

The complexity of the current information landscape amidst e-government development: how is the archivist coping?

by

Proscovia Svärd

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

Current Employment

Lecturer at the Institute of History and
Contemporary Studies

Södertörn University, Stockholm.

Email address: Proscovia.Svard@sh.se

Presentation Outline of the Research

- Research background
- Purpose of the research
- Methodology/Research Design
- Theoretical/Analytical Framework
- Research Findings
- Conclusion

Research Background

- *The information society and the paperless office* are by now two timeworn metaphors of contemporary society.
- Information is considered as the main asset and vehicle for economic, cultural and political achievements, enhanced by the use of information technology.

Research Background cont'd...

The political, administrative and technological challenges have affected information and records management practices and brought about new requirements on the creation and management of information – Require a holistic and proactive approach.

Research Background cont'd...

Appropriate procedures, processes and systems are considered necessary to provide and maintain trustworthy information and records in both the short and the long term.

Research Background cont'd

Within the context of public administrations, this is demonstrated through e-Government development and the conditions for its successful implementation.

The purpose of the Research

The aim of the research was to establish if the municipalities were coping with the above discussed new information demands and whether they were embracing a proactive and holistic approach to information management amidst e-Government development.

How did I achieve the Purpose of the Research?

In order to answer the central question of the thesis, research related to the issues being explored was identified; qualitative interview studies that critically examined the interface between Enterprise Content Management (ECM) and records management, and information culture were conducted.

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 the success or failure (Davenport, 1997).

The Current Information Management Landscape cont'd...

The current information environment has become complex and it is a known fact that the management of information still poses challenges to many organizations. Despite the deployment of information systems, 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.

Research Setting

Two Swedish municipalities and a municipality in Belgium. Case studies facilitate a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being researched.

Information intensive depts:

Social Welfare and Building Permit Granting and City Planning units.

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
- Investments have been made in information systems to facilitate the automatic capture and management of information.

The Public Sector Information Directive (PSI)

At the European level, we have the public sector information directive (psi) which requires European countries to embrace it and hence Sweden in 2010 published its national directive meant to reinforce the use of public sector information in Sweden.

The changing Information landscape

- Organizations are facing a new information landscape: documents, emails, 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.

Endless Acronyms

- DM – Document Management
- IRM - Information Resource Management
- WCM -Web Content Management
- EIM – Enterprise Information Management
- IG - Information Governance
- ECM – Enterprise Content Management
- RM – Records Management
- ECRM – Enterprise Content Managemement and Records Management

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.

The Records Continuum Model

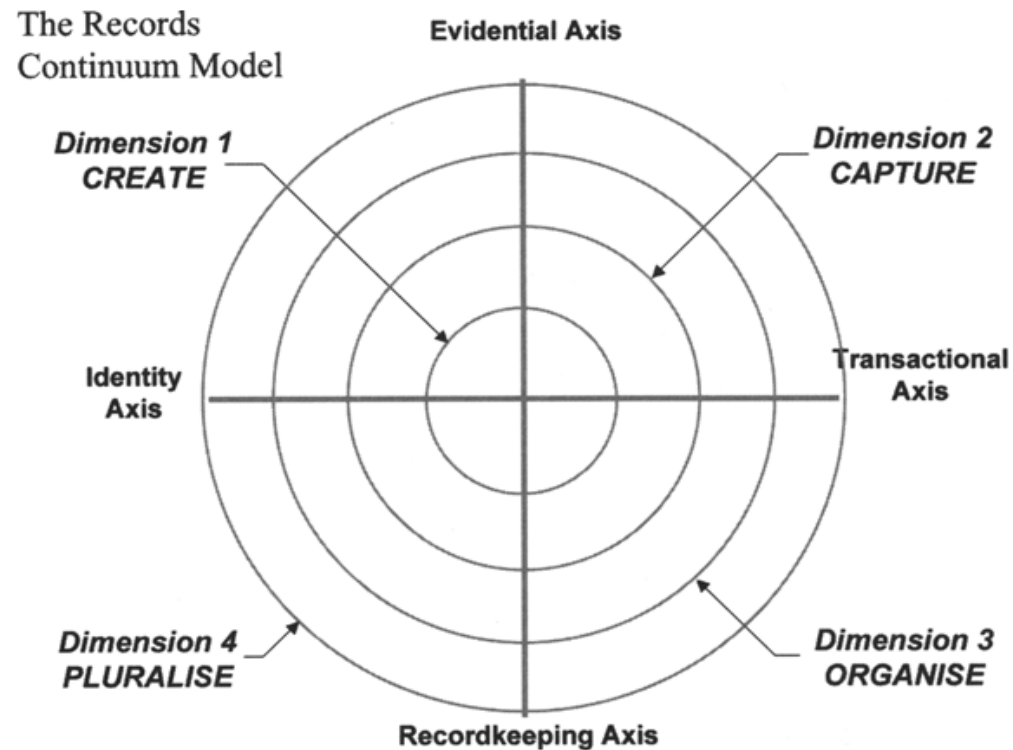


Figure 3: Source: McKemmish, S. (2001). Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice. *Archival Science*, 1 (4).

Analytical Framework cont'd...

- This is because the RCM promotes the management of the entire records' continuum, a proactive approach, combines the management of archives and records management activities and supports the pluralisation of the captured records.

Analytical Framework cont'd....

The research also used Oliver's (2011) framework for assessing information culture.

- The first level deals with the fundamental layer of an organization's culture and among many it includes, respect for records as evidence, respect for information as knowledge, willingness to share records and trust in records;
- The second level addresses employee skills, knowledge and experience related to records management and;
- The third level is about records governance and trust in organization information systems.

Davenport's research outlined the following models:

- Information federalism: based on consensus and negotiation on organization's key information elements and reporting structures;
- Information feudalism: individual business units manage own information, define own needs and report only limited information to the overall organization;

Davenport's research outlined the following models cont'd

- Information monarchy: information categories and reporting structures defined by firm's leaders may or may not share information after collecting it and;
- Information anarchy: absence of any overall information management policy, individuals obtain and manage own information.

Concepts Explored

- Enterprise Content Management
- Records Management
- Information Culture
- What was central to the research:
eGovernment development and the use of
information management systems.

What is eGovernment?

eGovernment is defined by ([Layne, 2001, p. 123](#)) as the “government’s use of technology, particularly web-based Internet applications to enhance the access to and delivery of government information and service to citizens, business partners, employees, other agencies, and government entities.”

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

ECM

- Enterprise Content Management (ECM) deals with both structured and unstructured information in all formats.
- ECM Systems are designed to meet web and intranet markets (Records Management, Document Management and Content Management).

ECM

- Is defined as an integrated approach (an initiative) to managing all of an organization's information content.
 - An ECM system supports the creation, management, distribution, publishing and discovery of corporate information.

Some of the ECM Driving Factors

- The fact that 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.
- Implications of re-using and re-purposing content.

My ECM Model



Research Findings cont'd

Enterprise Content Management (ECM) was not known in the municipalities.

- The research's main contribution is the identification of the differences between ECM and Records Management. It also highlights the overlap between the information management approaches.
- The use of Oliver's (2011) Information Culture Assessment Framework.

Similarities ECM - RM

Both ECM and RM endeavour:

- To help organisations to deal with the deluge of electronic information.
- Improved decision making processes.
- Elevate efficiency.
- Facilitate compliance.

Overlapp ECM – RM in the Municipalities

- Business Process Management;
- Collaboration;
- System Integration;
- Re-purposing of Information; and
- Knowledge Management.

Differences ECM - RM

ECM

- Techniques/methods/
Strategy
- Technology oriented
- Focuses on Documents and unstructured content
- Life Cycle view
- Engages Information Systems
Scientists/Information Technology Industry
- Business efficiency

RM

- Scientific discipline and practice
- Focuses on a record, its authenticity, reliability and integrity, long-term preservation
- Engages, records managers/archivists
- Underpins government accountability, freedom of information and privacy legislation, protection of people's rights and entitlements, and the quality of the archival heritage.

The Challenges

- Information sharing
- collaboration
- Information Access – One Access Point
- Repurposing of information
- System Integration
- Identification of content to save storage space
- Long-term preservation of information

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

However, the people issues complicate and minimise leveraging information and the information systems in a manner that would promote the effective creation, use and management of information. This is likely to compromise the e-Government objectives of increased accountability, transparency, efficiency and the municipal employees' competence development.

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

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](#)).

Information Culture

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

Davenport and Information Management

He instead proposes the term “information ecology” which puts a narrow focus on technology but addresses the way people create, distribute, understand, and use information.

Defines ecology as a “holistic management of information” or “human-centered information management” ([Davenport 1997](#)).

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:

- Information technology practices
- Information management practices
- Information behaviours and values

Research Findings cont'd

Positive information culture in the Swedish municipalities.

Anarchic information culture in the Belgian municipality.

How are the Archivists Coping?

Cont'd

- My research confirms that archivists need to work hard in order to strategically position themselves when it comes to information planning and management.
- Even in cases where archivists were progressive, they were often left out of information planning projects. This was the case in both the Swedish and Belgian environments.

