Mapping Information

An information map shows:

- What we need to know about to know about a situation (Context types and what they are called in the environment).
- How the things we need to know about … the Contexts… fit together (Correlations … N-Correlate and X-Correlate Sub-Contexts connecting (Occurrence) Identification Sub-Contexts).

The following diagram maps a public utility. Each row identifies a Context. The Contexts are the basic business of a utility reflecting central purpose information needs. Additional Contexts (*in grey italics*) are identified for possible future expansion. They are not correlated but are included here only to show that maps need not be comprehensive but can grow and evolve over time to develop a cohesive whole. Information is not broken into different systems (*e.g.* receivables, payables, accounting, personnel, payroll, etc.) which fragmentation by its very nature obstructs effective information management.

Contexts		**Sub-Contexts**	
Type	**Name** (Context-ID)	**Identification**	**Correlations**
Principal	Public Utility		
Actor	Subjects (People)	Subject	
Role	Customers	Customer	
	Employees	Employee	
	Vendors	*Vendor*	
Location	Premises	Premise	
Tangible	Equipment	Equipment	
Construct	*Chart of Accounts*	*Account*	
Intention	*Work Orders*	*Work Order*	
	Service Orders	*Service Order*	
	Purchase Orders	*Purchase Order*	
Action	Meter Reading	Reading	
	Payments	Payment	
Activity	Usage	Usage	
	Time and Attendance	*Time Cards*	
Event	Billing	Bill	
	Payroll	*Paycheck*	

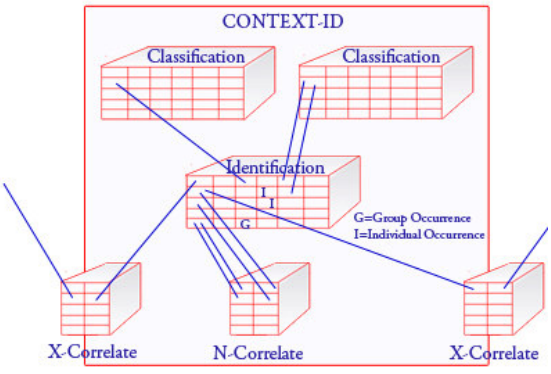
The purpose of an information map is:

- To give a high level view … a table of contents … of the information content of a particular situation and how information fits together. An informational "lay of the land."
- To focus on how information fits the real world instead of how it fits prior solutions and/or technology.
- To avoid process and procedural thinking in favor of function and behavior.
    - Business Behavior: While behavior is considered, it is information about the behavior, not how it is performed, that is important.
    - Information Management Behavior: To emphasize that information development is an act of discovery, not design, focusing on what the information is, not what we think we may do to or with it.
    - To eliminate procedural diagramming (*e.g.* Flow charts, data flow diagrams) which are far more concerned with doing the diagrams than with organizing information.
- To document an informational view that is recognizable both to business and technical people thereby bridging an all too common communications gap that has neither party knowing what they should be talking about.

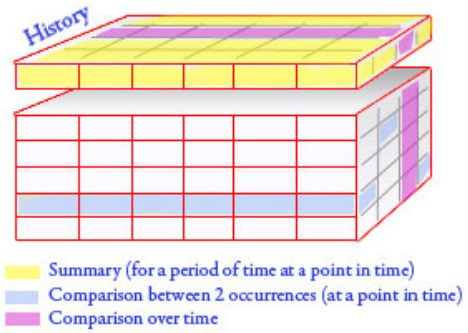
Sub-Contexts:

The information map (previous page) reflects four sub-contexts types: Context-ID, (Occurrence) Identification, N-Correlation, and X-Correlation. Classification, Summary, and Comparison sub-contexts are identified within a context description "chapter." It is not particularly necessary, however, to diagram the association of sub-contexts because they are essentially the same in all contexts. The informational difference between one context and another is not how sub-contexts fit together but in how many classifications and correlations each context has. (See Information Topography: Explicit and Implicit Sub-Contexts at www.id2100.com.)

Explicit Sub-Contexts



Implicit Sub-Contexts Within Explicit Sub-Contexts



Correlations:

The Correlation brackets are end point connections correlating two and only two Contexts at their point of identification. The bracket is a documentation device and does not indicate inclusion. More specifically a correlation is not by Context or Sub-context but by the ***occurrence*** of something in the real world reflected by the ***occurrence*** of information about it within the Identification Sub-Context … in conventional terms, an entry, or record. The N-correlations of *Subjects* and *Accounts* reflect the correlation of ***two different identified occurrences within the same context*** while X-Correlations correlate ***two different identified occurrences in different contexts***. Since this is a logical rather than physical map, issues of proximity and relative position are irrelevant.

Identification:

Occurrences are potentially identified in two ways: by existence and by reference (*e.g.* social security number, student number, etc. are identifications by reference). Identification by reference is optional. Identification by existence is not. Something can exist/occur whether or not we ever assign a unique number to it and even if we do it exists independent of that number. For a variety of reasons including that we got it wrong, we must be able to change, say, a person's social security number and still know it is the same person. Conventional systems tend to muddy identification by existence.

Principal:

As there is only one *Principal,* distinguishing between *Context-ID* and *Identification* sub-contexts, though real, is not especially meaningful. The association of other *Contexts* to the *Principal* is not by correlation but by simply being in the *Principal* environment. The *Principal* is, in effect, a super-*Construct*. If two organizations merge, the two *Principals* devolve into *Constructs* with a new, albeit descendant *Principal* emerging. If two businesses are each properly mapped, joining their systems is mostly just reconciling nomenclature, not meaning.

Actors and N-Correlations:

Actors, "doers," can be people or groups of people, creating (the potential for) N-Correlations between individuals, groups, groups of groups, and groups of individuals and groups. While Actors (in the example called *Subjects*) exist independent of any role they may occupy relative to the Principal, there are (potential) roles within N-Correlations. An individual can be the president, buyer, husband, mother, son, etc. within a Subject group dependent on their role in that group. Contact managers and their like consistently fail information management by grouping entries as a classification instead of as true N-Correlations, making it impossible to assign people in multiple groups with different roles in each group and to otherwise properly group groups. The conventional concept of "Parent-Child" as regards relationships contributes to this problem with vocabulary that dulls our ability to see what's really going on. A father and son are parent and child but informationally they are both "parents" to the same "child" … their mutual relationship of which they are equal "owners/parents;" thus the concept *correlation* instead of the traditional *relationship*. *Relationships*, as applied in traditional systems, don't exist in the real world.

Roles:

Roles identify who or what someone is relative to the principal … Customer, Employee, Vendor, Stockholder, etc. An actor can occupy more than one role and a role can be occupied by more than one actor. Rules for the actor within a role can be different. An employee, for example, must be an individual while customers, vendors, and stockholders, can be a group or an individual.