

2013 | 2014 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE BENCHMARKING SURVEY FOR THE U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT



A Call to Modernize Information Governance *in the U.S. Federal Government*

Cohasset Associates is pleased to complement its recently published, eighth biennial survey white paper with this study, borne of an analysis of the broader survey outcomes. The impetus for this study was driven by Iron Mountain and its desire to identify drivers and differences associated with practices in selected organizations. This white paper explicitly addresses *Federal Governments*, from a global perspective, contrasting its survey results to the overall survey results, which span many types of organizations. This white paper provides authoritative, up-to-date benchmarking metrics on information lifecycle practices in *Federal Governments*. You will find:

- Incisive and comprehensive measures of the current state of information governance practices.
- Details on successes, obstacles and opportunities for more effective information lifecycle management.
- Insightful actions that will modernize information governance to meet today's challenges.

Survey results provide evidence that:

1. Overall, IG programs are more prevalent, better-designed, and inclusive of electronically stored information (ESI). However, many essential implementation elements are *not* being addressed.
2. Effective IG is increasingly recognized as an imperative for corporate compliance and risk mitigation. Coordination and integration is on the rise.
3. While improvements are reported in the management of some ESI, information governance must modernize or forever be losing in a game of *catch-up*.
4. Legal Hold processes are more commonplace, but over-preservation is an immense challenge to the implementation of effective information lifecycle controls, thereby contributing to future risk and complexity.

Co-Sponsors:



Underwritten in part by:



Survey Overview and Research Methodology

SURVEY OVERVIEW

Modern Records and Information Management (RIM) programs are evolving through formal relationships with information governance (IG) disciplines. This in-depth study of the state of RIM and IG specifically pertains to *Federal Governments* – identifying program and discipline strengths and opportunities.

With the knowledge gained from these survey results, you can:

- Assess the state of your organization's records and information management programs, as well its broader disciplines of information governance
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses, and measure your progress against the outcomes identified by both your peers and by those from *All Organizations* participating in the survey
- Develop communications that highlight your program's accomplishments and its opportunities for improvement
- Formulate an action plan for modernizing your program, by leveraging the recommended actions presented in the survey highlights

THANKS TO:

Cohasset Associates wishes to express its appreciation to Iron Mountain for identifying the need for these specific organizational measures and for its financial support.

Gratitude also is extended to the over 1,400 participants, completing this year's survey and to ARMA International and AIIM for co-sponsoring the survey.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using a web-based survey tool. Over 1,400 survey responses were received between November 2013 and February 2014. The 2013 | 2014 biennial white paper reflects the initial 1,300 survey responses. The metrics in this white paper are based on the over 100 responses from *Federal Governments* survey participants spanning the globe, as a subset of over 1,400 total responses received. Invitees include:

- ARMA International members
- AIIM members
- Recent attendees of Cohasset Associates' Managing Electronic Records (MER) Conference
- Iron Mountain customers
- Records Management LISTSERV members

©2014 Cohasset Associates, Inc.
www.cohasset.com
7825 Washington Ave. S., Suite 500
Minneapolis, MN 55439

This White Paper and the survey information contained in it are copyrighted and are the sole property of Cohasset Associates, Inc. References to the information and text of this White Paper are welcomed, provided such references have appropriate attributions and citations. Permission is granted for reproduction so long as the contents are not edited and the integrity of the document is maintained.
cover photo: © Daniel Thornberg | Dreamstime.com

Authors

CAROL STAINBROOK is the Executive Director of Cohasset Associates' consulting practice – overseeing the development of practical records management and information governance solutions. With over 20 years of experience consulting on information lifecycle governance, Ms. Stainbrook possesses a comprehensive understanding of the legal, compliance, and business implications of managing information. Several of her clients include winners of ARMA International's Cobalt Award – which annually recognized one company for outstanding excellence in records and information management. Ms. Stainbrook is widely known for her informative educational presentations, as well as her insightful thought leadership. Ms. Stainbrook led the research, analysis and writing of the Cohasset Associates | ARMA International | AIIM Information Governance Benchmarking Survey.

MARCY ZWEERINK, PhD. is a Principal Consultant with Cohasset Associates where, for the last decade, she has focused on developing practical records management strategies and governance to achieve business goals. Her career with Cohasset follows 23-years with a major pharmaceutical company where she was responsible for information governance – the policies, programs, and underlying technologies. Dr. Zweerink leads Cohasset's Assured Records Management practice – a pioneering, structured methodology for creating awareness and alignment so organizations can deliver actionable electronic records management. Dr. Zweerink is also a noted speaker on cutting edge information governance issues/topics and has authored numerous scientific publications.

KAREN S. KNIGHT is a Senior Consultant with Cohasset Associates. Ms. Knight has been in Corporate Compliance for the past 20 years and first assumed responsibility for corporate Records and Information Management programs in 1999, working in both the domestic and global arenas. She has led the development and implementation of RIM and Legal Hold programs, which have included governance policies, standards, training and retention schedules. Recognizing the legal risks of managing information, Ms. Knight has ensured coordination between the records management and information governance disciplines. Her additional governance responsibilities have included privacy, social media and data breach prevention.

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Survey Overview and Research Methodology.....	2
Authors	3
Table of Contents.....	4
Survey Highlights	5
Survey Results	12
1 RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (RIM) PROGRAM	12
1.1 Does your organization have a RIM program?	12
1.2 Where does the enterprise (or central) RIM department/group report within your organization?	13
1.3 How many full-time equivalents are in your organization's enterprise (central) RIM department/group?	13
2 BUSINESS COMMITMENT	14
2.1 Are the following groups actively engaged and supportive of RIM?	14
2.2 How frequently is RIM training completed?	16
2.3 How mature are the following information governance components in your organization?.....	16
3 RETENTION SCHEDULE.....	19
3.1 Does your organization have a retention schedule?.....	19
3.2 Is your organization's retention schedule effective?	19
3.3 How many unique categories (e.g., record series, record titles, category codes) are on your organization's retention schedule?	20
3.4 Would your organization benefit from the following improvements to its retention schedule?	21
4 DELETION/DESTRUCTION	22
4.1 Is the identification of paper records (e.g., boxes stored off-site, file stored on-site, etc.) that are eligible for destruction automated?	22
4.2 Is the deletion of eligible ESI automated?	23
4.3 Do your organization's hardware and media disposal processes protect sensitive (e.g., confidential) information?	26
4.4 Overall, are improvements to the deletion processes for ESI a priority for your organization?	27
5 LEGAL HOLDS.....	28
5.1 Does your organization have a legal hold process?	28
5.2 Is your organization's legal hold process efficient and effective?	28
6 RIM PROGRAM MATURITY	30
6.1 Considering ARMA International's Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles® how would you rate the maturity of your organization's RIM program?	30
7 DEMOGRAPHICS.....	32
Sponsors	33

Survey Highlights

These Survey Highlights summarize the overall results, recommending actions for modernizing information governance. The four survey highlights and their respective implementation actions are detailed in this section, along with key benchmarking data from the survey. Respond to information governance opportunities by using this section to formulate *Federal Governments*-specific internal action plans and to develop communications highlighting your program's strengths and opportunities.

Survey Highlights	Recommended Actions
1 Overall, IG programs are more prevalent, better-designed, and inclusive of ESI. However, many essential implementation elements are <i>not</i> being addressed.	Compare the maturity of foundational IG program components to modern practices and create a plan to address program gaps Define an overarching IG implementation strategy that aligns implementation outcomes to business priorities Commit to ongoing communication, training and change management for all executives and employees Use meaningful metrics to monitor, report and improve implementation results
2 Effective IG is increasingly recognized as an imperative for corporate compliance and risk mitigation. Coordination and integration is on the rise.	Align the cross-functional IG steering committee with risk management, compliance and other internal governance practices, and engage these executives in the IG implementation strategy Leverage compliance and risk management relationships and processes
3 While improvements are reported in the management of some ESI, information governance must modernize or forever be losing in a game of <i>catch-up</i> .	Refine the implementation strategy to modernize the approach to lifecycle controls for ESI Incorporate IG with application/system development and decommissioning Apply IG practices to disaster recovery media Define IG practices for newer storage locations and information types Leverage content analytics tools for management, retention and deletion of ESI
4 Legal Hold processes are more commonplace, but over-preservation is an immense challenge to the implementation of effective information lifecycle controls, thereby contributing to future risk and complexity.	Coordinate with Legal to terminate legal holds when matters are resolved Work with Legal, Information Technology and the business areas to improve the precision of preservation actions

1

Overall, IG programs are more prevalent, better-designed, and inclusive of ESI. However, many essential implementation elements are *not* being addressed.

Defensible records and information management practices are founded on clear and consistent policies, retention rules, and training that result in systematic, repeatable and measurable implementation outcomes. Modern IG programs have adjusted their approach to address the realities of managing large volumes of electronically stored information (ESI).

Survey results uphold:

- Ninety-one percent (91%) of survey participants who identify with *Federal Governments* report the existence of a records and information management program.
- Fifty-one percent (51%) of *Federal Governments* survey respondents affirm that the development of a comprehensive strategy to guide future RIM direction is underway. Only 11% report a mature strategy.
- Just 6% of *Federal Governments* survey participants report a mature use of metrics to guide RIM program assessment and improvement.

Survey participants report continued barriers to implementation. **Revitalize your organization's program by taking the following actions.**

Compare the maturity of foundational IG program components to modern practices and create a plan to address program gaps

- ☒ Perform a thorough current state assessment of both the policy-level requirements and the implementation results – be reasonable – be comprehensive (include all information and the full lifecycle) – differentiate between high-value information and ancillary (lower value) information.
- ☒ Use this comprehensive and candid current state assessment to identify strengths and recognize improvement opportunities.
- ☒ Refresh the policy, strengthen alliances with other governance programs, streamline and simplify the retention schedule, and in all cases, expand the program to address all information.

Define an overarching IG implementation strategy that aligns implementation outcomes to business priorities

- ☒ Align the IG implementation strategy explicitly to support the organization's goals and priorities, including activities that provide both risk mitigation and business benefit.
- ☒ Engage cross-functional executives (particularly risk management, compliance, Information Technology and legal executives) in establishing priorities for the IG implementation strategy.

Commit to ongoing communication, training and change management for all executives and employees

- ☑ Establish regularly scheduled training for all employees, including strong emphasis on the benefits of IG to the organization.
- ☑ Target additional communications to middle management and executives, highlighting IG goals and achievements.
- ☑ Adopt a long range change management program to continuously build IG support and improve compliance.

Use meaningful metrics to monitor, report and improve implementation results

- ☑ Collect metrics on the current state of the IG program components, as well as the information types and locations targeted in the IG implementation strategy.
- ☑ Measure both direct actions (e.g., number of users trained; volume of information retained, preserved for legal holds, and deleted) and derived measures (e.g., cost savings and other benefits, such as increased awareness).
- ☑ Measure and analyze results throughout implementation.
- ☑ Report IG achievements, highlight trends, and use gaps as the impetus to revise implementation strategy, if necessary.

2 Effective IG is increasingly recognized as an imperative for corporate compliance and risk mitigation. Coordination and integration is on the rise.

The space occupied by Information Governance, and shared with Compliance, Privacy and Legal is defined by mutual purpose. This purpose – this integration – supports a harmonious, strong and interrelated whole. Information Governance (IG) is the fulcrum on which all of these disciplines tilt. Regulation, the threat of litigation and the uncertain cost of compliance, place increasing importance on effective and efficient recordkeeping and IG practices.

- With positive results nearing or exceeding 70%, survey participants who identify with *Federal Governments* affirm active engagement and support in their organizations. In addition to their colleagues in legal (68%) and in compliance/regulatory affairs (77%), those responsible for the information governance disciplines of privacy and data protection (82%) are also strong RIM advocates.
- Interdisciplinary affiliations with internal audit (56%) and with risk management (58%) are also reported by *Federal Governments* respondents.

While the above responses exemplify collaboration, continuous improvement efforts benefit from the relationships between RIM and all levels of management, as well as other information governance disciplines. **Revitalize your organization's program by taking the following actions.**

Align the cross-functional IG steering committee with risk management, compliance and other internal governance practices, and engage these executives in the IG implementation strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Leverage the synergy among governance disciplines, such as compliance, risk management and ethics. ☑ Model the charter and procedures of the IG Steering Committee on those used by other important committees. ☑ Align IG goals with the organization's risk management goals and governance practices. ☑ Include IG topics, when feasible, on the agenda of risk management and other governance committees.
Leverage compliance and risk management relationships and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Establish cross-functional cooperation. ☑ Gain knowledge of key compliance and risk management operations, and then tighten the integration across all information governance disciplines. ☑ Align language, streamline processes and harmonize communications to form a unified and consistent message for the organization.

3 While improvements are reported in the management of some ESI, information governance must modernize or forever be losing in a game of catch-up.

With the explosive growth of electronic information and the tendency for employees to abandon ESI that is no longer useful, it is not surprising that survey results clearly show that most organizations struggle to delete information past its required retention.

- Just 39% of *Federal Governments* survey participants affirm the automated deletion of email, instant messages, and electronic communications. This trails by twelve points the result they report for the automated deletion of paper records stored off-site (51%).
- Further, only 3% of *Federal Governments* respondents indicate that their content/document management solutions have evolved to fully automate the disposition process.

Today, most organizations face new storage locations and formats for electronic information. They rely on cloud storage or services for significant classes of information. Many are integrating new media types, such as video, podcasts, blog posts and social media into business operations. Yet, survey results show that new media and locations (e.g., cloud services, tablets, smart phones, social media, and collaborative tools) are largely overlooked by information governance. By neglecting information in these formats, records management will increasingly be marginalized.

- With just 3% fully and 15% partially automated, *Federal Governments* respondents report that outsourced (cloud) services data continues to lag far behind in automated deletion.

The ineffectiveness of current practices suggests that the profession must think anew. **Revitalize your organization's program by taking the following actions.**

Refine the IG implementation strategy to modernize the approach to lifecycle controls for ESI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Refine the IG implementation strategy to include comprehensive oversight of ESI in all its formats and locations. ☑ Promote IG value in the modern management of the organization's information.
Incorporate IG in application/system development and decommissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Make it a point to understand the tactical and long-range Information Technology objectives for systems implementation, redesign, and decommissioning and target important opportunities for RIM integration. ☑ Incorporate retention planning and information lifecycle controls into the application development process and establish equivalent checkpoints in application decommissioning.

Apply IG practices to disaster recovery media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Address this high risk situation if past practices have resulted in commingling disaster recovery and archival media. ☑ Establish a <i>day-forward</i> policy and practice that separates disaster recovery media from archival media. ☑ Initiate a legacy back-up media clean-up to sort the historical files, retaining archived information that is required and deleting information that is eligible.
Define IG practices for newer storage locations and information types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Discover how your organization is using new technologies. ☑ Establish interdepartmental teams to develop and apply reasonable, workable IG practices to these new arenas.
Leverage content analytics tools for management, retention and deletion of ESI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Establish a close partnership among Legal, IG practitioners, Information Technology and the information steward (e.g., business area). ☑ Leverage enabling technologies to analyze data, identify high-value information, and clean-up outdated information.

4 Legal Hold processes are more commonplace, but over-preservation is an immense challenge to the implementation of effective information lifecycle controls, thereby contributing to future risk and complexity.

Faced with the fear of spoliation charges during litigation, the traditional risk-averse approach to preservation was to keep everything. The danger of this approach is that routine disposal can come to a screeching halt. This shutdown results in increased costs of storage, inefficiency and litigation complexities.

- It is encouraging that 73% of *Federal Governments* survey participants report that their organization has a legal hold process.
- On the other hand, 67% of *Federal Governments* respondents strongly and mostly agree that over-preservation of information occurs due to how legal holds are written or applied.
- Further, just 54% of *Federal Governments* survey participants confirm that legal holds are regularly and effectively terminated.

Effective preservation of information, to satisfy legal discovery obligations in the United States, is essential, but must balance all risks. **Revitalize your organization's legal hold processes by taking the following actions.**

Coordinate with Legal to terminate legal holds when matters are resolved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coordinate with Legal to improve legal hold termination processes. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lead the effort to define the business process for reinstating retention and deletion/destruction activities for terminated legal holds.
Work with Legal, Information Technology and the business areas to improve the precision of preservation actions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partner with Legal and Information Technology to make preservation practices more precise and minimize excessive preservation.

Survey Results

1 RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (RIM) PROGRAM

Modern RIM programs are evolving. Through formal relationships with information governance disciplines, organizations are assembling Information Governance (IG) programs, with traditional Records and Information Management (RIM) components as a mainstay.

- Records and Information Management (RIM) is information lifecycle management – the management of information from its creation through its active and inactive phases and concluding with its final disposition.
- Information Governance (IG) is emerging as a comprehensive platform for managing information. Cohasset defines information governance as establishing the policy-level rules, investment priorities and accountabilities for managing the lifecycle of information.

Given the breadth of RIM and IG, as defined, it is unrealistic to achieve a flawless program. Accordingly, a modern program does not intend perfection. Rather, a modern program is one with robust components and strong interdisciplinary affiliation and cooperation.

For this global *Federal Governments* survey, Cohasset addresses both RIM and IG. For example, in this section, the questions are specific to RIM staffing and its reporting structure. Conversely, the Business Commitment questions in Section 2 pertain to multiple information governance disciplines.

Throughout this report, Cohasset uses information governance (IG) as reflective of the broader scope and RIM for the questions specific to traditional records and information management accountabilities.

1.1 Does your organization have a RIM program?

Modern IG programs define defensible information lifecycle practices, founded upon clear and consistent policies, retention rules, management practices and training that result in systematic, repeatable and measurable implementation outcomes.

Ninety-one percent (91%) of survey participants who identify with *Federal Governments* report the existence of a records and information management program in their organization. This positive result surpasses the *All Organizations* result by four points.

Respondents with a RIM program were asked the remaining questions in this section; whereas those responding in the negative were directed to Section 2, Business Commitment.

	U.S. Federal Government	All Organizations
Yes	92%	87%
No	8%	13%

1.2 Where does the enterprise (or central) RIM department/group report within your organization?

For *All Organizations*, a combined 28% of respondents assert that the RIM program reports to legal (21%) or compliance/regulatory affairs (7%).

Reporting relationships in *Federal Governments* are notably different:

- In *Federal Governments*, the RIM department reporting relationship to legal or compliance/regulatory affairs trails *All Organizations* by nineteen points.
- Further, a reporting relationship to information technology is affirmed by 30% of *Federal Governments* survey respondents. This is significantly higher the 18% reported by *All Organizations*.

	U.S. Federal Government	All Organizations
Administrative Services/Facilities ¹	21%	21%
Legal	3%	21%
Compliance/Regulatory Affairs	8%	7%
Information Technology	33%	18%
Executive Office	18%	10%
No one group has responsibility for the overall RIM program	3%	5%
Other	14%	18%

1.3 How many full-time equivalents are in your organization's enterprise (central) RIM department/group?

To better understand the staffing environment for the RIM program, the survey asked for the number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) assigned to the central program.

Respondents were explicitly requested to exclude file room and warehouse personnel, as well as the RIM network (e.g., records coordinators) to focus this FTE count exclusively on those individuals involved in governance and policy-related activities for the program.

	U.S. Federal Government	All Organizations
1 or less	11%	26%
More than 1 and up to 4	44%	39%
More than 4 and up to 7	31%	16%
More than 7 and up to 10	6%	8%
More than 10	8%	11%

Where *Federal Governments* staffing model responses vary from those affirmed by *All Organizations*, the differences are significant:

- For one FTE or less, the *Federal Governments* result trails *All Organizations* by sixteen points.
- A similarly notable variance is identified for the staffing model of more than four and up to seven FTEs, where the *Federal Governments* result surpasses *All Organizations* by thirteen points.

Generally, a reporting relationship to legal or to compliance/regulatory affairs can afford the RIM department the opportunity to influence regarding risk, and accordingly, staff size.

Survey participants who answered the preceding question by responding that: No one group has responsibility for the overall RIM program, bypassed this question.

2 BUSINESS COMMITMENT

In an era of limited organizational resources and increasing records and information management complexity, modern information governance requires a strong business commitment and interdisciplinary alliances.

This section of the survey evaluates the business commitment to the management of information over its lifecycle.

2.1 Are the following groups actively engaged and supportive of RIM?

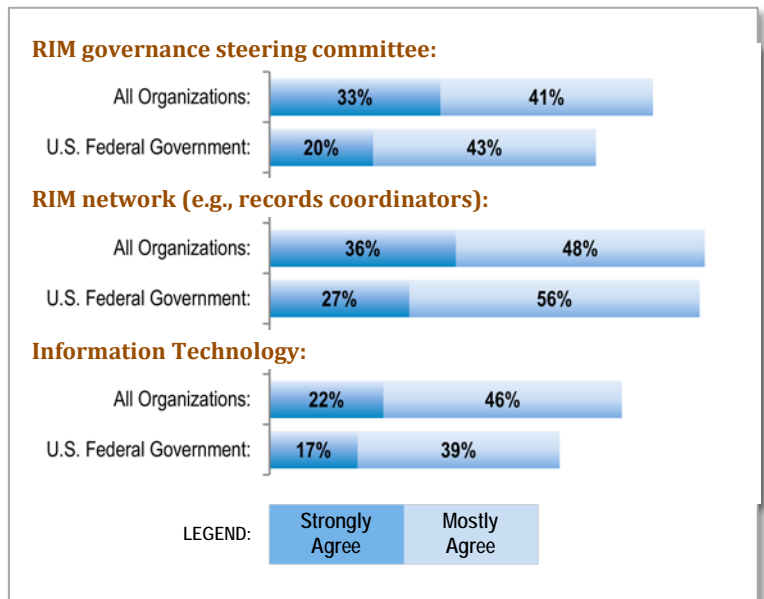
Organizational engagement, which engenders support, is critical to the achievement of effective information lifecycle management. This engagement is also a key indicator of the overall success and impact that the program can experience.

RIM Roles and Information Technology

The responses by *Federal Governments* survey participants affirm an active engagement with both the RIM governance steering committee (61%) and the RIM network (85%). This collaboration supports a strong and unified records management program.

The support provided by information technology (IT) of just 55% could be strengthened. This result is surprisingly low, considering the RIM department reporting relationship affirmed by *Federal Governments* survey respondents and described in Section 1.2.

An active engagement with IT translates to the opportunity for RIM to have a “voice at the IT planning table.” This alliance with IT is necessary when managing information through its lifecycle. Without this emphasis, new content will be created and managed without information lifecycle controls, increasing the mass of unattended information in the future.



Compliance and Risk Operations

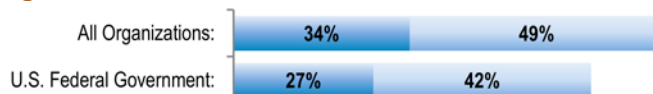
Policy-oriented business areas often experience the most direct impact when records management failures arise.

With positive results nearing or exceeding 70%, survey participants who identify with *Federal Governments* affirm active engagement and support in their organizations. In addition to their colleagues in legal (68%) and in compliance/regulatory affairs (77%), those responsible for the information governance discipline of privacy and data protection (82%) are also strong RIM advocates.

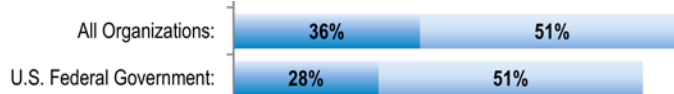
Interdisciplinary affiliations with risk management (58%) and with internal audit (56%) and are also reported by *Federal Governments* respondents.

The advocacy provided by these policy-oriented business areas illustrates their understanding of the importance of mutual purpose and the value of strong relationships.

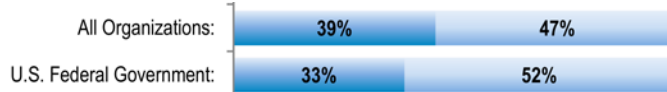
Legal:



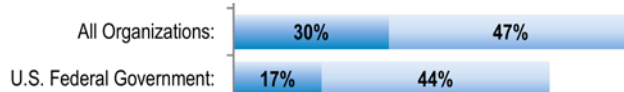
Compliance/Regulatory Affairs:



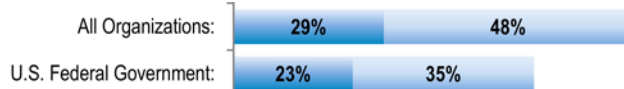
Privacy and data protection:



Risk Management:



Internal Audit:



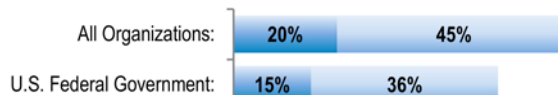
LEGEND: Strongly Agree Mostly Agree

Positions (Levels) within the Organization

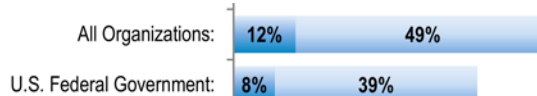
Management support is a critical RIM program success factor. The levels of support experienced in *Federal Governments* from its executives (52%) and from mid-level management (47%) are significantly lower than those reported by *All Organizations*. Both *Federal Governments* results warrant relationship building efforts.

In addition, information governance practices are often heavily dependent upon individual accountability. The lowest level of engagement is ascribed to the *Federal Governments* employees/workforce position, with a Strongly Agree result of only 4%.

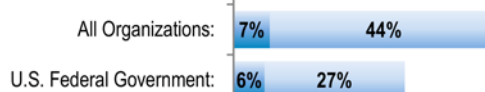
Executive management:



Mid-level management:



Employees/workforce:



LEGEND: Strongly Agree Mostly Agree

This weak advocacy dampens the success of information governance, since many organizations still rely on manual processes, requiring individual ownership and action.

2.2 How frequently is RIM training completed?

While management and employee support are critical success factors, training is essential to achieving effective information lifecycle practices. Employees cannot make good information lifecycle decisions unless they understand what to do and why it is important.

	RIM Network		All Employees	
	U.S. Federal Government	All Organizations	U.S. Federal Government	All Organizations
Annually or more often	41%	39%	29%	23%
Every 2 years	9%	9%	5%	12%
Less than every 2 years	14%	10%	15%	12%
Only when role is assigned	29%	29%	27%	27%
None	7%	13%	24%	26%

- Nearly one-half (46%) of *Federal Governments* respondents maintain that the RIM network receives training at least every two years, whereas only 26% of *Federal Governments* respondents assert that same frequency of training for all employees.
- Fifty-six percent (56%) of *Federal Governments* survey participants also report that employees never really receive any RIM training. This is problematic.

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

Modern programs address all information – regardless of format or location. Further, as the program matures, information lifecycle controls become transparent to employees as the controls are engrained into business-as-usual operations.

This survey question measures the maturity of various components of information governance in *Federal Governments*.

Governance, Strategy and Metrics

The following chart depicts the maturity of three key RIM governance components:

- Cross-functional RIM governance structure
- Comprehensive strategy to guide future RIM direction
- RIM metrics for ESI to guide assessments and improvements

In addition to membership from information technology and from the RIM organization, a cross-functional RIM governance structure generally includes executive leadership from business operations and representation from policy-oriented business areas (legal, compliance, risk management and internal audit). The purpose of the cross-functional RIM governance structure is to provide:

- Direction and oversight
- Sponsorship for resources and funding
- Leadership to engender organizational solidarity

For *Federal Governments*, the cross-functional RIM governance structure is identified as Mature only 19% of the time. (This is far less than the 42% result depicted for the protection of private, confidential and sensitive information). While this parenthetical data point illustrates a strong awareness of the need for cross-disciplinary balance, perspective and support, it also indicates that the execution of this type of governance is not easy.

Recognizing that improvement is underway (51%), a Mature ranking of only 11% is reported by *Federal Governments* respondents and assigned to the comprehensive strategy attribute.

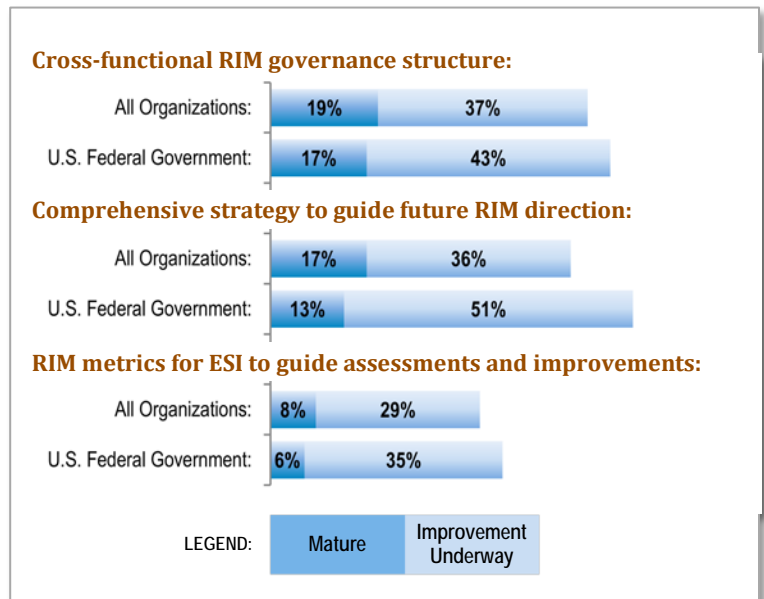
Regardless of the type of organization, in this era of limited resources and increasing complexity, information governance requires a strategy that aligns with the organization's priorities and goals. The strategy must emphasize achieving the largest business value or most significant risk reduction.

A score of only 6% Mature is attributed to RIM metrics for ESI. This low score is alarming.

Metrics are essential to:

- Document progress toward strategic goals
- Provide concrete proof of business benefit
- Signal when an implementation strategy is not achieving the desired outcome

Measuring success raises awareness and garners program support.



RIM Integration with Selected Information Governance Disciplines

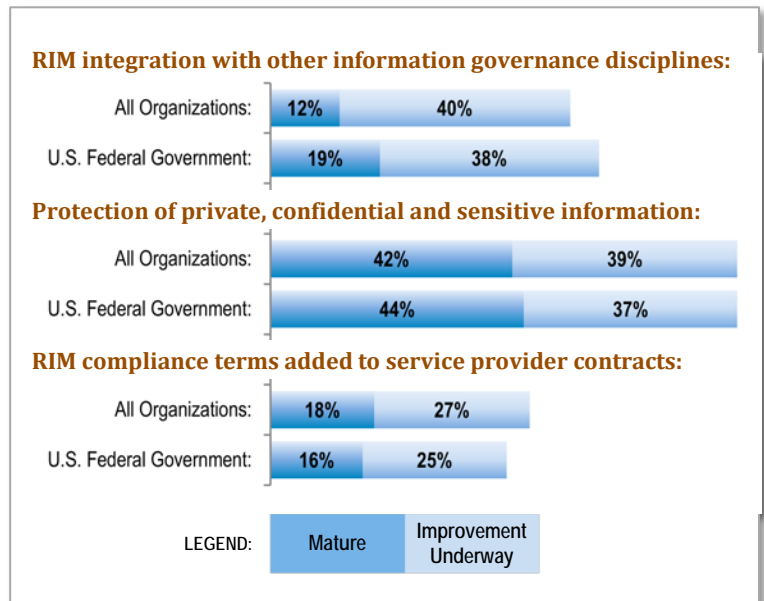
The chart to the right depicts the maturity of RIM integration with three selected information governance disciplines:

- RIM integration with other information governance disciplines
- Protection of private, confidential and sensitive information
- RIM compliance terms added to service provider contracts

As referred to earlier, *Federal Governments* respondents assign the highest Mature ranking of 42% to the protection of sensitive information; however, Mature results fade quickly:

- RIM integration with other information governance disciplines is identified as Mature only 19% of the time.
- The addition of RIM compliance terms to service provider contracts finishes last on the maturity continuum, with a Mature ranking of just 14%.

With Improvement Underway in most disciplines, *Federal Governments* survey participants recognize the importance of imbedding information governance with the day-to-day management of information. Still, integration maturity is slow.



3 RETENTION SCHEDULE

Modern IG 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.

This section of the survey focuses on retention schedules and opportunities for improving them.

3.1 Does your organization have a retention schedule?

This question establishes a baseline, identifying the percentage of organizations having a retention schedule.

In 2013, 97% of *Federal Governments* respondents agree that a retention schedule is in place in their organization. This very strong result justly aligns with the following positive result reported by *Federal Governments* survey participants and noted earlier in this white paper:

- **91%** agree to Question 1.1: *Does your organization have a RIM program?*

Respondents asserting the existence of a retention schedule were asked the remaining questions in this section; whereas those who responded in the negative were directed to Section 4: Deletion/Destruction.

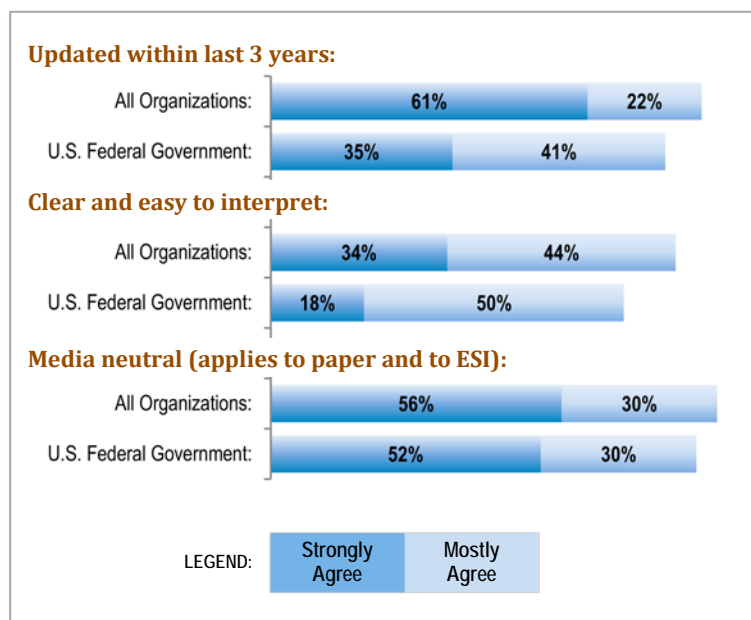
	U.S. Federal Government	All Organizations
Yes	100%	92%
No	0%	8%

3.2 Is your organization's retention schedule effective?

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.

Retention schedules used by *Federal Governments* organizations are up-to-date (74%), clear and easy to interpret (69%) and media-neutral (84%).

As depicted, 86% of survey participants in *All Organizations* maintain that their organizations' retention schedules are media-neutral; leaving only a 14% combined negative response.



In prior years, Cohasset's biennial survey explicitly asked if the retention schedule applied to ESI. The following table displays these results.

These historical measures depict continuous improvement, as more organizations apply the retention periods to all media, including ESI.

In total, a 33% gain has been realized over the last decade. This is strong evidence of the trend to modernize retention schedules.

Historical Survey Results for All Organizations:

	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
Yes	53%	57%	60%	65%	79%
No	47%	43%	40%	35%	21%

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

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. This has resulted in balancing:

- Fewer retention categories that can be applied to broader sets of information
- Sufficiently detailed retention specifications that direct users to a category for specific information (e.g., a form, document, database table, etc.)

	Current Number of Categories		Desired Number of Categories	
	U.S. Federal Government	All Organizations	U.S. Federal Government	All Organizations
Less than 25	8%	6%	8%	7%
25 to 49	13%	12%	30%	19%
50 to 99	11%	13%	22%	23%
100 to 249	8%	32%	23%	31%
250 to 499	27%	18%	10%	12%
500 or more	33%	19%	7%	8%

Broader categories (big buckets) are easier to apply to electronic information and easier to maintain than detailed retention schedules.

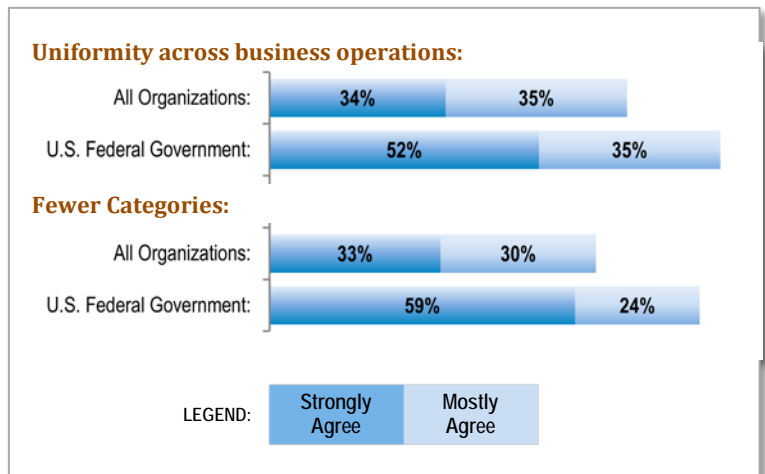
- A strong indication that a retention schedule refresh is absolutely necessary, 60% of *Federal Governments* survey respondents report that their **current** retention schedule contains between 250 (23%) and 500 or more retention categories (37%).
- A majority (more than 70%) of those same *Federal Governments* survey participants would **prefer** a retention schedule format that reflects between 25 and no more than 249 categories.

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

The retention schedule must be regularly maintained to ensure it remains effective and appropriate for the organization.

Most respondents agree that their organizations' retention schedules can benefit from enhancements.

Ranked highest, with a combined Strongly and Mostly Agree response of 86%, *Federal Governments* survey participants affirm the need to improve their organizations' retention schedules by developing uniformity across business operations.



In addition, 79% of *Federal Governments* survey participants attest to the need to reduce the number of retention categories. Too many retention categories make it hard for users to align their information with the proper category and retention time period.

This data supports that regardless of the type of organization, whether public or private, the regular review and maintenance of a retention schedule is necessary, requires expertise and takes time.

4 DELETION/DESTRUCTION

Modern IG programs utilize 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.¹

4.1 Is the identification of paper records (e.g., boxes stored off-site, file stored on-site, etc.) that are eligible for destruction automated?

Automating the deletion/destruction process is essential to attaining consistent and systematic end-of-lifecycle processes. Manual processes, which are reliant on individual actions, often result in inconsistent and haphazard deletion/destruction outcomes.

For these questions, respondents were provided the options listed in the table to the right. However, the legends presented with the charts in this section use the shorter descriptions, as depicted in this table.

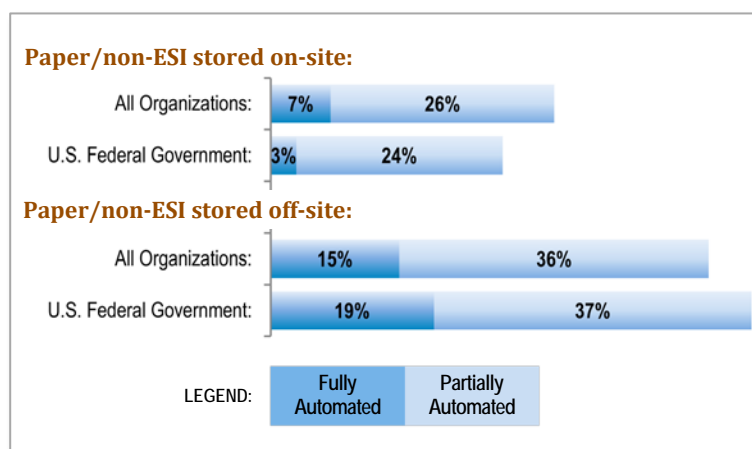
Answer options in the survey:	Fully Automated process	Partially Automated; progressing to automation
Legend for this white paper:	Fully Automated	Partially Automated

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.

Given the maturity of systems designed to assign and manage the retention of paper records stored off-site, it is troubling that only 51% of *Federal Governments* respondents select Fully and Partially Automated. Clearly, this represents an opportunity to modernize a foundational information governance component.

The results in the chart on the right focus on automated methods to identify paper and analog records that are eligible for destruction.

The following questions pertain to the deletion of eligible ESI.



¹ Legal holds require ongoing preservation of the information for reasonably anticipated, threatened, or pending litigation, government investigation, external audit or other similar circumstances.

4.2 Is the deletion of eligible ESI automated?

Today, most information is born in diverse electronic forms, in volumes that exceed manual processing capabilities.

Survey results indicate that 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. These tools enable organizations to classify information, separate high-value information and delete unneeded information, mitigating the cost and risk associated with over-retention.

Survey participants were asked to declare the level of automation for their organizations' deletion of eligible ESI by type of system or repository. Responses from those identifying with *Federal Governments* and those in *All Organizations* indicate that eligible ESI is not regularly deleted using automated processes.

To facilitate comparisons, Cohasset divided these charts into sets of similar information types:

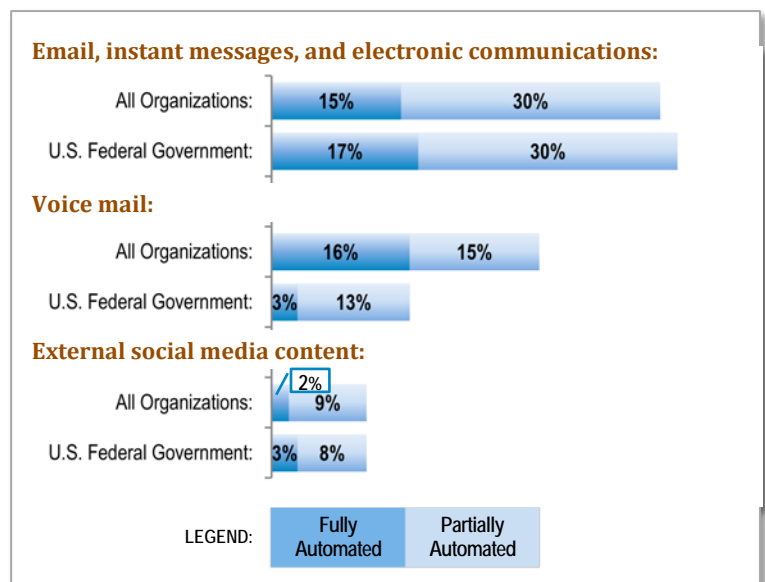
- Systems of Communication and Engagement
- Unstructured Content
- Disaster Recovery Media, Structured Data and Outsourced Data Services

Systems of Communication and Engagement

The deletion results for systems of communication and engagement highlight the significant gap between more traditional communication tools (e.g., email) and newer tools (e.g., external social media content).

The level of automation for the deletion of email, instant messages, and electronic communications affirmed by *Federal Governments* survey participants is just 39% (13% Fully and 26% Partially Automated).

In view of the maturity of email management tools, this low level of automation is surprising, identifying another opportunity for modernization.



For voice mail, Cohasset expected a far stronger response, since many voice mail systems automatically delete messages, following a predefined schedule. This extraordinarily low rate of automation (16%) could:

- Result from the implementation of digital voice mail systems having a larger storage capacity
- Reflect the implementation of unified voice mail systems, wherein voice mail messages are embedded in email messages sent to the recipient

Unstructured Content

Unstructured content includes word processing, spreadsheet, presentation and other types of files generated by individual users.

Unstructured content is often organized by users or groups (e.g., on network drives). Less frequently, it is organized in accordance with a pre-defined structured data model (e.g., in an imaging or structured document management system).

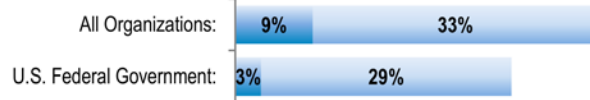
Email and other electronic communications are also frequently defined as unstructured content; however, Cohasset addressed email in the prior section.

One of the goals of content/document management solutions has historically been to automate the retention, preservation and disposition of information, in addition to obtaining workflow improvements. The survey results in the above chart establish that only 3% of *Federal Governments* respondents indicate that their content/document management solutions have evolved to fully automate the disposition process.

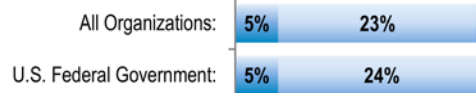
Results in *Federal Governments* for the other unstructured content types are also troubling. It is unlikely that any retention controls are applied if the disposition process is manual.

Effectively automating the disposition process requires an organizational commitment, appropriate resources and a willingness of the organization to embrace change.

Content/document management (e.g., imaging, ECM):

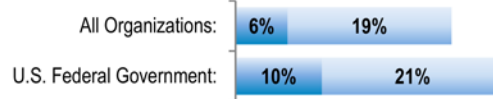


Collaboration tools (e.g., team/project sites, SharePoint®):

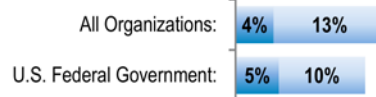


LEGEND: Fully Automated Partially Automated

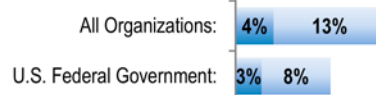
Network files (e.g., shared drives, file shares):



Desktop/laptop files (e.g., C:\drive):



Mobile devices (e.g., smart phones, tablets):



LEGEND: Fully Automated Partially Automated

While information governance may drive the effort, involvement from information technology (IT) and the support of business executives is a prerequisite for attaining desired levels of automation. A strengthened alliance with IT, developed by *Federal Governments* survey participants, can support this modernization.

Disaster Recovery Media, Structured Data and Outsourced Data Services

In the early days of ESI, many organizations relied upon back-up media (disaster recovery tapes) as a means to retain records. This practice was quickly recognized as:

- Impractical
- Expensive
- Very difficult to retrieve the records
- High risk, because the entire set of back-up media may become targets of discovery

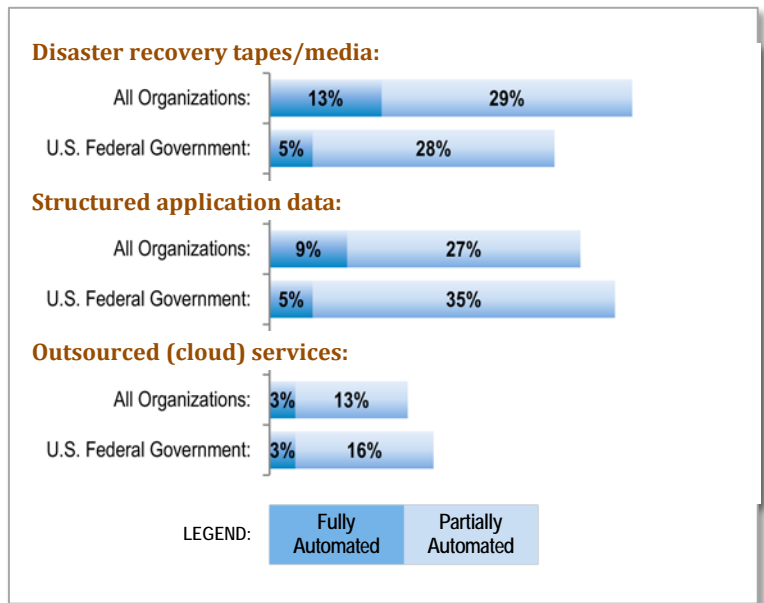
Accordingly, Cohasset urges *Federal Governments* organizations to regularly rotate the media used for disaster recovery. This recommendation conforms to the ISO standard 17799, in which paragraph 10.5.1(c) states:

"the extent (e.g. full or differential back-up) and frequency of back-ups should reflect the business requirements of the organization, the security requirements of the information involved, and the criticality of the information to the continued operation of the organization"

Better still, modern disaster recovery techniques often involve mirroring real time data to sites in disparate locations, significantly reducing the need for dedicated back-up media.

Given the fact that, in modern IG programs, disaster recovery tapes/media (back-up media) should be routinely rotated and not retained, it is surprising that only 34% of *Federal Governments* respondents affirm that retention is Fully and Partially Automated. This creates a high risk situation that 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, then a day-forward policy should be developed and put into practice.
- Thereafter, a legacy back-up media clean-up project should be initiated to sort the historical media and files. As a result, information is retained, in compliance with the retention schedule and legal holds, and is deleted when eligible.



This survey also demonstrates that *Federal Governments* is making modest progress with automating the deletion of structured application data (6% Fully and 31% Partially Automated).

With just 3% Fully and 15% Partially Automated, *Federal Governments* respondents report that outsourced (cloud) services data continues to lag far behind in automated deletion.

4.3 Do your organization's hardware and media disposal processes protect sensitive (e.g., confidential) information?

The secure destruction of information involves taking precautions and completing processes to ensure that the content is not recoverable.

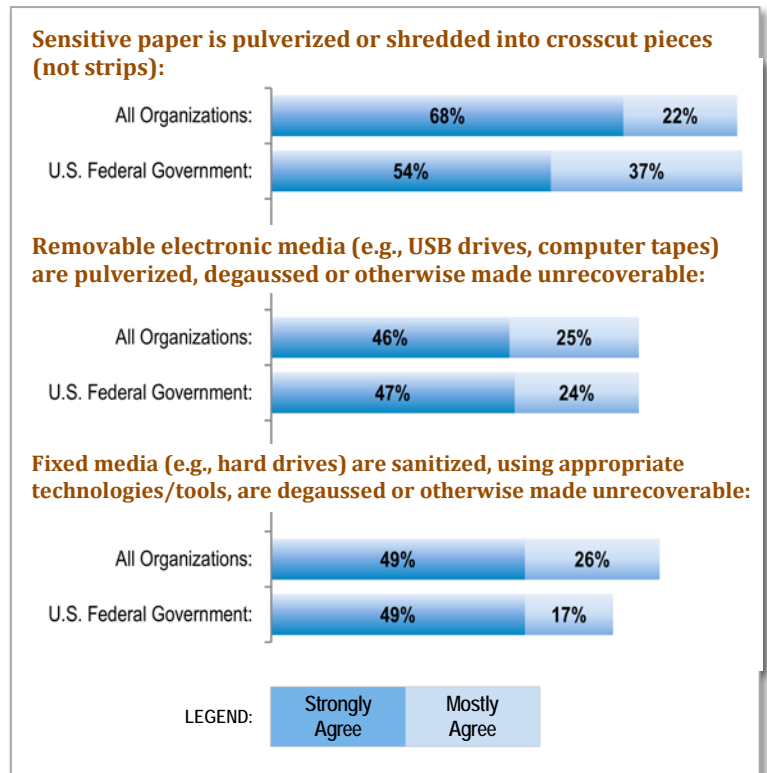
For paper records, the process involves pulverizing or cross-cutting the media. For digital media, the process involves sanitizing the media to prevent it from being read. Section 4.4.2 of the Defense Security Service (DSS) Manual for the Certification and Accreditation of Classified Systems under NISPOM² stipulates that:

Sanitizing removes information from media to render the information unrecoverable by technical means.

Further, Section 14.1.16 of this Manual contains the Clearing and Sanitization Matrix, which provides multiple methods of 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.

For paper, 88% of *Federal Governments* survey respondents Strongly and Mostly Agree that their organizations' deletion/destruction practices render sensitive information unrecoverable. Responses for both removable electronic media (64%) and fixed media (59%), however, identify opportunities for *Federal Governments* organizations to define information lifecycle controls.



² <http://www.dss.mil/documents/odaa/ODAA%20Process%20Manual%20Version%203.2.pdf>

4.4 Overall, are improvements to the deletion processes for ESI a priority for your organization?

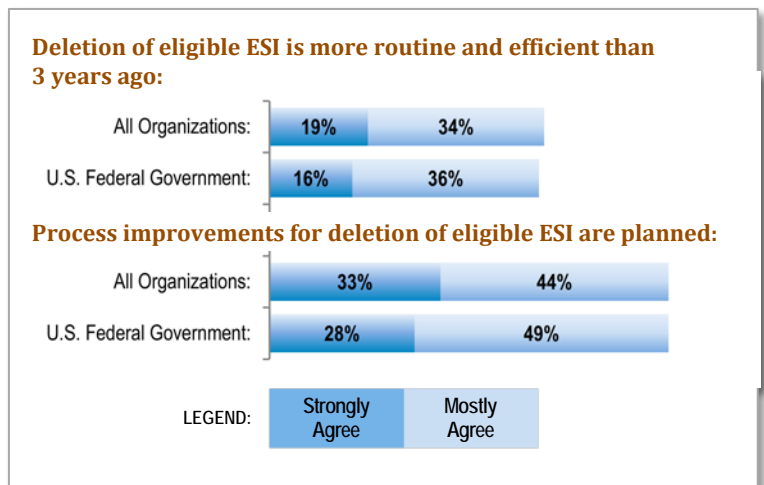
It is Cohasset's experience that unstructured ESI is growing at compounded rates of 40% to 60%, with structured content also growing, but at lower, steady rates.

The common barrier to clean-up and deletion of eligible ESI is: *Storage is cheap*. This barrier, while persistent, has been supplanted in organizations with modern IG programs.

Modern IG programs recognize that high volumes of ESI greatly increase the complexity of many IG practices, adding to unnecessary infrastructure cost. This emphasis on

modernization is clearly reflected by the *Federal Governments* survey result:

- Eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents Strongly and Mostly Agree that process improvements for the deletion of eligible ESI are planned.



5 LEGAL HOLDS

Modern IG programs, 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, Governments investigation, external audit or other similar circumstances.

Legal holds can have a significant impact on the implementation of routine retention and deletion of information; therefore, they are an important aspect of this survey. The full scope of discovery response is a very broad area and outside the scope of this survey.

This section of the survey assesses legal hold processes and the effectiveness of preservation of information for legal holds.

5.1 Does your organization have a legal hold process?

To satisfy legal discovery obligations in the United States, a predictable and defensible legal hold process that preserves information is essential. Legal hold processes are much more prevalent than 10 years ago. This year, 73% of *Federal Governments* survey participants report that their organization has a legal hold process.

	Federal Governments	All Organizations
Yes	82%	74%
No	18%	26%

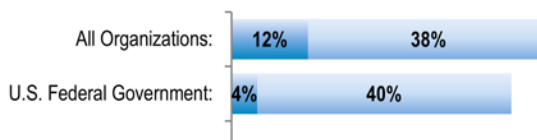
5.2 Is your organization's legal hold process efficient and effective?

Establishing an effective and efficient legal hold process is vital to complying with legal discovery requirements in the United States.

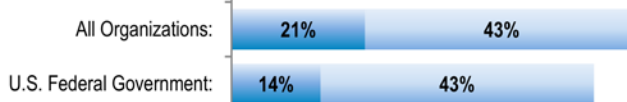
Forty-three percent (43%) of *Federal Governments* respondents Strongly and Mostly Agree that automated tools are used for the legal hold process. While modest, this automation result still exceeds the percentages related to the use of automated tools for the deletion of every different type of electronically stored information; see Section 4.2.

Just 54% of *Federal Governments* survey participants confirm that legal holds are regularly and effectively terminated. Room for improvement exists. Keeping information related to resolved legal matters is the most wasteful type of over-preservation. Benefit is derived through coordination with the legal department to improve legal hold termination processes and the subsequent reinstatement of retention and deletion/destruction activities.

Automated tools are used to locate and preserve relevant information:



Upon the conclusion/closure of the legal matter, normal retention and deletion/destruction are effectively reinstated:



LEGEND:

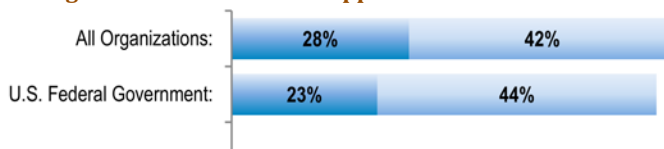
Strongly Agree Mostly Agree

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of *Federal Governments* respondents Strongly and Mostly Agree with the statement: more information than is necessary is typically retained due to how legal holds are written or applied. The inefficiency associated with over-preservation may be improved with the use of automated tools.

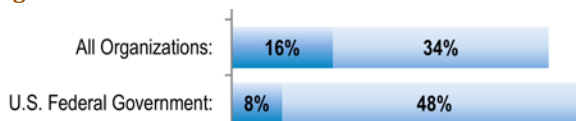
Further, 52% of *Federal Governments* respondents disclose a continued reliance on disaster recovery back-up media to satisfy legal holds.

Both of these results are troublesome, indicating that the legal hold process in *Federal Governments* merits modernization efforts.

More information than is necessary is typically retained due to how legal holds are written or applied:



Disaster recovery back-up media are preserved to satisfy legal holds:



LEGEND: Strongly Agree Mostly Agree

6 RIM PROGRAM MATURITY

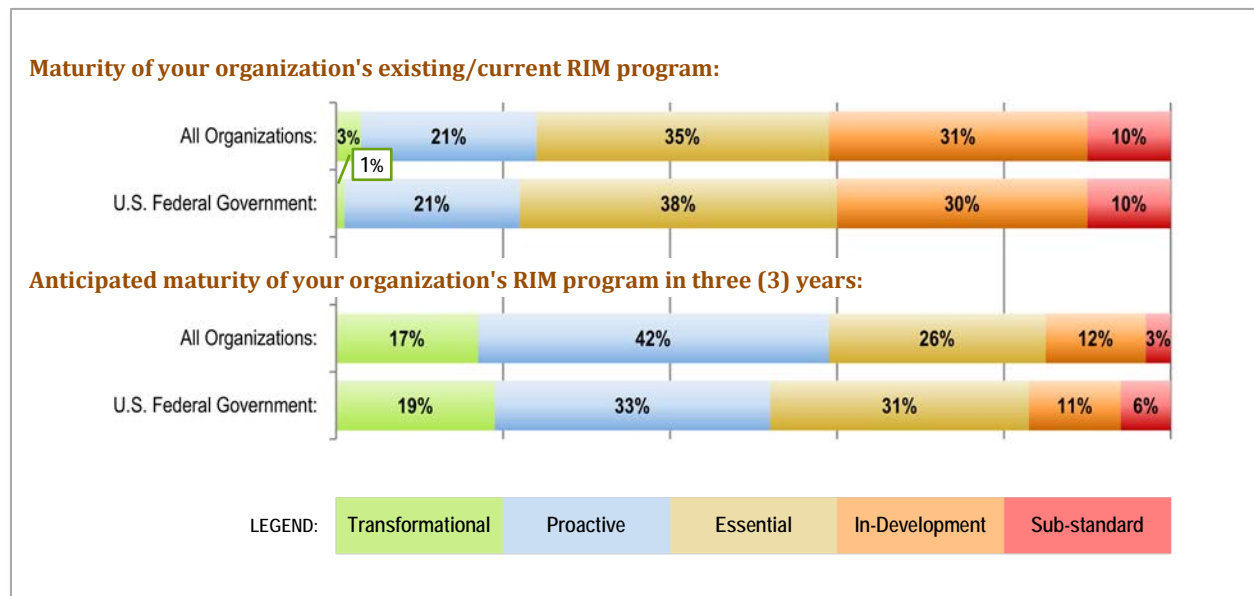
6.1 Considering ARMA International's Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles® how would you rate the maturity of your organization's RIM program?

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 mere statement of the principles by beginning to define characteristics of various levels of recordkeeping programs.

For each principle, the Maturity Model associates various characteristics that are typical for each of the following five levels in the Model.

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.

Cohasset Associates' final survey question asks participants to assess their organizations' *current* program maturity compared to The Principles and their *anticipated* maturity in three years.



Based upon overall survey responses, significant improvements in the maturity levels of RIM programs are expected.

- Eighteen percent (18%) of *Federal Governments* respondents rank the maturity of their **current** RIM program as Proactive, trailing the 21% Proactive ranking affirmed by *All Organizations*.
- Except in the Proactive ranking, which lags somewhat, in the **upcoming three years**, the RIM program maturity levels anticipated by *Federal Governments* organizations are generally comparable to the expectations of *All Organizations*.
- Nineteen percent (19%) of *Federal Governments* respondents and 17% of *All Organizations* establish a ranking of Transformational maturity as a **three-year goal**.

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

7 DEMOGRAPHICS

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

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

Financial Services and Banking	8%
Government: Federal, National	8%
Government: State, Province, Territory, Local	14%
Insurance	8%
Law Firms and Legal Services	8%
Life Sciences: Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology, Medical Devices	7%
Manufacturing	5%
Oil, Gas, Mining	8%
Public Accounting, Consulting	5%
Technology, Communications, Media	4%
Utilities	7%
Other	18%

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

	Federal Governments	All Organizations
Less than 1,000 employees	28%	35%
1,001 - 4,999 employees	37%	23%
5,000 - 9,999 employees	4%	11%
10,000 - 24,999 employees	11%	14%
25,000 - 99,999 employees	16%	12%
100,000 employees and over	4%	5%



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 four areas: management consulting, education, thought-leadership and legal research.

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. Distinguished as the leader of the transition from records management to information governance, Cohasset held its first Managing Electronic Records (MER) conference in 1993. Cohasset's current and former clients include several winners of ARMA's prized Cobalt Award. Cohasset is proud of its reputation for attaining exceptional results.

Education: Cohasset Associates is renowned for its longstanding leadership in education on information governance and information lifecycle management.

Thought-Leadership: Cohasset regularly publishes thought leadership white 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 Associates:

- *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 for large volumes of eligible information, 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-Sponsors:



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.



AIIM (Association for Information and Image Management) (www.aiim.org) is the global community of information professionals. The association mission is to ensure that information professionals

understand the current and future challenges of managing information assets in an era of social, mobile, cloud and big data. Founded in 1943, AIIM builds on a strong heritage of research and member service. Today, AIIM is a global, non-profit organization that provides independent research, education and certification programs to information professionals. AIIM represents the entire information management community, with programs and content for practitioners, technology suppliers, integrators and consultants.

Underwritten in part by:



IRON MOUNTAIN®

Iron Mountain Incorporated (NYSE: IRM) is a global provider

of storage and information management services. Its solutions for records management, data management, document management, and secure shredding help customers to lower storage costs, comply with regulations, recover from disaster, and better leverage their information into a business advantage.



Cohasset Associates, Inc. proudly presents the annual National Conference on Managing Electronic Records

(www.MERconference.com). The MER is the only national conference addressing 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”.

Join the thousands who, for over twenty years, have made The MER Conference their trusted source for the best in electronic records and information management education.

MER conference sessions and materials also are available to anyone, anytime, anywhere – via streaming video – RIM On Demand™ (www.ARMA.org/RIMOnDemand or www.RIMeducation.com)