

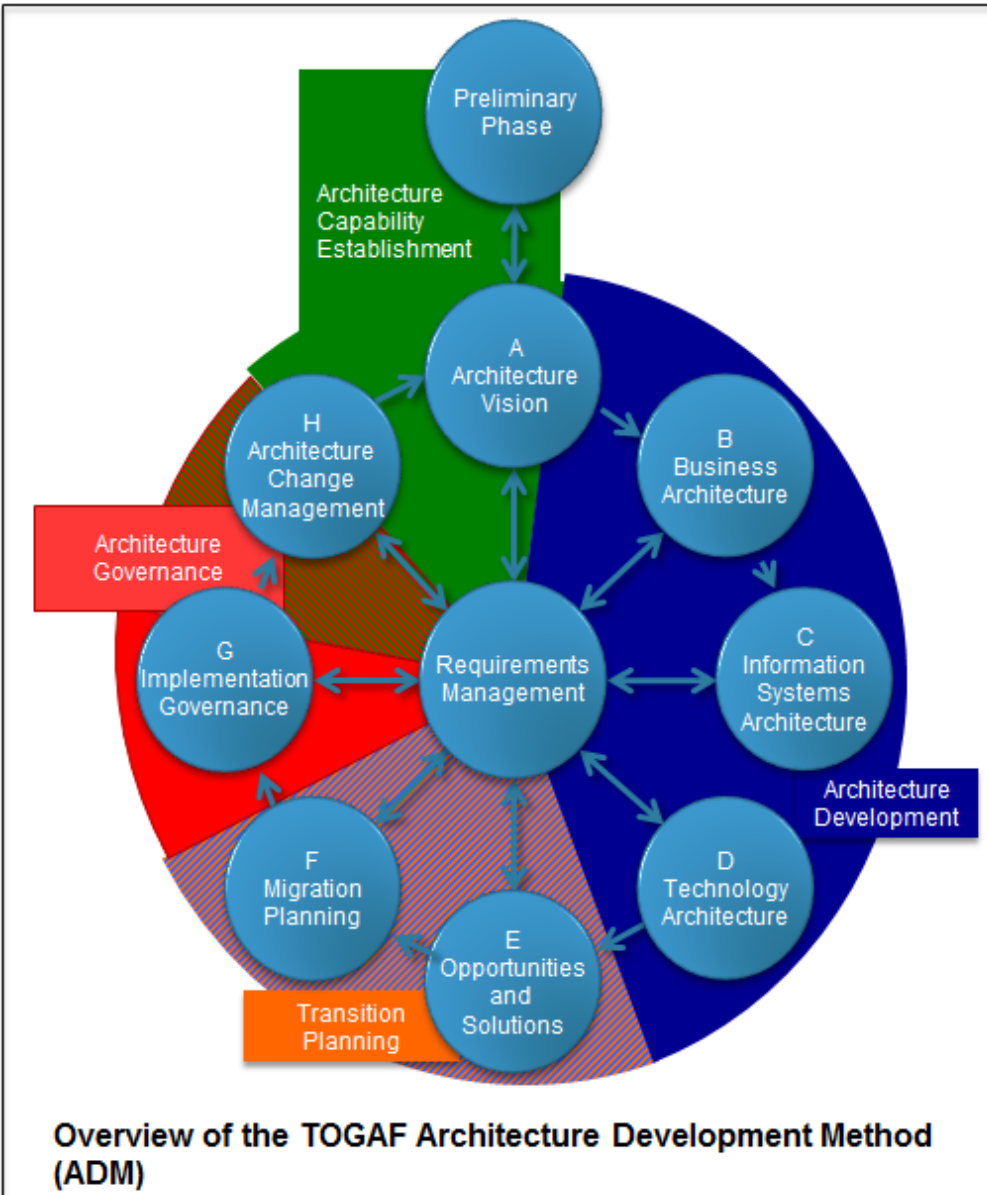
Thought Leader Interview: Allen Podraza on Records Management

By Iver Band
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Allen Podraza is a [Certified Information Professional](#) who believes that organizations benefit from developing a strategy for managing their information. He serves as the Director of Records Management & Archives for the American Medical Association in Chicago. He is an active member of a number of professional associations including the Association for Information and Image Management ([AIIM](#)), [ARMA International](#) and the Society of American Archivists ([SAA](#)), and has advised organizations on the development and administration of records management and archive programs. He also provides a wealth of “How To” advice through his blog, posts, and tweets.

This interview uses the Architecture Development Method ([ADM](#)) of The Open Group Architecture Framework ([TOGAF®](#)) as a template for interviewing Allen Podraza. As shown in the figure below, the ADM cycle focuses successively on the establishment of an architecture capability, the development of an architecture, planning for the transition to the new architecture, and architecture governance. Allen has responded to this unusual interview format with expert advice relevant to all aspects of the architecture lifecycle. At the beginning of all interview questions except the first and last, the most relevant TOGAF ADM phases are identified and hyperlinked in square brackets. For more information about the TOGAF ADM, refer to its [introduction](#) within the online TOGAF specification, and click on the hyperlinks to ADM phase documentation in the questions below.



EAPJ: How do you define "records" and "records management"?

AP: Records are recorded information regardless of medium. They are made or received by an organization. Records are evidence of what an organization does, and have value requiring their retention. They are retained by organizations to meet legal, fiscal, historical and operational requirements.

Records management, also known as records and information management (RIM), is the systematic control of records in all mediums throughout their lifecycle from point of creation or receipt through processing, distribution, maintenance and retrieval to their eventual disposal. To learn more about RIM visit the [ARMA International website](http://www.arma-international.org).

EAPJ: [Preliminary] Are there any concise principles that should guide the development of records management capabilities?

AP: A couple of great resources for developing and designing a comprehensive and effective records management program are the [Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles](#), created by ARMA International and [ISO 15489, Information and documentation – Records Management](#) by the International Organization for Standardization

EAPJ: [Preliminary] Which organizational roles should be involved in governing the management of records?

AP: An executive records management program sponsor who is a senior vice-president or chief executive officer, and key stakeholders from records management, legal, information technology, compliance and other key business groups need to meet regularly to provide program governance, strategic guidance and support.

EAPJ: [A] When you hear of plans for a new organizational initiative, such as offering a new product or service, or entering a new market, what are some of the questions you ask to uncover the records management implications?

AP: I would ask:

- Have you checked to see if such an initiative has been attempted in the past and if so, what was or was not successful? For some organizations this information would be found in their archives.
- What records management regulations and industry standards need to be considered in entering a new market?
- What records will be generated by this new initiative and need to be incorporated into the records retention schedule, what office will be responsible for maintaining the official records (Office of Record) and how long will records be retained?
- What technology will be used to generate, retain and manage the records?
- If it is a merger, does the merger contract discuss how records from the company being acquired will be handled?
- How will this new initiative impact the records management staff workload, budget, etc.?

EAPJ: [B] What new or strengthened organizational structures and processes must organizations consider when they plan new records management capabilities?

AP: Records managers and enterprise architects should collaborate in working with business units to identify records and systems to manage those records according to established records management policies. Records management policies and retention requirements must be linked to the relevant business processes and related technology. Records managers can contribute to both the business and data layers of enterprise architecture. The functional analysis conducted by the records management organization in

developing the records retention schedule will closely match the business layer of the enterprise architecture. The records management organization is also familiar with the records of an organization, including vital records for business continuity/disaster recovery programs, which has value to enterprise architects building the data layer of their architectures.

EAPJ: [C] What information standards must an organization adopt in order to manage records successfully?

AP: Relevant information privacy and security standards related to their industry, as well as the broadly applicable [ARMA Standards](#), [AIIM Standards](#), and [ISO Standards](#) .

EAPJ: [D] How should organizations decide whether to keep records onsite or offsite, and online or offline?

AP: Before organizations can decide where and how records should be stored, consideration should be given to whether records are active or inactive, vital, and public or private. They should also consider what laws and regulations relate to records management cost, security and risks to the organization. Organizations should also consider their internal climate regarding records management.

Online access can be provided for most records but security provisions must be in place for records that are private and regulated.

It is a good idea to send inactive hard copy records offsite rather than having them take up valuable office space.

Copies of vital records should be maintained offsite, eliminating the time and effort it will take to reconstruct this critical information in the case of disaster.

EAPJ: [E] What are some of the most important benefit elements of a typical business case for a records management solution? What are some benefits that organizations may overlook?

AP: There are many benefits to records management but as William Saffady, Ph.D. explains in his article [Making the Business Case for Records Management](#), they all boil down to your organization minimizing risks, reducing costs and increasing revenues.

Sometimes organizations overlook the benefits of [preserving their historical records in archives](#).

EAPJ: [E] What are some of the most common mistakes organizations make when planning records management implementations, and how can they be avoided?

- Not including stakeholders in the process of developing the record retention schedule, the foundation of the RIM program. Record users want to know their views are considered, and when they are, they are more apt to support the program.
- Attempting to manage all aspects of the program in-house. Outside resources such as record centers, digital vendors and consultants should be used whenever appropriate.
- Not enough staff training. In addition to the application of best practices, employees need initial and ongoing training on how to adhere to records retention and destruction policies
- Thinking that once the program is launched that the job is done. Someone in the organization needs to be assigned the responsibility to manage and maintain the program.
- Organizations storing their records on a server only. Server storage of records is not equivalent to storing records in a data repository which performs records management functions based on the document lifecycle.

EAPJ: [\[G,H\]](#) What are some signs that a records management implementation may be going off-track, and how should project leaders address them?

AP: A couple of signs that the records management program is not working are that it is difficult locating records for e-discovery or that many employees are not retaining and disposing of records according to established policies. In these cases, leaders need to revisit training, and the technology or lack of technology being used in the program. Not all users have the time with their busy work schedules to learn and implement document retention policies. Without automation, retention strategy is prone to human error.

EAPJ: As a records management veteran, what accomplishments do you treasure most, and what do you find most rewarding about working in this field?

AP: Hands down the accomplishments I most treasure are developing the Records and Archives Management Programs at the American Medical Association. AMA's core archival records are now readily accessible and used by physicians throughout the country and internally AMA staff are working paper-light and are applying and understanding best records management practices more each day.

I love continuing to learn about managing information and working through today's RIM challenges. I find it very rewarding solving problems, analyzing, improving and streamlining processes, and identifying opportunities to save money. I also find it extremely rewarding to give back to my profession by providing advice to those trying to figure out how to better manage their information, and to those new to the profession.

About the Interviewer

Iver Band is a practicing enterprise architect and a developer and communicator of enterprise architecture standards and methods. At Cambia Health Solutions, a health insurer and direct health solutions company, he shapes solutions that promote accountability, quality and efficiency in health care delivery. Iver also serves as Director of Enterprise and Solution Architecture for EA Principals, a training and consulting firm, for which he works with clients, develops curriculum materials, and edits the Enterprise Architecture Professional Journal and EAPJ.org. Iver represents EA Principals in the Open Group, where he is the elected Vice Chair of The ArchiMate Forum.