

In This Issue: –My Son the Custodian  
Update on Information Management & Lab Informatics

eOrganizedWorld  
the Online Information Management Newsletter  
for Information Professionals  
from Charlie Sodano

### My Son the Custodian

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My mother would be tossing in her grave if she knew that some people call me a custodian. Unfortunately, that job title is often associated with a guy who sweeps the floor, takes out the garbage and makes sure things are in good working order in a school or apartment building. There are other professions that are also struggling with poor iconic images. One other that comes to mind is librarian. Many of us immediately think of a dowdy woman with granny glasses speaking in an authoritarian school-marm voice and directing us to go to the card catalog to find the information that we are searching for.

The image of a records custodian is not as vivid as that of a librarian, but is still associated with a no-brainer menial job. File Clerk has also been posed as a toady who receives important papers, puts them in a secure location and produces them on request. A task that is too menial for more senior staff.

Most of these perceptions are not valid anymore in the electronic information age. Today, there are very few secretaries, file clerks and other traditional paper handlers. Most people do their own filing as well as a good chunk of work that had been formerly done by librarians. Yet, the images persist. Organizing information in a repository is viewed as second rate work relegated to “whenever I have some spare time”. It is barely viewed as being important for most people. Yet finding the “right” file in a collection is among the top time wasters in our workplaces.

Composing electronic information is much easier than writing/typing on paper. We all generate much more information through email, and other business correspondence than we did several years ago. Throwing your files into a box or folders in the box, like we did with paper, makes things much more difficult because there are just so many, often with the same or similar title names. Things have to be better organized. More attention has to be made to discard obsolete information.

Where do you start? If you have a records and information manager around. Ask them. They have put a lot of time learning how to improve the efficiency of file storage and retrieval. If you don't have someone around to ask for advice. Here's some things you can do.

Set up some rules for storing items into a group repository. Don't let people randomly create new folders that contain files with non-descript titles. When they leave, no one will know what the heck is really in those folders. Always organize the files by year at some

level. This makes things much easier to sort. Establish some sort of retention schedule, so obsolete files are trashed.

Of course there is a lot more. But you may have to talk to a custodian. They will sweep your records into organized piles, take out the trash on a regular basis and make sure your content system is in good working order.

Mother would be proud!

Everyone can profit and learn from their expertise

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A link to the EZine is also found at [www.eorganizedworld.com](http://www.eorganizedworld.com)

Contact us ([consultants@eorganizedworld.com](mailto:consultants@eorganizedworld.com)) for additional information about getting your records management program started. We'll give you more free advice and explain how we can continue to work together.

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What's new?

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INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

ShareMethods announced today the availability of an upgrade of its cloud-based service for more flexible document sharing – encompassing a broad dynamic range from open and social sharing to highly secure and private sharing. This easy and powerful new sharing model for its document management service is enterprise ready and fully integrated with Adobe EchoSign, Oracle CRM OnDemand, and salesforce.com.

SAP and OpenText have collaborated to add two new applications to SAP NetWeaver Portal. They include the SAP Portal Content Management application by OpenText, an enterprise solution for managing document-related content, and the SAP Portal Site Management application by OpenText, which helps users manage Web content more easily.

CU of America is working to deploy Bluepoint remote signing functionality that utilizes an identification verification service from SIGNiX. The solution employs information similar to what is currently used in the credit union's call center. Members who want to complete documents online will answer a set of questions to verify their identity and supply a six-digit security number provided by the credit union. Once their identity is confirmed, members can click through documents, adding their initials and signatures in cursive type in each required field.

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