

The Rise of the Information Professional

A Career Path for the Digital Economy



*Written by
John F. Mancini, President, AIIM*



About the Research

As the non-profit association dedicated to nurturing, growing and supporting the community of information professionals, AIIM is proud to provide this research at no charge. In this way, the entire community can leverage the education, thought leadership and direction provided by our work. We would like this research to be as widely distributed as possible. Feel free to use this research in presentations and publications with the attribution – “© AIIM 2012, www.aiim.org”.

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About AIIM

AIIM (www.aiim.org) has been an advocate and supporter of information professionals for nearly 70 years. The association's mission is to ensure that information professionals understand the current and future challenges of managing information assets in an era of social, mobile, cloud and big data. Founded in 1943, AIIM builds on a strong heritage of research and member service. Today, AIIM is a global, non-profit organization that provides independent research, education and certification programs to information professionals. AIIM represents the entire information management community, with programs and content for practitioners, technology suppliers, integrators and consultants.

About the Author

John F. Mancini joined AIIM in May 1996. Prior to joining AIIM, Mancini spent 11 years in various positions at the American Electronics Association in Washington, D.C., most recently as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. He has also served as Executive Director of the Foundation for Public Affairs. He holds a bachelor's degree from the College of William and Mary and a master's degree from Princeton University.

Mancini is a frequent speaker at meetings and conferences throughout the world on various topics focused on trends in the technology marketplace and the evolving and expanding role of information professionals in helping organizations build effective information management strategies. Recent keynote topics include:

[In the Social, Mobile, and Cloud era, what does it take to be an Information Professional?](#)

[Moving from Records to Engagement to Insight](#)

[Content Opportunities in Revolutionary Times](#)

[What is an Information Professional?](#)

[If SharePoint is Your Answer, Do You Know What Your Question Is?](#)

Mancini blogs under the title Digital Landfill, is an active participant on multiple social networks (usually as “jmancini77”), and is the author of a series of “[8 things you need to know](#)” books.

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Introduction

Last year, Gartner published “*CIO Alert: The Need for Information Professionals*.” The core finding in the report was:

The vast majority of organizations see the need to manage information as an enterprise resource rather than in separate “silos,” departments or systems, but they don’t know how to begin to address the challenge, as it is so large...Professional roles focused on information management will be different to that of established IT roles...An “information professional” will not be one type of role or skill set, but will in fact have a number of specializations.

- “*CIO Alert: The Need for Information Professionals*”, by Debra Logan and Regina Casonato, August 2, 2011, Gartner Inc.

This perspective was reinforced in a January 2012 report by noted IT skills expert Foote Partners. Per CEO David Foote in *IT Skills Demand and Pay Trends Report*,

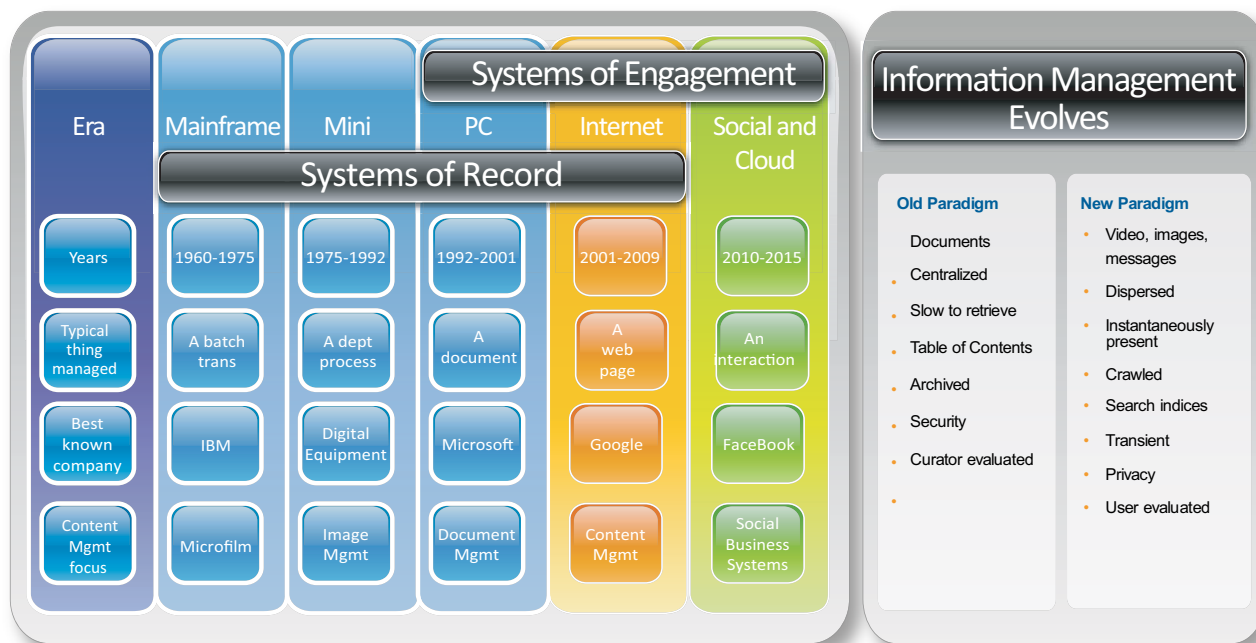
Gone is the tendency to hire specialists and large teams of limited range permanent staff for long-term initiatives. New models require smaller teams made up of multitaskers and multidimensionally skilled workers with subject matter expertise, business savvy, technology skills, and a range of appropriate interpersonal and “political” skills.

AIIM agrees with these assessments. AIIM believes the role of information professionals is changing, and changing very quickly. The value-add for information technology in organizations is rapidly shifting from the technology *per se* to the stewardship, optimization, and application of the information assets themselves.

To meet this need, over the past year, AIIM worked with industry experts and focus groups to define the body of knowledge necessary for these new information professionals to be successful, built a certification and test based upon this body of knowledge that is available at locations around the world, and has created a set of free training materials to help information professionals prepare for the examination.



The Perfect Storm



So how did we wind up here? How did the nature of information technology change so dramatically – and so quickly?

Over the past decade, there has been a “perfect storm” of change driven by mobile, social, and cloud technologies. These changes were first evident in the consumer sector. In the course of decade we went from an environment in which very few people used or cared about technology outside of the context of work to one in which technology is everywhere and virtually everyone has access to it. Ten years ago the most innovative technology a person had was normally handed out by central IT casting when one took a job. Now, those cutting edge technologies are more likely to be at home.

It was only a matter of time before these experiences started moving from the consumer sector to the enterprise. The “appification” and “consumerization” of the enterprise is revolutionizing the way we think about enterprise information and IT – and the kinds of skills we need within our organizations.

AIIM described this revolution in a white paper by best-selling author Geoffrey Moore, *Systems of Engagement and the Future of Enterprise IT: A Sea Change in Enterprise IT* (www.aiim.org/futurehistory). The paper notes that over the past few decades, the focus of enterprise IT across multiple technology transition has been the construction of “Systems of Record” – essentially the initial digitization of paper-based records and processes. Initially, these Systems of Record created competitive advantage for those who implemented them before their competitors. But no longer. Per Moore,

...the thing to register about systems of record is that they are mostly and largely complete, particularly within larger organizations. Are they perfect? No. But these systems of record are no longer a source of competitive differentiation for organizations. They are a necessary condition of doing business. Once you have an interstate highway system, the era of the great build out comes to an end, and the era of maintenance comes to the fore, and that is precisely what has happened with enterprise IT as we have known it.



Organizations are now focused on taking the next step. They are focused on applying the lessons of the consumer world, and building Systems of Engagement – systems to connect, engage, and automate relationships with their partners, their customers, and their employees.

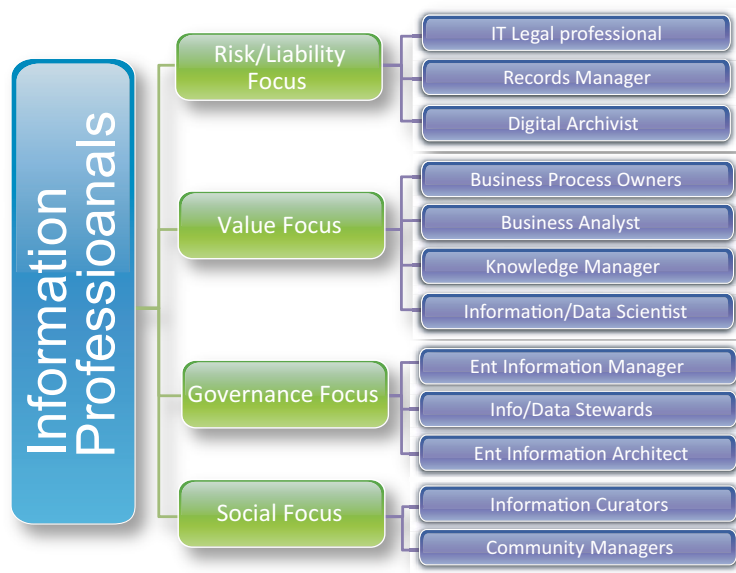
Organizations are facing an avalanche of information, in forms and formats and via devices that weren't even on the radar screen five years ago. Images and documents are the core of systems of record. Conversations — in a wide variety of forms and on a dizzying array of devices — are now the challenge. Best practices in this new world are scarce, the pressure by the business to implement is accelerating, a generation of networked millennials is ready to enter the workforce, and connections back to the familiar world of systems of record are tenuous. Our traditional definitions of control and governance must adapt to meet the changes of this new world.

The challenges here are enormous. Expectations of enterprise IT are rising. The business, still reeling from the crash of 2008, is questioning the rigidity and cost of legacy systems. The focus of IT is changing from a traditional focus on standardizing and automating back-end manual processes – a focus on CONTROL – to a focus on empowering and connecting knowledge workers and improving knowledge worker productivity and innovation. In the world of Systems of Engagement – no one on the user side cares about any of this. However, because these systems are being used by enterprises, they will inevitably be subject to the same legal and social restrictions as traditional enterprise content, and therein lies the rub. Today that rub is significantly limiting endorsement and adoption of consumer-style communication and collaboration facilities around the world, and it will continue to do so until the content management industry and its customers develop protocols and policies to address its issues.

This revolution in how business processes are conducted and deployed creates six imperatives for organizations:

- **Make everything mobile:** Redefine content delivery and process automation to take advantage of mobile devices and mobile workforces.
- **Digitize processes:** Drive paper out of processes and automate process flows.
- **Make the business social:** Integrate social technologies into processes rather than create stand-alone social networks.
- **Automate information governance:** Acknowledge that paper-based records paradigms no longer work and focus on automating governance and disposition.
- **Mine big content:** Find insights and value in massive aggregations of unstructured information.
- **Commit to the cloud:** Break down monolithic “enterprise” solutions into more “app like” solutions that can be deployed quickly independent of platform and in the cloud.

The Emerging Role of Information Professionals



AIIM believes that these changes are ultimately creating a need for a new type of information professional.

Traditionally, IT focused on either the deployment of enterprise software applications (seemingly the more complicated the better!) and the “plumbing” or our information infrastructures. Organizations now find that they need professionals with a broader skill set than what is traditionally found within traditional records managements or IT departments. Specifically, they need staff that understand the management, utilization, and application of information and social assets to the organization. They need a new breed of information professional.

The challenge in the early stages of this revolution is that this new breed of professional can have a number of roles within the organization. Few people currently have “information professional” as a title, but many have the stewardship, management, and application of information assets as a core part of their job. “Information professionals” can be found on the legal, records, and library staff of organizations. They can be found among those whose primary focus is governance – e.g., information architects and managers. Process owners, business analysts, and knowledge managers all have effective information management as a core part of their skill set, as do the new wave of information curators and community managers who currently focus primarily on social systems.

And that’s the point. At the early stages in the evolution of a profession – particularly one that is an umbrella that cuts across and encompasses a wide variety of technical disciplines – it is difficult to define where it begins and where it ends. Consider just one profession that is very well defined today – project management. Twenty-five years ago, one would imagine that the idea that there was a common body of knowledge associated with people who manage software projects and manufacturing projects and construction projects would have been met with extraordinary scepticism. “How can that be? The projects are so different! There can’t be any commonality across projects that are so different.”

AIIM believes this is how the profession of information management feels today.

However, over 400,000 Project Management Professionals later, it is clear that there was and is a core profession and body of knowledge associated with managing very different kinds of projects. Cultivating and encouraging awareness of this new breed of information professional is the focus of

AIIM. AIIM has built a comprehensive body of knowledge around the needs of information professionals, and is now beginning to certify professionals against that body of knowledge.

Validating the Need for Information Professionals

The first step in the evolution of the information management profession was defining whether it reflects the reality and experiences of those who are potential information professionals. In other words, can we validate the need for such a potential.

AIIM started by surveying a set of potential information professionals – both among those in the AIIM database (although not necessarily members) and among those with no connection to AIIM.

- 68% of those in the AIIM sample saw value for their organization in creating an information professional certification;
- 77% of those in the AIIM sample would find an information professional certification personally valuable;
- 38% of IT practitioners not connected to AIIM said that they would definitely or probably pursue such a certification.

Building the Body of Knowledge

In early 2011 AIIM surveyed 1,450 potential information professionals to kick-off the development of the new body of knowledge and certification. The survey respondents were asked to prioritize the knowledge areas identified by the Forrester report, *A Snapshot Of Today's Content And Collaboration Professional*, published in November 3, 2010. Industry experts in multiple workshops did the skills analysis, and the development was done according to ISO17024 - an ISO standard for how to certify professionals.

Domain	Focus Area/Sub-domain	Weights
1. Access/ Use	1.1 Enterprise Search	12
	1.2 Business Intelligence	
	1.3 Master Data Management	
	1.4 Text Analytics	
2. Capture/ Manage	2.1 Information Capture	20
	2.2 Business Process Management	
	2.3 Knowledge Management	
	2.4 Email Management	
	2.5 Content Management	
3. Collaborate/ Deliver	3.1 Collaboration	18
	3.2 Social Media	
	3.3 Information Workplace	
	3.4 Instant Messaging	
	3.5 Telecommuting Support	
	3.6 Web Conferencing	
4. Secure/ Preserve	4.1 Security	20
	4.2 Records Management	
	4.3 Data Privacy	
	4.4 Digital Rights Management	
	4.5 Archiving	
	4.6 E-Discovery	
5. Architecture/ Systems	5.1 Information Architecture	15
	5.2 Technical Architecture	
	5.3 Cloud Computing	
	5.4 Mobile Applications	
	5.5 Websites and portals	
6. Plan/ Implement	6.1 Strategic Planning	15
	6.2 Building the Business Case	
	6.3 Implementation Planning	
	6.4 Requirements Definition	
	6.5 Solution Design	
	6.6 Change Management	

The result was a set of key information management domains and prioritized set of focus areas within those domains. In other words, the result was a definition of what you need to know to be a Certified Information Professional (CIP).

A key issue that needed to be addressed at this point was the relationship of this broad body of knowledge and potential certification to much more technical and focused certifications and knowledge sets. Was this new professional certification a *replacement* for these? AIIM's conclusion was that this new professional certification was not a replacement for these, but rather designed to place these deep dive specializations *within a broader context*.

Take records management as an example. The CIP is not intended to be a replacement for deep dive training in the specific of records management; AIIM itself conducts 4-day Master courses in Electronic Records Management that has thousands of graduates. Rather, the point of the CIP is to place this deep dive technical knowledge within a context. A Records Manager needs to be an expert in records management, but also needs to understand how records management relates to live documents, social media, cloud computing, tablets, and *the business*.

Recall the quotes we introduced at the beginning of this white paper. According to Gartner's "*CIO Alert: The Need for Information Professionals*", the point is that "*an 'information professional' will not be one type of role or skill set, but will in fact have a number of specializations.*" And according to Foote, organizations need "*multitaskers and multidimensional workers.*"



CERTIFIED
INFORMATION
PROFESSIONAL

The Certified Information Professional Examination

With the body of knowledge in hand, AIIM then worked with a group of experts and Prometric to develop an examination to test whether someone understood the core concepts associated with information management.

The certification is now available from Prometric test centres across the world www.prometric.com/aiim. The 2 hours one-time, single-part proctored exam has 100 multiple-choice questions, electronically scored. The price is USD265 – with discounts available for organizations that wish to certify ten staff or more. AIIM is not requiring candidates to have any minimum education or experience before taking the exam, but recommending some years of relevant experience or education. Certification is valid for 3 years, and then must retake or take 45 CEUs to maintain it.

AIIM has made available a free sample exam at www.aiim.org/certification to help candidates test whether they are ready for the certification exam.

AIIM has built a set of videos to help candidates prepare for the examination. These videos are organized along the six major domains to allow candidates to focus on those areas in which they need additional help and background. The videos are available at no cost at <http://www.aiim.org/certification>. In addition, organizations are free to use these videos in your own internal training programs and are free to embed them in your own internal learning systems.

Who Should Pursue the CIP?

There are a wide variety of audiences for whom the CIP is directly relevant in understanding the challenges – and opportunities – associated with the revolution that is occurring in information management. A few examples...

IT Managers and Staff

It is clear that the skill set necessary to be effective in IT is changing:

- *IT is not providing a sustainable competitive advantage, just as having electricity does not provide a sustainable advantage when everyone has it.* (Coldstreams.com 2011, reporting on IEEE seminar)
- *The problem is that not enough people know how to use the new tools of the Internet, mobile, and cloud computing. The workforce as a whole does not have the right mix of skills.* (Maurice Mugambe, 2011)
- *The IT worker needed by businesses ... for the future needs to be multi-skilled – with a mixture of technical skills combined with strong business and communication skills.* (World of Work, 2011)

The CIP helps IT managers and staff: 1) Broaden their skill set beyond just technology; 2) Give sound advice on projects by better understanding the information lifecycle; 3) Communicate more effectively with project managers in the business; and 4) Understand how to exploit information for competitive advantage.

Solution Providers and Systems Integrators

Solution providers and systems integrators have long struggled with standardizing and delivering the educational content for their associates so that they understand the problems and pain points their customers are experiencing. This is particularly important as the nature of the solutions their customers are seeking change due to the “appification” and “consumerization” of enterprise solutions.

The CIP provides solution providers and systems integrators with: 1) A means to quickly educate their associates on the core concepts of information management – and validate their understand; 2) a turnkey set of educational tools that can be immediately deployed in your own learning environment; 3) a way to differentiate your competency from that of your competitors.

Records Managers, Legal Staff, and Archivists

Records management clearly is at some risk of marginalization within organization as the responsibility for managing information shifts to IT:

- *...most executives perceive it [RM] as an administrative cost center...the strategic relevancy of the records management function has taken a slight dip...* (ARMA/Forrester, 2011)
- *44% of records managers are not included in the IT strategic planning process, including requirements definitions and vendor selection – up from 35% in 2009* (ARMA/Forrester, 2011)
- *The inability of our profession to come to grips with the explosion of electronic records will spell the doom of the profession. In many organizations, that omission has made us irrelevant.* (Patrick Cunningham, CRM, 2010)

The CIP helps records managers, legal staff, and archivists:

1) Demonstrate a broad understanding of all information assets, not just records; 2) Demonstrate value of information and how to exploit it, rather than simply focusing on compliance; 3) Become involved in projects in the planning phase, not just at the end; and 4) Enhance existing skills and develop new ones to become more relevant and competitive in the marketplace.



Reaffirming the Business Value

In early 2012, AIIM conducted an independent market survey of more than 200 business executives, attesting to the value of certification for information professionals. The results show that executives are willing to pay a premium for both internal staff and external consultants with the [Certified Information Professional](#) (CIP) designation.

Conducted in January 2012, four months after AIIM launched the [Certified Information Professional](#) program, the survey shows that:

- 64 percent of business executives would prefer to hire a Certified Information Professional (CIP) versus a non-certified candidate.
- 76 percent of business executives would pay a CIP a salary premium. Of these, 45 percent indicated that they would pay more than a 10 percent salary premium.
- 61 percent of business executives would prefer consultants that hold the CIP designation over those who do not.
- 62 percent of business executives think having CIP-certified staff would enhance the perception of their organization in the industry
- 60 percent of business executives would prefer CIP-certified IT staff.
- 66 percent of business executives think having CIP-certified staff would improve their ability to find, manage, and exploit their information assets across the enterprise.

Initial industry feedback has been extremely positive; a few samples follow.

There will always be a role in organizations for those with pure technical knowledge. But the real value add in the world of Systems of Engagement comes from those who can place these skills in a broader context — in the context of the business. That's what AIIM's [Certified Information Professional](#) program is all about.

Geoffrey Moore, noted author ([Crossing the Chasm](#) and [Escape Velocity](#), among many others)

There is hardly any person I know who would not benefit from the content of the [AIIM Information Professional certification program](#). Whether on the job or in our personal lives, we all need core skills in managing, and perhaps even mastering, the information and technology that surrounds us every day.

Tim Elmore, CIO, Bank-Fund Staff Federal Credit Union

Over the last decade, we have witnessed an emerging need for Information professionals to expand their knowledge and develop expertise beyond a single core discipline. Changes in technology, business rules and legislation have mandated that Information Professionals adapt and grow. It is because of this changing dynamic that I strongly recommend the [AIIM Information Professional Certification](#). This unique certification recognizes your expansive knowledge of multiple disciplines, will enhance your marketability and will clearly identify you as a multi-dimensional Leader for ECM within your organization. Whether your background is in records, IT or business operations, I encourage you to Sign up today and get the recognition you've earned.

Tom Talamantez, Sales Director, [DSSI](#), An Act-1 Company



If you work with your organization's information or collaboration resources and technologies, you'll surely find AIIM a treasure trove of resources.

Andrew McAfee, Professor and author, [Enterprise 2.0](#) and [Race Against the Machine](#)

The technology and processes used to manage business information are in a state of rapid change. It is not a trivial change. It is not an evolutionary change. It is a revolutionary change. It is driven by the need to expand our "systems of record" to harness the unstructured digital and social content that has become the foundation of our businesses. Our systems must become "systems of engagement"...and soon!

Those who attempt to use the same knowledge and tools to get there will fail. It's going to require that we embrace a new body of knowledge and awareness. We will need to learn to operate within much vaguer boundaries. I'm thrilled to have found the knowledge-base to support this change in [AIIM's Information Management Professional Certification](#) program.

I encourage all information management and records management professionals to seek this certification. It's a great way to become a player in this technology overhaul.

Paul Engel, President, [VeBridge](#)

Anyone in IT or in an information related discipline today should be thinking about it.

Ken Bisconti, Vice President, [ECM Products and Strategy, IBM Software Group](#)

Growing information is placing huge pressures on businesses today – impacting productivity, increasing legal risks, making compliance more difficult, and costing organisations time and money. The AIIM Information Certification clearly connects all aspects of content, people, data and processes; which are behind or should be considered to solve these problems. I very highly recommend it.

Vikram Setia Managing Partner, infoMENTUM Limited

Every information management professional and information architect should become a Certified Information Professional. Experienced pros can quickly identify and fill knowledge gaps, while newcomers have a solid learning path to become an information subject matter expert. Earning the CIP designation demonstrates to your organization and clients that you are a valuable resource for their enterprise information initiatives.

J. Kevin Parker, Enterprise Information Architect, Web Engineer

The experience validated my knowledge and experience in the field of information management, and introduced many different avenues to study and learn about that I may not have otherwise considered.

Denise Harry, Supervisor, Records Management, Saskatchewan Government Insurance



The significant expansion in the amount of information all organizations have to capture, process and deal with on a daily, hourly, or even minute to minute basis has created a work environment where information processing systems are now the critical backbone of any inter-connected business - whether that business is small and regional or large and global it now needs a larger and larger population of skilled information professionals who know how to build, maintain and enhance systems and processes that capture and process information effectively. It's time to make Information Management a profession - the CIP program from AIIM gives everyone the chance to become a professional.

Martyn Christian, Chief Marketing Officer, Kofax

As organizations look to become social enterprises, having a social, mobile and cloud approach to information management is essential. The AIIM Information Professional certification equips individuals with the skills and resources needed to lead their organizations into this new era."

Andy MacMillan, Senior Vice President, Data.com Products, Salesforce.com



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