

## Three Things You Should Know About Electronic Records

Marry-Ellyn Strauser, CRM

### 1. A record is a record, regardless of media or format.

Missouri's State and Local Records Law (RSMo 109.200 – 510) defines a record as any “. . . document, book, paper, photograph, map, sound recording or other material regardless of *physical form or characteristics* made or received pursuant law or in connection with the transaction of official business.”

Many of the technologies used to create electronic records readily come to mind – electronic imaging, e-commerce, and financial systems. However, others, such as e-mail, databases, spreadsheets, presentations, and web pages, are not nearly as apparent. Therein lies the challenge.

### 2. Electronic records will last forever – or five years whichever comes first.

There are two major problems with electronic records.

One, they are ubiquitous. Network back-ups and e-mail are two of the biggest culprits. However, there is a third, possibly more dangerous perpetrator – *delete* doesn't mean destroyed. Delete just means you can't get to the information easily. The way information is written to a computer's hard drive makes it possible to recover information that has been deleted. Pieces of information are broken apart and stored in various locations on your hard drive. When you hit delete,

you've just told the software that you don't need to get to that information. The information is still there; it's just that your software doesn't know where to look for it anymore. New information has to be written on top of the exact same location as the old information – not once, but seven times – before it is completely gone.

Two, technology is a moving target. Things change and media doesn't last forever. Let's take a quick look at each of these threats.

- **Media decay** – magnetic media, like back-up tapes and hard drives, aren't static. Electrons wander over the media. Eventually, this causes damage to the recorded data. Optical media, like CD's, are alleged to have life spans of 100+ years. However, studies have shown that under normal conditions, 25 years is closer to reality.
- **Hardware obsolescence** – the ever increasing pace of technology change exacerbates the fact. Today's CDs and DVDs are tomorrow's 8-track tapes and Beta-video cassettes. Who still has the hardware to use them?
- **Software obsolescence** – in reality, this is the biggest threat. Think about the changes we've experienced in the last ten years. Windows 3.1, 95, 98, ME, NE. Now think about the changes in software applications. Remember when WordPerfect and Lotus were kings?

### 3. You have to budget for change.

There are no easy answers to the questions about how to manage electronic records. Nonetheless, there are good rules of thumb (but they'll cost you).

- **Records with a retention period of five years or less** – these are probably safe to keep in electronic format. However, if your organization undergoes a major change in software, hardware, or media, you should check the records to ensure you can still access them.
- **Records with a retention period greater than five years and less than ten years** – you should have a written plan in place to audit these records periodically after the five year mark. Any changes in software, hardware, or media should be signal to audit the records.
- **Records with a retention period of ten or more years** – unless the records remain highly active, it will be more cost-effective to store the paper (if there is paper) in an offsite facility than it will be to migrate the data over the many changes in technology. Another alternative is microfilm. The benchmark for State agencies is 35 years. In other words, if records have a retention period of 35 years or more, it is more cost-effective to maintain them on microfilm than to store them on paper. There's more to microfilm than just paper conversion. Digital information can be stored on microfilm and digital information can be created from microfilm.

## Our Next Chapter Meeting:

February 19, 2002

### **Tour:**

*Secretary of State's State  
Imaging Facility and New  
Records Annex*

Tour will begin in the  
First Floor Conference Room  
JCK State Information Center  
600 W. Main  
Jefferson City, MO

Board Meeting	3:00 – 3:30
Tour JCKSIC	3:30 – 4:30
Tour Annex II	4:30 – 5:00
Dinner Santa Cruz	5:00 – 6:30

Cost: Dinner- we do not have a set menu so each member will order their own meal (range \$9 to \$15)

RSVP: To Will Masters or Wayne Duncan by Monday, February, 18

## President's Pen



Hello chapter members,

The recent events at Enron have brought the profession of records management into the spotlight for many people to see and make comment on. My own father recently called me up and told me that he had read in the Wall Street Journal that destroying records was big business. I politely informed him that this was *not* news to me and in fact this is what I had been doing for the past several years. If people like my dad are reading about our profession then we have a unique opportunity to reach out and inform others about the benefits of a sound records management program.

I hope that the sudden spotlight on our profession can be turned into a positive reflection on our valuable service.

I can't believe we are nearing the end of another chapter year. We still have several great monthly chapter meetings planned and I am hoping that this year's Heartland Records Management Conference will be one of the best we have had.

In the more immediate future, next week I along with my co-workers get the opportunity to host the February chapter meeting and show off our facilities, equipment and the people that make the Secretary of State's Records Management Division a successful operation. Next month we will meet in Columbia and tour the Columbia Police Department offices, which have been recently renovated and improved. I look forward to seeing all of you at these upcoming events.

Will Masters  
Chapter president

## TREASURER'S REPORT



Previous Balance	\$	4,032.36
Deposits:		
Membership	\$	100.00
Dec. Meeting	\$	216.00
Bank Int.	\$	<u>2.95</u>
Total	\$	318.95
Expenses:		
Dec. Meeting	\$	192.49
Engraved Plate	\$	67.02
Stamps	\$	<u>34.00</u>
Total	\$	293.51
Current Balance	\$	<u>4,057.80</u>

## 2001– 2002 Board of Directors

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Please feel free to call them any time you have any questions about ARMA

## Who Wants to be a Buckinaire?

Are you ready to be a Buckinaire? The game is your chance to show off your RIM, KM, SIM, trivia savior faire and earn some ARMA bucks. For each correct answer you'll earn \$25 bucks. That's a possible \$250 bucks. We'll play a round of Buckinaire at our February Meeting. **You must be present to win.** As always, if you can't join us, play along anyway. It's fun, it's free, and it's safe for kids of all ages! Answers will also be published in the next edition of the *Mid-Missouri Star*.

In case you missed our December meeting, here're the answer to the last Buckinaire Quiz:

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. c  |
| 2. c | 7. a  |
| 3. a | 8. c  |
| 4. b | 9. d  |
| 5. a | 10. a |
| 6.   |       |

This edition's questions come from the old stand-by the ICRM's *Preparing for the CRM Examination: a Handbook, The Information Management Journal* (January/February 2002), and Robek, Brown, and Stephens (a.k.a. *Information and Records Management* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) or M-E's Records Management bible).

Bonne chance!

- 1) According to Bruce Dearstyne, today's RIM professionals need skills and expertise in each of the following – except:
  - a) subject area expertise that fits with their company core line of business.
  - b) leadership and management skills.
  - c) analytical and conceptualization skills.
  - d) technology (LAN, WAN, Web, e-commerce, digital signatures)
  - e) change management and flexibility.
- 2) When planning and designing a records center, each of the following must be considered - except?
  - a) Lighting.
  - b) Shelving arrangement.
  - c) Space utilization.
  - d) Aisle clearance.
  - e) None of the above because all of the above have to be considered.
- 3) The performance evaluation technique whereby employees objectively evaluate the performance of their immediate supervisor is commonly called:
  - a) the exit interview.
  - b) circular evaluation.
  - c) horizontal evaluation.
  - d) upward evaluation.
  - e) **the exit interview** – emphasis added.
- 4) Forty-five percent of the events for 2002 Winter Olympics are being held in:
  - a) Park City, UT
  - b) Athens, Greece
  - c) Moab, UT
  - d) Donnie Osmond's backyard, UT
  - e) Provo, UT
- 5) Which of the following is normally the initial step in the decision-making process:
  - a) panic.
  - b) evaluation of alternatives.
  - c) project schedule.
  - d) gnashing of teeth.
  - e) problem identification and definition.
- 6) Subject files are based on:
  - a) correspondent's name.
  - b) date of purchases.
  - c) topic.
  - d) All of the above.
  - e) None of the above.
- 7) All of the following are methods of destruction - except:
  - a) maceration.
  - b) pulverization.
  - c) shredding.
  - d) sectionalization.
  - e) incineration.
- 8) Today, the most common widths of microfilm are?
  - a) 16mm, 35mm, and 105mm
  - b) 8mm, 16mm, and 32mm
  - c) 16mm and 35mm
  - d) 16mm, 35mm, and 70mm
  - e) 8mm and 105mm
- 9) It is generally a good idea to hire the same accounting firm to do your books and then audit them when:
  - a) pigs fly.
  - b) the moon is made of cream cheese.
  - c) the earth is flat.
  - d) your attorneys are partners in the law firm of Dewy, Cheatem, and Howe.
  - e) all of the above.

- 10) The life cycle concept of a record is best defined as?
- a) controlling the reproduction of records.
  - b) magic.
  - c) control over the creation, usage, maintenance, retention, preservation or disposition of records.
  - d) controlling creation.
  - e) controlling inactive storage and destruction.

## Records Management Resources on the World Wide Web



Once again, here's proof that there is a wealth of information about records management on the World Wide Web.

*The Columbia/Jefferson City ARMA Chapter does not endorse these sites or their contents. Links are provided for informational purposes only.*

*Moving Theory into Practice:  
Digital Imaging Tutorial*  
<http://www.library.cornell.edu/preservation/tutorial/>  
Submitted by Craig Kelso

“This tutorial offers base-level information on the use of digital imaging to convert and make accessible cultural heritage materials. It also introduces some concepts advocated by Cornell University Library, in particular the value of benchmarking requirements before undertaking a digital initiative.

You will find here up-to-date technical information, formulas, and reality checks, designed to test your level of understanding.”

*Recordkeeping Metadata Requirements for the Government of Canada*  
[http://www.imforumgi.gc.ca/new\\_docs/metadata\\_1\\_e.html](http://www.imforumgi.gc.ca/new_docs/metadata_1_e.html)  
Submitted by Craig Kelso

Here's a site that gives you some idea of what's going on outside the United States, with electronic record documentation.

*Report on Current Recordkeeping Practices within the Federal Government*  
<http://www.nara.gov/records/rkreport.html>  
Submitted by Craig Kelso

Here is a report compiled over five months concerning how well federal government agencies are handling records management issues. It was just submitted in December 2001.

*Records Management Services at the University of Washington*  
<http://www.washington.edu/admin/records/index.html>  
Submitted by Craig Kelso

This site gives quick explanations of what is a University record, what the responsibilities of the various University departments are, and links to services provided by the record management program of the University of Washington.

## ARMA International: The Benefits of Membership \*

ARMA International is a not-for-profit association serving more than 10,000 information management professionals and 150 chapters in the United States, Canada and over 30 nations worldwide. ARMA International members include records and information managers, MIS and ADP professionals, imaging specialists, archivists, hospital administrators, legal administrators, librarians, and educators. ARMA, its chapters, and its members are dedicated to helping individuals, organizations, and government agencies successfully meet the challenges of the increasingly complex records and information management field.

*Contributions or gifts to the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, Inc. are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.*

## Benefits Include:

### *Access – Your Connection to a Global Network*

- Electronic access to members and information through ARMA listserves, Website, and Fax on Demand Service
- Local chapters to connect you to professionals in your geographic area
- Membership Directory provides you with contact information for members
- Quarterly newsmagazine, InfoPro, keeps you informed of ARMA activities as well as developments and trends in the records and information management field

### *Expertise – Links to a World of Ideas and Solutions*

- Industry Specific Groups: 32 ISGs focusing on your industry's issues
- Professional Resources: More than 200 member-discounted RIM resources, including books and videos
- Annual Conference and Expo: Dozens of educational sessions, plus conference proceedings

- Solution Providers and Users: At ARMA's Annual Conference and Expo, as well as local chapter meetings
- The Information Management Journal: In-depth articles by leading RIM and Knowledge Management experts

### *Professional Development – At Every Stage of Your Career*

- ICRM Study Groups and Exam Preparation Resources
- RIM Home Study Courses
- CareerLink Placement Services
- ARMA Salary and Compensation Survey
- Leadership Opportunities - Develop your leadership skills through service on ARMA's Committees and Board of Directors, as well as on Chapter Boards of Directors

\* ARMA International.  
<http://www.arma.org/membership/membership.htm>.  
(30 January 2001).