

# White Paper Information Management

## FINDING A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

In a post GFC world, executives around the boardroom table are desperately looking for ways to increase productivity, efficiency and carve out a competitive edge, in an environment where costs must be managed and every ounce of value identified and leveraged. By leveraging the value that exists in existing information assets, organisations can generate real and achievable gains in revenue generation, IT investments and productivity gains.

### So what is information management?

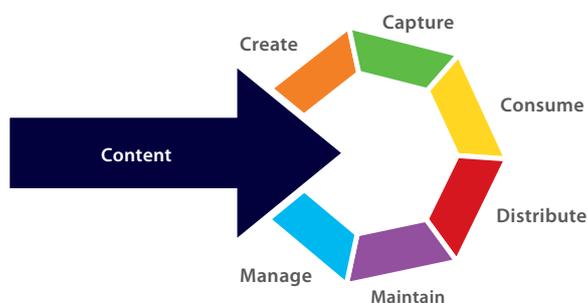
For us Information Management (IM) is a discipline that involves the creation, capture, consumption, and management of an organisation's unstructured content in physical, digital and hybrid forms. As a discipline we investigate the business process, people & culture, technology and capability elements to ensure an optimum IM state to meet or exceed business objectives.

IM shares close links with Data Management, a well-managed IM environment has benefits for Data Management programmes as we will discuss later. Ultimately though, information management deals with unstructured information in its various forms; office documents, web content, wikis, emails, blogs, twitter feeds

etc; data management focuses on structured information from largely transactional systems and databases, to derive analysis and insight from data.

Various industry sources will estimate that **unstructured information** represents anywhere between 60% and 80% of an organisation. But the volumes of data we are capturing are also increasing; here is our modern information management dilemma – one of volume and

### GOVERNANCE



variety. Organisations create and capture vast quantities of information; and at significant cost (anecdotal evidence suggests that this is the most expensive part of the lifecycle). So why create something that serves no purpose that adds no value? The reality is that we don't – but having invested in an asset; information – we don't manage it well, don't leverage it to its full potential and so our return is reduced.

Valuable information assets remain hidden in legacy applications and repositories, unknown, untagged and unmanaged, unable to be quickly retrieved when needed. In such circumstances how can you even know what gems you have lying around the organisation, and how do you share those assets easily, and in a timely way that adds value to customers, business processes and staff – reducing rework, corporate risk and increasing productivity.

I firmly believe that the answer to this issue is having a unified approach to capturing, and describing the information assets we rely on, a common vocabulary or tags that can usefully be relied on by parties across the organisation and external to it, fulfilling a variety of needs. Saving our customers (internal or external) the estimated 20% of time wasted in searching and often failing to find the relevant information needed in a haystack full of potential results. With effective capture and description processes in place, everything that comes after is much easier to manage; be that collaboration and publishing processes, e-discovery processes, records management and retention processes, publishing processes etc.

By leveraging the information assets we have taken the time and resource to acquire, we can also ensure the right investment decisions are made as IBM's research illustrated. IBM's research (IBM Strategy & Change, Survey of Fortune 1000 CIO's) highlighted that organisations reported 40% of total IT spending brought no return to their organisation. This waste or "value leakage" is attributed largely to up-front strategic activities of aligning initiatives with business priorities, not due to "runaway projects". One of the key findings of this report was that so called "structural issues" such as underutilised shared assets, of which information would be one, represented 32% of that waste.

Would organisations be happy with 40% wastage in financial assets, 40% lost production in a manufacturing scenario, 40% wastage in machinery, building or fleet stock? I think not, the sooner we think of information as a real asset – the sooner we will see a return. But where are the returns?

A financial services organisation invested in Information Management and achieved an efficiency saving of 60,000 hours per year for investment bankers by slashing response times from 3 hours to minutes. A public sector organisation saved \$1 million from overpayment of expired contracts, simply by making them more "findable" and accessible. Another organisation was able to sell a city centre building through ready access to information, process improvements and redeployment of staff to field based roles with a corresponding increase in customer satisfaction and staff retention.

Finding reliable and accurate information is difficult enough now, but given IDC's prediction that information holdings will increase 50 fold between 2010 and 2020 is accurate, that task will get even harder as more and more information sources are created or used. And if MindMetre's 2012 Research is any indication – unless we do something soon, the 52% of senior managers who are currently dissatisfied with their ability to find information on their corporate systems will increase. So where do you start?

The first step is ensuring that we are collecting the right information at the right time in our existing business processes. Information management cannot be divested from the business process in which it is captured and used. A key element of a successful organisation's toolbox is a holistic information management framework where information is seen as an asset, its creation and use is planned, that business



processes are optimally designed and appropriately integrated with the information repositories and perhaps most importantly an effective search, use and distribution framework is also in place.

### How many haystacks do you have?

Technology will continue to play a pivotal role in our digital information management world, where 'findability' remains a key requirement. It is often through successful 'findability' that the success of our IM framework is judged by internal and external customers and stakeholders. If information cannot be found, it can't be used; the asset can't be leveraged and we lose real opportunities for improvements and growth.

---

Gartner analysts believe that *“Significant innovation continues in the field of information management (IM) technologies and practices driven by the volume, velocity and variety of information, and the huge amount of value — and potential liability — locked inside all this ungoverned and underused information.”*

---

While Gartner was really talking about big data here, the underlying requirements of a well-managed information management environment still apply. Aberdeen Group's Content Management Research recently reported that across all industries 51% of business data was considered unstructured and concern over this valuable asset has more than doubled in the last year with 46% of organisations reporting significant business pressure in an inability to use unstructured data. “The first step in making unstructured data accessible and usable is providing a standard platform for storage and classification” Aberdeen Group 2013.

Significant advances are being made in this space, over the last 20 years we have seen the rise of a number of technological “solutions” to our findability and accessibility challenges. Electronic Document Management Systems, Case Management, Contracts Management, Resource Management, HR Management Systems, Financial Management Systems, Logistics Systems, Web content management systems, E-mail management systems, 'social workplace' solutions and so the list goes on.

However, these solutions are not always well adopted, investment rarely realises the return and benefits expected as the day to day needs of quick and easy retrieval are lost. Organisations still suffer with a lack of common terms, descriptions, structures and corresponding lack of visibility across the vast information holdings in an organisation. Poor search and retrieval experience is regularly cited in the top 3 reasons for poor user adoption of ECM systems.

This is supported by the 2013 Enterprise Search and Findability Survey, where 65% of survey respondents stated that the biggest obstacle to finding the right information was that we “don't know where to look”. In defence of users everywhere the question must be asked; why should they need to know where to look?. In an environment where every minute matters to the bottom line, why would we ask staff to waste time trying to work out:

- Where the information is likely to be stored
- What its likely to be called
- Who may have created it
- How could it be described (tags)



### Enterprise Search – the answer?

To a certain extent, yes. If staff don't have to waste time searching and not finding their results, they could be employed in front line activities. Delivering services that help us achieve our business goals, increase revenue, client satisfaction and retention etc. Wasted time is unproductive time, and an opportunity lost. Given that industry estimates we lose 20% of our time trying and failing to find information... imagine the possibilities if that time was better channelled into service delivery or revenue generation activities.

The rise of Enterprise Search tools is built around the need for timely, accurate and consistently reliable access to key information assets. Organisations have an ecosystem of technology solutions all delivering specific outcomes and each one, typically with its own independent search engine. Based on the familiar search experience of google.co.nz, the Google Search Appliance (GSA) is an integrated hardware and software appliance that delivers a scalable solution to an organisation's search and retrieval issues.

The Google Search Appliance dominates the marketplace providing ready access to information assets held in a myriad of business applications, formats, and of an ever increasing scale and size that today's modern business struggles to maintain, and to make use of.

Haroon Suleman, lead Enterprise Architect at Mercer has seen this first hand "The Google Search Appliance has been a worthwhile investment" not only in the significant cost reduction achieved through license costs, hardware & software and maintenance costs, but also in the increase of productivity for workers attempting to search across disparate content repositories.

"For knowledge workers there is no more powerful tool than instant access to the right information" Google. Many would agree including Kirsty Sinnott of Western Australia's Water corporation who, after implementing an Enterprise Search Solution; Google Search Appliance, was finally receiving comments such as "thank you, I'm finding what I'm looking for" comments – far more often than before the implementation even though they had an existing Intranet and a document management system.

### Driving more value from your information

We have seen many examples of enterprise search engines being implemented in organisations to varying degrees of success. For the most successful implementations, tools like the Google Search Appliance reach into the plethora of repositories and extract information, making it available to users through their search queries. This provides a strong foundation on which to layer additional functionality further increasing value to the investment made.

A key example of this is the growth of semantic and content analytic tools, referred to as "Content Intelligence" solutions, are becoming key productivity enablers in today's organisations. *"Through 2015, organisations integrating high value, diverse, new information types and sources into a coherent information management infrastructure will outperform their industry peers financially by more than 20%"* Gartner.

With a myriad of repositories and formats, we need to be able to deliver to our users fast and **contextual** retrieval and access paths, respecting security protocols while surfacing as much **relevant** content as possible; based on the context of the query, the user profile or the entry point.



Tools like Semaphore from SmartLogic deliver 'content intelligence' by capturing the vocabulary of the organisation (of which there could be many), their semantic tools define important topics, resources and people into a model (list, taxonomy or ontology) which is then used to automatically classify information and enrich it with metadata to deliver a more useful and complete information management experience. With this intelligence applied, users are more able to find relevant information more quickly as it is served to them with suggestions, navigational aids, visualisation aids and more.

As was seen by Applied Materials who saw a 46% reduction in the time taken to find information, equalling a productivity saving of 4,600 hours per week across their workforce.

McClatchy Tribune increased their classification accuracy, hitting an 85% accuracy rate, 25% higher than the industry norm. Such accuracy creates value and opportunity for their business in delivering "Smart Content" to grow revenue; to improve internal search for the journalists; to add value to our existing client services and to create value for the newspaper base by enabling mobile apps"

Working smarter not harder, using our systems to drive automatic tagging and classification, delivering a contextual, useful, fast and reliable search information retrieval service has value across the organisation.

## ABOUT PAULA SMITH

---

Paula Smith leads the Information Management practice for Optimization. She is a professionally qualified Information Management professional with experience across a number of domains including Information Governance, Strategy development and implementation, ECM selection, design and implementation, Change Management and Team Leadership. Paula writes for industry publications, contributes to discussions via various social media forums, chairs and presents at conferences and blogs. Paula will be the Conference Chair for Inforum for 2014, to be held in Adelaide in September. In her spare time she is also President of the New Zealand Branch of RIMPA, is actively mentoring new entrants to the IM profession and contributing to a number of formal advisory groups across the sector.

### About Optimization

At Optimization, we harness the potential of people and technology to create unrivalled business value for our enterprise customers across New Zealand and Australia. Optimization offer the full spectrum of IT professional services across plan, build, run, within an embedded practice structure that delivers best-in-class capability and IP backed by mature processes, methodologies and governance. Our capabilities are underpinned by the knowledge and experience we have gained over 20 years of successful business innovation and transformation.

Optimization has over 200 staff across offices in Wellington, Auckland and Sydney. Our local capability, responsiveness and agility are complemented by the global scale and specialist expertise we can access through our strategic partnerships with Google and Smartlogic.

For more information about Optimization visit [www.optimization.co.nz](http://www.optimization.co.nz)

