CAMPUS 08 TECHNOLOGY

Developing an Information Lifecycle Management Strategy for Higher Education

William Knabe, Ph.D., A.B.D., Director of Statistical Data Applications and Institutional Data Analyst for Information Technology Services, The University of Iowa

SYNOPSIS

Information lifecycle management (ILM) has gained prominence among academic institutions for good reason. Federal and state regulations, like HIPAA, GLBA, FERPA, FISMA, and the Patriot Act, as well as rules of civil procedure or e-Discovery, are forcing colleges and universities to retain more information for much longer periods of time than ever before. This information must now be more readily accessible yet protected due to its sensitive nature. These requirements are causing academic IT organizations to rethink how they store, protect, access and manage information as it moves through its lifecycle.

As storage management challenges and data protection regulations continue to escalate, ILM solutions offer a promise of increased accessibility, improved efficiency, and reduced costs. These benefits hold special appeal to those academic leaders, who are intent on leveraging their institutional information into a competitive advantage. More than a single technology or storage solution, ILM is a constellation of policies, services, and products designed to meet institutional data goals. These goals can be influenced by a number of factors including integrity of the data; regulatory requirements or conditions attached to the data; or a need to retrieve the data for legal discovery or some other purpose. ILM represents a more holistic, unified, end-to-end approach to data accessibility and storage; therefore, it requires an enterprise-wide strategy. It offers a unified approach to managing information throughout its lifecycle by helping decision makers discover information connections across applications, departments, and repositories.

This presentation discusses important aspects of a successful and effective ILM strategy in an academic environment. It begins with a discussion of the benefits of a properly implemented, tiered approach. An academic model for information lifecycle management is presented using elements based on a “situational” (information value based on time/context) approach. Recognizing that Infrequently accessed or inactive data can become more valuable as unexpected events occur or as new institutional initiatives or projects evolve, the proposed model links institutional intent (strategic plans, business requirements, and service agreements) with such integrated processes

as policy management and data classification. This discussion should provide insight and guidance to IT organizations seeking to evolve their ILM implementation regardless of institutional size or data management maturity.

The presentation concludes with identification of common roadblocks to successful implementation of an ILM plan, including lack of a clearly defined strategy, failure to achieve institutional buy-in, insufficient cost savings, and product or vendor immaturity. Action steps that can be taken to overcome such obstacles are presented in an effort to bring academic institutions a step closer to the reality of a proactive and optimized information lifecycle management strategy.