

Functional Classification for RIM

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The RIM Classification Challenge

- Why are RIM Classifications/File Plans not widely used (if at all)?
- What is the messy reality of Classification in The Real World
- How can we build more user-friendly and effective classification schemas?

Taxonomy is

- A form or subset of a Classification Schema
 - Groups related things
- Semantic
 - Relationship of terms - a vocabulary
 - Concepts must be known and meaningful to users
- A knowledge map
 - Users grasp and anticipate the structure
 - Users learn from it
- Is built specifically for its purpose
 - Example of Home Depot v. Wine.com

Functional Classification

- Established in ISO 15489 and DIRKS
- DIRKS: Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems
 - Systems development cycle
 - Designed to document the records creation and use context, and
 - Leads to the creation of classification for filing of records according to business activity
- Benefits for RIM:
 - Stability of FUNCTIONS
 - Connects activity to information flows
 - Provides context beyond the single transaction
 - Allows for application of retention at point of records creation, not at 'retirement'
 - Reduces the effort in the development, revision and management over time of retention schedules

Classification Primer

- A Classification is a system made up of parts
 - The 'external' structure: the appearance of organization to the user
 - The 'internal' structure: the relationship of items with the structure; the implicit rule of arrangement
- Very small classifications = single taxonomies
 - Simple Hierarchies that are Trees and Lists without rules
- Large / complex classifications
 - Consist of multiple taxonomies working together

Advanced Taxonomy forms

- Tagging - users add their own tags (terms) to items
- 'Taskonomies' - Specific vocabularies developed and used by small, focused groups to achieve tasks
- 'Folksonomies' - akin to tagging - vocabulary made up that is specific to a certain user group
- Facets - akin to metadata - a single 'view' of a set of data or concepts
 - Rather than a fixed taxonomy of parent-child, it presents chance other ways of seeing a relationship

RIM Classification 'Facets'

- Business Process(Function, Activity)
- Subject Matter
- Case files identifier
- People and Organizations
- Geography/Location
- Time-frames or Periods (FY, CY)
- Record and document types
- Retention Triggers

The Messy Reality

- It's a jungle out there, or a Rabbit Farm
 - People create and copy electronic records at will
 - They have learned that
 - Replication is Good
 - There is always another place to put a file if they can't find the right place
 - They often follow a 'Prototype' approach
 - They classify according to known example document types
- RIMs are seldom involved in designing classification
 - And if they are, their systems are met with confusion and indifference

Developing Effective Functional Classification - 1

- Classification schemas are always a mix of taxonomy types: Lists, Trees -> Hierarchies
- Typical RIM approach: Top Down
 - 1. Major corporate Functions
 - 2. Major Activities for each Function
 - 3. Sub-Activities for each Activity
- More effective: Middle Down & UP:
 - Start with Activities in an Organizational Unit
 - Document current arrangements and practices as a starting point
 - Work within unit and across units to rationalize terminology, structure
 - Use common activities as the 'bridging' point to establish group-/ business-wide functional arrangement

Developing Effective Classification - 2

- Draw process maps: See Handout
- For each Activity, identify
 - What records are involved
 - Who is involved and what their roles are in the process
 - 'Sources' for each activity (what is the legal or policy basis?)
- What are the records series (Retention schedule rules) for each record in the Activity?
- What document types that are included in the records retention series scope?

Developing Effective Classification - 3

- Identify core metadata for the Activity and its records
 - What are the 'needs' (requirements) associated with the record
- Turn this into a matrix of records requirements
 - Deployed in advanced technology (ECM), this adds a faceted taxonomy to the typical classification
- Document the 'trigger' metadata field name in the records retention policy.
- A Functional Thesaurus
 - A 'dictionary' of business activity terms for business and RIM
 - Guide for Users to navigate and use a controlled records vocabulary
 - Using the Relatedness structure, one can link Stakeholders, Sources, Records series, Record types, etc., as Related values

SUMMARY

- Understanding and using Business Classification is the way we RIMs get to table to effect how active information assets are managed
- Functional Classification is not perfect
 - No pure system is capable of handling the various reasons and rules required to manage large classifications
 - Must be supplemented with Subject and Prototype taxonomies
 - E.g., Boards and Committees; Forms; etc.
- 'Perfect' doesn't exist - don't let it be the enemy of the Good
- 'Grow the Onion': Start with small steps, document your corporate language and its relationships

Thank You.

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