AC+erm Project

Vignettes

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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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Background

General

One of the objectives of the AC+erm Project is to develop vignettes – a type of output that crystallises aspects of the research findings in the form of tools or exemplars that can be of use to practitioners, users and other stakeholders.

The purpose of the vignettes is not only to provide ready-made tools for use (though many of them can be treated in this manner), but also to suggest models or templates for building tools whose content can be tailored to suit a given context.

Prototypes of three of the vignettes listed below – fridge magnets, rich pictures, and story – were tested and discussed by participants in the project Colloquia.

Four of the vignettes reproduce a selection of the Phenomenological Analyses which are also included as outputs of the People and Process Delphi Studies. These analyses were deemed suitable for inclusion as they explore issues of immediate relevance to records management theory and practice.

Nature of Output

The vignettes are of seven types: fridge magnets; phenomenological analyses; rich pictures; Snakes and Ladders game; narrative story; videos; mind maps; and word clouds. More detailed explanations of the tools, along with suggestions for use, are included in the introductions to the individual vignettes.

The full list of vignettes is as follows:

1. Snakes and Ladders: Opportunities and pitfalls in records management
2. Phenomenological Analysis: Actors and contexts
3. Phenomenological Analysis: The bottom line for records management
4. Phenomenological Analysis: Principles of records management
5. Phenomenological Analysis: Skills for records management
6. Mind Map: Electronic Records Management solutions
7. Rich Picture: Managing risk
8. Narrative / story: Privacy, security and access
9. Word Cloud: Solutions to ‘people’ issues in managing e-records
10. Fridge Phrases
11. Video

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Vignette – 1. Snakes and Ladders

Nature of tool:

A 'Snakes and Ladders' board game based on organizational RIM opportunities (ladders) and pitfalls (snakes). It can be modified to suit particular organizational contexts.

The tool was drafted as a MS PowerPoint slide, which is available separately to facilitate basic editing and customization. In this document, a static copy in PDF format is provided for reference.

The idea for this game, and the 'rules' in the version presented here, came from participants at the 1st AC+erm Colloquium.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

The game of Snakes and Ladders is conceived primarily as an 'ice-breaker' rather than a tool for formal exploration of the issues. Possible uses include:

- training staff in RIM issues and responsibilities
- engaging staff informally at 'learning lunches', RIM drop-in sessions, etc

A variant of the game could be employed to allow greater exploration of issues: use a board showing only the snakes and ladders, with participants adding the possible 'triggers' for ascent and descent in the context under discussion.

Acknowledgments:

Concept created by:

G. Sippings, C. Vallis, E. Lomas, J. Foster, J. Lappin and M. Schofield.

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- Leaning Ladder / Clipart ETC http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/43100/43161/ladder-med_43161.htm
- Ladder of success / SEO Book http://www.seobook.com/images/ladder-success.png

Records Manager made CIO!

99 98 97 96 Data Protection enforcement notice 94 93 92 91

82 83 84 86 87 88 89 90

80 Records Management put in charge of IT 78 77 76 75 Basement archive floods – mould sets in 73 72 71

61 62 63 Everyone hates the corporate file-plan 65 66 68 69 IM principles in job descriptions and targets

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41 42 43 CEO leaves laptop on train 45 46 47 48 49 50

40 38 37 35 34 33 No budget for Records Management 31

22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

20 19 18 17 16 Corporate file-plan agreed 14 12 11

1 Standardised naming conventions agreed 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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Vignette – 2. Phenomenological Analysis: Actors and Contexts

Nature of tool:

Text-based; an exploration of issues relating to organizational actors and contexts in the form of a phenomenological analysis of responses to the AC+erm Project Delphi Study on the 'People' facet of e-Records Management.

The tool is intended to provide a basis for theoretical and practical discussion at a relatively sophisticated level.

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;
episodes and sequences in time;
qualities and dimensions;
settings and environments;
prerequisites and consequences;
perspectives and approaches;
cores and fringes;
appearances and disappearances;
clarity.

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

Suggested audience or setting for use:

This analysis may used as a starting-point for examining the complex organizational and behavioural contexts in which recordkeeping and records management are carried out. Although it is not limited to any particular audience, the nature of the tool means that it is appropriate only in situations where sustained discussion or engagement is possible.

Possible settings include:

seminars or coursework for students in the recordkeeping disciplines

seminars / workshops for recordkeeping professionals

discussion groups / meetings in the workplace, if the organizational culture facilitates reflective practice and other stakeholders are receptive.

Vignettes – 2. 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	> Value > Costs > Risk > Benefits
Engagement with RM	> (Lack of) understanding / involvement by actors > Complexity / abstraction of IM/ERM > Indirect / deferred / intangible impact of RM > Accountability
Legitimacy	> Perception of RM by other actors > Profile of RM within organization
Solutions	> 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	> Invisible process—visible responsibility > Visibility
Embedding RM	> Integration / automation > Balance
Awareness	> 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 he 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 and 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.

AC+erm Output

Vignette – 3. Phenomenological Analysis: The bottom line for records management

Nature of tool:

Text-based; an exploration of issues relating to whether ERM systems will improve the 'records' bottom line in organisations. This is in the form of a phenomenological analysis of responses to the AC+erm Project Delphi Study on the 'People' facet of e-records management.

The tool is intended to provide a basis for theoretical and practical discussion at a relatively sophisticated level.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

his analysis may be used as a starting-point for examining the role of ERM systems in improving recordkeeping processes, quality and value in organisations.

Although it is not limited to any particular audience, the nature of the tool means that it is appropriate only in situations where sustained discussion or engagement is possible.

Possible settings include:

- seminars or coursework for students in the recordkeeping disciplines
- seminars / workshops for recordkeeping professionals
- discussion groups / meetings in the workplace, if the organizational culture facilitates reflective practice and other stakeholders are receptive.

Vignettes – 3. 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 space[1]

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 time[2]

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 & dimensions[3]

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 & environments[4]

As above.

Prerequisites & consequences[5]

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 undertaking – 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 comments[7] about the golden paper-world of RM perfection) RM principles and practices are necessary

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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 Agency[8], 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 & approaches[9]

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 & fringes[10]

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 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 & disappearances[11]

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.

Clarity[12]

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?

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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

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AC+erm Output

Vignette – 4. Phenomenological Analysis: Principles of records management

Nature of tool:

Text-based; an exploration of issues relating to the applicability of RM principles and methods in the e-environment. This is in the form of a phenomenological analysis of responses to the AC+erm Project Delphi Study on the 'Process' facet of e-records management.

The analysis was produced collaboratively, the contributions of separate project team members marked as different 'voices' within the analysis.

The tool is intended to provide a basis for theoretical and practical discussion at a relatively sophisticated level.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

This analysis may be used as a starting-point for examining the capacity of currently accepted recordkeeping principles and methods to accommodate the changed records environment brought into being by the digital revolution.

Although it is not limited to any particular audience, the nature of the tool means that it is appropriate only in situations where sustained discussion or engagement is possible.

Possible settings include:

- seminars or coursework for students in the recordkeeping disciplines
- seminars / workshops for recordkeeping professionals

Vignettes – 4. Phenomenological Analysis – Applicability of RM Principles & Methods in the e-Environment

Voice 1[1]

Definition:

Principle: "1 a fundamental truth or proposition serving as the foundation for belief or action. 2 a rule or belief governing one's personal behaviour. 3 morally correct behaviour and attitudes. 4 a general scientific theorem or natural law. 5 a fundamental source or basis of something." (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*).

Given this definition why then is the applicability of RM principles and methods in the e-environment an issue at all?

Pieces and parts in space[2]

Voice 1

The big question is 'what are the RM principles and methods?' Are the principles about creation, capture, appraisal, storage, organization, maintenance / preservation, retrieval & access, retention; are they the characteristics of records (authenticity, reliability, integrity, usability); are they the lifecycle and continuum theories / models? Which are the methods? What makes them distinctive from other information management domains – appraisal & retention management? Anything else?

Voice 2

The 'pieces and parts' lie in the principles and methods themselves. There are many methods of records management, but only a handful of fundamental principles, which centre on:

- the definition and characteristics of records and their wider setting—provenance / function, records series. recordkeeping systems;
- appraisal;
- models—life-cycle, continuum.

RM methodologies, methods, techniques, and tools are far too numerous to address here, but among those that are significantly affected by the emergence of electronic recordkeeping are:

- classification—both as a conceptual tool and as a means of managing retention etc;
- standards;
- strategies, policies, and procedures;
- business / information / records analysis.

Any discussion of the foundations of RM must start with the term 'record', defined in the ISO RM standard as

[I]nformation created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.

ISO 15489:*1 Information and Documentation—Records Management. Part 1: General* (2001)

The four characteristics of a record are authenticity – reliability – integrity – usability: The standard tells us that a record "*should correctly reflect what was communicated or decided or what action was taken*."

Voice 3

I take the view that we're looking here under principles at the definition and characteristics of the record - that is the nub that makes RM distinctive from IM. All the rest is really methods whether at a high level of abstraction (models) or practical techniques. Of the methods, the one that is distinctive to RM is appraisal. The principle of the 'record' is still applicable in the e-environment. It is the methods that require review and possible amendment. The continuum model seems a much better fit to the e-environment.

Episodes and sequences in time[3]

Voice 1

Often (not always) RM begins when records need storing, destroying or archiving. Registry systems start the process earlier and in the e-environment RM rules need to be determined upfront at systems specification / design phase. Legacy or retrospective application of principles / methods is almost impossible, certainly impractical, especially with respect to retention scheduling (on local and shared drives and offline media) and also preservation. Therefore, timing needs to be different (before information creation, at systems design / conception phase) – but how often does this happen? "our implementation of the fundamental principles and their translation into implementation processes are not transforming quickly enough." *Why is this so?*

"Traditional principles and methods are a good starting point for managing e-records, but they cannot be used as they are with no review process, or assessing what changes will need to be made to adjust the method to the electronic environment." *This is surely correct in the context of evolution, though perhaps not when there is revolution, otherwise they wouldn't be fundamental truths or propositions. However, we do need to assess their applicability, appropriateness and interpretation in the particular business context (and recordkeeping and technology contexts?) and environment. Witness the comment "this does not change due to the environment being electronic. Rather it is the fact that the environment is electronic that becomes part of the context examined when determining how to implement the principles."*

Voice 2

Of the RM principles, perhaps that which has changed most, or been most challenged, over time is that of appraisal. Even in the paper world, the quantity of documents and records produced by modern governments, organizations, and even individuals was already proving far too great to be dealt with through a largely passive process of accretion and transfer. This has been exacerbated in the e-environment, which has also brought a new dimension—the need for some degree of appraisal, whether in the form of pre-selection or planning—well before the 'archival threshold'. In a sense, the discipline of records management could be said to have been created in response to a crisis in appraisal.

Voice 3

It is the timing of when RM activities occur that is so different in the e-environment. Actions have to be taken at the point of record creation. This therefore means that the record creator, not the records professional, will be required to undertake these tasks. With the result that such tasks may not be done, or done poorly as records creators often do not know what their recordkeeping responsibilities are and are given little support from the organisation (lack of training, guides) and software (lack of embedded RM capabilities) to carry out the tasks. This change of timing

throws into focus the different roles of records manager and archivist and requires that these two roles need to be brought together.

Qualities and dimensions[4]

Voice 1

Where and what is the record in the e-environment? ("Where information is data in data systems it could be very difficult to identify records").

The size and scale of the e-environment is much greater, so a different approach is needed to cope with this. Is it evolution or revolution? What new possibilities and opportunities does this bring? Automation (e.g. "quality checks, online help, guided data entry"); "more sophisticated / automated decisions" *though this demands that sound rules are built into the system until good artificial intelligence systems are developed;* "new ways to manage information" – *but what are or might these ways be? What challenges does it bring? Constant, rapid pace of change (e.g. storage and backup solutions; greater volume, more formats).*

"It's hard ... to be sure you are doing the right thing". *We can't be sure we are doing the right thing, only the best thing at the time with the knowledge and resources we have – ergo the need for a risk management approach. We lived with imperfection in the paper world, why do we strive for (have the notion of) perfection in the e-environment? We need to learn to live with uncertainty or conversely to be comfortable with the certain knowledge that systems / solutions / media will have a shorter life (cycle) than they had in the past. (Paper on shelves is a long-term solution; .doc files on a 3.5" floppy is not). Planning horizons are shorter. Pro-action not reaction is the order of the day.*

Voice 2

In RM, as in all fields, principles cannot simply be 'taken as read' in times of rapid or significant change: their nature and scope needs to be reviewed. By definition, principles are enduring and persistent, robust enough to weather all manner of storms once the overall climate remains substantively unchanged. But major, epochal changes *do* occur, that require the overhaul or overthrow of existing principles and presuppositions.

The essential problem facing records theorists and practitioners now is the same problem that has always faced those caught in the midst of change without any adequate precedent: how can we know what is persistent, and what transient? And how can we differentiate the merely transient from the transitional? Is it possible to evaluate the risks of failing to judge correctly either way? In these circumstances, whatever we do in response to a changing environment has a pretty much equal chance of making things better, making them worse, or making little overall difference. Even the best-informed and most thoughtful can be quickly wrong-footed by developments.

The nature of records

Recognizing this, it is nonetheless legitimate and necessary to try to see how the structural elements of our discipline and practice bears up in the digital era. Let's take the most basic starting point:

"[Some principles] may be questioned (e.g. what is a record)."

There is no unequivocal definition of a 'record', and not all of the standard definitions are entirely compatible with one another. Despite the Pittsburgh- and UBC-inspired vogue for 'the record as transaction' that gained ground in the 1990s, and which is to an extent echoed

by ISO 15489, Dearstyne's wider definition[5] is more in tune with current information environment and cultures.

"Some specific issues need to be addressed—like the re-use of information for a different purpose."
It was always possible, even in the paper environment, for the same document to be a record in more than one file or file series. However, the growing perception of data and information as 'content', to be continually used, re-used and re-purposed, embodies a qualitative change in approach which traditional RM methods and even principles lack the flexibility to accommodate. This has consequences for certain attempts to drain the 'electronic swamp', for instance by using de-duplication software—ten identical e-mails or documents may be as many quite distinct records.

RM models
Turning to RM models, the Records Continuum Model (RCM) was developed within a conceptual framework in which it described one continuum among many actual or possible others. When examined in conjunction with the closely related Information Continuum Model (ICM), some tensions or possible need for re-thinking come into view. For instance, at a 2005 APAN workshop on e-culture, Don Schauder[6] presented an outline of the ICM which is in most ways extremely familiar to records professionals who know or use the RCM: its 'five typologies' are (1) agency; (2) levels of action; (3) dimensions and (4) purposes of information and knowledge; (5) modalities which structure the scope of action.

(1), (2), (3), and (5) are familiar from the RK / Records Continuum perspective. But with the subdivisions of (4) into pleasure, awareness, and accountability, we venture into regions alien to traditional concepts of RK—pleasure, enjoyment, the enhancement of the experience of living. As the maintenance of a boundary between information and records becomes increasingly irrelevant, and as the personal and work spheres become progressively more interlinked, pleasure and play may have to be recognized as valid (albeit secondary) factors in the public / official and even the corporate information environments.

Schauder posits three partially overlapping categories of stakeholder in information and e-culture—the normative (government / law), facilitative (business), and interpretive (civil society). Although current RM principles, as embodied in ISO 15489, address equally the management of both digital and non-digital records, are they flexible enough to deal with a constantly mutating technical and cultural e-environment? Are they too one-sided, addressing only the normative and facilitative aspects of the ICM triad? Does this make them divergent from the overall trend of the information society?

Classification
Classification really falls under the rubric of methods rather than principles, but has in recent years been subject to an intensity of debate normally reserved for disagreement over fundamentals. Should it be replaced by search-and-retrieve within 'big buckets'? Democratized and simplified by the use of tagging? Is the functional approach still valid?

"Records classification is not just about search and retrieval … [I]t is really about ensuring that the provenance information is embedded in the record—that we can retrieve the information in context, that it can be connected to action."
RM business classification schemes add essential context and meaning to corporate information; nonetheless, they may need to be presented in different ways in the digital environment, with many different views and various localized and specific access points.

Furthermore, the functional approach to classification is very different from other, more universally familiar classification frameworks, whether formalized or intuitive, which are subject- or topic-based. A BCS may be a central intellectual tool for RM, but it may also need to be kept hidden in the background, served by a more readily accessible and intuitive front end.

Recordkeeping systems

"From the work we have been doing to prepare for eDRMS it is increasingly apparent that line of business applications often contain more significant business records than shared drives which contain massive quantities of "dross" records."

It has become a quasi-principle that 'records' must be held in 'recordkeeping systems', a term which encompasses more than just IT systems but whose problematic aspects are brought to the fore by such systems. Many corporate IT systems, such as most line-of-business databases and applications, cannot be described as (components of) recordkeeping systems, since records with the characteristics required by core standards and definitions cannot be created or kept within them. Yet these systems are the equivalent of files and documents in the paper world whose status as records was assured. So a large part of the data and information central to an organization's business—its genuinely 'vital records'—are not considered to be records at all by records professionals.

'Traditional' elements of RM principles and practice, which remain present in current developments including ISO 15489, encourage us, whether we are aware of it or not, to focus on managing the types of records whose nature most closely resembles that of physical records rather than the types that may actually be critical to the conduct of business.

We still tend to construct file-plans and retention schedules which effectively ignore information kept in line-of-business systems, databases, and other non-documentary formats—the information and data in these systems do not constitute 'records'. The most trivial word-processed document or spreadsheet is classified and managed as a record, while the data on which the functioning of an organization depends may not be represented even by proxy in our file-plans and classification schemes.

"What happens if we create the electronic swamp—does it really matter? … Let's sort the wheat from the chaff—is that what the new role of records managers is in cyberspace …?"

For this to be achievable, records professionals must first recognize that their view of what constitutes 'wheat' and 'chaff' may be distorted by professional preferences and prejudices. We need, always, to come back to the question of what all this stuff is being created *for*. Better a swamp teeming with life than a desert of perfection.

Voice 3

I can't match any of the above! But my small pennyworth is that the overall principle of the record and its characteristics remains the same.

ISO definition: "information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business".

The International Council on Archives (ICA) Committee on Electronic Records definition: "a recorded information produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an institutional or individual activity and that comprises content, context and structure sufficient to provide evidence of the activity."

"n. ~ 1. A written or printed work of a legal or official nature that may be used as evidence or proof; a document. – 2. Data or information that has been fixed on some medium; that has content, context, and structure; and that is used as an extension of human memory or to demonstrate accountability. – 3. Data or information in a fixed form that is created or received in the course of individual or institutional activity and set aside (preserved) as evidence of that activity for future reference. – 4. An instrument filed for public notice (constructive notice); see recordation. – 5. Audio · A phonograph record. – 6. Computing · A collection of related data elements treated as a unit, such as the fields in a row in a database table.– 7. Description · An entry describing a work in a catalog; a catalog record."[7]

Definition 2 resonates with me.

However, from trying to find definitions of a record it is clear that there is plenty of variation / disagreement out there! But I'm not sure that this is driven only by e-environment issues; it is also about people's different perspectives depending on their discipline and work activity.

What has changed / needs change is how we go about ensuring that the characteristics (authenticity, reliability, integrity, usability) are preserved in the e-environment.

Settings and environments[8]

Voice 1

What is it about the nature of the e-environment that is different and causes us to question the appropriateness of current RM principles and methods? Answer: the dependencies it imposes (software and hardware to access / read / use); its very dynamic nature (the degree of change / development); the changed spatial dimensions (local vs shared spaces; fixed vs mobile devices and locations).

The e-environment has altered business boundaries – in fact are there any now? Organisations outsource, work with partners / suppliers / service providers. Where are there records in this setting? Sometimes they are outside the organisation, so who has responsibility and, pertinent to this phenomenon, how are RM principles and methods applied?

Voice 2

Recordkeeping and records are functions and products of the society that creates them. Understanding records and their management needs demands an awareness of the broader arena in which they reside—the spheres of society, of culture, of politics. RM practice and principles that fail to address the full context of how information is created and used, whether in the public, corporate or private realms, are doomed to failure.

It must be acknowledged, too, that this larger context is riddled with contradictions and inconsistencies. The various and changing attempts to privilege particular aspects of records—evidential value now, compliance tomorrow, diplomatics next week, social computing last month—may be a form of reductionism, a quest for the Holy Grail of a simple solution to a complex problem. But there can be no 'grand unified theory' of RM; the principles and practices built up and built on over the years of thought and experience can only—and could ever only, in the pre-digital as well as the digital era—constitute an aspiration, not a destination.

Relationship between work and personal > Merging of personal and work environments
"The increased use of IT in our private lives will also impact on the workplace and requires organisations to educate staff in the differences between the information they exchange in a business context and private context. The casual treatment of information in our private lives does not translate well to the business context and issues such as information security and privacy perhaps need more emphasis to drive individual behaviours."
This is not simply a matter of time and place—people working outside office hours or 'playing' during work time. It is also marks a change in psychology and culture, in the perception of self, roles and identities. Rather than having a 'work self' and a 'leisure self', contemporary knowledge workers tend to have a seamless 'self' that does not compartmentalize work and leisure into separate conceptual and locational spheres, but treats them as almost interchangeable.

The increasing difficulty in distinguishing between the realms of work and the personal is partly a socio-technical phenomenon, facilitated by the emergence of new ICTs including the internet. One aspect of this is the relationship between the technology available at work and in private life; and the direction of change in this relationship is increasing the difficulty of modifying behaviour to attain compliance.

Up to about ten years ago, someone wanting to manage their personal information in digital form looked upon the systems and applications available in the workplace as the most advanced and developed tools. None of the software that came bundled with the standard home PC could provide the functionality of, say, MS or Adobe software applications—the 'serious' home user had to buy the software package separately (sometimes at greater cost than the PC itself).

Now, however, the situation is in many ways reversed, and the functionality of ICT and web systems available in the workplace is often noticeably poorer and less flexible than that available in the standard home PC package. The workplace has moved, in terms of the individual's technological experience, from the centre to the periphery, from the cutting edge to the lame duck.

This has inevitably had an effect on the perception of the electronic systems, including electronic recordkeeping and information systems, available in the workplace: they are now more likely to be seen as cumbersome, an irritant to be circumvented rather than a set of state-of-the-art tools to be embraced. The 'seamless self' of the 21st-century knowledge worker will tend to see such systems as disabling, and has no incentive, in an era of transient and contract employment, to adopt the corporate perspective of compliance, audit and security as a counterbalance.

Globalization, outsourcing, multiple centres
RM and RK principles and methods developed in centralized, monolithic organizations and bodies: courts, monasteries, chanceries, corporations, governments. Are they well adapted to the current landscape of sub (-sub-sub-sub)-contractors and geographic / jurisdictional dispersal?

Is, for example, the functional approach to classification capable of representing a given records 'ecosystem' in the distributed, fragmented context of chains of products and suppliers in the outsourced economy? Even within a specific bounded context, what is, say, part of the 'Housing' function for a local government body is more likely to be treated as a

discrete project by the contractor, with further chains of separate sub-contracted projects existing elsewhere.

Not only the chain but the categorization is fragmented, the whole process represented by a variety of functional, case-file, client- and subject-based systems. It is easy to adapt a functional approach for use within any given organization, but not so easy to extend it across multiple entities. In some ways, it is less suitable, less scalable, in this context than a subject-based, case-file approach, which would be more readily reduced to certain standard naming and classification conventions for all parties. We are faced once again with the tension inherent in all classification frameworks: do they really reflect what is 'out there' in the world, or do they instead try to force the world into artificial categories reflecting specific mentalities and culture-specific viewpoints?

Voice 3

Though IT has been around for a long time, its pervasive use is really only about 20/25 years (PCs on everyone's desk ~mid/late 80s, Web in common use ~mid 90s). So we've really not completely adjusted our working practices and our human perspectives to this. I feel in terms of RM / IM that we've thrown the baby out with the bathwater. People have assumed that the wonderful IT that does so much for us can do everything we need. So RM requirements and IM requirements have been dropped. Who wants to do boring things like consistently naming files, adding in metadata, putting them in the correct place, even if all of that is electronic rather than paper? Who wants to put out e-documents with bibliographic information and series numbers?

So the forms of control that were used in the paper world have by and large been dropped before the electronic equivalents had been put into place. (Not necessarily in all organisations or sectors but in a good number of them). We now have a mess, and people in the workplace who have not been brought up with the recordkeeping practices of the paper world (but have no electronic practices either). This makes the task of bringing back order far more difficult.

The records that reside in line-of-business databases are relatively well looked after in a current reporting sense (though their long-term preservation is a problem that hasn't really been addressed) but records within standard office software are by and large in a mess. It is this type of context that leads to ideas of 'keeping everything', big-buckets, search rather than classification, i.e. abandon traditional RM methods and depend on IT to save us.

Prerequisites and consequences[9]

Voice 1

We say that principles are applicable irrespective of format or environment but isn't their application / implementation (through processes and methods) very different – out of necessity and opportunity? For example, destruction means deletion in the RM context but deletion in the IT context doesn't achieve that, at least not immediately. Traces are still left. Recommendations for overwriting hard drives range from a minimum of three to seven times though some professionals believe physical destruction is the only safe method of e-deletion.[10]

Preservation is still required for records of archival value but the methods and timing need to be different.

Voice 2

Continuing validity of RM principles?

The great majority of the e-Delphi participants felt that, while many of the methods and techniques of RM needed to be modified or replaced in the digital environment, RM principles were fundamentally sound. But this did not mean that they could just be left there as a point of reference:

"[W]e are not doing enough in our education to make sure that the traditional is taught well enough to provision the practitioner with the ability to continually return to these principles and apply them in new and ever changing environments."

A consequence of the nature of information and records in the e-environment is that RM in the traditional, after-the-fact manner is no longer viable: "*Traditional RM starts when records require archiving or destruction. With e-records RM rules have to be decided upfront and built into e-systems in advance.*" Yet the pace of change means that "it's hard to be current and to be sure you are doing the right thing".

Among the pre-requisites for effective methods in the e-environment are "*greater flexibility, less dogma and a greater integration with the reality of the business environment … a switch in emphasis.*"

Voice 3

Though this is not sexy, the point that many Delphi respondents have made about RM awareness raising / training for staff is an important prerequisite as many of the RM activities are now down to all members of staff not just records professionals. But this should be a dialogue: what recordkeeping tasks are staff able and willing to do on a consistent, accurate basis? This will determine what the RM methods should be. It will also determine what RM capabilities need to be embedded into software; and that means standard office software, email and new communication tools, not just ERMS.

Perspectives and approaches[11]

Voice 1

*The only constant is change; "*change never ceases.*" Methods will always change and with them expectations, desires, requirements. Take banking for instance, the processes and the way this is done today has changed dramatically for some and remains very similar for others. In the past customers could only 'do their banking' during quite limited hours on weekdays and never on public and 'bank holidays' (at least in the UK and Republic of Ireland). This meant more forward planning regarding payments and cash (more important pre-credit card era). ATMs changed all that and reduced the amount of forward planning needed, providing self-service and greater availability and access. The internet changed it again and, in some instances, cut out the human interaction. This has not only changed processes but also people's behaviour and their expectations. Has it or how has it changed records management principles and methods?*

"Different technologies affect what limitations we have, and might mean that a different method must apply. But they also may mean that an existing method needs to be re-thought so that it can be adapted to those limitations."

Some major organisations have taken a lead; for example, the Australian Public Service Sector makes a good case for doing things differently, including "lifting the burden of recordkeeping" *for employees and having* "comprehensive awareness" *of* "business and

regulatory environments" *in order to* "prioritise recordkeeping attention on activities that pose the greatest level of risk". [12]

It's all about adoption and adaption.

Voice 2

Records managers are faced with a recurring problem in the digital workplace: while documents and objects created at work for work purposes legally belongs to the organization, not the individual, employees frequently think of 'stuff' residing on their office PC as theirs personally.

This is not as straightforward a matter as it is often portrayed. People often put a great deal of effort and creativity—a significant portion of themselves—into what they do on the job. Though they may not have a legal right to ownership of what they produce, they perceive themselves to have a definite moral right to their work. To deny this right is to risk the alienation and disaffection of some of an organization's most valuable staff.

And as the 'job for life' becomes a thing of the past, employees inevitably adopt a portfolio approach to employment, in which it is not only natural but legitimate for them to think of work done for an employer as also forming part of their personal intellectual capital.

Voice 3

Certain aspects of recordkeeping have been brought to the fore because of a range of scandals, like Enron, loss of private data in the public sector in the UK, and of legislation such as DP and FoI. This has still to percolate properly through organizations to the actions of staff. However, as an example, the NHS (an organization that has suffered from data loss scandals) is really starting to tackle the issue with policies and procedures.

Will the recession have any effect? On the one hand, when life is tough in a business many short cuts are taken (RM might be deemed an unnecessary luxury) On the other, there is a ground swell among citizens (though not yet politicians) that far more regulation, and openness / transparency of business practices are required (this requires good RM): a cultural change from globalised, raw capitalism, to a more social / human / ecological focused financial and business system.

Cores and fringes[13]

Voice 1

The vision of the modern office (McDonald, 1995 & 2005[14]) with IT focused on business processes rather than software applications, and RM processes embedded in those processes has not materialised. In re-thinking RM for the Web 2.0 world (Bailey, 2008[15]), three of the ten principles of RM 2.0 are particularly relevant here: that it must be "independent of specific hardware, software or physical location"*;* "proportionate, flexible and capable of being applied to varying levels of quality and detail as required by the information in question"*; and* "a benefits-led experience for users, that offers them a positive incentive to participate".

Appearances and disappearances[16]

Voice 1

RM principles and methods have always been there (which came first?) but the context is now different and very dynamic.

We haven't succeeded with many (any?) of the e-systems to date (cf. Bantin, 2008[17] – transaction processing systems; relational database systems; EDMS, content management systems, decision support systems, data warehouses, email). So will we succeed with Web 2.0? Do we need to or is it the semantic Web (Web 3.0) that we should be looking at?

"Processes have to change and evolve all the time. One of the current examples is how to manage the impact of web 2.0 in the organisation. Frankly I don't see it having that much impact on the organisation except in the enhancing of communications. It is a 'social' technology largely working on the internet and happening in personal space outside organisations. Organisations largely have yet to work out what impact this will have on their workings, and how to integrate it. Superficial examples of using wikis to collaborate, requesting client / user tagging of resources, CEOs blogging etc are not intrinsic to business. They are technologies seeking applications (in terms of the organisation). Web 3.0 (semantic web stuff) will probably be a different matter, utilising the techniques and technologies of web 2 into areas that will be more immediately useful to business outcomes. Who knows."

Clarity[18]

Voice 1

"Is it the principle or my idea of what the principle means that needs to be reviewed?"

"Is it the method that needs adjustment or the application of the method that needs adjustment?"

Do we fully understand and / or articulate the core principles? Has this lead to a situation where "we are not doing enough in our education to make sure that the traditional is taught well enough to provision the practitioner with the ability to continually return to these principles and apply them in new and ever changing environments." *For example,* "records classification is not just about search and retrieval. If it was, we should immediately and happily abandon all attempts at provenance based linking (through inadequate functional classification). But actually it is really about ensuring that the provenance information is embedded in the record – that we can retrieve the information in context, that it can be connected to action. So if we think classification is about search – well we're going to have to miss the boat." *Classification in any information management domain has never been just about search and retrieval – even in daily life it's not just about that. It's also about contextualizing, understanding and interpreting and always has been. Witness the concept of co-location in library classification (i.e. related topics).*

Voice 3

Much theoretical / research work has been done on ERM principles, models and methods. How much of this is used in practice? Organisations which have conducted case studies where these ideas have been put into practice – how successful were they? These ideas are not in common use in 'everyday' organisations: why not? Is it that records managers in organisations lack the power / freedom to implement these ideas? Or lack the knowledge? Or don't think the ideas practicable?

What changes in RM principles and practices are really the result of rethinking within the e-environment or changes that were happening anyway as the discipline develops and which have been applied to ERM, such as the continuum model and functional classification. Within ERM, old approaches are also being adapted, e.g. diplomatics.

Synthesis / Summary

Voice 1

Most participants, and I agree, think the (overall) RM principles are applicable in / transferrable to the e-environment but that methods need to change, develop and / or be applied differently. Principles are or should be "robust", "tried and tested", "based on a solid foundation of rules and processes", "broad enough to cater to all records and all environments"*; whereas methods* "need to be changed and definitions revised"*, either out of necessity or to exploit new opportunities to do things differently and better, presumably.*

On reflection engaging in this PA of applying RM principles and methods in the e-environment has made me consider the following:

- *Do we need to revisit fundamental principles? What are they? Are they sufficient? Should we debate them and ensure we fully, correctly, accurately understand them so that we can apply and / or reinterpret them in different (including yet-to-be developed future contexts / environments)? How do we do that?*
- *What and where is the record in the e-environment? When do we need to distinguish records from information?*
- *Is there a balance between the new possibilities and the new challenges that the e-environment brings?*
- *What different mindset do we need? That of the business process analyst, of the business strategist, other?*
- "these call for new methods e.g. the leisurely pace approach of mandating significant effort at time of filing see earlier comment re metadata and large fileplans, ignores human nature, busy work environments and the potential to take alternate approaches to achieve the same end Need to accept the challenges and work to achieve the best information management – a greater flexibility, less dogma and a greater integration with the reality of the business environment, whilst also influencing the business processes more effectively – a switch in emphasis."

"Everyone appears to be looking for 'the answer' rather than accepting there may be a variety of best practice techniques which are designed around the business"

Voice 2

To summarize, an elegant and apposite quotation in which one may with profit substitute 'Records Management' for 'Philosophy':

"Every now and then, philosophy moves house. The new place looks a bit familiar, because it contains some old furniture (problems, theories, methods, conceptual constructs). But it is also new, extraneous, somewhat disorienting: new rooms, newly bought furniture and everything is in a different place, perhaps in less (or even more) fitting locations. Moreover, as I was very nicely reminded, we should take the opportunity to throw away all the rubbish we have accumulated in the previous house. Fresh start, as it were. The new place looks partly familiar, partly entirely new. We try to find our new balance, adapt it to our needs, while also adapting ourselves to it. In practice, we develop a new philosophy."[19]

[1] Voices 1 and 2 conducted the PA independently of each other. Voice 3 then reviewed the content and added in additional comments.

2 Aspect of the topic – the pieces, parts, in the spatial sense, incl. interconnections, links

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

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

5 "[A]ny type of recorded information … created, received, or maintained by a person, institution, or organization…. Records are extensions of the human memory, purposefully created to record information, document transactions, communicate thoughts, substantiate claims, advance explanations, offer justifications, and provide lasting evidence of events." (Dearstyne, B W The Archival Enterprise: Modern Archival Principles, Practices, and Techniques (Chicago, 1993), p1)

6 http://www.apan.net/meetings/bangkok2005/presentation/eCulture/APANe-cultureFin-Don.ppt

7 A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology. Richard Pearce-Moses, http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=54

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 Federal Electronics Challenge Sample policy for disk/media sanitization http://www.federalelectronicschallenge.net/resources/docs/sanitization_sample.pdf

11 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

12 http://www.apsc.gov.au/mac/noteforfilecasestudiesabs.htm

13 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)

14 McDonald, J (1995). Managing records in the modern office: taming the wild frontier. Archivaria, 39 (Spring), p. 70–79.

McDonald, J. (2005). The wild frontier ten years on. In: McLeod, J and Hare, CE (Eds). Managing electronic records. Facet, p1–17.

15 Bailey S (2008). Managing the Crowd: Rethinking records management for the Web 2.0 world. Facet, 192 pp

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

17 Bantin PC (2008). Understanding data and information systems for recordkeeping. Neal-Schuman Publishers, 346pp

18 Aspect of the topic – the clarity of the phenomenon, incl. degree of uncertainty, definability, explanation, fuzziness, conflation

19 Floridi, L. http://www.philosophyofinformation.net/blog/2007/08/30th-international-wittgenstein_10.html

AC+erm Output

Vignette – 5. Phenomenological Analysis: Skills for records management

Nature of tool:

Text-based; an exploration of issues relating to essential skills for electronic records management. This is a phenomenological analysis of responses to the AC+erm Project Delphi Study on the 'People' facet of e-Records Management.

The tool is intended to provide a basis for theoretical and practical discussion at a relatively sophisticated level.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

This analysis may used as a starting-point for examining the skills and mix of skills required to effectively manage electronic records and information in organisations.

Although it is not limited to any particular audience, the nature of the tool means that it is appropriate only in situations where sustained discussion or engagement is possible.

Possible settings include:

- seminars or coursework for students in the recordkeeping disciplines
- seminars / workshops for recordkeeping professionals
- discussion groups / meetings in the workplace, if the organizational culture facilitates reflective practice and other stakeholders are receptive.

Vignettes – 5. 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 space[1]

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, CILIP[4], 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 time[6]

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 & dimensions[7]

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 & environments[8]

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 & consequences[9]

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 & approaches[10]

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 & fringes[11]

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 & disappearances[12]

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, 2008 [13]).

Clarity[14]

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

AC+erm Output

Vignette – 6. Mind Map

Nature of tool:

The tool uses the free online mind-mapping software MindMeister (www.mindmeister.com). This software enables both single-author and (real-time or asynchronous) collaborative drafting of mind maps, which can then be shared among a restricted group or made publicly available online.

The software is easy to use, and provides 'help' features to enable the novice to start using it immediately. Access is free for the basic version, which allows the creation of up to three mind maps.

The example we provide here is a hard-copy extract from a mind map created in the course of analyzing project data. The map is based on one of the solutions explored in Rounds 3 and 4 of our Delphi study on the Systems and Technology facet of managing electronic records. Further information is given on Page 2, and the full online version of the mind map can be found at http://www.mindmeister.com/32685588/ac-erm-project-vignette-exploring-solutions-to-erm-issues.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

The mind map is a flexible tool, and can be used as a graphical way of publishing information, a method for brainstorming and developing ideas, a way of canvassing ideas or suggestion, and a lot more. It can be used for audiences at any level, in whatever manner appears appropriate for the chosen purpose and audience.

For a 'passive' audience, it can be used as a visual way of summarizing information, policy and procedures; it could be used as a decision-making tool, in the manner of a flow-chart, but more flexible and intuitive. It also lends itself to the production of posters or other marketing material within the organization.

In a more active setting, it can be used as a means of drafting and stimulating ideas and discussion, either *ex nihilo* or based on an outline map already drafted and presented for development; or to summarize the proceedings and decisions of discussion.

The online nature of the software used means that collaboration can take place even when the parties are geographically dispersed and unable to meet at a single time.

Background information on the sample mind map

The sample mind map provides a summary analysis of a small subset of the data provided by participants in our Delphi Study on the Systems and Technology aspects of e-records management.

In Round 3 of the study, participants were asked to explore solutions to the seven issues ranked as most important in Round 2. The issue identified as most important had been 'the appropriate approach to ERM within a given context', and it is this issue that is represented in the sample mind map.

The following five solutions were focused on in Round 3:

1. Dedicated EDRMS
2. Using existing functionality in line of business, office and mobile systems
3. Embedding RM functionality in line of business, office and mobile systems
4. Integrating EDRMS with other corporate it systems
5. A combination of approaches

Participants were asked to suggest which solutions should be tried or avoided, and to:

- say why, how, who, when and where they worked, could work better or have not worked.
- provide, where applicable, the names of IT systems / products (e.g. SharePoint), techniques, specifications / protocols (e.g. XML), etc.
- note if there were significant variations between different industries, sectors, jurisdictions, or countries.

In Round 4, participants were invited to consider these solutions further, and asked to indicate whether they agreed that a proposed solution was (a) highly desirable and (b) likely to happen, in specified sector and industry contexts. The questions were posed in the form of an online survey, which allowed responses to be entered on a scale from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree'.

In the sample mind map, these responses have been amalgamated with those from Round 3 to give a full overview of the data provided by participants. The seven levels of the map show the questions and responses to the issue of from Rounds 3 and 4 as follows:

Level 1: Issue – What is the appropriate approach to ERM within a given context?

Level 2: Proposed solutions (e.g. the five solutions listed above)

Level 3: Amalgamated questions from Rounds 3 and 4 (elements of success; elements of failure; applicability to sector; applicability to industry; question specific to solution, e.g. named EDRMS products for Solution 1, prerequisites for integration for Solution 4)

Levels 4–6: Depending on the nature of the Level 3 question, the succeeding levels contain either the responses to those questions or further levels of questions/responses. Thus the Level 3 'elements of success' question terminates at Level 4, with the examples of these elements provided in the participants' responses, while 'does this apply to my sector?' branches into a list of sectors at Level 4, continues to the questions on desirability and likelihood at Level 5, and terminates with the responses at Level 6.

Some of the annotation capabilities of the MindMeister software has been used in the sample map to add notes and links. The existence of a note for a given node of the map is signaled by the pencil icon, and a link by the standard link icon; the note or link become visible when the cursor hovers over / clicks on the related icon (a small grey circle containing, for the note, a pale 'text' icon and for the link, a pale arrow – both pretty miniscule).

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Ac+erm Project Vignette: Exploring solutions to ERM Issues

Issue: What is the appropriate approach to ERM within a given context?

- Solution 1: Dedicated EDRMS
- *Solution 2: Using Existing Functionality in Line of Business, Office and Mobile Systems*
- Solution 3: Embedding RM functionality in Line of Business, Office and Mobile Systems
- *Solution 4: Integrating EDRMS with other corporate IT systems*
  - *Elements of success*
    - all EDRMS integrate reasonably well with MS Office
    - use EDRMS as back end file store with as many line-of-business systems as possible
    - database systems integrated with EDRMS: process-related documents and document-related data storage in EDRMS
    - SharePoint front end with EDRMS back end
  - *Elements of Failure*
  - *Prerequisites for integration*
    - development of other IT systems, e.g. using XML
    - other IT systems with compatible software versions
    - expensive programming
    - huge amount of technical support
    - Office systems – document templates
    - Office systems – custom metadata
  - Does this solution apply to my sector?
  - Does this solution apply to my industry?
    - Construction
      - Is the solution highly desirable?
      - Is the solution likely to happen?
        - Agree strongly
        - Agree
        - Neither agree nor disagree
        - Don't know
        - Disagree
        - Disagree strongly
    - Education
    - Energy, utilities and infrastructure
    - Finance
    - Government (incl. police, armed services)
    - Health
    - Manufacturing
    - Pharmaceutical industry
    - Service industries
    - *Other*
- Solution 5: A combination of approaches
- *Other*

The full mind map can be viewed at http://www.mindmeister.com/32685588/ac-erm-project-vignette-exploring-solutions-to-erm-issues

AC+erm Output

Vignette – 7. Rich Picture: Managing risk

Nature of tool:

Picture based. A particular context (real or imaginary) or a particular stakeholder view can be captured using a rich picture. Rich pictures can be used to develop an understanding of a situation, as well as recording the final ideas. The examples given here show the views of different stakeholders in an organization about how e-records management could be embedded into risk management. These views were those of respondents to the AC+erm Project Delphi Study on the 'Process' facet of e-records management.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

These example pictures may be used as a starting-point for exploring how different stakeholders in an organization might view e-records management in the context of business risk and risk management

The tool is not limited to any setting. The nature of the tool means that it is appropriate for situations that encourage discussion and free exchange of views. It works best with a facilitator.

Possible settings include:

seminars for students in the recordkeeping disciplines

seminars / workshops for recordkeeping professionals

discussion groups / meetings in the workplace, if the organizational culture facilitates reflective practice and other stakeholders are receptive.

Vignettes – 7. Rich Picture: Managing risk

THE RICH PICTURES

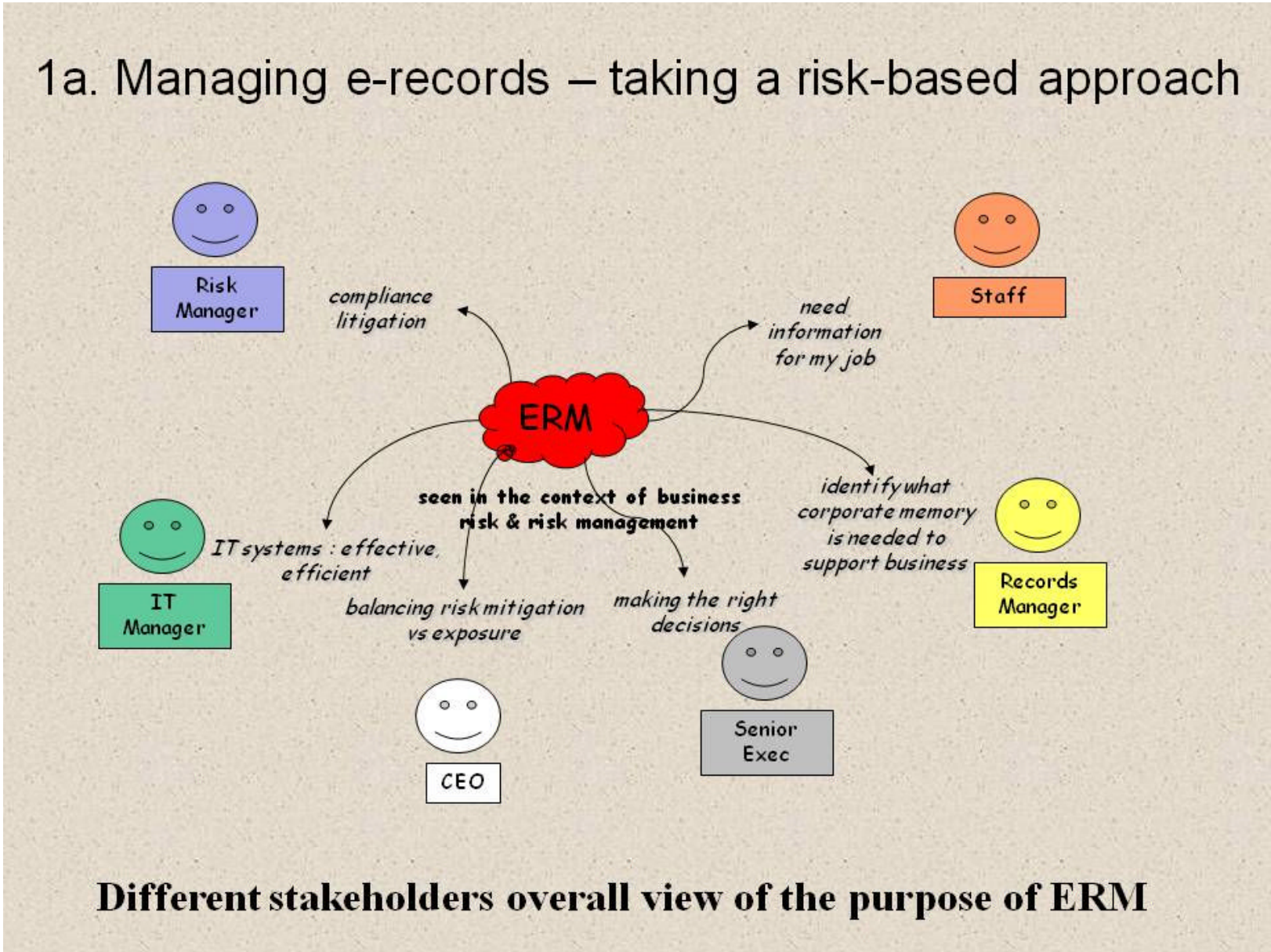
The Rich Pictures represent the approach that a risk enabled organisation might take to managing its e-records.

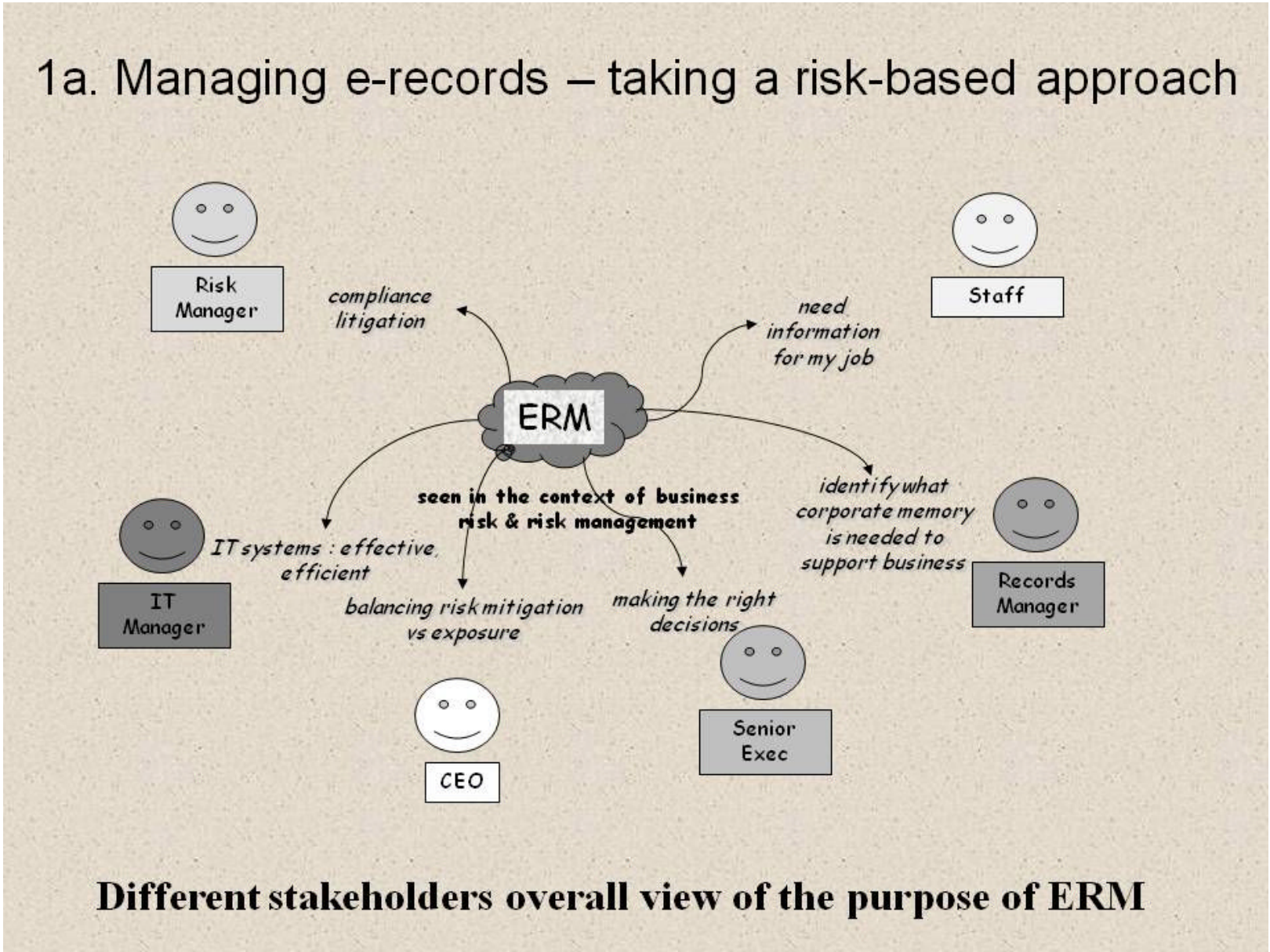
The examples used in these pictures are taken from the Process Delphi participants' responses to the issues: E-records management needs to be seen in the context of business risk & risk management *and* How to improve recordkeeping processes for e-records.

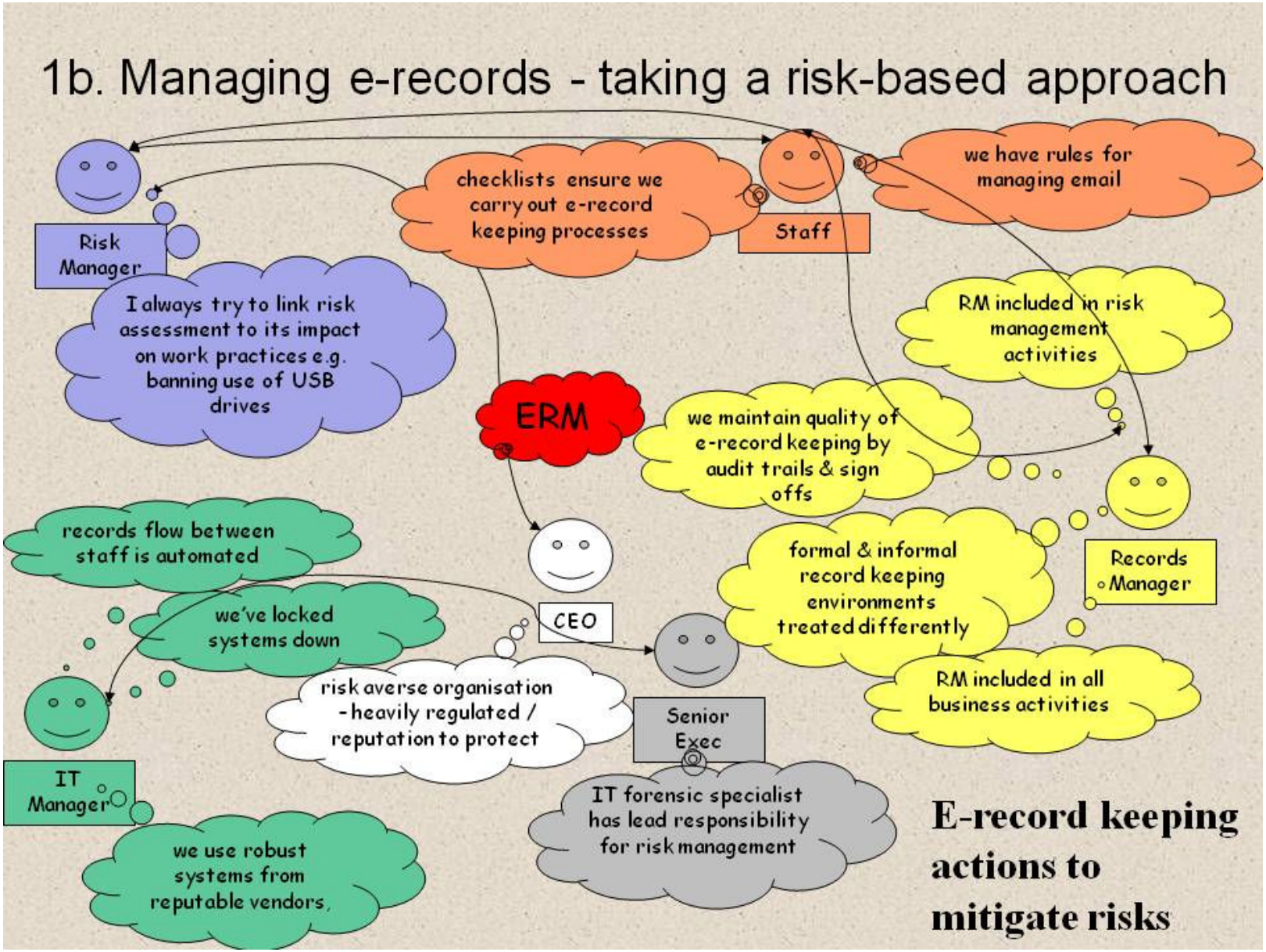
Picture 1a shows different stakeholders' overall views of the purpose of e-records management as seen in the context of business risk & risk management.

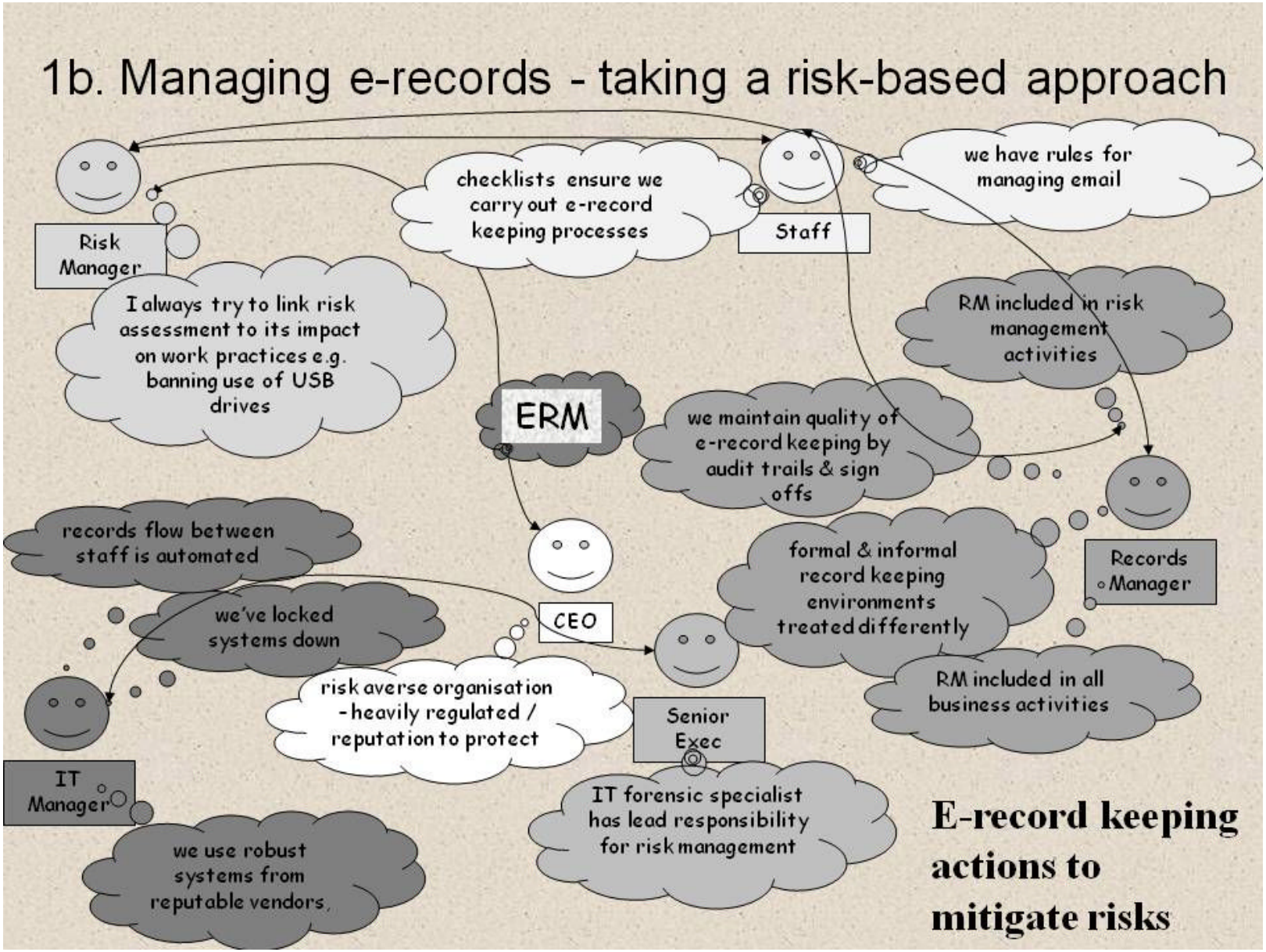
Picture 1b shows some of the e-recordkeeping actions that different stakeholders could carry out to mitigate risk.

Note:
Both colour and grey-scale versions of the pictures have been provided to support personal preferences, visual difficulties, black and white printing etc.


1a. Managing e-records – taking a risk-based approach
Risk Manager
compliance litigation
need information for my job
Staff
ERM
seen in the context of business risk & risk management
IT systems : effective, efficient
IT Manager
identify what corporate memory is needed to support business
Records Manager
balancing risk mitigation vs exposure
making the right decisions
CEO
Senior Exec
Different stakeholders overall view of the purpose of ERM







FACILITATOR'S NOTES

HOW TO USE THE RICH PICTURES

1. In an organisational setting/context

Use these pictures in a seminar, workshop or meeting (e.g. a meeting at the start of a new project/initiative) with lower grades of staff, not senior managers, as an introduction to the topic. Use as a starting-point to:

- explore how different stakeholders in the organization might view e-records management in the context of business risk and risk management
- explore and discuss what processes would be in place if the organisation were to take a risk-management approach to e-records management.

Get participants to produce rich picture(s) to (i) illustrate the preferred/required situation for the organisation and (ii) describe the current situation in the organisation, for comparison. The style of the rich pictures are not limited to the examples given: e.g. they can be hand drawn on paper or on whiteboards, illustrated with stick figures or cartoons etc. The background information below provides different styles and tips.

2. In a training / education context

Use these pictures in a seminar or workshop in the context of an imaginary/case study organisation. More or less detail could be provided about the organisation (e.g. a local authority or pharmaceutical company; a detailed handout giving background of the size, organisational structure etc). Use as a starting-point to:

a) discuss how different stakeholders in the organization view e-records management in the context of business risk and risk management; identify the implications of these views for the organisation successfully taking a risk-based approach to managing e-records

b) discuss what processes would be in place if the organisation were to take a risk-management approach to e-records management; produce a rich picture(s) to illustrate the preferred/required situation for the organisation. The style of the rich pictures are not limited to the examples given: e.g. they can be hand drawn on paper or on whiteboards, illustrated with stick figures or cartoons etc. The background information below provides different styles and tips.

Where participants are work-based, an additional task could be for them to compare this with the current situation in their own organisation and reflect on what developments are needed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON RICH PICTURES

Open University Systems Group

http://systems.open.ac.uk/materials/t552/pages/rich/richAppendix.html

"Rich pictures were particularly developed as part of Peter Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology for gathering information about a complex situation (Checkland, 1981; Checkland and Scholes, 1990). The idea of using drawings or pictures to think about issues is common to several problem solving or creative thinking methods (including therapy) because our intuitive consciousness communicates more easily in impressions and symbols than in words. Drawings can both evoke and record insight into a situation, and different visualization techniques such as visual brainstorming, imagery manipulation and creative dreaming have been developed emphasizing one of these two purposes over the other …

Rich pictures are drawn at the pre-analysis stage, before you know clearly which parts of the situation should best be regarded as process and which as structure.

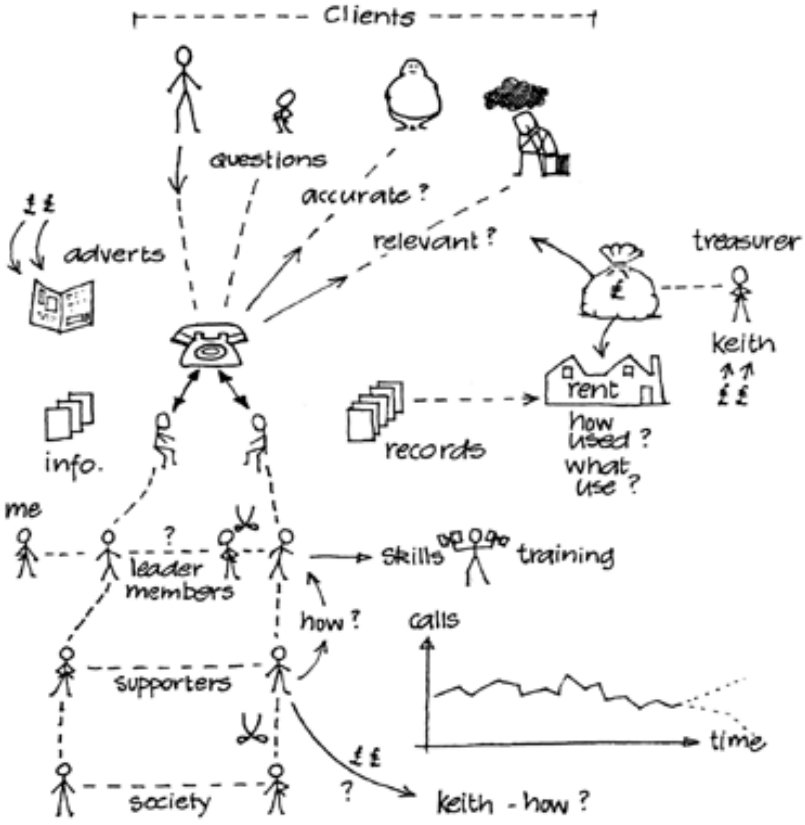
Rich pictures (situation summaries) are used to depict complicated situations. They are an attempt to encapsulate the real situation through a no- holds-barred, cartoon representation of all the ideas covered already layout, connections, relationships, influences, cause-and-effect, and so on. As well as these objective notions, rich pictures should depict subjective elements such as character and characteristics, points of view and prejudices, spirit and human nature. …

Elements:

- pictorial symbols;
- keywords;
- cartoons;
- sketches;
- symbols;
- title."

Example of a rich picture:

Part of a rich picture of a telephone helpline situation

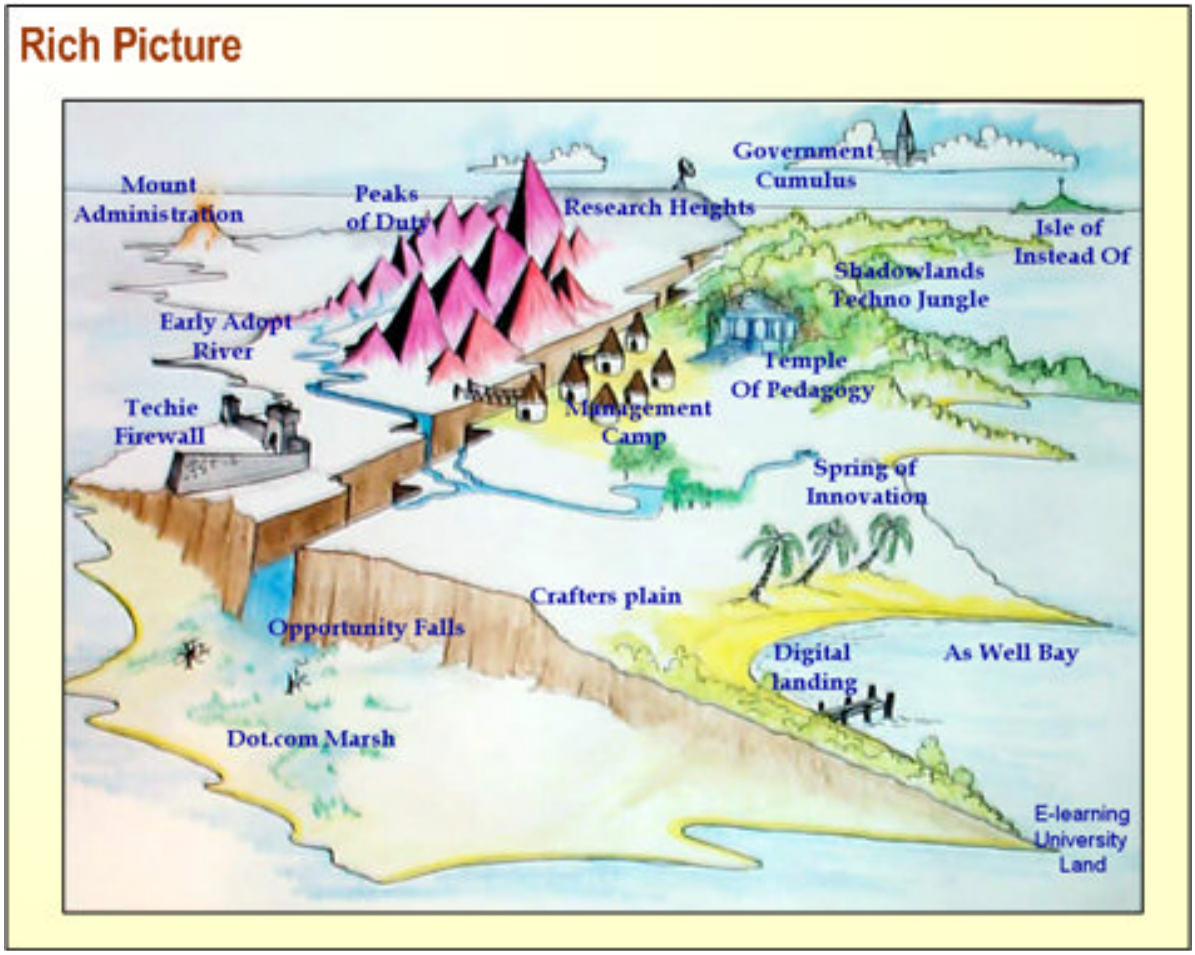


JISC infoNet

http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/InfoKits/process-review/rich-pictures

"A useful way to start a high level analysis is to identify players in the process. A quick and simple method is to use Rich Pictures".

"A variant on the theme of Rich Pictures is this map produced by Professor Gilly Salmon to help understand the perspectives of different stakeholders involved in implementing an institutional e-learning strategy."



References

Checkland P (1981) Systems Thinking, Systems Practice, Wiley

Checkland P, Scholes J (1990) Soft Systems in Action, Wiley

AC+erm Output

Vignette – 8. Narrative / story: Privacy, security and access

Nature of tool:

Text based. Stories are powerful tools which can be used for many purposes, e.g. :

- to capture an individual's perspective or experience
- to illustrate a situation (by combining components from individual stories)
- to encourage behaviour change

The example short story, based in the UK healthcare setting, covers a range of issues illustrating the complex relationship between privacy, security and access. These issues were raised in responses to the AC+erm Project Delphi Study on the 'Process' facet of e-records management.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

This story may be used as a starting-point for exploring the complex relationship between privacy, security and access and for discussing different people's views on this topic.

The tool is not limited to any particular audience, or organisational context. The nature of the tool means that it is appropriate for situations that encourage discussion and free exchange of views. It works best with a facilitator.

The tool might prove of particular use in situations where feelings run high, by providing a 'distancing mechanism' whereby the issues are seen through the eyes and in the setting of the fictional narrator rather than those of the audience members.

Possible settings include:

seminars for students in the recordkeeping disciplines

seminars / workshops for recordkeeping professionals

discussion groups / meetings in the workplace, if the organisational culture facilitates reflective practice and other stakeholders are receptive.

Vignettes – 8. Narrative / story: Privacy, security and access

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Jane's Story: The relationship between privacy, security and access

> Jane's Story is her individual take on the relationship between privacy, security and access, based on her experiences in her work and personal life.

I am a health care professional. I work in the NHS, on a ward in an acute hospital. Things are so different now on the technology front. The NHS is much more IT-enabled. So in a number of ways my life is much easier now. There are some really annoying aspects though. Log on to the systems is one of them – every time you use a different system you're supposed to log on and then off when you've finished. Such a faff and takes up so much time. So one person logs on to the systems and leaves it open for the rest of us in the team to use. I know it's against the rules, but I really can't see a problem with this! No one is going to walk in off the street and look for stuff on our computers – we'd soon spot them if they did.

All the scares about the loss of private data from NHS organisations has really focussed the attention of our Chief Exec. We've been inundated with directives about information security, records management, information governance, blah blah blah. I just haven't got time to read them all. I just hope he doesn't cotton on to our team log in!

But I'm not a complete work slave. I am keeping up as best I can with the topic of electronic patient records. We're not an early adopter site, thank goodness. Let someone else identify all the issues and iron out all the bugs! I do understand people's concerns about the security of their information! You can't blame them with all these data loss scandals trumpeted in the papers. I'm personally OK with having an electronic patient record, but in my private life I admit I do worry about my financial records and identity theft. Patients are going to be able to opt out of the electronic patient record scheme. But how we're going to deal with that on a daily basis I have no idea. We do a lot of epidemiological research here using anonymised data from the patient records. We've made really significant discoveries that will make such improvements to people's lives. So electronic records will make it much easier for us to obtain the data for our research. But if significant numbers of people opt out of having an electronic record this could totally invalidate our research.

The government doesn't help in creating public trust! I couldn't believe their wide reaching plans for data sharing. A small clause in a recent Bill would have allowed data collected for one purpose to be seen by any other government department (and even private sector organisations and foreign governments). This would have included medical records. So groups like the police and education officials could trawl medical records for evidence of things such as drug misuse, under age sex or welfare problems. Good on the BMA and royal colleges for challenging this. I see their protest has had some effect. The clause has just been withdrawn and the topic is now to be discussed further. One small victory for democracy.

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

HOW TO USE THE STORY

Use in a seminar, or workshop, asking the participants to discuss this scenario and the issues and concerns about privacy, security and access that this story raises / triggers.

Suggested seminar outline

Step 1: Break the participants up into small groups of no more than about 4 individuals. Give them a few minutes to read the story, then about 10 minutes to discuss the issues raised amongst themselves.

Step 2: Hold a discussion with all participants. Ask for someone to identify an issue covered in the story. (Note the issue only on a flipchart). Then explore what the participants think about this issue. When the issue has been thoroughly covered, move on to another issue until all the points in the story have been covered. Participants may also raise other relevant issues not covered in the story. Length of time will vary depending on the purpose/context but could be up to 30 minutes.

Step 3: This will vary depending on the specific purpose of using the story (i.e. to open up a discussion, to raise awareness, to identify solutions, to encourage reflection and improve practice etc). For example:

- take the most important issue and discuss how to address it. Identify actions needed (e.g. training, new procedure etc)
- split back into small groups of 4 and give each group an issue to discuss how to address it. Identify actions needed (e.g. training, new procedure etc)
- ask each participant to reflect on what they need to do/do differently to address the issue

Step 4: Feedback actions. Summarise and close.

Notes:
The seminar outline suggested above is purposively loosely structured. A more structured alternative would be to ask each small group to nominate a spokesperson for their group to feedback all or one issue they discussed which then form a list (captured at once on a whiteboard/flipchart). Once all issues are captured a decision can be made as to which one(s) are discussed: again each small group could have elected their preferred (most important) issue for discussion.

The details of the story would need to be amended / updated, depending on the context in which it is to be used, in terms of acronyms, references to legislation etc.

Though set in a healthcare context, the story would also be suitable for use outside that context.

THE STORY – FACILITATOR'S BACKGROUND NOTES, AND ISSUES

Jane's Story: The relationship between privacy, security and access

Jane's Story is her individual take on the relationship between privacy, security and access, based on her experiences in her work and personal life.

I am a health care professional. I work in the NHS, on a ward in an acute hospital.

Note: UK National Health Service

Things are so different now on the technology front. The NHS is much more IT-enabled.

Note: National Programme for IT (NPfIT) in the NHS http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/

So in a number of ways my life is much easier now. There are some really annoying aspects though. Log on to the systems is one of them – every time you use a different system you're supposed to log on and then off when you've finished. Such a faff and takes up so much time. So one person logs on to the systems and leaves it open for the rest of us in the team to use. I know it's against the rules, but I really can't see a problem with this! No one is going to walk in off the street and look for stuff on our computers – we'd soon spot them if they did.

Note: E-Health Insider Sponsored Feature: Sentillion. 10 Dec 2008. http://www.e-health-insider.com/features/sentillion/

Issue: Team log on has two main problems: (i) unauthorised people could potentially access the system; this is not only access by members of the public. Staff could access information that their work role would otherwise not allow them to see., (ii) the audit trail of who has accessed which data and when cannot be properly maintained so access cannot be properly monitored and inappropriate use spotted. However, if you make systems too difficult to use and affect people's working practices adversely then they will seek workarounds. The technological approach to this are single sign on systems.

All the scares about the loss of private data from NHS organisations has really focussed the attention of our Chief Exec. We've been inundated with directives about information security, records management, information governance, blah blah blah. I just haven't got time to read them all. I just hope he doesn't cotton on to our team log in!

Note: Lamb: NHS data loss utterly shocking. 26 Nov 2008. http://www.libdems.org.uk/home/lamb-nhs-data-loss-utterly-shocking-72506312;show

Issue: Loss of private data decreases the public's trust in the system, the organisation and staff. Losses are caused mainly by staff not understanding the risks of how they handle data, e.g. portable data storage media such as laptops and data sticks, sending non encrypted data through postal services, etc. Organisations must have suitable policies and training in place. Technological mechanisms controlling access and what can be downloaded could also help. However, no system can be made completely secure, and certainly no networked system can be completely protected from criminal and malicious attacks.

Question to the participants: In their organisation, what are the policies and technological systems in place? What training have they received?

Issue: what drives organisations and individuals to take data security seriously? For organisations it is often public embarrassment or legal threats.

Question to the participants: What would make them / makes them take data security seriously?

But I'm not a complete work slave. I am keeping up as best I can with the topic of electronic patient records. We're not an early adopter site, thank goodness. Let someone else identify all the issues and iron out all the bugs!

Note: NHS Care Records Service: information for patients http://www.nhscarerecords.nhs.uk/; information for staff http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/scr

Note: National implementation roll-out from January 2009

I do understand people's concerns about the security of their information! You can't blame them with all these data loss scandals trumpeted in the papers. I'm personally OK with having an electronic patient record, but in my private life I admit I do worry about my financial records and identity theft.

Issue: the public have to place trust in organisations to protect their data. Scares decrease the level of this trust. However, in the modern world electronic records containing personal data will not go away.

Patients are going to be able to opt out of the electronic patient record scheme. But how we're going to deal with that on a daily basis I have no idea.

Issue: There are two ways individuals can be given the choice of having personal information held in an e-record system. They can opt in or they can opt out. Many experts on personal rights feel that opting in to a system gives the individual more rights and protection. However, from a practical and uptake point of view, organisations often prefer the opting out approach as many people don't bother to do this and accept their information being held by default.

Question to participants: Which option do you prefer?

We do a lot of epidemiological research here using anonymised data from the patient records. We've made really significant discoveries that will make such improvements to people's lives. So electronic records will make it much easier for us to obtain the data for our research. But if significant numbers of people opt out of having an electronic record this could totally invalidate our research.

Issue: In society there are always competing rights. It is to the benefit of us all that medical research is carried out. Medical research requires informed consent by patients. However, epidemiological research on anonymised data can, with appropriate ethical committee approval, be carried out where it is impractical to contact the patients concerned. E-medical records provide the possibility of carrying out very large studies, very efficiently, with the potential of making important discoveries that could improve patient care. However, if the set of records is incomplete because people have opted out of the system, then the results of such research could be invalidated or give partial answers.

Question to participants: Whose rights are the most important in this case? The individual's or society's?

The government doesn't help in creating public trust! I couldn't believe their wide reaching plans for data sharing. A small clause in a recent Bill would have allowed data collected for one purpose to be seen by any other government department (and even private sector organisations and foreign governments). This would have included medical records. So groups like the police and education officials could trawl medical records for evidence of things such as drug misuse, under age sex or welfare problems. Good on the BMA and royal colleges for challenging this. I see their protest has had some effect. The clause has just been withdrawn and the topic is now to be discussed further. One small victory for democracy.

Note: The clause was a small part of a large Coroners and Justice Bill

Note: BMA – British Medical Association

Note: eHealth Insider Primary Care. Data sharing clause 152 dropped. 09 Mar 2009. http://www.ehiprimarycare.com/news/4640/data_sharing_clause_152_dropped

Issue: Electronic records provide for much easier sharing of data. Currently, personal data should only be used for the purpose for which it was collected. However, government services could be provided much more efficiently if data is shared. This would help individuals as they would only have to give the information once. And efficient services would save public money.

Question to participants: What is your view of this position? Should all personal information be treated in this way? Should medical records be involved in such data sharing? What about sharing data with private companies, many of whom are now contracted to provide public services? Do you trust the government's purpose behind data sharing? Is it more about tackling crime and terrorism than providing efficient, user-focussed services?

THE VALUE OF STORIES or ABOUT STORIES

> *"Powerful stories are 'cultural DNA', affecting us in ways both perceptible and opaque. Every culture -- whether it's a business, an institution, a family, or a nation -- is constructed by the stories it tells. Stories matter..."*
>
> Narrative Lab http://www.narrativelab.com

> *"storytelling is one of the most important ways--though not the only way--to get people to change their ideas and their behavior, not grudgingly and slowly, but quickly, willingly and enthusiastically"*
>
> Steve Denning http://kmedge.org/int/stevedenning.html

> *"Anecdote trains and coaches leaders to be better storytellers to influence, persuade and communicate more effectively, and to provide a coherent path when times are turbulent."*
>
> Anecdote http://www.anecdote.com.au

> *"An anecdote circle is a gathering (physical or virtual) whose purpose is to generate and collect anecdotes about some issue or topic. Usually the anecdotes gathered will be used later in some sort of sense-making, and they may be placed in a narrative database for sense-making and as a knowledge repository."*
>
> Cognitive Edge and David Snowden http://www.cognitive-edge.com/

Other sources of further information:

Kathy Hansen's Blog 'A storied career' http://www.astoriedcareer.com/

Narrate http://www.narrate.co.uk

Simmons A. (2006). *The story factor. Secrets of influence from the art of storytelling*. Revised edition. Basic Books

AC+erm Output

Vignette – 9. Word Cloud: Solutions to 'people' issues in managing e-records

Nature of tool:

Picture based. Word clouds create a pictorial representation of a piece of text: individual words are given more prominence if they occur more frequently in the text.

The example given here was created using Wordle http://www.wordle.net/ The source of the text was the themes produced from analysing the responses to the AC+erm Project Delphi Study on the 'People' facet of e-records management.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

As illustrations in publications, presentations, Websites etc.

Vignettes – 9. Word Cloud: Solutions to 'people' issues in managing e-records

WORD CLOUD EXAMPLE

The text that formed the source of this word cloud came from analysing the responses to the AC+erm Project Delphi Study on the 'People' facet of e-records management. The key issues listed below had been identified in earlier rounds of the Delphi. The participants came up with their suggestions, based on their experience and perspective, for solutions that worked in addressing the issues. Their responses were then themed (see the explanation below for details of our themeing process). The themes then formed the text.

Issues to be addressed

- Executives and management lack understanding of records management and their role within that
- Records professionals need appropriate knowledge/skills, approaches and relationships for the e-environment
- Records Management and Information Management: principles and practices need to be a valued and integral part of the organisation
- Staff, users: lack understanding of records management and their role within that
- Implementation of ERM and systems requires change and change management
- E-environment: has changed the nature of work and workplace relationships
- ERM systems: need to well designed
- Other professionals: lack understanding of records management and their role within that
- Managers need to commit not just to change in the organisation but lead by example through changing themselves
- Records/information management needs to be part of an organisation's culture to the same extent as quality assurance
- Integration/interoperability of ERM systems with other systems/processes is needed
- 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

Solutions that worked to address people issues in managing electronic records

What does this Word Cloud represent?

The responses provided by the e-Delphi participants were in a rich, discursive form – a single sentence often presented complex situations or ideas. In order to 'unpack' the responses and break them down to units more amenable to analysis and the identification of themes, we created a controlled vocabulary of standardised terms and adapted a form of facet classification to present these terms in the context they appeared.

The classification facets available under the system we used are:

Thing [Th], Kind [Ki], Part [Pa], Property [Pty], Process [Pr], Operation [Op], System operated on [SOO], Product [Pd], By-product [BP], Agent [Ag], Space [Sp], Time [Ti], Form [Fo].

To this, we added an extra facet Example [Ex] to show where there was an empirical basis for the statement, based on a case study or example, or on personal experience.

How themes are created

Original text

"The [Australian State Agency] had largely confined its RM focus to the records of the Administrative service and neglected the functional records of the [Agency]. When we contacted them and asked about their problems and needs, they came to us with photos of storage problems and tales of recordkeeping woe and confessed their confusion. In other words, they were so grateful that someone had shown an interest in their problems and looked to us for advice and a way forward! ... The important point is that people who were not good recordkeepers and didn't know how to go about it were aware of the problem and keen to get help. They were ready to listen when someone asked about their problems."

Faceted theme

awareness [Th] lack of knowledge/skills (RM) [Ki] causes [Pr] receptiveness [Op] support (RM) [SOO] staff [Ag] central government (Australia) [Sp] case example [Ex]

To create the word cloud, each word or phrase was listed as many times as it appeared in the themes abstracted from the entire set of responses.

The size of the font in the word cloud is proportional to the frequency with which the word/phrase appears. If, for example, the above theme is added to another proposed as part of the solutions to ERM problems <*staff [Th] requires [Pr] awareness [Op] IM [SOO] information (subset, records) [SOO]*>, the word cloud generated for these two themes looks like the example on the right.

The full word cloud was generated from the entire list of themed solutions.

AC+erm Output

Vignette – 10. Fridge Phrases

Nature of tool:

Text based, interactive. Fridge phrases (magnets) can be used by an individual or a small group to:

- explore a concept and to come up with a brief definition
- itemize/group objects (e.g. record types in a department) or categories (e.g. for a classification scheme)
- describe a process or workflow

The examples shown here used words obtained from analysis of responses to the AC+erm Project Delphi Study on the 'Process' facet of e-records management. In one of the project colloquia we asked the attendees, working in small groups, to come up with a vision for ERM.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

The tool is not limited to any particular audience, or organizational context. The nature of the tool means that it is appropriate for situations that encourage discussion and free exchange of views. It works best with a facilitator .

Possible settings include:

seminars for students in the recordkeeping disciplines

seminars / workshops for recordkeeping professionals

records managers running training sessions with staff in an organization

records managers obtaining input from staff in an organization before implementing a new system

discussion groups / meetings in the workplace, if the organizational culture facilitates reflective practice and other stakeholders are receptive.

Acknowledgements:

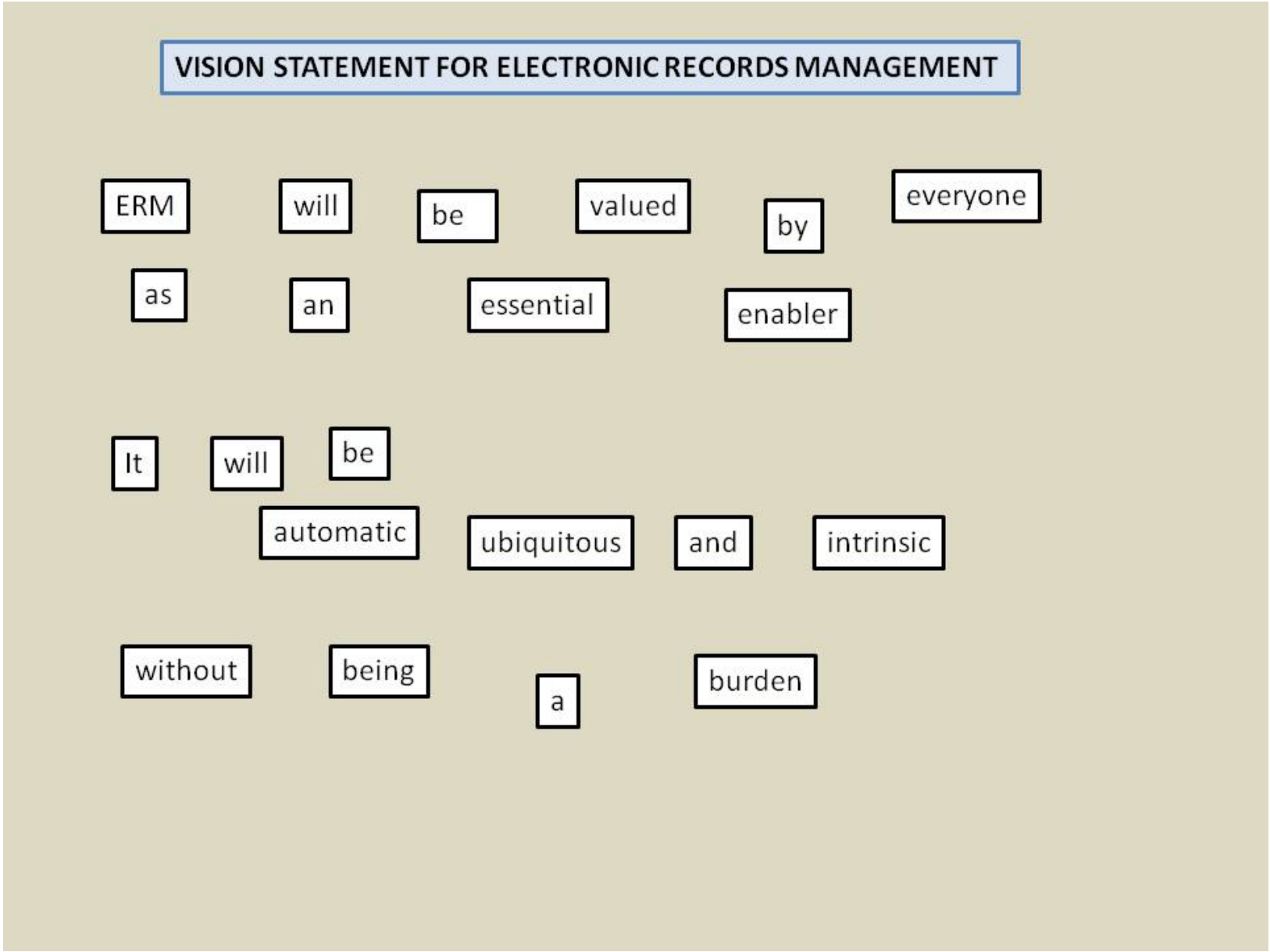
The visions given below are those of attendees at the Technology Colloquium held in Edinburgh on 24th September 2009.

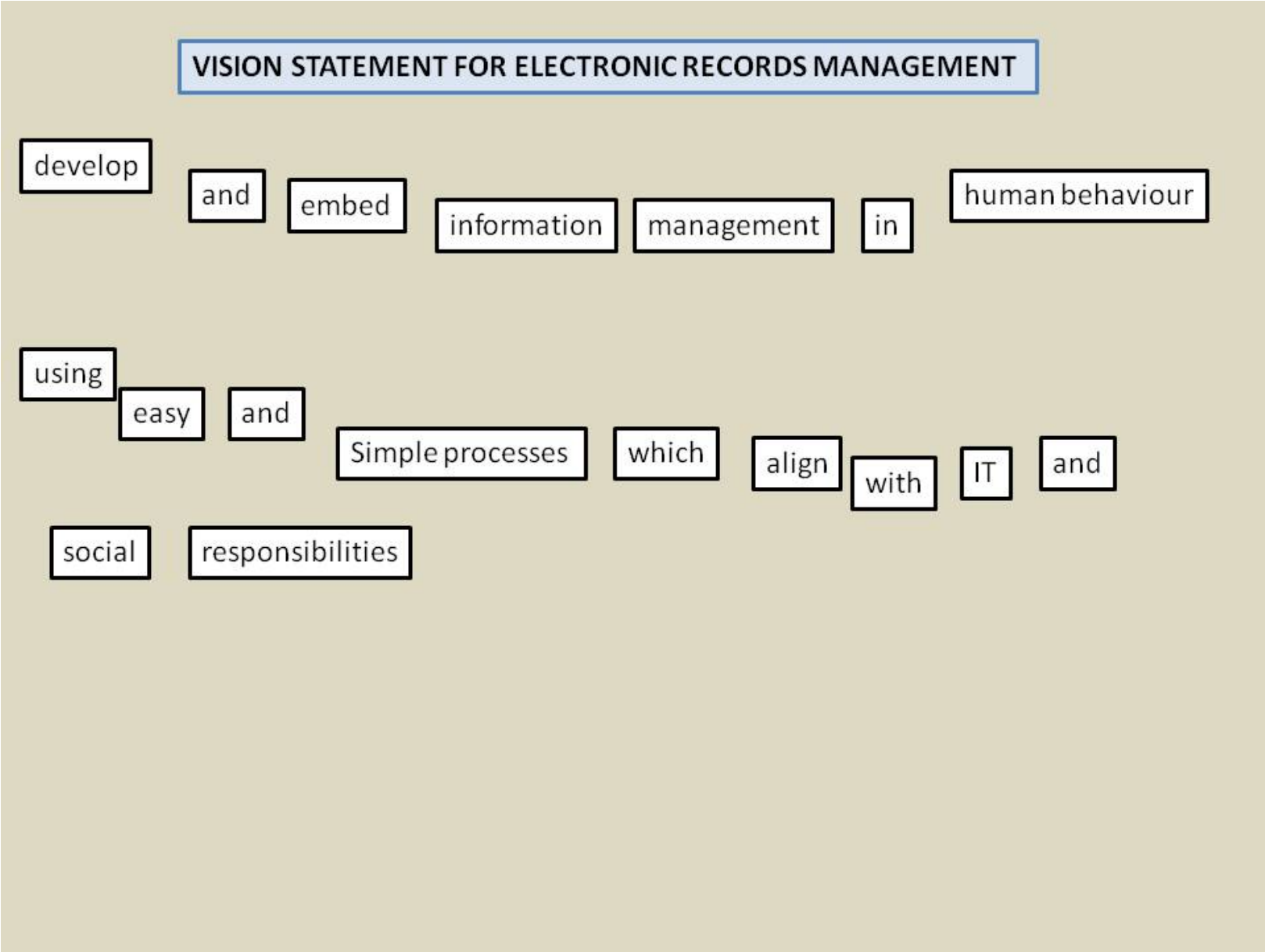
Vignettes – 10. Fridge Phrases

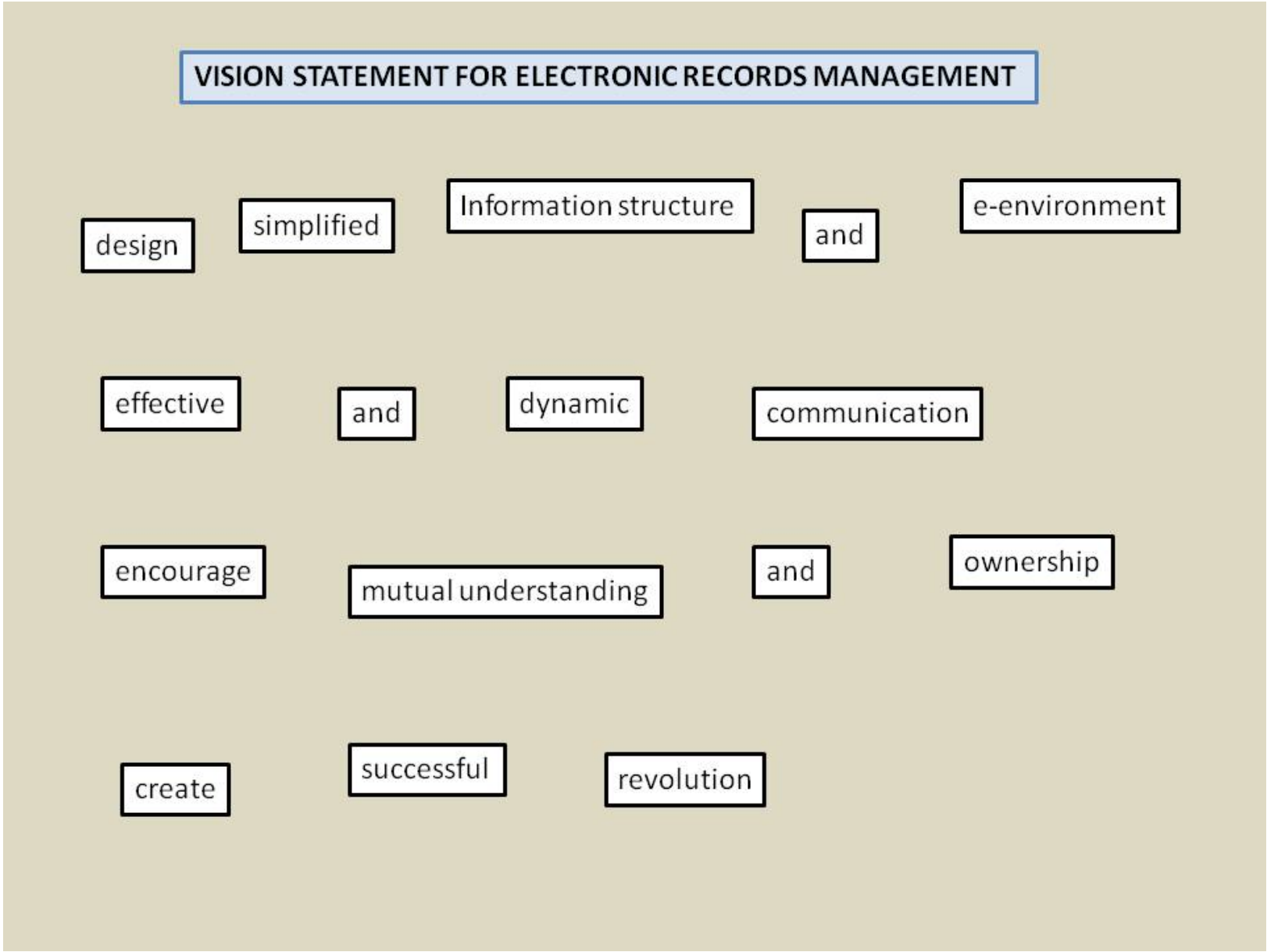
CREATING A VISION FOR ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT

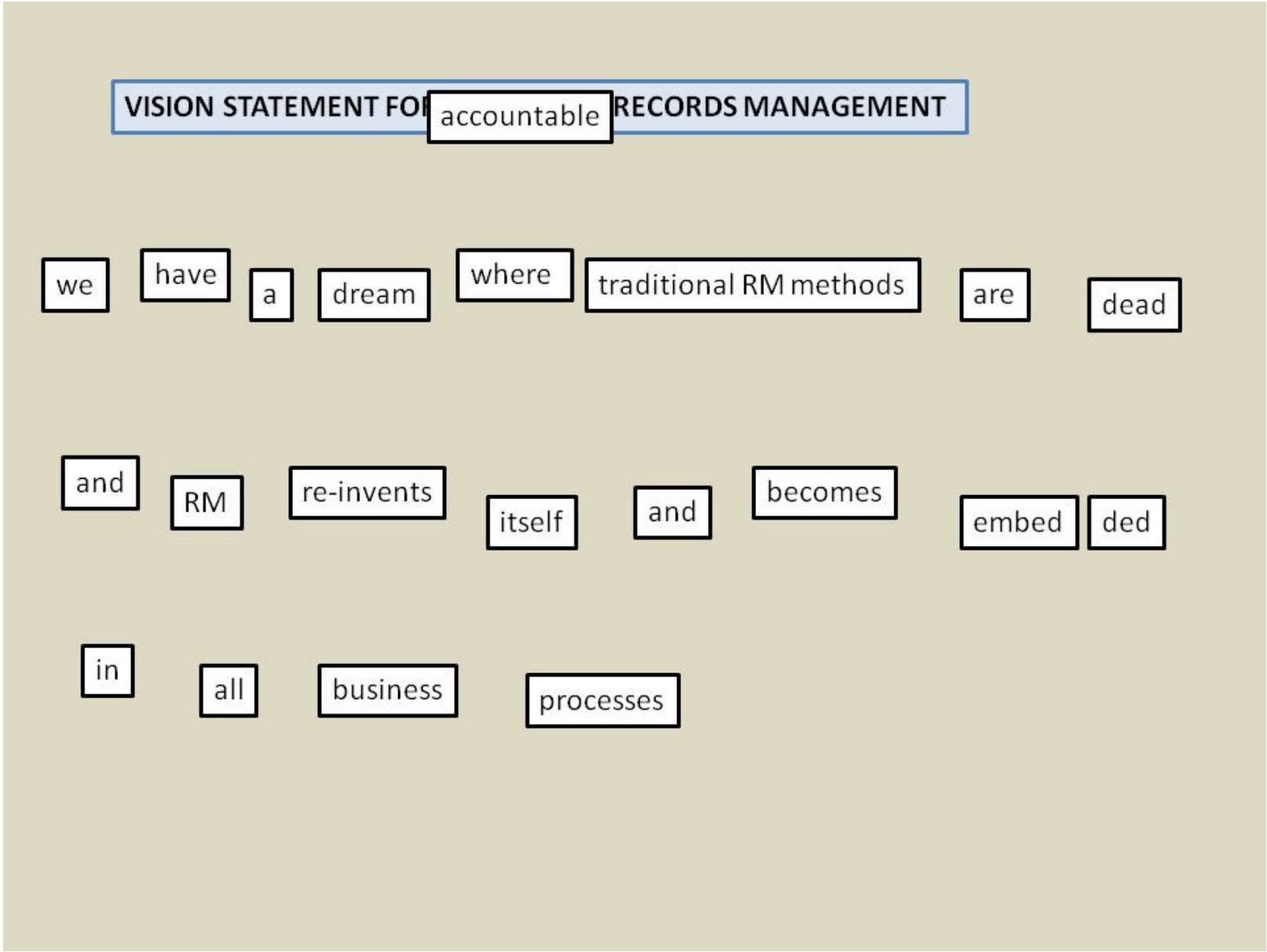
Group Task

Using the words and phrases provided as fridge magnets, develop and capture your vision for ERM. If a word or phrase you need is not available in the pre-defined magnets provided, blank magnets are provided for you to write on.









SETTING UP THE FRIDGE PHRASES

The source of appropriate words (both individual words and phrases) were obtained from our analysis of responses to the Delphi Study for the Process facet. They were printed out on to magnetic ink jet paper and cut up into the individual magnets. Many occurrences of common verbs, adverbs, articles, prepositions, conjunctions etc are required so users can create coherent sentences. Blank magnets to write on were also provided so users could create their own words or phrases. Magnetic sheet, cut to an appropriate size, formed the receptive media for the magnets. The source of our material was Anchor Magnets Ltd http://www.anchormagnets.co.uk/.

Attendees at the Process Colloquium where our fridge phrases were used offered the following suggestions:

- create sentence magnets, not just words or phrases
- use photos or images instead of words

Electronic versions of fridge magnets are available, e.g. e.Parenting's 'The Fridge' http://www.eparenting.co.uk/funstuff/thefridge.shtml and Magnetic Poetry http://www.magneticpoetry.com/play.html. However, e-fridge phrases might not provide the group experience that physical fridge phrases does.

AC+erm Output

Vignette – 11. Animated Videos

Nature of tool:

Video-based. The tool uses the free online software Xtranormal (www.xtranormal.com) to create short animated videos.

The software is very easy to use, and provides 'help' features to enable the novice to start using it immediately. The software allows animations featuring two characters at a time, from a selection of stock characters and sets. Dialogue for the characters is synthesized in a variety of voices and accents from lines typed in by the user, and a selection of sound effects and soundtracks is also available.

Both the purely online version and the faster and more flexible download version of the software are free. Once created, videos can be shared by giving access directly within Xtranormal or by uploading them to YouTube. A high-definition download option is also available.

The example used for this vignette is a video created to provide a short and light-hearted summary of AC+erm, in the form of a 'news feature' on the project. 'Stills' from the video are shown below; the full feature can be viewed on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYbzU8_C2cY.

Suggested audience or setting for use:

This tool is not restricted to any particular audience, but it is not really suitable for formal uses and contexts – it is not a slick, professional tool and part of its value resides in the disarming quirkiness of the minimalist animation and characterization, mechanical sound of the synthesized voices, etc.

Suggested uses include:

- publicizing activities, projects, policies etc;
- as training aids, to introduce or summarize more detailed material;
- breaking the ice or introducing material in training sessions, workshops, etc;
- collaborative creation of short videos during such sessions or as part of a team-building exercise.