Chapter 11
Finding and Discovering Information

ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the finding and discovery stage in the information lifecycle. The chapter identifies the key questions to answer in formulating an information strategy. Concepts associated with these issues and the consequences of ignoring them are explained. The issues are also interpreted in different internal operating environments and in the context of future business environments.

FINDING AND DISCOVERING IN THE LIFE CYCLE

Finding and Discovery include two important categories of tasks, specifically those that include ‘looking for’ information in the larger business environment, and those activities that pertain to searching within systems (Bates, 1989; Croft, Metzler & Strohman, 2010; White, Marchionini & Muresan, 2008). How individuals look for information is dependent upon their experiences, their knowledge, their sources and also the type of information they’re looking for. To support all the ways that people might look for information, an organization should ensure there are multiple points of access and discovery, including directories, navigation and browse structures, and easy access to individuals, reference services, and search support. Search system creation and maintenance includes the configuration of the search system architecture, definition of searchable fields and search index parameters, search system

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interface and search results display and presentation, search results sorting and manipulation options, and the configuration of query processing algorithms (e.g. exact and fuzzy pattern matching, Boolean operators, query expansion, etc.). Browse includes those capabilities that allow users to physically navigate through predefined collections of documents. Browse structures may be constructed for any classification schemes defined for a system, where the values have been associated with metadata records for documents. This function also includes the ability to generate search transaction logs and browse transaction logs. Search and Browse also includes maintaining the search indexes and classification schemes to ensure efficient performance of these tools for users. Chapter 11 presents key decision points related to finding and discovery of information assets, including considerations for different business and working environments.

**KEY QUESTIONS**

Chapter 11 provides a deep dive into the key questions and decision points in the finding and discovery stage of the life cycle. Experience suggests that there are 42 key questions to ask as you develop a strategy to support the creation and capture of information. The questions also form the basis of an audit of information assets. An audit should ask and answer all of the questions listed in this chapter. From these answers you should be able to judge the strength or weakness of assets in this stage of their life cycles.

These questions are organized into five easy to remember categories to help you work through them as you work on your strategy. We do not offer answers to these questions because only you can determine which answers best suit your environment. There is no single right or wrong answer. Short explanations are provided for key concepts as background and context. These explanations also serve as a working reference source for both business and information professionals.

**The What Questions**

Your strategy should explain….

- What information your internal stakeholders are trying to find?
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