

2021 InfoGov Predictions

2020 was a rough year for all of us, so let's look ahead to 2021, shall we? Fortunately, there are many encouraging events on the horizon that promise to change things for the better, personally, professionally and also in the worlds of Information Governance, Records & eDiscovery. Presenting Valora Technologies' Top 10 Predictions for 2021. . .



Soaring Demand

UCLA Economists predict another "Roaring 20's" once we have widespread vaccination in Q2/Q3. Pent-up consumer demand will cause a surge for all types of goods & services, ultimately pushing upwards and resulting in ever more content for IG professionals to intake, analyze and manage: more transactions, emails, documents, files & records. **The increased activity will lead to 2 key things:** higher prices (inflation) and larger budgets. Q1/Q2 is the time to evaluate new systems & lock in pricing ahead of the Q3 surge.



Remote & hybrid work

Remote and hybrid work are here to stay. That means continued disassociation from where data is, how it is used, who controls and has access to it, and a growing need for centralized information management that is not subject to human sources of error. Physical offices and locations will become insignificant which means employees, suppliers, customers, etc. will be operating worldwide with literally no boundaries – whether physical, time or distance. The concept of "location-agnostic" or "work-from-anywhere" will become standard.



Accountability & Integrity

Accountability and integrity will be important in both sell-side, buy-side and implementations. The misinformation we have witnessed over the past few years have left some struggling with knowing what to trust. This affects the IG realm, with trust becoming an ethical requirement for managing enterprise content. Accountability & integrity will apply equally to data processors and data controllers. We will see solutions that provide audit trails around disposition & decisioning, as well as on-demand reporting on all facets of IG.



Continued move to cloud

The migration to the cloud has only been increased by the Covid-19 pandemic. 2021 will continue and accelerate this process, with cloud or SaaS solutions becoming the preferred option for new capabilities. But legacy systems will still persist and continue to be heavily utilized (probably forever) so solutions need to account for both. Closed wall solutions that require data to be locked within their environments will be at a distinct disadvantage.



Metadata as a must-have

Get your metadata & field tags in order. The days of blissful ignorance around file and record contents are ending. 2021 will see the demise of one-size-fits-all records classification, legal holds, security access & retention. Legal, IT, Knowledge Management and Information Governance teams will demand to know: What is this file? What does it say or contain? Is it relevant or appropriate for my use?



Access & Privacy Controls

Watch for much stronger use of data access and privacy controls. Increasing awareness and regulations around personal data and access to data will continue to refine the definition of good data hygiene. In 2021, effective information governance will mean knowing what you have, where it lives, who has access, securing that access, being responsive to appropriate retention duration and why/how/when to decommission.



All digital, all the time

Brick & mortar will continue its torturous death. We will continue to shop online, work from home and engage in distance learning. Yes, some physical presence will resume – the fun things, once the vaccines have taken hold. Later in the year we will again be eating out, discretionary shopping (like for new countertops or a new car) and living on campuses and in cities. We will have become experts in remote & digital environments and expect all solutions to mirror this comfort.



Skeptical & still wary

People will continue to be wary of one another regarding health risks and recklessness. Though they may return, salad bars, theatres and crowded elevators will still give us pause. Many of us will continue to wear masks in public. The impact on Information Governance? Continued skepticism and a need to "prove" out solutions for efficacy and ROI. All the more reason to design projects and solutions around pilot engagements and proofs of concept before rolling out in force.



Backlash to status quo

"But that's the way we've always done it" won't cut it with Generation Z (born 1997-2010), the largest group now entering the workforce. These "digital natives" will not accept long-standing and outdated approaches to Records Management, eDiscovery and Information Governance. Anything that takes too long, is too complicated, or requires high levels of expertise will be pushed aside for **solutions that are more immediate, easy, and accessible.**



Things that won't budge

Unfortunately, some things won't change (much) in 2021: **Legal holds** will continue to be poorly understood, managed and removed. **Paper records** will stay stored away in warehouses, out of sight and out of mind. And **simplistic approaches** to content management (such as forced 90-day retention periods on email) will win out due to their sheer simplicity. **Fortunately, time, intelligence and progress all march on and we'll have 2022 to look forward to!**