Information Governance and Management

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IS THIS YOUR STORY?

Sulingituk Government tried to develop a records and information management (RIM) program years ago, with the goal of creating a unified filing system for the entire organization. Although there were some departments that adopted the program, several others did not, and have continued to use their own ad-hoc filing systems. The staff member who initially set up the program has since left and a number of the staff that received RIM training at the time have moved on or retired. Currently each department is managing records their own way, with some departments more organized than others.

Initially when the program was set up, it was designed to manage paper-based files. Over the years there have been some attempts to implement a filing system on shared network drives, but with very little success. The result is a network where individual users are constructing their own folders for their files, with many duplicate documents stored in multiple drives. Staff often spend a lot of time browsing through shared drives to find work completed by previous staff, and there have been numerous instances where work has been re-done because documents created by former staff could not be located. Some staff are getting increasingly frustrated with the lack of organization.

There are many boxes of paper records in various locations throughout the community - in sea containers that are used for storage, at the maintenance yard, and in people's offices in the main Administration building. The Language and Culture office has some boxes of historical records and cultural items. The Health office stores all of its records in locked cabinets and has special patient management software. The majority of boxes of paper records have the department or office written on the front and a year, but they are not formally labelled and have never been inventoried.

There are no fibre optic lines in the area so internet can be slow, and cellular service is spotty. This can create challenges for staff using email and accessing the network from outside the main Administration building. Some departments have line-of-business software - for example, the Finance department has accounting software, the Health department has a case-file management system, and the Housing Manager uses a specialized system for housing management. But these systems are not set up to "talk" to each other. Most staff rely on Excel spreadsheets to track and share information between departments, and IT often has to assist with creating these.

Does this sound like your government? As Sulingituk Government develops their Information Governance, they will be able to start identifying what social well-being data is being collected already, and what departments are doing with that information.

INTRODUCTION

What is information governance?

Simply put, governance is a way of strategic thinking. The act of governance is an exercise of authority, direction, control, and management. **Information Governance** includes the laws, policies, and decision-making processes that ensure information is managed properly. It is the guidance and oversight function.

The term "information" in this context refers to all types of information held by an organization, including data, paper, and electronic records (documents), other forms of documented knowledge, images, and communications.

Information governance:

- Provides effective and efficient records and information management practices;
- Identifies and demonstrates compliance with the law;

- Identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce risk; and
- Builds capacity and leadership buy-in.

What is records and information management (RIM)?

Information Governance is defining "what" we want to accomplish and "why" we are implementing this framework; **Records and Information Management (RIM)** is defining "how" we are going to do it (see figure 1 below).

Records and Information Management is the **practice** or action of managing **records and information** through their lifecycle.

Information Governance strategically provides a framework to ensure that Records Management and Information Technology work together with Legal, Risk, Privacy, Data Governance and the business units or departments to ensure that the Information Governance Principles® are being achieved.

FIGURE 1. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE IS THE FRAMEWORK THAT RIM RESIDES WITHIN.

RIM is a formal method or practice of managing records and information through their **lifecycle**: capture, collaboration, version control, retention/storage, holds/discovery and disposition or archiving (see figure 2 below). RIM provides a structure and procedures for how documents and information are handled both in paper and electronic form.

FIGURE 2. THE INFORMATION LIFECYCLE (ADAPTED FROM ARMA INTERNATIONAL, 2019[1])

Implementing a RIM program for your government means:

- Knowing what your records are and where to find them;
- Identifying and protecting records that are considered to be 'essential records';
- Assigning privacy and security access so that only those who should see certain records have access to them;
- Creating workflows to reduce cost, and save time and effort;
- Providing lifecycle management guidance on what can be disposed of and when;
- Reducing risk by meeting regulatory compliance for retaining and disposing of records;
- Reducing risk that could be associated with litigation and/or potential penalties.

[1] ARMA International. (2019). Mapping document management processes (leveraging an information lifecycle). *ARMA Magazine.* https://magazine.arma.org/2019/04/mapping-document-management-processes-leveraging-an-information-lifecycle/

What is a record?

A **record** is any format of recorded information that is created or received by an organization, that is evidence of either business or legal activities.

Records can be paper or electronic and can come in many formats: documents, emails, agreements, text messages, maps, GIS layers, drawings, photographs, audio recordings, stories, videos, data sets, and spreadsheets are all examples of different kinds of records.

ARMA'S INFORMATION GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES®

ARMA International is a global professional association for information governance professionals. ARMA has developed a set of Principles that are foundational to information governance, providing both controls and quality assurances that support records and information management.

The *ARMA Information Governance Principles*® are Accountability, Transparency, Integrity, Protection, Compliance, Availability, Retention, and Disposition:

1. Being **accountable** for care and quality of records.
2. Being **transparent** about how records are managed.
3. Demonstrating **integrity** in abiding by ethical principles and honesty.
4. Actively **protecting** records with physical and digital safeguards (e.g., fireproof cabinets, locked file rooms, firewalls and network security measures, data and system backups, etc.).
5. Proving **compliance** by meeting legal retention requirements, adopting standards and best practices.
6. Ensuring **availability** of records for audits, access to information requests, or for legal purposes.
7. Applying **retention** periods required by law or to meet business needs and storing records for those time periods.
8. Conducting **disposition** of records as required. This means records are destroyed beyond reconstruction, transferred to permanent business storage, or transferred to an archival repository as an historical record.

For information governance to be successful, there needs to be buy-in from leadership to the idea of managing records as **'assets'.** Information has value for an organization. When information is properly managed and accessible to the right people at the right time, the organization saves time, mitigates risk, and ultimately saves money. Effective information governance requires allocating a budget and an investment in resources to support the work. It also requires having the right people involved in developing and implementing the framework. Often this involves the following knowledge holders in an organization:

1. Frontline staff from the business units or departments.
2. Records and Information Management (RIM) staff.
3. Information Technology staff.
4. Legal counsel.
5. Staff who have expertise in policy development, risk management, and privacy.

Each of these practice experts or knowledge holders can provide recommendations on different aspects of the information governance framework. For example, front-line staff would have knowledge of which departments could be gathering or holding social well-being data for 'base-line' analysis. RIM staff could provide advice on how to organize and store information so it can be accessed and used, and what current best practices are for retention and disposition. Legal counsel could identify areas of concern or risk exposure related to information collection, and legal obligations related to managing information. Policy staff can help define what the organization's priorities and objectives are, and how information governance can be used to support those.

What are the components of information governance?

FIGURE 3. COMPONENTS OF INFORMATION GOVERNANCE.

Information governance offers a 'holistic system-wide lens' of an organization's information needs. It allows an organization to create a **master plan**, where the policy and legal framework, IT enterprise framework, line-of-business systems, reporting structures, and front-line work processes are all aligned so that information moves around, across, and out of the organization in an efficient and effective way. In an ideal world, good information governance means everyone in the organization has timely access to accurate information that allows them to do work and provide services efficiently, demonstrate compliance, be transparent and accountable, and report out to external stakeholders effectively.

If you are saying to yourself "I have no idea how we would even start doing this", don't worry. Very few organizations in Canada have yet achieved this level of maturity. This work reaches beyond the scope of managing social well-being data, which is the focus of this toolkit. However, it is important to understand how data management initiatives fit within the broader context of information governance, because managing data effectively requires implementing some aspects of information governance across your organization.

How does information governance relate to data governance?

Data governance is a component of information governance, because data is a type of information. Your information governance structures will form the foundation for your data governance structures. Much of the work you will do on data governance will feed into other areas of information governance. Likewise, much of the work you will do on data management will have implications on other areas of information management.

There are differences in opinion about how precisely to define and distinguish between information governance and data governance. For the purposes of this toolkit, we distinguish between the two as follows:

- Information governance is focused on improving compliance and management of all records and information, both paper and electronic, across the whole organization. Data governance is more IT centred, focusing on the collection, management, and use of data sets primarily for reporting and statistical purposes.

In many SGIGs, social well-being data can be found in the administrative records held by departments or business units. Having a formal records and information management program, as part of your information governance framework, means staff will more easily be able to find and extract social well-being data from these records, which can then be used in research and analysis.

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

What are the components of a records and information management (RIM) program?

If you are developing a RIM program here are the components that should be considered:

1. **Authorizing document: a regulation, bylaw or policy** that authorizes the records and information management program and assigns oversight of the program to an executive-level director or administrator. This will help establish trust and accountability, ensuring that controls are in place so that any retention and disposition (destruction or permanent retention) of records is authorized and approved.
2. **Records and Information Management Policy:** a policy that sets out what responsibilities departmental staff have for managing records and what tools they should be using to support these activities. Your RIM Policy should also include a Glossary, so that there is agreement and consistency around the use of terms. Although it may seem like these words are universally understood, there are many instances of people from different professions using the same term to mean different things, and this can potentially derail a project. Words like “data”, “record”, and “policy” can mean different things to IT staff, software vendors, RIM professionals, and frontline staff. Creating a list of terms and their definitions that can be provided to all parties can go a long way to making a project run more smoothly.
3. **Classification Plan and Retention Schedule**: a framework that identifies the different functional areas of the organization and categorizes records based on what functional area they are related to. It will also identify how long records should be retained based on what category they fall into, and what happens to those records at the end of their lifecycle. Other details that might be included are which departments have authority over different types of records, security and access restrictions, whether a category of records are ‘essential records,’ and departmental naming conventions.

Resources for programs and training

The First Nations Summit and the First Nations Public Service Secretariat (FNPSS) are a great resource for SGIGs that are wanting to create records and information management programs for their governments. FNPSS offers a free toolkit called the ***Information Management Toolkit for First Nations Government in BC***. This toolkit will provide SGIGs with all of the information and support they may need to establish records and information management for their governments.

The First Nations Public Service Secretariat also provides **Management Training Academies** (MTAs) 2-day workshops on Records and Information Management, Human Resources and Privacy. These programs are transitioning into online webinars and websites that support the toolkits.

ARMA International is the professional global associations for records and information managers and information governance professionals.

The ARMA Information Governance Book of Knowledge (iGBOK) is the leading international standard and best practice for information governance.

Please see the Training page of the toolkit for more information about training options.

How can records and information management support a data management initiative?

For the purposes of this toolkit, we want to identify how records and information management can support data governance and management.

1. Determine if your government already has a records management policy, a classification plan, and/or any authorized retention and disposition schedules for departmental records. If none of these exist, ***FNPSS's Information Management Toolkit (see Resources section above) can provide a starting point for developing your organization's RIM policies and procedures.***
2. Ask for an updated version of your SGIG's organizational chart. These charts help define the business of your SGIG and how your SGIG is organized, which in turn can help you identify which departments might be collecting social well-being data. For example, in Sulingituk Government data might be found in the following departments:
    - Housing - data related to supported and subsidized housing programs for citizens
    - Education - data related to childcare, school attendance, graduation rates, post-secondary enrolment, training and employment rates
    - Language and Culture - data related to program attendance, cultural knowledge, language learning
    - Health - data related to income assistance, clinical care, family interventions, public health access
    - Finance - data related to grants and other financial supports, treaty payments, post-secondary funding
    - Economic Development - data related to community employment opportunities, citizen benefits
3. Make a note of **how many boxes of paper records** are stored on-site and the type of records that they contain. This will give you an idea of the volume of records different departments have and what types of records are being created.
4. Make a list of the **shared network drives** that could be holding well-being data. Confirm whether any departments are storing this kind of data on mobile devices or computers that are not connected to the shared network.
5. Make a list of the different line-of-business (LOB) systems that are being used in your organization, and which departments are using them. IT staff may be able to assist you with gathering this information.
6. A good way to visualize how records and data are spread across the organization is to create a map of the administrative buildings and offices and what records or data might be stored in each of those locations. This will help you to start locating where existing social well-being data might live within the organization.