

The role of the records manager in open government

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Recordkeeping & information governance context

- Re-use of public sector information and open government data (OGD) is likely to be most effective when information and data is trusted as being authentic, 'complete' and reliable, and does not breach privacy /sensitivity requirements
- Some evidence suggests that 'researchers, government officials and members of civil society are beginning to question the validity, integrity and traceability of datasets' (IRMT workshop on credible data, 2013)
- As with FOI 'a stronger connection with Records Management may help authorities to address accuracy and authenticity issues, as well as making data easier to locate and understand'

UCL DIS research projects, include...



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UCL InterPARES Research projects

- Team Europe Research Project EU02: Open Government Data Literature Review (in progress)
- Team Europe Research Project EU03: The Role of the Records Manager in an Open Government Environment in England: local government (complete)
- Team Europe Research Project EU19: The role of the records manager / records management in an Open Government environment in England: the National Health Service (in progress)



Team Europe Research Project EU 02: Open Government Data Literature Review (on-going)

- Case study – Researchers Dr Shepherd, Dr Flinn & James Lowry (RA)
- Aim: produce a systematic and analytical review of the key literature relating to open government and open government data, with particular reference to role of recordkeepers
 - Including key EU & UK legislation, reports and other official documentation
 - Research literature relating to open government, open government data and recordkeeping
 - Open government and open government data web resources



The Role of the Records Manager in an Open Government Environment in England: local government

- Case study – Researchers Dr Shepherd, Dr Flinn & Jessica Page (RA) - 2014
- Aims:
 - To provide a snapshot of existing practice in information and records management in English local government
 - To identify legislation, policy or guidance relating to open government data and suggest implications for records management
 - To examine the recordkeeper’s role in open government data, especially in local government
 - To support better understanding of the recordkeeping issues and records policies which take account of open government requirements

Research outline

- Why local government?
- Survey (on policies / guidance re OGD and implementation) – disseminated via IRMS Public Sector Group
- Choice of case study
 - Large County Council engaged in developing OGD policies and implementation
 - Records Manager involved in OGD and supported research (access to internal policy documents and interviews(4))
- Interviews focussed on definitions and understanding; guidance and regulations; and implementation
- Survey and interview questions shared and commented on by Swedish & North American colleagues to support future collaborative and comparative work

Legislation / guidance for OGD & recordkeeping

- Legislation and guidance (eg 2012 Open Government White Paper & Action Plans) concentrates on publication of data and how it is to be accessed – acknowledgement that how data is managed is crucial but not so much on how that is to be achieved
- DCLG has issued *Local Government Transparency Code* (2011 & 2014):
 - Useful for determining in general which data should be published
 - Recognises role of robust RIM in delivering transparency but does not elaborate what this means or how it is to be achieved
 - Code assumes established electronic systems, whereas many RK systems are primarily paper-based
 - Code emphasises publishing as much data as possible, rather than identifying data which is wanted & will be utilised
- 2012 amendments to FOIA re datasets resulted in useful guidance from the ICO (Datasets sections 11,19 & 45)
- Overall lack of RM guidance on open government data & standards (compared to FOIA / DPA codes, etc)

Who is responsible for open government data in the local authority?



What are the main challenges of the open government data environment for RM?

- A new and evolving area of work (protocols & policy being developed)
- Resource implications / work load
- Risk management and data security
- Protecting personal data
- Management of Information Asset Register
- Cleaning up data before proactive release
- Lack of consistent policy on release by different de-centralised teams
- Ensuring long term data accuracy & integrity - providing future access to open data
- Metadata standards for open government data

What does this mean for the records professionals in local government?

- An important records management role, but not traditional paper file management
- Need to have clear digital expertise & mandate to extend recordkeeping principles (authenticity, integrity, preservation) to datasets & then the auditing of compliance with these principles
- Need resourcing / recognition of role by senior management
- Collaboration with other stakeholders and professional disciplines organisations
- But also greater standardisation of practice within organisations and across public sector backed up by detailed standards and guidance
- Importance of advocacy and training to underpin guidance and policy



The role of the records manager / records management in an Open Government environment in England: the National Health Service

- Case study – Researchers Dr Shepherd, Dr Flinn & Emma Harrison (RA) - 2015
- Aims:
 - Overview of existing information governance and records management policy and practice in NHS England
 - To identify legislation, policy or guidance relating to open government data in NHS and suggest implications for recordkeeping
 - To support better understanding of the recordkeeping and information governance issues which meet the many challenges of open government data and re-use of public sector information in the health sector

ADRC-E

Vision

To benefit society and quality of life through intelligent use of administrative data



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A bar chart icon with four vertical bars of increasing height from left to right, colored in shades of green.
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& TROPICAL
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Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

A logo for the Office for National Statistics, featuring a stylized white and green shape on a dark blue background.
Office for
National Statistics

Information governance research for ADRC-E

Co-Is: Drs Elizabeth Shepherd, Oliver Duke-Williams
RA: Dr Alexandra Eveleigh

- Aim: To develop a good practice framework for curating linked data for ADRC-E which helps to establish information governance policy landscape; best policy practice; and reflects community and user attitudes to government data, with a focus on the widening use agenda.

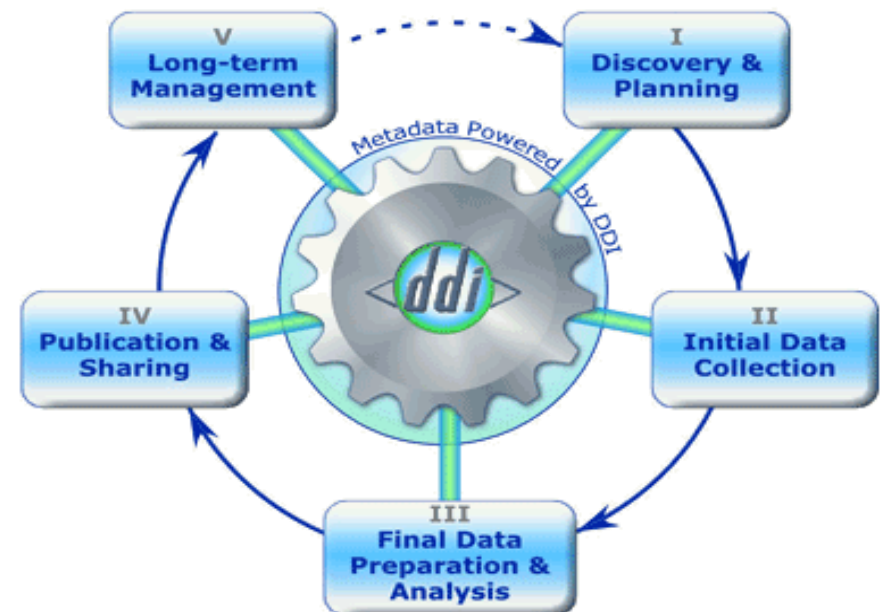


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ADRC-E research themes

- A risk management approach to disclosure review
- With/out consent
- Trusting government administrative data

Case studies of educational data, transport data, environment data



Access to datasets: more or less restricted?

“before Fols you could email local authority ... teams that were responsible for an area that you were interested in, have a conversation, say I’m doing this or that research and I’d like this, and they were often quite friendly and helping you. Now, you know, there’s no contact there, it’s all done through the Fol team and its just sort of very impersonal.’ [A3]

Access to datasets: more or less restricted?

“increased government sensitivity about data and I think better data ...protocols in government. ...late 90s, and government agencies didn't take data security as seriously as they do now.” [A1]

“culture of fear around privacy” [A3]

Further research

- Literature review on implications of UK and European legislation and regulations on privacy and data protection for recordkeepers and recordkeeping
- Further research concerning information governance for government administrative data / ethics, recordkeeping and health
- Research on impact on society of intersection of recordkeeping / information governance with open government agendas