



Balancing Records Management and Information Governance:

AUTOMATION Is the Key Ingredient

In Partnership with



AIIM Industry Watch

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About AIIM's Industry Watch Research

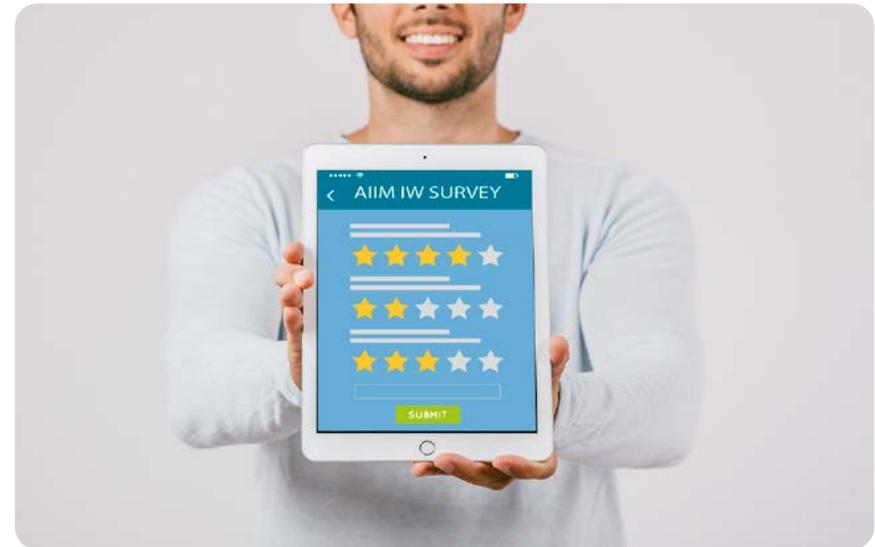
Over three years ago, AIIM introduced the concept of Intelligent Information Management, or IIM, and began researching the connections between IIM and Digital Transformation.

Our 2020 Industry Watch research program looks at the impact of the rising tide of information chaos on the effectiveness of transformation initiatives, the adoption rates of core IIM technology building blocks, and IIM best practices.

We specifically structure this research around the four core IIM capabilities that provide the structure for AIIM's Certified Information Professional (CIP) program:

- 1) **Creating, Capturing, and Sharing Information**
- 2) **Digitalizing Information-Intensive Processes**
- 3) **Extracting Intelligence from Information**
- 4) **Automating Governance and Compliance**

This report takes a deep dive into the 4th of these capabilities – **Automating Governance and Compliance** – and how this capability is integrated into an overall information management strategy.



Our editorial calendar for this year (*with release dates in parentheses*) is as follows:



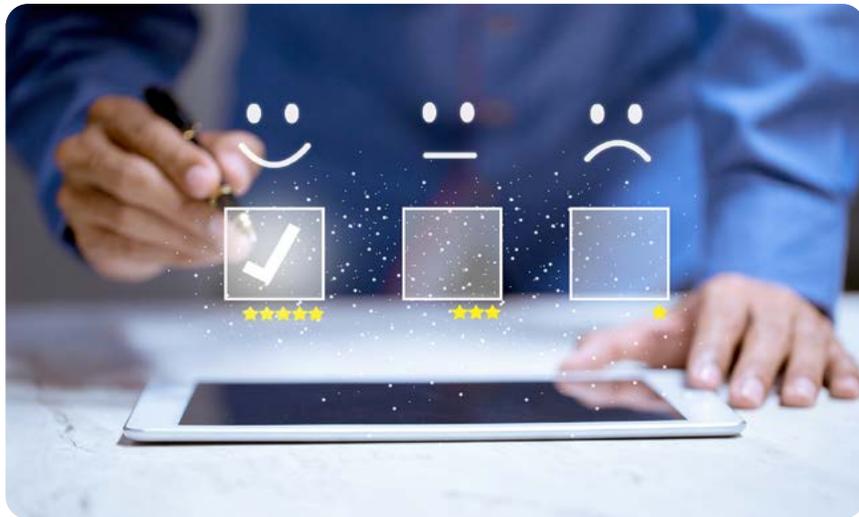
- State of the IIM Industry** (Jan 2020)
- Intelligent Capture, assisted by Artificial Intelligence** (Mar 2020)
- The Ultimate Guide to Improving Your Business Processes** (June 2020)
- Balancing Records Management and Information Governance** (Sept 2020)
- Maximizing Your Microsoft 365 and SharePoint Investment** (Nov 2020)

About the Survey

We value our objectivity and independence as a non-profit industry association. The results of the survey and the market commentary made in this report are independent of any bias from the vendor community. The data shared in this report is just a small sample of the overall data generated in preparation for each research report, and *distribution of the full set of findings is limited to the underwriters.*

The survey was taken using a web-based tool in July 2020. 80% of the survey participants were NOT associated with AIIM prior to taking the survey. Non-AIIM survey participants were drawn against the following criteria:

- Director/Manager, Other decision maker
- Organization size > 10 employees



Core Survey Demographics:

Number of employees

10–99	14%
100–1000	47%
Over 1000	40%

Headquarters location

US and Canada	38%
UK and EMEA	39%
Asia/Pacific/India	3%
Australia/New Zealand	2%
Mexico, Central/South America	18%

Role in Organization

Executive level with broad organizational responsibilities	16%
RM, DM, CM, or information governance	19%
Line of business or horizontal process owner	16%
Information technology/IT	35%
Compliance and Legal	10%

Top 6 Verticals

IT & High Tech	17%
Manufacturing, Aerospace, Food, Process	15%
Government (National, State, Local)	14%
Finance, Banking, Insurance	14%
Energy, Oil & Gas, Mining, Engineering	11%
Education	9%

Note: percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

All potential survey participants were asked this qualifying question: “In this survey, we are particularly interested in the perspectives of those in end-user organizations familiar with information and data governance technologies like Records Management, Information Security, Privacy and Data Protection, eDiscovery, and Digital Preservation. Are you generally familiar with these technologies?” A total of 229 individuals met this initial screening criteria.

We then asked survey participants to categorize their experience with these technologies and have categorized respondents within the report as follows:

- 48% of sample = **Potential Users**: “We are relatively new to most of these technologies and still exploring our options.”
- 52% of sample = **Experienced Users**: “We understand these technologies and are actively using at least one of them.”

We also asked survey participants to evaluate their overall digital transformation effectiveness and their status relative to a series of core transformation competencies. This self-evaluation was done on a 100-point scale.



Meet Your Expert Panel



Meet Your Expert Panel

We thank these records management and governance executives for their commitment to share their expertise and time in order to improve the overall level of competence and knowledge within the industry. The statements of the Expert Panel represent personal opinions and do not necessarily represent those of their employers.

Quotes within this report in each **Expert Panel Perspectives** section were made during a special panel discussion of the survey results on July 21. The intention of the conversation was to cut through some of the wishful thinking that often accompanies governance conversations and illuminate some of the real issues facing records and governance professionals on a day to day basis. To ensure confidentiality and candid perspectives, this discussion was conducted under a variation of [“Chatham House” rules](#). The quotes within the report are intentionally not attributed to the individual participants in the Panel.

Five of the participants are AIIM CIPs. We urge all information professionals to seek the CIP. For those unfamiliar with the CIP Certification, more information is [HERE](#).



Shukra Kichambare is manager of Information Governance at Cummins, Inc. and currently leads the enterprise content management and records and information governance program within Cummins. Shukra is a Certified Records Manager (CRM) and a current member of the AIIM Board of Directors.



Ellie Kim, CIP is senior consultant in Knowledge Management with Alberta Health Services. She has a proven track record of successful execution of projects that align with corporate strategy and has extensive experience with digital transformation initiatives in IT, financial services, healthcare, and the public sector. She currently serves as the ARMA Canada Expo and Events Director.



Baba Majekodunmi, CIP is a solutions consultant with Altair, and partners with banks and credit unions to help them achieve their strategic objectives with Monarch (Data Prep), Knowledge Studio (Data Science), and Panopticon (Data Visualization).



Devon McCollum, CIP is a Corporate Records and Information Manager with over 16 years of experience in document and records management, primarily in the financial sector. He specializes in capture/imaging, strategic planning of hybrid decentralized operations, and credit union regulatory compliance.



Mark Patrick, CIP leads the U.S. Department of Defense Joint Staff's Information Management Team. He currently serves as a key leader in digital transformation, intelligent information management, knowledge and business process management at the Joint Staff with program oversight at the eleven Combatant Commands. Mark is a former AIIM Chair and is a Member of the AIIM Company of Fellows.



Shelly B. Smith is Records Management and FIPPA Coordinator with the City of Winnipeg. She is an experienced and accomplished Information Governance and Records Manager and currently serves as the ARMA Canada Program Director.



Larry Wischerth, CIP recently retired as Director, Enterprise Information and Records Management at Healthfirst. He is expert in designing, implementing, and managing Enterprise Content Management (ECM) systems and experienced in the practical application of Document Capture, Workflow, Recognition (OCR/ICR), and regulatory storage technology. Larry is a former AIIM Chair and is a Member of the AIIM Company of Fellows.

Key Data Points

[Note: Feel free to use any of the following data points in presentations, blog posts, or articles, with this attribution: AIIM, Balancing Records Management and Information Governance, 2020]

Keep in mind these data breakouts:

- 48% of sample = **Potential Users**: “We are relatively new to most of these technologies and still exploring our options.”
- 52% of sample = **Experienced Users**: “We understand these technologies and are actively using at least one of them.”

1. 58% of organizations realize they need to move up the information management value chain from simply mitigating risk and cost to creating value.
2. On average, organizations expect the volume of information coming into their organizations to grow from X to 4.5X over the next two years. They expect more than 57% of this information to be unstructured (like a contract or a conversation) or semi-structured (like an invoice or a form).
3. 48% say that the shift in terminology emphasis from “Records Management” to “Information Governance” has made the task of managing and retaining critical business information easier. However, the “story” behind this data point is complex. Making a more strategic argument for managing and retaining critical business information (i.e., “information governance”) often makes it easier to convince senior management of the importance of this task. But use of the term sometimes tends to undervalue the core records management capabilities critical to making governance a reality.

4. The top obstacles to undertaking new governance projects all relate to senior executive buy-in and support: a) too many other high priorities (22%), b) too much potential for change management problems (17%), and c) lack of executive leadership (15%).
5. Overall, 53% of organizations see records management professionals as “indispensable” or “important” to the task of managing the retention of critical business information; the number rises to 59% among Experienced Users.
6. 28% of Experienced Users say that “When it comes to decisions about business records, IT is the MOST important decision-maker.”
7. Among Experienced Users, 47% say that “the process to dispose of ROT is an automated, accepted, and regular organizational discipline” (only 28% among Potential Users).
8. 43% of Experienced Users say they have automated how they “validate disposal or retention actions, track user behavior, and identify potential violations” (only 27% among Potential Users).
9. For three out of every four organizations (76%), change management is a challenge when it comes to planning governance initiatives. Interestingly, the results are roughly the same for both Experienced Users and Potential Users.
10. The biggest frustrations surrounding governance automation are familiar ones – IT doesn’t understand the business (15%), business doesn’t understand IT (14%), and poor requirements definition (14%). But coming in at a combined 27% are two issues that imply a deeper challenge related to the differences between data governance and information governance: poor understanding by others of content issues (10%) and poor understanding by others of records and governance issues (17%).

11. It is generally agreed that the only way to avoid being swamped by the tide of information chaos is to automate as much of the information management process as possible. Experienced Users have a significant advantage on a variety of key competencies tied to this journey; Potential Users lag far behind. Among Experienced Users:
 - 53%: “We have an organization-wide strategy for metadata.”
 - 52%: “We have automated processes to identify and protect PII.”
 - 51%: “We have automated processes for how shared workspaces are created and who can do so.”
 - 49%: “We have automated methods to translate compliance requirements into operational processes.”
 - 74% of organizations say that turning unstructured information into action data is a significant problem for their organization.
 - In general, AI and Machine Learning are still on the wish list – only 12% have these capabilities in widespread use.
12. One simple way to look at the current state of governance automation is to consider how many organizations consider themselves above average on BOTH of the core governance parameters: 1) Lifecycle Information Management; and 2) Information Privacy and Security. Looking at the data in this way, only 104 of the 229 organizations we surveyed (45%) rate themselves above average on BOTH of these core competencies. Why does this matter? It matters because governance competency translates directly into organizational excellence. ***The 45% of organizations with above average governance competence assess their overall Digital Transformation effectiveness at 76 (on a 100-point scale), compared to an average across the entire sample of 60.***

Why Should You Care About Governance Automation?



Why Should You Care About Governance Automation?

Most organizations and departments have a mandate to continuously improve operations. A conventional change agenda involves better tools and technology, better behaviors, and better processes, all focused on generating better efficiencies and improved productivity.

Ultimately, AIIM believes Digital Transformation is more than conventional change. Digital Transformation is about doing things differently – *and doing different things as well*. And different not just for the sake of being different, but in support of the key strategic objectives facing every organization in the age of digital disruption. In other words, Digital Transformation is not about incremental process improvement. Digital Transformation is about using information in brand new ways.

As the currency that fuels and funds this journey, *information* is an organization's most valuable asset. This means that the focus for information management must become broader than simply reducing information-based costs and risks; while this is important, it is insufficient. Rather, organizations need to focus on how to effectively monetize their information assets, directly and indirectly, in order to move the organization forward. *Information management must become a business enabler*. It is encouraging that 58% of organizations realize they need to move up the information management value chain from simply mitigating risk and cost to creating value.¹

The volume, velocity, and variety of information that most organizations need to manage, store, and protect now exceeds their ability to even marginally keep pace. This rising tide of information chaos and confusion imperils the process automation journeys of many organizations.

¹ AIIM, *State of the IIM Industry 2020: Are You a Digital Transformation Leader or Follower?*

On average, organizations expect the volume of information coming into their organizations to grow from X to 4.5X over the next two years. They expect more than 57% of this information to be unstructured (like a contract or a conversation) or *semi-structured* (like an invoice or a form).² It is the *convergence* of these twin forces – information *volume* and information *variety* – that makes process automation so challenging.

The reality is that the task can no longer be handled by traditional manual approaches, many of which were based upon a paper paradigm. *Something* needs to change.

That “something” is the automation of information governance.

This report combines key data points that describe the current state of information governance from our survey with insightful analysis of those data points by our **Expert Panel** in the **Perspectives** section. The analysis is organized into seven key recommendations, designed to help records managers and information governance executives be more effective in making their case to senior management.

- Pick your governance “dialect” carefully.
- Be realistic: Many C-Suites don't really care about governance.
- Don't neglect the gifts of records managers.
- Stop hitting your head against the wall and admit that automated disposition is more a dream than a reality.
- Bake in change management from the start.
- Use Machine Learning to break down the walls between structured and unstructured information.
- The secret sauce: Make governance invisible.

² AIIM, *State of the IIM Industry 2020: Are You a Digital Transformation Leader or Follower?*

1–Pick Your
Governance
“Dialect”
Carefully

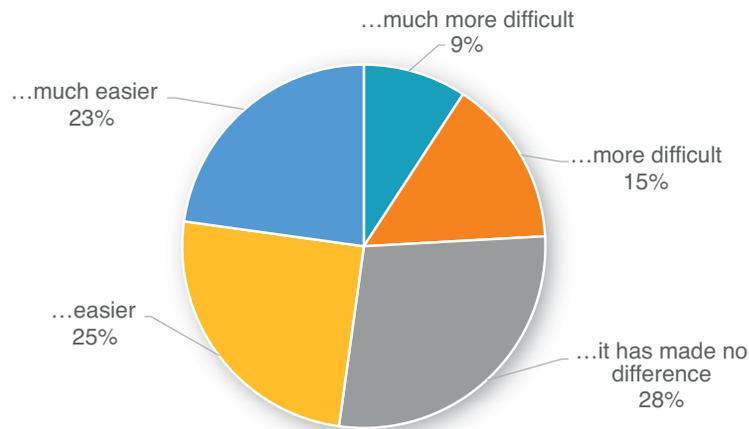


1–Pick Your Governance “Dialect” Carefully

Making the Case for Information Management

For 48%, “Information Governance” shift has helped

In our organization, the shift in terminology from "Records Management" to "Information Governance" has made the task of managing retention of critical business information...



Analysis:

Changing terminology – often driven by the marketing engines of solution providers seeking differentiation – is always a challenge for end users trying to explain their projects and get funding for them. In the broader content space, we experienced some of this disorientation as the core language used shifted from “ECM” to “Content Services,” and then with the incorporation of “Content Services” into the broader framework of “Intelligent Information Management.” The same terminology disorientation has been true in the governance arena, with varying uses and interpretations of “Records Management” and “Information Governance.”

Based on the data, our take is that emergence of the term “Information Governance” to describe a broad cluster of functionalities necessary to manage both formal records and information has *generally* been a good thing. Overall, 48% say the shift in terminology emphasis from “Records Management” to “Information Governance” has made the task of managing and retaining critical business information easier. However, the “story” behind this data point is complex. Making a more strategic argument for managing and retaining critical business information (i.e., “Information Governance”) often makes it easier to convince senior management of the importance of this task. But use of the term sometimes tends to undervalue the core records management capabilities critical to making governance a reality.

As one might expect, Experienced Users are more likely to view the use of “Information Governance” as a positive thing (51% vs. 44% among Potential Users). This means that those organizations relatively new to the task of automating governance – and solution providers trying to sell into these organizations – need to make sure everyone understands that there are differences between “Records Management” and “Information Governance.”

“Information Governance” is useful in talking with senior executives (i.e., VP and above) – 59% say it makes the task of managing retention of critical business information “easier” or “much easier.” For mid-level executives (i.e., Director or Manager – 44%) and Non-managerial staff (39%), the newer terminology is less useful.

At the bottom line, regardless of what you call it, the challenges associated with managing the intersection of people, processes, and information are getting more rather than less complex, as is the “language” used to describe the intersection. Records managers are still core to this function; Experienced Users particularly value the insights and skills of records managers. Records managers and governance professionals need to be cognizant of the various “dialects” used to describe the intersection between people, processes, and information and adjust their communications to reflect these “dialects.”

Records Management

ISO 15489, the international standard on records management, defines records as “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 first point to note is the word “information.” Note this word is not “document,” and most definitely not “paper document.” A record could, in principle, be in any form or format we can think of, so long as it conveys information. This means that electronic, paper, and other physical records are clearly included. So are audio, video, instant messages, and so on.
- The word “maintained” is quite significant here. It indicates that it is not enough to just capture records. They have to be stored and managed properly once stored. This includes disposing of them when they are no longer needed.
- The idea of “evidence” is more difficult. For a record to be good evidence, say in a court case, there must be no doubt that it is complete and unchanged.
- Finally, “pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business” indicates the two reasons for which records need to be kept.

Information Governance

Information Governance is more than policies and procedures. In order to be effective, the governance model has to have the support of senior management, business unit managers, supervisors and line managers, end users, and many other specialized roles such as IT, records management, and legal. Accountability for good governance therefore has to exist at every level and within every department of the organization.

- The roles required to provide the governance structures and accountability required to support them do not necessarily equate to job titles or descriptions. Some roles will be held by many individuals, while other roles might be combined within one person.
- In general information governance roles will not be specific to any particular process or repository but will extend to governance of most or all types of information within the organization: other repositories, other information objects, and other instruments.

Expert Panel Perspectives – What It’s Really Like:

- The shift to “information governance” has made my job more difficult. It was hard enough to get people to understand records management and why they have to do it and why it’s important. I think it makes it more difficult because people outside the discipline just don’t understand the terms. Those of us who DO it understand it, but I don’t think the general work population really understands either records management or information governance to any greater extent.
- “Information governance” was very much a response to a need that we all felt for a broader term than “records management.” Traditionally RM has very much been about compliance. But connecting information strategy to business value and organizational strategy requires a broader vision than that provided by “records management.”
- When you’re the person that’s trying to get something done in your organization you have to speak the dialect of the audience in the room. If they like to talk about data, then you couch governance in terms of data governance. If they like to talk about knowledge, then you couch it in terms of knowledge management. If you’re going to lead information management at a high level, you have to be able to comfortably switch dialects, just like Europeans can switch languages.
- There are records managers that get their nose bent out of shape because they feel like knowledge managers are infringing upon their records domain. This kind of tunnel vision is not helpful.
- People from the different disciplines that are critical to effective governance tend to talk past each other. They often don’t think they’re working on the same thing when there are actually huge overlaps in what people are trying to do. But lack of vocabulary synergy causes them not to commit resources – it even means they are often not even in the same meetings!

- You have records, you have data, you have all sorts of content, all kinds of goodies. In my organization there is no clear definition to unify our thinking.
- It may sound like I’m talking to my children. But my advice is that words matter. Definitions matter. Defining what you mean and making sure that this is clear are the foundational building blocks for governance success.
- We make certain assumptions that everybody understands governance concepts and definitions as well as we do. They don’t, and that’s a big hindrance to success.

2—Be Realistic:
Many C-Suites
Don't *Really*
Care about
Governance

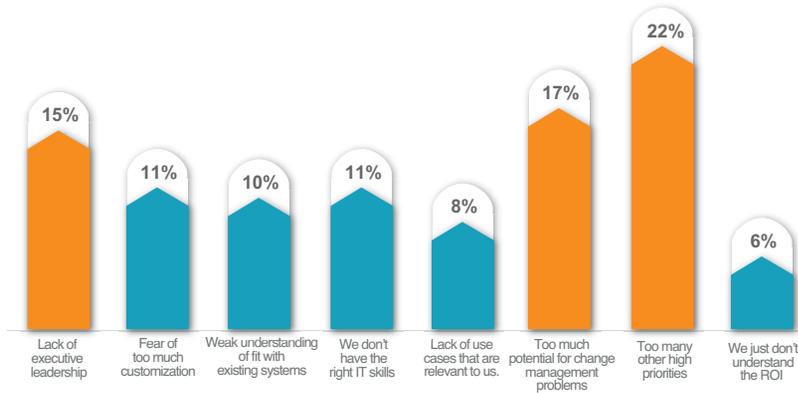


2–Be Realistic: Many C-Suites Don't Really Care about Governance

Key Obstacles to New Governance Projects

Too many other priorities, change management, executive support

What do you see as the MOST important obstacle to moving forward with a new governance project?



Analysis:

Even though most organizations give lip service to statements like “In a digital age, effectively managing your information assets is just as critical as managing your financial, physical, and human assets,” the reality for most organizations is that it is difficult to map this general sentiment to specific information governance projects. The top obstacles to undertaking new governance projects all relate to senior executive buy-in and support: a) too many other high priorities (22%), b) too much potential for change management problems (17%), and c) lack of executive leadership (15%).

The executive “mindshare” challenge is particularly acute given that the benefits of many governance projects cut across multiple departments and functions, creating “crowding out” and “free rider” issues when it comes to funding time.

The solution to the executive mindshare problem – as reflected in the comments within the Expert Panel comments – lies in not selling “governance” per se, but rather selling the things that executives care about and that good “governance” enables. This means less of a focus on the “how” of governance when communicating with senior executives – they don’t care – and more focus on the specific benefits that a governance project will yield in terms of customer experience, timely information, and better decision-making.

Last year, Gartner surveyed 473 CEO and senior business executives about their top three business priorities. The top priorities were:



Arguments for records and governance projects have traditionally been made at the lower end of this list, particularly using cost and risk arguments. The trick for these projects moving forward is to shift to the top of the list and focus on the role that timely and trusted information *that is delivered in context* plays in achieving the growth objectives of the organization.

Expert Panel Perspectives – What It’s Really Like:

- I don’t mean to sound cynical about this. I just don’t think anybody within big organizations actually cares about “governance” per se. I don’t know that there is a level of caring in most companies that makes this that important, and I think that’s why companies struggle. Of course, we do a lot of talking about it. But as long as people have sufficient data to do their jobs, to do analyses to run the business, and to make strategic decisions, I don’t think a lot of companies really care all that much whether we call it “records management” or “information governance.”
- My C-suite cares a great deal about IG, but thinks of it in compartments (RM, data management), not as an all-encompassing concept. Compliance is our main goal, and we are solid there. Senior management tends to get more excited about customer-facing initiatives than organizational structure. There needs to be a balance of the two.
- Senior leadership doesn’t care about “how.” They DO care about what they need to see to make a business decision. They don’t want to see the sausage being made. They don’t want to have us describe in detail how the sausage is made. But when they ask for a sausage, they want it without a lot of explanation. We spend too much time telling them how we made the sausage.
- I wanted to have a conversation with a senior executive about aligning some of our knowledge management resources. In emails before the meeting, I started to pitch the idea that we needed to talk about the relationship between data and information and knowledge. His response was, “I don’t want to hear it. I don’t want to talk about the details.” Later, he admitted that he actually knew he needed some of what I wanted to tell him, but that he was just channeling how senior leaders react to conversations about the “how” of governance. His point? I needed to focus my arguments on how I provide him with a decision support product in his hand that contains the correct data.

- I’m in a culture that likes compliance, but that doesn’t mean they like to deal with the administration of compliance and how you do it.
- You have to convince somebody to pay for your governance project. If you’re a senior leader you have to make choices. And so, if you can’t articulate value in a way that senior management can at least get their heads around, then your project will not be funded.



3—Don't Neglect the Gifts of Records Managers



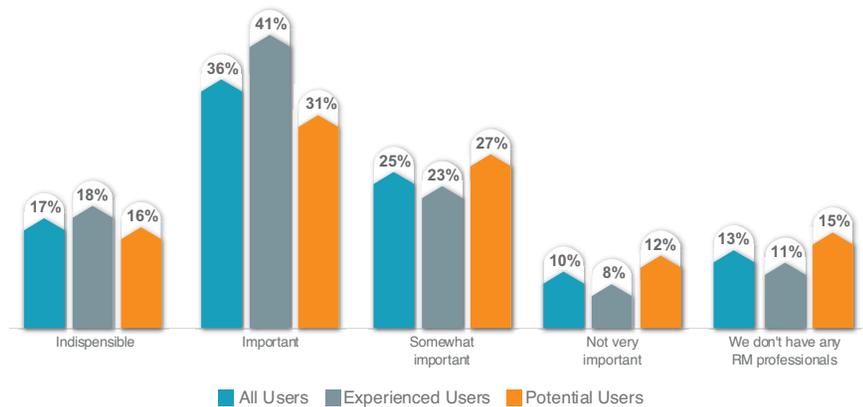
3–Don't Neglect the Gifts of Records Managers

Experienced Users Understand RM Value

Experienced Users – 59% say RM professionals “important” or “indispensable”

Potential Users – only 37% say RM professionals “important” or “indispensable”

In your organization, how critical are records management professionals to the task of managing retention of critical business information?



Analysis:

As noted earlier, when the dominant terminologies to describe a problem change (“Records Management” vs. “Information Governance”) there is often a corresponding confusion in the roles that individuals play. Do organizations need Records Managers, or do they need Information Governance professionals?

The simple answer is “yes” to both. Overall, 53% of organizations see records management professionals as “indispensable” or “important” to the task of managing the retention of critical business information; the number is 59% among Experienced Users.

There is both an opportunity and a challenge for Records Managers moving forward. The opportunity is that *records* management remains a key component of an overall information governance program. Thus, the skill sets and competencies associated with managing *records* – per ARMA, “stored information, regardless of media or characteristics, made or received by an organization that is evidence of its operations and has value requiring its retention for a specific period of time” – remain critical.

The challenge is that the information that organizations must now manage – recall the growth from X to 4.5X over the next 2-3 years, most of it “unstructured” – reaches beyond information that could be considered official records. This means that IT plays an increasingly important role – 28% of Experienced Users say that “When it comes to decisions about business records, IT is the MOST important decision-maker.” This does not mean that Records Managers need to become IT professionals, but they do need to understand the “dialect” of IT (see point 1) and be able to work with IT to operationalize RM concepts and policies.

What do Records Managers need to do to better position their value moving forward? Here are four ideas:

- Focus on value, not just cost and risk.
- Embed records functionality within core processes, not as a separate add-on.
- Take records management out of the hands of knowledge workers – they have enough to do. This is the surest path to buy-in and greater productivity.
- Automate the disposition process – a challenging task, as we’ll discover in the next section – as the most direct means to reduce risk and cost.

Expert Panel Perspectives – What It's Really Like:

- ❑ I look at records management as more of a tactical terminology; the core tenets of records management are intended to be more tactical. RM developed in a time before technology and I think that records management continues to be kind of a tactical term. Information governance is a more strategic concept sitting on top of records management. Records management is an important component – but only ONE component under the information governance umbrella.
- ❑ Records management is more down and dirty; information governance is more strategic. People love paper. They love to work off of paper. People do see the value in having digital records, but they just want their paper and people get fussy about it when you try to take it away. We still have people who get an email, then print it, and then scan it. People like the idea of not having paper. But often only theoretically.
- ❑ When I started, things were not very well organized when it comes to business records. Truth be told, it still is messy in many departments. So right now, we need records management. Once we get everything to a certain maturity level, then we'll call it information governance.
- ❑ There's a reason that "content" has been a weird niche for a long time. And that's because data and content are different disciplines with different approaches and different strategies. Those of us on the unstructured information side are used to dealing with lots of crazy forms of information and figuring out how you put structure around it. And if we could convince our organizations of that, that's a huge upward career path for records managers.



4—Admit that
Automated
Disposition Is
More a Dream
than a Reality



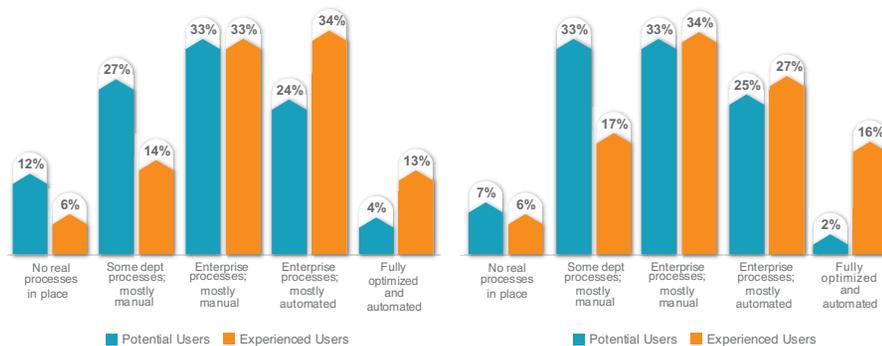
4–Stop Hitting Your Head Against the Wall and Admit that Automated Disposition Is More a Dream than a Reality

Disposition Management – A Pipe Dream?

Automated disposition a challenge for most organizations

"Disposition of redundant, obsolete, and trivial content is an accepted and regular organizational discipline."

"We validate disposal or retention actions, track user behavior, and identify potential violations."



Analysis:

Most any governance professional will at some time say something like the following: "Only 1/3 of the information we are gathering is critical to meeting our compliance, legal, business, or transactional requirements. The rest of it is redundant, obsolete, or trivial (ROT) and ought to be eliminated because it increases cost and business risk."

True. But both survey data and our Expert Panel suggest that for most organizations, the reality is that effective disposition is more a dream than a reality. Among eight different competencies that we examined associated with information governance maturity,

the two related to information disposition were weakest. Among Experienced Users, 47% say that "the process to dispose of ROT is an automated, accepted, and regular organizational discipline" (only 28% among Potential Users). 43% of Experienced Users say they have automated how they "validate disposal or retention actions, track user behavior, and identify potential violations" (only 27% among Potential Users).

There are many reasons for this, but here are a few:

- Until recently it was difficult to find specifically where all this ROT was located (no longer the case, but user awareness has yet to catch up with technology capabilities).
- The emergence of analytics capabilities that can mine information that was once considered ROT creates a caution about deleting things that "might someday have value."
- It is often difficult to get someone to put their name on a sign-off of an actual disposition decision.
- The geometric growth in the volume of information that must be managed means that many organizations will never catch up with the volume of manual dispositions that must be made at the end of an information lifecycle.
- Many retention and disposition policies have not been operationalized or automated. The volume, variety, and complexity of event-based disposition schedules creates serious obstacles to automation.

The net-net is that disposition will continue to be a challenge for many organizations as long as it is manual and event-based. You can't have an effective – and automated – disposition strategy until you have reliable tagging and categorization of information, both the information you already have and that coming into the organization.

Infotechtion.com offers these questions that organizations must consider when thinking about the costs of refusing to automate disposition and maintaining manual disposition practices:

- How long will a disposition review take per record? Will this in total take 15 minutes, 30 minutes, or more than 1 hour per record?
- How many records will you have in 10 years requiring disposition reviews? If you have 10 million records today, will this be 30 million records in 10 years?
- What will this require of resources? If each disposition review takes 15 minutes, then this means 4 disposition reviews per hour, and 32 disposition reviews per day if one person was doing it all. If you have 1 million records, then this means 1 million dispositions at 32 disposition reviews per day = 31,250 days spent on disposition reviews. If you have 10 million records, then this means 312,500 days spent on disposition reviews.
- How easy will it be for staff in 5, 10, or 30 years from now on to do an educated disposition review? The result often winds up being “lets extend the retention” since it is difficult to make a decision.

Automation is key to moving forward.

Expert Panel Perspectives – What It’s Really Like:

- I wonder about the impact of the big data and analytics folks on disposition. From a records and information management perspective, you want to manage information throughout its lifecycle. But the data people want to keep everything forever, and that works against effective disposition.
- I think risk-averse in-house attorneys are a big part of the problem. All of our corporate attorneys recognized the importance of reducing our risk and deleting records that had reached their stated retention periods. There was no question about that. They were all on board with the policies and would help develop the retention schedules that we needed to follow to support these policies. But a key step in our destruction process was to get legal approval before destroying records. Guess what happened? We would put forward records that were eligible and then have push back. A typical response was, “No, I think we ought to hold on to those for another year.”
- Unstructured information is not easily removed. A lot of systems haven’t been designed to identify, report out, and then dispose of information at the end of its lifecycle. A particular problem for automated disposition is retention periods that are based on trigger dates. Do you base disposition on X number of years from the date last modified or from the date last viewed or from some other criteria within the document? Event-based retention and disposition is particularly difficult to automate.

- ❑ The actual execution of a retention and disposition strategy is not a simple thing. Is there a REALISTIC risk associated with keeping information beyond its sell date? It depends on the particular circumstances of an organization and the industry it's in. As a result, many organizations just keep information. In addition, some executives pride themselves in keeping all this information because they tend to think this is some sort of virtue associated with corporate memory and knowledge management.
- ❑ I had an office that contained about 400 boxes. I did an information inventory and concluded the boxes could be destroyed. But I couldn't get anybody to sign off on destroying any of those boxes, even the ones full of journals and magazines. Nobody wanted to be the one to actually sign off on it.
- ❑ At my last employer there was a lady who had been there for about 10 years. She had a shared drive folder that had at least a gigabyte or two in it. After she left, we noticed that she had set up some automatic processes that were still adding to the shared drive. And no one wanted to act on it, even though she had been gone for over a year and a half. Until the folder reached its file size limit, no one did anything.
- ❑ You need to be able to quantify the amount of redundant, obsolete, and trivial information in the organization, standardize that measure, and translate it into what it is actually costing the business. If you don't do that, all of the "disposition" conversation in the world won't get you anywhere.



5—Bake In
Change
Management
from the Start

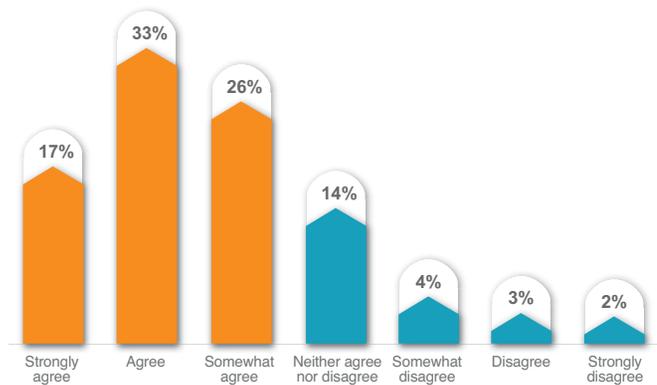


5—Bake In Change Management from the Start

76% Say that Change Management Is a Problem

Equally true for Experienced and Potential Users

Agree or Disagree:
"When it comes to Information Governance, change management is an ongoing problem."



Analysis:

For three out of every four organizations (76%), change management is a challenge when it comes to planning governance initiatives. Interestingly, the results are roughly the same for both Experienced Users and Potential Users.

“Change management” is one of those terms that is used *constantly* in discussions of the perils facing information management implementations. But what exactly is it? AIIM’s CIP Study Guide notes, “Change management is the application of the set of tools, processes, skills, and principles for managing the people side of change to achieve the required outcomes of a change project or initiative...Changing the habits, priorities, and day-to-day activities of information workers is also part of meeting

deployment objectives. A program and dedicated plan to manage the change in employee behaviors to parallel the changes in tools or procedures is essential to success.” The [AIIM Confident Change Management course](#) provides a good baseline in understanding these issues.

The specific change management issues cited vary from organization to organization, but they are usually drawn from this list:

- Poor communication from senior executives.
- Those who say, “We’ve always done it this way.”
- Lack of timely user input and participation in system design.
- Change that occurs faster than employees can handle.
- Concern about potential job loss from automation.
- Ineffective or poorly timed training.
- Poor follow-through on change management initiatives.
- Poor process documentation.

It is important when starting a governance automation initiative to get a solid change management foundation in place during the early stages of your potential implementation: 1) When you are building the vision and 2) During your initial inventory of capabilities and stakeholders. Too often, organizations rush forward without putting these basic elements in place. In following these steps, organizations can “bake” change management into the project in its earliest stages.

1. Identify a core cross-functional group to drive the initiative and get AIIM training to establish a common language and framework.
2. Use this framework to understand “why” your organization should consider a governance automation initiative – not *generally*, but in the specific business and competitive context of your organization.

3. Develop a process automation strategy document – e.g., a document laying out vision, key performance indicators, critical success factors, success measures.
4. Identify an executive sponsor for the initiative and get buy-in on the strategy document.
5. Evaluate which processes are initially best suited for the initiative.
6. Within the context of the targets, identify the roles and responsibilities required for change – e.g., sponsors, champions, management, specialists, business users, legal, and others.
7. Conduct an initial assessment of the current state of the process targets and the systems that support them.
8. Identify the expected benefits from automating these processes-customer, risk, compliance, financial, consistency and prioritize initial process targets.

Expert Panel Perspectives – What It's Really Like:

- You need everyone at the table – records people, content people, knowledge people, data people – and they all need to get along and understand how they all are a part of the success of driving the decision engine of your organization.
- Change management needs to start when you build your initial strategy, when you build your initial proposals. You need to build change management into it from the start.
- As far as change management goes, I have started convening groups of people with records responsibilities. We meet quarterly. I meet with all the department leaders and some of the supporting people behind them. We all get together and we just talk about what they're doing in their departments. I have found that the more people take ownership – the more they feel like they're part of the process – the better it's going to be.
- It is critical to give people a taste of success. When you pick projects, demonstrate that the value to introducing information governance lies not in what you do, but in what they care about. And what they care about is doing their day-to-day jobs. Without that buy-in, you won't get anything done.
- You need to earn people's trust. You need to take feedback seriously. You need to listen to what people are trying to tell you.

6—Use Machine Learning to Break Down the Walls between Structured and Unstructured Information

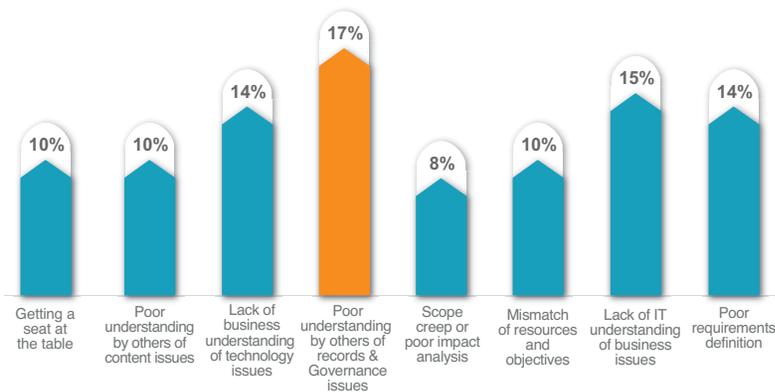


6—Use Machine Learning to Break Down the Walls between Structured and Unstructured Information

Top Governance Automation Frustrations

Greater cross-functional education/awareness needed

When it comes to your involvement in governance automation decisions, what is your BIGGEST frustration?



Analysis:

The biggest frustrations surrounding governance automation are familiar ones – IT doesn't understand the business (15%), business doesn't understand IT (14%), and poor requirements definition (14%). But coming in at a combined 27% are two issues that imply a deeper challenge, 1) poor understanding by others of content issues (10%) and 2) poor understanding by others of records and governance issues (17%).

Long ago, the skills, technologies, and competencies that are unique to managing unstructured information created a strange niche in the IT space. Content and records management was

³ AIIM, *Incorporating Intelligent Capture in Your Digital Transformation Strategy*

messy, the information being managed didn't fit neatly into the rows and columns of a database, there were SO many unusual file types. The history of AIIM, in fact, is the history of how you manage within this unusual niche of the IT space.

And so content management and data management competencies in organizations grew up in somewhat non-intersecting paths, often with nuances of definition and language that reinforced this separateness. This separateness is at the heart of the poor understanding by others of content issues (10%) and the poor understanding by others of records and governance issues (17%). It is also at the heart of the preoccupation with cost and risk in governance circles at the expense of creating value.

The various inputs now coming into organizations blur the traditional lines between structured and unstructured information. These inputs include data and documents, of course, but they also include text and speech and images and video and a host of unconventional forms of business content.

So, what can be done to bring this all together? The key is the use of Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence to automatically classify, extract, and enrich physical and digital content and data. Given the volume and variety of incoming information, we need new approaches to better leverage scarce – and expensive – human resources. This means software that can be trained to understand the meaning and the context of information, classify it into categories that cut across the traditional boundaries between content and data, and automatically apply governance categories and retention schedules. 74% of organizations say that turning unstructured information into actionable data is a significant problem for their organization.³

MI and AI adoption is still in its early stages, in large measure because it is so difficult to rationalize the flow of information of all sorts into a machine-digestible stream. In general, AI and Machine Learning are still on the wish list – only 12% have these capabilities in widespread use.⁴

⁴ AIIM, *State of the IIM Industry 2020: Are You a Digital Transformation Leader or Follower?*

Keeping in mind the lessons learned from the evolution of ECM to Content Services, MI and AI capabilities need to be more readily available on-demand and via the cloud.

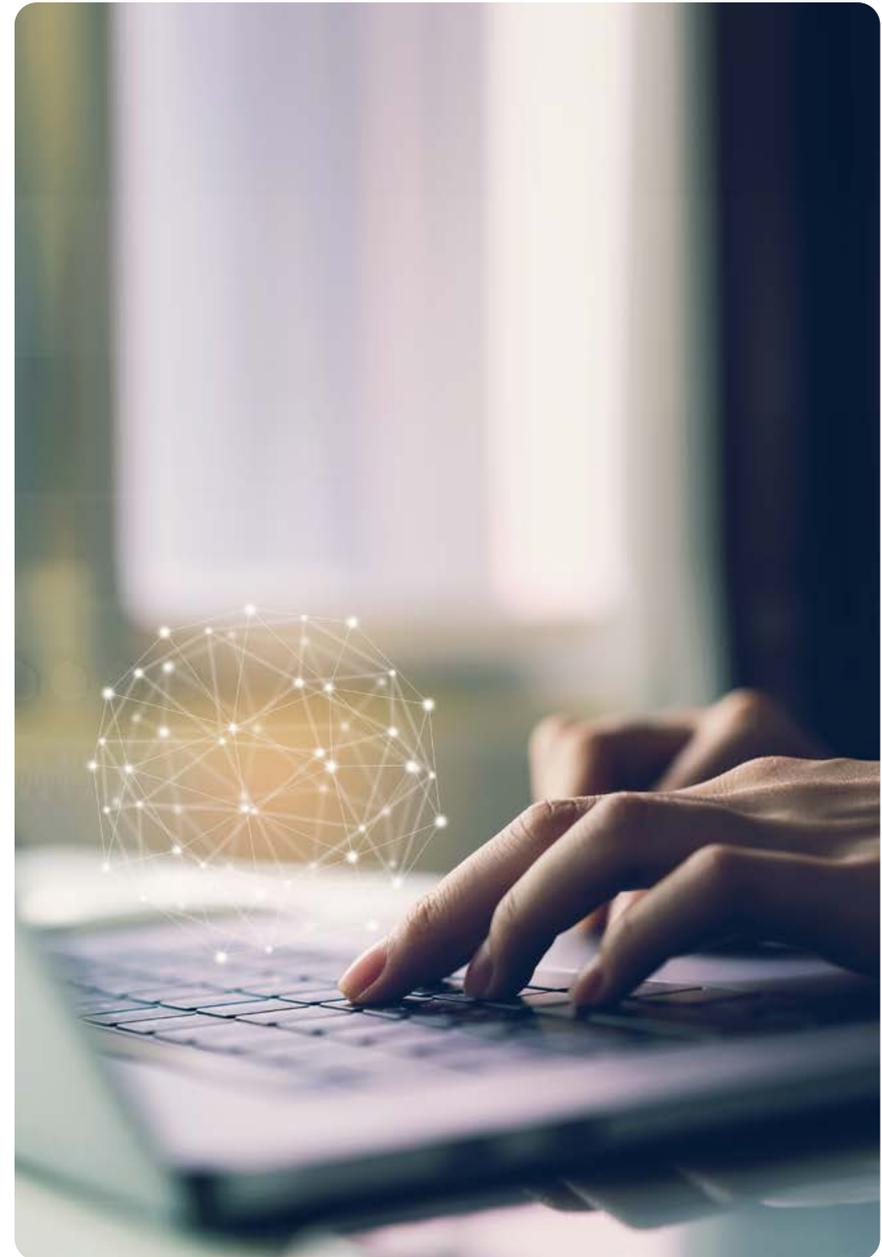
As we use machines to standardize and understand all information flows, we will reap a wide variety of benefits from governance that go far beyond reduced compliance risk and increased efficiency. We will be able to more seamlessly integrate information into core processes. We will see relationships between parts of the business that we never knew existed. And organizations that are committed to this journey will be able to use these insights to create new customer value.

There is still much basic change management work to do in bringing the worlds of data governance and information governance together, as is reflected in the perspectives of the Expert Panel. But critical to this journey will be the use of MI and AI to close and standardize the gaps between data and information.



Additional reading from Iron Mountain:

For larger businesses, the sheer volume of documents makes handling and managing the data within them severely challenging. This [whitepaper](#) outlines some of the key business functions that Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning is helping to effectively aggregate, manage, and derive insights from the data that organizations are collecting.



Expert Panel Perspectives – What It’s Really Like:

- Don’t try to separate data and information and content. They are becoming so integrated and so ingrained in one another. There’s really a lot of overlap, so don’t try too hard to separate out structured and unstructured information because really, it’s all just data.
- It is unfortunate that many of us who come from traditional Records Management ignore data governance, even as we talk more about information governance.
- It’s all the same stuff, it’s all data. It all needs to be managed. It all needs to be surfaced into some visual or actionable format. It needs to be easily available for a senior person to make a rapid decision.
- Why is it that I often see an email message from someone on the data side sent to someone about an information governance task force, and as a records manager I’m NOT on it? Did you forget to invite me? Why am I not part of this? I should be the ringleader. But because it was organized by the data governance folks, records management was left out.
- We were supposed to be hiring a data governance officer to walk hand in hand with me on information governance, but the pandemic cancelled out that person’s hiring.
- It’s frustrating that there aren’t a lot of CIPs amongst the DATA governance folks. That’s a problem, but it’s also a huge opportunity.
- With the focus on big data and analytics, it feels like we’re competing with the data governance people. We want to get rid of information and they want to keep everything. In the last couple years – or even just the past year – the

data governance people started realizing that bad data isn’t good and that has opened up opportunities to talk. My reaction? “Hey, that’s what we’ve been doing here in RM all these years.”

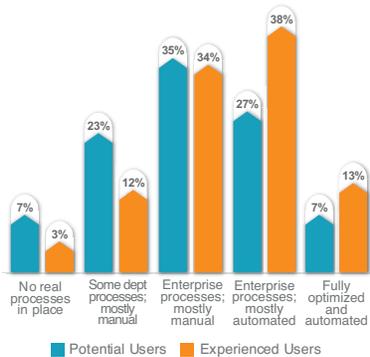
- If you’re a credit union, your financial data and your plan data matter. If you’re a health care provider, your patient data, health information data, and personal information matter. What I observe is that so much care is focused on specific types of data that other kinds of data tend to be forgotten because they’re relatively low risk for the organization.
- Sometimes it almost seems like people in information governance and data governance are speaking different languages. We’ve got to figure out how we bridge that gap. If you start to see negative feedback, you have to think on your feet. Ask a few questions and shift the dialogue. If you don’t, all you’ll get is a digital Tower of Babel.
- It baffles me that for so long unstructured information and data have been managed separately. It really is all information. Aligning your strategy, your resources, your talents, and your people around this simple fact is not only going to save you from being in the news. It is also going to allow you to differentiate yourself in whatever market you’re in.

7–The Secret Sauce: Make Governance Invisible

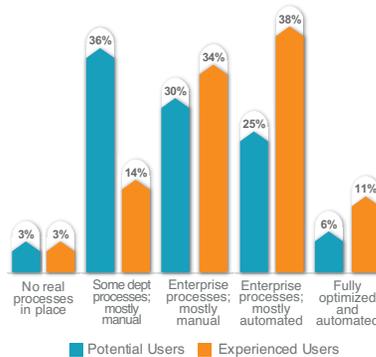
Automation Is the Key

COVID collaboration explosion and rising compliance complexity

"Processes exist for how shared workspaces are created and who can create them."



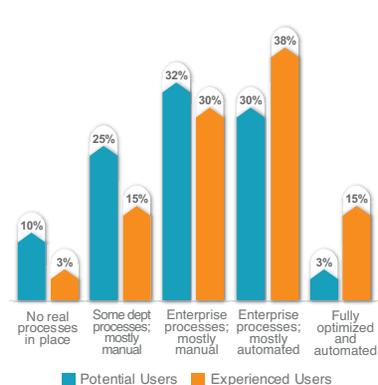
"Compliance requirements at all levels are translated into operational processes."



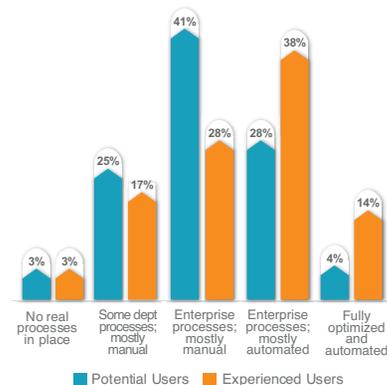
Automation Is the Key

Metadata key to protecting PII

"A clear organization-wide strategy exists for metadata."



"Policies and processes exist to identify and protect personally identifiable information."



Analysis:

It is generally agreed that the only way to avoid being swamped by the tide of information chaos is to automate as much of the information management process as possible. Experienced Users have a significant advantage on a variety of key competencies tied to this journey.

Experienced Users	Potential Issues	
53%	33%	"We have an organization-wide strategy for metadata."
52%	32%	"We have automated processes to identify and protect PII."
51%	34%	"We have automated processes for how shared workspaces are created and who can do so."
49%	31%	"We have automated methods to translate compliance requirements into operational processes."

There are two driving factors that will force organizations to automate records management and information governance. As we've noted, the first is the juggernaut of information volume and variety. *Organizations will just not be able to keep up with this explosion using traditional means.*

The second factor is the assumption that individual knowledge workers can be expected to perform a meaningful role in necessary records management and governance functions is simply wrong. This assumption was based on records and governance paradigms constructed on a foundation of paper documents and is now outdated and counterproductive.

Unless governance can be made invisible, it will fail. Making governance invisible to the day-to-day knowledge worker is not a glamorous task, but a necessary one and one whose time has come.

Automation is the key.

Expert Panel Perspectives – What It's Really Like:

- You're not going to get individual knowledge workers to care about governance; you just need to figure out how to automate it. Knowledge workers need to focus on their core competency for the organization and WE need to figure out a way to automate that as much as possible. It needs to be baked into the back end so that nobody thinks about it, they just think about getting their work done.
- I hear this all the time. "Don't give me more things to do. Are you going to help me do my job better, or are you going to add more stuff to how I do my job already?" You need to make governance as painless as possible. If there's any friction at all, it won't work.
- We all know the difference between what's a record and what's not. We understand the terminology and the definitions. The average knowledge worker does not know and does not care. When you make the assumption that people have all of this background and knowledge about records, you set the stage for a change management disaster – they will either just do nothing or to be overly cautious and just declare everything. All of this needs to be automated, or it will never become a reality.



Final Thoughts



Final Thoughts

The Link Between Automation, Governance Effectiveness, and Digital Transformation

So, where do things stand with regards to governance automation?

We asked survey participants from various disciplines to evaluate their current competency (on a 100-point scale) relative to these core Digital Transformation competencies tied to *Automating Governance and Compliance*.

Self-Evaluation of Core Information Governance Competencies Tied to Transformation Effectiveness – 100 pt scale	Compl or legal	Exec level	IT	LOB	RM, DM, CM
LIFECYCLE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT – “We have a strategy for managing and automating the management, retention, and disposition of information throughout its lifecycle.”	57	65	63	60	49
INFORMATION PRIVACY AND SECURITY – “Our data privacy and security plan includes all content assets and protects the personal information within these assets”	60	71	66	62	55

These results highlight some of the insights raised by the Expert Panel elsewhere in the report:

- Most executives fail to directly understand the true dimension of the information chaos facing their organization.
- Senior executives tend to view this chaos through rosier glasses than those closest to the problem – until it directly impacts them.
- Perhaps because of the huge public footprint that results from privacy and security breaches, more progress has been made on information privacy and security than on the other information governance competencies.

One simple way to look at the current state of governance automation is to consider how many organizations consider themselves *above average* on BOTH of the core governance parameters: 1) Lifecycle Information Management; and 2) Information Privacy and Security. Looking at the data in this way, only 104 of the 229 organizations we surveyed (45%) rate themselves above average on BOTH of these core competencies.

Why does this matter? Why does it matter if 55% of organizations are below average on one or more of the key governance automation competencies?

It matters because *governance competency translates directly into organizational excellence*. The 45% of organizations with above average governance competence assess their overall *Digital Transformation effectiveness* at 76 (on a 100-point scale), compared to an average across the entire sample of 60.

In an era with rising levels of BOTH information chaos AND customer expectations, it is more critical than ever before that organizations make a commitment to move away from manual governance. As the stakes for digital competence rise, organizations put their very existence at stake if they do not automate the processing of information *wherever and whenever they can*.

8 Things You Need to Know about Balancing Records Management and Information Governance

1

The top obstacles to undertaking new governance projects all relate to senior executive buy-in and support:

- 22%** too many other high priorities,
- 17%** too much potential for change management problems,
- 15%** lack of executive leadership.



6

76%

For three out of every four organizations (**76%**), change management is a challenge when it comes to planning governance initiatives.




2

53% Overall, **53%** of organizations see records management professionals as “indispensable” or “important” to the task of managing the retention of critical business information...

59% ...the number rises to **59%** among Experienced Users.



7

The biggest frustrations surrounding governance automation are familiar ones:

- 15%** IT doesn’t understand the business,
- 14%** business doesn’t understand IT,
- 14%** and poor requirements definition.



3

28%

of Experienced Users say that “When it comes to decisions about business records, IT is the MOST important decision-maker.”




8

27% Coming in at a combined **27%** are two issues that imply a deeper challenge related to the differences between data governance and information governance:

- 10%** poor understanding by others of content issues,
- 17%** poor understanding by others of records and governance issues.



4

47%

Among Experienced Users, **47%** say that “the process to dispose of ROT is an automated, accepted, and regular organizational discipline” (only **28%** among Potential Users).



Conclusion

The only way to avoid being swamped by the tide of information chaos is to automate as much of the information management process as possible.

Among Experienced Users:

- 53%** “We have an organization-wide strategy for metadata.”
- 52%** “We have automated processes to identify and protect PII.”
- 51%** “We have automated processes for how shared workspaces are created and who can do so.”
- 49%** “We have automated methods to translate compliance requirements into operational processes.”



5

43%

of Experienced Users say they have automated how they “validate disposal or retention actions, track user behavior, and identify potential violations” (only **27%** among Potential Users).




Developed in Partnership with:



About Iron Mountain

Iron Mountain Incorporated (NYSE: IRM), founded in 1951, is the global leader for storage and information management services. Trusted by more than 225,000 organizations around the world, and with a real estate network of more than 85 million square feet across more than 1,400 facilities in over 50 countries.

Iron Mountain stores and protects billions of valued assets, including critical business information, highly sensitive data, and cultural and historical artifacts. Providing solutions that include information management, digital transformation, secure storage, secure destruction, as well as data centers, cloud services and art storage and logistics, Iron Mountain helps customers lower cost and risk, comply with regulations, recover from disaster, and enable a more digital way of working.

Learn more at: www.ironmountain.ie



Now What?



As you read in this report, the traditional approaches to managing governance and compliance fail to address the rising tide of information. For more on HOW to balance your Records Management and Information Governance, check out AIIM's [Modern Records Management training course](#) – designed to help you position Records Management to play a critical role in accelerating business activities, enriching customer experiences, and improving operational agility.



About AIIM

Here at AIIM, we believe that information is your most important asset and we want to teach you the skills to manage it. We've felt this way since 1943, back when this community was founded.

Sure, the technology has come a long way since then and the variety of information we're managing has changed a lot, but one tenet has remained constant — we've always focused on the intersection of people, processes, and information. We help organizations put information to work.

AIIM is a non-profit organization that provides independent research, training, and certification for information professionals.

Visit us at www.aiim.org.

Written by AIIM

Contributions by:

John Mancini, CIP

Content Strategist and Past President of AIIM

The background features a dark grey triangle on the left and a teal triangle on the bottom right. The central area is white with a pattern of grey gears. Several gears contain icons: a server rack, a scale of justice with a gavel, a server tower, a server rack with a monitor, and a server rack with a monitor.

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