Pride and Prejudice:
a reflection upon ten years in the life of
information management in public services

Prof. Eileen Milner (Robson Rhodes)

Apoio

APDSi
ASSOCIAÇÃO PARA A PROMOÇÃO
E DESENVOLVIMENTO DA
SOCIEDADE DA INFORMAÇÃO

Pride and Prejudice: a reflection upon ten years in the life of information management in public services

Eileen Milner

Eileen.milner@rsmi.co.uk

In 1994 …

Where it all started for me

'The huge growth in our capability for producing and our appetite for consuming information has not been accompanied by improvements in the quality of the data itself. What is not sufficiently addressed by any of this marvellous technology is the inherent correctness, completeness, simplicity and fitness for purpose of the data itself. Technology has grown from the precocious child of the Sixties to the equally remarkable adult of the Nineties, losing its innocence and gaining a lot of responsibility along the way …'

(Tozer 1994)

And what inspired me on my research journey

' The watchwords of the decade are innovation and speed, service and quality … Instead of embedding outdated processes in silicon and software, we should obliterate them and start over. We should reengineer our business to use the power of modern information technology to radically redesign our business processes in order to achieve dramatic improvements in their performance.'

Hammer (1990)

A champion of Australian excellence!

'   Our goal is better government – better government through grasping the opportunities presented by new technologies, and more effective, less costly government through improved information management policies and practices. Our vision is for a government that uses its' information fully, as a national strategic asset of government, business and the community; manages information for better policy development and the continuous improvement of services; shares information easily across agency boundaries; improves information flows to provide collaboration across public services and with other levels of government; and protects personal privacy and the public interest.'

Management of Information as a National Strategic Resource (1997)

And there is more …

'To unlock this potential, government needs to become smarter in its approach to information management … this requires not just the technology, but also commitment by managers and staff to make the necessary structural changes, both within and across agency boundaries … information management reforms can make a major contribution to the Government's plans for reduction in the size and costs of public services, while at the same time ensuring the continuing improvement of services to the public. Some capital investment in technology, reskilling and organisational and cultural change will be needed to make this happen. But the costs of not making such investments will prove greater over the medium term.'

Management of Information as a National Strategic Resource (1997)

My simple vision

Public services which are demonstrably capable of being:

- Fast

- Focused

- Flexible

- Friendly

  Acknowledging the profound changes that have occurred in the last decade, particularly around our concepts of *space* and *time.*

Key areas of focus in 'information enabled' public services

- Underpinning intention to transform the citizen experience of contact with public services;

- Focus upon the importance of service development based upon communication, consultation and engagement both internally and externally;

- Back office functions designed such that information can flow seamlessly and invisibly;

- Partnership working enabled rather than hindered by information sharing protocols;

- Costs of services reduced and user satisfaction increased.

Centrelink – a global benchmark

- Established 1997, employs 22,000 people, has over 1,000 service centres;

- Brought together service lines and responsibilities that had previously run out of 11 separate central government departments;

- Serves the total population of Australia

Objectives of Centrelink at the point of creation

- To remove the complexity of government programmes for the customer;

- Create a genuine 'one-stop shop' facility for citizens;

- To introduce these services in the most efficient way, thereby providing savings to the government and the tax payer;

- Maintain a high degree of accountability to government and hence the citizen – with a clear message that failure to deliver would mean the service would be taken out of the public service domain.

Information architecture drives forward service design

- Centrelink was created with a clear underlying principle that information was its' principle asset;

- Structures were put in place which focused upon information creation, flows and usability;

- High levels of ongoing consultation internally around the way in which information is gathered, structured and used, leading to ongoing recalibration of service design/interfaces.

Highlights from the Centrelink operating culture

- Fundamental adherence to the principle that excellent information management is key to achieving on the *capability to do the expected;*

- Focus on the fact that the organisation comprises two principle assets, its' *people* and its' *information*, and structuring itself to do business around these;

- Willingness to develop information sharing protocols with partner organisations from public, voluntary and commercial sectors.

Government@the speed of public interest – the Canadian approach

- Canada is one of the few developed nations to have a whole of Government appointment to the role of Chief Information Officer;

- Stated government ambition is to serve all citizens in a 'connected society';

- Well designed public services seen as a pivotal plank in the country's ambition to drive forward economic growth through innovation;

- Information gathering seen as a core activity of policy development and testing.

Focusing on your people

- CIO role articulated by first incumbent as being that of an enabler and translator;

- Developing human capacity to work with information seen as the critical challenge;

- In Canada a powerful 'push' came from data which showed (1999) that by 2003 up to 50% of executive cadre in public service could retire – both challenges and opportunities;

- Risk management came to the fore in terms of potentially 'lost' knowledge.

CONK - Information Management's strongest concept

Cost of Not Knowing

CONK

- Risk management a key public service activity;

- More and more information held by public service organisations but risks associated with loss or threats to security and privacy have magnified;

- Operating cultures not traditionally based upon robust performance information either quantities or qualitative;

- Connections between different information *silos* not routinely undertaken and the opportunity for seeing a 'full picture' are diminished.

Disasters with an IM component

Twenty first century consequences of poorly constructed practice

...we shall highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain...
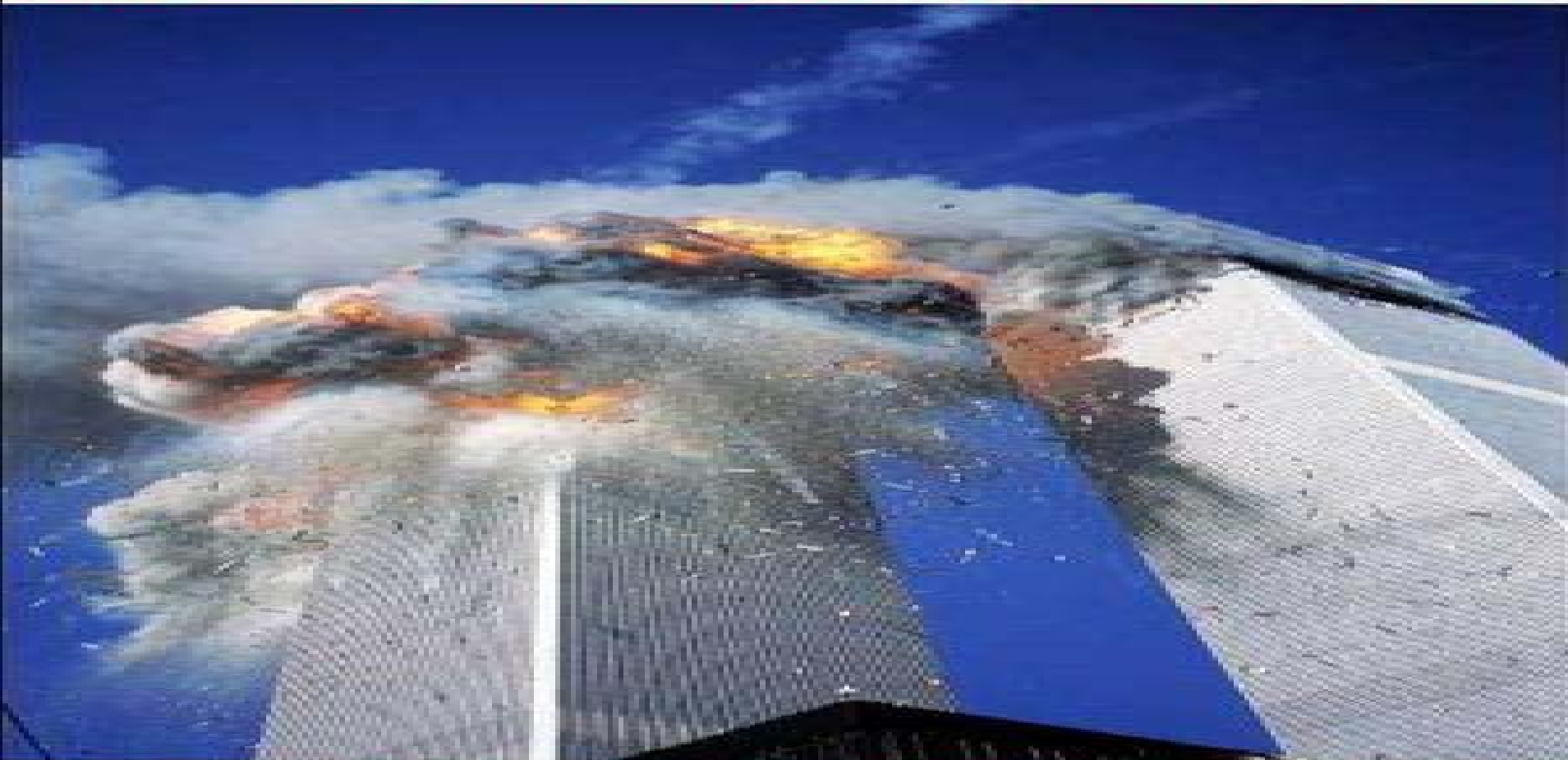
REMEMBER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

RSM Robson Rhodes

GuardianUnlimited **Special reports**

Home | UK | Business | Online | World dispatch | The Wrap | Newsblog | Talk | Search
The Guardian | World | US elections | Arts | News guide | Columnists | Audio | Help | Quiz

Special report
The Soham murder trial

Profile
Ian Huntley's lies and charm fooled many but they hid a violent, bitter man

Search this site
[   ] Go

Latest

Police chief in Soham storm returns to work
The chief constable of Humberside was welcomed back to work yesterday by colleagues and people who had denounced his suspension after the Soham murders.
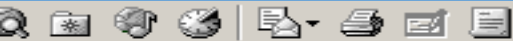
Brian Stevens

How officer betrayed Soham parents
August 14: Family speaks out as policeman is jailed for concocting alibi.

Soham officer's 'false tears'
August 11: Policeman accused of weeping to gain Old Bailey jury's sympathy.

Disasters waiting to happen?

Do governments have a learning capability?

NHS IT modernisation programme costs will triple

Published: 15 Oct 2004

The magazine, Computer Weekly, has reported that officials at the Department of Health (DH) have estimated the total costs of modernising NHS computer systems at between £18.6 billion and £31 billion; a rise of three to five times the original declared figure of £6.2 billion.

Computer Weekly says the inflated sum could encroach on already overstretched trusts' budgets. Estimates had been based on US experiences. A spokesperson from the DH said: "It is generally accepted in the IT industry that implementation costs are some three to five times the cost of procurements. That is reflected in the business case that was made for the national programme."

Public spending watchdog, the National Audit Office, is currently investigating the programme and hopes to report by summer 2005 on the way the system to be installed was chosen, and whether it offers value for money.

The 10-year IT programme plans to give 50 million patients in England an electronic health record and should allow doctors to access information about a patient, via their record, whether they are at their local GP surgery or at a hospital at the other end of the country.

◄Go back

2004-14 – the next stage in my research journey

Lessons in Leadership

Leadership for IM

- To date where I have identified successes they can be tracked back to the impact of leadership;

- We lack leaders who understand the value of information as a core organisational asset;

- Poor decisions flow from those who are not properly informed;

- Top teams take the word 'information' and automatically add to it the word 'technology' at which point the vast majority lose connection with any issues in this area!

Leaders for an IM enabled public service

- Executive education places far too little emphasis upon the role of information within the strategic and operational contexts of any organisation;

- Leaders need to understand that content and channel of communication have a hierarchy of importance and that it is content management and interpretation that brings real value and fundamentally enables both *change* and *renewal*;

- The concept of CONK is the very best way to gain attention in the twenty first century!

Questions? Comments?