Information Management: A Faceless Electronic Records-Creation and Management

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ABSTRACT
There are a lot of definitions for Information Management. My notion of information management is that it is concerned with policies, measures and actions concerning creation, processing, management and use of information in an organisation; and with quality of the relations between those policies, measures and actions. With the fast pace of development in the field of information technology the archives of the future are going to be less of paper and more of machine readable records. The compact medium of storage of these data is being seen by many panacea of future archiving problem. With the present computer age and widespread use of computer generated data, electronic records have come to assume a distinct of their own.

Keywords
Information Management, records, policies, archives, electronic, digital, architecture

1. INTRODUCTION
The records which are preserved in a format that only a computer can process are called electronic records. These records are appraised, accessioned for reference. The electronic records are also known as machine readable records which are generally in code, recorded on a medium such as magnetic disk, magnetic tapes, punched cards whose contents are accessible only by machine and organised in accordance with the principle of provenance. The creation of these records did not take place long time ago. Most of these electronic records have been in existence since 1960s. Talk and proposal for electronic governance are now a day's heard among the officers of the administrative reforms department of the Government of India.

2. TYPES OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS
These records may be from any type of computer applications such as a database management system, word processing, computer modelling or geographic information system. The electronic records are stored either in the hard disk of computer or smart phone, CD, DVD, pen drive etc. Electronic documents are created by using word processing system and are generally referred as file. The files are stored in a folder or sub-folders. A document stored digitally may be audio, video, pictures text, animation or their combination.

3. RECORDS MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES
The records management program has two major objectives:

3.1 Economy and Efficiency
Through the application of records management system and techniques, promote economy and efficiency in the organization, maintenance, use, and disposition of records.

(1) Assure uniformity and simplicity in assigning the office of record and in maintaining and using records;

(2) Provide adequate controls over the creation of and prevent accumulation of unnecessary files;

(3) Facilitate the coding, filing, retrieval, charging out, and refilling of records;

(4) Assure the preservation of those records having sufficient continuing value to warrant their permanent retention; and

(5) Provide for the systematic cut off and periodic destruction or retirement of files in accordance with approved records disposition schedules.

3.2 Preservation of Historical Records:
Ensure that records are carefully preserved when they have value for future study by scholars and historians.

(1) Preventing the Loss of Historical Records on Paper. Properly managed files will prevent the loss of historical records and make filing easier, simpler, more logical, and more efficient.

(2) Preventing the Loss of Historical Records on Non paper Mediums. The agency responsible for preserving the historical documents of the Nation, the National Archives and State Archives has a new major concern today: those historical records in mediums other than paper, especially in electronic media, will be lost forever. Although there are many benefits in maintaining records in other than paper storage mediums, the record keeper's responsibilities may be complicated by such mediums and their associated equipment. For example, if such records are not under the record keeper's control and those who use and maintain the records are not knowledgeable about recordkeeping responsibilities, the record keeper should educate the maintainers of the systems and records that such records need to be controlled and managed.

3.3 Life Cycle of records
Records are managed by using the theory that records pass through three stages: Creation/Receipt, Maintenance/Use, and Disposition. (US Deptt. of Energy, 2006).

4. ELECTRONIC RECORD PROGRAMME

Developing metadata for electronic record keeping system is an essential feature of an electronic record programme. Electronic records should be available as and when required and if they are appraised they should be retained as per schedule.

There are a lot of definitions for Information Management. My notion of information management is that it is concerned with policies, measures and actions concerning creation, processing, management and use of information in an organisation; and with quality of the relations between those policies, measures and actions. A widely used model for analysing the quality of information management is the so-called 'Amsterdam 9- Square Model' (Maes, Rik 1999).

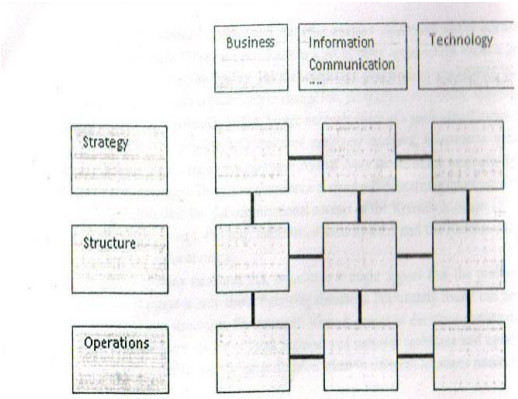

Diagram 1: The Amsterdam 9-Square Model for Information Management

This model can be used to analyse the current status, the requirements and the ambitions of every separate square and its connections. It becomes clear how strategy, organisation and operations are connected. It also becomes clear whether the information and communication policies in the organisations support business strategy and operations. Every part of the model is relevant to the Records manager, and records Management is important for every square and connection.

Any attempt to manage recorded information that is not well integrated into Information Management policies will fail quickly. That is an impossible task since every field covered in the 9-square model required deep specialisation.

5. INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE AND STANDARDISATION

An important part of Information Management is a proper understanding of Information Architectures. The term 'Information Architecture' was coined by Richard Saul Wurman and was introduced as a way to make information design visible and understandable (Wurman 2013).

An important feature of Information Architecture is standardisation. This applies especially to the ways in which the various parts (or modules) of the architecture should interact with each other and with the environment of the architecture as whole. Just as money was a way of standardising trade, and language a way to standardise human communication, standardisation of e.g. network protocols, file formats and metadata is an indispensable part of creating complex environments for information Management.

The topic of standardisation has always been core business of Records managers. The famous 'Dutch Manual' can be seen as a way of standardisation the arrangement and description of archival holdings (Muller 2003).

6. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Another feature of our landscape that is becoming more and more relevant to Records Managers is Quality Management.

A widely used model in Europe is the model that is created by the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM 2013).

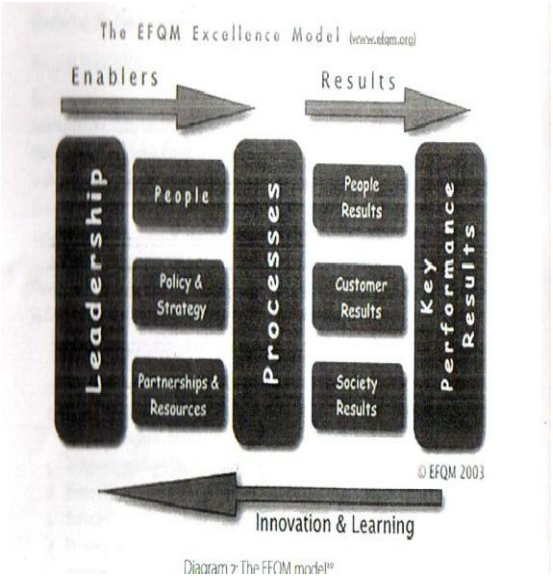

Diagram 2: The EFQM model[8]

The EFQM Model can be used for assessing the current state of an organisation, as well as for analysing what is necessary to achieve the organisation's aims and goals. The model includes the 'internal' state of the organisation, its effect on the environment and the famous Deming cycle of plan-Do-Check-Act for continuous organisational improvement. Thinking in terms of Quality management has been intensively incorporated in methods for improving Records Management.

7. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

The new landscape is the emergence of Governance. Whereas Quality Management is primarily concerned with improving business process, Governance is concerned with controlling the organisation. In the last decades of the twentieth century, due to scandals like Enron, guidelines and rules were set up for corporate governance. Governance protocols like Basel II were developed and adapted (Basel Committee). The heightened attention for control of business operations in the financial markets led to a renewed general interest for governance and to the introduction of 'Information Governance'. There are different definitions for 'Information Governance', but they all centre on the notion of being in control of Information Management.

The European Union Regulations make use of the concept of the Three Lines of Defence for corporate governance.(E U Law Directive) This implementation concept makes a clear positioning of responsibilities and tasks possible.

Diagram 3: Three Lines of Defence Model[25]

The first line consists of all the measures taken within the business process; the second line is concerned with setting rules and providing prerequisites. The third line contains auditors, accountants and inspectors, both internal and external.

8. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records Management comprises foundation, functions, actors, process domains, results, functionalities, data, information objects and the technology of the organisation (Rienk Jonker).

Bailey's criteria about the applicability of Records Management for all recorded information, and about the independence of location, indicate that our profession is passing beyond all its previous boundaries (Bailey 2008).

This passing of all boundaries is also confirmed in James Gleick's book The Information, a history, a theory, a flood, a book which gives at least one important insight for record Managers (Gleick 2011).

It then seems that all information will be digital form in future. Emergence of "electronic government" is a new trend. Eagle or no eagle, each nation now dares to create and preserve electronic records or evidence of its activities. Any national electronic work schedule, though expensive, is unavoidable.

We see this development in the enormous and apparently endless growth of the amount of digital information. It is hopeless task for organisations, and their Records managers, to arrange, describe and preserve their records based on principles and methods from the 'analogue age'.

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