

Robust Information Management Regimes are a Prerequisite to the Democratization of Information

by
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Current Employment

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Academic Background

- Ph D – University of Amsterdam – Faculty of Humanities.
- A Licentiate degree in data and systems sciences – Mid Sweden University.
- BA and MA in Archives and Information Science – Mid Sweden University.
- BSc in Media and Information Science – Uppsala University.

Employment History

- Worked as an Archivist.
- Research Administrator on a Post-Conflict Program that focused on Sierra Leone and Liberia.
- Project Co-ordinator for a Nordic Documentation Project at:
www.liberationfarica.se
- Consultancy work in Belgium.

Research Background

Freedom of information is a constitutional right in Sweden. The world's first freedom of information legislation was adopted by the Swedish parliament in 1766.

Research Background cont'd

According to the Global Network of Freedom of Information Advocates, 93 countries have enacted freedom of information laws.

However despite this positive development, some of these countries still lack the political will and information management infrastructure that is key to their implementation.

My Ph D Research

The motivation to undertake a Ph D in information management was motivated by the weaknesses that I saw in managing the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) documentation in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

My Ph D Research cont'd

The challenges surrounding the documentation processes of past TRCs are worth investigating if future TRC findings are to serve the objectives of addressing social and economic injustices that partly cause the conflicts.

Going where the money is...

The focus shifted from TRCs to Enterprise Content Management (ECM), Records Management and Information culture amidst e-Government development.

Research Background cont'd

E-Government has at its core the use of information technology and information. It aims to improve the performance of government institutions.

Research Background cont'd

Andersen (2006) argued that e-Government is driven by policy goals of increased effectiveness, efficiency, and information quality, improved interaction mechanisms, and in turn better governance tools.

Research Background cont'd

Information is considered as the main asset and vehicle for economic, cultural and political achievements, enhanced by the use of information technology.

Technology environment

An effective technology environment is one that supports the management, protection and exploitation of an organization's information assets.

Authenticity of Records

Without authentic information and records there can be no accountability framework and no responsible government. Accountability is critical to responsible government.

Authenticity of Records cont'd

The rights and entitlements of citizens are based on records. The ability of a government to respect these rights and entitlements is based on the quality of the policies, standards and practices employed for the care of government information and records.

The Public Sector Information Directive (PSI)

Government information resources are being recognized as a "gold mine" for the development of e-services by interested parties. A good example is the PSI Directive that is being promoted both at the European Union and national levels.

The purpose of the Research

The aim of the research was to establish if the three municipalities that I investigate were coping with the management of their information resources amidst e-Government by embracing a proactive and holistic approach.

Research Setting

Two Swedish municipalities and a municipality in Belgium.

Information intensive depts:

Social Welfare and Building Permit Granting and City Planning units.

The Current Information Management Landscape

- Information and records management involves the deployment of information systems and organizational issues which include behaviour and attitudes ([McLeod, Childs et al. 2011](#)).
- Research further reveals that people need to be at the centre of information management solutions, since they play a major role in their success or failure (Davenport, 1997).

The Current Information Management Landscape

Despite the deployment of information systems and accumulated research on information and records management, these challenges are omnipresent.

The Current Information Management Landscape

In theory, there are good prospects to maintain satisfactory information and records management practices. In practice, there is a problem of implementation and compliance.

Information management skills

The current information environment requires employees that are equipped with information management skills in order to effectively create, capture, manage and use and re-use information.

Information management skills

This in turn would promote a mature information culture which leverages information in a manner that leads to improved service delivery and promotes information access.

Superior business performance cont'd...

Choo, Furness et al. (2006) argue that in order for organizations to achieve superior business performance, they should have the following capabilities:

- Good information technology practices
- Good information management practices
- Good information behaviours and values

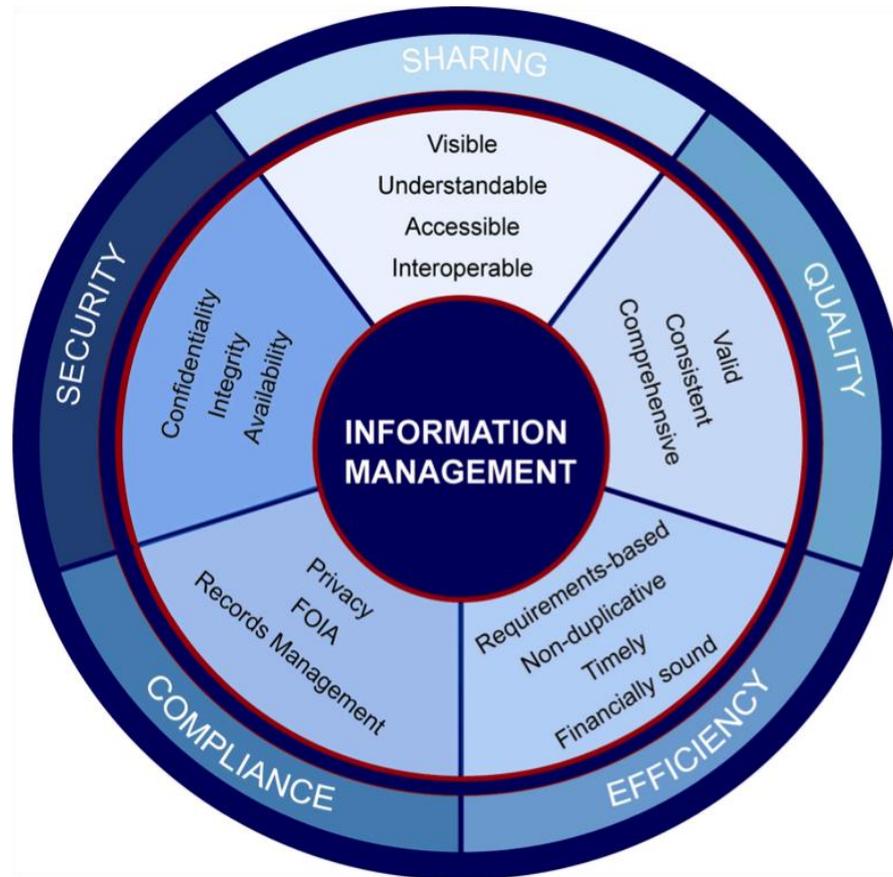
The Municipalities....

- The municipalities are institutions which exist to enhance the social welfare of its citizens. As such, they follow established rules and regulations in executing their obligations.
- Were working with the improvement of their business operations.
- They invested in information systems to facilitate the automatic capture and management of information.

The changing Information landscape

- The current information landscape: documents, videos, blogs, chats, scans, rich media etc.
- Information is richer today but dispersed; hybrid environments. Some devices that employees own put information outside the managed environment.
- BOYD – Bring Your Own Device technologies.

Effective Information Environment



Methodology

Qualitative Research Methods: Case Studies

Research Techniques:

- Interviews – 103 interviews in three municipalities.
- Literature review, Documentary analysis

Categories of people interviewed:

- Unit managers, system co-ordinators, web editors, IT managers and archivists.

Records Management (RM) and Enterprise Content Management (ECM).

- **Records Management** is the systematic management of records and evidence to maintain their authenticity and context
- **Enterprise Content Management** refers to a broad collection of organisational practices and approaches related: to generating, capturing, and disseminating know-how and other content relevant to business. Focuses on unstructured content.

Information Culture

Douglas defined information culture as “an emerging complex system of values, attitudes and behaviours that influence how information is (created) and used in an organization. Information culture exists in the context of and is influenced by an organizational culture and the wider environment” ([Douglas, 2010, p. 388](#)).

Davenport (1997)

Emphasizes a human-centered approach to information management. He argues that a lot of focus has been put on information technology and yet, better computers and communication networks do not necessarily lead to better information environments.

Information Culture

Research shows that 80% of the challenges are people issues ([McLeod, Childs, & Hardiman, 2011](#)).

The Records Continuum Model

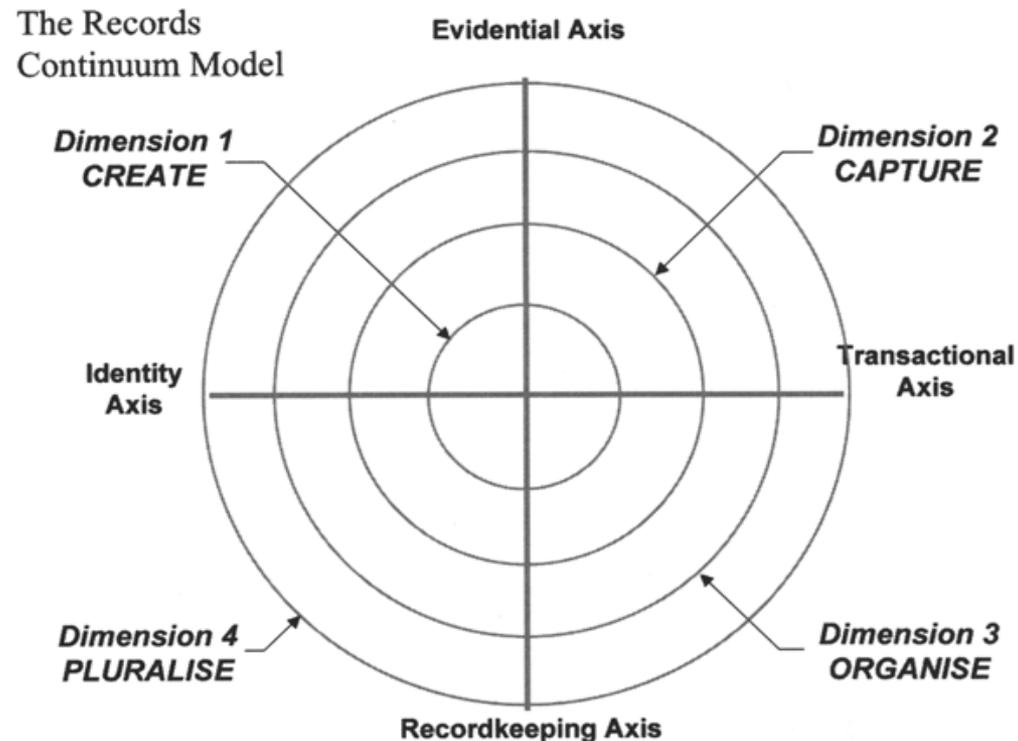


Figure 3: Source: McKemmish, S. (2001). Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice. *Archival Science*, 1 (4).

How did I achieve the Purpose of the Research?

Conducted studies:

Three studies in two Swedish municipalities:

1. Identified projects that aimed at improving business processes.
2. Focused on establishing if the municipalities information management strategies could be similar to ECM.
3. If ECM strategies could mitigate long-term preservation challenges.
4. Focused on Information Culture in the two Swedish municipalities and a municipality in Belgium.

Research Findings – Factors driving ECM

- Organizations now recognize the monetary implications of re-using and re-purposing content.
- Increased volume of content that organizations have to deal with.
- Increased regulations and standards that require organizations to manage their content better.
- The need to track content to cater for organizational needs.

Research Findings - My ECM Model



Overlapp ECM – RM in the Municipalities

- Enterprise Architecture
- Business Process Management
- Collaboration
- Change Management
- Re-purposing of Information
- Knowledge Management
- System Integration
- Life Cycle Management of information

Identified Problems in the Swedish Municipalities

- Stovepipes
- Top Management Support
- System Integration
- Knowledge Management
- Competence Development
- Resistance to Change
- Long term Preservation challenges
- Lack of electronic archives

Swedish Municipalities

- Had an a positive information Culture

Identified Problems in the Belgian Municipality

- Lack of information governance
- Anarchic information management environment.
- System Integration
- Knowledge Management
- Competence Development
- Resistance to Change
- Long term Preservation challenges
- Lack of electronic archives

The way forward....

Strong who is a consultant by profession combined Enterprise Content and Records Management and came up with the acronym ECRM as “the strategy, technology, and processes for managing information assets facilitated by information technology” ([Strong, 2008, p. 1](#)).

Records management still plays a vital role regardless of the various approaches being promoted.

Research Findings cont'd

In general the people issues complicated and minimised leveraging information and the information systems in a manner that would promote effective service delivery.

This is likely to compromise the e-Government objectives of increased accountability, transparency and efficiency.

Poor Information Management Regimes

In the Belgian case where there were lack of robust information management regimes, administrators found it difficult to retrieve information needed for the delivery of services.

Information access cont'd

Poor information management regimes make it virtually impossible to determine responsibility for actions and to hold individuals accountable.

Inadequate Information Systems

Inadequate information systems affect the delivery of programmes. All aspects of public service, including health, education, pensions, land and judicial rights, depend upon well-kept and well managed records.

Public information and records are vital to every aspect of the governance process.

Revisiting the TRC Challenges

- Lack of Information Management Institutions
- Lack of the political will to make information accessible to the citizens
- Lack of skilled information professionals
- The digital divide - technical know-how to manage digital content.

- Lack of resources to the archiving process of the documentation
- Lack of a follow-up institution to continue with the dissemination process
- High illiteracy levels

