Professionals’ Understanding of the Influence of Legal and Regulatory Requirements and International Standards on Workplace Information Behavior

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Background

In an increasingly digital workplace, where much professional information is now created and managed digitally, and accessed and shared using mobile devices, the importance of information security, information provenance, and information quality becomes ever greater. The information needs of government agencies and regulators, and other stakeholders in the organization, through continually developing legislation and regulatory frameworks, are imposing greater information creation and management needs on the organization. The lack of awareness therefore of why information needs to be collected, created, shared or carefully managed, driven by legal and regulatory requirements, or how information management and security related standards can support the efficient management of workplace information, is of concern.

Recent academic research into factors affecting professionals’ workplace information behavior (Silburn, 2013) found that there was a complex socio-technical web of inter-related people, technology, organization and organization environment factors that affected information behavior. One group of factors - legal and regulatory requirements and international standards - was found to have positive and negative influences on behavior when people understood what the legal and regulatory and standards requirements were. However, there was also a lack of awareness regarding the existence of legal and regulatory requirements and information management related international standards amongst many participants. This lack of knowledge has consequences for information, information management and information behavior in the workplace. A review of academic and practitioner literature suggests that there is little research on the relationship between legal and regulatory requirements and the need to create, share, and manage information in the
professional organization. The emphasis of much of the literature is either on the practical consequences of a regulation, e.g., Baxendale & Jones (2000); or assessing the impact and awareness of a standard amongst information professionals, e.g., McLeod (2003).

**Aim**

The aim of this research is to develop an understanding, based on current literature and primary research, of: the influences of legal and regulatory requirements on information in the organization; the role of information-related standards in the organization; and the awareness of professionals of the influence of legal, regulatory and standards on information in the workplace.

This research is focused specifically on UK legislation and regulation, and standards published by the UK’s national standards body - the British Standards Institute. These two themes are being investigated together because there are referential links between the two. For example, the Freedom of Information Act (Great Britain, 2000) makes reference to the standard for managing records, BS ISO 15489:2001 (BSI, 2001).

**Method**

The research will be conducted in two main phases. The first phase is an extensive literature review of relevant acts of parliament, regulations and standards to examine their influence on the creation, processing, and management of information in the workplace. This review, which is currently underway, will also incorporate a review of existing published literature on the topic area.

The second phase of research will focus on exploring the professionals’ understanding of legal and regulatory requirements within the context of information, and the subsequent implications on their information behavior. The methodological approach to the second phase will be dependent upon the outcome from the documentary and literature review.

**References**


