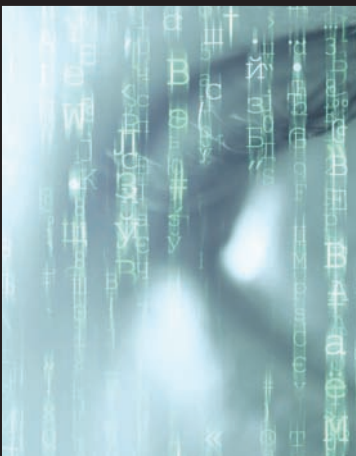


The Data Strategy and Governance Toolkit

DARAGH O BRIEN



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Executive summary

“Change begets change. Nothing propagates so fast.” Charles Dickens (in Martin Chuzzlewit, 1884)

INFORMATION AND its quality is increasingly moving centre stage in industries as diverse as health care, education, financial services, telecommunications and government services (to name but a few). This is due in part to the increased focus on information and the need to be able to trust information used in decision making in key industries. However, the increasing maturity of thinking among early adopters and the emergence of case studies of good practice have also increased the maturity of thinking in this field.

Ultimately, organisations are increasingly finding it difficult to absorb the costs of non-quality information. Whether this is due to increased regulatory oversight, a desire to move from legacy IT platforms to the cloud, mergers and acquisitions, or the exposure of information quality problems due to the exiting of key staff from an organisation, there are clear drivers for organisations to tackle these issues in a sustainable and cost-effective manner; and one that is value-adding in the long-term.

This report addresses many of the key issues and challenges that information quality leaders may face in defining and executing an effective strategy for sustainable change in their organisation. Readers will take away practical insights into:

- What information and data quality actually is, its strategic and operational importance, and how it can be measured;
- The key drivers: operationally, strategically and from a regulatory perspective, with an emphasis on how data quality approaches can help when addressing data protection and privacy challenges;
- Key proven frameworks and methodologies that can be used to structure information quality initiatives to secure quick wins while working towards longer-term success;
- Some of the relevant standards and regulations which relate to information and data quality, including insights into how an information quality principles-based approach can help compliance objectives under ISO27001, COBIT, Solvency II and other high priority standards;
- The role of and risks arising from cloud computing in the context of information quality;
- Practical tools and approaches to defining and communicating your strategy for information quality improvement, including defining the value propositions and the use of story and narrative to communicate; and the three strategies you will need to plan for in order to have a sustainable information quality change in your organisation;
- Approaches to gathering information for and constructing the formal business

cases for your information quality projects; and the critical importance of having a business case that demonstrates the value of your approach, even if it is one you prepare as part of an after action review of your projects; and

- Common pitfalls and barriers that are encountered in the roll-out of information quality change, with potential solutions to tackling some of the most common.

A number of international and industry-diverse case studies are analysed in terms of where these issues have occurred and the actual or potential difficulties which might impact the long-term success of information quality change. Readers can learn valuable lessons to apply in their own organisations.

Ultimately, good quality information is the result of sound practices and procedures in the governance of that asset. Quality data provides a key foundation for regulatory compliance, risk management and basic business processes/functions – ultimately generating profit on the bottom-line.

While there are myriad tools and best-practices available to draw on, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that organisations don't change; people change. Recognising and addressing the 'human factor' in your strategy is a critical success factor.

About the author

DARAGH O BRIEN is managing director of Castlebridge Associates, one of Ireland's leading consulting and training companies specialising in the field of information quality management.

Prior to founding Castlebridge Associates, Daragh worked for over a decade with a leading Irish telecommunications company in a variety of complex information management projects, from single view of customer to compliance controls, with hands-on experience of technical issues, information quality challenges and the strategic change management needs at the heart of such projects.

Daragh is a charter member of the International Association for Information and Data Quality (IAIDQ). In 2008, he was awarded a fellowship of the Irish Computer Society for his contributions to the information/data quality profession.

He is a former director of the IAIDQ and chairs the IAIDQ's Irish community of practice, which is run in partnership with the Irish Computer Society under the IQ Network brand. He lectures on Legal Issues in Informatics on the European MSc in Business Informatics at Dublin City University and was an active contributor to the development of the IAIDQ's Information Quality Certified Practitioner (IQCP) accreditation. He is a lead tutor for the Irish Computer Society's professional accreditation in data protection practice.

A regular presenter at information quality conferences internationally, Daragh has worked with clients in healthcare, financial services, government services and telecommunications on a broad range of information quality and data governance issues. He has also written extensively on these topics. His consulting clients include clients in healthcare, education services, start-up companies, government departments and financial services.

Daragh is a frequent writer on his company website (www.castlebridge-associates.com) and his personal blog (www.obriend.info). He also maintains the IQTrainwrecks.com website (www.iqtrainwrecks.com) on behalf of the IAIDQ (www.iaidq.org).

Acknowledgements

IN PREPARING this report as an updated extension of my first report, *Defining and Implementing an Effective Data Quality Strategy*, I must restate parts of the dedication.

In this report I quote Issac Newton: “If I see further it is because I stand on the shoulders of giants.” Truly I too, stand on the shoulders of giants, having learned an incredible amount from my experiences on real-world projects and from conversations (face-to-face and by e-mail) with other members of the information/data quality community, through my membership of the IAIDQ.

Since 2009, the network of information and data quality professionals and the opportunities to connect with, debate with and learn from skilled people the world over has exploded to a level I could not have anticipated back in 2005, when I started pushing the publicity machine for the IAIDQ. To all the voices in that network, I thank you for your support, your constructive criticism and your wisdom.

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I must also extend my thanks to all those I’ve worked with on projects to improve information quality or who have shared their experiences of projects with me either through formal presentations or informally in social situations. If I haven’t named you it is because you are too numerous, but if any of you see anything that looks familiar in the case studies in this paper, it is entirely a coincidence.

Finally, I have to thank my wife and the other woman in my life, our daughter. All this is my wife’s fault because over a decade ago she made me ask ‘why?’ when information or data was wrong. And my daughter just makes me want to work all the harder to improve life for all through smarter management of information and its quality.