

Foreword

In today's fast changing world, organisations generate enormous amounts of data, yet many are finding it difficult to use this data. Indeed it is estimated that more than 70% of generated data is never used. Decision-makers have access to much data but more than ever make decisions with sub-optimal data. The cliché “Drowning in data and starving for information” is so true these days.

Issues of information quality (IQ) problems in the organisation are not identified until it is too late. Few organizations treat information quality as a strategic issue, yet they make strategic decisions with often inaccurate, incomplete and outdated data.

There is however an emerging awareness that in the modern organisation one is required to make decisions very quickly in order to gain information superiority and competitive advantage. High quality data is critical in such situations. Equally, many organisations are also painfully aware of the significant costs of poor quality data. Consequently, there is a growing demand for IQ initiatives as organisations' awareness of the importance of their IQ increases.

Leading organisations must no longer treat data quality as a cost, but as a strategic issue that must be addressed. A variety of initiatives are becoming imperative to address real-time data profiling, cleansing, and matching, metadata management, new regulatory compliance requirements and so on. The real-time nature of e-business practices and processes today has made real-time profiling, cleansing and matching an important issue. The issue of metadata management has gathered attention because standards, definitions, and application metadata sharing are key to solving many IQ problems.

In tackling IQ problems, many lessons have been learned. It is well established that in improving data quality, organisations must treat IQ as a multi-dimensional concept beyond accuracy. Methods and tools for performing IQ assessments have been developed in practice. Understanding the systems, processes, and management practices of an organisation has become as important as understanding its data. Furthermore, many organisations have found that resolving their IQ problems is not a single-phase process, Rather it is a continuous process, where one solution

may lead to new problems and employees at all levels must come together and to solve IQ problems.

Without a solid foundation of high quality data, dirty data can chip away at an organisation's ability to function effectively. An information quality initiative that is well defined within the context of an organisation may still encounter difficulties with implementation. The difficulties faced by organisations when executing their information quality initiatives include meeting data standards, handling secondary information, reconciling technology with general business IQ, integrating disparate disciplines, etc.

The book *Challenges of Managing Information Quality in Service Organisations* provides us with the unique opportunity to get an in-depth insight into the IQ issues facing organisations in the service industry. Information quality is a core business issue that is fundamental to the success of the contemporary Enterprise. Recently information quality has gained the status that it deserves in the research community and no doubt books such as this will also inform the communities of practice to enhance enterprise information orientation.

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Andy Koronios received his PhD from the University of Queensland, Australia. He has extensive teaching experience both in the tertiary sector at undergraduate and postgraduate, MBA, DBA and PhD level as well as in the provision of executive industry seminars. He has numerous research publications in a diverse area such as multimedia and online learning systems, information security and data quality, electronic commerce, and Web requirements engineering. His current research interests focus on data quality and the use of information in strategic decision-making. He is currently a professor and the head of the School of Computer and Information Science at the University of South Australia.