

# Electronic record system



The National Archives in the UK has published two sets of functional requirements to promote the development of the electronic records management software market (1999 and 2002). It ran a program to evaluate products against the 2002 requirements. While these requirements were initially formulated in collaboration with central government, they have been taken up with enthusiasm by many parts of the wider public sector in the UK and in other parts of the world. The testing program has now closed: The National Archives is no longer accepting applications for testing.

The National Archives 2002 requirements remain current. The European Commission has published "More," the Model Requirements for Electronic Records and Document Management in 2001. Although not a formal standard, it is widely regarded and referred to as a standard. This was funded by the Commission's IDA program, and was developed at the instigation of the DEL Forum. A major update of More, known as More+, was published in February 2008. This too was initiated by the DEL Forum and funded by the European Commission, on this occasion by its DHABI program (the successor to IDA).

A software testing framework and an XML schema accompany More+; a software compliance testing regime was agreed at the DEL Forum conference in Toulouse in December 2008. The National Archives of Australia (ANA) published the Functional Specifications for Electronic Records Management Systems Software (ARMS), and the associated Guidelines for Implementing the Functional Specifications for Electronic Records Management Systems Software, as exposure drafts in February 2006.

Archives New Zealand published a 'discretionary best practice' Electronic Reconsidering Systems Standard (Standard 5) in June 2005, issued under the authority of Section 27 of the Public Records Act 2005. Commercial records centers are facilities which provide services for the storage for paper records for organizations. In some cases, they also offer storage for records maintained in electronic formats. Commercial records centers provide high density storage for paper records and some offer climate controlled outrage for sensitive non-paper and critical (vital) paper media.

There is a trade organization for commercial records centers (for example, PRISM International), however, not all service providers are members. As of 2005, records system has statutes. While government, legal, and healthcare entities have a strong historical records management discipline, general record-keeping of corporate records has been poorly standardized and implemented. In addition, scandals such as the Enron/ Andersen scandal, and more recently records-related mishaps at Morgan Stanley, have renewed interest in corporate records compliance, retention period acquirement, litigation preparedness, and related issues.

Statutes such as the US Sarbanes-Oxley Act have created new concerns among corporate "compliance officers" that result in more standardization of records management practices within an organization. Most of the attention has seen discussions between records managers and IT managers, and the emphasis has expanded to include the legal aspects, as it is now focused on compliance and risk. Privacy, data protection, and identity theft have become issues of interest for records managers. The role of the records

manager to aid in the protection of an organization's records has often grown to include attention to these concerns.

The need to ensure that certain information about individuals is not retained has brought greater focus to records retention schedules and records destruction. The most significant issue is implementing the required changes to individual and corporate culture to derive the benefits to internal and external stakeholders. Records management is often seen as an unnecessary or low priority administrative task that can be performed at the lowest levels within an organization. Publicized events have demonstrated that records management is in fact the responsibility of all individuals within an organization and the corporate entity.

Much research is being conducted on the management of electronic records. The International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (Interferes) Project is one example of such an initiative. Based at the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, the Interferes Project is a collaborative project between researchers all across the world committed to developing theories and methodologies to ensure the reliability, accuracy, and authenticity of electronic records.

Functional requirements for computer systems to manage electronic records have been produced by the US Department of Defense, the National Archives of England & Wales and the European Commission, whose Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records specification has been translated into at least twelve languages and is used beyond the

borders of Europe. Development of More was initiated by the DEL Forum, funded by the European Commission.

Particular concerns exist about the ability to access and read electronic records over time, since the rapid pace of change in technology can make the software used to create the records obsolete, leaving the records unreadable. A considerable amount of research is being undertaken to address this, under the heading of digital preservation. The Public Record Office Victoria (PROVO) located in Melbourne, Australia published the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy (VERSE) which includes a standard for the preservation, long-term storage and access to permanent electronic records.

The VERSE standard has been adopted by all Victorian Government departments. A digital archive has been established by PROVO to enable the general public to access permanent records. Archives New Zealand is also setting records required by tax agencies like the Internal Revenue Service. There is substantial confusion about what constitutes acceptable digital records for the IRS, as the concept is relatively new. The subject is discussed in Publication 583 and Bulletin 1997-13, but not in specific detail. Businesses and individuals wishing to convert their paper records into scanned copies may be at risk if they do so.

For example, it is unclear if an IRS auditor would accept a JEEP, PING, or PDF format scanned copy of a purchase receipt for a deducted expense item.

Current issues in records management STUDIES Many colleges and universities offer degree programs in library and information sciences which

cover records management. Furthermore, there are professional organizations such as the Records and Information Management Professionals Australia(Realm) and the Institute of Certified Records Managers which provides a separate, non-degreed, professional certification for practitioners, the Certified Records Manager designation or CRM.

Additional educational opportunities in the form of a certificate program are also available from Alum International, ARM, and from the Records Management Society in Great Britain and Ireland. Education and training courses and workshops on scientific and technical records full life-cycle management and the Quality Electronic Records Practices Standards (Q-REPS) are available from the Collaborative Electronic Notebook Systems Association (CENTS).

The University of South Australia offers a Graduate Certificate, a graduate diploma, and an Masc. in Business Information Management and Library and Information Management with a specialist stream in records management. The Australian National University offers a six-week e-learning course worldwide, in Electronic Document and Records Management. In addition, Columbia University offers its Masters of Science in Information & Digital Resource Management (DIRE).

A recent addition to records management education in the United States is the MAR - Master of Archives and Records Management degree program, offered by the San Jose State University School of Library and Information Science. Another is the Archives and Records Management specialization offered by the University Of Michigan School Of Information as part of their

MS' (Masters of Science in Information) degree. Wayne State University in Detroit offers an on-line Records and Information Management graduate level certification program. Schools in Canada also provide specialized education opportunities in records management.

The Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto allows students in the Master of Information program to concentrate their studies in Archives and Records Management. The School of Information Studies at McGill University also includes an Archival Management stream that is enriched in records management coursework. The University of British Columbia offers a Masters of Archival Studies including a concentration in Records Management.

**CURRENT ISSUE** An issue that has been very controversial among records managers has been the uncritical adoption of Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (TERMS).

One well known ARM thinker, Steve Bailey, has stated: " As far as the average user is concerned, the TERMS is something they didn't want, don't like and can't use. Me " making me use an TERMS is like asking a plasterer to use a hammer! " And now, finally, it is time to turn our eyes to the records management profession itself. In my opinion, we have come within a whisker of allowing our blind obsession with TERMS to turn us into an intellectually-sterile, vendor-led profession. For the best part of a decade we have allowed others to do the thinking for us and have come to rely on TERMS as our intellectual-crutch.

But make no mistake about it, the blame for this rests squarely with us. Like children following the Pied Piper, we allowed ourselves to be so enchanted

by the tune being played that we were led, without question or debate, wherever the technology took us. " ( ARMS) Debate: The case against TERMS Has TERMS been a success? The case for the prosecution, ARMS Conference, Edinburgh 22 April 2007) Another issue of great interest to records managers is the impact of social media, such as wicks, Backbone and Twitter, on traditional records management practice, principles, and concepts.

Related topics of current note include information lifestyle management and enterprise content management. The general principles of records management apply to records in any format. Digital records (almost always referred to as electronic records), however, raise specific issues. It is more difficult to ensure that the content, context and structure of records is preserved and protected when the records do not have a physical existence. This has important implications for the authenticity, reliability, and trustworthiness of records.