The State of the Association

A Report to the ARMA International Board of Directors

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The speed of modern business is always accelerating. Time is critical. Opportunities for success or failure are determined in increasingly smaller units of measurement. Professional associations are not immune to these pressures, as the professionals who make up their ranks demand immediate solutions to the problems cropping up incessantly on the front lines.

In my previous State of the Association addresses, I’ve shared our many successes. And I often enjoy this opportunity to pause and reflect on the accomplishments of the previous period – since the frenetic pace of daily progress rarely affords the chance to do so.

This State of the Association address provides that same opportunity. We have accomplished many grand, audacious goals. The ARMA International of the past could scarcely have dreamed of the bold headway we’ve made. On our journey, the association has evolved into a much more nimble machine, capable of keeping up with the pace of modern business. With this address, I welcome the opportunity to take a moment and proudly look back on these accomplishments with you.

Advancing Information Governance and Information Governance Professionals
Since the Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles® were developed in 2009, I have reported about their progress and how they are helping us define and lead in the information governance (IG) space. The Principles continue to evolve. Since my last address, we updated the Information Governance Maturity Model as part of our ongoing commitment to serve as the IG leader. The Principles have truly helped us accomplish a great deal for the profession and for our professionals.

First, they’ve helped us communicate to business leaders, the analyst community, and government policy makers. For too long, our profession had lacked a cohesive set of statements that unifies best practices and foundational principles of records and information management and brings the RIM profession to its logical conclusion: sound IG across the enterprise.

Simply put, RIM is the foundation on which the Principles – and good IG – stand. This truth brings us to the next-most-important accomplishment made possible by the Principles: they helped us create a career roadmap for information professionals.

Throughout her term, President Komal Gulich, CRM, has challenged all information professionals to move further along their career path by following this IG roadmap. The opportunity is great; in today’s explosive information environment, organizations have never had a greater need for IG professionals who can lead them in creating, organizing, managing, protecting, using, and disposing of information in ways that will reduce their risks and help them reach their goals.

For RIM professionals who may be struggling to see how they might build on their skills and knowledge to progress along the IG career path, this image identifies key areas of expertise that frame an IG professional’s sphere of influence.
As you can see, within these areas of expertise are many certifications information professionals may earn to demonstrate and receive recognition for their knowledge and skills and to advance in their careers. Whether you choose to focus in a specialty area (like privacy or e-discovery), become recognized for general knowledge in information management, prove expertise in RIM as a CRM, or demonstrate your abilities by leading major IG initiatives in an organization, ARMA International encourages you to quantify your abilities through a quality certification program like many of those listed here.

As the IG picture continued to reveal itself this past year, ARMA International seized the opportunity to create a professional certification for the profession itself. As the IG leader, we developed and in March 2013 made available the Information Governance Professional (IGP) certification, providing a credential within an ethical and professional framework that supports individuals in delivering organizational value and reducing risk.

Those who earn this certification will have demonstrated their competence for working closely with executive officers responsible for the organization’s legal/compliance, IT, and lines of business activities to implement an effective governance program and make themselves recognizable within the industry as an expert.

So, what do IG experts look like? IG professionals are strategic in nature. They work in or with those who work in the highest levels of the organization. Their span of control and influence is broader than traditional RIM professionals have and is heavily influenced by information technology. They also take a proactive role in identifying opportunities and business needs that are not being met, determining what content an organization should create and demonstrating how it can be used effectively within the organization.

IG professionals routinely interact with those key functional areas that are necessary to implementing and maintaining good IG; in addition to working with IT, they frequently interact with legal/compliance, RIM, and business unit leaders. They have a firm grasp on key interdisciplinary strategies required to
respond to litigation, implement new systems, and incorporate new technologies – in short, to embrace all of the things that are characteristic of good IG!

Finally, they are able to communicate effectively with the C-suite and receive verbal and financial support for handling all of the organization’s information appropriately.

It is important to note here that the IGP certification is incorporated under an independent governing board and is not linked to or restricted by any ARMA International product or service. The IGP certification is awarded solely on an individual’s ability to meet the certification requirements.

**Resources and Connections for the Future**

As we’ve described, the IG career path winds through many related fields, which provides numerous opportunities for ongoing professional development. ARMA International’s partnerships with key organizations, associations, and other entities help bring those quality professional development opportunities to you.

In addition to the resources that allied organizations have enabled us to make available on our website, content from ISACA, the International Association of Privacy Professionals, The Sedona Conference®, and the International Legal Technology Association will have prominent placement at the 2013 ARMA International Annual Conference & Expo.

The image of the IG landscape shown above has helped us sharpen our focus, causing us to expand our relationships with some organizations and seek new ones with others.

For example, among our other relationships in the legal community, ARMA International is now working with the Electronic Discovery Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to resolving electronic discovery challenges by conducting studies of litigation processes that incorporate modern technologies. By sharing content between us, our goal is not only to provide valuable resources to you, but also to further the legal community’s understanding of governance and records issues.

We have been reaching out to the legal community for several years now. Our ongoing partnership with LegalTech and LegalTech West has expanded, giving us the opportunity to provide education in our own IG track. For the second year, a packed house of legal-focused professionals has received the benefit of ARMA International’s brand of education.

On the business management front, ARMA International is also excited to bring our resources to Today’s General Counsel Institute, which was formerly known as the Executive Counsel Institute. An arm of what is now known as Today’s General Counsel magazine, the institute offers an interactive colloquium that provides a deep understanding and practical advice regarding major e-discovery challenges organizations face. Expert speakers from ARMA International were invited to its events in Beverly Hills, Calif., San Francisco, and London.

I’m also pleased to unveil significant planning and preparation for our work within the internal auditor community. In the business world, “what gets measured gets done,” so a significant way to encourage organizations to develop robust IG programs is to provide a way to help measure their effectiveness. Working with volunteers from the ranks of corporate internal auditors, we developed and are now ready to launch a Principles-based audit tool for internal auditors to use, which will continually bring focus to the programs our professionals have built.

Our professionals need to be prepared for this emerging world of IG. We want to ensure that our members and customers are ready to be the experts their organizations need them to be. With that in mind, we also continue to bring ARMA International education to our own community. Since my last
report, we participated in a joint European Union conference with partners PRISM and NAID, with shining feedback by attendees. We have helped prepare numerous candidates for IG-related certifications with our study packs. On the publications front, we released the latest version of the *Glossary of Records and Information Management Terms*, ARMA TR 22-2012, which was expanded to include many new terms from disciplines that comprise IG, including IT, legal, and business management. And, we’re acting on customer feedback to provide more case studies and practical examples in our *Hot Topic* publication and *Information Management* magazine.

Also tending to the needs of RIM professionals who find themselves on the front lines, we find our listing of timely, topical web seminars continues to grow – and be very popular. We have also launched our newest online course, “Managing the Social Media Information Explosion.” This course joins our ever-expanding library of online offerings to help prepare information professionals. And, it serves as a tremendous next step for those who have taken our best-selling Essentials of RIM certificate program. There are now more than 450 professionals who have made a commitment to mastering these essentials!

Additionally, we’re helping educate our vendors to better serve their customers. By transforming our Essentials of RIM certificate program into an in-person training that is available for sales and account representatives, we are providing a common language and knowledge set that our vendor partners can use to help their customers meet the daily challenges faced by practitioners everywhere.

Perhaps most significantly, we’ve taken the show on the road. In partnership with our chapters, we’re bringing quality programming out of the halls of our Annual Conference & Expo and into the local market with our new “road show.” Initially offered as a pre-conference session in 2012, the SharePoint® Records Management Certificate program teaches attendees how to implement large and complex electronic document and records management systems successfully. Facilitated by Bruce Miller, a best-selling author and expert in electronic recordkeeping, this certificate program consists of a two-day seminar and comprehensive computer-based exam. Although it is based on Microsoft® SharePoint® 2010, the education the program offers is fully applicable to other technology platforms.

**Building a Community of Professionals**

We’ve seen how our world is expanding. We’ve helped highlight the many areas in which an information professional’s career may grow. But, creating a true community of professionals takes time and commitment. Our first priority is to say thank you to the many members and volunteers who help create our resources – and our vibrant, thriving community.

Many members took advantage of our “Thank You for Your Membership” holiday gift, which included free access to the RIM Fundamentals web seminar series. We also took an opportunity to thank members who served in an official leadership role over the previous fiscal year with a letter and certificate of appreciation, along with an electronic “badge” that made its way virally onto many social networks.

Social media continues to be a rapidly growing forum for our members and customers to engage with the association in real time. From updates to questions, we continue to notice membership and “fan” growth throughout all of our social media vehicles. If you haven’t followed us on Twitter yet, @ARMA_INT continues to be one of the “go-to” sources for members, customers, and vendors alike who are searching for updates, trends, and discussion. Currently, we have 3,764 Twitter followers, a 10% increase since our last update. @ARMA_INT has a “Tweet Grade” of 98.4%, which means we are more effective in terms of number and power of followers, update frequency, and engagement than 98% of the two million other Twitter users.
Finally, visitors to our website will notice a recent dramatic facelift, with more concisely presented information that can be found through an easier-to-navigate system. But, most importantly, what was a sometimes-frustrating shopping experience has been resolved. Visitors now have an easy-to-use shopping cart and more payment options, are encouraged to post reviews on products and education, can share products via social media, and can even add items to their wish list for later purchase — after budgets are approved! As you take it for a test drive, you’ll also notice a site-wide improvement to search capabilities that brings ARMA.org more in line with expectations from today’s web-savvy consumers.

As you can see, ARMA International has had a very active several months, working to provide resources, education, and opportunities for our professionals. And, as our president has done so many times this year, I challenge you to reach out beyond your comfort zone. Take advantage of the many educational opportunities, partnerships, and resources that are now available to you.