Transforming Information Management

Abstract

Cohasset Associates and ARMA International are pleased to announce their ninth biennial survey white paper. Since the survey's launch in 1999, these editions chronicle the practice of Records and Information Management (RIM), and more recently, its advancement to Information Governance (IG). They document this relentless evolution, examining RIM, and then IG, as the profession navigates the business complexities, the regulatory shifts, and the technology innovations driving this transformation.

This year's survey results provide up-to-date, authoritative benchmarking metrics on information lifecycle management means and methods, emphasizing electronically stored information (ESI). Drawing on these metrics, this White Paper provides:

- Measures of the current state of RIM and its on-going transformation to IG.

- Details on the successes and the obstacles resulting from and impacting effective information lifecycle management.

- Actions that will enable IG and RIM professionals to respond to today's information-related, interdisciplinary demands.

SURVEY RESULTS PROVIDE INCISIVE EVIDENCE THAT:

1. Organizations identify information governance as a business priority. Still, they struggle to overcome the challenges, both institutional and technical, that confound their efforts to transform to IG from RIM.

2. The effective and efficient governance of information, whether stored electronically or in physical form, is hampered as the automation of critical information lifecycle activities remains elusive.

3. A commitment to information governance across organizational groups and disciplines is on the rise. However, improved lifecycle practices with commensurate IG-related training and monitoring is required to transform IG outcomes and to enhance compliance.

Survey Overview and Research Methodology

Survey Overview

Cohasset Associates and ARMA International are pleased to announce this ninth biennial survey white paper. Over the past seventeen years, the goals of the survey have been steadfast:

- Measure the feedback from IG and RIM professionals regarding the challenges and issues faced, and the achievements realized, as organizations manage information over its lifecycle.

- Provide incisive, up-to-date benchmarking metrics, against which readers can gauge their information governance practices.

With over 13,000 total responses since its inception, the Cohasset Associates | ARMA International surveys are recognized as the definitive source on the state of information lifecycle management. The surveys' findings and the white papers' insights have been referenced in articles, research dissertations, speeches and management presentations.

More than 25,000 copies of the white papers have been downloaded – recognition of the widespread interest and trust in these survey results.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted using a web-based survey tool. Nearly 1,000 survey responses were received from October through December 2016. The survey invitees included:

- ARMA International members and associates

- Attendees of Cohasset Associates' May 2016 Managing Electronic Records (MER) Conference

- Iron Mountain customers

- NIRMA members

- Records Management LISTSERV members

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Survey Highlights

These Survey Highlights summarize key findings, while providing recommendations for information management professionals and their organizations, as they respond to the challenges of transforming records and information management (RIM) to information governance (IG).

Three survey highlights and the consequent recommended actions are detailed in this section, along with representative benchmarking data from the survey.

Use this section to understand the current state of RIM, in its on-going transformation to IG.

- Assess how these indicators apply to or compare in your organization.

- Formulate action plans that respond to the benchmark indicators, addressing the comparative opportunities.

- Develop communications that highlight the IG-related successes of the information management professionals and, accordingly, the organizations they represent.

- Request, access or make available targeted and supportive information governance resources.

1 | Organizations identify IG as a business priority. Still, they struggle to overcome the challenges, both institutional and technical, that confound their efforts to transform to IG from RIM.

2 | The effective and efficient governance of information, whether stored electronically or in physical form, is hampered as the automation of critical information lifecycle activities remains elusive.

3 | A commitment to information governance across organizational groups and disciplines is on the rise. However, improved lifecycle practices with commensurate IG-related training and monitoring is required to transform IG outcomes and to enhance compliance.

1 | **Organizations identify IG as a business priority. Still, they struggle to overcome the challenges, both institutional and technical, that confound their efforts to transform to IG from RIM.**

Information is an essential business asset. Regardless of organizational size, revenue, industry, or global presence, information enables decision-making; serves as evidence of business transactions; facilitates processes, operations and other business activities; and supports regulatory compliance, all while satisfying customer expectations.

Given these widely-recognized and information-critical business dynamics, it is disquieting that in many organizations the transformation to IG from RIM has not even begun. In other organizations the transformation to IG is but a work-in-progress, hindered by all manner of challenges.

Survey results uphold:

- Eighty-five percent (85%) of survey respondents indicate that their organizations have a RIM Program.

  - However, a mere 25% report that their organizations have developed a strategy to enable a transformation to IG from RIM.

- Efforts by organizations to transform to IG from RIM encounter numerous challenges:

  - Just 36% of survey participants describe their organization as having cross-functional collaboration.

  - Eighty percent (80%) of survey participants struggle as transformation tactics are challenged by the rapidly increasing volumes of data.

  - Resistance to change as an obstacle to transformation is strongly and mostly agreed to by 84% of participants.

Recommended Actions

Emphasize to management how IG supports the organization's strategic and risk management goals

Link the investment necessary for IG transformation to improved business performance and governance

Build a coalition of business stakeholders, who support IG, to help elevate the importance and benefits of IG to senior management

Leverage industry reference materials, such as The Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles© and other ARMA resources, Sedona documents, EDRM and IGRM, ISO standards, etc.

Gain executive sponsorship to advocate for the IG Program; assemble an IG oversight council or committee

Construct a business case; engage support and lead the development of sustainable processes that address the growing volumes of information and other technical challenges to IG

Include IG topics, when feasible, on the agendas of other strategic or governance committees

Identify a champion to lead the change management effort for the IG transformation from RIM

2 | **The effective and efficient governance of information, whether stored electronically or in physical form, is hampered as the automation of critical information lifecycle activities remains elusive.**

Information Governance (IG) is the comprehensive, interdisciplinary platform for managing all information, regardless of format or location. IG establishes policy-level rules, investment priorities, and accountabilities for managing the lifecycle of information - from creation or receipt - through retention and preservation – concluding with disposition.

Regulation, the threat of litigation, and the uncertain cost of compliance place increasing value on IG practices that are effective and efficient - automation enhances both. Automation supports information lifecycle activities, such as legal holds and information deletion. Simply stated, contemporary information media and locations, and increasing information volumes, overwhelm manual processes.

Survey results uphold:

- A combined 60% of survey participants report that in their organizations, processes to automate deletion are either underway, or prioritized to occur in the next twelve months.

  - Regrettably, just 16% of respondents define their organizations' deletion of expired information as currently using mature, automated processes.

- Just 44% of survey respondents strongly (10%) and mostly (34%) agree that automated tools are used to locate and then preserve relevant information.

- A mere 4% of respondents when referring to collaboration sites – to a high of just 7% when referring to ECM – describe the deletion of their organizations' unstructured ESI as fully automated.

- Survey participants strongly (40%) and mostly (38%) agree that the biggest challenge to the deletion of eligible information is the lack of automated tools.

Recommended Actions

✔ Refine IG transformation strategies to include the automation of lifecycle controls, where reasonable, for physical records and ESI

✔ Automate preservation elements, including the identification of the relevant information, its collection, and ultimately its return to business-as-usual retention and / or disposal

✔ Include automation considerations as IG practices are defined for and then applied to newer electronic repositories and information types

✔ Use process or work flows to automate the management of information through its lifecycle

✔ Engage with Information Technology to assure IG, and automation where possible, are employed during application and / or system development and decommissioning

✔ Leverage content analytics to monitor and measure the benefits, as automation is used to address the management, retention and deletion of ESI and paper records

3 | A commitment to information governance across organizational groups and disciplines is on the rise. However, improved lifecycle practices with commensurate IG-related training and monitoring is required to transform IG outcomes and to enhance compliance.

Organizational steadfastness is key to effective information management. Everyone across the organization – from executives to entry-level employees – must be engaged. Processes must be enhanced, with the appropriate tools, to embed effective information lifecycle controls.

Interdisciplinary commitment, which engenders support and fosters collaboration, is critical if the transformation to IG from RIM is ever to become reality. Further, while commitment, and the advocacy it generates, are harbingers of Program success, IG-related education and metrics compel a sustainable RIM to IG transformation, enabling favorable reports.

Good information management decisions are made when information users are educated to understand what to do and why it is important. Metrics then detail how those decisions impact the day-to-day work, the Company and in particular, the customers.

Survey results uphold:

- Eighty-three percent (83%) of survey participants strongly and mostly agree that management is supportive of IG; the combined response drops to just 68% when ranking support by Employees.

- Respondents strongly and mostly agree that IG support is received from: Legal or Compliance – 90%; Privacy – 88%; and Risk Management – 80%.

- Retention schedules apply to all media (79% agree); legal holds processes are mature (73% agree); and deletion of eligible information is automated and routine (60% agree).

- Just 33% respond that IG training occurs at least annually for IG Network members or IG Advisors; for all Employees, this falls to 26%. Nearly one-quarter reveal that no training is conducted for these groups.

- Self-assessments by an IG oversight area (60%) or assessments performed by a central group (50%) are reported as the methods used most often to monitor IG compliance.

Recommended Actions

✔ Annually, establish and present an action plan to executives and interdisciplinary partners that aligns IG transformation goals with organizational and departmental objectives and risks

✔ Commit to ongoing engagement with executives, interdisciplinary partners, and employees regarding IG transformation progress, and its integral information-related successes and needs

✔ Develop monitoring processes that use meaningful metrics to assess, report on and improve IG transformation results, and accordingly, engender advocacy and resource allocation

✔ Regularly educate all employees on IG components, placing emphasis on the benefits of IG on the day-to-day operations, to the organization, and to its customers

✔ Commit to process improvements that enhance information lifecycle controls

Survey Results

1 | RESPONSIBILITIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRUCT

How information is managed is transforming. Business complexity, shifting regulation, and technology innovations are just a few of the influencers driving this transformation. Information management professionals must build relationships with their colleagues who support the information-related disciplines in their organizations, collaborating to bring about a transformation from RIM to IG. Traditional RIM, however, remains core – it is the foundation upon which the IG Program is constructed.

- Records and Information Management (RIM) manages the information lifecycle – from creation through disposition.

- Information Governance (IG) is a strategic, cross-disciplinary framework composed of standards, processes, roles and metrics that hold organizations and individuals accountable for the proper handling of records and information. The framework helps organizations achieve business objectives, facilitates compliance with external requirements and minimizes risk posed by sub-standard information-handling practices. (Source: ARMA International)

Given the breadth of IG as defined, this transformation requires cross-disciplinary skills, competencies and cooperation.

1.1 What are your job responsibilities related to information management?

Survey respondents are asked to examine their information management roles, and identify each of their inherent, individual, information-related responsibilities.

First, these responses corroborate contemporary thinking – there are a variety of assignments performed by those accountable for information management. They also validate that naturally-occurring interrelationships already exist among the IG disciplines and information management job responsibilities.

Finally, the answers confirm that the professionals currently performing information management roles, with these constituent skills and competencies, are well-suited to lead and facilitate an organization's transformation to IG from RIM.

Transformation requires cross-disciplinary skills, competencies and cooperation

Generally, the benchmark data detailed in the chart are consistent with that collected in 2013; however, there are a few interesting – and perhaps telling – deviations:

	2013	**2016**
Records and Information Management (RIM)	98%	**90%**
Management of physical records archives or offsite records storage	Not asked	**65%**
Management of file room or electronic repository	45%	**54%**
Information Governance (IG) strategy development	Not asked	**45%**
Legal holds	36%	**39%**
Technology selection or implementation	51%	**31%**
Privacy	29%	**27%**
Business continuity / disaster recovery	25%	**26%**
Information security	26%	**26%**
Data analytics	Not asked	**14%**
Other	5%	**8%**

- *IG strategy development* is now reported as a job responsibility by 45% of respondents

- Fifty-four percent (54%) of survey participants identify management of a file room or *electronic repository* as a job duty, as compared to only 45% in 2013

- Only 31% affirmed responsibility for *Technology selection or implementation*. This reduction of 20%, in comparison to the 2013 metrics, may indicate that technology is in place and implemented; and, therefore, is not a current role

- Down eight points from 2013, *RIM* is now reported as an information management responsibility by just 90% of respondents

These changes could be indicators that while in its early stages, the transformation from RIM to IG has begun.

1.2 Where do you report within your organization?

Information governance reporting relationships are important, as they:

- Imply scope of responsibility

- Suggest likelihood of impact

- Make a statement as to the value of the IG role

- Define scope of organizational influence

In turn, the reporting relationship of IG impacts compliance and risk mitigation. In keeping with the focus of this paper, ideally the reporting relationship facilitates, or results from, the organization's transformation to IG from RIM.

	2007	2009	2011	2013	**2016**
Administrative Services / Facilities	36%	35%	22%	21%	**15%**
Legal	20%	23%	23%	21%	**14%**
Compliance / Regulatory Affairs				7%	**6%**
Information Technology	17%	16%	15%	18%	**15%**
Information / Data Governance Office	Responses are included in the "Other" option for these years.				**5%**
Finance					**6%**
Executive Office	Responses are included in the "Other" option for these years.		10%	10%	**15%**
No one group has responsibility for the overall RIM program			4%	5%	**3%**
Other	27%	26%	26%	18%	**21%**

These survey data reveal that certain reporting tendencies continue. The trend of information management programs reporting to *Administrative Services or Facilities* has consistently declined, now down to 15%.

Reporting relationships to *Information Technology* at 15%, have also decreased.

Also notable is that just 3% of respondents indicate that: *no one group has responsibility for the Program*.

By contrast, the trend of reporting to an *Executive Office* has increased – prompting some speculation. Considering the obvious interdependencies, the executive may be the General Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer or Chief Risk Officer.

No matter where the role reports, cultivating a relationship that enables strategic collaboration, offers visibility, and acknowledges the premise that IG transformation objectives align with business priorities is crucial.

1.3 How many full-time equivalents comprise the information management program staff?

To better understand the number of resources, specifically personnel, allocated to a program, this survey question asks respondents to characterize the number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) assigned to the information management program in their organizations.

To set this FTE measure apart, respondents are requested to **exclude** both (a) personnel from the file room or warehouse and (b) the members of the Program network, and to **include only** those individuals involved exclusively in the governance and policy-related activities of the Program.

These benchmarking data suggest that an organization's size is not necessarily a factor driving the number of FTEs allocated to its information management program.

Perhaps, the number of FTEs is a result of (a) the job responsibilities associated performed by the program staff; (b) the ability of the program's leader or champion to influence in support of resources; or (c) perhaps the program has been staffed in response to an adverse event.

Another dynamic may be the regulatory demands of the organization's primary industry.

Among other survey demographics, organization size and primary industry data are detailed in Section 9.

Organization Size

- For large organizations, defined in this survey as 25,000 or more employees, 22% of respondents report information management program staffs of *more than ten*.

  • Yet, this same *more than ten* FTE profile is also identified in small organizations, as reported by 7% of respondents.

  • For medium organizations it is reported by 13% of survey participants.

	2013	**2016**	**Small** Less than 5,000 Employees	**Medium** 5,000 to 24,999 Employees	**Large** 25,000 or More Employees
1 or less	26%	**26%**	29%	25%	12%
More than 1 and up to 4	39%	**34%**	34%	38%	31%
More than 4 and up to 7	16%	**12%**	11%	14%	15%
More than 7 and up to 10	8%	**6%**	5%	5%	13%
More than 10	11%	**10%**	7%	13%	22%

- Consistent for the most part across the three organization sizes, approximately one-third of survey participants – 34% for small; 38% for medium; 31% for large – define their information management program staffs as *more than one and up to four*.

- The results for the FTE profile of *more than four and up to seven* are similarly consistent – from 11% to 14% to 15% - across the small, medium and large organizations, respectively.

In contrast to the above distinctions:

- For large organizations, 12% of participants characterize program staffs as having *1 or less* FTE.

  • Understandably, the response rate for this FTE profile is more than double (29%) for small organizations.

  • For medium-sized organizations, this FTE profile is identified by 25% of respondents.

Finally, 12% of survey participants report that their organizations have *no dedicated RIM staff*. Using the organization's size as a filter, the responses are further clarified:

- Small – 15%

- Medium – 5%

- Large – 6%

This data point is consistent with the response from 3% of survey participants, detailed in Section 1.2, that indicates that *no one group has responsibility for the overall RIM program*.

Primary Industry

	2016	Local Government	Manufacturing	Life Sciences	Insurance	Energy and Utilities	Financial Services
1 or less	26%	27%	36%	6%	37%	11%	28%
More than 1 and up to 4	34%	35%	36%	39%	40%	16%	34%
More than 4 and up to 7	12%	14%	7%	17%	9%	19%	16%
More than 7 and up to 10	6%	6%	5%	6%	0%	23%	4%
More than 10	10%	9%	2%	11%	9%	22%	10%

When the survey participants' responses to this FTE resource question are filtered by the *primary industry* demographic, additional findings result:

● Local, State, Province, and Territory Government are depicted in this extract because of response rate: 25% of the nearly 1000 total survey respondents identify this as their primary industry.

● Manufacturing; Life Sciences (Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology and Medical Devices); Insurance; Energy (Oil, Gas and Mining) and Utilities; and Financial Services are represented due to the highly-regulated environments in which they operate.

　• For nearly every industry example, the FTE profile of *more than one and up to four* is selected most often by survey respondents.

　• The FTE profile of *more than 10* is identified by 22% of survey participants that represent the combined Utilities and Energy industries; by 9% of Insurance industry respondents; and by 11% of respondents associated with the Life Sciences industry.

　• However, considering the massive regulation the industries navigate day-to-day, it is problematic that 36% of Manufacturing industry survey respondents; 37% of Insurance industry respondents; and 28% of Financial Services industry respondents describe their program FTE profile as *1 or less*.

While these two filters, organization size and primary industry, suggest certain FTE resource influencers, many factors can impact the number of personnel resources allocated to an organization's information management program. What is certain, however, is that dedicated and competent information management staff is essential to build the business case, the platform and the relationships necessary to bring about a transformation to IG from RIM.

2 | TRANSFORMING TO IG FROM RIM

Records and information management (RIM) programs define defensible practices, founded upon clear and consistent information lifecycle management rules that result in systematic, repeatable and measurable outcomes.

Information governance (IG) focuses beyond the rules framing the information lifecycle, functioning broadly around a comprehensive, interdisciplinary core. Leveraging RIM as its foundation, this cross-functional platform – that is IG – transforms how information is managed. It facilitates information-related collaboration across an organization. It strategically aligns information management outcomes to business priorities and objectives, and then measures the results of these alliances.

Information is a critical business asset – IG supports this principle.

2.1   Is your organization advancing from RIM to IG?

Records and information management (RIM) programs are evolving. Using mutually-beneficial alliances with information governance disciplines, organizations are starting to construct IG programs. Traditional RIM programs are the starting point; they are the basis for IG.

As the pie chart reveals, a majority (85%) of survey participants affirm the existence of a RIM Program in their organizations. The response to the same inquiry in 2013 was 87%, which begs the questions:

- Is it slightly lower now because some respondent organizations are transforming to IG, and no longer refer to it as a RIM Program? OR…

- Is it actually statistically unchanged? OR…

- Does the response simply acknowledge that RIM exists, forming the basis for IG, regardless of IG transformation initiation or status?

Cross-functional Collaboration

Information governance transformation requires interdisciplinary participation with broad organizational collaboration. This teamwork is a key indicator of the overall success and impact that the IG program can experience. As depicted by the chart on the page that follows:

- Just over one-third (36%) of survey participants respond that IG, supported by interdisciplinary collaboration, is in place in their organizations.

- A sizeable 55% of respondents answer *No* to the question.

- Another 9% of survey participants reveal that they *Don't Know* if IG-related collaboration exists.

2% Don't Know
13% No
85% Yes

Does your organization have a RIM program?

9% Don't Know
36% Yes
55% No
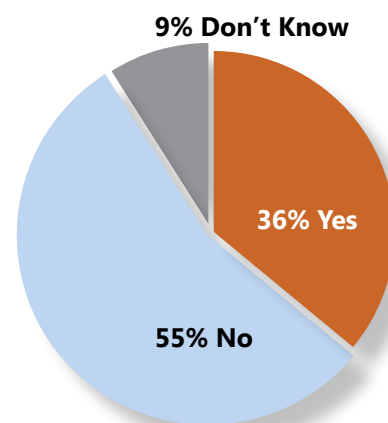
Does your organization have IG with cross-functional collaboration?

Transforming to IG from RIM requires the cooperation of an organization's numerous information-related disciplines. Departments accountable for these disciplines, for example: privacy, information security, contract administration and compliance, must work together to address IG matters and deploy solutions.

While these data illustrate an awareness of the need for cross-functional balance, perspective and support, it also indicates that the execution of this type of governance is not easy.

11% Don't Know

25% Yes

64% No

Has your organization developed a comprehensive strategy to guide the advancement to IG from RIM?

Comprehensive Strategy

A comprehensive strategy is necessary to guide IG transformation. The strategy must focus on improvements in lifecycle controls, across the organization's many information-related disciplines, with an emphasis on achieving value and mitigating risk. Specifically, the strategy should:

● Explain how IG supports the organization's business objectives

● Link the investments necessary for IG transformation to improved business performance and governance

● Propose IG initiatives that are achievable and sustainable

Simply put, in this time of limited resources, with a growing demand for trusted information, IG transformation requires a strategy that aligns with the organization's priorities and goals. As the survey responses in the above chart uphold:

● Just one-quarter (25%) of survey participants indicate a comprehensive strategy to guide the transformation to IG exists in their organizations.

● Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents indicate there is *No* strategy; 11% *Don't Know*.

2.2   What information management drivers are important to your organization?

Businesses face a range of complex, yet interrelated challenges – all of them benefitting from the effective and efficient management of information – simultaneously driving an organization to transform to IG from RIM.

Each driver endures, individually, as an indicator of the critical nature of information as a business asset.

Collectively, the drivers represent the cross-functional disciplines that will collaborate within an IG framework, once established. These internal collaborators include the information-intense disciplines of: Privacy; Ethics and Compliance; Legal; Information Security; Risk Management; and those that both amass and use Big Data.

Survey participants affirm all four of these information management drivers as important to their organizations. The extent of the strongly and mostly agree results, in effect, characterize the drivers as current, pertinent and essential. The small percentages of the opposing disagree responses, in contrast, support the same conclusion.

- Undeniably, reducing regulatory non-compliance risk is important, with 90% of survey respondents strongly and mostly agreeing with this as an information management driver.

- The improvement of legal hold processes is nearly as noteworthy a driver, at 82%.

Reduced risk of not complying with regulations — 90% / 7% / 3%

Improved legal hold and/or legal discovery processes — 82% / 12% / 6%

Internal cross-functional collaboration on information governance — 73% / 19% / 8%

Data mining or other actions to derive value from information — 61% / 26% / 13%

● Strongly and Mostly Agree   ● Strongly and Mostly Disagree   ● Don't Know

- While still significant, a smaller number of respondents (61%) identify data mining as an information management driver. This activity may be newer to some organizations, or, perhaps, unfamiliar to some respondents.
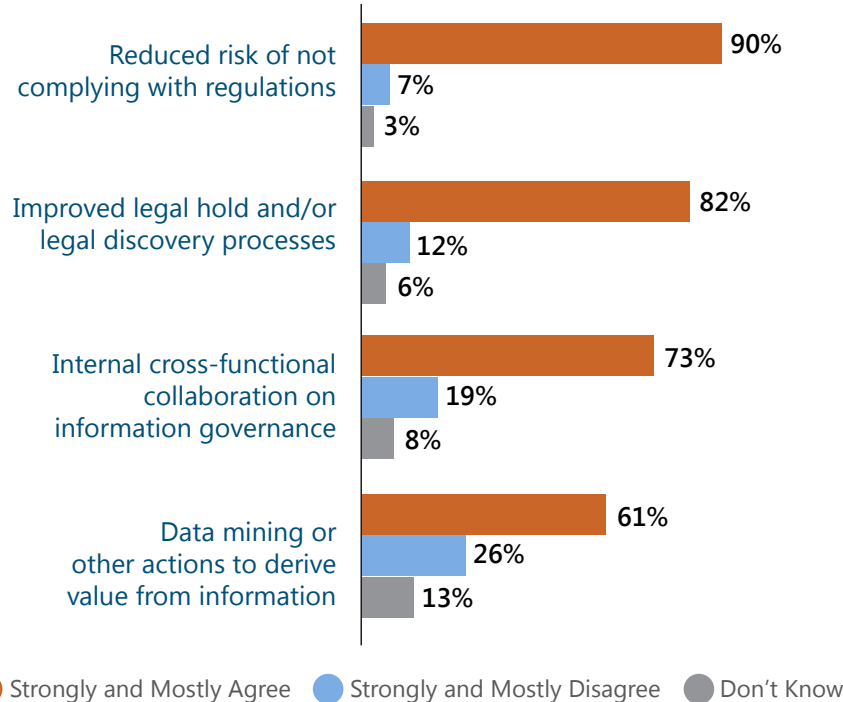
These responses are an interesting juxtaposition to the results to the question presented in Section 2.1, "Is your organization advancing from RIM to IG?". The comparison begs the following questions that readers of this White Paper will be anxious to consider:

- With these IG-oriented drivers acknowledged as important by so many, why (in Section 2.1) do so few organizations (36%) have IG in their organizations with cross-functional collaboration? AND…

- Why (in Section 2.1) have so few organizations (25%) developed a comprehensive strategy to transform to IG from RIM?

2.3   How is compliance with IG and RIM monitored?

Monitors and their component metrics are critical to effective information management and the programs that support it. Measurement raises awareness and garners program support.

Designed and conducted appropriately, active monitoring measures progress toward strategic goals, provide concrete proof of business benefit, and signal when the RIM to IG transformation strategy is not achieving its desired outcome. Compliance assessment - monitors with metrics - must be an element in all information management programs.

Meaningful metrics assess, report, and ultimately facilitate improved information management compliance and outcomes. It has been proven that when performance is measured, it improves. Monitors should measure direct actions, such as:

- The volume of information retained, preserved for legal holds, and deleted

- The use of storage locations designed and designated to retain the specific type of information

- The numbers of employees, information management professionals, and management attending IG training

Monitors should also enable derived measures, such as:

- Increased awareness

- Cost savings

- Risk mitigation

Respondents report the incidence of information management compliance monitors as follows:

- *Self-assessments* by an IG oversight area (60%), or *assessments performed by a central group* (50%) are reported as the methods used most often to monitor IG compliance.

RIM and IG Compliance Monitors

Self-assessments reported to an oversight area (RIM, IG, etc.)	60%
Compliance assessments performed by a central group	50%
Measurement of key performance indicators (KPIs)	33%
Metrics are monitored to measure implementation results	29%
Measurement of key risk indicators (KRIs)	18%

- IG *program implementation metrics* are monitored by just 29% of survey participants

- Further, just 18% of respondents indicate that *key risk indicators* are measured to assess IG program compliance.

Measure and analyze results throughout the transformation from RIM to IG. Report achievements, highlight trends, and use gaps as the impetus to revise the transformation strategy, if necessary.

Remember, measures garner engagement and support increased success.

2.4   How mature are the following information governance components in your organization?

Information governance addresses and impacts each of the information lifecycle activities – from creation and/or receipt through final disposition. It also pertains to all information – regardless of format, media or location.

With IG program maturity comes business-as-usual information management; IG-related requirements are no longer impositions, instead they are routine and ordinary. Program maturity makes it easier for organizations and individual information users to manage this critical business asset, day-to-day. To a great extent, the more mature the IG program, the less participants notice its controls. Often, maturity equates to automation, with certain IG control actions occurring without user intervention or notice. Obviously, this is the goal!

Existence of: cross-functional IG structure
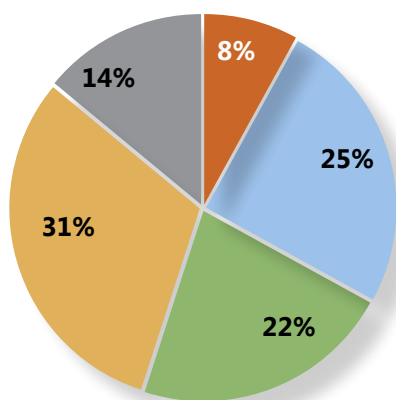
Existence of: enterprise-wide IG policies
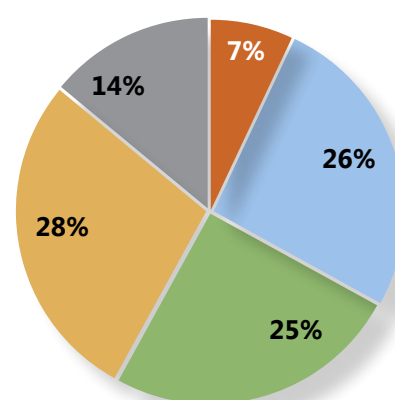
● Mature   ● Progress underway   ● Priority for next 12 months   ● None   ● Don't Know

Accordingly, this survey question examines and assesses the maturity of the various components of an IG program. This examination begins with two foundational (and essential) IG elements:

● Cross-functional IG structure

● Enterprise-wide IG policies

The maturity of both of these elements is reported as profoundly underdeveloped.

● The existence of a *Mature* cross-functional IG structure is identified by just 8% of respondents.

● It is reassuring that a combined 47% of respondents indicate that the development of a cross-functional IG structure is underway (25%) or a priority in the next year (22%).

   • It is worrisome; however, that a combined 45% of survey participants either *Don't Know* (14%) if a cross-functional IG structure exists, or reply that one does not exist (31%).

It is not surprising that the maturity rankings for these two IG program elements are nearly identical. An IG structure requires enterprise-wide IG policies, and vice versa.

● A *Mature* ranking receives just 7% of responses.

● A combined 51% of respondents indicate that the implementation of enterprise-wide IG policies is underway (26%) or a priority in the next 12 months (25%).

● A combined 42% of survey participants either *Don't Know* (14%) if IG policies have been implemented, or reply that they do not exist (28%).

Lifecycle Management

Information governance addresses the management of information's lifecycle activities – from creation and / or receipt through final disposition – across an interdisciplinary framework. The following graph plots the rankings of certain aspects of the basic information lifecycle management elements of retention, preservation and deletion.

A retention schedule that applies to all media is characterized as one that addresses ESI as effectively and efficiently as physical records. This aspect of the lifecycle element of Retention is ranked *Mature* by 45% of survey participants.

Another 47% combine to indicate that the development of a media-neutral retention schedule is *underway* (34%), or a *priority in the next twelve months* (13%). It is surprising that this "media-neutral exercise" is not yet complete!

Retention is examined more closely in Section 4.

The legal hold process is ranked *Mature* by 42% of respondents.

- Together, another 43% indicate that the development of a legal hold process is *underway* (31%), or a *priority in the next twelve months* (12%).

- It is concerning that 9% of survey participants indicate that no legal hold process exists.

Preservation is investigated in Section 5.

Automation is a bellwether when the *Maturity* of the information lifecycle management element of deletion is measured. However, just 16% of survey participants indicate that the automated or the routine deletion of outdated or expired information occurs in their organizations.

- Sixty percent (60%) of respondents, together, indicate that automated deletion is *underway* (32%) or a *priority in the next twelve months* (28%).

Deletion is reviewed in greater detail in Section 6.

Regulation, the threat of litigation and the uncertain cost of compliance place increasing value on the maturity of IG practices.

Interdisciplinary Framework

Information Governance functions as a comprehensive, interdisciplinary platform. It establishes policy-level rules, investment priorities, and accountabilities for managing the lifecycle of information. These rules, priorities and accountabilities are a result of the collaboration of the numerous information-related disciplines in the organization that align to develop, advance and enforce these platform components. This graph depicts the maturity rankings of four of the various IG-related disciplines.

Chart data:

Retention schedule that applies to all media
- Mature: 45%
- Progress underway: 34%
- Priority for next 12 months: 13%
- None: 5%
- Don't Know: 3%

Legal holds and preservation to legal matters
- Mature: 42%
- Progress underway: 31%
- Priority for next 12 months: 12%
- None: 9%
- Don't Know: 7%

Automated or routine deletion of outdated/expired information
- Mature: 16%
- Progress underway: 32%
- Priority for next 12 months: 28%
- None: 19%
- Don't Know: 5%

Legend:
- Mature
- Progress underway
- Priority for next 12 months
- None
- Don't Know

Of the disciplines measured here, the *Maturity* of Privacy is ranked highest by 39% of survey participants.

Another 46% combine to indicate that the inclusion of Privacy as an IG discipline is *underway* (35%), or a *priority in the next twelve months* (11%). This is not surprising, considering the extent of regulation enacted to protect personal information.

Sharing a *Maturity* ranking of just 18%, respondents indicate that (a) the collaboration with information technology (IT) on application / system development and (b) the governance of vendors providing information-related services, including cloud services, have room to improve.

- Together, 65% of respondents indicate collaboration with IT to address matters of retention and disposition is *underway* (37%), or a *priority in the next twelve months* (28%).

- By contrast, only 48% of respondents combine to report that the IG-related alignment with contract administration is *underway* (32%); with just 16% identifying this as a *priority in the next twelve months*.

Bringing contract administration, vendor management or procurement, however named in an organization, into the alliance of disciplines that support information governance, is increasingly important considering the prevalence of information in the cloud or with third party service providers.

Finally, only 17% of survey participants indicate that enterprise content management (ECM) for important information is *Mature* in their organizations.

- Another 62% combine to indicate that ECM implementation is *underway* (38%), or a *priority in the next twelve months* (24%).

Automation in the form of ECM supports information lifecycle management. Simply stated, modern information media and locations, and increasing information data volume overwhelms manual capabilities.

3 | INTERDISCIPLINARY COMMITMENT

In an era of limited organizational resources and increasing information management complexity, the transformation to information governance requires a strong business commitment and interdisciplinary alliances. Organizational steadfastness is key to effective information management. Everyone across the organization – from executives to entry-level employees - must be engaged.

Interdisciplinary commitment, which engenders support and fosters collaboration, is critical if the transformation to IG from RIM is ever to become reality. Further, while commitment and the advocacy it generates are harbingers of Program success, IG-related education compels a sustainable RIM to IG transformation, enabling favorable reports.

This section of the White Paper evaluates the business commitment, as well the challenges to the effective and efficient transformation to IG from RIM.

3.1 Are the following groups in your organization actively engaged and supportive of IG and/or RIM?

Organizational engagement, which brings about support, is critical to the achievement of effective information lifecycle management. Also, this engagement is a key indicator of the overall success the IG program can experience.

Management, Network and Employees

The engagement of management and employees, and of the Program's dedicated professionals is a critical IG program success factor. Information governance is heavily dependent upon individual accountability.

Group	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Management	29%	54%	14%	3%
Employees/Workforce	11%	57%	29%	3%
RIM or IG Steering Committee	34%	37%	17%	12%
RIM or IG advisors (SMEs)	36%	41%	14%	9%
RIM or IG Network (liaisons or specialists)	28%	47%	15%	10%
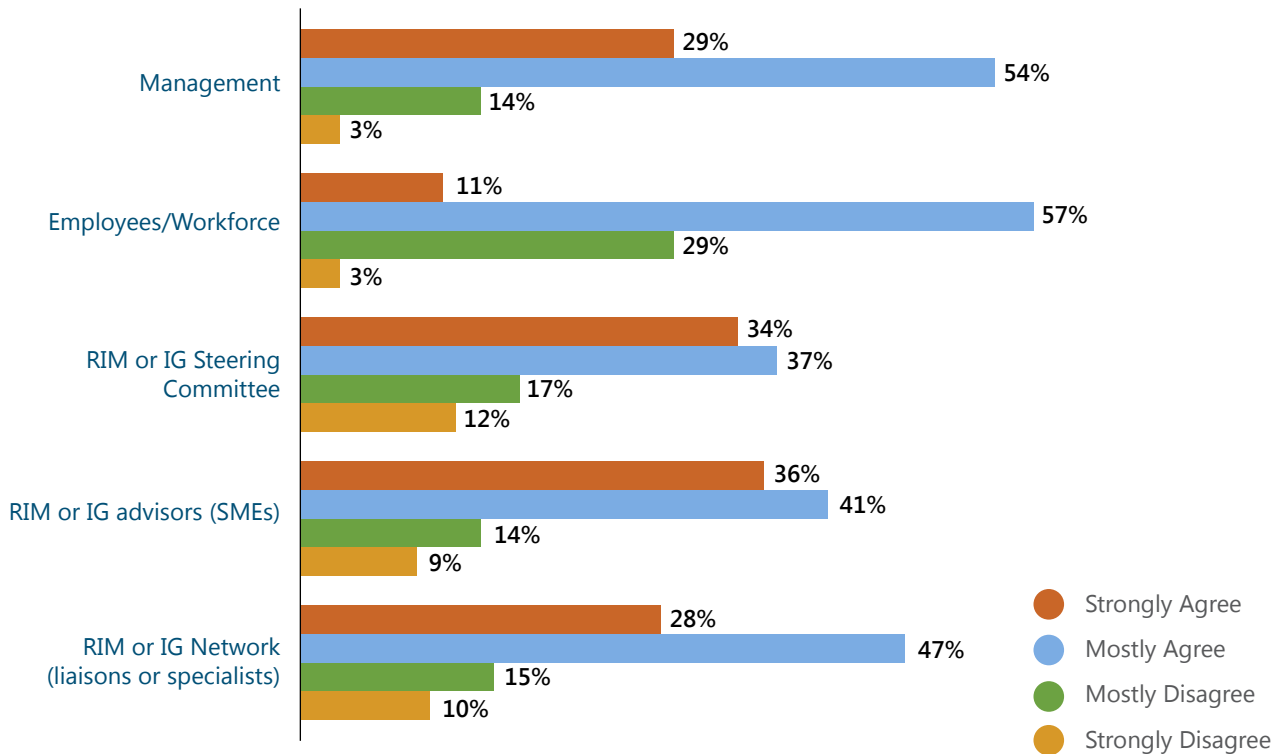
The lowest demonstrated engagement is ascribed to employees with a strongly agree result of only 11%. This weakened advocacy dampens the success of IG transformation, since many organizations still rely on manual processes, requiring individual ownership and action. It is hopeful, however, that 57% of respondents mostly agree that employees are engaged. Perhaps mandated IG training, IG-specific performance measures, or the addition of an IG-oriented question to an organization's annual code of conduct attestation could enhance this result.

The combined agree results for the program's Steering Committee (71%); for its Advisors (77%); and for its Network (75%) are heartening.

It is also encouraging that these questions were answered by the survey participants - indicating that these IG program positions and governing bodies actually exist!

Interdisciplinary Groups

Policy-oriented business areas can experience the most direct impact when information management failures arise. Accordingly, these collaborations support a strong and unified IG program.

Risk Management, Legal, Compliance or Regulatory Affairs, Privacy and Data Protection and other key users of information represent important alliances.

It is noteworthy that the combined strongly and mostly agree responses, as follows, are so positive:

- Legal – 90%

- Privacy – 88%

- Risk Management – 80%

Collaboration between Information Technology (IT) and IG is necessary when managing information throughout its lifecycle. Without this cooperation, new content will be created and managed without information lifecycle controls, increasing the mass of unattended information in the future.

Legal, Compliance and/ or Regulatory Affairs — Strongly Agree 47%, Mostly Agree 43%, Mostly Disagree 9%, Strongly Disagree 1%

Privacy and Data Protection — Strongly Agree 44%, Mostly Agree 44%, Mostly Disagree 10%, Strongly Disagree 2%

Risk Management — Strongly Agree 32%, Mostly Agree 48%, Mostly Disagree 17%, Strongly Disagree 3%

Information Technology — Strongly Agree 32%, Mostly Agree 51%, Mostly Disagree 14%, Strongly Disagree 3%

● Strongly Agree ● Mostly Agree ● Mostly Disagree ● Strongly Disagree

- This active engagement with IT, signified as existing by a combined 83% of respondents, enables IG to have a "voice at the IT planning table".

- This engagement is also important to the sound design, capture, and other technology-oriented decisions that impact lifecycle management.

These responses from the survey participants provide evidence that strong interdisciplinary engagement is integral to IG. Further, a commitment to the ongoing engagement with interdisciplinary partners sustains a collaborative environment, necessary for IG transformation.

By the way… an environment with pre-existing collaborative relationships is an advantage that helps organizations realize early transformation benefits!

3.2   How frequently is IG or RIM training completed?

While support from management, employees and interdisciplinary allies is a critical IG transformation success factor, training is essential to effective information management. Employees cannot make good information management decisions unless they understand what to do and why it is important.

- Thirty-three percent (33%) of survey participants report that IG training occurs annually or more often for *IG Network* members or for *IG Advisors.*

- For *All Employees,* this falls to 26%.

It is very troubling that for these same three groups, nearly one-quarter of respondents reveal that **no training** is conducted.

This low rate of training for all employees suggests a correlation to Question 3.1, which measures active employee engagement, with only 11% strongly agreeing.

Often, training occurs because of regulatory requirements; however, employees cannot make good information lifecycle management decisions unless they understand what to do – how to do it – and why it is important.

Training Frequency

	Annually or more often	Every 2 years	Only when role is assigned	No Training
RIM or IG Network	33%	8%	30%	21%
RIM or IG Advisors (SMEs)	33%	8%	28%	22%
All Employees	26%	10%	29%	23%

As was suggested earlier in this White Paper, mandated IG training and IG-specific performance measures for individuals (employees and managers) and for departments, both supported by the addition of an IG-oriented question to an organization's annual code of conduct attestation, will enhance information management outcomes.

For the information management professionals (Network members and Advisors), training and education play a pivotal role in their readiness as they work to transform from RIM to IG in their organizations; this preparedness contributes to their engagement, their effectiveness as program leaders, and importantly, to their job satisfaction.

Finally, while commitment and the advocacy it generates are harbingers of Program success, IG-related education compels a sustainable RIM to IG transformation.
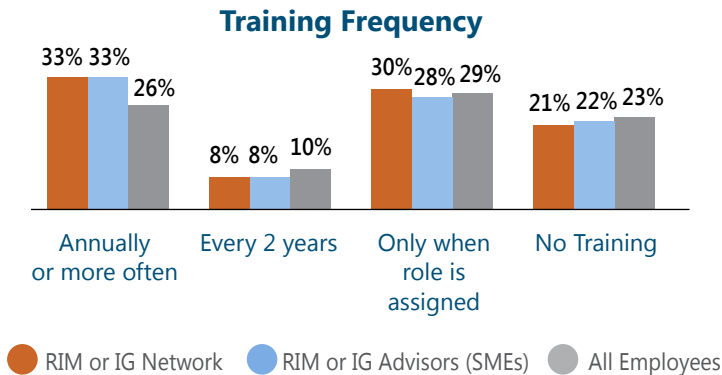
3.3   Which of the following represent challenges faced by IG and/or RIM in your organization?

Information is an essential business asset. It enables decision-making; serves as evidence of business transactions; facilitates processes, operations and other business activities; and supports regulatory compliance, all while satisfying customers. Given these information-critical business dynamics, it is disquieting that in many organizations the transformation to IG is but a work-in-progress, hindered by all manner of challenges.

Cohasset observes that organizations face both institutional and technical challenges as they transform to IG, working to embed information lifecycle controls with business-as-usual operations.

These survey results, which support this observation, are first sorted into two charts by type of challenge and then ranked using the combined responses of strongly and mostly agree, as compared to the combined strongly and mostly disagree responses.

Institutional Challenges

Institutional challenges are those in an organization with social, cultural, or interpersonal aspects. They are often harder than technical challenges to overcome as they involve people and personality – they can be deep-seated - indoctrinated through behavior, habit or tradition.

- Proof positive, a combined 84% of respondents strongly and mostly agree that *Resistance to change* is a challenge to IG. Whether institutional or technical in nature, this challenge is ranked highest by survey participants.

- Facing a *keep-everything culture* is ranked as a challenge by 81% of respondents.

- *Lack of support from management and stakeholders* is identified by 70% of survey participants.

	Strongly and Mostly Agree	Strongly and Mostly Disagree
Lack of management and stakeholder buy-in or support	70%	30%
High cost or lack of resources	80%	20%
Change keep-everything culture	81%	19%
Lack of recognition that IG and RIM require commitment and investment	81%	19%
Resistance to change	84%	16%

● Strongly and Mostly Agree   ● Strongly and Mostly Disagree
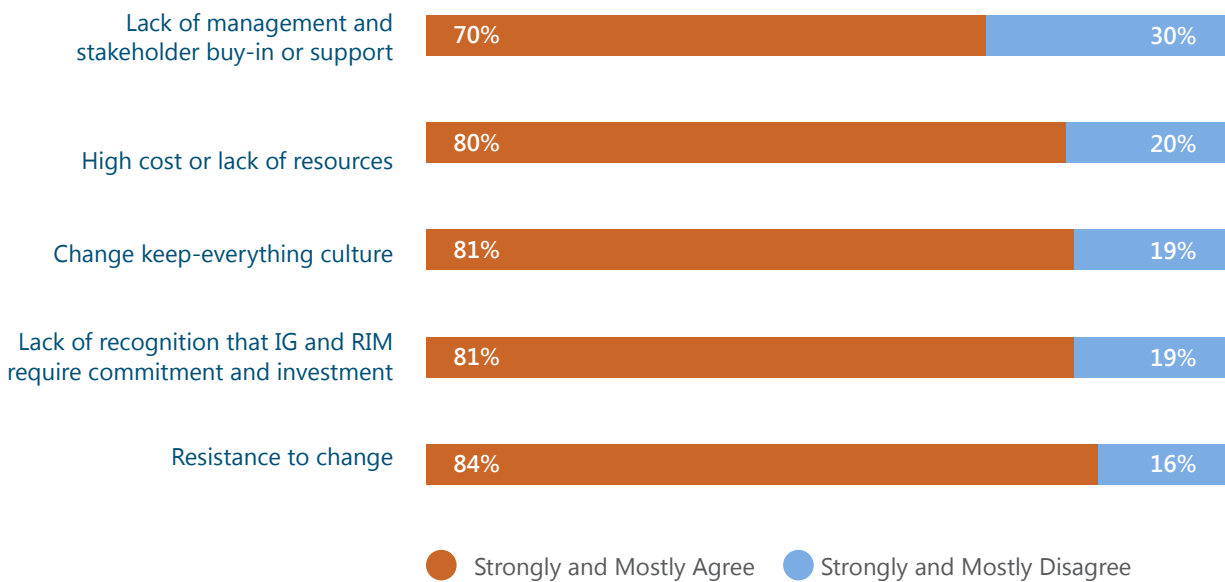
Technical Challenges

Today, most information is born in diverse electronic forms, stored in myriad locations. It is not surprising that *complexity of solutions for ESI* is a challenge identified by 78% of survey participants.

	Strongly and Mostly Agree	Strongly and Mostly Disagree
Complexity of legal hold processes	47%	53%
Complexity of solutions for ESI	78%	22%
Rapidly increasing volumes of data	80%	20%
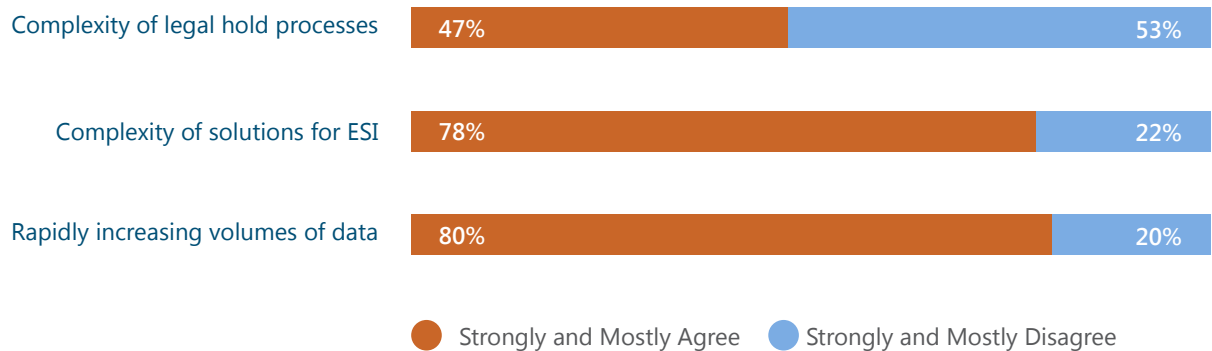
Information management must adapt, leveraging automation to address the lifecycle activities of large volumes of electronically stored information (ESI).

● Accordingly, *rapidly increasing volumes of data* are another obstacle to IG and its transformation from RIM, ranked highest at 80% within the technical challenges, and as significant as the challenges characterized as behaviorally-oriented.

High volumes of ESI generally increase the complexity of many information-reliant processes, adding to costs; yet, only 47% of respondents identify the *complexity of legal hold processes,* highly dependent on information, as a challenge to IG. This is surprising considering that sorting through information to determine relevancy in a legal matter, can escalate legal and related case-management costs.
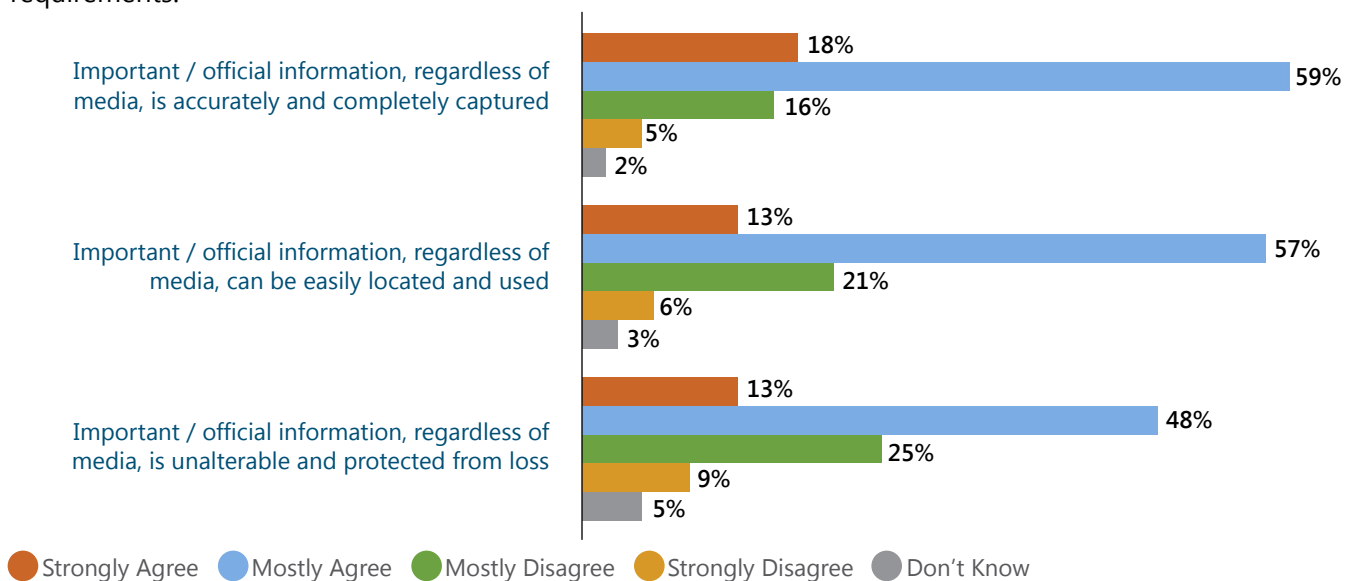
4 | RETENTION AND RETENTION SCHEDULE

The information lifecycle begins when information is created, or received, to document business transactions. The lifecycle continues with the accurate capture of that information; includes the retention and / or preservation of the information; and ends with the final disposition (permanent retention, deletion or destruction) of the information.

This important business information, whether paper or ESI, must be managed throughout this lifecycle, particularly during the time it is retained.

4.1   Is your organization's retention process effective?

In accordance with IG standards, important business information is retained effectively, as paper or ESI, when it is captured and trusted as factually complete representations; easily located and retrievable, supporting routine and recurring use; maintained in an environment where it is protected from unauthorized alteration and modification; and kept for as long as needed or required for business and legal or regulatory requirements.

Important / official information, regardless of media, is accurately and completely captured
- 18%
- 59%
- 16%
- 5%
- 2%

Important / official information, regardless of media, can be easily located and used
- 13%
- 57%
- 21%
- 6%
- 3%

Important / official information, regardless of media, is unalterable and protected from loss
- 13%
- 48%
- 25%
- 9%
- 5%

● Strongly Agree ● Mostly Agree ● Mostly Disagree ● Strongly Disagree ● Don't Know

In assessing these information retention attributes, the following is reported:

- Seventy-seven percent (77%) of survey participants strongly (18%) and mostly (59%) agree that important information is *accurately and completely captured,* whether paper or ESI.

- Considering that 80% of respondents report rapidly increasing volumes of data as one of the biggest challenges to IG in their organizations (see Question 3.3), it is rather remarkable, and perhaps inconsistent, that 70% of these same respondents combine to strongly (13%) and mostly (57%) agree that important business information, including ESI, is *easily located.*

- Finally, 61% of survey participants strongly and mostly agree that their organization's important business information is retained securely, in immutable form.

4.2 How many unique categories (record series, record titles, category codes) are on your organization's retention schedule?

Information governance programs define the time period for keeping information, using a streamlined and simplified retention schedule that applies to all information – regardless of location or format.

The objective of most organizations is to formulate a retention schedule that can be easily and effectively applied to both paper records and to ESI. To be most useful, a retention schedule should:

- Include the fewest number of categories that can be applied to the broadest sets of information.

- Use a minimal number of event-based or conditional categories to make it easier for users to consistently interpret retention time periods and calculate destruction eligibility dates.

Number of Categories	2011	2013	2016 Current Categories	2016 Desired Categories
Less than 25	16%	6%	12%	16%
25 to 49		12%	9%	12%
50 to 99	13%	13%	13%	19%
100 to 249	30%	32%	25%	19%
250 to 499	20%	18%	15%	7%
500 or more	21%	19%	12%	3%

- Use sufficiently-detailed retention specifications that direct users to a category for specific information.

This question asked survey participants to identify the range of categories into which their retention schedule falls.

- One-quarter (25%) of respondents identify, currently, with a retention schedule having between *100 and 249* categories.

- Just 19% of survey participants *desire* categories in that range.

Instead, a combined 47% of respondents would prefer retention schedules having categories in the range of 25 or less and up to no more than 99.

By contrast, 12% of survey participants indicate they currently work with retention schedules having *500 or more* categories.

- Five years ago, nearly double the number of survey participants provided that response.

- Today, only 3% of survey participants desire 500 or more retention categories.

Overall, survey data show a continued trend toward fewer retention categories. This bodes well, and in fact enables, a more effective retention process, particularly for ESI.

4.3 Would your organization benefit from the following improvements to its retention schedule?

An effective retention schedule that applies to information – in all locations and formats – is the cornerstone of robust information governance. It is essential to retaining and subsequently deleting or destroying unneeded information, following consistent and systematic practices. For most of the respondents' industries, including healthcare, life sciences, insurance, and financial services, it is important to remember that the retention schedule must take into consideration the patient, claimant or customer information, respectively, in addition to the organization's operational information.

A retention schedule should be regularly maintained to ensure it remains effective and appropriate for the organization. An effective retention schedule is comprised of the fewest possible categories; addresses international operations, when the organization is global; and is based upon legal and regulatory research.

Survey participants considered their organization's retention schedule, assessing improvement opportunities.
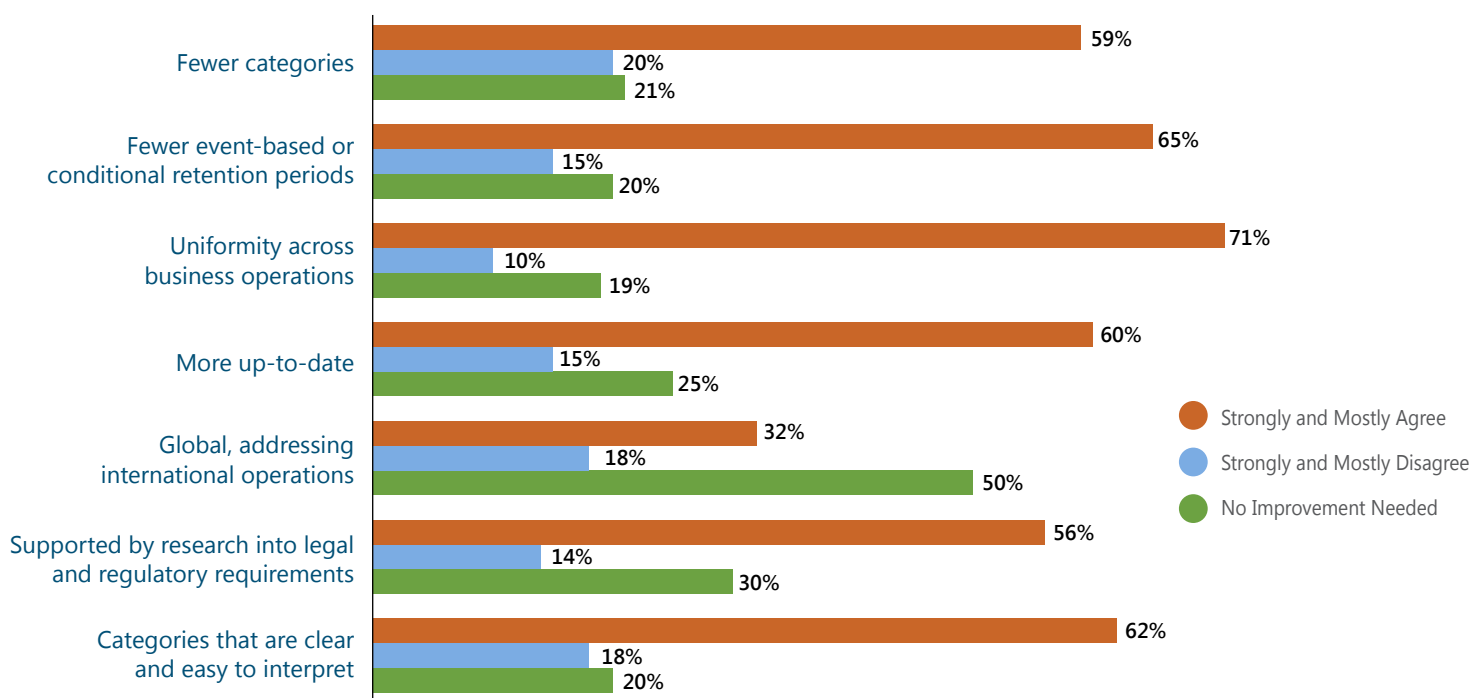
Most respondents strongly and mostly agree that their organizations' retention schedules can benefit from enhancement, as follows:

- Seventy-one percent (71%) require uniformity across business operations.

- Sixty-five percent (65%) need fewer event-based or conditional retention periods.

- Sixty-two percent (62%) call for retention categories that are easier to interpret.

By contrast, for nearly every one of the enhancement attributes, *No Improvement Needed* is selected by at least 20% of respondents.

In this vein, it is noteworthy, that when a respondent considers their organization's retention schedule as it relates to global operations, *No Improvement Needed* increases substantially - to 50%.

5 | PRESERVATION FOR LEGAL HOLDS

Information governance programs, particularly those with operations in the United States, have established legal hold processes to preserve (or suspend destruction of) information relevant to reasonably anticipated, threatened, or pending litigation, government investigation, external audit or other similar circumstances.

Facing the potential of spoliation charges during litigation, the traditional and risk-averse approach to preservation was to keep everything. The danger of this approach is that routine disposal can come to a screeching halt, entrenching a hold-everything mentality. This shutdown can result in increased storage costs, litigation complexity and overall process inefficiency.

This section of the White Paper addresses legal hold processes and the effectiveness of the preservation of information for legal holds.

5.1   Is your organization's legal hold process effective?

An effective legal hold process is key to complying with legal discovery requirements in the United States.

- Forty-four percent (44%) of survey respondents strongly (10%) and mostly (34%) agree that automated tools are used to locate and then preserve relevant information.

    - Even with this automation, 62% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that more information than is necessary is retained due to how overly-broad legal holds are written or applied.

- Nearly one-half (49%) of respondents indicate that disaster recovery back-up media is relied upon to satisfy legal holds.

    - Regrettably, 26% don't know if back-up media is used in this way.

- Finally, 23% of participants respond that legal holds are not regularly and effectively terminated.
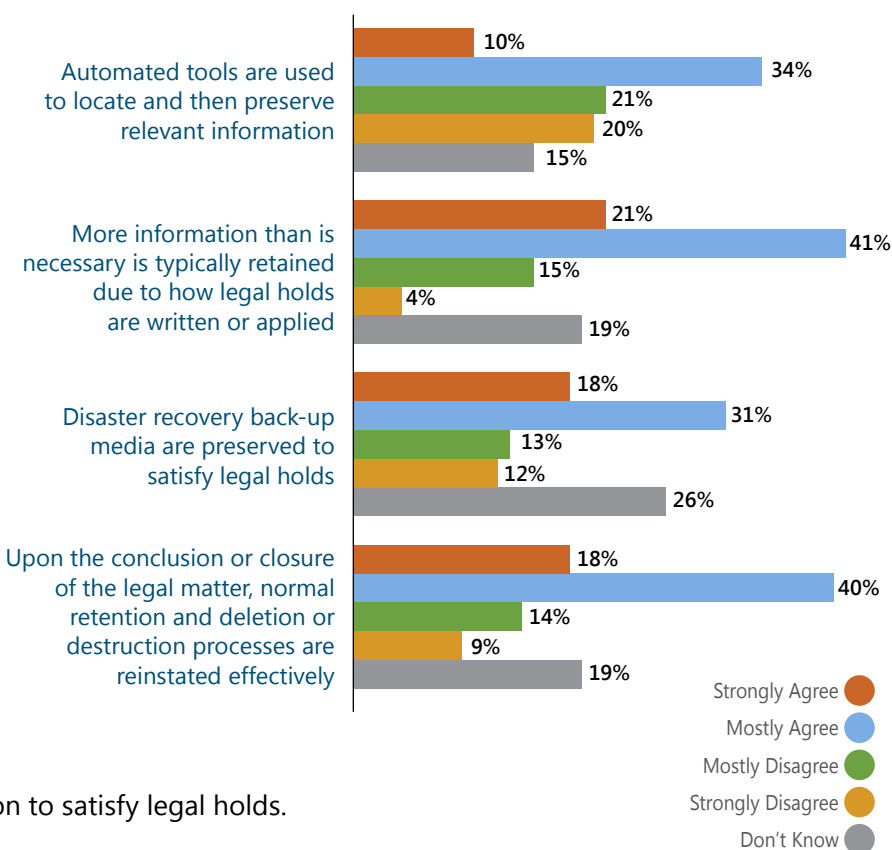
When ineffective, any one of these preservation elements can contribute to the over-retention of information.

Moreover, keeping the information related to **resolved** legal matters, beyond its stated retention time frame that applies under ordinary business conditions, is a most wasteful form of over-retention.

6 | DISPOSITION / DELETION / DESTRUCTION

As they progress in the transformation from RIM, IG programs are adopting, operationalizing over time, automated or partially-automated methods to delete eligible information (or identify physical records that are eligible for destruction), when the retention period expires, provided the information is not relevant to a legal hold (see Section 5).

Regulation, the threat of litigation and the uncertain cost of compliance place increasing value on IG practices that are effective and efficient. Automation improves both while supporting information lifecycle activities, deletion in particular. Simply stated, modern information media and locations, along with increasing information data volumes overwhelm manual processes.
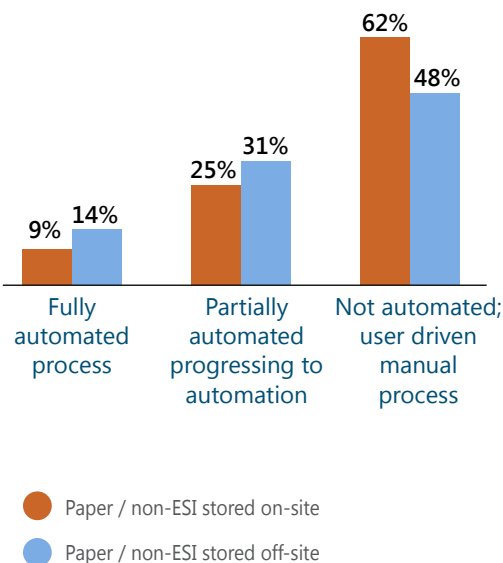
Automated Deletion Defined

- Fully automated processes are found in organizations that systematically perform consistent and repeatable deletion.

- Organizations with partially automated deletion processes and those progressing to automation have made some progress in establishing automated and system-controlled deletion.

This section of the White Paper evaluates the disposition / deletion / destruction elements of the information management lifecycle.

6.1 Is the destruction process automated for physical (paper) records identified as destruction-eligible?

Automating the disposition / deletion / destruction activities is essential to reliable and systematic end of lifecycle processes. By contrast, manual processes are reliant on individual actions, often resulting in haphazard outcomes.

Fully automated process: 9% / 14%
Partially automated progressing to automation: 25% / 31%
Not automated; user driven manual process: 62% / 48%

● Paper / non-ESI stored on-site
● Paper / non-ESI stored off-site

For paper and analog records, this question focuses on automation to support the identification of paper and analog records eligible for destruction. Given the maturity of systems designed to manage the retention of paper records stored off-site, it is surprising that 48% of respondents selected *Not Automated* (manual). Clearly, this represents an improvement opportunity.

Regardless of media, however, automating disposition is a transformative IG effort; it requires an organizational commitment, appropriate resources, and a willingness of the organization to embrace change.

6.2   Is deletion automated for eligible electronically stored information (ESI)?

Today, most information is born in diverse electronic forms, in volumes that exceed manual processing capabilities. Most organizations struggle with cleaning up and deleting ESI that is past the required retention and not needed for a legal hold. This is not surprising given the explosive growth of ESI and the tendency for employees to abandon ESI that is no longer useful.

Content analytics tools have matured and are now accepted as a defensible and practical method for applying lifecycle controls to large volumes of eligible information. Supporting the reduction in the cost and risk associated with over-retention, these tools enable organizations to classify information, separate high-value information and delete unneeded information

Survey participants were asked to declare the level of automation for their organizations' deletion of eligible ESI by type of system or repository.

Overall, responses show that eligible ESI is not regularly deleted using automated processes.

Communication and Engagement Systems

The automated deletion results for systems of communication highlight the gap between the more traditional method - email - and the more contemporary systems, collectively - social media.
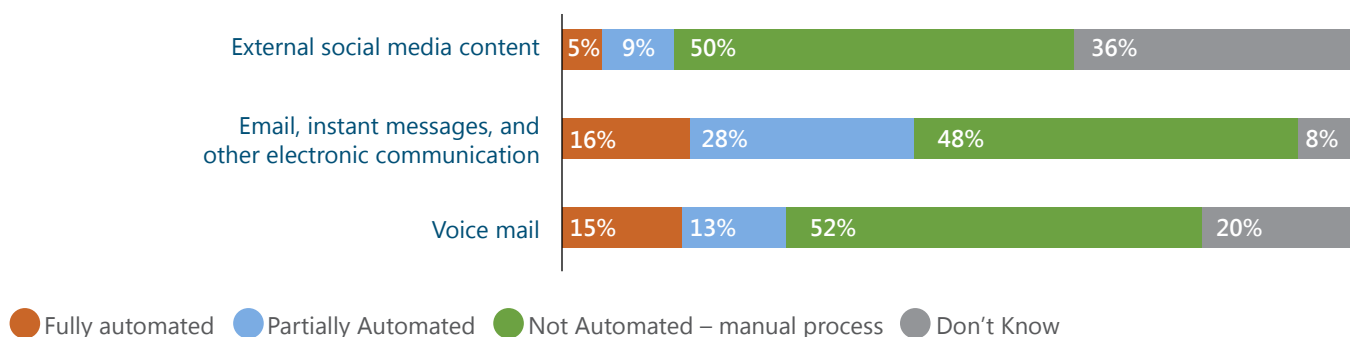
The *fully automated* deletion disparity between the two methods is as follows:

- Email - 16%

- Social media -5%

Further, approximately one-half of all survey participants indicate that deletion remains a *manual* process for all three systems of communication and engagement:

- Email – 48%

- Social media – 50%

- Voice mail – 52%

Given the maturity of email management tools, it is surprising that so many **have not** addressed automation for this important area.

Similarly, for voice mail a larger response for automation was expected, since many voice mail systems routinely delete messages, following a predefined schedule. Still, just 28% of respondents affirm the *fully* or *partially automated* deletion of voice mail.
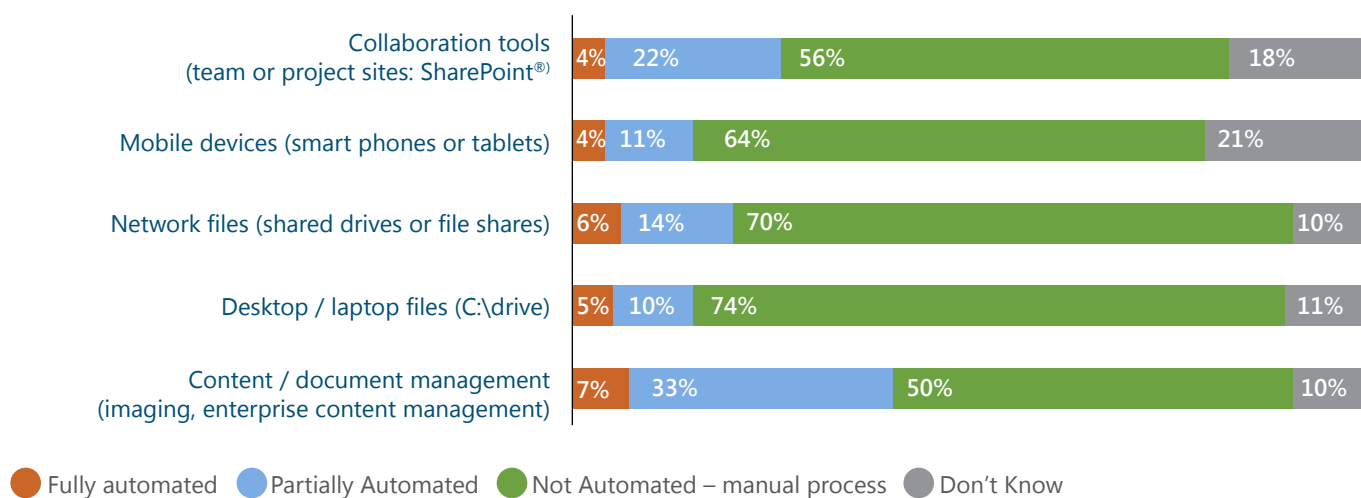
On the other hand, present-day voice mail systems do present automated deletion challenges: (a) digital voice mail systems have a large storage capacity, and (b) unified voice mail systems embed the voice mail message in an email.

The *Don't Know* response (36%) for social media content suggests an absence of IG participation in discussions related to the retention and deletion of these type of electronic communications.

Unstructured Content

Unstructured content includes word processing, spreadsheet, presentation and other similar file types generated by individual users. Unstructured content is often organized by users or groups (on network drives). Less frequently, it is organized in accordance with a pre-defined structured data model (in an imaging or structured document management system).

Email and other electronic communications are also frequently defined as unstructured content; however, it is addressed in the prior section.

	Fully automated	Partially Automated	Not Automated – manual process	Don't Know
Collaboration tools (team or project sites: SharePoint®)	4%	22%	56%	18%
Mobile devices (smart phones or tablets)	4%	11%	64%	21%
Network files (shared drives or file shares)	6%	14%	70%	10%
Desktop / laptop files (C:\drive)	5%	10%	74%	11%
Content / document management (imaging, enterprise content management)	7%	33%	50%	10%

One of the goals of content / document management solutions, historically, has been to automate the retention, preservation and disposition of information, while improving workflow.

● These survey results establish that a mere 7% of respondents indicate that their content / document management solutions, which happen to experience the highest ranking of the five unstructured content examples, have evolved to a *fully automated* disposition process.

   • By contrast; however, one-third of survey participants indicate that their content / document management solutions have *partially automated* disposition processes.

● Automated disposition results for the other four unstructured content types are similarly low. It is unlikely that any retention controls are applied, with automation processes that are so significantly *manual*.

While IG professionals may initiate and drive the efforts to automate disposition, involvement from both IT and management is a critical transformation success factor.

Disaster Recovery Media, Structured Data and Outsourced Cloud Services

In the early days of ESI, many organizations relied upon back-up media (e.g., disaster recovery tapes) as a means to retain records. This practice was recognized as impractical. It is expensive. It is very difficult to retrieve the records. It is high risk, because the entire set of back-up media is preserved and may be targeted for discovery.

Accordingly, organizations must regularly rotate the media used for disaster recovery, in accordance with ISO 16175 – 3: 2010 (E) Guidelines and functional requirements for records in business systems, in Section 3.4.4, Footnote 95, which states:

*"While this document does not cover the management of back-ups for business continuity and disaster recovery purposes, it is noted that good practice should ensure **that backups are not retained for longer than needed for business continuity purposes.**"*
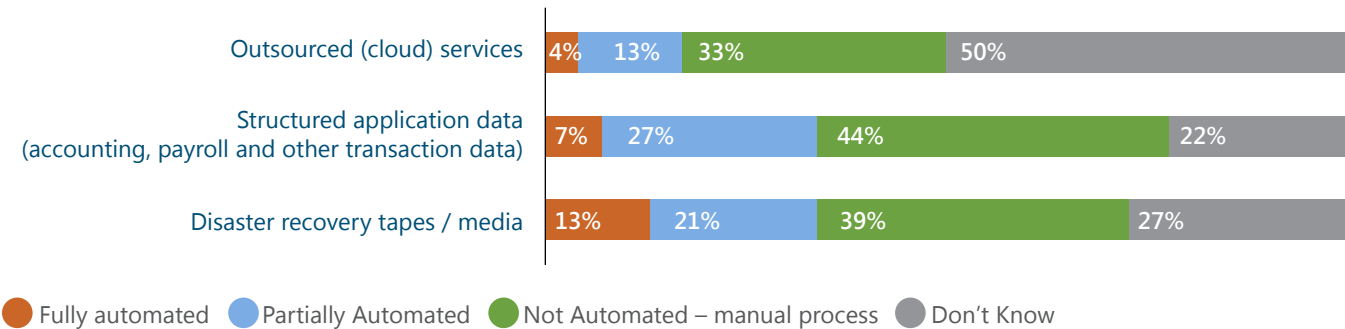
Given the fact that disaster recovery media should be routinely rotated and not retained, it is surprising that 39% of respondents say that deletion is *Manual*; 27% *Don't Know* if the rotation of back-up tapes is automated.

This high-risk situation should be addressed if past practices have created a situation where it is difficult to segregate the disaster recovery media from the archival media required to meet ongoing retention requirements:

• A day-forward policy should be developed and put into practice.

• A legacy back-up media clean-up project should then be initiated to sort the historical media and files.

• Going forward, information is retained, in compliance with the retention schedule and legal holds, and is deleted when eligible.

The survey results also demonstrate that some organizations are making modest progress with automating the deletion of structured data (7% *Fully Automated,* 27% *Partially Automated*).

Finally, outsourced (cloud) data lags far behind (4% *Fully Automated,* 13% *Partially Automated*), signaling the need for considerable improvement as information management transforms from RIM to IG.
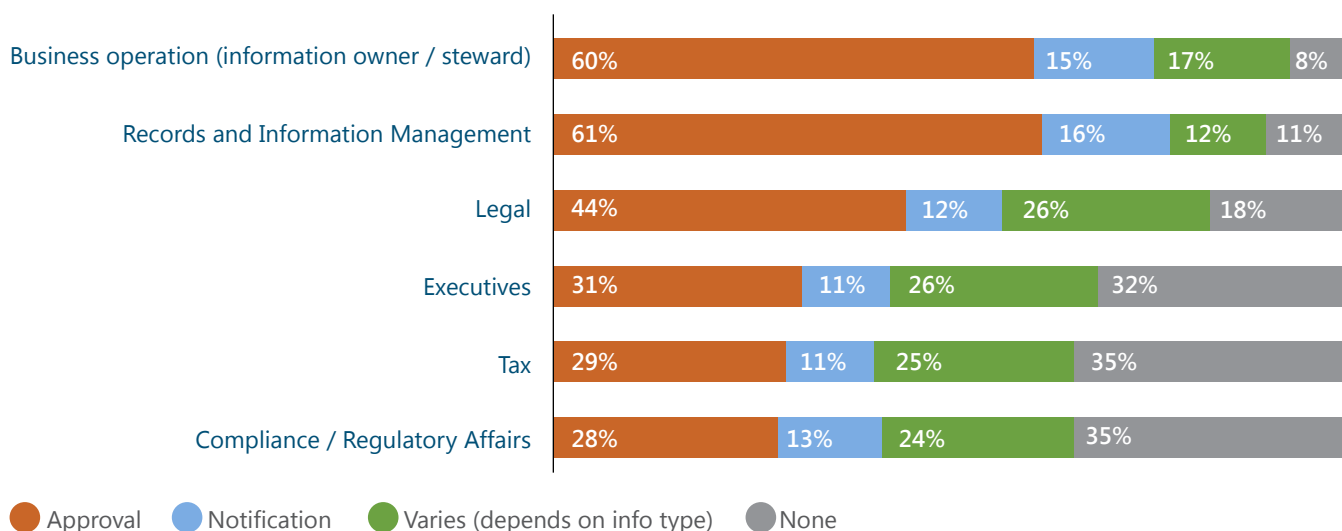
6.3 Which areas must grant approvals or receive notifications prior to deleting or destroying eligible information?

Approval processes originated when paper records, sent off-site to a third-party custodian, required advanced destruction approvals; however, applying an approval process to ESI is a cumbersome endeavor.

For this question, approval and notification associated with deletion / destruction processes are defined as:

- Approval – One or more groups (the business operations, Legal, Compliance, etc.) must provide signoff prior to deletion/destruction.

- Notification – One or more groups (the business operations, Legal, Compliance, etc.) is informed that deletion/destruction is scheduled, with no approvals requested.

When working toward effective and efficient information management, it is counter to purpose to require approvals prior to the deletion of ancillary information - it should be deleted as day to day work. Users should routinely delete ancillary email messages, drafts and working files that are no longer needed. Routine deletion activities should not require approval.

	Approval	Notification	Varies (depends on info type)	None
Business operation (information owner / steward)	60%	15%	17%	8%
Records and Information Management	61%	16%	12%	11%
Legal	44%	12%	26%	18%
Executives	31%	11%	26%	32%
Tax	29%	11%	25%	35%
Compliance / Regulatory Affairs	28%	13%	24%	35%

Striking in their similarity to the results to the same question in the 2013 survey, albeit a bit better, these survey responses identify recurrent approvers:

- Business operation (information owner or steward) – 60% (76% in 2013)

- Records and Information Management - 61% (67% in 2013)

- Legal - 44% (56% in 2013)

Conspicuous in their near-absence, however, are *notifications*.

To obtain a more consistent and routinely conducted deletion/destruction process that is not derailed by latent approvals, organizations may elect to replace approvals with notifications as part of an automated or partially-automated deletion / destruction workflow.

6.4 Do your organization's hardware and media disposal processes protect sensitive (confidential) information?

The secure destruction of information involves taking precautions, and completing disposal processes that ensure it is not recoverable. This protection is not only appropriate, it is required by numerous rules and regulations enacted to protect information defined as personal, sensitive, confidential or private. Business information that is proprietary must also be safeguarded. Information management professionals can identify with some or all of these classifications dependent upon their industry, global presence or business operation. Regardless, inadvertent disclosure of these types of information must be prevented.

For paper records, the disposal process involves pulverizing or cross-cutting.

For information stored on fixed or removable electronic media, the process involves sanitizing. Sections 4.4 and 4.5 of the Defense Security Service (DSS) Manual for the Certification and Accreditation of Classified Systems under NISPOM stipulates that *sanitizing removes information from media to render the information unrecoverable by technical means.* This DSS Manual details methods for sanitizing various media types, including:

- Degauss magnetic tape or magnetic disk

- A three-cycle process to: (1) overwrite all electronically addressable locations on the device with a pattern; (2) overwrite it again with the complement pattern; and then (3) overwrite it a third time with a random character

Over 90% of respondents strongly (71%) or mostly (20%) agree that their organizations' disposal practices for sensitive paper records render the information unrecoverable.

For removable and fixed electronic media over 20% of survey participants respond as unacquainted (*Don't Know*) with their organizations' disposal practices. This survey finding demands engagement with IG interdisciplinary colleagues, to assure this lifecycle control is in place or, if not, to establish the control.
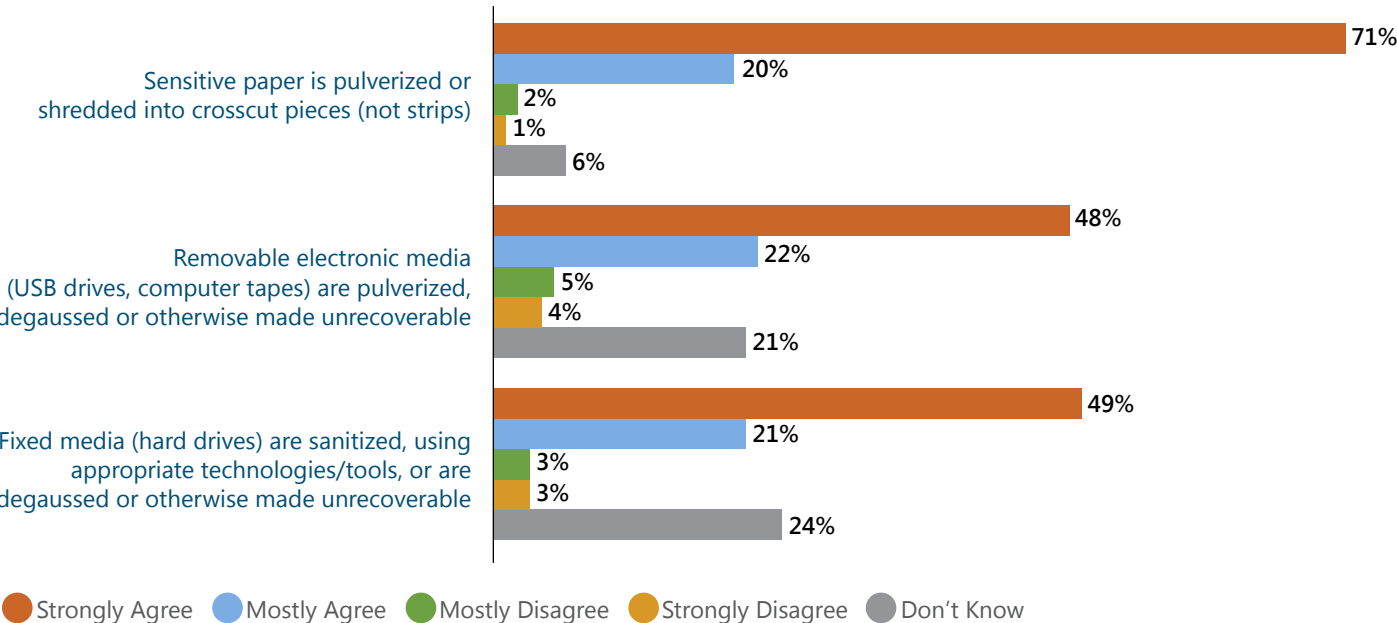
6.5   Does your organization face the following challenges to routine and efficient deletion and/or destruction of eligible information?

The routine and efficient (defensible) deletion/destruction of information, in the regular course of business, is an elusive reality for many organizations. The diversity of electronic information, its considerable volume, and the lack of systematic controls all contribute to the complexity of disposal.

	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There are no automated tools to delete / destroy eligible information	40%	38%	15%	7%
Cannot get users to "let go" of the information under their control	23%	45%	26%	6%
Eligible information cannot be readily separated from information that must still be retained, or is needed for legal holds	20%	38%	31%	11%
Cannot obtain required approval(s) to delete / destroy eligible information	13%	27%	41%	19%
It is too hard to match information to the retention schedule	9%	26%	45%	20%
There is apprehension that the retention period on the retention schedule is incorrect	10%	19%	43%	28%
Information Technology cannot or will not delete the information when asked	9%	22%	41%	28%

● Strongly Agree   ● Mostly Agree   ● Mostly Disagree   ● Strongly Disagree

This survey question asks participants to identify and assess the challenges to defensible deletion in their organizations. As ranked by respondents, the most prevalent of the obstacles can be characterized as (a) the absence of technology, (b) resistance to change or (c) information volume. Specifically:

- Seventy-eight percent (78%) of respondents strongly (40%) and mostly (38%) agree that the biggest challenge to the deletion of eligible information is *no automated tools*.

- Change management challenges also exist - 68% of survey participants strongly (23%) and mostly (45%) agree that users will not *let go of their information*.

- Information volume contributes to the *inability to separate information eligible for deletion from that which must be retained*. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents strongly and mostly agree that this creates an obstacle to defensible deletion in their organizations.

This question mirrors results highlighted throughout this White Paper. Organizations struggle to automate aspects of information management; information volume overwhelms the transformation from RIM to IG; and resistance to change persists as a transformation obstacle.
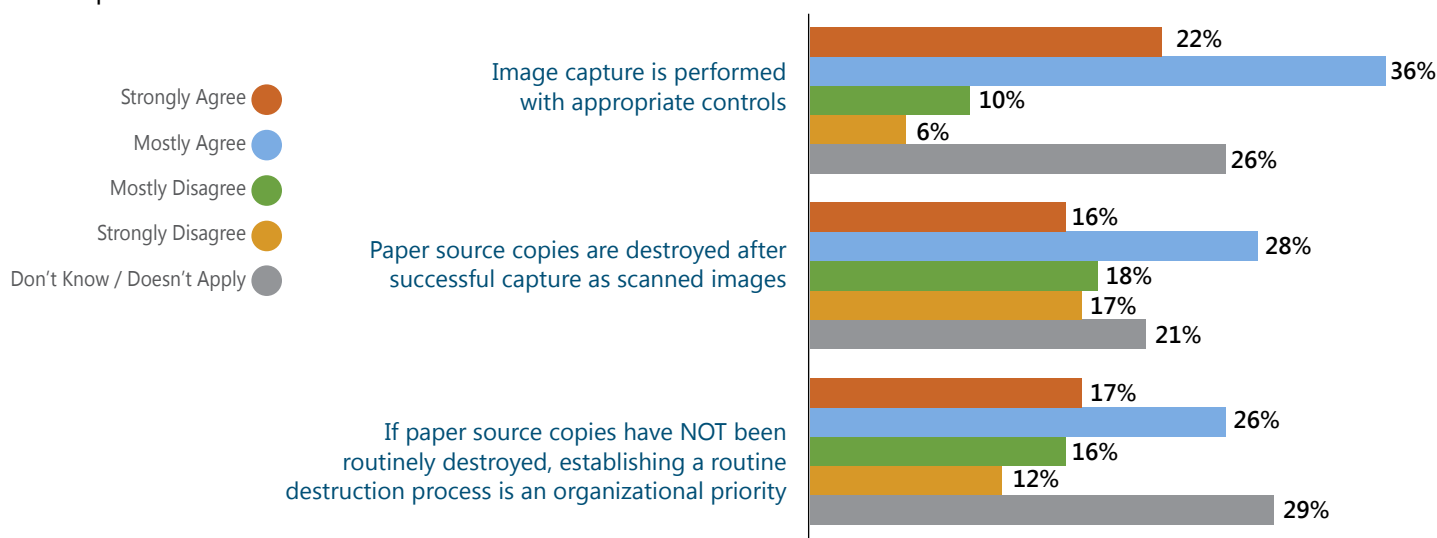
7 | IMAGING

7.1   Is your organization's imaging operation efficient and effective?

Imaging is the process by which physical documents are converted from a human-readable format to a computer-readable digital file. Since the early 1990s, organizations have deployed document imaging systems to capture, store and reprint digital replicas of documents.

Imaging can be an important RIM to IG transformation tool. In some organizations, it supports moving from paper to ESI; in others it is a means by which unstructured information is captured.

This question assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of the imaging process by examining certain of its component activities.

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of survey participants strongly (22%) and mostly (36%) agree that image capture is performed with appropriate controls, which include:

- Maintaining index detail

- Imaging such that the scan is a near duplicate of the original

- Applying quality assurance throughout the imaging processes

To reduce the retention of duplicates, paper source copies should be destroyed after the successful capture of the scanned image.

- Just 44% of respondents strongly (16%) and mostly (28%) agree that the paper is destroyed after the scanning is deemed successful.

- It is concerning that over one-third (35%) of survey participants report that both the paper and the digital images are maintained.

Optimistically, a combined 43% of respondents agree that if paper source copies have NOT been routinely destroyed, establishing a routine destruction process is an *organizational priority*.

8 | PROGRAM MATURITY

8.1 Considering ARMA International's Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles® how would you rate the maturity of your organization's RIM / IG program?

ARMA International's Maturity Model for Information Governance is based on the Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles® (The Principles). The Model is based on ARMA International's eight Principles, as well as a foundation of standards, best practices, and legal/regulatory requirements.

The Maturity Model goes beyond a statement of principles by characterizing levels of recordkeeping programs.

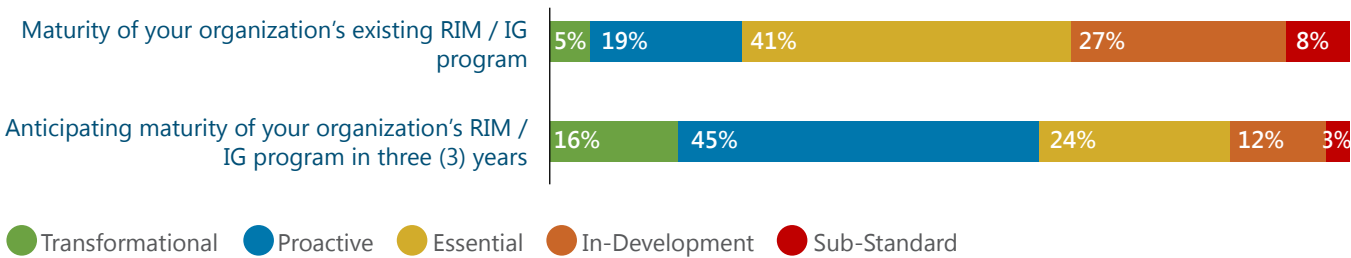|	
LEVEL 1 **Sub-standard**	Recordkeeping concerns are either not addressed at all, or are addressed in a very ad hoc manner. Organizations should be concerned that their programs will not meet legal or regulatory scrutiny.
LEVEL 2 **In Development**	There is a developing recognition that recordkeeping has an impact on the organization, and that the organization may benefit from a more defined information governance program. However, in Level 2, the organization is still vulnerable to legal or regulatory scrutiny since practices are ill-defined and still largely ad hoc in nature.
LEVEL 3 **Essential**	Essential or minimum requirements are being addressed in order to meet the organization's legal and regulatory requirements. Level 3 is characterized by defined policies and procedures, and more specific decisions taken to improve recordkeeping. However, organizations that identify primarily with Level 3 descriptions may still be missing significant opportunities for streamlining business and controlling costs.
LEVEL 4 **Proactive**	Information governance program improvements are being initiated throughout the organization's business operations. Information governance issues and considerations are integrated into business decisions on a routine basis, and the organization easily meets its legal and regulatory requirements. Organizations that identify primarily with these descriptions should begin to consider the business benefits of information availability in transforming their organizations globally.
LEVEL 5 **Transformational**	Information governance is integrated into its overall corporate infrastructure and business processes to such an extent that compliance with the program requirements is routine. These organizations have recognized that effective information governance plays a critical role in cost containment, competitive advantage, and client service.

Using The Principles to perform the assessment, the final survey question asks participants to evaluate the maturity of their organization's current information management program, and then anticipate its maturity in three years.

Based on the overall survey responses, significant information management program improvements are on the horizon. In the next three years:

- More than twice as many survey participants expect their organization to achieve Proactive maturity (45%) than ranked their organization as *Proactive* today (19%).

- Further, three times as many respondents expect to achieve *Transformational* maturity (16%) than ranked the current state of their organization (5%).

The contrasting (*Sub-Standard*) responses from the survey participants are also instructive.

- Just 8% of survey participants rank their organization's information management program as *Sub-Standard* today; only 3% expect their organization will be at that maturity level in three years.

Maturity of your organization's existing RIM / IG program	5%	19%	41%	27%	8%
Anticipating maturity of your organization's RIM / IG program in three (3) years	16%	45%	24%	12%	3%

● Transformational ● Proactive ● Essential ● In-Development ● Sub-Standard

These results suggest a continued focus on information governance improvements and optimistic outlooks, despite the challenges faced.

9 | DEMOGRAPHICS

The following tables highlight responses to demographic questions, including those used to filter the responses by type and size of organization.

9.1 Which category best describes your organization's primary industry?

Education	**8%**
Energy: Oil, Gas, Mining	**6%**
Financial Services and Banking	**5%**
Government: Federal, National	**7%**
Government: State, Province, Territory, Local	**25%**
Healthcare	**3%**
Insurance	**4%**
Life Sciences: Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology, Medical Devices	**2%**
Manufacturing	**4%**
Professional Services: Law Firms and Legal Services	**7%**
Professional Services: Public Accounting and Consulting	**4%**
Retail, Wholesale, Distribution	**2%**
Technology, Communications, Media	**2%**
Utilities	**8%**
Not for profit	**4%**
Other	**9%**

9.2 What range best represents the total number of employees in your organization?

Less than 1,000 employees	**42%**	Small 66%
1,001 - 4,999 employees	**24%**	
5,000 - 9,999 employees	**10%**	Medium 21%
10,000 - 24,999 employees	**11%**	
25,000 - 99,999 employees	**9%**	Large 13%
100,000 employees and over	**4%**	

9.3 What country/region of your organization's operations will these survey answers represent?

Africa	**6%**
Asia-Pacific	**11%**
Canada	**26%**
Europe	**11%**
Latin America - Caribbean	**8%**
Middle East	**5%**
United States	**74%**

9.4 Are you a member of ARMA International?

Yes, I am a member	**70%**
No, I am not a member	**30%**

Cohasset Associates

Cohasset Associates, Inc. (www.cohasset.com) is one of the nation's foremost management consulting firms specializing in records management and information governance. Spanning 40 years and serving both domestic and international clients, Cohasset provides award-winning professional services in:

Management Consulting: Working with multi-national clients, Cohasset develops information governance (IG) strategies and engages in IG implementation activities to achieve business goals, improve compliance and mitigate risk. Cohasset is proud of its reputation for attaining exceptional results.

Thought-Leadership: Cohasset regularly publishes thought leadershipwhite papers and surveys to promote continuous improvement in the lifecycle management of information.

Legal Research: Cohasset is nationally respected for its direction on records and information management legal issues – from retention schedules to compliance with regulatory requirements associated with the use of electronic or digital storage media.

FOR DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS, COHASSET:

- Formulates information governance implementation strategies

- Develops policies and standards for records management and information governance

- Creates clear and streamlined retention schedules

- Prepares training and communications for executives, the RIM network and all employees

- Leverages content analytics to improve lifecycle controls, enabling clients to classify information, separate high-value information and delete unneeded information

- Designs and assists with the implementation of information lifecycle practices that avoid the cost and risk associated with over-retention

- Defines technical and functional requirements and assists with the deployment of enterprise content management and collaboration tools

CO-SPONSOR

ARMA International (www.arma.org) is a not-for-profit professional association and the authority on governing information as a strategic asset. The association was established in 1955. Its approximately 27,000+ members include information managers, information governance professionals, archivists, corporate librarians, imaging specialists, legal professionals, IT managers, consultants, and educators, all of whom work in a wide variety of industries, including government, legal, healthcare, financial services, and petroleum in the United States, Canada, and more than 30 other countries around the globe.

UNDERWRITTEN IN PART BY:

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Cohasset Associates, Inc. proudly presents the annual National Conference on Managing Electronic Records (www.MERconference.com). The MER Conference addresses the issues and challenges of managing electronic records from three perspectives: legal, technical, and operational. Registrants regularly describe the MER as "a truly remarkable learning experience".