Information Management

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Investing in intranets and search

For some time now I have been advocating the use of a risk-based approach to making a case for investment in intranets and search. Organisations have to declare business risks in their annual reports and have a duty to shareholders to monitor these risks and take all reasonable measures to reduce them. I have had some success making investment cases that could reduce the risk scores. In a presentation to the Enterprise Search Summit in New York last month I argued that important though a search strategy might be, it would only have a lasting value and impact if incorporated into an information management strategy. Based on a show of hands very few attendees had either a search strategy or an information management strategy based on an information life cycle model.

Over the last few years there has been a growing interest in information risk management. The main focus of information risk is on making sure that information is held securely, and is invariably based on ISO Standard 27001 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO/IEC_27001. As a result, the requirements tend to be around breaches of security that lead to information that is vital to business operations not being available because it has been lost, has been stolen or has just strayed. There is an excellent report from PwC, sponsored by Iron Mountain, which provides a good introduction to information risk-management strategies (see http://www.continuitycentral.com/BeyondCyberThreats.pdf).

However, in my opinion, there is a fourth scenario in which the information is there all the time but that for various reasons (such as a poor search implementation) it cannot be found, and *de facto* it is lost. In the PwC report there is a list of seven causes of information loss, but search failure is not listed.

Another report that makes for interesting reading is *A Business-Led Approach to Information Risk*, published in March 2013 by the Corporate Executive Board http://www.executiveboard.com/exbd/executive-guidance/2013/q1/index.page. For anyone looking for information on which to base a business plan for additional investment in information services, this report contains a wealth of survey information and analysis.

- Approximately three out of four executives report that more than one-half of their staff now use information to make decisions as a primary part of their job.

- 76% of employees report a significant increase in time spent working with data and information, which now occupies more than one-third of their time.

- 67% of employees are exchanging more information with colleagues to get their work done.

- 60% report exchanging information with 10 or more people on a day-to-day basis.

There is no doubt that information risk is on the Board agenda, helped by companies with an interest in information security management. Perhaps now is the time to talk to the managers responsible for assessing and reporting information risk and highlighting the scale of the problems that a lack of investment in intranets and search could be causing the organisation. I'm still recovering from a paper at the Enterprise Search Summit in which one global business mentioned that 25% of the zero-success queries listed in the search logs were the result of IT and HR repositories not being crawled and indexed. That is a lot of 'lost' information.

The language of information risk management, focused as it is on ISO27001 compliance, is still some way from the language that we as information professionals might use. However I think that there is an opportunity here for us to reach out to the information risk management community, and to the managers with an interest in information management risk in our own organisations, and start a dialogue about how we are in fact trying to achieve the same outcomes.

Since early 2012 there has been a CILIP Information Management Advisory Group. This grew out of an informal group of information professionals who were increasingly concerned about the lack of commitment and action by CILIP to address information management issues. The Chair of the Group is Peter Griffiths, Anne Mauger is the CILIP contact and Guy Daines acts as the Secretary. Both Charles Oppenheim and I are among the current members of the Group. At Umbrella CILIP will be releasing a position paper on information management which has been drafted by the Group and later this year there will be a seminar to help CILIP prioritise the work that needs to be carried out to raise the profile of information management. The Group has also compiled a list of information management resources and this will be published on the CILIP web site in the near future. You might also want to watch out for a new book entitled *Total Information Risk Management: Maximizing the Value of Data and Information Assets* by Alexander Borek, Ajith Kumar Parlikad , Jela Webb and Phillip Woodall which will be published by Morgan Kaufmann later this year.

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