SHORT WHITE PAPER ON DOCUMENT AND RETENTION

This report considers the needs of a basic set of policies around information management and retention. It is not intended to be an in-depth assessment but to provide the basic steps required to lay the foundations for effective Information Management.

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Information Management: Overview

Information storage Growth

The average amount of new information added to computer installation is 30% per annum which in most cases does not align to the rate of business or employee growth. Email or messaging traffic is growing at 35% and again is not directly related to the business income being generated.

For every 10 GB of Data stored it costs £3800 of manpower costs and £600 per annum of tape and disk costs to ensure it is available in the event of a disaster. From these figures alone you might expect £1400 additional budget per 10 GB of Data stored and archived in support of the business.

This can be controlled and growth restrained to the point of growing with the income of the business. If a detailed retention policy is in place then the costs of information storage per customer could be calculated to ensure those costs per client are charged accordingly. However the cost of detail within Information Management is proportional to the higher budget associated with information management and not always an acceptable cost.

Organisational Records

The basis on which cost control is maintained is through defining the information that is required to 'Record the businesses. These records normally fall into two parts, the first of these are records that define the legal part of the business such as contracts, end of year accounts, company registration documents etc. and the information flow that supports these [e.g. letters to leaseholders, emails to tax offices]. The second group are document(s) that define the delivery to the customer, but exclude the internal information journey (e.g. draft document versions) unless specifically supporting the final deliver or is proof of work accomplished.

The second group is at risk of archiving more information than necessary unless it is managed by clear and concise set of information policies.

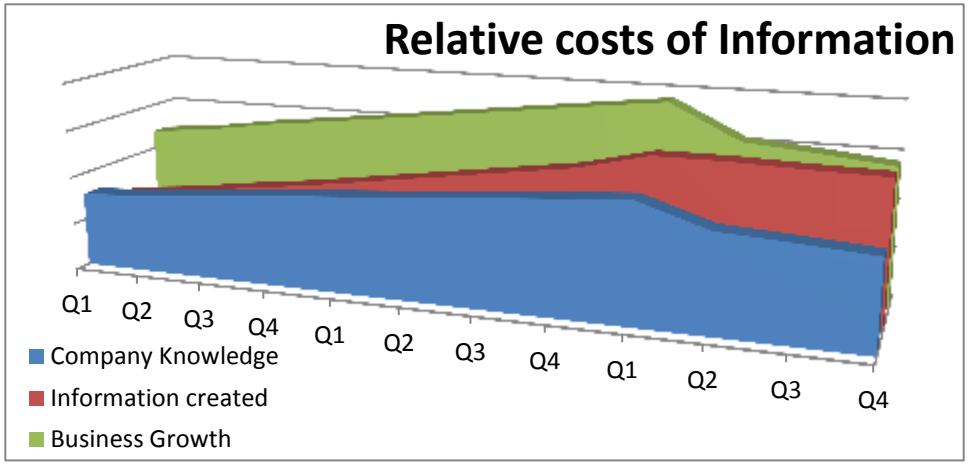
> The ISO 15489:2001 defines a record as "…information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business

The objective

If we assume that the green line is an income line then the red line is what many businesses see as their costs of storing information controlled not by the information required to meet the customer needs but by the costs of maintaining information on network shares and storage devices.

The objective would be to only pay for supporting the company knowledge which is defined as information that is intrinsically linked to the business or the business process.

The outcome of this policy is that storage and information management costs run closer to a proportion of the income rather than running beyond the income line.



How does information grow out of control?

The reason that information storage constantly grow is due to a few factors:

- IT manage the technology not the information (e.g. The answer to a shortage of storage space is… add more storage space)
- Employees are allowed to control storage rather than understanding a corporate policy (…just save it to the network space by default, without thought)
- Technologies implemented for convenience and removal of decision making (PC/Laptop synchronisation with network resources)
- Retention is not seen as a cost saving
- Tools used to create information have exceeded any predictive module by 50% (Tablets, PDA's, Smartphones, Cameras etc.)
- Only recently have (non-specialist) tools been available to easily manage retention and retention policies (SharePoint)

The basic reaction to employees who have not received any other instruction is to place all information they create in the most available location possible which is normally on the network. With no management of this information it simply gets left on the share and part of the normal back-up process 'ad infinitum'.

The Retention process

An effective retention policy needs to align to an effective back-up and Archive strategy and sit alongside a disaster recovery operations plan. Additionally it sits against the corporate information policy that defines master copies of documents, off-line working policies and information ownership rules.

In essence Retention policy will list the information identified as being important to the business and then having a plan to archive and retrieve this information. This is often referred to as record management, or management of information that records the actions of the business. As a record it will not change again with any modifications creating a new document or new version of a document. As a record copies need to be made available (as read only) but not part of the back-up plan.

There is a direct correlation between an object that becomes a record to the savings that can be made in Back-up costs. It should be noted that defining more records than the business requires can adversely affect the cost benefits.

Identifying this information is a key part of the process and uses analysis of current storage and modification dates to identify the type of information the business uses and how much it changes. Additionally how much information is re-used or not used at all. When this information has been identified then it is classified and a retention policy applied. Finally tools are put into place for new information to be classified and the appropriate policy applied. These tools are now part of the SharePoint toolset.

Information policies

An Information policy will define how information is classified and any requirements, legal or otherwise, to how long it must be kept. These will also be different between countries and often led by industry guidelines. Polices are not just for electronic version but should be carried across to paper stored versions of documents. Some documents are not defined by a length of time they should be kept but HR. records may have a policy that defined a maximum life-time after which is shall/must be deleted.

In the basic form a policy will be applied to a type of document, it will state the owner of the policy and define:

- If it becomes a record of the company business and at what timeline it becomes a record
  - A set of account may after 180 days of being deemed as final it becomes a record and maintained for 7 years then deleted
  - A verbal reprimand is delivered and notes from this meeting are deemed a record and must be removed at 6 months.
- If it is not deemed as a record when it is deleted from the information store
  - 365 days after being deemed as final the document is deleted and not archived.

A company can run with any number of policies covering all kinds of information. In general a policy is applied to a document by an employee without them being aware of the underlying retention policy. Naming of the information policy being applied can be descriptive e.g. Financial Account Policy, without including details of the retention schedule.

Governance Policies

The following policies will need to be considered/created if a comprehensive information Management strategy is to be put in place within the business

1. Information access
   - 1.1. Defining information location and availability technologies for on and off line access.
   - 1.2. Location of Master versions
   - 1.3. Version policies and Restoration
2. Information strategy
   - 2.1. Retention Policies
   - 2.2. Record Management and processes
   - 2.3. Responsibilities of information owners
   - 2.4. Information Categories and retention settings
   - 2.5. Information ownership
3. Back-Up Policy and Restoration
   - 3.1. Defining immediately available data from network resources
   - 3.2. Back-up process and locations alongside restoration locals and timescales
4. Disaster Recovery
   - 4.1. Location of information restoration in the event of a disaster
   - 4.2. Restoration timing and priority
5. Business Continuity
   - 5.1. Define the core business to prioritise service (Day 1-10)
   - 5.2. Define communications paths (from day 1)
   - 5.3. Define Information Management requirements (over time)
   - 5.4. Define Business restoration (from Day 11)

Conclusions

In 2008 IDC created a report suggesting that by 2011we will outsell the information storage predictions by as much as 50%. The same report outlined the footprint of an email that was distributed to 4 people with an attachment of 1Mb which had a digital footprint of 51.5Mb of total storage space as it transitioned through the traditional data storage scenario (although new messaging techniques may result in this figure being 40% lower). **Whilst we may think of our files and messages as small once they are accepted as part of a data storage scenario the resources multiply significantly**. If we can stop the message reaching the Archive stage because it does not warrant keeping then significant savings can be made.

For companies using SharePoint the technology exists to support information governance aligned to define information policies. These technologies allow storage to be limited to corporate data and integrate the polies within the business at the point of creating documents.

There are business benefits associated with Information governance in **making search more efficient and allowing employees to reduce the time to find information**. However whilst there are costs associated with defining and agreeing governance policies these can easily be off-set against cost savings in storage and archiving costs.

During the last 10 years we have started to create more information than we have disk storage for, 75% of the information an employee uses day to day will have been created by someone else and a typical employee will spend 30% of their time chasing information that is not easily found. These figures from IDC and Gartner have shown that if the required information is not found within 12 minutes they will re-create the information rather than continue to search.

Managing information storage from the start of the process will ensure only core information is available to be searched through speeding up information access and increasing the chance of the right information being found, **Back-ups are quicker and restoration of data in an emergency is** swift.

Author Background

Steve Dalby has a background in IT management going back 25 Years during which time he has involvement in IT and Information Governance for a number of businesses:

1. National Investment Group: UK Side Stockbroker - Network Resilience plans and solutions
2. Ford Motor Company: Research Centre UK and Germany – Network Resiliency for users across international distributed sites
3. London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine: Disaster Recovery Planning/Information strategy/Back-up and Archive
4. London Fire Brigade: Information Access/Back-Up/Information Strategy/Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity planning
5. London Borough of Bromley: Information Strategy/Taxonomy planning
6. Japanese Tabaco International: Intranet Information Strategy/Intranet Taxonomy and Search strategy
7. Aspentech: Information Access/Back-Up/Information Strategy/Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity planning

Through involvement with the British Computer Society/CMA Steve ran the Business Continuity group and was part of supporting a number of London banks and business during a period of time when terrorist activity was affecting City of London Businesses.