


Chapter 10

Implementing Information Governance in Academic Libraries: An Exploration of Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on opportunities to implement an information governance framework within an academic library. Due to their mission and breadth of information management activities, academic libraries face numerous challenges in organizing and preserving information and records, and governing data. Implementing information governance strategies, specifically in the areas of records and information management, metadata creation, institutional repositories, digital preservation, and data management will result in well-informed and collaborative policies which protect the library as well as the institution. Developing this skill set within the library requires a culture shift towards transparency, collaboration, and accountability. Additionally, library and information science curricula should reflect the current demands of the academic library landscape and expand course offerings to build information governance competencies.

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the Information Governance (IG) framework and its potential for implementation in academic libraries. IG refers to the activities and practices developed to control information use (MacLennan, 2014). More specifically, IG consists of the “standards, processes, roles, and metrics that hold organizations and individuals accountable to create, organize, secure, maintain, use, and dispose of information in ways that align with and contribute to the organization’s goals” (ARMA, 2014). While not traditionally used in the library setting, IG practices permeate information work, and the rationale for applying these practices in an academic library environment is strong. Academic libraries are libraries attached to a higher education institution with a common mission to support the curriculum and research of the institution. Because of their mission and scope, they face numerous challenges in organizing and preserving information, governing data, and ensuring privacy while meeting accreditation and other higher education data reporting requirements. This chapter aims to highlight the potential role of IG in addressing these challenges while identifying opportunities for academic libraries to enhance their information management practices.

Enhancing information practices within an academic library will be a multidisciplinary initiative requiring the active participation of a broad cross-section of functional groups and stakeholders. Similarly, implementing IG in an academic library would involve multiple departments, including digital services, assessment, archives, and data management. Implementing IG opens the door to increased collaborations with departments external to the library— information technology systems, institutional research/data management, general counsel, and sponsored research. The relevant research illustrates that involving multiple academic departments in IG compliance will result in well-informed policies which protect the library and the institution. The policies may reflect how the institution complies with regulations and laws, meets ethical standards when managing information, addresses confidential information, and organizes assets.

An academic library interested in an IG framework may find this chapter helpful, as literature and case studies on implementing IG specifically in academic libraries are lacking. The following suggestions in this chapter may lead to policies that outline the needs of the larger institution. While each area within the library may benefit from an IG implementation, starting with one department or process may better suit your library. Eventual integration into your library’s strategic plan may solidify efforts and build consensus behind this change in operations. This chapter will discuss opportunities for IG implementation within the library areas of records and information management, including metadata creation, records maintenance in repositories, and final preservation; data governance; and the need for additional education and training for library and information science students and those currently employed in academic libraries.

BACKGROUND

An IG framework is the overarching umbrella strategy for organizational information by establishing the processes, capabilities, structures, and infrastructure to enable information to be a useful asset and reduced liability to an organization. Creating such a framework can be a big undertaking for an academic library of any size, but libraries can learn from organizations who have advanced information governance experience and trusted models. The National Archives of Australia (NAA), for instance, is a leader in

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