

enquired about the two acronyms I discovered they were for the previous system which was replaced years ago. It is not a system, software, or hardware that misplaces, loses, or makes records inaccessible, it's people. Consider this:

- ◆ Moving files to a USB
- ◆ Storing files on personal drive and in a personal email account
- ◆ Printing and deleting files, then storing in hard copy format
- ◆ Corruption of data – Ctrl A, then presses space bar, saves file – resulting in a document with no text
- ◆ Corruption of data via software migrations/updates, removal or change of extension
- ◆ File titles incorrect or incomplete eg, Nofile.xls, summary.zip, thisone.doc
- ◆ Storing files in the wrong folder or hidden within multiple layers of sub-folders
- ◆ Moving or deleting the original file so short cuts/links in other (more important) folders don't work – hyperlinks as well.

INVEST IN TRAINING

Why do we expect ICT to fix our mistakes with a single click, button push? People created this mess! We need to invest in training and quality assurance (QA). QA indicates a knowledge gap which is rectified by training plus QA ensures accuracy of the records so that people can find them. Let's invest in our people by providing training and support.

My contract is extended and I return on site ready to continue after a break. However, my manager forgot to tell ICT I was returning and now my profile is inactive. My manager grants access permissions and I'm told "good to go". I find out that I'm locked out as I don't have a new password, so I have to contact the service desk.

I ring them using the loud speaker and I ask them to reset my password. They do; it's a random set of numbers and letters, upper case, lower case PLUS they ask for my manager's name to email her the last half of my password for security purposes. Manager passes me the rest of my password on a 'post-it' note.

Type in password, doesn't work, try again, doesn't work, try again – locked out. Ring service desk via loudspeaker, given the same set of random letters and numbers. We repeat this process a few times until they give me the entire password which everyone in the branch has HEARD. Yes, I could have been dismissed for breaching the ICT security policy for passing on my password. But I'm lucky, they understand my situation.

I discovered that the mics in court are for the remote sonographers not for amplification. The judge apologised for the lack of accessibility and, during the case, stated that I was an unreliable witness, as what I heard wasn't what was being said. The sheer enormity of it all hit; my future was being

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decided by someone else and I was at a huge disadvantage. All I could do was concentrate on something positive, something that I did well and that was records management. When the judge asked for evidence, I had it – I knew how to access records that the other party had forgotten. The judge accepted that I wasn't able to do a normal job in a normal office – I was in fact disabled because I am profoundly deaf and I wear two hearing aids.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth) defines disability as:

- ◆ total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- ◆ total or partial loss of a part of the body
- ◆ the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- ◆ the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- ◆ a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- ◆ a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour



and includes a disability that:

- ◆ presently exists
- ◆ previously existed but no longer exists
- ◆ may exist in the future
- ◆ is imputed to a person (meaning it is thought or implied that the person has disability but does not).

As we get older we accept loss of eye sight, hearing and mobility as a given, however you can join the disabled community at any given moment through accident, illness or just by living a full life.

Over four million people in Australia have some form of disability – that's one in five people. Some of those disabilities are invisible.

My own definition of disability is simply "unable to discharge a task".

What about if you broke your arm skiing? You would have extreme trouble logging on – Ctrl, Alt, Delete. If you had a baby in a pram, you would have trouble with stairs. If you lost your voice to a bad cold, how would you be able to conduct a meeting? Just because you're unable to do ONE thing, doesn't necessary mean you're completely unproductive.

You could use 'sticky keys function' on the keyboard so you can log on using one hand. You could take the lift when you have a pram if there is one. And, if you lose your voice, why not use the National Relay Service to place a conference call from the comfort of your own bed!

Many agencies are Web Content Accessibility Guidelines compliant externally, but don't consider being compliant internally – especially in regards to eLearning, webinars and presentations.

As RIM professionals, I want you be at the forefront of accessibility. Instead of narrowing your focus, your policies and your attitude – widen it. Apart from the economic and altruistic benefits – accessibility also prevents loss of skills and productivity.

Instead of listening to a webinar or podcast – I want to read a transcript. Instead of listening to a movie, video, DVD, eLearning – I want captioning. Instead of communication by the phone, I want to use text, email, live chat, instant messaging. Instead of ringing the service desk to unlock my account, I want to use a 'secret question' application.

Look beyond process, procedures and policy and remember people, for they are the missing piece in the accessibility puzzle. ❖



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