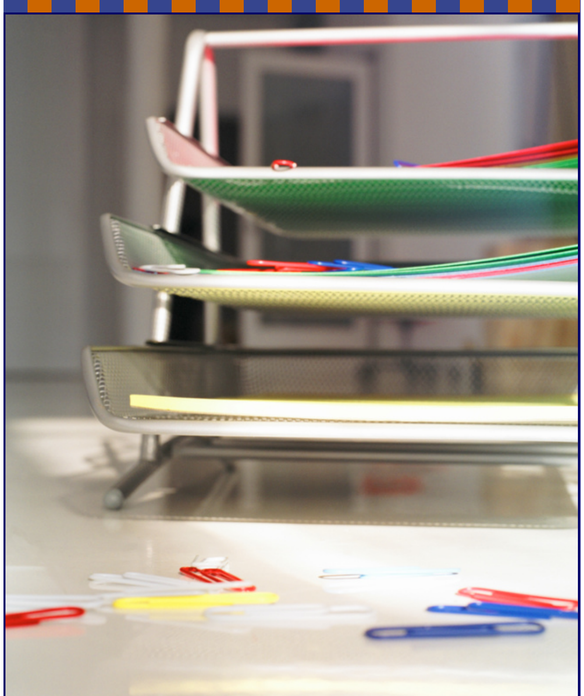
RIM MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS LTD

"Bridging the Gap from Theory to Outcomes" *Volume 1, Issue 4, May-June 2007*

In This Issue



With a continuing thrust for EDRMS to manage our records contents, we sometimes forget that EDRMS isn't the magic pill that will make our clutter vanish. There are several things that we can do (and must do) to organize our records—and these things do not involve technology.

I think we all know (or have a very good idea) about what happens when we apply a software "solution" to an existing problem. We magnify that problem in electronic form (sometimes in ways that we couldn't have imagined!). So, the first step to applying an EDRMS to our records management "problem" is to assign responsibilities for various records management functions to our staff. Yes, I know we've heard that before, but it really is a key area (if not THE key area!). We all need to know what we're responsible for if we're to expect any kind of benefit from an automated solution.

Aside from allocating responsibility, the other basic steps are to ensure that we have adequately written (and approved) policies and procedures. A taxonomy is always a good thing (i.e., how do we arrange our information?). And, of course, the ever-important ongoing monitoring and training to ensure that our staff are doing what we expect them to be doing.

That said, if your organization is a bit slow during the summer, the season may be the ideal time for the responsible people to initiate and develop the required materials to augment your planned or implemented EDRMS. For instance, maybe a policy needs to be written (or an old one revised) or new procedures may be required for handling training. Or, what about that classification system? Is it still relevant for your office? If not, put your thinking cap on and work up a draft revision!

Happy summer everyone!

Mary Colak

Document Management or Records Management? What's the Difference?

We've all been there. We're in a casual conversation and someone brings up the need to better manage our *documents* because they are getting out of hand … too much paper piling up, documents all over the place. Then you pipe in and acknowledge that the *records* definitely need better control. Are you both talking about the same thing? Well, according to Steven Goodfellow, President of Access Systems, there is a difference.

When organizations want to evaluate an EDMS (electronic document management system) to better manage the overload of paper, e-mails and other electronic files, they typically call on IT because IT knows the systems. The focus here is to improve the storing, indexing/organizing, and retrieving of those documents so that users can find things faster and clean up the clutter in their offices (i.e., get rid of the paper). During discussions about the EDMS, the records manager may be invited for an opinion especially if compliance is one of the driving forces for the EDMS. And, says Steven, "This is where the fun begins!"

There are three perspectives to this clean-up of clutter. First, the end user wants to find things faster and reduce the clutter in their area. Second, IT wants to see how these systems fit into their infrastructure and what technical support may be required of them. And, third, the Records Manager wants to know how the solution/process will address those things important to him or her such as identifying individual record series, record retention and destruction scheduling, determining the Office of Record (the "official" owner of he record), creating and maintaining an audit trail, reporting, policy development, procedures and more. Chances are that none of the Records Manager's concerns were discussed up to this point in the EDMS evaluation if only IT and the user were involved.

Generally, document management focuses on:

- Reducing the occurrences of lost and misfiled documents
- Providing faster location of and access to documents
- Reducing the amount of physical space used to store records (file cabinets, boxes, shelving, etc.)
- Better organization of existing records
- Improving general work process and organizational efficiency

Records management generally includes all of the above, plus:

- Identifying what records exist (i.e., inventorying the records)
- Applying required retention periods to stored items
- Determining the owner of each record series
- Ensuring that a chain of custody and a proper audit trail exist
- Assisting in e-discovery issues and applying legal holds to records when needed
- Adhering to defined policy and procedures, regardless of format
- Disposition—actually getting rid of documents (this also helps in the eventual migration of information to a new system since there will be less data to migrate, which will occur, but may not be until ten or more years down the road)
- Preserving records throughout their lifecycle—some of which may be permanent and must be readable 100+ years into the future.

See "Documents" on page 3

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Here are some terms and their meaning to different departments *(reprinted from E-Doc Magazine, March/ April 2007—page 16—www.edocmagazine.com):*

Term	Records Management	Information Technology
Archiving	To keep; information must be readable no matter what changes occur 10-100+ years from now.	To move; migrate data to off-line or near-line storage (tape, optical, low cost storage device, etc.).
Retention	Classify and store records according to a defined schedule which includes the potential disposal of a record.	Store in an electronic format and back-up to another medium (i.e., tape). A destruction period is not explicitly defined.
File	A manila folder (or equivalent) that holds paper records; the act of properly placing a record into an appropriate container.	An electronic document.
Record	An official document of the organization (not every document is a record).	A field in a database.
Preservation	How will this record be accessed and viewed several decades into the future? Will all the components to read the data still be available (the media in which the data is stored, the device to read the media, the software that operates the device and reads the data).	Usually not addressed or a viewpoint of less than 10 years is taken due to the expected change in the systems used. But will all the data be able to be migrated to the new platform in the proper format successfully?
Office of Record	The one functional area of an organization deemed the party of responsibility for an individual record series.	Who created the data (but they may not be the ultimate owner of the information).

The bottom line is that if you don't put the terms into context in which the receiver understands, then you'll get a lot of confused processes. If you don't understand the differences between records management and document management, there will be disappointment in the future. There is significant risk to an organization for not applying basic record management guidelines when managing electronic records and/or the selection of an EDMS. Unfortunately, many of these risks are not realized until months or years later.

The damaging results can range from harm due to litigation and the e-discovery process to significant lost productivity. Also, the EDMS may not be used at all because it doesn't meet user or organizational needs as originally thought (and wasting thousands or millions of dollars in labour and equipment costs.

Organizations need to have an integrated approach that addresses both document management and records management. Understanding how these terms differ will save organizations countless hours, money, and the embarrassment of not coming close to what turns out to be unrealistic expectations. An integrated approach to the information environment for both hard copy and electronic information is key.

An overarching issue for any project is the understanding and awareness of culture change and change management that needs to occur. As an organization moves forward with its strategic plan for records and information management, it is important to devote time to culture and change management to increase the project's success. After all, it is people that make the difference!

In Praise of Resource Constraints

BY: Michael Gibbert (Bocconi University), Martin Hoegl (WHU—Otto Beisheim School of Management) and Liisa Valikangas (Helsinki School of Economics and the Woodside Institute)

For the complete article, contact MIT Sloan Management Review: www.sloanreview.mit.edu —ask for article # 48308.

IBM discovered decades ago that adding programmers to a software project that was late did not help. Indeed, progress slowed even more. The "resource-driven mindset," sometimes known as "throw more money at the problem," is limited. Yet this mindset has dominated the research agenda such that it has clouded our consideration of many situations in which scarce resources (precisely because they are scarce) are desirable, potentially leading to breakthrough performance.

> ***"It seems that the human mind is most productive when restricted. Limited—or perhaps better focused—by specific rules and constraints, we are more likely to recognize an unexpected idea."***

Resource constraints fuel innovation in two ways: through entrepreneurial, social-network approaches to securing the missing funds or the required personnel. Teams often produce better results as a direct result of the constraints. The human mind is most productive when restricted, the authors maintain.

Limited—or better focused—by specific rules and constraints, we are more likely to recognize an unexpected idea. Witness the outcome of a Cold War-era race between General Electric and BMW teams to design adequately cooled jet engines. The U.S. team had a virtual blank cheque, used the most advanced materials and spent nearly twice as much as the Manhattan Project did. The German team, which had significantly less funding at its disposal, came up with a simple yet elegant design principle that remains in use today.

A Necessary Evil

According to Janelle Julien of *E-Doc Magazine*, "any organization that uses e-mail needs some level of management to control e-mail volumes and storage costs." If e-mail management is used, organizations benefit with reduced storage costs and faster discovery if the process is automated instead of done manually. "An automated and reliable way of categorizing high-value information plus a targeted approach to moving this information into a more accessible system is the basic benefit of e-mail management," says Sean Morris, Director of Client Services for Digitech Systems. Often, it is difficult to assess and understand what is locked away in user e-mail accounts or how to extract and use it.

E-mail retention is only part of e-mail management. It involves the back-up of all e-mails generated and saved according to retention policies outlining what e-mails must be kept, how they are kept and for how long. However, e-mail management allows for the organization, fast search, and compilation of e-mails pertaining to a certain topic. "When the court gives an organization ninety days to present relative e-mails for an upcoming trial, organizations with e-mail management in place will be ready to sort through and organize e-mails, while an organization with retention only may need to spend hours sifting through old files," says Craig Freeman, vice president and general manager, Xerox Litigation Services.

According to The Radicati Group, an average mailbox sends and receives about 10MB of e-mail per day. High service quality and cost reduction can counteract an organization's need to retain information for compliance purposes. However, proper e-mail management can also increase employee productivity by allowing them to access e-mail through more automated, streamlined filing processes. Another tangible benefit is through disk cost savings for the long-term storage of e-mail.

See "E-mail" on page

E-mail, continued from page 4

"E-mail management is one component of a document management system—time and money will also be saved by organizations that use one system to manage all of their records—from hard copy documents to accounting forms to electronic data," says Freeman.

When it comes to ensuring e-mail management, Morris recommends "taking the human intervention out of it." It requires the enforcement of policies by central IT administration because end users forget to retain otherwise. "Create policies to identify 'communications of record' or messages that require archiving and automatically upload them into the ECM system for secure archival." This allows the technology to capture e-mails rather than relying on end users to identify and upload messages using their own judgment.

An advantage to using an e-mail management system is that it can track which end users are making use of the system and identify those who are not. It is up to managers to ensure that end users understand that participation is not optional while monitoring their group's use of the system.

However, it's the usual story with any organizational changes—none of it matters if there is no buy-in from the top. Working closely with the IT department, senior management must lead by example for end users to adopt e-mail management policies. As Janelle Julien says: "Preach the message and preach it often."

- *In 2000, IDC estimated that e-mail sent was 2.6 trillion and in 2005, it increased to 9.2 trillion.*
- *Gartner estimates volume of e-mail to increase at 40% per year.*

"Of course, this is a worst case scenario."

SOME E-MAIL FACTS & STATS

According to John Mancini, author of *"E-mail Management: An Oxymoron?"* for most organizations, "e-mail management" is usually something of an oxymoron, and at best more a wish than a business reality. While most organizations make heavy use of e-mail, they nonetheless have a very casual attitude toward its management. E-mail started its life in most organizations as a proxy for conversation, and organizations largely continue to manage it in an ad hoc and casual way.

In a survey (August-September 2006) of over 1,000 participants (58% were from organizations of more than 1,000 employees, 70% were from the US, 10% from Canada, 6% from UK), Mancini determined that 18 percent of respondents spent at least 50 percent of their time on e-mail-related tasks. Slightly over half of the respondents use instant messaging and 48 percent reported that they "are not allowed to use instant messaging" in their organization.

Organizations largely leave the management of e-mail to individual employees—72 percent of participants said that they "are responsible for deleting, managing, classifying, and saving e-mail on their desktops." At best, organizations tend to adopt a "one-size-fits-all" approach to e-mail management, with 29 percent of end users indicating that they capture and save all e-mail, regardless of content, for a specific length of time (e.g., 180 days). When it comes to a rigorous definition of e-mail management—making retention and management decisions based on some combination of metadata, the actual content of the e-mail, or the content of attachments—less than 10 percent of end users claim to meet this standard.

Surprisingly, only one in five users possess the capability to classify particular e-mails as formal organizational records. And, only 14 percent have the technology infrastructure to separate e-mails from attachments.

To read this full report, go to AIIM's website at: http://www.aiim.org/article-industrywatch.asp?ID=32054.

Freedom of Information in the U.K., U.S., and Canada

This article is an excerpt from an article of the same name by Sarah Holsen, reproduced in The Information Management Journal, May/June 2007.

Over the past two decades, the number of freedom of information (FOI) laws has grown from nine to 68, and they are continuing to be passed by more and more countries around the world. The legislation is often touted by campaigners and other supporters as a window into government and by government administrations as proof of their commitment to transparency and accountability. How FOI works in practice, however, is often far from the ideal envisioned by either group.

Federal FOI laws can look very different, depending on where they are implemented and practiced. In three countries—Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States—federal legislation was enacted at three distinct periods of FOI's evolution, yet the governments face common challenges and issues regarding their respective laws.

The U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which originally passed in 1966 and has been amended four times, has given the rest of the world 40 years of experience on which to draw when writing and implementing their FOI laws. Canada, which passed its Access to Information Act (ATIA) in 1982, can take credit for a carefully structured act that has incorporated most of the key points necessary for good FOI legislation. The U.K.'s FOI Act 2000, to which 100,000 U.K. public authorities are subject, is the most recently passed law, having been fully implemented in 2005.

The Right to Access

FOI legislation works by conferring to the public the legal right to ask for and receive information held by public bodies. Enforceability is what sets FOI laws apart from general pledges of access to information made by governments. In the United States, the FOIA is enforceable in court, whereas Canada and the United Kingdom have established information commissioners to ensure compliance with their acts, backed by court action in Canada's case. However, though unused, both Canada and the UK incorporated a "government veto" into their legislation—a somewhat tentative commitment to FOI when compared to the US legislation.

FOI legislation qualifies the right of access by

defining a series of issues, or exemptions, for which the right is not valid. Exemptions are the key section of any FOI legislation because their breadth and depth determine how much information is actually disclosed. The practice of exempting information from disclosure to protect essential functions of government is consistent across all countries' FOI regimes. Common exemptions cover information that is related to national defense, international relations, and law enforcement, as well as information provided in confidence, personal information, and policy advice. There are few significant differences in the scope of the exemptions in the UK, Canadian and US acts.

An obvious yet important potential exemption relates to the requester: Does the law give the right of access to anyone or only to that country's citizens? FOI laws in the US and UK allow anyone to make a request, while the Canadian ATIA applies only to Canadian citizens or permanent residents. A recent change in the US via the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 prohibits intelligence agencies from complying with requests from foreign governments, their representatives, or intergovernmental organizations.

In terms of numbers, FOI is actually used by only a minute portion of the population. In the US, Canada and UK, fewer than one percent of the population in each country has made an FOI request. However, in terms of sheer numbers, far more people file FOI requests with the US government than with the UK or Canadian governments. For example, the US government received 2.6 million FOI requests in 2005 compared to Canada's 25,207 and the UK's 38,108. The most frequent categories of requesters are private citizens, the media, and businesses.

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Implementing FOI Laws

When deciding whether to pass an FOI law or how to implement one, government officials and politicians often fail to think carefully about the practicalities of putting the law into practice. For example, few seriously consider how the law will affect the jobs of civil servants and other government employees or, conversely, how the staff's abilities and attitudes will affect the success of the law's implementation. Yet those who answer requests and respond to complaints are the key players in the FOI implementation process. Along with FOI officers, records managers play a large role in ensuring that implementation goes smoothly.

Several areas of FOI implementation are worth examining to understand the complexity of dealing with the legislation. The main ones to consider are:

- FOI response process/system
- Costs of compliance
- Time spent processing requests and backlogs
- FOI training and awareness for public authorities
- Senior management's role
- Recordkeeping as key to FOI's success

Those who are not prepared, face many challenges as they scramble to organize the information being requested.

Responding to FOI Requests

The logistical complexity of the FOI request response process is influenced by the nature of the tracking system as well as the type of the request. The centralized Canadian system allows all requests to be fed into one database which is used by most departments and agencies. The UK and US, however, do not have centralized systems nor do individual departments in those countries use common tracking software.

Another factor is whether departments respond to requests on a simple first-come, first-served basis ("single track") or divide them into those that are simple (requiring minimal administrative effort) and those that are complex or voluminous ("multi-track"). The process becomes more complicated and unwieldy as more moving parts lead to the involvement of more actors and increase the need for coordination.

Actors include those providing legal services or consultations with other departments, people at other levels of government, and foreign governments. If a request is refused and the requester is dissatisfied, additional actors can become involved in internal reviews (in the both the UK and the US), appeals to the information commissioner (in the UK and Canada), and appeals to a higher court (the UK information tribunal, the Federal Court of Canada).

...the total cost of administering the US FOIA in 2003 was just over $23 million. ...in Canada, its annual FOI cost is estimated to be approximately $30 million (Cdn) or $25 million (in US dollars) and in the UK, £35 million per year (about $68 million in US)...

The precise cost of complying with FOI legislation in the three countries is virtually impossible to calculate. One reason for this is that some agencies keep track of costs while others do not. Another reason is the wide variation in how the costs are calculated. According to the US Department Justice Office of Information and Privacy, the total cost of administering the US FOIA in 2003 was just over 23 million. According to the government of Canada, its annual FOI cost is estimated to be around $30 million (Cdn) or approximately $25 million in US dollars. In the UK, an estimate after 18 months was £35 million per year (about $68 million US). The cost depends on the efficiency of the response procedures and, therefore, to the time dedicated to FOI compliance.

The statutory guidelines for time needed for compliance are broadly comparable across the three jurisdictions. The UK's FOI Act stipulates that the authority must comply "not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt." In the US, "(once) an agency properly receives a FOIA request, it has twenty working days in which to make a determination on the request," according to the Department of Justice's May 2004 "Freedom of Information Act Guide." In Canada, the ATIA mandates that the response must be "within thirty days after the request is received."

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In each jurisdiction, however, these statutory response times are often not adhered to—for instance, delays are the most common reason for requester dissatisfaction in Britain and Canada—and response times are mixed in each jurisdiction. UK central government organizations' adherence to the time limit varied between 64 and 92 percent, according to one set of statistics from the "Freedom of Information—One Year On" report.

Comparable US figures are hard to come by, owing to the decentralization of the process and compilation of statistics, which do not include delay time. Under the Canadian legislation, a late response constitutes a "deemed refusal" and, after a marked decrease in the number of deemed refusals in 1999, the number is on the rise again: the lowest being 5.9 percent, the highest 60.1 percent (Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Department of Foreign Affairs on International Trade, respectively), according to the Information Commissioner of Canada's annual report for 2005-2006. In all three countries, delays typically lead to backlogs: 18 percent of requests in Canada are backlogged each year, while only 7.1 percent in the US and 2.6 in the UK share the same fate.

Training and Support

One of the factors that can affect the efficiency with which FOI requests are processed is the amount of training FOI practitioners receive. In the US, the Office of Information and Privacy (OIP) takes government FOI staff training seriously, recommending a year to learn the job. Training FOI practitioners in the UK is the responsibility of each government department. Levels of training in access work vary across departments in Canada, where it is usually sparse, voluntary as opposed to mandatory, and takes the form of voluntary information sessions. The importance of training, however, has been recognized, and recommendations are being considered to improve training, according to an ATIA Review Task Force report, "Constructing a Culture of Access in the Federal Public Service."

Support from senior management is also seen as crucial for successful implementation, not only with regard to training, but also the effect of management's attitudes toward the work. The direct involvement of managers in access work and sensitivity toward employees' time constraints can do much to facilitate access work as well as to boost morale. Senior management has been reproached in each jurisdiction, however, for its lack of support. Senior managers in the US are said to pay little attention to FOI, while their Canadian counterparts are too reactive, showing interest only in specific issues and files, according to an ATIA Review Task Force report from Canadian training firm Yvon Gauthier Info-Training Inc. This has also been identified as a problem in local authorities in the UK.

The Role of Recordkeeping

The importance of recordkeeping has been flagged with the implementation of FOI legislation. Recordkeeping appears to have risen toward the top of the agenda since FOIA 2000 was passed in the UK. According to a report, "Freedom of Information Act 2000: The First Six Months," 34 percent of local authorities in England surveyed in 2005 felt that FOI had had a positive impact on records management, with issues being recognized and progressed.

Twenty-seven percent of public authorities surveyed by the UK Information Commissioner in a January 2006 survey stated that they believed recordkeeping had improved, and 57 percent of these thought their filing system was likely to change within the next year to comply with FOIA 2000.

Scope for authorities to use specialized software has also been identified. In the US, E-FOIA is thought to have had a beneficial effect on database quality, but information records management expertise is still being deployed on authorities' databases. In Canada, the quality of filing systems has been flagged and, despite confusion over the definition of a "record," recommendations have been made for explicit guidelines in this respect.

In the end, FOI laws are only as good as the system that underpins them. Staffs have to learn to deal with the demands of compliance and a new decision-making process. Efficient and effective procedures for creating, managing, disposing of, and archiving documents and records are key to their success. Obviously, if a government employee cannot find information when asked for it, he/she cannot evaluate it, make the decision on whether to release it, make necessary redactions, or relay it to the requester within the legislation's statutory time limit. Without good records management, FOI simply does not work.

INNOVATION 101
FOR THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE A FUTURE

By: Thonrton May, E-Doc Magazine, May/June 2007

Innovation is the new "black." Everyone everywhere is jumping on the innovation bandwagon. Almost every discipline, that is. Information management is broadly perceived as "behind the curve" with regards to its pursuit of innovation. This bodes poorly for our collective future—unless we do something about it. Consider the following a call to action with suggestions to take you ahead of the curve.

Why Managing Perception is so Critically Important

Research at the IT Leadership Academy demonstrates that career success is very much a function of three variables:

- **Identity:** Sense of self—who you are, what you do, what you stand for.
- **Image:** External perceptions regarding who you are, what you do, and what you stand for.
- **Reputation:** Collective judgments (by outside parties) regarding actions and accomplishments.

The IT industry has been stereotyped as not being particularly innovative. This is a damaging perception.

Anthropologists and sociologists spend a great deal of time examining the concept of status. Despite protests to the contrary—in any setting—from faculty meeting, board meeting, or sandlot baseball diamond, there are (perceptually) high-status people and low-status people. Understanding how the status chips are distributed in any context is an important first step toward achieving success and happiness.

Being perceived as innovative moves one up the status ladder. Being perceived as not being innovative moves one down. Why do you care? Status accumulates, stays constant, or deteriorates over time. Like interest on capital, status accrues, and like interest on debt, lack of status also accumulates. Note that very small differences in treatment due to perceived status differences can, as they pile up, result in large disparities in organizational impact, salary, promotion, and prestige.

The Innovation Scavenger Hunt Is On

The IT Leadership Academy has a research relationship with 1000+ organizations keeping a close eye on changes to the "executive habitat." About a year ago, we started getting early indications that executive conversations were changing. "C"-level players were now asking all parties in the enterprise, "How can you help me/ help us grow the business? How can what you do differentiate my products and services in the minds of my critical customers?" This was new. Historically, the conversation revolved around strategies for driving down costs.

Action Item Number One—Dump/Manage the Ego

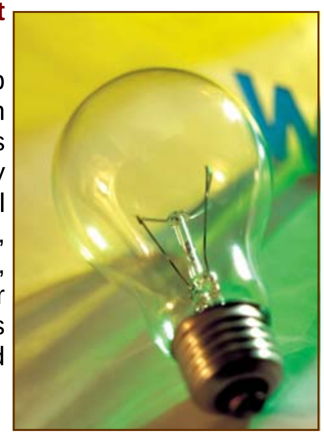
A perfunctory review of organizations considered to be highly innovative immediately surfaced a common characteristic—the absence, or at least the disciplined management, of ego. Egocentricity refers to the tendency of individuals to see themselves as the center of the world, as fully-knowledgeable, and as though everything revolves around them.

An important part of managing your ego is the public-though-selective, high-energy celebration of ignorance and inactivity. By this we mean:

a. Truthfully identify those things you do not know enough about, and,

b. Honestly identify things you want to do but do not have time for.

Action Item Number Two—Assemble a Group of Wicked Smart People



Bring together top of the food chain thinkers to serve as your personal advisory board. Have this panel of wizards stimulate, interrogate, validate, and optimize your thinking on your zones of ignorance and inactivity.

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Action Item Number Three—Connect to the Network

William Gibson will sadly probably be less remembered for his fabulous works of science fiction and more recalled for his prescient remark, "The future is already here. It is just not evenly distributed." The same can be said for knowledge.

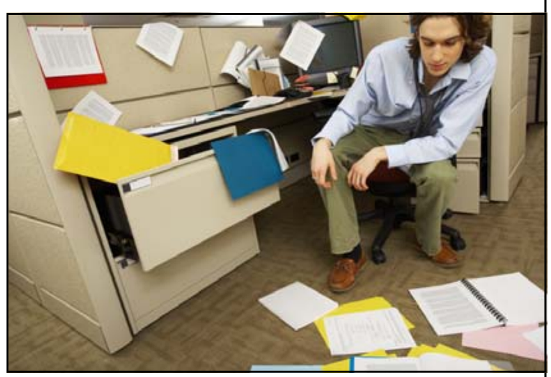
Tom Friedman claims we live in a "flat world." In point of fact, from an information management point of view, we live in a spiky world. Richard Florida, a social scientist at Carnegie-Mellon tells us that knowledge is not evenly distributed around the globe, but rather aggregates in spikes. To be innovative, you need to know how to find those spikes, how to connect to those spikes, how to find the talent in those spikes, and then apply those resources to your opportunities. ■

GETTING ORGANIZED

The most frequently cited "reasons" that I hear for overflowing filing baskets, in-baskets and e-mail inboxes is that "it's not a priority," "I'm too busy with other work," or "IT has given me lots of space for my e-mail inbox, so I don't see why I can't keep storing all my e-mail there." Puzzling for those of us who are behind the "organized" ball, but nonetheless troubling. I have, on occasion, tried to gently persuade people that purging their e-mail inbox will help them be more productive by decreasing their search and retrieval time for items. I have always been sympathetic to people's personal work habits and tried not to tell people how to do their work. Sure, personal work styles do play a big role in how people organize their work and their lives, but there are ways to get organized—beyond the excuses!

What does it mean to be "organized," you ask? To organize and to become organized is not a one-time occurrence. According to Jocelyn Coverdale of Ballantrae Solutions, being organized is a process. Of course, as those of use who are organized know, this does not occur overnight and it also involves a dedicated mindset. Ms. Coverdale offers several strategies to eliminate timewasters and self-defeating behaviours and obstacles to personal productivity. Let's explore some of these strategies.

Organizing Your Workspace



Consider your workspace to be comprised of five zones:

- Zone 1—this is your immediate work area such as your desktop including your telephone, computer, printer and anything else that happens to be within arm's reach.
- Zone 2—this is the area in your workspace that you can reach by swiveling around in your chair—for instance, reaching for a filing cabinet behind you.
- Zone 3—this zone is still in your office, but in order to get to it, you need to get out of your chair (perhaps walking over to a bookcase on the other side of your desk).
- Zone 4—this is shared office space such as a supply closet on your floor.
- Zone 5—this is offsite such as the archives.

In order to use these zones effectively, it is recommended that you *organize* your work within the zones based on how frequently you access or need that item (e.g., if you use a paper cutter only once a month, there is no need for it to be in Zone 1—maybe it should reside in Zone 4). By moving as many items out of Zone 1 to more appropriate zones based on their frequency of use, you will achieve a more aesthetically-pleasing office as well as improve your overall productivity.

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Organized, continued from page 11

Processing Incoming Items

Once you've organized your physical workspace, you will need to develop a *habit* of reviewing your work daily and allocating your work to certain "buckets." Two indispensable buckets will be Trash and the In-basket. If you consider that up to 80 percent of the information that we receive is never viewed again, then you know the importance of the recycle, trash or out-box (for filing).

Do you need an In-basket? Well, if you find that people leave things on your desk or your chair when you're not around, you probably do need an in-basket to help organize your office space. However, be careful...your in-basket should not be used as a storage bin—it should be used as a processing station only! This applies to your e-mail inbox, also! The e-mail inbox is not a storage bin, "to do" list, or a reference resource!

Consider that there are five sources of incoming items: paper, e-mail, voice mail, external requests and your thoughts. For each one of them, you need to make a decision. The first decision (the hardest) is to decide whether you need to discard the item. How do you know? Well, ask yourself if you will ever need it again (be brutally honest!) and if you will need it again, can you get it from another source? If it isn't a document that you wrote and you can get it from another source, then chances are that you can discard it!

Other decisions to make when you are processing your incoming items is whether you can delegate the work, do you need to act on it (and if so, when—develop a follow-up system for doing so if required) and the final decision is whether you need to keep the item for reference purposes (in which case, if it's not a "to be filed" item, keep it in your own reference library/file in your office).

Managing Your Time

There are four big time wasters: meetings, interruptions, procrastination and lost stuff! How do we handle each of these? Well, not much we can do with meetings, but we can control the others. Did you know that YOU interrupt yourself the most? How? By allowing external items to break your concentration. Here are some strategies for handling interruptions:

- Arrange your office so that you don't notice external things so much (someone just walked by your office, caught your eye, and now you're in conversation!).
- Set aside uninterrupted time each day to work on important tasks. Let people know that you are not to be interrupted.
- Monitor self-interruptions—if thoughts pop into your head, use a "parking lot" and jot the idea down or capture it in your PDA.

On average, Americans spend:

- ***11 years watching television***
- ***5 years standing in line***
- ***2 years returning phone calls***
- ***8 months opening direct mail***
- ***6 years eating***
- ***4 years on major household chores***
- ***1 year searching for misplaced items***

In order to better manage our time, Coverdale suggests the "96-Minute Technique." This is based on the Pareto Principle (80/20 Rule—20 percent of our efforts produce 80 percent of our results) and simply says that 20 percent of an 8-hour day is 96 minutes. Use that 96 minutes as your "uninterrupted" time to work on your most important tasks—turn off the e-mail, telephone, visitors, etc. By doing this on a daily basis, you'll be amazed at how much more productive you can be.

Mindset

Now, here's something that may come as a surprise: multi-tasking, perfectionism, workaholic behavior and procrastination are self-defeating behaviours! "Multi-tasking" is a buzzword of the 80's and 90's and even though some of us think it's good to do many things at once because we can get more done … surprise! It's counterproductive.

Research suggests that multi-tasking contributes to:

- Shoddy work
- Mismanaged time
- Rote, non-creative solutions
- Reduced productivity
- Stress, anxiety and depression
- Forgetfulness
- Damage to short-term memory
- Car wrecks and kitchen fires!

See "Organized" on page 12

Organized, continued from page 11

Also, multi-tasking can reduce IQ by 10 points (wow!) and the work can actually take longer to do because you are shifting gears constantly.

Don't multi-task. Instead, create dedicated time for dedicated tasks and stick to it. Remove distractions and get into the flow of the task at hand. Try using the 96 Minute Technique to manage your time.

While perfectionism is not quite so dramatic in its negative contribution, it does have some serious drawbacks. These include:

- Poor job performance
- Decreased productivity
- Stress, depression and illness
- Alienated colleagues
- Accidents

Ways to get over perfectionism—first, fire your inner critic!!! (We really are our own worst critics!). Next, recognize that there are degrees of excellence. Perfectionists hate anything that's not excellent, but as long as you're in the range, that will make it easier to take! Above all, Coverdale says that you should allow rational thinking to prevail—after all, perfectionism is an illusion and good enough sometimes really is good enough!

Now, the workaholic. Unfortunately, while the workaholic might think that it's "cool" to be a workaholic, they are, in fact, sending out negative messages about themselves. The following are cited to be causes of workaholic behaviours:

- Setting unrealistic timeframes and deadlines
- Procrastination to get the job done
- Spending too much time on things that don't matter
- Over-promising
- Lack of profound knowledge about how to handle the task

And, last, but certainly not least, procrastination. Do you procrastinate? Here are some underlying causes for procrastination:

- Fear of failure—because you think you won't succeed, you put off starting the task
- Fear of success—if you succeed, change will inevitably follow and change can be scary
- Dodging discomfort—you don't like the task
- Lacking skills—perhaps some training is required, but you don't know who to ask
- The "later will be better" habit—this does not always work in your favour!
- Moods and emotions—just simply not feeling like doing it right now.

Procrastinating …	Productive …
I must (or) have to (or something awful will happen…)	I'd like to (or) choose to …
I've gotta finish …	When can I get started on …
This job is enormous …	Where is the best place to start?
I must do well (fantastic, perfect)	I'll do okay; I'll give it time
I have no time to play	It's important to play one hour
I see life and work as a grind	Life and work can be fun
I can't succeed	I have a better chance of succeeding if I ...

So how can we overcome procrastination? Well, there are a few things that Coverdale suggests would be beneficial. The following table outlines some strategies for overcoming procrastination.

Try replacing procrastination "self-talk" with productive thinking:

In summary, get a handle on three aspects of your productivity: your physical workspace, your time and your brain (how you approach work). Organizing and being organized is not a one-off—it's a process that needs to be practiced over and over in order to become more productive, more efficient, and, generally, more centered!

If you are not organized and have difficulty getting organized, start first with your workspace and work out from there (next is your time schedule followed by your approach). Soon, you'll discover that you'll be more productive and have time on your hands that you didn't have before. ■

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

AIIM-The Enterprise Content Management Association—AIIM is the international authority on Enterprise Content Management (ECM) - the tools and technologies used to capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver content and documents related to organizational processes. ECM enables four key business drivers: Continuity, Collaboration, Compliance, and Costs. www.aiim.org.

ARMA International—is a not-for-profit professional association and the authority on managing records and information – paper and electronic. www.arma.org.

Bitpipe.com—is the definitive guide to online resources for IT professionals. Provides information through technology white papers, webcasts, case studies and IT product information. www.bitpipe.com

British Columbia Corporate Information Management Branch—CIMB provides central information management services and support to ministries, Crown corporations and agencies within the Government of British Columbia. CIMB is responsible for government recorded information management policy, standards and procedures. www.mser.gov.bc.ca/CIMB/

Gartner—global leader in technology-related research and advice. www.gartner.com

IDC—International Data Corporation—get the latest trends, surveys and forecasts. www.idc.com

ISO—International Organization for Standardization—check out the latest information on ISO 15489, the world's first standard for records management. www.iso.org.

Library and Archives Canada—Library and Archives Canada collects and preserves Canada's documentary heritage, and makes it accessible to all Canadians. This heritage includes publications, archival records, sound and audio-visual materials, photographs, artworks, and electronic documents such as websites. As part of Library and Archives Canada's mandate, they work closely with other archives and libraries to acquire and share these materials as widely as possible. www.collectionscanada.ca

National Archives and Records Administration (USA) (NARA)—Of all documents and materials created in the course of business conducted by the United States Federal government, only 1%-3% are so important for legal or historical reasons. These documents are kept by NARA forever. Learn about NARA's record keeping standards. www.archives.gov.

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