30% of respondents calling out the lack of stakeholder alignment among IT, legal, compliance, and business decision makers as a top program challenge, and 33% naming staffing or in-house expertise development as the top challenge. (See Figure 1 "Top Records Management Challenges.")

On a positive note, 67% of surveyed RIM professionals said they are included in their company's IT strategic planning, including in activities like requirements definition and vendor selection – up from 59% in 2015.

Digital Sprawl Continues to Worry IG Pros

The top challenge for RIM teams in 2017 is the same worry they had in 2015. When asked "which of the following represent the top records management challenges for your organization," the number one response, at 39%, was "the volume of unmanaged digital documents outside of RIM control," which is down slightly from 43% in 2015. (See Figure 1. Note that respondents were allowed more than one choice.) File shares, ungoverned SharePoint sites, mobile devices, and the growing volume of content in software-as-a-service (SaaS) applications mean that silos of corporate information are not only proliferating in corporate data centers, but in cloud environments as well.

More Growth Is Predicted

Expect this digital sprawl to persist. Only 6% of survey respondents – the same as 2015 – expect the volume of “non-record” documents to decrease over the next year, and less than 1% expect the volume of electronic records to decrease. In comparison, 45% expect the volume of onsite physical records to decrease (up slightly from 43% in 2015), and 32% are projecting a decrease in physical records held in third-party storage facilities (down slightly from 34% in 2015).

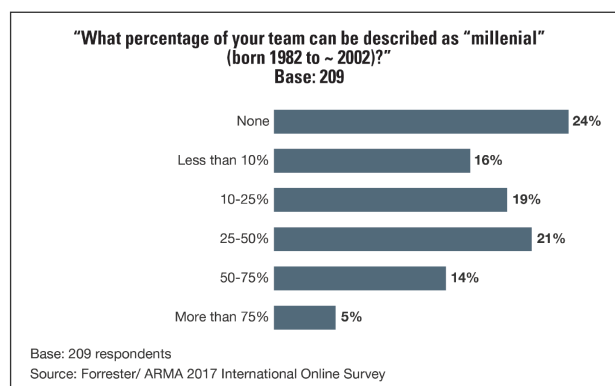


Figure 2: Percentage of Millennials on RIM Team

Newer Content Sources Are Neglected

RIM programs still aren't keeping pace with the emerging sources of business records in their enterprise. An IG strategy must be aligned with – if not help guide – the digital transformation initiatives in which organizations across all industries are investing. Enterprises continue to have a handle on physical records, e-mail, and documents in enterprise content management systems, but are failing with new content.

New communication channels are the least likely to be on the horizon for implementation of retention policies. In 2017, enterprise social or collaboration sites were rated as having the lowest interest among RIM respondents, with 20% having no interest in applying retention policies to these content and communication applications. Instant messages (with 16% expressing no interest) and cloud file-sharing apps (15%) round out the top three areas of least interest.

Forrester's take is that items that have higher business value are migrated into an appropriate repository, and that these newer communication platforms may primarily hold *transitory* records, or those with low or short-term business value. Retention and disposition rules can still add value by ensuring that obsolete content from these platforms is removed in a timely, controlled fashion. IG programs need to take into consideration the “non-records” generated inside their businesses.

Technology Investments Shift

Forrester continues to see a shift in technology investments as enterprises focus budgets on top priorities

such as revenue growth and improved customer experience. External engagement with the “extended enterprise” (such as customers, suppliers, citizens, or partners) has revealed new use cases for content sharing and collaboration. Governance needs to now extend to applications beyond the firewall. Potential business records will now come into enterprises via file-sharing platforms – whether cloud-based or implemented as hybrid tools, integrated with on-premises content stores.

RIM Programs Must Attract Millennials

Overall, RIM program teams are small – with 79% having fewer than 20 full-time employees globally. Few respondents said they plan to substantially increase their team size. Nearly a quarter of RIM programs reported having no team members that can be described as a “millennial” – that is, anyone born after 1982. (See Figure 2 “Percentage of Millennials on RIM Team.”) This up-and-coming generation of workers is among the first to go through its education and early work years in the digital era, and many traditional industries are striving to compete for this tech-savvy workforce.

Tactics for Attracting Millennials Shared

RIM programs are failing to be competitive for this younger talent: only 7% of survey respondents said they work in a RIM program that has specifically designed programs to recruit or retain younger workers. Their most common tactics include mentorship programs, internships or co-op programs, and efforts to improve workplace cultures, such as by providing more town halls, social events, and networking opportunities. The approaches deemed to be most successful, however, were offering internships/co-op programs, changing job descriptions to encourage applicants with more diverse skill sets, and investing in on-the-job training.

Three Roles Poised for Growth

Few RIM program roles are likely to grow in 2017 – a similar pattern from the last survey in 2015. When respondents were asked about positions they were “planning to hire in the next 12 months,” just three exceeded the 10% marks: business analysts (10.1%), RIM professionals – not certified (11.3%), and scanning/imaging specialists (13.1%).

Skills Training Is Essential

RIM teams seeking to invest in longer-term vitality must pair their need to attract younger entrants into the field with ongoing skills development programs to ensure that new hires have the skills they need to fulfill their roles.

Cloud Becomes More Comfortable Choice

2017 represents a notable jump in the use of a hosted, cloud, or SaaS-based records management application, with 30% using this approach in some capacity for records management – up from 19% in 2015. Another 18% reported they are not using the cloud or hosted tools for records management, but have plans to do so (up slightly from 15% in 2015). More than half (52%), however, said they have no plans to adopt cloud in the foreseeable future (down slightly from 55% in 2015).

Security, Budget Block Adoption

The top objection to using cloud for digital records continues to be concerns over potential privacy or security issues – no change from 2015. Interestingly, the second-top barrier to cloud records management adoption in 2017 is lack of budget to migrate to a cloud solution,

Nearly half (49%) of the responding RIM professionals said they did not know if the GDPR, which is due to take effect in May 2018, would affect their business; this includes 23% who said they know that no action or planning related to the GDPR has occurred. Thirty-two percent of respondents said they have done their due diligence and are not concerned because the new law will not apply to their organizations. Just 9% reported being concerned about the GDPR and having taken steps to be prepared, and another 9% said they are concerned but have not yet developed plans to address it.

Regulatory Landscape Remains Volatile

The regulatory landscape for data protection, information transfer, and breach notification continues to be volatile, particularly for global enterprises; North American firms may have more obligations than they realize. RIM professionals have an opportunity to provide guidance where uncertainty rules today. The requirement

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and the second place objection in 2015 – “policies, regulations or laws prevent[ing] this approach” – slipped to third place in 2017.

Cost-Effectiveness Drives Adoption

Forrester asked for the first time in 2017 “what factors encouraged your organization’s adoption of SaaS, cloud or hosted records management solutions?” In this “choose all that apply” question, the top rationale was cost-effectiveness, with 55% naming this as one of their factors. Other top factors included sufficient compliance with security and privacy needs (39%), cloud adoption of part of overall technology roadmap (39%), and improved speed of deployment (26%).

Uncertainty Colors EU Data Protection Plans

In April 2016, the European Parliament approved the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) with the mission of harmonizing various data privacy laws across Europe. The GDPR applies not only to European companies, but to any organization doing business to provide goods or services to EU citizens. Substantial fines can be imposed on organizations that fail to process personal data appropriately, fail to gain customer consent for data use, or fail to have their records in order. (To learn more about GDPR, see www.eugdpr.org.)

to protect, anonymize, and safely dispose of personal information, as well as to provide clear accountability for such actions, is core to the GDPR. Companies committed to their IG strategy will be in a position to meet these requirements more proactively and with less disruption.

Most Satisfied with Ability to Protect Data

Overall, 62% of RIM survey respondents said they are satisfied with the ability of their existing records management applications to support privacy requirements, specifically their processing, transporting, and handling of confidential or personal information. Only 14% expressed dissatisfaction with their current tools, and 24% were neutral on this topic.

What Results Mean for RIM and IG Pros

With eight years of joint research with ARMA International now completed, Forrester sees several constants in the results:

- Optimism about ongoing technology deployments remains high, although budgets remain relatively flat, and few firms have plans to expand current RIM teams.
- Confidence in retrieving records in 15 or more years is rising, demonstrating hope for a serious look at long-term digital preservation challenges.

- The gap in applying retention policies to emerging sources of business content calls into question the preservation and future retrieval of these data types.
- New areas of risk continue to grow, as RIM professionals are not extending consistent governance practices to the social, cloud, and collaboration tools their client-facing colleagues have embraced.

The top RIM challenge of “the volume of unmanaged documents outside of RIM control” combined with the challenges of aligning stakeholders, attracting millennials,

and developing skills indicate that the gap between governance and information chaos is at risk of expanding – a finding largely unchanged since 2015.

RIM professionals need to home in on the shifting communication and content creation patterns inside their enterprise and be prepared to extend their purview to the collaborative, social, and mobile world of today’s digital business. This is the promise of IG as Forrester describes it: “A holistic strategy for using and managing information to meet business objectives.” **E**



About the Author: Cheryl McKinnon, IGP, CIP, is a principal analyst with Forrester, covering the trends, challenges, and recommended practices for managing enterprise content. The certified Information Governance Professional and Certified Information Professional frequently presents at conferences, seminars, and webinars and contributes to a variety of industry publications. McKinnon has a bachelor’s degree from the University of Winnipeg, a master’s degree in history from Carleton University, and she has completed coursework toward a Ph.D. in history at the University of Ottawa. She can be contacted at cmckinnon@forrester.com.



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