Building the Digital Repository with the Electronic Records Management System (ERMS)

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Overview

- Background
- Business Requirements
- Stakeholders
- Systems Development & End Users
- Criteria for Measuring Success
- Benefits (Expected & Unforeseen)
- Lessons Learned
- E-Repository in the Enterprise Architecture
- Successful ERMS Implementation
- Conclusion

Background

- GAO pioneered implementation of document management in the Federal government
- Automated business processes needed an electronic records management system (ERMS) to capture e-records
- Knowledge Services, Information Technology, and Quality and Continuous Improvement (Policy) formed a Strategic Partnership

Business/Operational Requirements

The ERMS had to:

- Be easy to use
- Place no burden on the audit staff
- Centralize management of multiple document repositories
- Provide the foundation for knowledge management
- Integrate with the enterprise architecture
- Utilize the existing document management system

Business/Records Management (RM) Requirements

The ERMS had to:

- Integrate with other e-business initiatives
- Embed records retention into the electronic processes
- Store documentation or pointers to documentation (paper, data sets, copyrighted material)
- Capture the record at creation or receipt
- Minimize the end user's responsibility for RM
- Facilitate the RM staff making the RM decisions
- Be easy to use

Identifying Stakeholders

Analysts/Auditors/Attorneys

- DOCS Task Force
- Work Paper Task Force
- Automated Processes Task Force

KS, IT, & Policy Partnership

- ERMS Steering Committee
- ERMS Work Group
- ERMS Task Forces (Processes/Metrics & Schedules)

Management

- Investment Committee
- Continuous Improvement Board

Systems Development & End Users

Analysts/Auditors/Attorneys as stakeholders, contributed to the:

- Prototyped System
- Pilot System
- Communication, Training, & Implementation Strategies
- Phased Roll-Out
- Community of Practice

Simplified Retention and the 3 Bucket Approach

Mission

5 year retention

- Testimony, Engagement & Investigation Case Files
- Engagement Management Files

Summary of 3 Bucket Approach, cont.

Policy & Special Collections

Permanent

Or Long-term retention

- GAO Reports & Publications
- Legal Decisions
- Legislative Histories
- Agency Directives
- Senior Executive Files

Summary of 3 Bucket Approach, cont.

Administrative

7 year retention

- Budget
- Building & Property Management
- Congressional Relations
- EEO
- Finance
- FOIA
- Library Services
- Human Capital
- Information Systems & Technology
- Procurement
- Safety
- Travel
- Etc.

Definition of Successful Pilots

- Successful capture of the records documenting the business process
- Appropriate file plans for the tasks
- Adequate electronic files to satisfy the users' organizational requirements
- ERMS functionality poses no impediments to doing the work
- Increased capture of paper and e-mail into the official records
- Reduced or eliminated requirement to print records and file paper in boxes.

Criteria for Measuring Success

ERMS must be an integral part of the agency's business:

- E-audit documentation provides the record copy of evidentiary files
- Centralized repositories provide authenticated evidence of the work done
- Provides greater transparency by facilitating ready access to and retrieval by authorized users to all GAO records
- Enhances the potential for knowledge sharing among teams and supports matrixed engagement teams (geographically and cross-team)

Criteria for Measuring Success, cont.

- Improves workflow with electronic records housed in one virtual repository
- Provides pre-programmed disposition dates to move records from active to archival storage
- Reduces staff time in locating and accessing records
- Reduces administrative tasks – less time spent by analysts and support staff managing records
- Reduces off-site storage and courier costs for paper records
- Reduces secure destruction vendor expenses
- Permanent records are ready to transfer to NARA when the ERA is ready to receive e-records

Metrics

- Background: American Council for Technology/Industry Advisory Council (IAC): e-Government Shared Interest Group: **White Paper on The Use of Metrics in Electronic Records Management (ERM) Systems**, August 2004 at

  http://www.actgov.org/actiac/documents/sigs/egov/08032004ERMMetricsFinal.pdf
- Measurable Processes – None.
- Perceptions – Pilot User Survey.

Expected and Unforeseen Benefits Derived

- ERMS implementation provided the opportunity to further refine business processes (e.g. personnel, budget)
- ERMS repositories formed the foundation for our prototype portals
- ERMS implementation clarified some audit policies (changes from paper to electronic processes and the variety of records management practices among teams)

Lessons Learned - GAO

- Engage policy (quality control/continuous improvement) staff early on in the ERMS design process to examine the difference between electronic and traditional documentation/evidence production
- Assign reluctant users (as well as enthusiastic users) to the ERMS pilot groups
- Train on the ERMS but also on basic Microsoft Applications software and Adobe

Lessons Learned – Records Officer

- The need to communicate is continuous – restate the value proposition to the user in as many ways as possible
- Change is a continuous exercise in negotiation
- Everything will evolve (e.g., requirements, resources, software functionality)
- Some amount of software customization/integration is necessary to support your business processes.
- Key team players will leave the project.

E-Repository in the Enterprise Architecture

- ERMS had minimal impact on the enterprise architecture because electronic records management is fully integrated with the document management (DM) system already in place
- ERMS required no additional hardware
- ERMS did require additional assistance from the DM system administrator and help desk staff
- ERMS e-repositories store records throughout their:
  - creation process
  - active use
  - retention
  - value to knowledge management (reuse & reference).

Successful ERMS Implementation

- System has management support from the chief-level offices
- System use is mandated for GAO work
- Simplified retention schedules make system use easy and almost transparent to the user.
- Streamlined business processes incorporate electronic records management functionality
- Policy refined to eliminate unnecessary tasks (eg. eliminated the need for forms by using the electronic profiles)
- ERMS Community of Practice integral for voicing and working user issues.

Summary: ERMS Works

Criteria for success:

- The ERMS must be user-driven
- E-business processes must be clearly defined
- The ERM functions must be an inherent part of the business process
- The ERM functions must be simple
- The ERM functions must <u>not</u> place a burden on the users.

Questions

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