

# NARA's Strategic Directions for Federal Records Management: Status Report

September 20, 2004

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## Executive Summary

Last year, on July 31, 2003, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) issued *Strategic Directions for Federal Records Management*. In that document we set out our goals, strategies, and tactics for redesigning Federal records management. Since that time we have made dramatic progress.

- We established an integrated National Records Management Program that will deliver coordinated services to agencies across the country and that will support both national and local priorities to meet agency needs at headquarters and in field operations.
- We are leading the Electronic Records Policy Working Group (ERPWG), part of the Interagency Committee on Government Information. This group will develop policy recommendations to NARA and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to ensure more effective management of Government information on the Internet and for electronic records generally.
- We promoted the benefits of effective records management to support agencies' mission and business needs through numerous high-visibility interactions with agency officials and through other promotional activities.
- We have redesigned the content and format of our records management training program to help agency records professionals meet the challenges of technological change. We have added a voluntary certification program to further strengthen the role of Federal records managers.
- We have developed a new, easier to use structure for our regulations. In the coming months we will rewrite them in plain English and will incorporate changes that have been developed as part of the records management redesign.
- We have developed a methodology that will help us allocate and focus our resources on the most significant recordkeeping challenges. We have used that methodology successfully to develop our records management work plan for FY 2005.
- We continued to work with the Department of Defense to develop version 3 of the DoD 5015.2 records management standard. The additions to the standard would

- enhance interoperability of certified Records Management Applications and support the export of permanent records to NARA for preservation.
- We collaborated with several agencies to develop more flexible approaches to scheduling records. These approaches will help agencies implement electronic recordkeeping and will make their schedules easier to understand and implement.
  - We have developed additional General Records Schedules to eliminate the need for all agencies to develop individual agency schedules. This effort will help agencies to focus their resources on high-priority records systems that are unique to each agency.
  - We have proposed new e-mail regulations that will allow agencies to focus on filing their e-mail messages that are needed to adequately document their agency business, but eliminate the requirement that even transitory e-mail dealing with routine matters must be filed in a formal agency recordkeeping system. That proposed regulatory change is currently under review by OMB.
  - We issued a NARA appraisal policy to clearly set out our objectives and the guidelines we use in appraising the archival value of records.
  - We collaborated with a number of agencies, including the Department of State and the Department for Homeland Security, in planning for new electronic recordkeeping systems.
  - Our Records Center Program has nearly completed an assessment of agency customer needs for electronic records services. Services will be developed in the coming years.
  - We issued a custody policy for Federal records with archival value. It defines affiliated custody relationships and establishes criteria for affiliated archives. We also entered into an agreement with the Government Printing Office (GPO) by which GPO has become an affiliated archives.
  - We issued guidance that will allow agencies to transfer a broader range of formats and data types to NARA.

So in just one year we have made major progress in achieving our goals and implementing the strategies and tactics to redesign Federal records management. There remains much work to be done, but our integrated National Records Management Program (NARA-RM) is pressing forward to meet the challenges of a constantly changing environment.

## Strategic Directions Status Report

### Background

Last year, on July 31, 2003, we issued NARA's Strategic Directions for Federal Records Management. In that document we said that our goals were, in partnership with our stakeholders, to ensure that:

- Federal agencies can economically and effectively create and manage records necessary to meet business needs,
- records are kept long enough to protect rights and assure accountability, and
- records of archival value are preserved and made available for future generations.

We said that these are the strategies that we will use to achieve our goals:

1. We will create mutually supporting relationships with agencies that advance agency missions and effective records management.
2. We will demonstrate that effective records management adds value to agency business processes. Our guidance, training, and assistance to agencies will focus on using records management as an important tool for supporting agency business processes.
3. We will stress that there is no one level to which all records must be managed. Resources, techniques, and tools should be allocated based on business needs for the records as information assets, legal requirements (e.g. the Federal Records Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and the Privacy Act), risks, and resources.
4. We will stress that agencies may choose a variety of means to manage their records, including traditional records management programs, automated tools, or other approaches. Our concern will be how well records are managed, not whether agencies have all the elements of a traditional records management program.
5. Our approach to records management will be based on the ISO Records Management Standard 15489. We will focus on the importance of trustworthy records, and we will stress the concepts of authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability found in the ISO Standard. We will stress that records management

- processes occur throughout the records lifecycle rather than in a fixed, sequential manner. In developing regulations, policies, and guidance, NARA will stress the importance of agencies documenting their business processes, assessing the value of their information assets, and using risk assessment to determine appropriate records management approaches.
6. We will focus on those records that are essential to the Government as a whole for accountability, protection of rights, and documentation of the national experience. This will help NARA and Federal agencies to focus attention and resources on a smaller number of Government activities (work processes)—those areas and programs that create and produce such records.
  7. We will establish priorities for committing NARA resources based on three criteria:
    - the degree to which agency programs create records involving rights and accountability;
    - the degree to which they create records with archival value, and
    - the degree to which records in a program area are at risk.
  8. We will partner with Federal agencies and others to develop, adapt, or adopt products and practices that support good records management. Our experience shows that we are more effective in partnerships than working alone. Potential partners and sources will include standards organizations, other governments, and the private sector.
  9. We will provide leadership, in partnership with other key stakeholders, to focus agency attention on electronic records needs and to guide and support solutions to electronic records issues and problems.

## Status

Last year we identified 26 tactics that we would pursue to support our goals and strategies. Our approach to implementing the tactics has been flexible and pragmatic. We developed and vetted white papers on a number of the tactics with internal and external stakeholders.<sup>1</sup> In response to stakeholder input and to pilot testing, we have refined or significantly modified some of them. We have set a few of them aside—at least

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<sup>1</sup> The white papers appear on the NARA web site at [www.archives.gov/records\\_management/initiatives/rm\\_redesign\\_project.html](http://www.archives.gov/records_management/initiatives/rm_redesign_project.html)

temporarily—and we have added others that are discussed in this report. We expect that we will continue to adjust our tactics to the changing business and technological environment, but our vision will stay focused on our goals and strategies. Much remains to be done as we continue to redesign records management in the Federal Government, but we have already made great progress.

***National Records Management Program (NARA-RM):*** One of our major accomplishments in creating mutually supporting relationships with our agency customers and in developing more effective partnerships with them has been the creation of an integrated nationwide records management program. NARA-RM was not among our original tactics. NARA-RM is organized to

1. Provide records management training to our Federal agency customers;
2. Develop and provide records management services and support to our Federal agency customers with emphasis on electronic records;
3. Appraise records schedules devised by our staff and Federal agency customers; and
4. Develop the electronic records management and program management competencies in NARA-RM staff to support our Federal agency customers.

NARA-RM recognizes both national and local priorities in a balanced program to meet agency needs at headquarters and field operations. Where possible, and practical, we adopt solutions that address both national and local issues. We foster teamwork as an operations strategy, both within our staff and with our partner agencies.

Although NARA-RM was not listed among our original tactics, it will be crucial in implementing them. Its creation also illustrates the flexible and empirical approach of our redesign efforts, which must continue to adapt to changing needs in the recordkeeping environment. NARA-RM is the structure for effectively implementing our tactics.

***Electronic Records Policy Working Group (ERPWG):*** This group's work was also not among our original tactics. In the summer of 2003 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) established the Electronic Records Policy Working Group, with NARA as its chair, to develop draft recommendations for the implementation of section 207(e) of the E-Government Act of 2002. The ERPWG is part of the Interagency Committee on Government Information (ICGI), created by OMB. NARA and its 11 partner agencies on the ERPWG have produced a report identifying barriers to effective management of

“Government information on the Internet and other electronic records”.<sup>2</sup> The ERPWG has developed two additional documents: a framework for tools to manage electronic records and proposed common characteristics of records (metadata). Later this year the ERPWG will submit recommendations to the ICGI for the adoption of policies and procedures to ensure that the records management requirements of title 44, United States Code, are applied effectively and comprehensively to Government information on the Internet and to other electronic records.

Other accomplishments include:

### *Communications*

#### Advocacy

**This is what we said:** NARA will take a more active role in raising records management awareness.

#### **This is what we did:**

We promoted the benefits of an effectively managed records program to support an agency’s mission and business needs through numerous high-visibility interactions with agency officials and through other promotional activities.

- High-visibility contacts: Agency contacts by NARA management, legal, and records management staff across the country can be found in the Appendix.
- Senior Records Manager position description: We developed a model agency Senior Records Manager position description (PD) as a best practice in the Federal Government. We will use this in a variety of ways to stress that records management is important, that it supports the agency mission, and that the agency Records Officer can and should be a person who knows and speaks the language of the agency’s legal, program, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and Chief Information Officer (CIO) offices. This places the Records Officer in new and expanding roles, reflecting what is already happening in some of the most forward-looking agencies.
- Agency assurances: We have developed a recommended practices document on internal agency review of proposed retention schedules covering records that significantly impact rights and accountability. We anticipate that this recommended practice will underscore the importance of effective records management and of records management professionals. It will provide a “one

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<sup>2</sup> E-Government Act of 2002, Public Law 107-347, 44 U.S.C Ch. 36, sec 207 (e)(1)(A).

size does not fit all” flexibility to accommodate a variety of agency organizational contexts, business processes, and records systems.

#### Change Management

**This is what we said:** NARA will address internal and external stakeholder needs so that together we can make the necessary changes in our records-related business processes.

#### **This is what we did:**

- We have vetted a large number of white papers within NARA, with agencies, and with the public to help agencies prepare for some of the new ideas and tactics that we will be using. We have also used this vetting opportunity to revise and improve on our ideas.
- We are revamping our training program (discussed below). This will help agencies adapt to the technological and process changes that are occurring in their environment.
- We and agencies have been learning by testing and implementing a number of the tactics described here.
- The ERPWG targeted meetings held from February through April 2004 were attended by more than 200 internal and external stakeholders who identified barriers to effective management of electronic records and suggested tools to address those barriers.
- We have not adopted a formal approach to change management. As the Lifecycle Business Process Reengineering (BPR) and the Electronic Records Archives (ERA) move forward, NARA will adopt a more formal approach to help us and agencies prepare for and adapt to change.
- We have restructured our records management program so that NARA-RM staff, regardless of location, have the most up-to-date policy and guidance information and are able to support agency records management programs across the nation more effectively and with consistency.
- We have developed a customer-satisfaction survey designed to establish a baseline measurement of agencies satisfaction with the scheduling and appraisal process. This will provide us with one way to measure improvement over time. The survey was sent out to a sample of Federal agencies in August 2004.

### *Guidance and Training*

**This is what we said:** We said that we would modify our guidance and training to reflect and support the goals and strategies of the redesign.

**This is what we did:**

Records Management Training

- We are redesigning the content and format of NARA's training program for agency records professionals using adult education concepts and alternative delivery approaches in addition to traditional classroom settings. The redesigned NARA-RM training program will be geared to help agency records professionals better support the business needs of the agencies they serve. It will highlight the importance of managing agency records as information assets and will incorporate the principles of asset and risk management. It will also acquaint participants with the IT capital planning process and incorporate principles from the ISO records management standard (ISO-15489) that stress the importance of authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability of records for carrying on agency business. This training program will reinforce the notion that in records management "one size does not fit all." That is, the rigor of the management controls will vary, depending on the importance of the information assets and the risks confronting the agency program and its records. The training program is on schedule to have its first rollout at the beginning of FY 2005.
  
- We have established a new Records Management Training Officer position that will be filled before the end of this calendar year. This position will help keep our training program current with new trends in records management and with the ongoing revolution in information technology so that agency records professionals can play an important role in process design, IT capital planning, and information and knowledge management in their agencies.

Certification Program

- We are also establishing a voluntary certification of training program that will permit participants in a core set of training modules to take an examination and receive certification of their successful completion of the training. Certification will underscore the professionalism of records managers in the Federal Government and will help stress the importance of Federal records management. The certification is on track to go live at the beginning of FY 2005.

Guidance in implementing records management regulations and procedures

- In an effort to make our regulations easier to comprehend, we issued an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding a restructuring and rewriting of our regulations and have received agency and public comments. By the beginning of FY 2005, we will have digested the comments and will develop the new structure and begin rewriting our regulations in plain English.
- During FY 2005 we will incorporate Strategic Direction concepts into our regulations and into our planned revision of the *Disposition of Federal Records*.
- We are in the process of issuing specific new guidance in a variety of areas described under the Advocacy, Planning and Evaluation Tools, Scheduling and Appraisal, and Records Center and Archival Activities sections of this report. Together this guidance will help raise the visibility of records management, provide tools for planning Electronic Records Management Systems, eliminate much unnecessary routine scheduling work for agencies and NARA, and make it easier for agencies to transfer records with archival value to NARA.

*Assistance to Agencies*

**This is what we said:** The tactics in this group will help us set priorities for providing assistance to Federal agencies. We will be able to provide assistance appropriate to the business needs of the agency while ensuring the protection, preservation of, and access to records of archival value.

**This is what we did:**

Resource Allocation

- A NARA-RM team developed a set of criteria, procedures, and a handbook for identifying the functional areas within the Government that contain the greatest records management challenges. These will be our highest priorities for allocating NARA records management resources. The criteria that the team developed included records of greatest significance for rights and accountability, records with archival value, and records that are at greatest risk of not being managed effectively. We successfully piloted the resource allocation methodology in a project done in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security. Another NARA-RM team has further refined and used the methodology to identify priorities for our 2005 workplan. This work will help ensure that we are putting our resources where they are most needed. We plan to continue to use the resource allocation methodology in coming years to help us focus on the major records management challenges in the government.

#### Targeted Assistance

- This successful work, begun before the redesign, continues and will focus most of its efforts on the priorities identified in the resource allocation planning effort while maintaining a balance between our customer's headquarters and regional needs for NARA-RM assistance.

#### *Oversight*

**This is what we said:** The United States Code authorizes NARA to inspect agency records and record management practices and to conduct records management studies (44 U.S.C. § 2904-2906). We said that we would streamline our inspection and studies activities and align them with the priorities identified in the resource allocation effort. We also said that we would use inspections as a last resort when efforts using targeted assistance were insufficient to address serious records management problems. The goal here is to be sure that the inspections are incorporated into our overall work priorities and used where most needed.

We also said that we will focus records management studies on major cross-Government issues and records management best practices and that we will develop recommendations and guidance based on what we learned.

We further indicated that, as required by statute, we will report to OMB and Congress regarding records management problems and recommended practices that we found in agencies.

#### **This is what we did:**

##### Inspections

- We have documented our high-level goals and completed identifying internal NARA criteria for determining when to undertake an inspection. We have developed and documented procedures for conducting inspections. We plan to implement these procedures in FY 2005.

##### Studies

- We have developed internal NARA criteria for determining when to undertake a study. Because this work ties closely to inspections, we are evaluating combining the procedures for conducting inspections and studies.
- In addition, a NARA-RM Science Team has been conducting a study of science records and has developed an early draft of appraisal guidelines for scientific records. By the end of this calendar year, they plan to present a proposal for

appraisal guidelines for these significant but complex records. An integrated Electronic Records Team has also been busy studying the extent of unscheduled electronic records systems in the Government and has identified more than 7,200 unscheduled major systems. The team will use the resource allocation methodology to set priorities for tackling this enormous task.

#### Reporting

- The goal here is to identify both records management successes and major records management problems. In NARA's FY 2003 Annual Performance Report, we reported on several Federal agencies that have shown significant progress in their records management programs. Agencies such as the U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Aviation Administration, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), just to name a few, are acting to better control and manage their business information. In addition, we are developing criteria for establishing reports for future submission to OMB and Congress. We will use the methodology developed in FY 2004 to continue this type of reporting annually.

#### ***Business Process Reengineering***

**This is what we said:** We will change our own lifecycle work processes so that they more effectively and efficiently support the needs of our customers, and so that they better support and complement one another. The goal here is to improve both the quality and the efficiency of our work processes. To do this, we want to eliminate duplication of effort, add flexibility so that we can respond effectively to varying circumstances, eliminate process steps that do not add value to our service delivery, and focus on the work that is most important for delivering quality services.

#### **This is what we did:**

- We chartered a Process Redesign Team that examined all records lifecycle processes and created a high-level end-to-end "to-be" lifecycle model. This high-level model was approved by NARA's leadership, and is being used as the starting point for NARA's current and more detailed process redesign work.
- Systematic "drill downs" of each records lifecycle process are being conducted—each identifying how processes can be redesigned to better meet the needs of customers, increase efficiency, and build in flexibility so that NARA can continue to respond effectively to changing customer needs.
- To date, NARA has completed redesign of processes for: Scheduling and Appraisal, Transfer and Disposition of Federal Records in Federal Records Centers, and Processing of Federal Electronic Records. We have begun our

analysis of Reference and Space Management in Federal Records Centers, Processing of Non-Electronic Federal Records, and Archival Reference. Analysis of these three processes will be completed and integrated with the other redesigned processes by the end of the fiscal year. Analysis and integration of Federal Records Management Transactions with NARA will be completed next fiscal year—providing NARA with a detailed end-to-end redesigned lifecycle model. Next fiscal year we will also complete our plan for how these redesigned processes can be effectively rolled out to agencies and NARA staff.

### *Planning and Evaluation Tools*

#### Planning Tools

**This is what we said:** We will work with stakeholders to build records management considerations into the planning and procurement processes for new records systems.

**This is what we did:** We have explored with OMB and other agency stakeholders potential ways to effectively accomplish this tactic. We initiated conversations with OMB about the need to build records management considerations into the IT acquisition process. The proposed ERPWG toolkits for legacy and new systems that produce Government information assets will further address this.

#### Evaluation Tools

**This is what we said:** We will work with stakeholders to develop methods that agencies can use to evaluate how effectively they are managing their records.

**This is what we did:** We have received stakeholder input through the ERPWG meetings concerning evaluation tools. As the ERPWG develops its framework for e-records toolkits this year, additional methods and tools will be identified.

### *Records Management Tools*

**This is what we said:** We will support the development of automated tools that will help agencies manage Federal records, support electronic recordkeeping, and help records management support agency business needs.

#### Department of Defense (DoD) Standard

**This is what we said:** We will continue to support the DoD 5015.2 Standard and will partner with DoD to further develop the standard.

**This is what we did:** In FY 2004, we executed an interagency agreement with DoD to fund additional work on version 3 of the standard. The purpose of the work is to

describe methods, procedures, and proposed enhancements that enhance interoperability of Records Management Applications (RMAs) for the export of permanent records of 5015.2 certified RMA repositories to NARA. The FY 2005 ERM Initiative work plan calls for DoD to release the draft version 3 for public comment.

#### Records Management Service Components

**This is what we said:** As part of the FY 2005 ERM initiative, we will bring together interested agency partners, academia, and industry to document Records Management Service Component (RMSC) requirements. Records management is commonly needed but not provided by most applications supporting business activities. Components are designed to provide standard services accessible by many applications and systems. Additionally, components can be used alone or combined with others to support complex business processes. The RMSC requirements will be made available to industry for development and will allow the Government to acquire records management components for submission to the Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA). Once available through the FEA, they can be re-used by many agencies in a variety of systems to meet records management needs.

**This is what we did:** We obtained OMB approval to include requirements developmental work on the components as an FY 2005 ERM Initiative activity.

#### *Scheduling and Appraisal*

**This is what we said:** We will find ways to minimize routine scheduling activity so that agencies and NARA will be able to focus resources on high-priority records.

#### Flexible Scheduling

**This is what we said:** NARA will change its process so that, except for permanent records, agencies can schedule records at any level of aggregation that meets their business needs.

#### **This is what we did:**

- Now called “big bucket” functional schedules, our staff prepared a white paper that set out several rationales for such schedules. It was fully vetted inside and outside of NARA, and we established six pilot scheduling projects. These include NARA (selected NARA offices in the regions and in Washington), Government Accountability Office (GAO), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), and the Department of State (DoS). The NOAA

schedule is in the public comment phase, and all but the NARA schedules are due to be at that stage by the second or third quarter of FY 2005.

- In addition, a NARA-RM team from six regional offices and Federal wildland fire management agencies are developing another kind of flexible schedule. It will be an interagency schedule for fire-fighting incident management records. NARA-RM has also developed draft agency guidance on how to develop these “big bucket” functional schedules. That guidance will be vetted within NARA and with agencies by the end of this fiscal year.

#### Expanded GRS

**This is what we said:** NARA will provide additional general records schedules to include more types of records that are common to Federal agencies.

#### **This is what we did:**

- We have combined the GRS into a single document available in HTML, MS Word, and PDF versions on NARA’s web site. The MS Word version allows full document search capabilities instead of searches by chapter.
- In December 2003 we issued the GRS for Alternative Dispute Resolution (GRS 1, Item 27). The GRS for Reasonable Accommodation Requests was issued in GRS Transmittal 12 in July 2004. A draft GRS for CIO Offices is currently being vetted through the Federal CIO Council. Other GRS schedules are soon to follow.

#### E-Mail Retention

This item was not among our original tactics. We have drafted for review by agencies and the public new regulations and modified GRS instructions that will authorize agencies to dispose of e-mail with only transitory value without making a paper or electronic recordkeeping copy and without having to schedule such records through an agency specific schedule. We believe that this will allow agencies to focus their resources on managing e-mail that is important for long term documentation of agency business.

#### Media Neutral Retention Schedules

This item was not among our original tactics. The object here is to eliminate routine rescheduling work so that agencies and NARA can focus their resources on high records management priorities. We have developed proposed regulations and guidance and informally vetted them in NARA and with Federal agencies. By the

end of this calendar year these proposals will be formally vetted. Under our proposed new guidance

- NARA would consider all retention schedules submitted in the future to be media neutral unless an agency specifically requests that the schedule apply only to specific media.
- NARA would specify when it will be necessary for agencies to reschedule records when switching from a paper recordkeeping system to an electronic system.

#### Retiring Unscheduled Records to the Records Centers

This item was not among our original tactics. We have drafted a regulation permitting agencies to send unscheduled records to our records centers. This will meet needs of agencies to move records out of valuable office space and will encourage the transfer of records of permanent value to NARA. We will also have in place procedures that will ensure that we will not develop a vast volume of unscheduled records in our records centers. We plan to vet this proposed regulation with agencies and the public in the next few months.

#### Retention standards

**This is what we said:** When appropriate, we will develop retention standards that cover broad functional areas of the Government.

**This is what we did:** We decided to set this tactic aside temporarily due to limited staff resources and our need to focus on the massive job of revamping our training program.

#### Appraisal policy

**This is what we said:** NARA will codify the strategic framework, objectives, and guidelines that it uses to determine whether Federal records have permanent value. The rationale for this tactic is to document our appraisal policy and guidelines so that we can streamline our appraisal work, provide agencies with guidance on the kinds of records we want to preserve as part of the Archives of the United States, and let the public know our appraisal policy and guidelines.

**This is what we did:** Appraisal is one of NARA's greatest professional responsibilities. We issued our appraisal policy on October 14, 2003. We also plan to have appraisal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) developed by November 2004. We will incorporate concepts from the appraisal policy and appraisal SOPs into our planned revision of the *Disposition of Federal Records* during FY 2005. In

December 2004, we plan to issue appraisal guidelines developed by our NARA-RM Science Team in the area of scientific and research and development records.

Front-end scheduling

**This is what we said:** We will work with agencies to schedule their records as early as possible in the records lifecycle, including building scheduling into the design of new records systems.

**This is what we did:** We have expanded this tactic. Consistent with available resources, we provide front-end records management assistance and early scheduling of agency records to support effective records management.

- NARA staff serve on the e-Rulemaking Advisory Board's Records Management Working Group and is working with agencies to build in records management requirements upfront. We have recommended that the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) use a DoD 5015.2-compliant RMA.
- NARA staff have also served on a committee with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) senior records officer and the CIO's staff to identify all statutory, regulatory, and functional requirements DHS must meet to develop an enterprise-wide electronic records management system. A report titled "Electronic Records Management at the Department of Homeland Security: Needs, Risks, and Recommendations" submitted to the DHS CIO in September 2003, examined the "as-is" process for managing electronic records and recommended an automated "to-be" system that complies with DoD standard 5015.2. DHS is building on this collaborative effort to evaluate and test systems that have DoD 5015.2-compliant modules that can be used to meet requirements identified in the report.
- Our NARA-RM staff is in preliminary discussions with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to address conversions to electronic Official Personnel Folders (OPFs).
- NARA, in conjunction with the ERPWG, is working together on incorporating records management into agency business processes and as a layer in the Federal Enterprise Architecture.
- In the first and second quarters of FY 2004, our Washington, DC staff has advised the Department of State on records management requirements and records disposition issues relating to State's Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset (SMART).

Mandatory destruction

**This is what we said:** We will seek to change the statutory requirement for mandatory destruction of records and substitute a more flexible and less labor-intensive approach to meeting agency needs to keep some records longer than their NARA-approved disposition authorities (retention schedules) specify.

**This is what we did:** We drafted proposed legislation and received OMB support and House Oversight Committee approval. The House Committee on Government Reform reported favorably to the full House HR3478, the NARA Efficiency Act of 2003. The House passed the bill and at this point it is unclear whether Congress will pass the bill prior to the end of this session. We have begun to explore non-legislative approaches to dealing with this issue if the legislation does not pass.

*Records Center and Archival Activities*

**This is what we said:** These tactics will help us provide agencies with modern records center services and will help us preserve permanent records and make them available for research. The goals of these tactics are to support agency business needs, for NARA to take physical custody of electronic records with archival value so that we can ensure their preservation as early as possible in their lifecycle, and to ensure preservation and access for all Federal records with archival value regardless of where they are or who has legal custody of them.

Records Center Program (RCP) and electronic records services

**This is what we said:** To the extent viable from a business perspective, the NARA RCP will accept and service electronic records.

**This is what we did:** We established a NARA national project team to analyze, select, and test electronic records-related services. We identified and prioritized many potential electronic records services for pilot deployment and developed a plan for executing electronic records media storage pilots. We documented requirements and criteria for electronic records media storage and plan to establish a basic capability within NARA's RCP system to receive and store physical media for temporary electronic records. Our work on this tactic is assisted by the Records Lifecycle BPR analysis.

Custody policy

**This is what we said:** We will publish a policy directive that defines affiliated relationships and establishes criteria for affiliated archives. This will clarify when it is appropriate to establish such relationships and will help NARA and our affiliates combine our resources to preserve and make accessible records of archival value.

This is part of our effort to ensure preservation and access for all Federal records with archival value wherever they are and whoever has legal custody of them.

**This is what we did:** We issued a NARA custody policy on February 28, 2003, even before the Strategic Directions document was formally adopted. Since that time:

- We have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government Printing Office (GPO), naming it an affiliated archives for the records in GPO Access, the online GPO file of Federal Government electronic publications.
- NARA and the Department of the Interior (DOI) entered into a formal affiliated relationship agreement to protect DOI Indian Trust records at a state-of-the-art records storage facility operated by NARA in Lenexa, KS. Under the agreement, space in NARA's Lenexa Records Center is dedicated to housing and servicing an American Indian Records Repository for DOI, which retains legal custody of the records. In addition, NARA will assist DOI in establishing a records management training program for students of nearby Haskell Indian Nations University. The repository, which was officially opened in April, meets NARA archival storage standards and can store more than 200,000 cubic feet of records.
- NARA began addressing how to provide guidance and mutual support to the entities that create, manage, and make available Federal scientific records. NARA identified a series of Federal scientific data centers and repositories and began work to examine how to establish affiliated relationships with these institutions to support the long-term availability of the scientific record.
- During 2004, NARA staff visited and conducted program reviews at the seven "legacy" (pre-custody policy) affiliated archives. We are working to continue and enhance supportive relationships with these NARA partners by providing advice and guidance on issues involving records management, records storage, security, preservation, description, and public programs.

Expanded formats for archival records transfers

**This is what we said:** We will accept a broader range of formats and data types for permanent electronic records.

**This is what we did:**

- This initiative began even before the issuance of the Strategic Directions Document. In FY 2003, we issued transfer guidance for
  1. e-mail with attachments (September 2002),
  2. scanned textual images (December 2002),

3. PDF (portable data format) documents (March 2003).

As part of the FY 2004 ERM Initiative work plan, we issued transfer guidance for digital photography records on November 12, 2003, and guidance for digital geospatial data records on April 9, 2004. We are on track to issue transfer guidance for permanent web content records by the end of the fiscal year.

Pre-accessioning

**This is what we said:** We will work with agencies to obtain permanent electronic records as soon as possible and before they are legally accessioned so that we can ensure their preservation.

**This is what we did:** NARA staff conducted a test of pre-accessioning and produced a white paper that recommended we pursue this tactic on a case-by-case basis. We issued NARA Bulletin 2004-02 on July 12, 2004, which describes the process and the criteria for determining when pre-accessioning is appropriate.

Pre-description

**This is what we said:** We will work with agencies to capture archival descriptive information about permanent records as part of the scheduling process.

**This is what we did:** This tactic is being supported by the Records Lifecycle BPR analysis. Data is being systematically captured about how descriptive information is provided and used throughout the records lifecycle. This data will be used to develop “to-be” information flows that describe how information can be most efficiently captured as early in the lifecycle as possible. NARA will validate these information flows with agencies to determine how to most effectively capture archival descriptive information earlier in the lifecycle—particularly during the scheduling process. Once validated, these information flows will inform the content of updated scheduling forms and tools.

## Success

**This is what we said:** We will know we have succeeded when

- NARA is recognized as providing leadership in records management throughout the Federal Government.
- NARA is agile in adapting to changes in information technology and in the Federal recordkeeping environment.

- Records management is viewed by agency leaders and managers as an important component of asset and risk management.
- More people, inside and outside of the Federal Government, know about, use, and benefit from NARA services.
- Current and future users of records have ready access to essential evidence regardless of where it is or where they are.

**This is where we are:** The last two indicators will be realized continually and over a long time. They will also reflect improvements in all of NARA's many services to a wide range of customers. It is in the first three areas where we are already demonstrating success.

- NARA is recognized as providing leadership in records management throughout the Federal Government.
  - We are participating as one of only three agencies (OMB and the Government Services Administration are the others) who are Executive Sponsors on the Interagency Committee on Government information (ICGI). NARA is leading the Electronic Records Management Policy Working Group, which is developing recommendations for Government-wide policy that will strengthen records management in the Government.
  - We continue to lead the E-Government Electronic Records Management (ERM) initiative that is providing guidance to agencies on enterprise-wide ERM and transferring records to NARA.
  - Our work with ERA is giving us national and international recognition.
  - We are active participants in a wide range of records related international standards efforts, including ISO 15489, PDF/A, EDMS/ERMS, and DoD 5015.2 version 3.
  - OMB has designated us the lead agency in developing requirements for records management service components (the RMSC project) that will become part of the Federal Enterprise Architecture.
  - The Department of State has asked us to assist it in identifying records management requirements for its new agency wide SMART cable/e-mail system.

- We have been asked by the Department of Homeland Security to provide assistance in addressing records issues stemming from the creation of a huge new agency from many parts of the Federal Government.
- We have provided assistance on the ground to the Department of Defense in Iraq and Qatar.
- NARA is agile in adapting to changes in information technology and in the Federal recordkeeping environment.
  - Our records management redesign itself and our lifecycle business process redesign are responses to major technological and organizational changes in information systems and recordkeeping. An underlying assumption of these efforts is that we will continue to adapt to an ever-changing environment.
  - We have modified and adapted several of the tactics found in our Strategic Directions document (July 2003) as we have tested and implemented them over the past year.
  - Our training program is designed to be modular and flexible so that we can easily adapt it to changing needs.
  - Our new integrated records management reflects and supports the nationwide networked Federal environment.
- Records management is viewed by agency leaders and managers as an important component of asset and risk management.
  - There is much to do in this area, but through our work with the ICGI and OMB we are beginning to see progress.
  - We have received and responded to requests for assistance from agencies facing major records-related risks to carrying out their missions and critical agency business.
  - Our revamped training program should bring about major progress in this area in the next few years.

- Federal agencies have the records management tools necessary to support their business needs.
  - This is also an area where there is much work ahead. But we have begun work on the RMSC; we are continuing work on the DoD Standard; and the ERPWG promises to deliver valuable tools to agencies. In addition, we have issued guidance so that agencies can transfer additional electronic record formats to NARA; we are exploring new RCP electronic records services; and, of course, we are building ERA, which will include critically important automated tools for use throughout the records lifecycle.

**Summary:** So in just one year we have made major progress in achieving the goals and implementing the strategies and tactics to redesign Federal records management. There remains much work to be done, but NARA-RM is pressing forward to meet the challenges of a constantly changing environment.

### Appendix – Advocacy

NARA personnel throughout the country have been busy advocating the importance of records management. Following is a list of some of NARA's major records management advocacy activities in the past year.

#### Conferences:

- NARA-RM organized and put on one of the best Records Administration Conference (RACO) programs ever, focusing on managing risk and drawing speakers from the program side of agencies who demonstrated the importance of records management for meeting their business needs and mitigating risks in their programs.
- At the RACO conference we continued our tradition of issuing awards to agencies with exemplary records management achievements
- A NARA-RM team planned and staged in Denver in August 2004 a successful second RACO program, RACO West, which brought this important advocacy tool on the road outside of Washington.
- NARA staff spoke:
  - On E-Government ERM at the National E-Commerce Coordinating Committee in Raleigh, NC.
  - On recordkeeping issues in the litigation context on numerous occasions to Federal agencies and other miscellaneous institutions both nationwide and abroad.
  - At a conference held at Fordham University Law School on whether the rules governing Federal court procedure should be modified to account for discovery of electronic records as evidence in civil proceedings.
  - On transfer of e-records to NARA at the Society for Imaging Science and Technology (IS&T) Archiving Conference in San Antonio, TX.
  - At the 2003 ARMA FedDay Program on the status of RMI and other major electronic records management initiatives. The next FedDay at ARMA is scheduled for October 5, 2004. NARA will brief participants on tools we are developing in partnership with other Federal agencies to more effectively manage electronic records.

- At the annual Department of Energy/Environmental Protection Agency records and information management conference in Cincinnati, OH.
- To several Federal Executive Boards around the country .
- To senior management of FEMA Region VIII in May 2004 on vital records protection.
- At a conference hosted by the Department of the Interior at Haskell Indian Nations University (a BIA-owned and operated university). The purpose of the conference, titled “American Indian Records in the 21st Century and Beyond: Creating a Tribal/Federal Vision” was to discuss the management of Indian and Indian-related Federal records.

NARA senior and mid-level management meetings/presentations to agency officials:

- John Carlin, Archivist of the United States, attended a ceremony at the Department of State during which Secretary Colin Powell presented him with a first transfer of electronic cables.
- NARA staff received a warm reception from leading agency officials in meetings in Washington and around the country where we were able to press the case that records management supports agency business and helps agencies get the most out of their information assets while helping them manage risk. Agencies included the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Department of the Interior, Department of Labor, Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Office of Management and Budget.
- NARA’s Regional Administrators (RAs) and Assistant Regional Administrators are active members of the Federal Executive Boards (FEBs) in their regional cities. Often, NARA staff serve as FEB chairpersons or policy committee members. The FEB consists of regional agency heads and senior Federal staff. Annually, each RA presents a session advocating records management and stresses its importance for effectively and efficiently managing agency programs.
- Several members of senior NARA management have been meeting with OMB to focus on ways that we can inject records management into agency process design and the IT capital planning processes.

- NARA was a member of a Denver FEB Design Team Committee that conducted a Table Top exercise (COOPeration '04) for all Federal agencies in the Denver/Boulder Metro area on August 11, 2004. This annual exercise is designed to test how quickly agencies can reestablish operations and meet critical mission goals, provide resources to each other, and restore communications with each other after a disaster. Approximately 20 agencies participated in the 14-hour exercise. NARA staff also briefed the group on vital records protection.
- John Carlin and NARA management met with the Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao, at the Department of Labor to discuss general records management issues.
- Department of the Navy Vice Admiral Patricia Tracey and NARA staff met on records management issues. This was in conjunction with a Navy records management conference, which was itself a Navy/NARA collaborative effort.
- NARA and Department of the Interior officials met several times regarding American Indian Trust Litigation and related records management activities.

Advice and consultative services to promote better records management:

- NARA staff gave a records management overview briefing to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (The "9/11 Commission") in July 2003.
- NARA staff met with the Federal Web Content Managers Group about web guidance.
- NARA staff met with the Department of Education records management BPR team on E-Government ERM.
- NARA staff met with records management staff in the Office of the Secretary of Defense to discuss flexible scheduling concepts.
- NARA staff met with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) CIO for E-Government and with USDA senior records managers on major USDA and NARA electronic recordkeeping goals, NARA's new electronic records transfer guidance, and other NARA records management initiatives.
- NARA staff met with the NASA records officer, NASA Director of Strategic Alliances (Office of Public Affairs), and other NASA officials regarding the

- digitizing of NASA's vast still and motion picture holdings and the transfer of these records to NARA's custody.
- NARA's representative to the Open Archival Information Systems (OAIS) Reference Model working group was the only non-NASA member to receive the NASA Honor Award for Group Achievement. The NARA representative is currently co-chairing a study to develop guidelines for the Certification of Trusted Digital Repositories. That working group report is due by December 2004.
  - NARA staff met with Office of Personnel Management (OPM) staff to discuss the conversion of Official Personnel Folders (OPFs) to an electronic format.
  - NARA staff met with attorneys, high-level officials, and contractors of NASA and the *Columbia* Accident Investigation Board regarding the preservation and transfer of the board's records to NARA. They also met with several House and Senate staffers of the Senate Commerce Committee and the House Science Committee on the preservation of and access to the board's records.
  - NARA staff met with representatives of the Office of Legislative Information at the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress to discuss a comprehensive targeted assistance project for FY 2004 and FY 2005.
  - Our membership on the Interagency Committee on Government Information (ICGI)—discussed above—and the work of ICGI's Electronic Records Policy Working Group, has given great visibility to the importance of records management in general and electronic records management in particular to a wide audience of agency IT staff, records management staff, policy makers, and web managers, and has received excellent publicity in the press.
  - In August 2003 NARA became a member of CENDI, an interagency cooperative organization of senior Scientific and Technical Information (STI) Managers from 12 U.S. Federal agencies. Through this forum, NARA will gain valuable understanding of STI policies and direction and contribute to members' understanding of records management and preservation issues affecting STI.