

National Information Management Skills Summit

REPORT ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE BREAKOUT SESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

Background

The National Information Management (IM) Skills Summit was held on Wednesday 15 October at Parliament House in Brisbane. The Summit, which was a key initiative of the IM Sub-Committee of the Queensland Government's Strategic Information & ICT Council, was organised by Queensland State Archives.

Delegates participated in one of the following three breakout sessions during the afternoon of the Summit:

1. IM Education and Careers
2. Recruiting and Retaining IM Specialists
3. Identifying Future IM Needs

The sessions were held to generate ideas for consideration by the IM Sub-Committee during the development of an action plan to improve the IM capability of the public sector.

Breakout Session Approach

The breakout sessions were conducted between 2.00pm and 3.35pm. After an introduction to the session by group chair, two delegates presented brief case study vignettes. The purpose of the vignettes was to highlight key issues within the presenter's organisation, or area of expertise in relation to the topic and to generate discussion.

Following the vignettes, a professional facilitator led a brainstorming session to identify future opportunities and barriers to success in each of the topic areas. The group chair presented the key outcomes of their session to Summit delegates immediately after the session.

OUTCOMES

Key Themes

Although the sessions were divided into three separate topic areas, all sessions focussed on how government can respond at a strategic level to challenges in a rapidly changing information management environment.

The following high-level themes emerged from all three sessions indicating possible future action areas:

1. Defining and promoting information management as a profession
2. Promoting the value of information and effective information management
3. Raising awareness of the information management responsibilities of all public sector staff
4. Partnering with the tertiary sector to progress information management education
5. Strengthening dialogue about information management and facilitating collaboration
6. Addressing sustainable skills development for existing IM professionals.

Summary of Session Outcomes

The information detailed below does not capture all verbatim comments and topics covered in general discussion during the breakout sessions. Instead, it focuses on the opportunities and barriers that were either articulated by delegates or interpreted from discussion themes.

Information Management Education and Careers	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increase integration between industry, government, educators and community sector employers through a forum (i.e. knowledge council) for dialogue about collaboration, joint research and joint education opportunities.▪ Create an IM professional body to define IM and increase recognition and respect for IM professional. In conjunction, there should be IM competencies introduced that enable better, more targeted marketing towards potential IM students and demonstrates IM career paths.▪ Invest money into research to define IM and determine the value of information and IM.▪ Include IM education into discipline specific study. (i.e. mathematics students need to complete a subject in IM to graduate). In lieu of that, there should at least be some classes within non IM degrees that illustrate how IM skills are highly important for the workplace. Combine IM degrees with other degrees such as IT or public administration.▪ There is a need for recognised progression pathways for IM skills/competencies. This should include space for experiential learning.▪ Current students are generally more digitally literate due to the environment they grew up in (the digital era). Teaching of IM needs to take this into consideration.▪ It is strategically important to raise the profile and encourage people to value IM. There is a lack of language and understanding of how to value IM and information. More specifically, IM needs to be defined in monetary terms.▪ Include broad skills such as policy development, business analysis, education or training skills in IM, communication, mentoring and interpersonal skills IM courses.▪ Develop strategies to ensure the impacts of a retiring workforce are minimised. This could include mobility or the job training opportunities.▪ Strengthen relationships between employers and educators to better prepare students for the workforce.▪ Develop state level traineeship opportunities for archival staff that leverage off the current federal government training programs.
	Perceived Barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Anecdotal evidence indicates that students of IM courses over the age of 45 are not getting interviews for jobs despite the skills shortage, indicating a possible age bias.▪ IM workers and educators are still bound by traditional skills and techniques, however IM education can be targeted at, and leveraged off, digital natives. This will propel thinking about IM into the future.

Recruiting and Retaining Information Management Specialists	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a pool of Government IM professionals that can be accessed by all government agencies. ▪ Increase coaching/mentoring opportunities for existing information management professionals. ▪ Promote career path and incentives such as flexible work practices (i.e. mobile computing) to encourage IM professionals to consider public sector careers. ▪ Encourage/enforce managers to enable existing IM professionals to take advantage of flexible working conditions. ▪ Define the skills sets required by IM professionals to enable government to articulate the skills needed. ▪ Standardise pay levels for IM specialists across Government. ▪ Undertake similar awareness raising activities to the Equal Employment Opportunities campaign to encourage cultural change i.e. mandatory courses as part of induction and the inclusion of IM responsibilities within position descriptions. ▪ Whole-of-Government standards and guidelines are integral to achieving change. Raising awareness of standards and guidelines will ensure all staff, not just IM professionals, understand their IM obligations. Standards, policies and guidelines need to be written in plain English and not be overly bureaucratic. ▪ Influence the ‘supply’ side (tertiary sector) and commit government to employing IM specialists following graduation. ▪ Target Chief Executive Officers with awareness raising strategies. <p>Perceived Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruiting individuals that possess all the required skills. Many agencies are employing business analysts and skilling them up in other areas because they are unable to find people with the required range of skills. ▪ Information management as a discipline is evolving and is relatively new. Skills sets are ambiguous. ▪ Perceived lack of ownership of issues relating to recruiting and retaining IM specialists, including a lack of investment in strategies to address issues. ▪ Inability to negotiate salaries which forces agencies to appoint contractors. ▪ Prioritisation of technology over information management capability by CIOs.
Identifying Future Information Management Needs	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop new policies and principles that embed “smart” IM into business processes and avoid unnecessary constraints. ▪ Change focus from records management to business process management. Need to define information and information management to support this change. ▪ Challenge the culture where recordkeeping and information management is not considered a necessary core skill for all public sector employees. Focus on embedding in everyday work practices and reward practices that value and value-add information. ▪ Maintain information as part of an organisation’s assets. Education and awareness strategies that link information in business terms to outcomes need to be developed to ensure public sector employees understand the value of the information asset.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the contribution that community collected information could add to government information assets. ▪ Take advantage of the existing talent pool of IM experts and transfer knowledge to organisations. ▪ Develop strategies for succession planning that include practices for capturing tacit knowledge in the workforce. ▪ Consider models adopted by other disciplines such as project management where there are sets of rules / “body of knowledge” which have become accepted practice. ▪ Information managers need to help set up awareness, business process changes and competency changes for all managers. ▪ Explore opportunities for assigning value of information and effective information management practices. (i.e. assessing performance on discoverability). ▪ Consider harnessing the innovation of existing social networking strategies to attract future IM professionals. ▪ Address cultural information management issues through leadership development. Strategies for encouraging leadership need to be considered. ▪ Develop a whole-of-government approach to address issues of power between agencies and within agencies.
	<p>Perceived Barriers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of leadership and clarity around roles and responsibilities. ▪ Identifying and reaching the right audience. ▪ Role of the CIO which is misunderstood or misused. ▪ Lack of willingness to invest in strategies for sharing information. ▪ Legislative, regulatory, political and commercial barriers such as privacy, policy, security, identity management.

Breakout Session Roles

Session	Roles
Breakout Session 1 IM EDUCATION AND CAREERS	Chair: Tim Barker Assistant Government Statistician Queensland Treasury Case Study Presenters: 1. Sue McKemmish Professor, Information Technology Monash University 2. Helen Partridge Associate Professor Queensland University of Technology Scribe: Alex Main Research Officer Queensland State Archives
Breakout Session 2 RECRUITING AND RETAINING IM SPECIALISTS	Chair: Tony Hayes Executive Director Public Service Commission Case Study Presenters: 1. Ray Moore Chief Information Officer Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Queensland Government 2. Stephen Long Director of Human Resources Department of Public Works Queensland Government Scribe: Anna Morris Senior Research Analyst Queensland State Archives
Breakout Session 3 IDENTIFYING FUTURE IM NEEDS	Chair: Alan Chapman Case Study Presenters: 1. Mark Corbould Assistant Director-General, Information Technology National Library of Australia 2. Steve Jacoby Executive Director - Infrastructure Strategy Department of Education, Training and the Arts Queensland Government Scribe: Joanne Colwell Policy Officer Queensland State Archives