



Electronic Records Management on a Shoestring: Three Case Studies

Developing and implementing a full-fledged, certified ERM system requires time, resources, and a big budget. But the records manager who takes low-cost, high-value steps can reach a successful outcome.

Jeanne Young

Business entities, both private and public, have come to appreciate information as an asset, and they realize that it must be managed effectively to provide the maximum benefit to business efficiency and economy. However, resources for managing records – including human, financial, and electronic – have not always been generously supported in business budgets. Records managers often face an uphill battle to incorporate electronic records management (ERM) into their programs.

But starting with almost nothing in the way of basic tools and funds is not as daunting as it may seem. With a bit of ingenuity, a records manager can build a more effective program than if he or she started with a huge budget.

Integrating ERM is not primarily a battle with management for resources; it is a culture war for the hearts and minds of the people who create and use records. People are generally comfortable with the way they do business and are usually skeptical of “outsiders” seeking to “improve” the process. Cooperation of the business staff is

what the records manager and the IT staff need to successfully implement ERM. Converting a manual program piecemeal to an electronic records program may seem frustrating at the outset, but the extra time it takes allows the records manager to plan carefully, spend very little money initially, and start with small projects or changes that have a greater chance of success than a huge enterprise-wide initiative.

At the Core

This article

- ▶ discusses implementing an ERM program with limited resources
- ▶ presents three case studies that illustrate ways to do this
- ▶ offers low-budget strategies for implementing ERM programs

Low-Budget Ways to Implement ERM Programs

Case Study 1: Digitizing Bank Examiner Work Papers

The records manager in a federal banking agency was facing the challenge of converting a manual records system to an ERM system. She sought a business unit that was already doing business electron-

ically. The bank examination staff was using a software package, developed in conjunction with several other federal bank regulators, to create and store examination work papers. The creation and preservation of complete, accurate, and trustworthy bank examiner work papers are paramount because bank ratings depend on examination nation results. The records manager asked the IT staff to develop a small set of computer code so that when a set of examiner work papers was saved by a bank examiner, a copy would be automatically sent to a folder controlled by the records manager. IT added appropriate codes to ensure that only the records manager had access to the folder. nation results.

The records manager did not consider the new procedure a bona fide ERM system. However, the project achieved several goals. The records manager gained control of an important set of electronic records. She established a working relationship with IT and the business unit. The bank examiners were able to send electronic records to the records manager through a seamless process. She used the metadata developed for the records in this project as the foundation for agency-wide metadata

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Message from the President, Patricia C. Franks

One of the primary benefits of belonging to A R M A / CNYARMA is the ability to participate in training programs to enhance your records/information management skills and knowledge.

This year I had the opportunity to travel to San Antonio to attend ARMA's 51st Annual Conference. The keynote speaker was the Honorable Shira A. Scheindlin. You may recognize the name. She was the jurist who issued five groundbreaking opinions in the case of the now famous Zubulake court case (Zubulake v. UBS Warburg LLC, et. al.).

Her presentation, *Electronic Discovery Sanctions in the 21st Century: Avoiding the Perils and Pitfalls*, detailed her rulings in the case and gave us a clear idea of how the judicial perspective has changed since her opinions were published. A major portion of her presentation explained the role the opinions played in the revised FederalRules of Civil Procedures and the resulting impact those revisions will have on managers of records and information.

The keynote set the tone for the conference. The topics were timely, and the speakers were interesting and informative. Breaks between conference sessions gave us the opportunity to network with colleagues or to visit the

expo to see demonstrations of hardware and software we've been reading about.

The conference program had something for everyone. Presentations covered training programs, disaster recovery, automated classification and search, project management, creating collaborative partnerships, imaging, developing and writing an RFP, and more.

If you haven't had the opportunity to attend the national conference, you can have a similar experience on the local level. Join the Central New York chapter of ARMA International. Then attend our meetings to share ideas with colleagues and learn from experts in the field. Our next chapter meeting is December 7 at Iron Mountain's facility in Syracuse, NY. There's no better way to learn about a product than by talking to those who have used it. Attend this meeting to hear two case studies. Deborah Montana of Upstate Cerebral Palsy will present a case study on OnBase, and Jerry Edmonds of Syracuse University will share his experiences overseeing Project Advance using DocuShare imaging software.

I hope to see you on December 7th!

Sincerely,

Patricia C. Franks, Ph.D., CRM
CNYARMA President

CNYAMA Report of the Treasurer

Submitted by Edward L. Galvin, Treasurer
October 20, 2006

Balance as of 9/27/06	\$4121.71
INCOME:	
Escrow (Membership)	\$ 105.00
Sponsor & Advertising	\$1000.00
	\$1105.00
EXPENSES:	
October Newsletter	\$124.20
	\$124.20
Balance as of 10/20/06	\$5102.51



Solutions to CRM Corner -

- 1 - e
- 2 - b
- 3 - b
- 4 - c
- 5 - d

standards. The project cost a fraction of what the agency would eventually pay for an ERM system. By undertaking a small, low-budget project, the records manager was able to demonstrate that the ERM system was workable and to make a more informed recommendation for an enterprise-wide system.

- design and implement the beginnings of an ERM program that would meet the needs of the business units

- give the business units a sense of ownership in the records management policies and procedures

The records management team did not impose a new process; it reached

records section. The law library retained paper copies of some materials sent to the records section in a part of the library called "Legal Records." The division used a software package for creating synopses of legal cases.

The attorneys created all their documents in a word processing program,

Understanding how the business units operated and establishing rapport were vital factors in the success of the records management program.

Case Study 2: Implementing ERM in a Small Federal Agency

Prior to implementing an ERM program, a records manager will want to find out what other people in the organization do. When developing a records management program in a small federal agency, a staff of two set up a series of one-hour "show-and-tell" sessions for work groups in various business units. One session featured the fundamentals of records management and related them to the general work of the audience. In another session, business units were asked to describe their business processes, explain interactions with other business lines, list the documentation created or received, and recommend the length of time the information needed to be available.

It was important to schedule the sessions at a regular time and limit them to one hour each. If the discussion was not completed in an hour, participants returned to the subject in the next session. The records management team also took notes and circulated them for comment either via e-mail or at a subsequent session.

The goals were to

- develop records retention schedules that would accommodate paper and electronic records

solutions through collaboration. Understanding how the business units operated and establishing rapport were vital factors in the success of the records management program because, as both providers and users of records, the business units were its major clientele.

The records management staff's collaborative approach did not add to the agency budget. It asked for time in small increments, making it easier for people to commit to the project. In addition, the agency did not have to find a sizeable extra appropriation for a consultant or ask busy staff to give up large blocks of time. All participants were better informed about agency business processes, making changes easier to implement effectively.

Case Study 3: Presenting the Case to Management

A third low-budget technique for managing electronic files was undertaken by the law librarian of the legal division of another federal agency. Technically speaking, not directly part of a records management program, this project prepared the way for later implementation of ERM. The agency had a long-standing central filing system, managed by a records section consisting of file clerks. The legal division sent paper versions of all material deemed to be records to the

but they received many paper documents from outside the agency. The attorneys spent much time searching Legal Records for information relevant to their current projects; they also complained about having to retype sections of documents that were not available electronically.

The law librarian began asking attorneys how their work processes could be improved. She went to demonstrations of newly marketed records management applications. She gathered information on the several operating systems used in the agency to produce the documents received in the legal division and researched product capabilities, costs, and analyses online. She reviewed the division's software product, which featured several functions that the division was not using, such as scanning and electronic document storage. She reported the advantages, disadvantages, and costs of implementing several systems. Ultimately, she recommended expanding the use of the software package already in limited use on the basis of its flexibility to meet the needs of the legal staff, its shorter learning curve, cost of implementation, and track record for service. When she presented her carefully documented request to management, it signed off because the plan was deftly prepared and credible.

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The law librarian did not consider her document capture and storage system a bona fide records management system. She was aware of the early efforts to upgrade her agency's records management program and of the fact that her division would eventually be part of that program. When it came time to integrate the division into the agency's ERM program, the staff was already informed and comfortable with storing, protecting, and accessing electronic records.

Small Success = Solid Foundation

Records managers have assets that do not require large staffs and generous budgets to build. Credibility is one of the most valuable, and it should never be squandered. Records managers establish credibility by being current on the principles, practices, laws, and regulations relating to ERM. They are careful to plan wisely for any project; thinking through to the final result and considering what steps will reach that result. Planning, of course, is much less expensive than fixing. Managing expectations for the outcome of a records project is a primary responsibility and requires resisting the temptation to over-promise or to allow unintended growth of the project. Achieving a small success establishes a solid foundation for future projects.

Another important tactic for records managers is to sell the positive business benefits of ERM. So much is written about risk management that it is easy to forget the benefits. Managers need efficient, economical access to authentic, trustworthy records in order to make

timely decisions. Staff must complete work in a timely, efficient manner. Public organizations need, or want, to make information about their programs and services available to the public. Attorneys should defend the organization in court and protect the rights of individuals. One set of electronic records, effectively captured and well managed, can be used for a multitude of purposes by any number of people simultaneously.

Today, greater accountability is demanded of public and private company employees and managers because of corporate malfeasance. As organizations convert to electronic commerce and business processes, the records detailing agreements within and between/among organizations and documenting who did what, when, and why, are created in electronic systems. Electronic media allow faster, more encompassing access to information that formerly had to be searched manually, either one filing system at a time or by multiple staff members assigned to one task.

Achieving a Successful Outcome

Several interim measures are available to records managers with few resources. They can begin by providing business users with definitions of records and the recordkeeping requirements that apply to their business functions. Then they can persuade business units to store electronic records in a secure location, either by dedicating a separate system to records storage or by having IT provide read-only access in a separate location within an extant system. They can help business units develop a standard minimum set of qualities (metadata) to

describe records in electronic systems. They also can explain that limiting acceptable file formats accommodates storage and records retrieval.

Effective communication is vital and inexpensive. Records managers must always consult the business users when developing the metadata. Even though most of the metadata collection will be transparent, the users must be comfortable and familiar with the terms used for gaining access to the records. Soliciting user groups among system end users ensures that necessary changes can be made and engenders cooperation with the implementation. Records managers should use the ideas that have merit and explain why other suggestions cannot or will not be incorporated. Those invested in a system will be more likely to use it when it is implemented.

Records managers have incentive to work with IT and the business unit to modify or build recordkeeping capability into current and new systems. They need to cooperate to identify the certification criteria for their organization's ERM systems. Doing so will save time, money, and stress during the conversion to a certified ERM system because many of the necessary features will be in place both culturally and technically.

No program comes to fruition in one economic and efficient step. A full fledged certified ERM system will take time to develop and implement and will cost a substantial sum. The records manager who takes incremental, low-cost, high-value steps will contribute significantly to a successful outcome.

Jeanne Young is a certified archivist and consultant in archives and records management. Before retiring in 2003, she directed the records management program at the Federal Reserve Board from 1995 to 2003. From 1977 to 1995, she was an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). She served as president of the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) from 2000-2002. She may be contacted at Jeanney9149@aol.com.

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New Records Coordinator System in Place at Syracuse University

This past spring Syracuse University's Department of Archives and Records Management [ARM] reestablished its Records Management Coordinator system for administrative and academic departments. Records Management policy states that all University departments and offices are to designate a staff member to be the primary liaison to the Records Management Program.

According to ARM Director, Edward L. Galvin, this system will streamline the production of department records retention schedules and better manage the flow of paper and electronic records to and from the University Records Center. Each department is designating one staff member (and one back-up) to serve as records coordinator for that department whether or not they store their records in the Records Center.

The SU Records Coordinators will:

- Serve as primary liaison between their department and Records Management
- Coordinate any records deposited into the Records Center
- Act as central control point for any files or boxes retrieved from the Records Center
- Facilitate disposition of records at the end of their legal retention periods
- Coordinate access to department records by non-department staff
- Review any department retention schedule for required updates and changes

Records Management has created a listserv for coordinators to keep them abreast of procedural changes, changes

to existing retention schedules and to allow coordinators to assist each other with records concerns. All coordinators are being automatically enrolled.

As part of this overall process, over 100 existing University Record Retention Schedules are being reviewed this year. These schedules provide record holders with recommended retention periods for records (paper and electronic) to ensure that departments are in compliance with federal and state record keeping requirements. The department schedules supplement the two major University schedules for academic and administrative records which are available at:

archives.syr.edu/recman/retention.htm



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**CRM
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If you're interested in making a name for yourself in the Records Management field, a CRM after your name is a must. As the CRM designation becomes more attractive to employers, more individuals working in the records management field are working to earn this designation by taking and passing the 6-part exam. The first five parts are objective and the last is a case study. Below are examples of the kinds of questions you'll be asked if you take the first 5 parts. For more information about the Institute of Certified Records Managers or the CRM examination program, visit <http://www.icrm.org>.

Part 1: Management Principles and the Records & Information Management Program

1. Which of the following is not considered a technique for resolving conflict?
 - a. Avoiding.
 - b. Compromising.
 - c. Accommodating.
 - d. Collaborating.
 - e. Competing.

Part 2: Records Creation and Use.

2. The master reference file for directives:
 - a. Contains those directives affecting current organizational policy.
 - b. Contains a copy of all current and superseded directives.
 - c. Is needed for permanent directives.
 - d. Replaces the directives history file after directives have been superseded.
 - e. Should be maintained in all departments of an organization.

Part 3: Records Systems, Storage, and Retrieval.

1. File folders that have side tabs are best suited for storage in _____ files.
 - a. Drawer.
 - b. Open shelf.
 - c. Reciprocating.
 - d. Sorting.
 - e. Tub.

Part 4: Records Appraisal, Retention, Protection, and Disposition

1. A records retention and disposition schedule should:
 - a. Assist in the disposal of all files whose primary value has expired.
 - b. Identify permanent retention of all files having secondary values.
 - c. Help stabilize growth of an organization's records by providing destruction of records to offset growth of new records.
 - d. Provide for the permanent retention of all files needed for legal purposes.
 - e. Be reviewed every five years to ensure its accuracy.

Part 5: Facilities, Equipment, Supplies and Technology

2. Microfilm can reduce storage space requirements by what percent?
 - a. 33 percent.
 - b. 61 percent.
 - c. 90 percent.
 - d. 98 percent.
 - e. 100 percent.



**CNY-ARMA meetings
are a great place
to greet old friends
and meet new ones!**



CHAPTER MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Submitted by Jackie Lewis

CNY ARMA is proud to announce our 2006 Chapter Member of the Year recipient, Ed Galvin, Director of Archives and Records Management at Syracuse University. The CNY ARMA membership elected Ed as this year's recipient for his dedication and commitment to our chapter. Ed was presented with a gift at our June meeting and was honored along with other chapter members of the year at the recent ARMA International Conference in San Antonio, Texas.



Ed has been an ARMA member since 1990, joining the CNY ARMA chapter when he moved to Syracuse in 1995. Ed has held various offices on our chapter Board of Directors and is currently serving his 6th term as Treasurer. Under Ed's leadership as Treasurer, the chapter now benefits from an annual budgeting process as well as regular status reports of the chapter's position in relation to the current budget.

Ed initiated and developed the CNY ARMA chapter website and has served as Webmaster since inception of the website hosted by Syracuse University. The website has proven to be an invaluable tool to current, new, and potential members of the chapter. In addition, Ed continues to step up to the plate for CNY ARMA. He has served on program committees, edited newsletters, served on panels, provided presentations, and developed and maintains our member and board listservs.

Congratulations to Ed on this well deserved recognition!

Congratulations!

MEMBER NEWS

Dianne Liuzzi Hagan recently finished her Masters degree at Le Moyne College. Dianne will graduate in December with a Masters in Professional Education Studies. The title of her Masters Thesis is *Dancing Across Race and Culture in America: The Story of Cara and Mackenzie Hagan*. It is an auto-ethnographic study.

Congratulations to Dianne for this wonderful accomplishment!



Disclaimer Notice

ARMAil is published at least five times during the fiscal year. Readership includes members of the Central New York Chapter of ARMA International, as well as interested records and information management professionals in the central New York area. The information contained in this newsletter does not necessarily reflect the views of the membership or the editor, nor is there any endorsement of advertisements or published seminar information. This newsletter is offered only as a source of information.

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