

How important is Digital Continuity for our organisations? As records, documents and information assets become digital, it is important to ensure that they are complete, available and useable for our business needs into the future. This is where Digital Continuity comes in. In simple terms, Digital Continuity facilitates the use of digital information in the way it is needed, for as long as needed. Can we find our information, open it when we need it, work with it, and trust its authenticity and integrity?

Organisational, business and technological change has an impact on continued access to records and information with ongoing importance. With the majority of records now created, communicated and/or maintained by computer technology the impact of change has increased strongly. Digital Transition is gaining pace across our organisations, with movement towards entirely digital work processes, including the use of digital approvals and authorisations such as digital signatures. Digital Transition, though, can bring challenges like systems interoperability (can our systems communicate with each other?) and systems and services integration, raising complexities for the transfer and usability of information when systems change.

With movements like the drive to adopt eGovernment, Digital Continuity management has become a necessary consideration for information management professionals in the government sector in particular. Being able to manage Digital Continuity means being able to understand the frameworks, principles, processes, and technologies behind information systems change.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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DIGITAL SYSTEMS

Successful digital information management systems will have the following qualities:




-  Automation of process
-  Information managed by users
-  Apparent ease of use

Understanding ease of use for the end user can make or break the adoption of fully digital work and business processes across an organisation and is the last but not least of these qualities.

INTEGRATION AND EASE OF USE

Systems that are easy to use do not require the user to know what is going on in the background. A successfully integrated system is likely to have a single interface – it will look and feel like a single system regardless of any complexity behind it.

Technologies behind the single interface may be:

-  Search capabilities across Line of Business Systems
-  Staging tables to allow for data interchange
-  Third-party systems linked to internal systems

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TOOLS FOR DIGITAL CONTINUITY

Metadata and Standards are two of the prominent tools we can use to enable Digital Continuity within our organisations.

For government organisations, the Australian Government Recordkeeping Metadata Standard (AGRkMS) Version 2.2 is used to describe ‘information about records and the context in which they are captured and used in Australian Government Agencies’ (NAA, 2019).

For private organisations, Standards AS ISO 15489.1: 2017 Records management and AS ISO 23081.3: 2012 Managing metadata for records are important tools which can assist us to adequately manage our records, documents, and information over time by providing *minimum data sets* for our information.

SUMMARY

Digital Continuity is an important consideration for organisations today. As records and information continue to transition to digital formats, information professionals must decide how to manage information systems and processes, and their organisations’ end user experience. The use and application of adequate tools in the form of Standards will also support the need to ensure that valuable information continues over time.

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