

# IG 101: Enterprise Information Governance

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by Diana Warner

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“Enterprise information management” (EIM) is an emerging term in healthcare today. EIM relies on the processes that are developed through an effective information governance program. Information governance is the means (the “how”), with EIM being the ultimate goal (the “what”) for the organization. Essentially, EIM provides the processes and tools to control the use, access, distribution, and retention of an organization’s information assets.

Gartner defines EIM as is an integrative discipline for structuring, describing, and governing information assets across organizational and technological boundaries to improve efficiency, promote transparency, and enable business insight.

Information quality and integrity controls should be instituted across the enterprise. With the increase in interoperability and information exchange, any quality and integrity problem could have cascading and potentially deleterious effects across the continuum of healthcare delivery as well. For example, incomplete, inaccurate, or missing documentation, inconsistent availability of data and information, and inability to capture, track, or cumulate data and information could lead to less than ideal patient care or vital business outcomes.

EIM addresses all information, regardless of the state or location:

- Unstructured, discrete data
- Paper-based records and forms
- E-mail
- Social media
- Voice
- Images
- Additional forms of information

## The Right Information

The goal of EIM is to ensure that that information is trustworthy and actionable. When implementing standards, policies, and business rules of an EIM program, it is imperative to ensure that information has the following attributes:

- **Trustworthiness:** What is the level of reliability and trustworthiness of information?
- **Relevancy:** Is the information of benefit to the user’s current need(s)?
- **Timeliness:** Is the information “fit for use?” Is it the “right information available at the right time?”
- **Accuracy:** How accurate are the patient identifiers across the EMPI (i.e., duplicate/overlapping identifiers)?
- **Integrity:** Implementing an EHR can largely solve the issue of information availability, but only if it’s “good” information. Are copy/paste issues being addressed in the EHR? How has this issue impacted documentation integrity/risk levels for healthcare organizations?

## Relationship between Information Governance and EIM

EIM works within the framework of the information governance accountability infrastructure to ensure enterprise-wide compliance. EIM applies information governance policies and standards across individual business units cross-organizationally to ensure that collaborative, integrative efforts are applied uniformly and consistently to meet strategic information governance goals and objectives. The focus of EIM is in the tactical implementation of the information governance program.

Desired business outcomes are what will provide the value-based evidence needed for EIM programs to demonstrate solid benefits. Outcomes such as patient safety (i.e., correct use of EHR defaults), quality of care delivery, business intelligence to

enable strategic decision making, reimbursement management optimization, and cost-effective risk assessments are all dependent upon the quality and integrity of an organization's information assets.

EIM will be progressively more driven by the need for increased productivity and competitive advantage, which will be achieved when the right information is readily available and supports new resources like analytics. Analytics is needed for competitive advantage and for drivers for initiatives such as accountable care organizations and value based purchasing.

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*This is the third article in a six-part web series, [Information Governance 101](#), that discusses information governance programs and seeks to define the terms associated with information governance. The next article will discuss the importance of information asset management for implementing the information governance program.*

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**Original source:**

Warner, Diana. "IG 101: Enterprise Information Governance" ([Journal of AHIMA](#)), December 2013.

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