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Businesses face data 'explosion'

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Study has revealed that by 2010, the amount of information created, stored and replicated will have reached 988 billion gigabytes

Businesses face an information explosion over the next three years as the number of digital images, email inboxes and broadband connections doubles by 2010.

A study, *The expanding digital universe*, by researcher IDC and software company EMC, found the information stored on disk arrays has grown at a compound annual growth rate of 60 percent over the last decade — and that growth rate is predicted to be maintained through to 2010.

The amount of information created, stored and replicated in 2006 has been calculated by the study to be 161 billion gigabytes — equivalent to three million times the information in all books ever written. That figure is expected to reach 988 billion gigabytes by 2010.

Speaking at the EMC World annual conference in Orlando this week, Joe Tucci, chairman, president and chief executive of EMC, said: "The driving factor behind all of this information is individuals... this all needs a place to live and be stored securely."

Not only will there be more digital information but that information will be more complex than in the past. The research predicts almost 90 percent of data will be unstructured, compared to around 70 percent historically.

Dave Donatelli, executive vice president of storage product operations at EMC, said this data explosion will present ever increasing power, cooling, personnel and data security challenges for businesses and chief information officers in the future.

As part of its Information Heritage Initiative, EMC has donated \$1m in equipment, products and services to the US Smithsonian Institution's programme to digitise its collections. This donation includes 100 terabytes of archival storage capacity and an EMC Centera content storage system.

Speaking at the EMC World conference Ann Speyer, chief information officer at the Smithsonian Institution, said: "Capturing our cultural heritage through digitisation is one of the biggest challenges we face."

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