What is a document and records map?

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Last week, as part of a new consultancy I am undertaking, I found myself trying to solve this question, because my clients knew they needed one, but did not know exactly what it was.

The term **"document and records map**" has not a precise definition, as they are for other methodological tools. In fact it is a term not used in English, but broadly in Spanish speaking countries and especially in Spain.

In my experience the term was **"invented" for the first time in 1999** in the context of a consultancy for the implementation of the document and records management system of the company TRAGSA, by the team I formed with my partners of that time. We tried to find a term that "sell" the idea to engineers with no experience in document and records management. The initial idea was to find a **gr aphical and easy to understand** instrument to present the enormous amount of information gathered in the audit process necessary before implement a program, model or document and records management system.

The inspiration came from the methodology Infomapping or **Infomap**, which had some success in the early 90s (Burk, CF, & Horton, FW InfoMap: A Complete Guide to Discovering Corporate Resources. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988.). This methodology is defined as a method for identifying and mapping information resources within an organization.

The term "document and records map" was successful and has been used in many projects to implement document and records management models and technology **ECM (Enterprise Content Management),** although it may not always be the same instrument, presentation or methodology behind the name

The characteristics of a "document and records map" includes:

Information on documents/records:

What is a document and records map?

- Details of the types of documents/records produced or received by the organization (using aggregations as files, case files or records series as defined in the organization)
- Relationships with functions and activities where they are produced, and business procedures
- Organizational units involved in the creation and control of the document/records and the related information systems or computer applications

Information on policies to implement

- Includes information on established retention schedules for records and their associations

- Information about the form and format in which it was decided to keep the documents/records
- Information about the possible restrictions on access to each type of documentation
- Also my include information for the implementation such as metadata sets, or access permissions

Presentation

- The map should include a graphic representation to assist in the understanding of the information
- It is ideal to be implemented in a technology that allows the display of information from different views or perspectives and with different levels of depth.

In the last year I have also worked in a very interesting line which merges "document and records maps" with **business process maps**.

Document and records maps are instruments that cannot become the objective or goal of document/records management. In my opinion they are valid if they help to implement a document/records management model. Therefore, they can differ from one organization to another and don´t need to be built from predetermined criteria.