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Information Governance

An Overview

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01_ The Knowledge Continuum

An organisation might have the most efficient business processes, highly capable staff and the best technology, but if the underlying data that touches people, process and technology is poor, the outcome will be poor.

- Ram Kumar Director, Enterprise Information Management And Privacy, IAG



Information, Data and Knowledge

The term “Information” to encompass Information, Data and Metadata.

Data: The collected facts that describe elements of the real world

Information: The applications of processes to turn data into meaningful forms

Metadata: The underlying definition of Data and Information components

Knowledge: Results from applying Information in a business context.

Quality information leads to high performance, poor information results in poor outcomes.

The Governance Gap

“IT owns the systems that we use to create it and store information. That means they own the bits and bytes. But they do not own the ‘information’ or really understand its meaning to the business.”

- Debra Logan, Research VP at Gartner.

The primary stakeholders in the organisation’s information are information technology and systems groups, and business units. In general, IT manages the systems that collect, produce and store information, and business consumes information to accomplish the organisation’s goals.

Paradoxically, in the strictest sense, neither group is accountable for the information itself. This is the gap filled by information governance. Information Governance brings together IT and business to develop a common view of the organisation’s information and manage them accordingly.

02_ The Role of Information Governance

Information Governance will only succeed if it is sponsored at a senior executive level that lead by example and stay the course.

The role of information governance is to ensure that business information is managed in the best interests of the organisation and all its stakeholders.

Many organisations believe that IT manages all aspects of information. However Information management is a collective concern for the organisation. As the consumers of information, business groups must also take an active role in its management.

Information assets should be overseen by business stewards who ensure that it is fit for purpose, readily accessed and is properly used and reused.

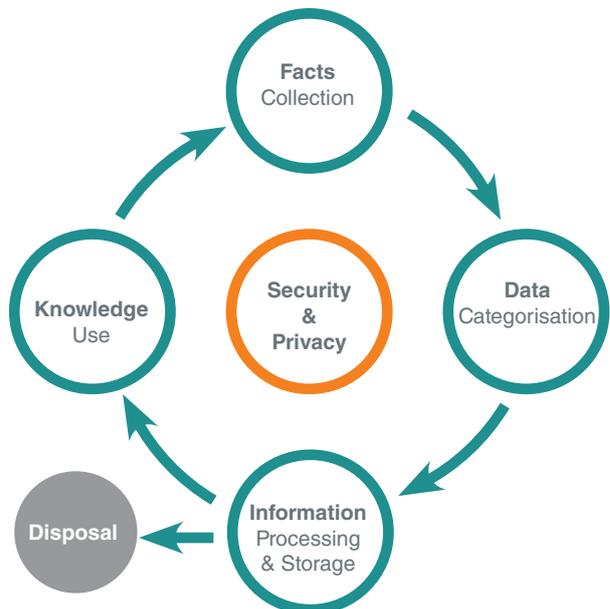
Information governance oversees the organisational bodies, rules, roles, decision rights and accountabilities of the stakeholder groups that create, maintain and consume information. It covers all phases of the information lifecycle from creation to destruction and includes oversight of information security and privacy policies.

Without this structure data quality is likely to be questionable and information may be flawed and will degrade over time. Users become frustrated and there is no accountability. Budgets may be spent on lesser value information rather than that which will make the most difference to business success.

The Information Lifecycle

Information governance must oversee the entire information lifecycle, summarised in the diagram below.

The lifecycle of a unit of information (or data record) extends from creation or receipt right through to final destruction. It involves many points of risk, opportunity and threat that need to be understood, and managed proactively.



03 _ Managing Information as an Asset

Information is the foundation of business value and as such, should be recognised as a corporate asset and managed in the same way that all corporate assets are managed. Here are some key policy guidelines for managing information assets:

1. Information is the basis of exchanging business value

Business value is primarily transferred through the exchange of information within the corporation and between the corporation and its customers and external business partners.

2. Information is the property of the organisation

Information that is gathered, created and maintained to support the organisation's business is the property of the organisation, not of individual business units or departments.

3. The organisation is responsible for its information assets

All stakeholders are accountable for the organisation's information. Leaving accountability solely to IT or IM, either by omission or commission, is inappropriate and misplaced.

4. Information must be managed as a corporate asset

Information must be managed according to asset management principles:

- Maximise value
- Minimise risks
- Continuous improvement

5. Business systems will re-use existing information components

Information should be re-used rather than reinvented. It's important to formally differentiate between:

Foundation Information components that are common across applications
(*Customer, Product, and others*)

and:

Business Information components specific to a business area or system
(*Transactions, Inventory, others*)

6. Prioritise management for your high value information

Retention of low value information costs money. If you don't need or use it, archive or discard it.

7. Information must meet the needs of all stakeholders

All stakeholders have rights to the definition and content of information components, but also all have responsibility for the definitions, standards and quality of information as well.

8. Information quality

Poor quality information is of little value to the organisation. However it is expensive and unnecessary for every piece of data or information to be of perfect quality. Rather, the goal is to ensure that information quality is fit for purpose.

04_ Information Governance Principles

The main Information Governance Principles, and their relationship to standards and policies, are shown in the following table (the terms 'data', 'metadata' and 'Information' are interchangeable):

1. Information is Available, Accessible and Usable

Information is available to those who need it, in a form and timeframe that enables them to perform their duties.

2. Private Information remains Confidential

Private information is not disclosed to unauthorised persons.

3. Information is fit for purpose

Quality of information consistently meets knowledge workers' and customers' expectations.

4. Data is Consistently Defined

- Data and metadata are defined consistently across the corporation
 - Definitions are understandable and accessible by all stakeholders.
-

5. Data is Shared

Data is shared in ways that ensure that the integrity and quality of the data are preserved.

6. Data is Protected

Data is protected against physical loss, either by accidental deletion or catastrophic systems failure.

7. Information is Secure

Data and Information are protected against unauthorised access.

05_ Implementing an Information Governance Process

To ensure success and buy-in, we suggest the following implementation approach.

1. Start small and simple

It's the best way to get buy-in and establish the governance culture

2. Begin as you wish to proceed

The initial governance framework should be as comprehensive as possible, so that extending it to other areas is a matter of adapting what has been done rather than making wholesale changes.

3. Top down, bottom up

Governance is a corporate issue, so there needs to be clear corporate accountability for Information Governance processes and outcomes.

Data stewards and information custodians need clear lines of accountability and should have the authority to make things happen.

IT needs to develop metrics of data quality and identify root causes of quality problems.

4. Business ownership

All key business data should have a business owner who is accountable for it, along with appropriate KPIs.

The Business Case

Create a business case that outlines the benefits in terms of productivity, risk mitigation, cost reduction and productivity across business, IT and systems units over a sustained period.

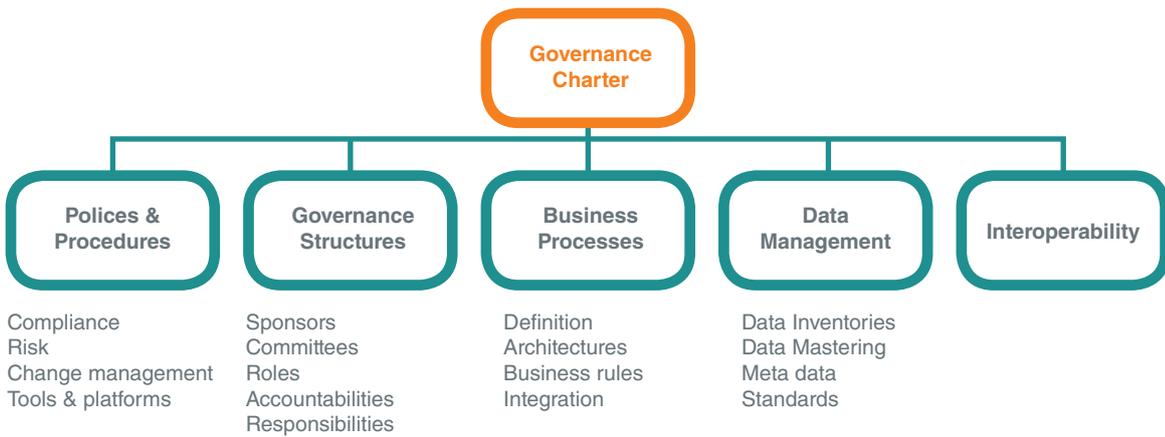
Design milestones such as:

- Establishing an Information Governance awareness and culture
- Sponsorship and funding for the long term
- Engagement model to bring all functional units on board
- Integration of existing processes into a single enterprise platform or portal
- Controls and monitoring processes for evolution and continuity.

05_ Implementing an Information Governance Process *(Continued)*

The Information Governance Framework

The diagram below represents a template for the structure of an information governance framework, together with some of the elements that are addressed by the framework modules.



You should limit the scope of your governance framework by selecting the elements that will make it effective and sustainable for your budget and organisation settings.

Structured Approach

The best approach is to enhance and extend existing governance structures to include Information Governance.

Our implementation approach is flexible and adaptable to so that each component adds real business value. It is based on the following four steps:



05_ Implementing an Information Governance Process *(Continued)*

Principles & Charter

Establish the principles of information governance that drives the governance framework:

- Agree and ratify the information governance principles in line with the corporate vision
- Draft and endorse the information governance charter based on these principles.

Current State

Review the current state of Information governance in the organisation, in particular examining:

- The commitment to implementing an effective information governance framework
- The appetite for information governance within the enterprise
- The root cause of issues and problems together with the associated cost and risks
- The state of existing information governance structures.

Road Map

Define the information governance target state and complete the planning process to achieve it:

- Strategic targets and outcomes
- Quick wins: choose initiatives that have immediate benefit/impact
- Further steps.

Target State

Determine the bodies of work required to implement the governance road map:

- Scope and priorities
- Plans and execution
- Monitor and review.

06_ Tips & Tricks

1. Leverage existing governance structures

Extending existing governance structures to include Information Governance will minimise cultural impacts and maximise stakeholder buy-in.

2. Business ownership

Each key business data item should have a business owner who oversees it from an asset management perspective

3. Driven by senior management

There needs to be a clear understanding of the role that Information Governance plays in achieving the corporate mission and vision.

4. Top down, bottom up

There needs to be clear accountability for Information Governance processes and outcomes. Data stewards and custodians need clear lines of accountability and be authorised to make things happen.

5. Start small and simple

- With a single system. Candidate could include CRM, Single Customer View or Data Warehouse.
 - With the information life-stages that have the highest business importance.
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6. Begin as you wish to proceed

The initial governance framework should be as comprehensive as possible, so that extending it to other areas is a matter of adapting what has been done rather than making wholesale changes.

7. Be aware that Information is political

Groups will stake territorial claims on information assets and behave as if they belong to them.

Senior sponsors needs to reinforce that:

- All information assets are owned by the enterprise, not individual groups. No exceptions
 - Each group is the custodian of the information they collect, process and use
 - Other groups have right of access to use the information of other groups
 - There are explicit protocols, conditions and responsibilities for information sharing and re-use.
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8. Implement in phases that meet your budget and organisational settings.

There needs to be a clear understanding of the role that Information Governance plays in achieving the corporate mission and vision.

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