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THINKING ABOUT IDENTITIES OF INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS: EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF INTERSECTIONALITY

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Abstract

The changing information landscape is recasting the role of information managers as strategic leaders advising on business competitiveness and advocating organizational change. However there is considerable uncertainty as to how these roles are being interpreted and the extent to which this impacts upon professional identity. Recently there has been an emerging awareness in IS research of the need to further explore identity issues in organisations. The aim of this paper is to report on the first stage of a research project that is examining how the identities of information professionals, specifically information managers, are constructed as it has received limited attention in theory and practice. Further, we explore the concept of intersectionality as an analytic approach that simultaneously considers the effects of different social memberships at multiple levels in the identity formation process.

Keywords: information management, information professional, identity, intersectionality,

1   Introduction

The velocity, volume and types of information that organisations need to manage to support and enable business growth and respond effectively to legal, regulatory and compliance requests is a complex and ongoing challenge. Enterprise information management (EIM) initiatives are recognised as critical in ensuring the "consistency, quality, accessibility and shareability of information" across and outside the organisation requiring significant investment in technology and tools as well as the "creation of specific roles around information management and governance" (Lapkin et al. 2011). A recent survey revealed knowledge and information management (KIM)[1] as an essential rather than discretionary business function as organisational strategy, innovation policy and investment plans were identified as a key driver in the assignment of KIM responsibilities (Abell et al. 2011). The changing information landscape is recasting the role of information managers as strategic leaders, advising on business competitiveness and advocating organisational change (Lapkin 2011). However, there is considerable uncertainty as to how these roles are being interpreted by information managers, and the extent to which this impacts upon professional identity (Abell et al. 2011; Lapkin 2011).

Recently within the information systems (IS) field of research there has been an emerging awareness and a growing body of literature exploring identity issues in organisations as to date it has received limited attention in contrast to general management and organisational studies (Gal and Kjaergaard 2009). Broadly speaking, attention is being directed towards the impact on and transformations of professional identities arising from the adoption, implementation and use of information technology (IT) and the IT profession itself (Brooks et al. 2011). A related but separate debate is also unfolding in the library and information sciences (LIS) field of research, which has a long tradition of developing theories and examining issues relating to *information* itself from a range of perspectives (Nolin & Åström 2009). Questions about the future identity of the field (Nolin & Åström 2009), roles of information professionals (Mahon 2008), domains of information management (Detlor 2010) and the relationship of information practice with the disciplinary area of information science (Middleton 2007) have arisen against the backdrop of digital environments. These matters have heightened attention around old ambiguities in relation to the contested meanings of data, information, knowledge and their relationship (see for eg Kettinger and Li 2010), uncertainties around capabilities, as well as the status of professional fields, disciplines and their jurisdictional claims across both the IS and LIS fields.

In the amalgam of scholarly and practitioner interests is the recognised need to develop understanding of the dynamics underlying the identities of information professionals and in particular information managers in complex and changing socio-technical contexts. However, much of the research attention is being directed at how professional identities are shaped and impacted by *IT* or the status of IM or IT as a profession and the importance of having a collective identity to enhance professional status. We depart from the collective endeavours of information professionals to examine the professional identities that information managers have constructed for themselves as there is currently limited understanding of the content of these individual's identities that underpin organisational arrangements, processes and products. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to report on the first stage of a research project that is examining the varying ways that information managers are interpreting their roles in these changing landscapes and the impact on their professional identity. We utilise the concept of intersectionality to analyse and explore the interrelated nature of processes of identity constructions, social structures (eg. organisational arrangements) and symbolic representations (eg. norms and values), linked through social practices. In doing so two objectives are served. Firstly, we build upon theory and practice in terms of the professional identities of information managers, which to date has received limited attention notwithstanding the increasing attention being given to the "information

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[1] KIM is recognised in this survey as a single discipline unifying and replacing information management (IM) and knowledge management (KM).

management leader" (Lapkin 2011). Secondly, we explore the concept of intersectionality and how it invokes an integrated approach in understanding the complexity of social identities and inequalities (Bilge 2010). As there is no universal grouping for 'information managers,' this perspective assists in "identifying and untangling the differential and material impact" of their "everyday practices" (Holvino 2010). This analysis may provide fruitful contributions for developing organisational information capabilities and particularly identifying and retaining necessary skills.

The paper is structured as follows. Firstly, we examine the theoretical ground upon which this research is based, including what is meant by the term information professional in the context of this study. Secondly, the methodology adopted for this study is discussed followed by an exploration of the formation of identities within an information management context. The paper concludes with the limitations and implications of the study.

2 Theoretical considerations

2.1 Identity in IS research

Walsham (1998) defined professional identity as "the way in which groups and individuals within those groups, see and describe themselves in relation to their work and the work of others" in his investigation of the changing identities of professional groups relating to the use of IT. The 'identity' concept has received significant theoretical and empirical attention evident by the diversity and size of the literature, spanning multiple disciplinary domains (Cornelissen et al. 2007). However it has received relatively limited attention in the IS literature (Gal & Kjaergaard 2009). Gal and Kjaergaard (2009) provide a comprehensive review and characterisation of how the identity concept is applied in the IS literature which we do not repeat here, but expand upon in three separate and related ways.

2.1.1 The *information* phenomenon

Gal and Kjaergaard (2009) identified different theoretical areas and research opportunities to advance understanding of identity in the IS field across functional, interpretivist and critical orientations. Central to these different views was progressing understanding of the impact on and transformation of professional identities arising from the adoption, implementation and use of *IT*. We argue that this line of research could be further strengthened by engaging with the library and information sciences (LIS) field of research, where similar questions relating to professional identity have been raised, but the phenomenon of interest is centred on *information* itself. This is further elaborated upon in section 2.2.

2.1.2 The *information* professional and the *middle* manager

Research attention directed towards the relationship between IT and professional identity has focused on groups such as scientists (Lamb & Davidson 2005), loan managers, insurance brokers, salespeople (Walsham 1998) and health care workers (Bloomfield & McLean 1996). To date limited attention has been given to the identities of *information* professionals, and in particular information managers. Yet, in the practitioner literature an emerging role, identified in varying ways such as the "enterprise information management (EIM) leader" (Lapkin 2011) or "knowledge and information manager" (KIM) (Abell et al, 2011), has been recognised as essential for organisations to be able to effectively respond to the challenges of managing risk and maximising value from their information assets (Lapkin et al. 2011). This may partly be explained by the confusion surrounding the term 'information professional' and it being subsumed under the labels of 'knowledge workers' or IT professionals. We return to this point in section 2.2. Further, Walsham (1998) focused on middle manager groups, as there was limited understanding of the changing nature of their work, yet responsibilities had expanded to a broader range of duties. More than a decade onwards this remains a limitation in IS research more broadly, evident by Wilcocks and Griffiths (2010) call for further research into the critical role of middle management in the outsourcing context. Similar to Walsham (1998) we argue

that focusing on middle level managers may provide significant insights for identity research because of the possible range of duties and accountabilities.

2.1.3   The levels of analysis issue

The need for a more holistic understanding of identity at multiple levels of analysis has been recognised in both organisational (Cornelissen 2007) and IS (Walsham 1998; Gal & Kjaergaard 2009) domains. Cornelissen et al. (2007), drawing from the work of Brown (2001), identified the "*individual* (relating to people's personal sense of self within the organisation), *group* (relating to the shared identity of teams and sections within an organization), *organizational* (relating to the identity of the organization as a whole) and *cultural* (relating to commonalities in identity across organizations and within a society as a whole)" levels of analysis. However, varying views have been expressed as to whether different forms of identity can be integrated (ibid). We engage with intersectional research, characterised by Bilge (2010) as a "macro/micro analytical duality" to examine multiple levels and respond to calls to broaden the scope of identity theory in IS research (Gal and Kjaergaard's (2009).

2.2   The information professional and the information manager

Much confusion surrounds the term 'information professional' with links to a broad range of fields such as accounting (Elliott & Jacobsen 2002), business archives and records management (Cox 2008), knowledge management (Choo 2000), information management (IM) and information systems IS (Culnan 1986; Middleton 2007), health (McIntosh 2008) and librarianship (Black 2004); itself with "distinct missions" of information services for public and private sector contexts (Sturges 2005). Mason (1990) asked the question "what is an information professional" and proposed that "information professionals apply their special knowledge about information and information technology with one basic purpose in mind: to get the right *information* from the right *source* to the right *client* at the right *time* in the *form* most suitable for the use to which it is to be put and at a *cost* that is justified by its use". More than two decades on similar questions are still being raised because of the varied roles and many different actors in the field (Mahon 2008).

Not surprisingly the disciplinary and professional field(s) of information professionals has for some time been the basis of enquiry with "contrasting views on convergence and diversification" (Middleton 2007). IM has been promoted as a "highly flexible" discipline for addressing the needs of "the information profession" (ibid). However, there are various meanings and interpretations of the term itself, often used interchangeably with the management of IT and drawing upon disciplinary fields of IS and library and information science (Middleton 2007; Detlor 2010). Questions about the future identity of these disciplinary areas have also been the subject of attention in the IS (eg. Somers 2010) and library and information science literature (eg. Nolin & Åström 2009).

Rowley (1998, 1999 cf Middleton 2007) posits that information has both behavioural and systems dimensions as it is "practice-based" and distinguishes between "information *processing* as an activity common to all information users, and information *management* as being the province of professionals" which draws upon many disciplines ranging from management science to cybernetics. Detlor (2010) examined three major perspectives of information management, the personal, library and organisational; the later as most prominent and associated with terms "like information systems management, information technology management, data management, business intelligence, competitive intelligence, content management and records management." However, while IT is acknowledged as playing a key role in managing information in organisations, it is the technical medium and "not the primary entity that is being managed under the information management rubric" (Detlor 2010).

Therefore, we argue, at a theoretical and practical level, that there is a need to: (1) move beyond the collective identity and status of professional fields, disciplines and their jurisdictional claims; and (2) focus attention on how the professional identities of information managers, that underpin organisational arrangements, processes and products, are formed and constructed.

2.3   The "Intersectionality" concept

The term 'intersectionality' was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, cf Yuval-Davis 2006) in addressing issues of black women's employment in the US and has subsequently gained increasing prominence in feminist studies, race and ethnicity studies, study of later life and queer theory in sexuality studies (Cronin & King 2010). Recently, the value of an intersectionality view has been recognised in business research (Zander et al. 2010). Intersectionality as defined by Zander et al (2010) refers "to the specific conditions that exist when one individual holds two or more social statuses and to the simultaneous and interacting effects of that combination." The term relates to "both normative theoretical arguments and an approach to conducting empirical research that emphasises the interaction of categories of difference (including but not limited to race, gender, class and sexual orientation)" (Hancock 2007); which Holvino (2010) conceptualised as "simultaneous processes of identity, institutional and social practice." Hence it provides a useful lens in which to examine how difference and identity interplay and intersect in the context of the professional identities of information managers.

The perspective has developed in diverse disciplines and research traditions and so not surprisingly has been the subject of confusion and controversies at a theoretical and methodological level, which are well documented elsewhere (see for eg. Bilge 2010; Monro 2010). We broadly follow the constructionist approach, which is concerned with the intersectional identity formation process on multiple levels and narrative constructions rather than the systematic approach where meanings of identities are determined by set categories such as gender, racism etc. representing static and rigid systems of domination (Prins 2006). Secondly, in the context of this paper it is used primarily as an analytical tool based on the four level analysis framework by Anthias (1998). Thirdly, whilst we do not ignore the critical agenda of making visible areas of oppression and inequality (see for eg. Kvasny et al. (2009) work on gendered identities in IT), it is not our primary objective.

In Anthias's (1998) four level framework, identity and difference are "abandoned in favour of the identification of ontological spaces or social domains, which are contingent and variable in their specificities".These ontological spaces, in this context the work domain, have experiential, intersubjective, organisational and representational forms summarised in Table 1:

Experiential	"focuses on the experiences of persons (within specific locatable contexts, say … in the work place …) of being defined as different, identifying as a particular category"
Intersubjective	"arises from the level of intersubjective relations: the actions and practices that take place in relation to others (including non-person actors such as …the social security system …)"
Organisational	"focuses on the institutional and other organisational ways in which the ontological spaces are played out: for eg, … educational systems, political and legal systems…, systems of policing and surveillance. For example, how is sexuality … or population categories organised within institutional frameworks and in terms of the allocation of resources?"
Representational	"What are the symbolic and representational means, the images and texts, the documents and information flows around the ontological spaces?"

Table 1: Four level framework (Anthias 1998)

These crosscut the "two problematics of differentiation and positionality" defined as follows:

"The process of differentiation (and identification): relates to processes whereby persons are attributed or attribute themselves characteristics, and are sorted or sort themselves into places as well as processes whereby the differentiation of places, is constituted: what are the primary organising principles and assumptions that underlie the category? On what specific and local criteria have persons been assigned to a category? What constitute the contents of the attribution and identifications involved in specific local contexts?" (Anthias 1998)

"The process of positionality: places in the order of things: What are the processes by which the categories emerge as hierarchical? How are places allocated positions? What are the social processes

at a range of different levels which are involved in the production, reproduction and transformation of unequal social outcomes? How are these embodied in institutions, structures, laws, power relations and so on? How are places hierarchised and subjected to processes of inferiorisation?" (Anthias 1998)

3   Research Design

This research is the second stage in a broader research program aimed at assisting organisations in managing their enterprise information in an era of rapidly changing digital information infrastructures. The first stage consisted of a literature review covering academic and practitioner journals, for the purpose of identifying key themes and concepts to assist in designing the research framework and a focus group study to identify key information management issues and challenges. One of the focus group findings revealed a complex range of position titles and diverse knowledge and skill sets required for information professionals. This raised the question of just who is the information professional? The primary aim of this second stage of the research is to explore this question and investigate the work identities of middle level information managers through an empirical study. Finally, the study follows an interpretive research design and is organised into three stages: data collection; data coding and thematic analysis; discussion and interpretation of findings.

3.1   Data Collection

A qualitative research approach was adopted comprising interviews with seven information managers using semi-structured interviews. Respondents were identified through a passive snowballing technique. Whilst we did not seek out participants at particular stages of their careers we did target middle level managers because of their practical intelligibility (know how) of work practices and material arrangements, such as rules and structures. Details of the interviewees are set out in Table 2; names have been changed to ensure anonymity. All participants were based in Australia. The in-depth interviews are between 50 to 115 minutes in length and were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Questions were based on the type of work they were involved in, in terms of their roles and activities, their educational and career backgrounds and their location within their organisation. In addition, issues that were identified as important by respondents were expanded upon in the interview.

Name	Date of first job	First job area	Current job title (as at 2010)	Current industry where employed	Org Size	Educational Qualifications	Professional Associations
Therese	>20 years ago	Filing clerk	Information manager	Manu-facturing	Approx 700	Bachelor of Librarianship Master of Management & Knowledge Management	ARMA, RMAA, AIIM, ALIA
Cathy	1972	Teacher in Special Ed.	Corporate Records & EDRM Project Manager	Government	>13000	Bachelor of Arts (psychology & sociology) Bachelor Legal Studies Masters of Law Certificate in Special Education	Australian Institute of Management
Lyla	> 20 years ago.	Nursing	Document mgt manager	Professional Services	>130,000 globally	Bachelor of Theology Graduate Diploma in Archives & Records Mgt Graduate Diploma of Business Mgt	RMAA and IIMA (corporate membership)
George	1977	Mail clerk	Manager, Electronic Documents & Records Mgt	Government	2000	Certificate of Business Studies & Records Mgt Certificate in Computer Systems	Corporate membership of RMAA
Victoria	> 20 years ago.	Public housing & policy	Information Mgt & Admin Services	Government	2000	Bachelor degree in urban management	RMAA & Institute of Public Administration (corporate membership)

Name	Date of first job	First job area	Current job title (as at 2010)	Current industry where employed	Org Size	Educational Qualifications	Professional Associations
Brenda	1996	File services & projects	Team Leader Information Mgt.	Government	> 800 permanent staff plus contract staff	Bachelor of Arts (History, English) Graduate Diploma of Archives & Records Mgt Professional Diploma of Human Resources	Records & Information Management Professionals
Cecilia	1971	Data punch card clerk	Manager Information Lifecycle Team	Government	>600	Associate Diploma of Arts Bachelor of Arts (History & English) Certificate in Software Fundamentals Diploma in Information Management (Archives Administration)	RMAA (corporate membership)

Table 2   Details of interviewees

3.2   Data coding and thematic analysis

The interview data were reduced and analysed using an in-depth analytical coding approach as shown in Figure 1. The coding process was organised into two cycles. The first coding cycle involved the structural and topic coding of the raw interview data following standard procedures (cf. Miles and Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2009).
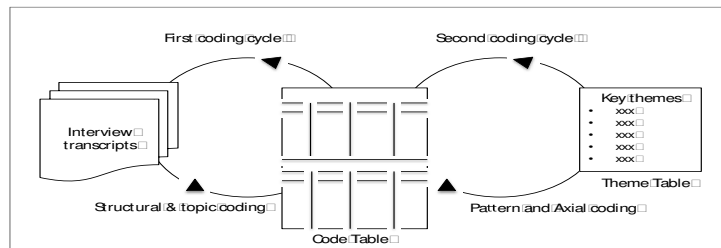

Figure 1: Coding and analysis process

The core concepts of intersectionality were used to provide a structure to guide the coding process. Two researchers independently encoded each interview transcript. Regular meetings were held to review the emerging codes, agree on labelling terms and consolidate the codes into the final code table. Table 3 shows an extract from the final code table for one participant (Therese). The code table contains a descriptive topic code (shown in bold in the table) and the original text from which the code was derived. This process was completed for all the interviews and the topic codes reviewed and harmonised. The second coding cycle involved a process of pattern and axial coding (Saldaña, 2009). The researchers identified the dominant themes and issues arising from the first cycle analysis and these were first added into the final column of the code table and then synthesised into the theme table.

4   Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

The outcome of the second coding cycle and thematic analysis is five separate but related themes: 1) routes to information management; 2) importance of multiple identifications and multiple levels; 3) the ambiguities of (dis)identifying with information and technology; 4) the precarious nature of belonging; and 5) institutional influence. These themes and their implications are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

4.1   Routes to information management: origins, mobility and lifelong learning

The information managers in this study came to information management from a variety of

PARTICIPANT	PROCESS OF DIFFERENTIATION AND IDENTIFICATION				KEY THEMES/ISSUES
	EXPERIENTIAL	INTERSUBJECTIVE	ORGANISATIONAL	REPRESENTATIONAL	
THERESE	**The value of mobility** "I wanted to keep moving… I wanted to experience a lot of different organisations … professionally I grew quite a bit just by being able to move from one organisation to another" **The consulting role** "I seem to be consulting quite a bit to [the parent company] – I sat on a steering committee recently for an imaging system that they're implementing; I'm advising on retention and disposal..." **Importance of project management & change management skills** "Project management - an absolute must. Change management skills - an absolute must"	**Understanding the "detail"** "… the senior people don't get bogged down in detail, but I think sometimes they have to understand that detail in order to know what the implications are of why you have to do something; why you might need a classification scheme, for instance, why keeping emails for seven years isn't necessarily going to keep you out of ... the courts. **Educating about the value of information management** "I don't always feel that people truly understand the implications of managing information ... there's so much of it in the detail...the biggest challenge is helping people understand how much benefit they can get from managing information properly."	**Institutional influences** "The company was responding to a Government request for information on a major issue. They spent a lot of time and money responding to that and it was in response to a strategic action that the company wanted to take … it was at that point it brought to a head the need to have some proper document and information management." **Role and value of professional associations** "I find ARMA, in some ways, of much more value than the RMAA … in terms of resources ... [but] … they're American-centric ... The RMAA provides more of a network … [I've] …almost grown up and grown old with these people … they're not close friends but they're people that are always there for you … I have a few people that I call up every now and again and … bounce an idea off."	**Silos and switches** "One of the issues in this organisation is people working in silos. They wanted people to be sharing information more … You can tell what the benefits are but getting there is not a light switch moment." **The SharePoint implementation** "So my role initially was to just get the system up and running, so technically parts of it had been established but very little happened … So basically my role is [well] ... it's governance but specifically the taxonomy and all of those things, just to get some practical things happening. Also, I keep senior managers - part of my role is to educate them on what they need to be aware of. I'm not sure how much they take that on board..."	Professional associations as a resource and support network. Multiple roles & skill sets: Project manager, internal consultant, advisor & change agent. Traversing the strategic and operational needs Professional development through lifelong learning & mobility Gaining (in)visibility through technology implementation Identifying with the value of information mgt
PARTICIPANT	PROCESS OF POSITIONALITY AND PLACEMENT				KEY THEMES/ISSUES
	EXPERIENTIAL	INTERSUBJECTIVE	ORGANISATIONAL	REPRESENTATIONAL	
THERESE	**Role & Position** "I established my own unit quickly, soon after I arrived … someone asked me recently … are you the information [rather than IT]… "Basically my role is … information governance but there's a lot of hands-on work as well, because I'm the only one basically"	**Some senior mgt "get" the importance of IM.** Some "get it" like the senior manager with the "army background" others need to "feel the pain." "… it's bit hard at the more senior levels … I don't always feel that they are complying with what they are wanting me to do … I've observed this in a few organisations, where senior managers are telling people to use the system … and [when] I talk to [them] … they say, [they] don't have anything [for the system].	**Belonging to professional associations** "I joined the Records Management Association. At that time … being a librarian in the Records Management Association was like being poison. They didn't like librarians …because there was another professional group moving into this area… there's more convergence now from different positions…"	**IM as a strategic partnership with the business.** "Yeah, I do see that but there's all sorts of information professionals out there … they're coming from all sorts of fields …[and]… it's a mixture of the organisation that you're in and its culture, the culture of its people – the senior people, the level of knowledge and skill to be able to understand, what kind of person they respond to, whether they're in a suit or not … what the issues are around the time."	Positioning in the organisation: • senior level (recognition) • location of IM group (non IT) Institutional influences - culture

Table 3   Example of Structural and Topic Coding for one participant

backgrounds (as set out in Table 2), not unlike those in many other occupations. However, there were some particular patterns identified that were influential on the development of their professional identity. The first group (Therese, Cecilia, George and Brenda) had started their careers in clerical positions relating to data, mail and filing. The second group (Cathy, Lyla and Victoria) varied in terms of nursing, special education and public housing and policy. Whilst Therese, Lyla, and Brenda had aspirations to information management as a career evident by their studies, there was no sense that any of the two groups of information managers had actually set out to work in information management. The managers had most commonly attributed their employment in information management as a combination of convenience and serendipity. For example, Therese reflected:

> "I did a degree in librarianship … went overseas … been back barely a week and … [there was] … a temporary job available … setting up a filing system, it was more clerical than anything else… turned into more like four years…"

or in Victoria's case

> "I started my career working in public housing and … policy … and moved into a range of different roles including executive support type roles … I got involved in a more technical sort of space when IT outsourcing was all the rage … from there got involved in policy initiatives to put government information services online and it just sort of evolved."

Common across both groups was the occupational self constructed by mobility, in terms of changing employers and departments. This was primarily viewed as a way for professional development and valuable in developing practical experience in a range of business contexts. However, Brenda, who was younger than all of the other participants, also highlighted the project based nature of her working career and her preference to find a more stable work environment. Further both groups had a range of knowledge and qualifications. However, while "lifelong" learning was identified as important, the emphasis was on practical experience and the need to develop a wider skill set particularly in regards to project management; a point we return to in section 4.2.

Hence the managers had come to information management with a variety of motivations and through a number of different routes. This was also found to have wielded some influence on how they related to information management as an occupation subsequently. For example, Cathy who came from a education and legal background, stated that:

> "I'm in this purely by accident … but with a passion for the evidence base"

Whilst not proposing an essentialist type view of destiny derived from some common origin, this has highlighted how the identification of information managers covers a wide terrain, which presents complexities in understanding the collective identity into which it can be inscribed and in forging new routes in digital environments.

4.2 Importance of dual and multiple identifications: advisor, change agent, project manager at strategic and operational levels

All of the participants emphasised the image of an 'advisor' and 'change agent' specifically in relation to articulating the value of information management to senior management and framing efforts with a strategic focus. However, this identity was often contingent on senior management recognition and support and needed to be balanced with operational needs; as Therese commented "understanding the detail." Further, the 'project identity' was a pervasive theme in our analysis. The projects emerged as a site of identity mainly by default in terms of the implementation of electronic document and records management (EDRM) systems. For some participants 'projects' were a way of positioning their professional activities to access resources and for enhancing their identity. Whilst for others, it changed other business unit conceptions of their work and hence their identity because of the symbolic constructions that surrounded a 'technology' implementation, where our discussion now turns.

4.3 The Ambiguities of (Dis)identifying with *information* and *technologies*

Whilst it is widely acknowledged that information is an asset for an organisation and required for compliance purposes, its *management* is not as straightforward. A common issue identified was that it was not enough to claim the identity of an information manager, it also had to be ascribed by others and in particular senior management. Further, whilst implementing EDRM systems appeared to be identity enhancing for some (eg. Greg, Victoria), for others the technology became a representational form of their identity (eg. Brenda & Cecilia); notwithstanding that all participants acknowledged the importance of understanding the technology. This suggests that information managers may experience a kind of "intersectional invisibility." This term, proposed by Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008), in intersectionality research, refers to people with multiple subordinate-group identities such as ethnic minority woman who "do not fit the prototypes of their respective identity groups." In the context of this study, information managers may have intersecting identities of information and technology and hence perceived as "non-prototypical" of their constituent groups such as librarians, records managers and IT managers. Whilst this concept awaits further analysis, it also points to issues relating to the positioning of IM in organisations, which follows.

4.4 The precarious nature of belonging and processes of positioning: professional associations and localities of IM

The information managers were placed in varying locations in their organisations. Of the seven participants, three were located in an IT department, three in independent units with two of those within a corporate service type area, and one in multiple locations. For those located in an IT department, it was generally viewed, as not optimal but necessary because of the technological changes. Lyla believed it assisted her IT counterparts in better understanding the IM work whilst Cecilia cast it more in terms of its inevitability because of technological innovations and the history surrounding the difficulty in where to place IM departments. Of the three independent units outside of IT, two of the organisations had IT outsourcing arrangements in place. Finally, Brenda's unit was located in multiple areas because of the "unique" way in which team leaders were divided into structured and unstructured information and attached to different applications. However, there had been a number of restructures where they were originally located in an IT department, which had subsequently been restructured under a business services area. This highlights the "information paradox" problem raised by Logan (2010) in terms of the problematic nature of whether to position IM as an IT responsibility and the way in which the identification of IM is increasingly de-territorialized.

Belonginess did not only pertain to organisational localities, but also to professional associations. As seen in Table 2, participants were members or had corporate membership of primarily the Records Management Association of Australia (RMAA), amongst a range of others. Only three of the participants expressed particular views about the value of professional associations. Of those, Therese saw value in terms of the support network that she had periodically connected with in conducting her professional activities. However, she reflected upon a time in the early stages of her career when:

> "… being a librarian in the RMAA was like being poison. They didn't like librarians … It's not so much of it now as there's more convergence now from different professions…"

She also identified the information resources available from another association as extremely useful, albeit "American centric." The other two participants derived some limited value. Both were of the view that the diversity of their professional group and different levels of expertise made many courses too generic, when they required more subject specific and detailed guidance. None of the participants viewed their membership as a representation of their skills and competencies. This has interesting implications in terms of whether individuals will identify with support networks or business communities as they become more embedded in the organisation (Abell et al. 2011).

4.5   Institutional influence

Institutional influence was a key theme identified across most of the participants and particularly for those in the public sector. This was cast more in terms of the records that needed to be kept according to particular laws and the impact on their work activities. In the case of George, the law itself was of particular significance in the context of his professional identity "having been part of that world" since his career started in 1977 following a law enacted in 1975. In the case of Cathy, it sprang from a primary commitment to the public service and the need for a proper "evidence base" required by law and proper record keeping of events relating to vulnerable people. For Therese, it was a government request for information and the poor response that acted as a trigger for her IM unit to be formed. This highlights institutional influences as a legitimating identity source to be further explored.

5   Limitations and Conclusion

This paper has attempted to build on the growing, but underdeveloped area of identity in IS research. Specifically we examined how information managers are interpreting their role in the changing information landscape and the impact on their professional identity. We documented and assessed the ways professional identity was experienced, practised and performed, organised and represented using the intersectionality concept. The information managers came from diverse education and work backgrounds and this diversity appears to be increasing with new areas incorporating advisory, project and change management roles. Clearly the research is based on a limited number of managers in an Australian context and so further research is required. However, we identified the critical need to examine the professional identities of information managers and proposed an analytical framework that provides an integrated approach for progressing the study of identity in IS research.

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