



AC⁺erm Project

People Facet: Delphi Study
Phenomenological Analyses



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The AC*erm Project – Accelerating positive change in electronic records management' – is a research project carried out by the School of Computing, Engineering and Information Sciences in Northumbria University from 2007 to 2010. It aimed to investigate and critically explore issues and practical strategies to support accelerating the pace of positive change in managing electronic records.

The project focused on designing an organisation-centred architecture from three perspectives: (i) people, including vision, awareness, culture, drivers and barriers; (ii) working practices including processes, procedures, policies and standards; and (iii) technology in terms of the design principles for delivering effective recordkeeping.

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AC⁺erm Output

People Facet Delphi Study – Rounds 1– 5 – Phenomenological Analysis of Responses

Background The issues examined in Round 5 of the People Delphi Study and the solutions proposed by the participants were combined with relevant aspects of the responses to previous rounds and then subjected to phenomenological analysis.

Phenomenological Analysis is a method of providing subjective insights into a topic (phenomenon) through the researchers exploring it in depth using their experience and imagination.

Using this method, a topic is explored under some or all of the following aspects:

- pieces and parts in space – *the pieces, parts, in the spatial sense, incl. interconnections, links;*
- episodes and sequences in time – *the episodes and sequences, in the temporal sense, including stages, eras, historical, iterations, reiterations;*
- qualities and dimensions – *the qualities and dimensions of the phenomenon (other than parts, episodes etc), incl. attributes, characteristics, levels, size;*
- settings and environments – *setting, environments, surroundings, incl. contexts, ambience, sector, country, jurisdiction;*
- prerequisites and consequences – *the prerequisites and consequences in time, including underpinnings, requirements, impact, implications;*
- perspectives and approaches – *the perspectives or approaches one can take, including the four ISO stakeholders (senior managers, systems administrators, RM professionals, employees), psychological, philosophical, ethical, political, ecological, legal;*
- cores and fringes – *cores or foci and fringes or horizons, incl. positive (at the core) to negative (on the fringes), one focus or multiple foci, looking to the horizon (aspiration, vision), beyond the horizon (blue sky, future prediction, forecasting);*
- appearances and disappearances – *the appearing and disappearing of the phenomena, incl. historical, contextual, transitory, continuous/discontinuous, persistence, cause/effect, visible from certain viewpoints;*
- clarity – *the clarity of the phenomenon, incl. degree of uncertainty, definability, explanation, fuzziness, conflation.*

Further information about the method can be found in Boeree, C.G. *Qualitative methods Part One, Chapter Two: Phenomenological description*. Shippensburg University, 1998.

<http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/qualmethone.html>

Nature of Output The output consists of the list of the analyses of the seven topics selected for examination. The topics were divided up between project team members; any given analysis was written by a single member of the team.

The list of topics analyzed is as follows:

- Actors and Contexts
- The Records Management 'Bottom Line'
- Change Management
- Cultural Change
- Essential Skills for Records Management
- Management Class Change
- Professional 'Turf Wars'

These analyses were originally drafted and published from July to September 2008.

Unless otherwise specified, all quotations used in the analyses come from the responses given by the Delphi Study participants.

People Facet Delphi Study – Phenomenological Analysis – Actors and Contexts

- Q1 RM doesn't require the understanding or involvement of senior managers. RM should be seen as basic organisational infrastructure, like water or computers.**
- But why is it that RM departments are often undervalued, poorly resourced or even non existent, whereas no one would dispute the importance and resourcing of Estates or IT departments?
- Q2 ERM needs to be pervasive in the organisation, hidden in the background, by use of systems transparent to the user.**
- If RM is too much in the background how are staff to be made aware of their recordkeeping role and responsibilities?

Pieces and parts in space

These questions focus on the organizational actors—senior managers, records professionals, and staff in general—and on the contexts in which the RM function is found within organizations, contexts which both shape and are shaped by the perceptions of the people involved. Within these contexts, other actors are also present: IT, legal and other professionals and specialists who, like records professionals, have their own specific agendas and interactions with the corporate environment and with other corporate actors.

The components of this nexus can be conceived as a number of headings or areas with inner subdivisions. For the issues raised in Question 1—the lack of resourcing and recognition for RM compared with other corporate functions—they break down as follows:

Bottom line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Value > Costs > Risk > Benefits
Engagement with RM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > (Lack of) understanding / involvement by actors > Complexity / abstraction of IM/ERM > Indirect / deferred / intangible impact of RM > Accountability
Legitimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Perception of RM by other actors > Profile of RM within organization
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Training > Marketing > Business

The components relating to Question 2—on the tensions between the need for automation of recordkeeping tasks and the requirement for staff to be aware of their recordkeeping role—are:

Profile of RM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Invisible process—visible responsibility > Visibility
Embedding RM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Integration / automation > Balance
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Education

Episodes and sequences in time

Subsumed under other categories.

Qualities and dimensions

Subsumed under other categories.

Settings and environments

Subsumed under other categories.

Prerequisites and consequences

Current RM processes tend to be intrusive, adding work without always obviously adding value. And even where value is added, it will inevitably be discounted in comparison to the extra work involved, a process exacerbated by the fact that the extra work is always *now* while the value may only manifest itself later, or even manifest itself only to some third person. Marketing RM in the digital world is a considerable task, and records professionals do not always have the approach, skills, or networks to carry it out. Their focus may remain on 'paper' processes, treating digital records using analogous models that may or may not be appropriate. Even when fully aware of the changed environment and having a clear idea of what is required, they may have neither the temperament nor the aptitude to do what must be done, nor have in place or feel able to forge the interdisciplinary relationships with other professionals and units within the organization that could enable them to carry out their mission effectively.

'Change' and 'change management' are terms that are often used very glibly; of course, people are faced with a constant need to adapt to a changing environment, but when the pace of change is such that staff who were hired on the basis of one set of skills or personal characteristics are now expected to work in ways that require a completely new set, it involves more than the repetition of mantras and positive thinking. 'Information' has now become so linked to ideas of networking and social exchange that it is necessary to remind ourselves that many information professionals started out on their careers when the focus was on processes rather than people, and where the work was often solitary and technical in nature.

Records professionals who were hired because they were good at one set of things are now exhorted to engage in completely different areas of work, requiring skills that are often rarely found in conjunction with those they have hitherto brought to their job. It is assumed that records professionals must engage in marketing and communication and in managing change and relationships, but who would expect staff in the marketing or PR department to engage in systems analysis or the design of classification schemes? Perhaps the records professions suffer from a lack of specialization—being a jack-of-all-trades becomes impossible in the face of the hugely increased number of 'trades' in the modern world. A records unit or team may require not a group with the same skill-sets and competencies, which they must constantly strive to update and change, but individuals each starting from a different perspective and area of expertise, so that between them they can adapt successfully to new and unexpected requirements.

Nevertheless, existing RM staff must learn to swim or resign themselves to drowning. And the skills they lack are often present in abundance in their organizations. Perhaps the essential adaptation records professionals must make is to build relationships and networks with their fellow experts—experienced administrative and operational staff as well as professionals—so that they can avail of these skills, and also so that they can both communicate their own knowledge and concerns more widely and plug themselves in to wider organizational currents and concerns. This is all the more necessary as, in this 'information age', everyone thinks they understand information and how to manage it, since they use it in one form or another in all their work, business, and personal activities. The challenge lies in getting the RM perspective recognized, and in aligning it with central corporate needs and preoccupations.

Perspectives and approaches

The environment within which people work exerts a major influence on their behaviours and practices. In a highly regulated sector or industry, an organization (or at least those parts concerned with the core function) will be fully aware of the need for good RM and recordkeeping, and may well have invested in industry-specific data and records management systems to ensure compliance. Other

settings may accommodate—or even demand—far more fluid, experimental, disorganized, or haphazard ways of working. Records professionals must be flexible enough to work along all points of the spectrum, and apply RM principles through policies and practices that help rather than hinder whatever working environment and culture they find themselves in.

Each actor in a workplace is driven or constrained by a variety of factors: first and foremost, by the requirements of the their role—basically, in carrying out their contractual obligations for the job they are paid to do. How they carry this out will be influenced by other factors, supposedly subsidiary but sometimes subjectively of equal or even greater importance—organizational or group culture; personal desires, objectives, or fears; relations and interactions with colleagues, subordinates, and superiors. They will be subject to a number of requirements that have nothing to do with their actual business role, but which they must nevertheless bow to and against which their performance may be evaluated and assessed—policies relating to health and safety, for example, or internet usage, or discrimination and harassment, or timekeeping. Then there are further, more tenuous, requirements for which there is rarely either stick or carrot in any systematic sense and which staff will actively circumvent if they are in any way irksome—putting paper into the recycling bag rather than the bin, using one stairway rather than another, leaving fire doors shut, and so on.

Records professionals want, and often believe, RM to belong in the first, essential, category; other actors in the organization consider it to fall at best into the second and at worst the third, unless their job is in an area subject to strict regulatory or security requirements. The challenge is therefore to make RM processes so integral to a person's normal tasks that they barely register, just as it becomes second nature to put paper in the recycling bin if it is beside the desk, but to ignore that requirement if it demands a trip down the corridor. But it is more complicated than that: the invisibility of the process in this example is backed up by the very high visibility of the principle—the paper is recycled because everyone knows the importance attached to environmental issues. As RM itself is largely invisible, there is little reason to make even the tiny psychological investment of consistently using one process—no matter how unobtrusive or invisible—over another. RM must therefore be made visible, while its processes are rendered invisible—the very opposite, in fact, of the situation that obtains at present.

For RM to become both visible and important, it needs to be seen in a holistic context, as part of rather than an addendum to the business process itself. If RM provides a benefit, it needs to do so in the context of what an organization actually does, whether it manufactures widgets, sells books, provides health care, designs software, performs a government function, in whatever sector it operates. The requirements and ethos prevalent in the organization at large will inform and even determine its attitudes to records and information, in terms of accountability, diligence, legacy, and a host of other factors.

Desired behaviours can only flow from understanding, responsibility and accountability and ability in all workplace activities. It's not about RM in isolation.

Part of the challenge to the records professional—or rather, to the team the records professional has managed to assemble, for this task could never be carried out in isolation—may be to show that the RM function is sufficiently important or desirable that it is worthwhile to change the organizational ethos to one more receptive and hospitable to good recordkeeping culture and behaviour.

RM strategy and policies need to be aligned with the corporate mission and strategy, RM procedures and processes with business procedures and processes. Frequent, flexible, tailored, and relevant training and education can provide RM with its necessary visibility, the profile that in itself gives the 'because' to the question of 'why should I do this?'. But this will be worthless if the 'how' is not virtually effortless:

System design should take care of the employees record keeping responsibilities. Automatically capture 'important' records.... automatically destroy unimportant records. As all information is now electronic, this should be achievable, and with little / no user intervention.

These goals can really only be achieved through partnership working and networks within the organization; specifying or building RM functionality for new or existing systems cannot happen without the active collaboration of the IT department, for example. Mounting a major awareness, marketing, or training campaign can only be carried out with the input of the HR, staff development, or communications teams. Embedding RM alongside "other intrinsic responsibilities such as security, acceptable use policies etc" will require liaison with the units responsible for these policies so that RM can be incorporated into rather than bolted onto both their thinking and the actual suite of corporate policies. Proper use of a system after implementation is dependent on prior and ongoing collaboration

with all users, both individually and collectively. RM needs to take its place with all the other functions as a strand of the corporate ambient music rather than jarring awkwardly as a discordant background noise.

Cores and fringes

Despite the insistence by many records professionals that RM is a central element of efficient and effective business operations and of corporate governance, it is neither a core concern nor a focus for attention within most organizations. Indeed, records professionals frequently hold two seemingly incompatible positions simultaneously: that RM is vital to the organization, and that RM and records managers are consistently and comprehensively sidelined in favour of other, more favoured professions, notably IT.

RM remains at the fringes for a variety of reasons, some bound up with the records professions themselves, others arising from the nature of organizations and of various actor perspectives—particularly at senior level—within them. RM labours at a disadvantage when compared with other key service departments within an organization: the effects of localized or systemic failure are rarely felt immediately, and rarely incapable of being circumvented in the short term.

Recognition of corporate record management failure may be deferred for months (years?) while knowledge workers refer instead to e-mail dumps accumulated online, ad hoc data dumps in personal external storage devices, or selected print-to-paper reference files.

Loss of power or of business-critical IT systems for even a few hours can lose an organization great sums of money or the confidence / goodwill of its customers and investors; poor recordkeeping, unless allied to business practices that are in themselves questionable or illegal, almost never has such consequences—Enron did not fall because of poor RM, it fell because it engaged in illegal accounting methods. Ironically, those aspects of RM that organizations *do* recognize as being in the same league where business continuity is concerned—such as the physical storage of paper records—are the very aspects that records professionals frequently strive to dissociate themselves from in the digital era.

Historically, organisations have been able to 'get away with it' in terms of ignoring RM, but operational necessity always forced Estates or IT to be resourced.

This leads to a question: what is it that organizations have been 'getting away with'? The normal connotations of the phrase relate to activity that is legally or morally dubious, or that carries a high risk. But poor recordkeeping is common in all parts of the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, and in organizations of all shapes and sizes, and has been for decades. Poor RM is undoubtedly wasteful, but then so are a great many of the practices routinely engaged in by all organizations: design or production errors leading to product recall, bloated expense accounts, 'fact-finding' freebies for managers or elected officials, golden handshakes, golden handcuffs, hiring consultants as the default option even when the in-house capacity already exists. And it is notoriously hard to put a figure on the ROI of an RM system, even an EDRMS implementation where there are identifiable costs and timescales:

[T]here are yet no methods to relate RM to an organisations business values and the cost a poor RM could bring.

Could it be that RM is kept at the fringes because it is, in fact, a fringe activity in all but a specific number of highly regulated contexts, such as the pharmaceutical industry?

Senior managers need only know that their enterprise will ultimately fail in the absence of adequate RM. If their enterprise will thrive without RM, and if their competitors are successfully operating within a similar records-free environment, then that segment of society may not need RM. (I find that scenario more likely a disaster waiting to happen.)

Yet good IM and RM are generally seen as desirable, and not just by records professionals. And the peripheral relation these desirables bear to core concerns is contextual rather than absolute—a change in culture or emphasis can bring a previously marginal activity or concern into the centre. What are the contexts? One has already been alluded to: an indifference to waste and inefficiency, at least until the pips really begin to squeak. This is to a significant extent a structural or cultural phenomenon, related only tenuously if at all to questions cost or efficiency: as a parallel, some organizations and industries embody a quality culture in which 'getting it right first time, every time' is a core value, while others churn out substandard or mediocre products. The latter type can hardly be described as

'getting away with it', as there is often no obvious relation between the integrity of the production process or the quality of the product and the profitability or market position of a company.

RM is often undervalued because there is a lack of understanding and accountability at the uppermost levels of management. Nobody disputes the importance of IT departments because upper management understands the value of IT, supports it (in the form of funding and resources), and is accountable for poorly functioning IT. If this same accountability applied to compliance and information management, you can be sure that RM departments would no longer be the "ugly ducklings".

An organization that is serious about governance, or transparency, or efficiency, or integrity of process, may well embrace IM and RM as means of adding value or of demonstrating its credentials. Making senior managers and executives accountable for poor IM/RM would certainly bring it in from the fringes—but that is premised on a willingness to embrace a culture of accountability in the first place, where failure to embrace such a culture may not have any impact on the organization's success or failure. If accountability itself occupies a fringe position, then RM is not marketable as a core means of ensuring accountability and good governance.

The centrality or marginality of RM is affected not just by the nature of the organization but also by the perceptions, capacities and priorities of those working within it. If people are faced with a function that not only appears to be inessential but is in addition complex and poorly understood by them, it is inevitable that they will regard it as a marginal rather than a core concern. At a senior level, this lack of understanding translates into poor resourcing and support for RM, and a failure to include IM/RM in strategic plans.

Unfortunately, because senior managers have little involvement or understanding of RM, RM departments are often undervalued or poorly resourced etc.

As the new world of information management becomes more abstract, senior managers without direct experience in the discipline will have a growing lack of understanding of the discipline.

In general, RM is neither well recognized as a function or even a corporate department by staff, nor appreciated or welcomed for the benefits it can provide. It is often at the edge of staff perceptions in its more strategic aspects, and at the bottom of staff priorities in its practical manifestations ("To most people, day to day recordkeeping activities are tedious and best avoided"). The basic questions underlying any attempt to move RM from the periphery towards the core are:

- (1) Is RM a core concern of a given organization?
- (2) If so, how can it acquire the profile and recognition needed to position itself as a corporate function equal to other, more familiar functions?
- (3) If not, how can the useful, though not fundamentally essential, benefits it *does* bring to the business processes best be marketed so as to be recognized and welcomed by users?

Appearances and disappearances

RM is frequently a function without any significant corporate profile or visibility, a status exacerbated by very real difficulties in quantifying both the opportunities presented by good RM and the risks associated with poor RM. It can also be exacerbated by records professionals themselves, not all of whom are capable of changing their own priorities and practices in line with the rapid changes in the nature of records and information in the digital age. Records staff themselves may not have a clear idea of what they are there for:

sometimes ... they do not understand the importance themselves, because they landed up in the unit by accident rather than design.

This is a concrete manifestation of the 'fuzzy' concept of RM as a discipline or profession not just in the corporate setting but in society at large. No-one would ever consider that an IT manager or a legal adviser or even a PA could just 'land up' in their position by accident or as the result of organizational restructuring; RM differs in this even from other information professions, as most people would have at least some idea that a librarian, say, must have professional qualifications for the job. RM thus suffers from a lack of legitimacy on at least two fronts: it is not supported or valued highly at senior corporate levels, and it is unable to claim the intrinsic legitimacy of mature professions with their various requirements for qualification and certification.

A number of means are open to the records professional in trying to raise the corporate profile of RM. Three of the most frequently advocated are: to present a 'facts and figures' business case for the benefits of RM; to market the RM function and the services it provides; and to conduct training and education programmes. These approaches seem straightforward enough, so why haven't they worked to date? Awareness programmes and marketing campaigns have been used and have met with varying degrees of success in many contexts. Think of, say, a public health initiative, like the drives to combat smoking or obesity. There are the facts and figures: smoking and being seriously overweight lead to a variety of identifiable, quantifiable and provable health problems. There are the services available: health centres, clinics, doctors' surgeries, information, help-lines, and a host of other channels through which the benefits of a healthy lifestyle may be marketed and realized. And there is education in forms as disparate as literature, support groups, and programmes in schools and other educational or community institutions.

This analogy highlights one of the problems: for RM, at least two of the proposed solutions are also at the heart of the problems they purport to address. If RM has a low profile because it cannot quantify its benefits and costs, then the 'solution' to present executives and other significant corporate actors with facts and figures is no answer at all. Requests for just such facts and figures appear regularly on RM and archives discussion lists (regardless of country or region); the responses direct one to the same handful of reports or articles, along with an assortment of anecdotal, unattributed pieces of 'evidence'. And if RM has no quantifiable benefits to impart, how can it be marketed as a useful service at any level?

This is an extreme statement of the case: clearly, there are *some* quantifiable benefits to RM, and in any case benefits can be qualitative as well as quantitative. Where RM programmes are effectively implemented, it can be the qualitative aspects that swing the balance—real consultation with users to ensure that their needs inform RM tools and processes, a recognition on the part of users that the new programme really is there to help them carry out their job more smoothly or creatively rather than just impose another bureaucratic burden can have a far greater impact than statistics about reducing storage requirements. Nonetheless, the haziness surrounding RM and its place within the organization and in relation to people's working practices and business needs once again comes into play. The "benefits and costs associated with RM practice are indirect and diffuse"; "RM to most is also intangible, not being able to be counted or touched or seen".

People take cognizance of what has a noticeable effect, either positive or negative, on their activities. Generally, those effects that are routine and everyday are most noticeable, though infrequent effects can acquire significance if they are sufficiently serious in their consequences. It appears to be in the nature of things that negative effects and experiences have a far greater impact than positive: people will take good functionality and smooth processes for granted, as the norm, while resenting anything that seems to impose upon them or disrupt the 'normal' course of their activities. We always whinge when the system is down, but never marvel at the technology, skill, and hard work that keeps it up and running 99.9% of the time.

Clarity

For a discipline so intimately bound up with the imposition of order and structure—with its classification schemes, retention schedules, process maps, functional charts, controlled vocabularies, and all the rest—RM remains curiously indistinct and amorphous to outsiders in almost all of its aspects. As a corporate function, it has no fixed abode: positioned variously in IT, Legal, Risk Management, Compliance, Facilities, Information, Communications (and this list is far from exhaustive). Nor is its remit clear: is it a strategic or a service/support function, or both?

Staff at all levels have at least some idea of what, say, their IT department is *for*, even if they are utterly ignorant of every aspect of it from systems analysis to plugging in the cables on their desktop computers. But few have even this level of understanding of RM, and what understanding they do have is often a constraint on, rather than a facilitator of, effective RM—thus the persistent association of RM with boxes, files and physical storage and the concomitant assumption that anything digital is the remit of IT. Worse still, the function is often associated more with the boxes themselves than the records they contain, with filing and portering rather than the management of a vital part of the organizational knowledge base:

As long as RM departments are dealing with box storage they will always be tarnished with that brush. Records managers must off-load box storage to facilities management and align themselves

with legal and IT to earn their place as essential players in the management of the organisations intellectual capital.

How this lack of a 'feel' for what RM is or does actually manifests itself in terms of strategy, policy, operations, or consequences varies according to the actors and contexts. Ignorance or uncertainty at executive level leads to under-resourcing and marginalization, and to a more insidious process of devaluation throughout the entire organization as the pack responds to the preferences and priorities of its leaders.

Summary

- ERM requires new skills and aptitudes; where records professionals do not themselves possess these skills, they must recognise this and seek to build partnerships and links with other specialists in their organizations who can supply this lack.
- RM hovers at the edge of perception at both the corporate and individual staff level; it lacks legitimacy on a number of levels, which means that its impact is muted and its requirements often ignored.
- The desired state of RM is only achievable through partnership working and networks within the organization, bringing benefits to staff in their *business* activities.
- RM must be both visible and invisible—invisibly embedded in line of business systems and desktop software, visibly present in the ethos and culture of an organization.
- Good RM may not be necessary to the success of an organization. Nor will it be possible in an organization that is indifferent to good governance or quality and integrity of process.

People Facet Delphi Study – Phenomenological Analysis – RM ‘Bottom Line’

Will ERM Systems Improve the ‘Records’ Bottom Line in Organisations?

Will they Improve Records Quality, Access to and Use of Records, and Exploitation of the ‘Value’ Contained in Records? (Focus on the People Aspects)

Pieces & parts in space¹

Records quality isn’t the content per se, it’s more what is stored (kept) and for how long - so the unimportant and ephemeral are kept just for as long as they are required then deleted. This leaves the RM effort to be concentrated on the important and the long term value records. Access is about ease with which this can be done by users, how quickly it can be done, and that the required record is found when required (precision/recall/specificity etc.). Without this, use just can’t happen. If you’re keeping the records you *should* be keeping, and can easily find them when you need them, then the huge ‘knowledge’ resource bound up in these records can be further exploited beyond their initial purpose and used to the benefit of the organisation.

Episodes & sequences in time²

Records were managed in the paper world (well or badly). Does moving into the e-world and using ERMS fundamentally change anything, expect that one uses a computer as the tool rather than paper&ink? Are we not just repeating the problems? A well managed person / organisation in the paper world will become ditto in the e-world because that’s ‘who they are’, that’s ‘how they do things’. How do we move a disorganised / non-RM focused person/organisation into an organised / RM focussed one? A topic for another PA!

Qualities & dimensions³

The situation seems little affected by the nature, size, country of location of the organisation concerned. It really is down to how people and organisations behave, which are the same everywhere.

Settings & environments⁴

As above.

Prerequisites & consequences⁵

Fundamentally it seems to be down to (i) undertaking good RM principles and practices - without these no organisation will manage their records well, whether paper or electronic; (ii) these practices need to be put into place BEFORE the ERMS is introduced; (iii) BEFORE introducing an ERMS, or any system, the existing system (‘state of affairs’) needs a system analysis to be undertaken – what is currently happening, what are the problems, what do users need to do their job, etc. etc. – ask all users but particularly the end user who really undertakes the tasks. This then feeds into the design/selection of the ERMS to be used; (iv) design of ERMS needs user involvement from the OUTSET – a true partnership with the designers; (v) ERMS implementation needs active user involvement from the OUTSET (but not as passive elements but as active agents who can guide/direct the implementation and make changes) – and it should be all users from the CEO down to the end user; (vi) change management is required.

BUT as we know from public sector IT project failures (the private sector don’t tell us whether they have had failures – but I bet they have) all these stages (equivalent of in those contexts) are just not done! WHY?

BUT Do we have the evidence that if these processes were undertaken the system implementation would be successful? We know that audits of failures state all these as the major reasons for failure, e.g. reports on NPfIT in the NHS. ⁶

What I think is beyond question (based on pure logic) is that good (not necessarily perfect cf comments⁷ about the golden paper-world of RM perfection) RM principles and practices are necessary

as we don't yet have an IT system that can do it all for us in the background. Computerising crud is still crud.

The remit here is the 'records' bottom line. However, what about a step backwards to the topic of the evidence that good RM is necessary for the success and survival of an organisation, i.e. the organisation's bottom line. (Note: that success and survival are not synonymous; an organisation may survive but not be that successful.) Is there evidence for this? Obviously in a tightly regulated industry such as pharmaceuticals an organisation that didn't keep the required records would be closed down. However, for most organisations the evidence (other than anecdotal) that poor RM was the only or main cause of an organisation's failure or lack of success is just not there. Enron failed because of its fraudulent activities which reached a point where they could no longer be concealed. The part that records played was (i) that they were falsified to hide the illegal activities, and (ii) that later on records were used as evidence that illegal activities had taken place. In the UK HE sector, through a target driven culture set by the government for the public sector, a huge bureaucratic edifice has been created of procedures and records. This has created extra workload in an already overworked sector which has been coped with by (a) cutting back on the people-intensive methods of teaching, and (b) staff working over and above their contractual hours to ensure that students don't suffer and that their professional credibility is maintained. However, universities aren't failing because of this – there is a level playing field with all universities facing the same requirements. The reasons why universities will fail is low student numbers.

So if RM doesn't affect the organisation's bottom line (for good or bad) than an ERM system won't either. Major IT failures in the public sector haven't led to the demise of the organisation – the service is still required and must be provided. The only one I'm aware of that is being radically changed is the Child Support Agency⁸, but that was a deeply flawed organisation from the start (conceptually and in management terms) and never functioned well – the final IT failure was just the icing on the cake of failure! Whether a bad choice of ERM system that costs millions of pounds in implementation could cause a private company to fail I don't know (such things rarely come to light in the public domain).

Perspectives & approaches⁹

If this is all about human nature and organisational behaviour then it's a very complex intermixture as all the stakeholders' needs / perspectives interrelate. And it's not just a stakeholder group view. Individuals within a stakeholder group will behave differently as they will have different personalities, and different personal needs & goals over and beyond the ones that come as part of their stakeholder role (and which are more organisationally-focussed). We can't solve this. All one can say is that there is expert research, theory, opinion, advice on how to 'manage' humans within organisations to improve organisational effectiveness as well as create happy working environments. And I don't mean those awful management guru books, but proper research in the human sciences.

This might be a quote or misquote: Failures are 'all the same' it is the successes that are individual. That's because whether or not a system implementation is successful seems to come down to having one or a few of the 'right' people in the organisation (and right is variable, just 'right' in that context because it worked.) The committed CEO with vision; the good manager (though you couldn't write down what makes a good manager you just know when you are working for one); the champion; the enthusiast; the RM person with the 'right' personality. And their importance only really becomes apparent if they leave for some reason and then the system collapses / fails. How do you get such people on board a particular implementation project?

Just as there are 'right' people there are also 'wrong' people: the bad managers; the people out for personal benefit at the expense of other staff / of the organisation; the jealous; the threatened; the inadequate etc. These can be at any level; and even at a lower level can have quite a large effect. They can torpedo a project. HOW do you deal with such people? My experiences of working in a number of organisations is that these people are not dealt with; if the 'wrong' people are at the higher levels then they create the dysfunctional organisation, if they are at the lower levels they are not tackled and are left to do their damage.

So this is really down to the psychological and the political (in the sense of organisational politics). And in the public sector it might be political in the wider sense if, as with NPfIT in the NHS, a one size fits all solution is forced onto organisations from the centre.

Cores & fringes¹⁰

In discussions with the team the input from one respondent was along the lines of you can't 'manage the change' it's just too big a task so don't bother with that just concentrate on the task in hand, i.e. setting up the ERMS and getting the people who will do so to use the system. I have some sympathies with that. The RM tail can't wag the organisational dog; you can't change the whole of the corporate culture when you want to implement a new ERMS. That doesn't happen with other bits of systems that are added into the organisation. However, I think there are three things you really must do (which aren't complete corporate change): (i) improving the RM practices; (ii) involving users in the design / selection of the system; (iii) implementing the system in a much more user-focussed way. Otherwise you just end up with a system and people creating and using workarounds. I would like to see systems analysis carried out, but with the complexities of organisations I don't see this ever happening as it takes too long and 'business' demands can't wait that long.

I've talked of the need for good managers to solve the problems. Is there anything in the nature of IT that could help? If a computer is only equivalent to a pen then it won't affect the human nature issue (though in itself it can add to the problem as another 'player' in the complex intermixture – we've already had people saying how this can change roles, status, power, relationships, working practices). But could you imagine an IT system that could make things so much easier that it would significantly ameliorate some of these problems – most people take the easy path. Not an ERMS etc. but what about the 'semantic' web type technology? Data contains data structures (XML) so can be shared between systems etc. Transparency of desktop systems so we are not aware that we are undertaking recordkeeping activities. Intelligent classification of records by programs running in the background etc. etc. A topic for the technology strand. If there isn't a technology solution, or it is a minimal contribution to the solution, then we must tackle the human aspects.

If it is the human nature issue, which is so difficult to do even if we do know WHAT we should be doing, maybe all we can say is that's the situation and always will be.

Can we do no more than just set out the human problems / solutions? Can we get somewhere with HOW, WHY, WHY NOT? I don't think we really can. Maybe stating the same human nature problems / solutions is drip drip on the stone. Or maybe it's just consolation to the people where the system failed to say 'not your fault'.

I've been talking about ERMS implementation and RM practices, but these are just part of the much wider human/social animal that is the organisation as a whole. And we can't solve that, and individual 'RM' staff wanting to implement an ERMS can't sort out that in their own organisation. It's human nature and we have to find a way to work with it, or workaround it. That way is overall good people management in an organisation, which is either there or not. (This leads into PA on autonomous actors I think). In the solutions can we look for these people workarounds? Or as I say above, is it just down to the individuality of that particular circumstance? As they say there is more than one way of skinning a cat ... A people workaround that works for one records manager (aligned with their personality and method of working) may not work with another.

Appearances & disappearances¹¹

The problems with implementing systems are repeated again and again; the same problems are identified and the required changes to the implementation process are noted but organisations / managers just don't learn from these. (requirements as listed above). WHY?

A not particularly good system can be kept going for a while by the 'right' people. For long term sustainability, and independence from the 'right' people you must have a well designed system produced as above.

Clarity¹²

To me the problem seems quite clear. I admit that the solution is very, very difficult. It means that very good managers do their job – managing people – very well. Most managers simply aren't very good at their jobs. We talk about participative / cooperative working organisations / style of management as the best way of working, but still mostly have hierarchical, 'macho' organisations / style of management.

SUMMARY

- Good RM principles and practices need to be in place in an organisation irrespective of the tools (paper or electronic) used.
- Failure of systems implementation is mostly down to human nature issues.
- Suggestions for solutions to these problems involve bringing all the users (from CEO to end users) into the design, change and implementation processes as active, equal players.
 - Do we really know how to do this?
 - Do we have the evidence that if these processes were undertaken the system implementation would be successful?
- Why do organisations not learn from publicised past failures and use these user-focussed solutions?

1 Aspect of the topic - the pieces, parts, in the spatial sense, incl. interconnections, links

2 Aspect of the topic - the episodes and sequences, in the temporal sense, including stages, eras, historical, iterations, reiterations

3 Aspect of the topic - the qualities and dimensions of the phenomenon (other than parts, episodes etc), incl. attributes, characteristics, levels, size

4 Aspect of the topic - setting, environments, surroundings, incl. contexts, ambience, sector, country, jurisdiction

5 Aspect of the topic - the prerequisites and consequences in time, including underpinnings, requirements, impact, implications

6 Internal reports reveal NPfIT flawed at its launch. Tony Collins. ComputerWeekly.com 22 June 2009.

<http://www.computerweekly.com/Articles/2009/06/22/236531/internal-reports-reveal-npfit-flawed-at-its-launch.htm>

House of Commons Public Accounts Committee. The National Programme for IT in the NHS: Progress since 2006. 14 January 2009. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmpubacc/153/153.pdf>

7 From Delphi participants

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_Support_Agency

Crisis-hit computer system may be ditched. Debbie Andalo and agencies. Society Guardian, 11 February 2004.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2004/feb/11/technology.internet>

⁹ Aspect of the topic - the perspectives or approaches one can take, including the four ISO stakeholders (senior managers, systems administrators, RM professionals, employees), psychological, philosophical, ethical, political, ecological, legal

¹⁰ Aspect of the topic - cores or foci and fringes or horizons, incl. positive (at the core) to negative (on the fringes), one focus or multiple foci, looking to the horizon (aspiration, vision), beyond the horizon (blue sky, future prediction, forecasting)

¹¹ Aspect of the topic - the appearing and disappearing of the phenomena, incl. historical, contextual, transitory, continuous/discontinuous, persistence, cause/effect, visible from certain viewpoints

¹² Aspect of the topic - the clarity of the phenomenon, incl. degree of uncertainty, definability, explanation, fuzziness, conflation

People Facet Delphi Study – Phenomenological Analysis – Change Management

Pieces & parts in space

There are a number of models and techniques for change management. Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Change_management_%28people%29) notes that “The current definition of Change Management includes both organizational change management processes and individual change management models, which together are used to manage the people side of change.” Some of the concepts described in the Wikipedia entry for individual change management comprise:

Unfreeze-Change-Refreeze model developed by Kurt Lewin – (Stage 1) “‘unfreezing’ ... overcoming inertia and dismantling the existing ‘mindset’. Defense mechanisms have to be bypassed.” (Stage 2) “change occurs. This is typically a period of confusion and transition. We are aware that the old ways are being challenged but we do not have a clear picture to replace them with yet.” (Stage 3) “‘freezing’ (often called ‘refreezing’ by others). The new mindset is crystallizing and one’s comfort level is returning to previous levels.”

“Some change theories are based on derivatives of the Kübler-Ross model from Elizabeth Kubler-Ross’s book, “On Death and Dying.” The stages of Kubler-Ross’s model describe the personal and emotional states that a person typically encounters when dealing with loss of a loved one. Derivatives of her model applied in other settings such as the workplace show that similar emotional states are encountered as individuals are confronted with change.”

ADKAR

“This model describes five required building blocks for change to be realized successfully on an individual level. The building blocks of the ADKAR Model include:

- Awareness – of why the change is needed
- Desire – to support and participate in the change
- Knowledge – of how to change
- Ability – to implement new skills and behaviors
- Reinforcement – to sustain the change”

The interim results from our systematic literature review on critical success factors on ERM systems implementation list the kind of things that need to be considered in change management in general. The majority of these are people aspects, see below:

- Implementation projects are not just IT projects (covers People, Processes, and Technology Perspectives)
- Commitment and support of CEOs (covers People Perspective)
- Project aligned with business objectives (covers Processes Perspectives)
- Project has clear agenda (covers Processes Perspectives)
- Demonstrate benefits (covers People and Processes Perspectives)
- Procurement planned and requirement-driven (covers Processes Perspectives)
- Integrated systems and technology (covers Technology Perspectives)
- Involvement at all levels within the organisation and with external stakeholders (covers People Perspectives)
- Communication (covers People Perspectives)
- Change management (covers People Perspectives)
- Planning and project management (People and Processes Perspectives)
- Prior existence/development of necessary ‘infrastructures’ (covers Processes and Technology Perspectives)
- Piloting and testing (covers People, Processes and Technology Perspectives)
- Sharing of expertise (covers People Perspectives)
- Involving end-users (covers People Perspectives)
- Training and support for users (covers People Perspective)

- Policies and guidelines (covers Processes Perspectives)

These are the types of issues that are covered in books and tools for implementing change in organisations.

An important component in change management is overcoming resistance to the change: e.g. see the idea above that an emotional response similar to grief is experienced when change is mooted.

So the different components of change management seem to be clearly agreed by most writers. They resonate with me personally; they feel right and they relate to my experience ('more in the breach than the observance!').

Can these components be categorised in some way, rather than remaining just a list of independent items? E.g. Agreement is both at executive level, and at individual user level, and both are needed. Can these components be drawn out as a rich picture? Look at various models / tools for organisation change management. Example from a quick Google search:

http://www.businessperform.com/html/change_management.html

Business Performance Pty Ltd CHANGE Approach ©.

“Create tension - Articulate why change needs to happen and why it needs to happen within the planned timeframe.

Harness support - Get on board the key decision-makers, resource holders and those impacted by the change.

Articulate goals - Define in specific and measurable terms the desired organizational outcomes.

Nominate roles - Assign responsibility to specific individuals for the various tasks and outcomes.

Grow capability - Build organizational systems and people competencies necessary for affecting the change.

Entrench changes - Institutionalize the change to make it “the way we do things around here”.

Episodes & sequences in time

Once again the components of change management – there are clearly stages that must come before others, e.g. vision, planning. And it could be argued that if you don't achieve a certain phase then the following phase(s) are doomed to fail. Some stages however are more diffuse and long term, e.g. awareness raising – early on you need awareness raising of the need for change, but awareness raising would also occur as the change is implemented and people are starting to use it. Accepting the need to change is a key early stage; i.e. overcoming resistance. However, this will not occur completely or for all people at the early stages, so the change will have to be implemented with ongoing actions to overcome resistance as people become more familiar with the change. The stages and their timing could be illustrated by a diagram of arrows / flows etc.?

But surely change never stops, it is a helical structure, the results of one change feeds into further changes and so on, but not circular because there is progression – whether progression for good or bad in all cases is debatable.

Organisations are in constant flux responding to external and internal factors. But not all changes are of equal size and complexity, nor do all need to be formally managed. A part of a good change management process should surely be identifying what needs to be formally changed and prioritising effort on that, and also being careful that change is necessary and not 'just for the sake of it' or 'to be seen to be doing something'. The rate of change in the public sector created by the government for party political motives, particularly e.g. the NHS, has just become ridiculous and totally counterproductive. A clear example of change fatigue.

Qualities & dimensions

This is a topic that clearly relates to our People Perspectives stage of the AC⁺erm project.

Settings & environments

Is change management the same in all contexts? I believe there are a set of components that must be gone through irrespective of sector, size, country etc. etc., but in different contexts these components are more or less difficult to achieve. In some contexts the component may be so intrinsic to the people concerned that it is invisible to them – they are already doing it, e.g. in small organisations communication is intrinsic and hierarchies are much flatter. In larger organisations communication is more problematic, but if a CEO becomes convinced of the need for change then the stronger line management control may assist with take up by users.

There are also cultural issues as change management is such a 'people' issue. Culture of the organisation – is it 'up for' change, or suffering from change fatigue? Do organisations in different sectors have different approaches to change, e.g. a science-based industry compared with a media company? Culture of different countries and, for a multinational organisation, different parts of the organisation having different cultures. How do different cultures respond to change?

Prerequisites & consequences

See under 'the episodes and sequences, in the temporal sense'.

One view: Change management is a requirement for successful ERM implementation. I believe that when you are making changes you must consider the people aspects as is done with a change management process. Without it you get superficial quick implementation but then this will break down as one realises that actually change hasn't happened, and in the long term much more time becomes required. But is it a prerequisite? Do you have to change an organisation first, or does the change come with the ERM implementation?

Is a prerequisite to the change management process an organisation / people that are receptive to the ideas of change management? So a 'change' organisation similar to that of a 'learning' organisation? And really so, not just lip service.

For a related view: see PA on cultural change.

perspectives & approaches

Change management has different meanings in different disciplines. IT / systems engineering have a very specific understanding of a process undertaking to improve the components of system / product / computer program {fixing bugs, design flaws, problems}. This is a far more circumscribed, prescriptive 'change' process with well defined models and techniques for managing it.

In this PA I'm concentrating on the wider people/organisation change, but it should be borne in mind that people's views of change management may be driven by their different definitions. So we should look to see if the results vary between the different stakeholders.

But also there is the fundamental breakdown between people; those who disparage the touchy feely approach and those who would promote it. Could you envisage a strategy where the CEO (taking on board such things as need for record keeping training, functional analysis, metadata etc.) orders everyone, on pain of sanctions, to use the system as required to do so by the record manager? Could this be as equally effective as change management requiring communication, agreement, negotiation, etc? It feels as if the answer would be no. But don't we all need sticks as well as carrots? How do you make the recalcitrant employee use the system? You can't wait till they leave, through new jobs/retirement. Such a prescriptive approach also requires that the records manager really understands the organisation's requirements and the way of working of the employees to ensure that what is being put into place will be of benefit. But isn't this a requirement for an ERM implementation anyway – business analysis? I instinctively believe in the approach that before even obtaining any piece of technology (or even any new major procedure) you need to undertake systems analysis, i.e. what really do people do in the organisation? But with huge complex organisations this is never achievable; the time required is such that the analysis is out of date before it is finished (re the Forth Bridge).

cores & and fringes

appearances & disappearances

Comments on the 'change' organisation above. You either embed change management in the overall approach of the organisation or it's not effective. You can't just switch it on for ERM implementation, then switch it off when that's done. Particularly, as ERM, being based on IT, will change itself so quickly, and in unsuspected ways as the new technological developments can take us all by surprise, even the techies. The techies might know what developments are in the pipeline but they can't predict how avidly /quickly they are taken up by the 'public'. I don't think the huge uptake and expansion of uses of the mobile phone in a relatively short period of time would have been predicted, and certainly not the spin offs into mobile cosies, ring tones etc.

clarity

As above, the literature gives good agreement on what change management comprises. To me the need for change management is obvious, the components are obvious, and simple in their concepts. Though I admit that it's a difficult thing to do, as with any thing to do with human beings. Humans are complex in their responses, and change is upsetting (as well as interesting) and 'old habits die hard'. So the nub of all this to me, is why - if authors say that change management is necessary, and all audits of failed IT projects pinpoint failures in the human aspects of the process (i.e. failure to successfully carry out or often even to consider change management) - do people still implement major IT projects without it? If they don't do it because it's difficult to do and resource intensive and requires managers to really manage people, then are we really saying that ERM is a punt in the dark, and it's luck, and purely context specific aspects (organisation-wise and the actual mix of individual personalities present in the project team etc.) that decides whether or not it is successfully implemented and what degree of success is achieved? Possibly yes, so therefore maybe there are no ways to accelerate change! So is change management really a phenomenon or just a 'band wagon' or 'the emperor's new clothes'?

One topic of discussion with Delphi participants was:

Question: ERM systems implementation requires application of change management techniques.

- Why are such techniques so rarely used?

Responses from Delphi participants:

"Because they are painful, and also deal with the unknown, and so inherently unsettling (just part of human nature)."

"Change management is a very difficult process, people have a natural aversion to it even in principle. It takes a brave management to start the process, and a skilled one to complete. Ergo for successful CM the management have to both brave and skilled, a rare combination."

"Most organisations do use them, but with varying levels of competence and effect. Selection of the appropriate method, the right people to execute it, disciplined project management and skilled, accurate and consistent communication are a challenging combination."

"Because implementers do not really grasp why staff resist change."

"Cynicism, failure of past initiatives in other areas."

Synthesis

- Rich picture of the change management process with arrows / flows etc. capturing time / stage elements.
- What contexts make change management easier / harder to achieve?
- Is there such a thing as a 'change' organisation and what would it comprise?
- How do you make the recalcitrant employee use the system?
- Would the CEO command/sanction strategy work just as effectively?
- What's the point of systems analysis? Is establishing functional requirements really a true reflection of the organisation's reality?
- Why do people implement ERM without undertaking an implicit change management process?
- Do we really need to bother with change management, don't we really leave it to luck / contingency anyway?
- Is not change management as a concept really just a touchy/feely fad, the 'emperor's new clothes'?

People Facet Delphi Study – Phenomenological Analysis – Cultural Change

RM is not an element in the culture of an organisation but an essential tool. It must be applicable across all types of organisational cultures. You cannot change cultural conditions to an optimum to suit RM.

There was divergence in views on cultural change among the participants of the Delphi study on the people aspects of designing an architecture for ERM. Some participants felt that records/information management needed to be part of an organisation's culture, others disagreed. This divergence stimulated a topic for further discussion:

Question: RM is not an element in the culture of an organisation but an essential tool. It must be applicable across all types of organisational cultures. You cannot change cultural conditions to an optimum to suite RM. Others disagree – citing the problem of failing to bring about prior cultural change.

- What aspects of an organisation's culture needs to be present to enable effective RM?
- ERM is a new activity so some degree of change must occur: what level or degree of change is required? what aspects of an organisation or of staff working behaviour would have to change?

Pieces & parts in space

There are a number of overlapping set of issues here:

Culture of an organisation. (See definition below)

RM within that organisation: policies and procedures, the RM department, the records professionals, recordkeeping activities undertaken by all staff, the recordkeeping tools used. All this might be considered to comprise the RM culture of the organisation. (See discussion of subcultures below.) A specific change to the 'RM culture' would range from (i) an amendment to a policy or a procedure, to (ii) an organisation with poor RM practices and staff unaware of their recordkeeping responsibilities trying to adopt formal RM policies and practices and to train their staff accordingly. These changes might come from within the RM department itself (which often means by staff at a relatively low level within the organisation) or come from executive level either initiated by them or agreed by them after lobbying from the RM department.

The societal change, occurring for us all and ongoing, is that of the introduction of IT into all our activities which means electronic records and therefore ERM. At organisational level this move to e-records and ERM is occurring, whether or not the organisation has undertaken this in any formal way, whether or not the staff are really aware of this ongoing change, whether or not there are specific tools for the RM task, over and above existing databases (e.g. finance) and office desktop packages. This might be deemed the ERM culture of the organisation – a subset of the RM culture.

A specific technological change – implementation of an ERMS. As above this might come from either the RM department level or the executive level. And the ERMS may be overlaid upon an organisation with a poor or a good RM culture, and a poor or a good ERM culture.

Episodes & sequences in time

As above, there is a changing RM culture as we move from the paper RM world, through the hybrid RM world (which we currently exist in) to a fully ERM world. And then that ERM world itself will be in a state of flux as new technology impacts upon it, e.g. the current effect of Web 2.0 technologies in the 'business' world as opposed to the personal world.

But each stage is not distinctly separated. People from the paper RM culture bring their preconceptions / engrained habits into the ERM world. And this applies to the records professional as well as other staff. And this affects what the ERM world can achieve and the speed of change. Young members of staff who have been brought up in a fully IT world bring in a different set of preconceptions and skills. However, though they are fully conversant with technology they may lack the distinction between the corporate and the personal with respect to technology, and they may also lack basic formal methods, e.g. students overuse of Google and lack of use of books and journals as information sources.

Qualities & dimensions

A definition of organisational culture is appropriate here:

From Wikipedia "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organisational_culture

“Organizational culture, or corporate culture, comprises the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values of an organization. It has been defined as ‘the specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organization and that control the way they interact with each other and with stakeholders outside the organization. Organizational values are beliefs and ideas about what kinds of goals members of an organization should pursue and ideas about the appropriate kinds or standards of behavior organizational members should use to achieve these goals. From organizational values develop organizational norms, guidelines or expectations that prescribe appropriate kinds of behavior by employees in particular situations and control the behavior of organizational members towards one another’”.

There is the idea that there are subcultures within organisations based on professional groupings or departments or work units/teams. Under this definition the RM unit and the records professionals within the organisation could legitimately be regarded as a subculture. But would this extend across the organisation as all staff undertake recordkeeping activities? Is there such a thing as an organisational RM culture?

I think that RM is more than just a tool but contributes to/reflects organisational culture. Does the organisation conduct itself in an honest, legal, ethical and accountable way? Are its activities open to staff, clients and the outside world? Does it perceive that its activities could contribute to the cultural heritage of the sector/country? All these questions directly impact upon what kinds of records should be kept, how long they should be kept, and who can have access to them. Answers to these questions will define the organisation’s recordkeeping principles and RM policies. Via RM procedures, training and the provision of appropriate tools these principles and policies will then be enacted out in the behaviour (working practices) of the staff. However, not all recordkeeping activities are mechanistic – staff, particularly those higher up in an organisation or with very specialised responsibilities, will encounter occasions when the judgements about whether to keep a formal record and who should see it etc. are not clear, even in the most prescribed RM systems. This may then require discussion, amendments of procedures etc. On occasions events outside the organisation with a particular RM slant may require changes to the organisational culture, e.g. Enron causing the development of the Sarbanes Oxley Act; the keeping of body parts by a pathologist in the NHS causing changes in the NHS Research Ethics requirements.

The ‘tool’ part of RM is that with good training and procedures most of the recordkeeping activities for most staff will happen smoothly and mechanistically. In fact, there is a call for RM to be embedded in IT systems / desktop office packages in such a way that they operate transparently as far as the staff member is concerned.

Comments from Delphi respondents:

"If an organisation is committed to bringing about culture change, the first essential is this: all stakeholders must develop a personal understanding of what the information they are creating or handling really represents.

Information exists for as many reasons as there are activities in the range of human existence. It may have a range of special values, including: practical, political, scientific, emotional, financial, intellectual and artistic.

It may also represent a serious liability.

It may cause harm, from minor through to life-threatening, if recklessly or carelessly created, changed, published or destroyed.

The key attribute of information is not its physical or electronic existence.

Its purpose in life is neither to be the object of the application of methodology, nor a means whereby professionals can indulge in esoteric point-scoring.

A sense of responsibility cannot be adequately developed without this understanding."

The cultural requirement for effective RM is: "Respect for the rule of law."

"To a certain extent, the cultural element is that of recognising the what RM is and how it affects the organisation and further to recognise that this is about what all members of the organisation do (and not just some in specific roles, for example, quality assurance)."

"ERM is not that radically different compared to other fundamental management ideas. For example if an organisation change their IT infrastructure to be fully based upon service oriented architecture (SOA) this also affect the organisation. In all kinds of larger changes in an organisation the organisational culture is affecting the outcome. In fundamental changes in an organisation every person is affected and change management research will most likely give some advices on how to deal with different problems."

So one reason for the divergence in responses is that we are really talking about at what level you address this question.

Another reason for this divergence might be that we are actually talking about behavioural change not cultural change. Behaviour interrelates to organisational culture.

A different aspect is that of the organisational culture affecting the quality of the RM activities of the organisation and affecting RM changes, e.g. what changes are deemed necessary, how the change can be implemented, and the outcome of the change, even whether it succeeds or fails.

Settings & environments

The initial premise for this PA is that "RM needs to be universally applicable within a broad spectrum of different management and corporate cultures".

It seems that we are really down to the question of what level are we talking about?

There are standard RM principles, procedures, techniques and tools which are applicable across all organisations. The interrelationship with organisational culture comes in decisions about the organisation's recordkeeping principles and its RM policies.

Prerequisites & consequences

The nub of the topic is:

If RM is purely a tool then if you make changes – a new RM procedure, implementation of an ERMS - then there is no need to change the organisational culture. This seems to resonate with the IT / systems engineering view of change management (fixing a bug, problems, design flaw) which is a much more circumscribed and mechanistic approach (see PA on change management).

Comments from Delphi respondents:

When implementing ERM avoid "failing to bring about prior cultural change".

"By building ERM on very focussed stakeholder requirements, implemented through integrated information technology that bypasses individual decision-making about records, then change management is limited to informing knowledge workers about the consequence of automatic data capture. (i.e. personal messages on office systems may be captured)."

"ERM is not that radically different compared to other fundamental management ideas. For example if an organisation change their IT infrastructure to be fully based upon service oriented architecture (SOA) this also affect the organisation. In all kinds of larger changes in an organisation the organisational culture is affecting the outcome. In fundamental changes in an organisation every person is affected and change management research will most likely give some advices on how to deal with different problems."

We're back at levels again.

Is the RM change of such a magnitude that it impinges on more than a straightforward alteration of a procedure and therefore a working practice? It could be argued that adoption of an ERMS in an organisation who has previously had no such system, or has poor RM practices, is a change of sufficient magnitude to require some aspects of cultural change This is more especially true because the current 'state of the art' / design of ERM systems does not provide for them to be transparently embedded in the background of existing IT systems/desktop office packages. However, I don't think we can be talking about the whole of the culture changing. The trick is to work out what needs to be changed at the cultural level to enable the RM change.

If the level of RM change is small, then notification and some awareness raising/training may be all that is sufficient. If a larger RM change is required than you need the adoption of change management processes to enable these changes. (See PA on change management). Where the RM change

requires changes in organisational culture than the change management process would need to cover the organisational cultural changes as well.

Perspectives & approaches

There is disagreement here, but it may be because of differences in definitions/perspective level so some analysis of respondents by stakeholder group could be instructive.

Cores & fringes

There is a call for design of ERM systems so they can be transparently embedded in the background of existing IT systems/desktop office packages. Therefore staff would be unaware of them, and unaware of their recordkeeping activities. However is this the chimera of the technological fix to a complex, human problem, or is it a future reality? If it is a future reality, what timespan are we talking about? Such a future reality would side step many of the problems we are currently grappling with re organisational/staff awareness/understanding of RM.

Appearances & disappearances

State of play of ERM and state of the art of ERMS means that we are not in an ideal world yet in managing e-records. The ERM change is part of a wider societal change, and implementation of an ERMS will be a large change in an organisation and affect its culture. In the future this may not be so.

However, will we ever achieve a state where all organisations manage their records well? This never happened in the paper world. Will we be able to design technology that will require us to undertake good RM, but this will be occurring in the background so we won't know we are doing it?

Clarity

I think there is a problem of different definitions / different perspective levels.

Synthesis

- When covering more abstract topics, the difficulties of different definitions, different understandings can cause confusion.
- You need to be specific and give concrete examples when talking about the part RM plays in an organisational culture and the effect of RM changes on the organisational culture (and vice versa).
- RM is more than just a tool, it is part of an organisation's culture (at the principles, strategic level) and the RM corporate function exists within an organisation as a subculture.
- Many RM changes won't require organisational culture changes, and if they do, it would only be parts of the culture that would be affected.
- RM is about staff behaviour and RM changes require behavioural changes. It could be more useful to look for solutions embedded in behavioural disciplines.

People Facet Delphi Study – Phenomenological Analysis – Essential Skills for ERM

Introduction

One Delphi respondent's view: The essential skills for ERM are (in order from most to least important): project management, change management, business process analysis, technology, records management.

This response was in answer to the following question:

Question: "Any other solution(s) that you think should be tried, or avoided, that does not fit in with the above issues but should be included at this stage."

Response: "Have the correct mix of skills involved – essential skills (in rough order from most to least important) include project management, change management, business process analysis, technology and records management."

It formed the basis of the following question the next round of the Delphi:

Question: The **essential skills** for ERM are (in order from most to least important): project management, change management, business process analysis, technology, records management. Do you agree with the need for these skills? Do you agree with their order of importance?

Pieces & parts in space¹

There seem to be two critical aspects to this issue (phenomenon) – (i) **what** are the essential skills for ERM and (ii) **who** needs them. Additional aspects are when are these essential skills needed, are some more important at particular times, and how are they best acquired. Formal education and training? CPD? Work-based training? Through experience?

There was agreement from Delphi respondents that the five essential skills presented (viz. project management, change management, business process analysis, technology, records management) were needed, none were dismissed. Three others were added:

- people management ("essential to accomplish the ones" presented)
- negotiation & influencing skills ("important enough to be singled out and added to the list in their own right")
- "knowledge in how to capture user requirements". (Does this mean how to conduct a user needs analysis or is it about how to represent/articulate/translate/specify understood requirements to systems designers)?

There was some dispute among the respondents about the order of importance. Three respondents (from 7) supported the order given (as above); three suggested that records management should be higher up the list, with one including technology higher:

- "I would probably shift records management up there with change management"
- "records management principles are most important. How would you know how to implement if you do not know what it should do?"
- "may have put technology and records management a little higher up the order"

The remaining respondent said all were "equally important".

Given the generic/transferrable nature of the skills listed (except for records management skills) how will the records (and other) professionals react? Will they see this as 'dumbing down' or 'upskilling'/'raising the bar'? Will they perceive their status and value of their profession as being under threat since anyone can fit this bill? (Compare comment on turf wars PA).

Does this mean records professionals are 'jacks of all trades' and 'masters of none'? Or does it mean they need to be 'masters of many'? Is that possible? Realistic? One respondent's view is: "don't think it necessary for one person (e.g. head of RM) to have all these skills in abundance – for example with good communication with IT department advanced skills in technology whilst being useful isn't a necessity".

What follows in italics are thoughts and material from a University of Northumbria MSc RMDL module which are pertinent.

Given a records management function exists in all organisations, if we focus on the managerial level of responsibility, the person carrying out this role needs to have a range of knowledge and skills. Much of this knowledge and many of the skills reflect the difference between professionals and managers in relation to the hierarchy of management skills in organisational life. At entry level management technical skills are predominant; at the middle management level human interaction skills are required; and at the senior management level the need is for conceptual skills involving the ability to take an holistic organisational view that are paramount.

Progressing up the management hierarchy requires strong management knowledge and skills, in the broadest sense, and less development of technical or specialist skills. But it will be imperative that those managerial skills enable the effective delivery of technical skills by others.

So what skills does a records manager need in the 21st century? Jones (1999) ² identifies the key skills essential for today's records manager as:

- communication – the ability to communicate to different people and using the appropriate (business) language
- business analysis and understanding
- management – turns concepts into reality, plans into action
- information and records management.

With the exception of the last one those skills might apply to many different organisational roles. So does that mean today's records manager is simply a manager? A generalist? At the top of the tree that may well be the case but, thinking strategically about records management, then it is a management function and must be aligned and integrated with the business of the organisation and so perhaps the emphasis on management knowledge and skills is appropriate and justified."

The e-TERM project considered building partnerships to be fundamental for records managers. Developing successful working relationships requires a very good level of IT and organisational knowledge as well as interpersonal skills.

Best (1996) ³ confirmed the need for records managers to play an active part in the process approach:

"Business analysis and process modelling are key to the task of improving the application of information management ideas to improve corporate performance. Until, and unless, we as information managers can represent the role of information in the business process we will always be accused of being peripheral to the main thrust of business performance."

However, he expressed concern about the fragmentation of the information profession which mitigates against a strong unified message from the wide range of practitioners in the information management field. This continues to be a legitimate concern with the number of professional associations that exist, including the Records Management Society of Great Britain, the Society of Archivists, CILIP⁴, the Business Archives Council, the ICA (International Council on Archives), ARMA International and the British Computer Society, to mention but a few.

An exercise with final year students on the RM option is as follows:

*Skills for records managers: Which of the following skills are **essential**, **desirable** or **dispensable** for a records manager. Place only three in each category, duplication is not allowed.*

1. IT skills
2. Business Management
3. Communication skills
4. Indexing skills
5. Cataloguing skills
6. Financial Management skills

7. People Management skills

8. Broad Legal Knowledge

9. Premises Management skills

Is it worth mapping these skills, who needs them, why, how they are needed & used in a mind map/rich picture/matrix that shows the relationships and against which professional organisations/educators (e.g. HEIs, FARMER members ⁵)/trainers could benchmark/audit their bodies of professional knowledge/accreditation criteria/programmes/courses/learning & skills outcomes? CILIP's current 'body of professional knowledge' identifies the following generic, transferable skills: Information literacy; Interpersonal skills; Management skills (HR/budgets); Marketing; Training & mentoring; Research methods.

If these are the essential skills how do they compare with person specifications for advertised posts in ERM (for records professionals and others)? Are they listed as essential, desirable, not explicitly mentioned? It might be interesting to do a quick comparison.

Episodes & sequences in time⁶

Have these skills always been part of the (records/ERM) professional's skill set? Have all of them always been essential or are some new (e.g. change management, business process analysis)? Is it that their relative importance has changed over time e.g. project management has surely always been a necessary skill but is even more important as ERM projects are bigger, more complex, more costly than previous projects? Similarly with people management – not just one's own team but records creators, other/new partners. Clearly some change – none more so than IT, which demands constant learning, updating, skills enhancement.

At what point(s) are these skills essential in terms of the professional's role (junior/early career, middle, senior position)? Is it necessary for early career, newly in post professionals to be skilled in all these areas, to be knowledgeable about all of them? Is it necessary, or at least more realistic, that some will be learned over time through experience and/or continuing professional development?

On the issue of IT skills something that has struck me is the suggestion that records professionals should learn, experiment with new technology *outside the workplace* and bring their learning/understanding into the workplace. For example, from Delphi respondents, "get the RM team using all of the 'new media' that you're likely to encounter over the coming years. It's easy to find and use for free and socially. Don't wait to be educated by vendors, getting oversold in the process". "Get RM staff to play with new media outside of work so that they have an appreciation of what is possible, then start small experiments with new media inside work to understand the implications for IM". This is after all what we see with many other people (cf. Ceri Hughes, RMS Annual Conference 2008, KM 2.0, citing KPMG staff as wanting social networking etc technologies in the workplace to do business because of their use and preference for them outside the workplace).

Qualities & dimensions⁷

Skills for ERM, irrespective of who (which professional group(s)) needs them, is a fundamental aspect of the people dimension of designing an organisation-centred architecture for ERM. It should be important for all organisations to enable recruitment/engagement of the right staff and their continued development, as well as for educators (e.g. FARMER)/trainers/consultants and professional bodies to ensure they remain relevant.

Settings & environments⁸

If these skills are essential for ERM then they will be essential irrespective of the setting and environment. However, who has the skills may vary. For example, in small organisations will it be more important that one person has them or will it be that the extent of their application is less (e.g. change management might be easier, projects less complex because fewer people, less variety of user requirements, easier communication is possible)? In different countries different skill sets may be found in the various professional groups/academic qualifications, training provision etc. It may be interesting to explore.

Prerequisites & consequences⁹

See points under 'episodes and sequences, in time'. Given the nature of the essential skills identified, the implications are for tertiary education and training (i.e. HEIs), work-based training and continuing professional development. The jack-of-all-trades vs. master-of-none, transferable vs. subject specific skills, balance is also pertinent.

Perspectives & approaches¹⁰

Who is best placed to say what are the essential skills? Can this only come from experience of success and/or failure? Are consultants, experience implementers best placed? What would be the perspective of HR managers?

I can imagine that the various professional associations might have different views, that the turf wars syndrome might rear its head if there was any sense of competition or needing to protect ones members. Would this be the same for educators, trainers, consultants?

Senior managers (as a stakeholder group) might see the generic skills as most important, particularly if they do not recognise the professional nature and speciality of records management as a discipline. Will (should?) records professionals see this set of essential skills as something to 'bag' and be able to 'sell' for better posts, enhanced status and career progression? A CV evidencing the full range would surely set such professionals apart from the rest i.e. fit with upskilling rather than dumbing down/downskilling/down-grading.

Cores & fringes¹¹

At the core for records managers and archivists is the subject/discipline/domain specific knowledge/skills (e.g. lifecycle/continuum models, appraisal, retention etc). This has either been formally acquired from HEI study (usually but not exclusively a postgraduate qualification) or 'on-the-job' through experience, mentoring, training. University programmes usually include some transferable skills but do they include all of these essential ones and at the right level? Indeed can they? It is one thing to learn about the principles of project management, for instance, but it is not always easy to provide appropriate experience of managing a realistic project. Is the balance between transferable and discipline specific skills appropriate? How do other professional groups address the core (essential) and the desirable skills?

Appearances & disappearances¹²

The fact that Philip Jones wrote an opinion piece on the 21st records manager suggests skills have and/or need to change to meet ERM requirements. Professional bodies (e.g. CILIP) do update their 'body of knowledge' requirements and the Society of Archivists have updated their accreditation criteria for post-graduate qualifications in records management and archives as part of their commitment to "advance the professional education and training of archivists, archive conservators and records managers and those engaged in related activities" laid down in their constitution. It would be interesting to trace changes in skill-sets through professional body requirements, curricula and person specifications for job adverts, but I doubt we have time. It would also be interesting (and more realistic) to compare the essential skills identified in the people Delphi with the requirements to deliver Steve Bailey's *10 Principles of Records Management 2.0* (Bailey, 2008¹³).

Clarity¹⁴

My sense is that there is a lot of literature about skills for ERM (but this needs to be collated and referenced) and, just from my own knowledge, some leading organisations have invested heavily in training and educating their (records) professionals (e.g. The National Archives, formerly Public Record Office; the BBC; the European Central Bank; PRONI (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland) and five universities in Eire).

I sense that the range of skills is not particularly controversial or disputed but that the real question is as highlighted at the start, does one person need them all or, as one respondent said, not - because good communication and partnership working assures their availability/access. There is perhaps one exception up for debate – IT/technology skills. Surely everyone, given the e-environment in which we

live and work, needs to be IT savvy – the question is what degree of IT knowledge and skills is required. This is a key area of uncertainty and fuzziness.

Synthesis

The people Delphi has gathered views/evidence that the e-environment has altered the knowledge and skill requirements of the information professions viz. records professionals, information management professionals, including librarians, information & communication managers, knowledge managers, IT and information systems professionals.

Most of the agreed upon essential skills are 'generic' or transferable rather than discipline specific. The essence of this phenomenon is about *who* has the requisite skills – one person or not? If there are good working relationships between different roles, stakeholders, professions then a 'master of all trades' will not be required which is reassuring as it is likely to be unrealistic! An alternative is that we have (the need/opportunity for) masters of some trades i.e. specialisation within professions. (Responses such as record professionals specialising in IT, or law, or business management; IT staff specialising in record keeping).

On reflection this PA of essential skills raises some similar questions to the PA of turf wars and highlights the need to engage educators & trainers, professional associations and employers in a discussion about what is required moving forward in terms of knowledge and skills to ensure we have the agility and ability to accelerate positive change in ERM.

In addition to the rich pictures (views of the disciplines and stakeholders) and possible timeline (development/origins of the key professional groups) suggested in the turf wars PA a matrix/mapping of essential and desirable skills against stakeholders/professional groups could be useful as a starting point for discussion amongst those above.

¹ Aspect of the topic - the pieces, parts, in the spatial sense, incl. interconnections, links

² Jones, P. (1999). The records manager beyond the millennium. Records Management Journal, 9(1), p3-8

³ Best, D. (1996). The fourth resource: information and its management. Aslib/Gower.

⁴ Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

⁵ Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research for the UK and Ireland <http://www.digicult.info/farmer/>

⁶ Aspect of the topic - the episodes and sequences, in the temporal sense, including stages, eras, historical, iterations, reiteration

⁷ Aspect of the topic - the qualities and dimensions of the phenomenon (other than parts, episodes etc), incl. attributes, characteristics, levels, size

⁸ Aspect of the topic - setting, environments, surroundings, incl. contexts, ambience, sector, country, jurisdiction

⁹ Aspect of the topic - the prerequisites and consequences in time, including underpinnings, requirements, impact, implications

¹⁰ Aspect of the topic - the perspectives or approaches one can take, including the four ISO stakeholders (senior managers, systems administrators, RM professionals, employees), psychological, philosophical, ethical, political, ecological, legal

¹¹ Aspect of the topic - cores or foci and fringes or horizons, incl. positive (at the core) to negative (on the fringes), one focus or multiple foci, looking to the horizon (aspiration, vision), beyond the horizon (blue sky, future prediction, forecasting)

¹² Aspect of the topic - the appearing and disappearing of the phenomena, incl. historical, contextual, transitory, continuous/discontinuous, persistence, cause/effect, visible from certain viewpoints

¹³ Bailey, S. (2008). Managing the crowd: rethinking records management for the Web 2.0 world. Facet.

¹⁴ Aspect of the topic - the clarity of the phenomenon, incl. degree of uncertainty, definability, explanation, fuzziness, conflation

People Facet Delphi Study – Phenomenological Analysis – Change Within the Management Class

One respondent's view: RM can't require a whole management class to change

This response was in answer to the following question:

Question: "Managers need to commit not just to change in the organisation but lead by example through changing themselves"

Response: "This emphasis on managers changing themselves is misplaced. RM should not adopt change management of a whole management class throughout business and government, all of the public and private sector, as a criteria for success. This is a death wish for records management."

It formed the basis of a question in the next Delphi round:

Question: RM can't require a whole management class to change. If the value of RM is not recognised and the risks of poor RM not realised who is responsible for changing this perception? Or doesn't it matter? Organisations can survive without good RM.

Pieces & parts in space

The key facets of this phenomenon are:

- Do managers need to change their views/perceptions etc of RM? If so, what change is required, when and why?
- Who is responsible for making the change happen? Does it matter?
- Why and how can organisations survive without good RM? Is that different to survival without other aspects of good management? What are the drivers?

It is intriguing that the need for managers to commit not just to change in the organisation but lead by example through changing themselves was the single issue ranked joint first in terms of urgency but then prompted a response that such an emphasis on managers changing themselves was misplaced. If used as a criteria for success it "is a death wish for records management." So there is significant divergence of opinion about management change in the context of RM.

It seems to me that managers *must* recognize the value of the organisation's information assets in the same way they recognize the value of its other assets (people, money, estates). This may be a significant change of mind-set but what other change does it require? And when is change needed – before, during or after RM/ERM implementation? (See similar question in PA of change management.)

I believe that no *single* role/person is responsible for changing the mind-set/perception of the value of RM. For example, "[t]he people responsible for changing this perception are [t]he people who are aware of it, who have the knowledge and skills to articulate the desired state and who are in a position where it is one of their responsibilities to do so. This may not be an overt responsibility." "The responsibilities are the CEO and the company board in private organisations and in public organisations the director-general is one of the persons responsible." "Unfortunately it is probably going to be down to RM individual/team involved to change perception of firm." It *doesn't matter* who does it, in fact it will vary. For instance, if management education and training programmes truly cover the management of information/knowledge assets as equally important as other organizational assets then managers should not perceive them as being different/less valuable. If not, then records/information professionals should take a stronger, more bullish stance and state that 'no business case is required' for RM - after all do HR, Finance, Estates Managers have to make a business case for managing the organisation's people, money, buildings? No. They do have to make the business case for new systems, training etc (i.e. resources) to implement that management. It should be the same for RM.

Many organisations can survive without good RM just as they can survive without good people, financial and/or estates management. It is no different, it is just that they may be able to survive longer without good RM, depending on the sector, than (say) good financial management. It is the impact, in

terms of timing and nature, that varies. “In the short term you do not need a working RM but in the long term the lack of RM could be costly” yet “It is however becoming more difficult to survive without good RM.” For some organisations, however, survival is at least partly dependent on good information management – external drivers (regulation, legislation) demand it (e.g. pharmaceutical sector).

Poor financial management may have the greatest and fastest impact on survival, though the recent Northern Rock example refutes this as does local/central government financial health. But many organisations don’t proactively manage their staff well, don’t provide great salaries or working conditions but continue to survive. “Good government requires good recordkeeping.” (DIRKS, 2003). “Good business requires good recordkeeping” (State Records Authority of New South Wales, 2006).

Survival, necessity and drivers are neatly summarised in one of the responses “If a society needs ERM to enable economic activity to prosper and compete within a rule of law, then a solution will be imposed by the society whether it exists within a democratic or other environment. The debate over implementation may range along the classic continuum between a legal framework requiring a standard of recordkeeping or a laissez-faire strategy that relies upon occasional corporate collapse to demonstrate the impact of ERM failure.” The sense is that external (regulatory, legislative) drivers will have greatest impact in the short term but the in the longer term society (i.e. the collective people) will drive change (see below about ‘natural evolution’).

Episodes & sequences in time

It may be that management perception of the value of good RM and risks of poor RM will change/is changing for the better as part of ‘natural evolution’. How old is the information revolution/economy in comparison with the previous industrial revolution/economy? 50 years? Less? How long is it since information was first recognised and promoted as the fourth resource? (See Best, 1996 & Hawley Committee, 1995) Will it simply take time? True that technology has only more recently been identified as the fifth resource and yet seems to be perceived in a more positive light by managers – why this is so is the subject of another related debate, discussion, analysis!

Will, with the passage of time, - and the even greater dependence on information and communication to make decisions, do business, and the future management generation brought up on Web 2.0 collaborative, information centric applications - it become ‘the norm’ to recognise the value of information/records and hence its good management? This relates to the responses about change needing to “come from both directions in an organisation, from top down and bottom up. However, there has to be a mandate for change by senior management, unless the bottom up is revolution (and can be quite messy).”

Settings & environments

In tightly regulated industries, e.g. pharmaceuticals, managers do recognise the necessity of good RM and the risks of poor RM (from losing their licence/approval to continue to do business to adverse publicity about products). But over a decade ago they also recognised that the upstream business processes were all about information creation, analysis and use and that investing in its better management would contribute to reducing the lengthy drug discovery and development time and hence time to market. This could lead to earlier, larger sales within patent lifetimes and hence competitive advantage. An example of external and internal drivers leading to management recognition of the importance of information – not sure how much of a change this was or that it represents a totally top down approach.

In countries with freedom of information (or equivalent) legislation there may be greater recognition of the need for good RM but, even in the UK, FoI has not resulted in the demise of any organisation and it has cost organisations to manage.

Prerequisites & consequences

See comments above under “episodes and sequences in time”. RM simply cannot require a whole management class change otherwise nothing will ever happen. Incremental and/or evolutionary change in perception/mind-set is more likely; it will be driven by external factors as well as from the bottom-up and sideways peer pressure within organisations. And, again, change may not be a *pre-requisite* for successful RM/ERM.

Perspectives & approaches

It would be interesting to know which stakeholders (other than records professionals of course) tend to recognise the value of good and the risks of poor records/information management. There may be no pattern either by stakeholder group or discipline or sector. For some positive perception of RM may be innate, it may be related to attitudes to risk, because of a good/bad experience or any of the factors listed above (i.e. psychological etc). It might be worth trying to see if attitudes do vary between different stakeholders (again see similar comment in change management PA).

Cores& fringes

“In the short term you do not need a working RM but in the long term the lack of RM could be costly”; “...it's not essential for survival or success. Plenty of surviving successful organisations don't do it well”; and “Obviously to some degree organisation[s] can survive without good (E)RM as many do at the moment; but the point is why should they have to when the benefits of good quality (E)RM considerable outweigh the disadvantages/ inconveniences of setting up said system.” Given these views (and the reality) that organisations can and do survive in the short term without good RM there is a horizon dimension to this phenomenon. But can they survive forever? Are there any real examples of organisations failing because of poor RM? (Do we know or can we try to check?) Some fail after a major disaster because of failure to backup information (there are statistics and it did happen after 9/11 in New York). Others, like Enron, Arthur Anderson, Worldcom, possibly others, fail because of fraudulent activity or links to that which are *exposed by and evidenced in* their records rather than because of poor RM.

If managers need to take a long-term visionary or aspirational view why don't they? They do in terms of financial management (they will have short, medium and long-term plans) and also with people management – investment in training and continuing professional development may have an immediate payback but the return on investment is often long term. In fact it may not be fully realised as often another organisation benefits from the personal development invested in a member of staff when they leave the organisation that made the initial investment. But of course this also happens the other way round. Investment in people/money management must at least in part be the desire to want the organisation to grow and prosper, so is the root of this that information/records is not seen as a factor in organisational ‘prosperity’? Is there something less tangible, measurable about the benefits of information management?

Is this something to do with the individual person, their psychology, persona etc? Again, in our personal lives some manage their money, relationships and property better than others. Some take a short term view concerning themselves only with today/tomorrow, others a long term view e.g. planning for retirement.

Appearances & disappearances

I doubt the attitudes of managers has changed significantly over the past 50+ years; perhaps it's just that, because of the significant investment in technology and its pervasiveness and reliance organisations have on it for creating and managing information, it is just more difficult for records professionals to successfully manage an organisation's records asset in the post-custodial e-world.

Clarity

Greater clarity of the extent of this phenomenon is needed to define its boundaries – i.e. is it about changing management's perception of RM or is about that and getting them to change the way they manage their records to lead by example?

Synthesis

This phenomenon is closely linked to others on change management and cultural change (see those Phenomenological Analyses).

It seems that RM *cannot* require a whole management class change as a pre-requisite. Nothing or little will happen. Attitudes will change in an evolutionary way because of a variety of different drivers (often external) and different people/experiences.

Three interesting aspects to follow-up are:

- to find out which stakeholders (other than records professionals) recognise the value of good and the risks of poor records/information management. Is there any pattern/tendency by stakeholder group or discipline or sector?
- to find out why certain managers have a positive perception of RM (innate, attitude to risk, good/bad previous experience etc)
- to find out why managers invest in the long-term as well as short to medium term in managing other assets (people, money, estates) but not always information/records – what is about the former that makes them worthy of investment and not the latter?

This seems to me to be an important issue emerging from the People Investigation about the management stakeholder group which has implications or might also be found in other stakeholder groups.

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People Facet Delphi Study – Phenomenological Analysis – ‘Turf Wars’ Between Professions

Pieces & parts in space

Elements here include (roughly categorised):

- exactly which professions are involved in turf wars? Can we accurately represent this so that we don't imply wars that don't exist? Records managers & archivists; records managers and IT; information managers & knowledge managers; IT and information systems; archivists and IT; etc.
- history of the professions (where they came from); nature of people in each profession; perceptions of their purpose/role; beliefs; knowledge and skills; qualifications
- perceptions of the status/value of one's profession; power struggles (especially concern of archivists & records managers being valued less/having less power than IT people); sense of vulnerability, lack of confidence vs. great confidence
- professionals' own views/perceptions vs. impact of views/perceptions of others

Episodes & sequences in time

Did turf wars exist in the past or is this a phenomenon of the e-environment? Is it due to (i) blurring lines/boundaries (what is the difference between documents, records & grey literature?); or (ii) the space *and* time model disappearing and changing the way we think about and implement information/records management; or the need for new (ICT) knowledge and skills? Again the historical development of the different professions and their rise/fall (?) seems to be part of this phenomenon. For example the significance of archivists in the 20th century and their dominance in the development of principles and practice in the public sector (esp. central government and public records acts); the emergence of records managers and development of RM profession because of necessity and frustration/disillusionment with the archives profession (a breakaway group); the ubiquitous IT profession and the tensions/distinctions between that and, for example, computer science. [Might be possible to draw a timeline of professional body development.]

Qualities & dimensions

A number of professions, potentially closely related, but with different foci/drivers; for example IT professionals work at both the organisational and societal levels (e.g. Microsoft, Google, Apple with technology for the populous as well as 'businesses'); the archivists in reality have society at their heart; and records managers and knowledge managers are more focused on their organisations. Is any profession centre stage? What about information managers, information systems people and librarians? Do academics in these disciplines engage in similar turf wars or have they 'simply' ploughed their own furrows? Are they in a better position/should they take a lead and demonstrate the need for and benefits of collaboration not confrontation?

Settings & environments

I have a sense that turf wars between the professions are similar across the globe but this may not be true; worth looking to see if any country has/is actively promoting explicit links and if they have been successful. One example in the UK is the recent drive by the head of TNA to forge links with CILIP i.e. between archivists and librarians. Is it that multi/interdisciplinary collaboration exists in some organisations (public and private sector) but the turf wars are more obvious at professional gatherings/events where the focus reverts to type/passion/interest? Or is it that turf wars exist *in practice* because of power struggles/positioning etc and don't in the academic disciplines? (See point below on perspectives). In small organisations of course it's more likely that the roles/responsibilities lie with one person/group, i.e. that they aren't separated, so turf wars can't exist.

Prerequisites & consequences

Where turf wars, or silo/focused thinking, exist then there will be no holistic, long-term strategic approach to ERM. All professional groups have something to bring to the table and need to work together, from system design onwards, for ERM to be effective and successful. Without this, implications over time include, for instance: information loss; information not accessible or usable; legacy systems needing migration; huge appraisal/retention management problems; interoperability problems; unnecessary costs to organisations; loss of heritage.

Perspectives & approaches

Professional associations can take a lead and enter into dialogue, collaboration (e.g. through joint events, reciprocal membership); academics can take a lead (e.g. through courses which include topics/philosophy/theory/readings/tutors from other disciplines, joint research, co-authorship); senior figures can take a lead (e.g. Head of TNA already is; ICO?, others?) If these are 'top down' approaches then what could happen 'bottom up' if anything? I wonder how people in the medical profession see themselves? Do GPs see themselves as specifically that, battling with neuro-surgeons or cardiologists etc, or do they see the latter as 'specialists' with whom they partner for the patient's well-being? In turn, do specialists see GPs as partners or 'suppliers' of patients/work, do they see themselves as superior? Is their allegiance/affinity with the 'medical profession' or their special interest group within it? Are there parallels here with the various information professions or is this a spurious analogy? Why/why not?

Cores & fringes

At the core for archivists is the social value of records; at the core for records managers is the evidential, business support & corporate memory/knowledge value of records, the social value is on the horizon; at the core for IT people are the technology and systems and the value of the information content is on the fringe; for IS people what is core and what is fringe? However, some academics/disciplines have aspirations about multiple foci/multidisciplinary collaboration perhaps because of their own beliefs and their colleagues. The cynical view might be that 'multidisciplinary' is the buzzword in academia.

Appearances and disappearances

See points above on 'episodes'. Turfs wars need to be eradicated, not subverted, hidden, if ERM is to be successful (on the basis that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts). If not, then the strongest, most powerful, influential, knowledgeable and successful profession(s) will win out/survive/conquer. I'm minded of Steve Bailey's statement at the first Witness Seminar (2006) "it's not illegal to impersonate a records manager" – the same could be said of any/all of the information professions. Good examples of change/transition include SoA conference programmes including more (and more) records management issues/speakers; RMS conference including topics/speakers from other disciplines; IT usage of terms such as lifecycle management, retention.

Clarity

It is apparent and manifests itself in, for example, membership of professional associations, conference/meeting attendance, conference programmes, including speakers. How many people are members of more than one professional body? How many people attend/asked to speak at different events/conferences? But to what extent are the turf 'wars' conflated and rather than 'wars' the phenomenon is more about 'silo mentality' and fear? Is this more hype than reality?

Synthesis

On reflection engaging in a PA of turf wars between professions has made me wonder:

- Are they really 'turf wars' because of concerns about power/influence or silo thinking, protectionism, lack of confidence?
- Why would any one professional group think they had all the answers in such a wide-ranging, complex arena/challenge?
- Is there real evidence of 'battles' in practice or only in principle (manifest in articles, discussion)?
- Academics and leading figures should take up the mantle and 'preach' the holistic view, actively work together (on research and in practice) so that the notion of turf wars is anathema.
- Why worry – take a Darwinian approach – survival of the fittest?
- Get the Chairs of professional bodies together and knock heads?

Regardless of the degree of existence/actuality of this phenomenon it would be useful to capture the views of the disciplines and stakeholders in one (or separate?) rich pictures building on Bob Wiggins' information worldview of the 1990s. Also possibly a timeline of the development/origins of the key professional groups with their missions/definitions/constitutions for comparison and debate about what needs to be done for moving forward.