

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

# **Preserving the Past to Protect the Future**

2007 Performance and Accountability Report























- NARA protects the essential records of hundreds of Federal agencies and courts as well as the records of the Congress, the Supreme Court, and 12 Presidential administrations in 37 facilities nationwide. These records include everything from highly classified National Security Council policy memorandums to congressional committee records to architectural drawings of Federal facilities to satellite photographs of major cities to the tax returns of individual Americans. All of this information and more is saved for as long as needed because it is essential for the effective operations of our government, protecting the rights and entitlements of our citizens, understanding past decisions and informing future policy choices, holding appropriate officials accountable for their actions, and ensuring the safety and security of our country.
- Our greatest challenge is to ensure that valuable electronic records—from electronic OMPFs to geographic information systems to State Department cable files to transportation security databases—are managed and preserved over time so that key information is not lost in obsolescent hardware and software. To meet this challenge, NARA is developing the Electronic Records Archives (ERA), a revolutionary system that will capture electronic information, regardless of its format, save it permanently, and make it accessible on whatever hardware or software is currently in use.

Let us turn to the specific challenges NARA faces:

***Records Management, and specifically, Electronic Records Management.*** In this world of exponentially increasing volumes and formats of electronic records, having the ability to find, manage, use, share, and dispose of records—which is the essence of records management—is vital for the efficient and effective functioning of the Federal Government. Records management is an essential component of knowledge management, and yet records and information are rarely managed as agency business assets. Records management remains an area for improvement in many agencies. This undermines the authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability of Federal records and information essential for Government business, particularly electronic Government and public use.

This Government-wide challenge requires collaborative, creative solutions with benefits that are obvious to Federal agencies. That is why we are undertaking a multi-faceted approach to improving Federal records management through a suite of strategies, policies, standards, and tools that facilitate the effective and efficient management of Federal records. Ultimately, records management

Yukio Morita, a history professor from Toyama City, Japan, came to the NARA-Rocky Mountain Region in Denver last spring, waving a printer's proof of a chapter of his new book about World War II Japanese-American internment camps. The chapter was the direct result of a tip from NARA archivist Eric Bittner five years earlier that federal court files at Rocky Mountain contained records about criminal charges brought against 63 internees at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center. Morita was so interested that he made the story of the trial of the internees a full chapter in his book.



The cover of Yukio Morita's book. (Photo courtesy Yukio Morita)





















































































