

The Basics of Electronic Records Management

ERM is more than technology.

Implementing an ERM project requires more than just purchasing software and hoping for the best.

Goals for this Session

- PROVIDE a simple explanation of ERM;
- DEFINE or outline elements of a working program or system concept as well as potential things to avoid; and
- OUTLINE a basic process for steps to undertake the transition from paper to an electronic records management system.

Food for thought regarding the lack of a process for electronic records management...



Information *can be* a liability

- Many organizations are swamped with both structured and unstructured electronic information which is neither properly filed nor securely managed through to appropriate disposal.
- This huge information asset, 80% of which is held in unstructured form, is often locked inside end-users' desktops and departmental file systems, embedded in collaboration and email systems, and integrated into business processes, creating significant challenge for information governance and the mitigation of risk.
- How do you properly retain and dispose of your information?

Records Management All types



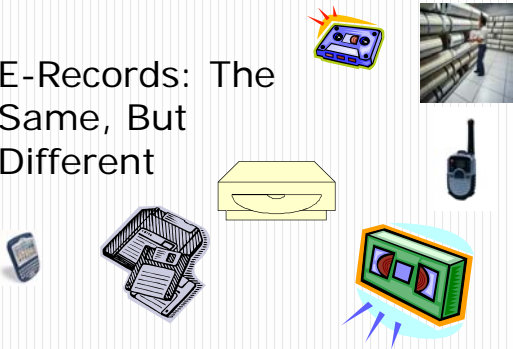
We all manage records...

- With the advent of personal computers and the Internet, the ability to create and disseminate information has become decentralized.
- The result is the Records Management function is also decentralized.
- In other words, every employee today is a records manager – like it or not.
- If we let them manage their records without any proper training or policy, the results could prove disastrous.

Records Management means different things to different people.

- *Document Management* is about the management of documents that are "active" works in process.
- *Records Management* is typically related to the lifecycle of a document with a specific emphasis on the systematic archival and destruction of documents (both physical as well as electronic).

E-Records: The Same, But Different



Transitioning a paper intensive environment into one of electronic data takes time.

Regardless of format, consider these BASIC recordkeeping principles

- Principle of accountability
- Principle of integrity
- Principle of protection
- Principle of compliance
- Principle of availability
- Principle of retention
- Principle of disposition
- Principle of transparency

So what defines a Record?

- *Anything* may be a business or official record.
- What makes a record is not the *media* it is transmitted in, but rather, its *content*.
- The general rule is that it is not a record unless it holds some type of *legal, fiscal or administrative value*.
- You probably already have a strategy to manage your paper records.
- In order to apply these practices to electronic information, you must first determine, just as you would in the case of information preserved on paper, which electronic information is a "record" and which is a "non-record".
- When electronic information is deemed to meet the criteria of a "record", it must be managed according to sound records management policies and retained according to each organization's records retention schedule.
- Electronic information that is deemed to be a "non-record" can be destroyed at the discretion of the user - generally, after a transitory period or after the official record is produced.

So what is ERM?

- An electronic record is a record created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means.
- Electronic records management, while involving special considerations, requires the planning, budgeting, organizing, directing, training, and controlling activities associated with managing the record in its entirety.
- It can be further defined as the efficient management of records stored on computerized systems.
- The key to an ERMS is to be able to support such documents through their entire life cycle and manage an electronic record from the point of creation to disposition.

Benefits of ERM

- Digitally-stored electronic documents are not nearly as susceptible to destruction, accidental or otherwise, as their paper counterparts.
- They can easily be stored remotely, sent quickly, and viewed by a number of people at once without compromising the original, making them a very versatile and efficient information source.
- Converting vital documents into electronic format can be a lifesaver, not only in terms of efficiency, but from a recovery standpoint.

Top 10 excuses for not considering ERM

1. If we need to, we can usually find it.
2. No one is ever going to sue us.
3. We've got to pick our battles.
4. Green/schmeen.
5. It's good for staff to be busy.
6. It is easier just to get everyone together in person.
7. Our business isn't located on a flood plain or anything.
8. Information security just isn't at the top of our list.
9. Change is expensive.
10. This information management stuff is just too squishy.

ELEMENTS of a Working Electronic Records Management System (ERMS)

A recent AIIM survey indicates that the majority of ERM projects fail due to *people-related issues* and *not due to technology*.

Things to think about before you get started



- Your main goal should be to provide access to information as quickly, accurately and pleasantly as possible.

- Define your USERS and UNDERSTAND their NEEDS. It is critical to consider the data people most often search and make it the most readily available.
- The ability for a record keeper to provide information depends on how it is organized and how it is presented. Ensure your employees (customers) can use the system the way they want to (and not how YOU think they should).
- If people are happy with the initial appearance and performance of a system, they are more apt to use it and learn it.
- Your main goal should be to provide access to information as quickly, accurately and pleasantly as possible.
- If you build your information architecture (catchy phrase for filing system) based on some type of internal structure or positioning, it will not work externally nor for perpetuity.
- It is not about the information but what you are going to do with it.
- The entire purpose is to consider who looks for what, how it is found and how it should be classified to provide for this.

- ### Transitioning from paper based processes to electronic processes
- Don't let this type of "solution" make the problem worse!*
- It is a mistake to assume that an electronic system can be structured the same as a paper system.
 - With a paper system, the documentation is put into files after all data has been captured and processed.
 - But with an electronic system, the document is built as it is captured and processed (think about the former definition of document management versus records management).
 - An electronic records retention system is similar to a paper records system in that it is no better than the planning and design that went into the system.
 - Ways in which documents are captured and stored must be consistent. If consistency is not maintained in the process of capturing documents or storing them, they can then become essentially lost in the system.
 - There are few things more frustrating than wasting time searching for a document that was filed electronically in the wrong place or in the wrong way.

- ### Top 10 ways to guarantee failure
- ECM implementation has an 80% failure rate
- Selecting the solution, then defining the requirements.
 - Learning as you go
 - Non-trustworthy solutions/implementations
 - Mix and match
 - Not understanding the need for change management
 - Adopting an everyone gets everything approach
 - Restricted functionality
 - Inexperienced advocates
 - Limiting champion user participation
 - Unstable foundation or components

Useless Trivia....

Unbelievably, the 2007 Cohasset ARMA AIIM Electronic Records Management Survey noted that more than a third of organizations still do not include *electronic records* in their retention schedule.

Yet, over 98% of all records are generated and stored electronically.



Records Retention is command central for any type of records management system.

- Many organizations are confused about how long to keep e-documents, but a good retention schedule should be designed to cover both electronic and paper documents.
- The growing use of electronic documents, and in particular, e-mail, has made retention a critical corporate responsibility.
- The retention schedule is a legal authority that needs to include:
 - ❖ A description of the records.
 - ❖ The retention periods of all records in the series.
 - ❖ The medium used to record/store information.
 - ❖ Where records are stored.
 - ❖ Date and method of records disposition; or the storage of records transfer instruction, if disposition is not authorized.

Special Note on E-Mail

- E-mail messages are potentially official records, so you should plan for e-mail as part of your electronic records management strategy.
- The medium is irrelevant.
- The content of the message determines whether it is a record or not; the content determines to which records series the message belongs; and the content determines how long the message needs to be retained.
- Both statute and case law make clear of the need to include e-mail in an overall records management strategy.
- Currently, few agencies manage e-mail as records; it is typically left to personal preference or routine systems back-ups and administrative procedures that treat all e-mail alike.
- These practices can result in serious legal, operational, and public relations risks.

Getting Started

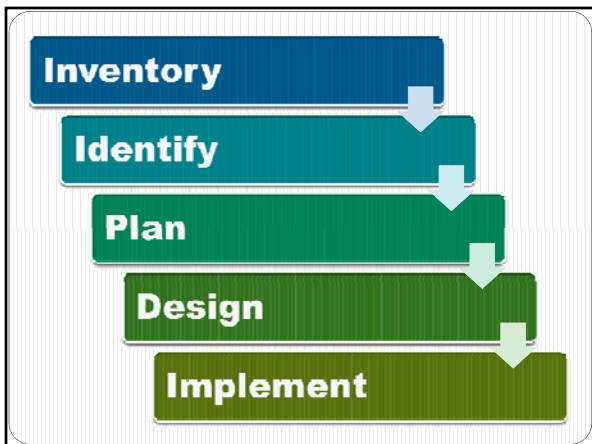
Requires a lot of change management and communication as you move from your current way of doing business into an ERM-enabled way.

Consider references such as:

- AAIM ARP1-2009 /Recommended Practice for the Analysis, Selection, and Implementation of Electronic Document Management Systems (EDMS); or
- The global standard for records management - ISO/TR 15489 provides an implementation methodology which can help you achieve success.

10 simple steps.

1. Take a holistic approach.
2. Assign responsibility at the top.
3. Create a recognized, central discipline within the enterprise.
4. Create a common language and controlled vocabulary.
5. Create classification schemes.
6. Apply standard indexing terms across the organization via metadata.
7. Keep it simple and avoid techie jargon.
8. Institute training and change management.
9. Consider essential computer applications.
10. Highlight the positives.



Inventory

- Begin by documenting existing electronic records systems.**
- Complete and inventory of all official records and keep it current.**
- Find out what records there are, where they are stored, their quantity, and how they are captured and used.**
- Define the contents of the files and records.**
- Determine whether records are being captured correctly; and if not, consider what needs to happen to ensure they are.**

Identify

- Specify all technical characteristics necessary to read and process the files.**
- Determine restrictions on use and access.**
- Describe update cycles or conditions and rules for adding, modifying, or deleting information.**
- Analyze business activity; this serves as the baseline for your project in terms of establishing what needs to be done and how to approach it.**
- Establish process for timely, authorized disposition of records and to ensure efficient and timely migration of data.**

Plan

- You must take the time to study alternatives (software solution or not) and draft a plan that includes steps to clearly accomplish expected results.**
- Once complete, you can define the program scope and develop a high-level program outline or concept.**
- In this step, you determine which policies, procedures and tactics are necessary in order to create the appropriate records control framework.**
- This step helps you to identify records-related challenges you face and understand what is doable within a particular time frame.**
- Outputs from this stage might include detailed project plans, documents of changes to requirements, the detailed system design (including architectural diagrams and models, file plans and support plans), and the overall implementation plan.**

Step 3(a) - Evaluate

- If evaluating solutions/products, consider:
 - ❖ Product maturity (how long the product has been available);
 - ❖ Adherence to relevant industry standards and guidelines;
 - ❖ Ability to meet key objectives and critical success factors;
 - ❖ It is important to make certain that each software product record the creator of a document and when it was created;
 - ❖ The system should always be able to identify changes to the original and when those changes were made;
 - ❖ Level of available technical support both during implementation and after;
 - ❖ Product scalability;
 - ❖ Availability of system documentation, including HELP facilities;
 - ❖ System security and availability;
 - ❖ Cost of ownership; and
 - ❖ Reference site benchmarks.

Design

The best approach is to create an initial design, or prototype and have the users "test" the system to gain a better understanding of how they can use the selected technologies.

This testing and project monitoring should be executed by different members of the project team; and include project or product acceptance testing.

Without this thorough testing, the potential for user frustration is significant and can have a negative impact.

Consider whether to integrate into production mode using a phased approach based on process or specific activity or a complete unit basis.

After the system has been selected, the project planning occurs with establishment of dates associated with detailed technical design, user interface definition/customization, report definition, etc.

Step 4a - Policy

Prior to the system being moved into full production, it is highly recommended the organization prepare business practices or some type of policy document.

This document further enables the organization to authenticate or certify that information contained within the digital system is accurate, reliable and trustworthy.

Information should include, but not be limited to:

- Description of how information will be scanned, indexed and verified;
- Description of how the system will be secured from unauthorized access;
- Description of how documents will be secured from unauthorized modification or alternation; description of how authorized modification of documents will be managed, including audit trail information and the ability to retrieve any previous document version required to be maintained.
- Description of how notes and annotations (if any) will be stored and managed, if they are a part of the official record;
- Description of how these policies and procedures will be followed; and
- Description of how the system will adhere to the published or company-adhered to records retention schedule.

Implement

- Implement the records system and roll out the project to the users.
- Do not forget user training.
- Conduct post-implementation review.
- Step back and review the system as delivered and the delivery process to identify gaps and areas for improvement.
- On an ongoing basis, you'll want to establish a monitoring regime so that small changes can be addressed before they require big changes and so that big changes can be anticipated and addressed in an orderly fashion.

Shhhh! I'm reviewing...

