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A matter of record

by [Matthew Scott](#)Comments (0) | 28 Nov 2011 | Rating 

Companies are becoming less reactive and more proactive.

A number of important shifts are taking place in the world of information management as companies struggle with the challenges presented by dealing with increasing numbers of electronic documents that have differing levels of importance. [Tweet](#)

An ever-changing regulatory environment means official documents can no longer simply be managed and stored, but must also have some aspects of governance applied to them. The process of handling documents, therefore, is moving rapidly from records management to information governance.

‘For the purposes of efficiency, cost containment and risk mitigation, governance must apply across the board to all information,’ says Galina Datskovsky, president of ARMA International, the association of records and information management professionals.

Datskovsky, who is also senior vice president of information governance at Autonomy, points out that many companies are applying governance to their information so they are better positioned to win lawsuits. Given that companies are legally required to preserve data even before they know they are being sued, it makes sense to classify those data in ways that reflect corporate policy for easier retrieval.

The trend now is to ‘introduce governance up front, when firms build new systems,’ Datskovsky says.

Whether it’s email, intranet files, classified materials or social networking documents, firms are finding the sheer volume of files they create can quickly become too vast to store and organize. Records information management has traditionally been split into five areas: storage management, corporate/government compliance, legal e-discovery, records retention management and content management. Managing five separate areas is cumbersome, but all that may be about to change.

Kon Leong, chief executive of San Jose, California-headquartered ZL Technologies, says that in the future, technology will unite all of those areas in one system that combines policies with one true look at each document. ‘Only one copy of the document will be kept, but all other applications will refer to it,’ he explains. ‘This will save on storage costs.’

Another innovative change on the way is ‘automated classification’, which Leong says is the wave of the future in records information management. The trend is to take the decisions of classifying documents out of the hands of end-users. Automated classification allows companies to ‘enforce all records and information management policies with automation and continuous auditing processes,’ Leong adds.

All of these changes are happening because there is a major shift among firms toward being more proactive and less reactive when it comes to information management. Instead of waiting and doing nothing before they are sued, companies are now preparing for possible lawsuits year-round. Not surprisingly, both Autonomy and ZL Technologies recently introduced new products to help companies become more effective at information governance and other aspects of records and information management.

When it comes to companies adopting the new products and technologies to help them deal with the challenges of higher volumes and increased regulation, Datskovsky says: ‘I think now the realization is that [they] have to do itÖ but let’s embrace it with the proper guidelines in mind and with the analysis of risk and reward much clearer.’

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