



Putting Together a Winning Team

Given the radically different nature of electronic records, you need to have a team approach for ERM (Electronic Records Management). You will need to have active engagement with a wide variety of key stakeholders led by a sponsor at board level who recognises the need to put records management on the corporate agenda – most likely driven by regulatory compliance, legislative pressures and/or the business need for keeping records (including ediscovery demands and protection of intellectual property). For many organisations, the race is now on to reduce their risk exposure by regaining control of their corporate records.

The Business Managers

The middle strata of business managers in your organisation, including legal and compliance experts need to understand the business benefits to be gained from having accurate, reliable, and easily accessible records, as well as the consequences of not having them and, therefore, the need to drive the effort to make sure the organisation meets operational requirements.

Records Managers

Records are the "corporate memory" of your organisation and Records Managers help to protect and preserve that memory. They are instrumental in designing and developing all the elements of a successful records management system, including retention schedules, classification schemes, metadata standards, security and access requirements, audit trails, etc.

The IT Team

The IT Director must be aware of the IT implications for the long-term management and preservation of electronic records. His or her IT Team are the "mechanics" for the records management system. They possess the technological expertise to oversee the management of an organisation's information infrastructure, which increasingly includes custody of its records.

The End User

Most records will be created from documents created, or processes executed, by end-users. The declaration of a document as a record should be part of the normal process. Your golf game isn't over until you have cleaned your clubs and put them away. The end user will need to be prepared for this responsibility and approach.

Rules of the Game

To meet the increasingly complex legal, regulatory, and operational requirements, organisations need to improve how they manage their business records that are created in the normal business process. Here are some important "Rules of the Game":

- Records are retained on the basis of their value to the organisation and legal requirements.
- Records management is an ongoing process, not a project.
- Records management is the discipline of defining and applying business rules related to the creation, protection, retrieval, and disposition of an organisation's records over time.
- Effective electronic records management requires the collaboration and integration of business, legal/compliance, records management, and technology functions within an organisation. If you aren't managing your organisation's digital records, you need to "T-Off" with your electronic records management today.

Elements of a Winning Electronic Records Management Process

- Common goals.
- Board level sponsorship.
- Work as a team.
- Integration into the normal work process.
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Clearly defined benefits and benefits realisation plan.
- Effective change management, including training.
- Patience and perseverance.
- Learning from failures and celebrating victories.
- Collaboration between business, Records Managers and IT stakeholders.

Legislation and Standards

- General:**
- Data Protection Act 2003.
 - Disability Discrimination Act 2005.
 - Many National Privacy Laws & UN Resolutions
 - Many National and Local Civil Procedures, such as:
 - Canada's Rules of Civil Procedure
 - UK's Practice Directive to U.K. Civil Procedures
 - US's Federal Rules of Civil Procedures
 - Many National Admissibility of Electronic records as evidence standards, such as:
 - BS 10008
 - Canada's Electronic Records as Documentary Evidence

- Good practice:**
- BSI BIP0008: Code of Practice for Legal Admissibility and Evidential Weight of Information Stored Electronically.
 - BSI BIP0018: Code of Practice: Information Management Systems: Building Systems fit for Audit.

- Public sector:**
- Public Records Acts of 1958 and 1967
 - The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on Records Management.
 - Environmental Information Regulations 2005.
 - e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF) version 6, specifically e-Government Metadata Standards (e-GMS).
 - The National Archives Requirements for Electronic Record Management Systems (2002).

- Sector-specific, eg:**
- Regulations from Financial Services Authority (MIFID, TCF), Health and Safety Executive (COSH).

- Standards:**
- MoReq2: Model Requirements Specification for the Management of Electronic Records - www.moreq2.eu
 - ISO 17799 / BS7799 Information Security Management.
 - ISO 15488 Information and Documentation: Records Management.
 - ISO 23081 Information and documentation - Records management processes - Metadata for records
 - ISO 9001: 2000 Quality management systems: Requirements.
 - BS/ISO Standards are available at: www.bsiglobal.com

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What is a Record?

A record is evidence of a business decision or action that needs to be preserved in its current state. Importantly, a record can take almost any form including emails, instant messages, text files, voice mails, paper, invoices, employee records, a website, a collaborative team space, reports, and even maps, rocks, or other physical samples. Many of these records start as a normal document, potentially already managed within a Document Management system. The total collection of corporate records constitutes the organisation's memory. Records are retained according to their administrative, financial, legal, operational, or historical values. Many different laws, regulations, standards, and business practices include requirements about how records are retained.

Organisations must comply with the record-keeping requirements defined by regulators, their industry, by legal precedents and the actual business needs. The retention requirements for records vary significantly from one type, or category, of record to another. Keeping records accessible and preserved over long periods of time is a challenging area for electronic records management.

Pre-Game Checklist

Review your readiness with the following questions:

- Do you manage electronic records across your organisation in a consistent manner?
- Are electronic records included in your organisation's records retention schedules?
- Does your organisation's litigation hold system include electronic records?
- Does your organisation have a plan and budget for migrating digital records that need to be preserved for more than 5 years?
- Have funding and resource levels for records management in your organisation kept pace with the exponential growth in the type, number, and of electronic records?
- Is there a forum for records management, legal, and IS/IT to collaborate and cooperate on records management initiatives?
- Are business units held accountable for compliance with records management policies and procedures?
- Is the declaration of records part of normal business processes?
- Is your record management process aligned with your document management process?

If you answer "No" to any of these questions, then you will need to re-appraise your current records management arrangements

Compliance

Discovery

Business Needs

Process

Risk

Operational

Regulation Enforcement



Managing the Information Lifecycle

Records are not something new. They have always been a necessary and required aspect of business. However, the arrival of the digital age has raised some unique issues. The volume of information being created and circulated has exploded. Within this deluge of documents, messages and agreements are items whose importance might require them to be raised to the level of a record. Once raised to this state, they need to be preserved for an appropriate period of time, and then disposed of. Traditionally, these records would be created and stored on paper. Now they are almost certain to be created electronically, and increasingly they are being stored electronically for their lifetime. In addition, there is little point in preserving a record if it cannot subsequently be found if at some point it needs to be referenced.

A further change in the traditional process is that records filing can no longer be consigned to a dedicated clerical function. All information workers need to be empowered to decide if a document or email should be declared as a record and where that should be kept in the Record Management System. Of course, the user can be assisted by tools to make this possible and to assist with classification. Once we have that record we can start to manage it across its lifecycle. Those documents that don't make it to records status need to be cleared out, otherwise they will reside in the organisation for ever, presenting potential legal risk as well as consuming digital storage space.

A record is not just entered in the system, but needs to be managed throughout its life. Probably the most important time will be when the record is indexed or in other words given metadata - data that allows the system and users to see what kind of record it is, what it is about, and other pieces of information that are crucial to identify, find and manage it. Probably the most important type of metadata is that which allows you to find the record again, since it is of no use to throw a record into a black hole. Other types of metadata are also important, for example who will be allowed to see the record and what can they do with it, where is it stored and for how long do we need to keep it?

Even though storing the record is important, it is just as important to recognise the fact that a record does not need to be kept forever in an organisation but at one point will leave it again as well. This can mean that the record gets disposed of by transfer to eg, to The National Archive, or to an acquiring company.

The management of the company record is not a one time action but a process that will manage all of the records over their lifecycle.

Electronic Records Management Issues

Today, almost all business records are created - and most spend their entire lives - electronically. Failure to manage electronic records and physical records in accordance with established records management policies and procedures is to turn a blind eye to potential risk. Here is an overview of records management issues that can leave you stranded in a bunker if ignored.

1. Compliance

Government and businesses need to meet the record retention requirements specified by the law and by regulatory authorities. For further information Download our compliance poster - <http://www.aiim.org.uk/posters>

2. Email

Email is just another format. Because emails contain so much business information today - decisions, discussions, customer communication, etc. - emails have to be managed as part of an electronic records management initiative. Putting emails on backup media is not records management. Should an email on backup media exist, it is discoverable in the courts - regardless of whether it "should" have been disposed of. For more information about managing emails download our "Email - Manage the flood" poster - www.aiim.org.uk/posters

3. Discovery

If your company is involved in litigation, an effective records management environment can ease discovery pains and costs. Records that are properly classified and protected can be retrieved and produced efficiently and effectively. Search functionality will allow you to find responsive records and filter out those that are not relevant or are privileged. Audit trails will be required to demonstrate that protection controls were in place and properly enforced for record retention and disposition.

4. Disaster Recovery

Records are the "corporate memory" and some of them will be critical to your business in the recovery phase in the event of a disaster. For most records, best practice stipulates that backup copies of electronic records must be stored, preferably in a separate geographical location, for recovery after a disaster.

5. Enforcement

The records management policy, which defines the organisation's position on the ownership and care of business information, is a core component of any RM system. But having a records management policy without supporting authority, infrastructure and compliance mechanisms simply creates a liability. Records management policies and retention schedules must include both physical and electronic records. Procedures and training must ensure that the RM process produces and protects records that are accurate, reliable, and trustworthy.

6. Risk Reduction

As records management programs focus less on space reduction and more on content, risk management becomes a driver for managing records for two main reasons

- discovery requests from litigation can be costly when electronic records, especially email, are involved; and
- the exponential increase in the volume of records as business processes become more complicated, organisations increase in size, and the use of messaging and E2.0 technologies expands.

7. Disposition

Electronic records management, when planned for in conjunction with an organisation's compliance needs, often represents an opportunity to spring-clean the house. Once policies, retention schedules, and systems are updated and integrated, it may be possible to clean up repositories of hard and soft copy records that have exceeded their required lifetime. Going forward, organisations will retain only records that have value. While users are most often supportive of records management initiatives, compliance with retention guidelines will depend on easy to use, burden-free ERM systems and rules.

8. Ongoing Process

Records management is a process, not a project. Changing regulations, evolving best practices, new technologies, and a growing body of knowledge about long-term digital preservation mean that a records management function must be sustained with sufficient financial resources, executive support, collaborative planning, and implementation, and an infrastructure that integrates records protection controls with robust content management.

9. Education & Training

Too often overlooked, training is critical to the success of a records management initiative. While it is important that record creation be as straightforward as possible, everyone in an organisation must understand the central importance records have for an organisation as well as their role in the process. Check out the AIIM Electronic Records Management certificate courses at: www.aiim.org.uk/training

