Your data and information is no longer anonymous — you can no longer afford to simply save it and set it aside. It has a clear face; it has priority; it has importance. It is the subject of service-level agreements, and you must know and keep track of how to treat it, how long to keep it, where to store it, and who is allowed to touch it.

At the same time, your repositories of data and information continue to grow — and grow tremendously. No longer limited to transactional data or electronic documents, information now includes email, voice recordings, instant messages, and much more.

How you manage data and information over time requires an information lifecycle management (ILM) strategy. Perhaps you are well on your way to developing such a strategy — if not, there are some pressing reasons to do so now (see “Is Your Missing ILM Strategy Putting You at Risk?” in the October-December 2005 issue of SAP Insider).

Once your ILM strategy is set, all that is left to do is implement it. SAP and its partners have developed several new tools to help our customers do just this: better manage their data and information. Those tools are now available within, or can be used through, mySAP ERP 2005. The requirements used to develop these ILM tools originated from meetings SAP conducted with ASUG Influence Councils and others to identify and tackle the major pain points customers are facing as they develop their ILM strategies. SAP has derived a representative list of customer requirements that a solid ILM strategy must address — requirements that most, if not all, companies have in common.

**Overcome Common ILM Pain Points**

What customers have told SAP is that a comprehensive ILM strategy seeks a balance between three, sometimes competing, factors: legal requirements, TCO, and risk.

**Factor #1: Legal Requirements**

In the minds of many customers, meeting legal requirements represents the highest priority for ILM-related tools. Current customer strategies reflect this:

- One large US company currently implementing an ILM strategy, with legal compliance as a top priority, has identified two main focal areas: identifying whether the information is relevant for litigation and reporting or if it is eligible for destruction, and deploying the ILM strategy with respect to data retention and destruction.

- Another large US company has devised an extensive email classification system and has educated its employees to follow this system so that their emails, once archived, can be managed in line with legal retention requirements.

Legal requirements often collide with another trend now popular in the IT world: industry consolidation. When consolidating data centers to centralized locations, companies must first ensure that they have carefully considered legal compliance issues. For multinational companies in particular, it is important to store the data in...
the right place, both logically and physically. Data that is generated by a German subsidiary, for example, could be required — by German law — to be stored within that country.

Compliance issues also make ILM more complex than ever before. Different countries have different requirements as to how long data must be stored. Laws in the United States, for example, require that certain financial documents be stored for 6 years, whereas in Germany, the same document may need to be stored for 10 years.

**Factor #2: TCO**
The simplest solution would be to store all data and information forever. While this would guarantee that your company meets all legal requirements, the resulting cost would be exorbitant. Therefore, you not only need policies in place to determine the necessary shelf life of data, you also need to be able to destroy the data if you no longer need it and are not required to keep it.

**Factor #3: Risk**
Our customers also recognize that the more data they keep scattered throughout more locations, the greater the potential risk. A company called upon to defend a lawsuit, for example, may be required to search all its data as part of the discovery process. The more data you have, the greater the time the search will take, and the greater the risk that this process will be a cumbersome and costly one.

Another risk comes from redundancy of data and information. In some companies, different representations of the same information may be stored on different systems. Such redundancy not only represents unnecessary cost, but also tremendous risk, because it can considerably complicate — or even hinder — the final destruction of data.

For an optimal ILM strategy, customers must inevitably determine their own compromise between costs, risks, and legal requirements. Once that compromise has been reached and the business rules are defined, you then need the tools to actually implement that strategy.

**Tools That Bring ILM to Life**
The tools are now in place to turn an ILM strategy into reality. SAP ships many tools today with mySAP ERP 2005. **Archive Routing**, for example, gives you the ability to define where you want to store data based on specific criteria, such as company code or time-related factors. You can define rules based on these criteria to tell the system how to automatically store this data in designated storage areas at the time of archiving.

With Archive Routing, you can set up business rules so that US financial documents are archived in a United States repository, and German documents in storage devices in Germany. You can configure the archive to retain data and information for specific time periods, and then arrange for its eventual deletion when appropriate.

**mySAP ERP 2005** will provide a new interface for storage providers. The interface is based on the standard **WebDAV** protocol and offers many ILM advantages. For example, it supports end-of-life of system scenarios, allowing archived data to be read even after the original system has been permanently shut down. Also, it enables you to store archived data in hierarchies, facilitating the final destruction of data. Another advantage of a WebDAV-based storage solution is that structured and unstructured data can be stored together, an important requirement customers are facing in their ILM strategies.

Several storage partners have already successfully completed the SAP certification process, ensuring that their offerings integrate with this interface and take advantage of its interoperability with their own tools. To find out more about certified storage partners, visit www.sap.com/partners/directories/searchpartner.epx and, under **Search for Solutions**, choose the SAP-defined integration scenario **BC-DAR — WebDAV for Data Archiving**.

**ILM Is a Reality Now with mySAP ERP 2005**
New ILM tools from SAP are now available in **mySAP ERP 2005**. All future tools — those currently in the pipeline to be released this year and next, and future ILM developments — will also integrate with **mySAP ERP 2005**.

Your data and information stores will only continue to grow. This is why it is critical to start now and implement your ILM strategy. With these new tools from SAP and partners, you can transform your data and information from faceless objects that pose an increasing burden on your company into meaningful and valuable corporate assets that are at your fingertips when you need them.