A High-level Overview of Information Governance and IGP certification

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What Is Information Governance?

There are several different definitions for information governance (IG). Based on some simple Internet research, it is interesting to note that the definition tends to depend on the industry or profession defining it. I like the Wikipedia definition the most because I think it's the most comprehensive. Wikipedia defines IG as:

> the set of multi-disciplinary structures, policies, procedures, processes and controls implemented to manage information at an enterprise level, supporting an organization's immediate and future regulatory, legal, risk, environmental and operational requirements. Information governance should determine the balance point between two potentially divergent organizational goals: extracting value from information and reducing the potential risk of information.

Overall, when IG is the topic of discussion, it is about taking a holistic approach to managing an organization's records and information. Not only that, special consideration is given to all of the players (i.e., stakeholders) that are involved or at least have a vested interest.

Who Are IG Stakeholders and What Roles Do They Play?

Records Management – Since records management is about managing records from the time they are created all the way through their eventual disposition, we can understand why some people say that records management is the foundation for IG. It is IG's driving force, and in some organizations, the records management division, program, or unit will be responsible for its implementation throughout the organization.

Information Technology (IT) – IT plays a very important role. A lot of records and information are created and stored electronically for its entire lifecycle. IT definitely has to be involved in IG efforts because its staff members are the experts in maintaining the systems, databases, and other locations where the electronic records and information reside. Records and information cannot be managed if it can't be maintained.

Legal – The legal department also plays a critical role. Theoretically, the organizations' lawyers will be able to help identify laws that pertain to records and information. For example, some states have laws that govern how long (the retention period) certain types of records are to be retained. Our friends in legal may be able to help with those types of inquiries in an IG program.

Privacy/Security – The privacy and security group should be able to help ensure that an IG program includes protecting the confidentiality of records and information. Because of the role this group plays, the privacy and security group might be a part of IT or legal. The main goal here is to ensure information like trade secrets, personally identifiable

information, and protected health information is secure and protected against unauthorized access or disclosure.

Audit/Risk Management – There could be both internal and/or external audits and risk management considerations to account for in an IG. Internal audits and risks management will ensure internal policies and procedures are adhered to, while external audits and risk management may have more to do with how the organization complies with regulations and whether external auditors are able to access the information they ask to see for their audits.

The Organization Itself – It's important in an IG program to know what the organizational needs are. Knowing what the business operations are – theoretically what the organization is doing to meet its vision and mission – is vitally important. To that end, the organizations' policies and procedures will most likely touch on every aspect of an IG program.

What Is the Key to IG Success?

Communication, communication, communication!!! If IG is going to be implemented and maintained successfully, there has to be clear communication and good working relationships among all stakeholders. We've all probably heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." Well, when it comes to successful IG, it literally takes everyone in the organization to communicate for all to understand the direction of the organization and the IG program and to be driving toward the same goal.

What Is the IGP Certification?

The IGP Governance Board offers an Information Governance Professional (IGP) certification for those interested in demonstrating that they have honed their IG knowledge and skills. The test has 140 multiple choice questions, and candidates have 2 hours and 45 minutes to complete the exam. See the IGP Candidate Handbook for more details.

ARMA International administers the IGP certification program.

Where Can I Find More Information on IG Certifications?

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