

ORGANIZING DIGITAL RECORDS



AGENDA



1. Introduction
2. Electronic Records
3. Digital Repositories/ECMs
4. Electronic File Naming
5. Search Strategies
6. Q&A

ELECTRONIC RECORDS RETENTION

- ❑ Electronic records must be retained in electronic format (WAC 434-662-040)
- ❑ Electronic records need to stay electronic to ensure:
 - ❑ Metadata about the record's authenticity is preserved
 - ❑ The record's usability (keyword searching, discovery, etc.) is preserved
- ❑ Records retention depends on the *function* and *purpose* of the record, not its format

FILE FORMATS AND RECORDS RETENTION

- ❑ File formats can affect *how* a record is kept, however
- ❑ Electronic records can be change as necessary for retention and preservation
- ❑ They can also be migrated from one system to another



ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT (ECM) SYSTEMS

ECMs consist of two parts:

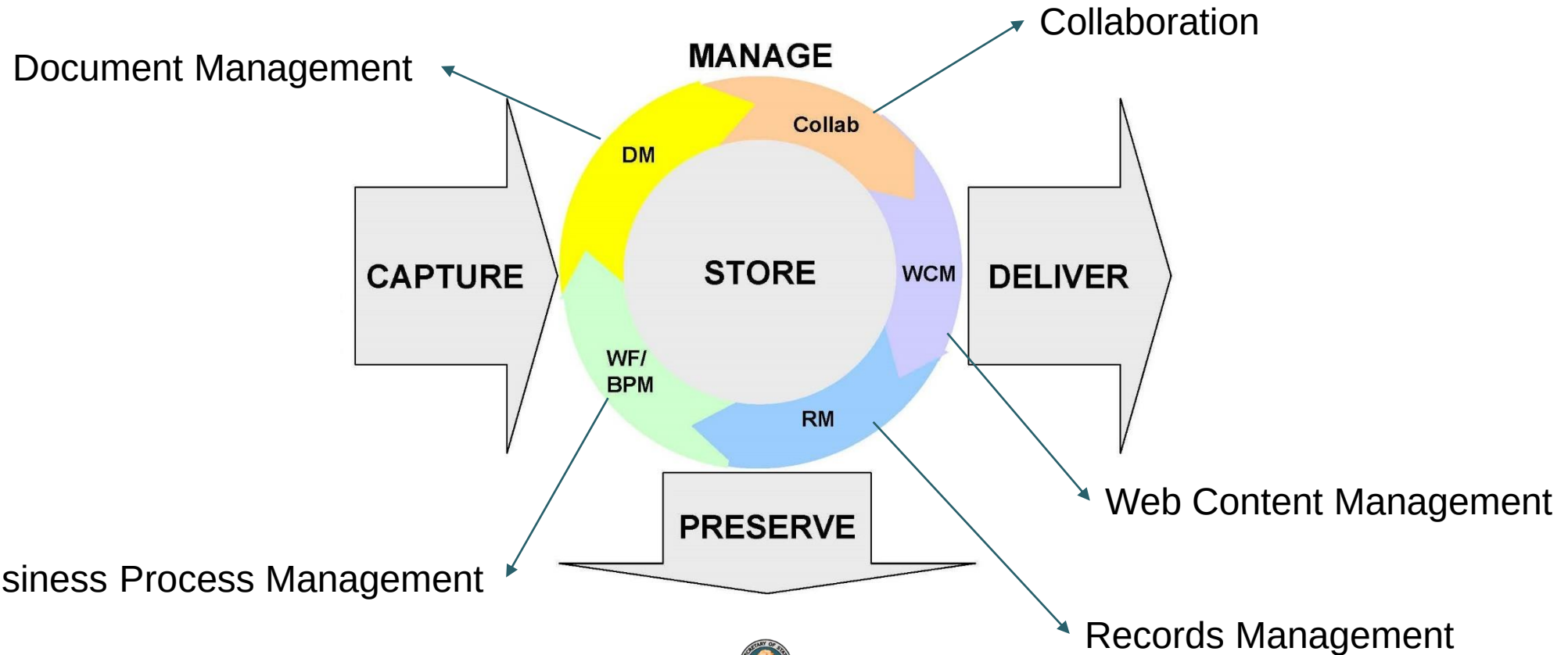
- ❑ Policies and procedures for content management
- ❑ Tools for implementing those policies/procedures

Five components of ECMs, according to the Association for Intelligent Information Management (AIIM):

1. Capture
2. Administration
3. Storage
4. Preservation
5. Output

AIIM MODEL OF ECMs

AIIM Model for Enterprise Content Management



BENEFITS OF USING AN ECM

- ❑ Helps ensure control of records during retention period
- ❑ Helps inventory the records your agency creates and receives
- ❑ Can aid with the destruction and transfer of records
- ❑ Can help track requests for records
- ❑ Can help prepare records that are requested

WHICH ECM SOFTWARE SHOULD YOU USE?

Regardless of what platform you choose, an ECM should have the ability to:

- ☐ Set (and change, if needed) retention periods
- ☐ Handle simple *and* complex retention periods
- ☐ Apply litigation or public records request holds
- ☐ Destroy records that have met retention
- ☐ Export records in a non-proprietary format

THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH ECMs

☐ Management vs. Hoarding

- ☐ Holding onto everything is not the same as records management
- ☐ Storage is only *one* component of an ECM

☐ Legal Custody

- ☐ Some companies assume ownership of content put into their systems
- ☐ Pay attention to Terms of Service and contract language

☐ Exit Strategies

- ☐ What will you do if your ECM company goes out of business?
- ☐ What happens if your agency goes with another platform/software?

ELECTRONIC FILE NAMING



Electronic file names should be:

☐ Consistent

☐ Logical

☐ Predictable

12 STANDARDS FOR ELECTRONIC FILE NAMES

- ❑ These standards are meant to make records:
 - ❑ Easier to organize
 - ❑ Easier to inventory
 - ❑ Easier to find
- ❑ Many of these standards overlap in function and content
- ❑ As you work to make file names consistent, logical, and predictable, you will notice patterns

STANDARD 1: KEEP IT SHORT, SILLY!

Yes!

- ☐ BldgCmteMins.docx
- ☐ BldgCmteAgenda.docx
- ☐ SmithJCmteNotes.docx

No!

- ☐ Building_committee_minutes.docx
- ☐ The_building_committee_agenda_packet.docx
- ☐ Notes_on_the_good_and_reasonable_points_committee_chair_Johnny_made_during_the_last_building_committee_meeting.docx

STANDARD 2: AVOID REPETITIOUS REPETITIONS!

Yes!

☐ Court/20071214Minutes.docx

☐ Procedures/Appeals.pdf

No!

☐ Court/20071214CourtroomMinutes.docx

☐ Procedures/ProcedureManualforAppeals.pdf

STANDARD 3: CAPITALIZE TO SAVE SPACE(s)!

Yes!

- ☐ DisasterPrep.pdf
- ☐ FilePlanFinal.docx

No!

- ☐ Disaster_Prep.pdf
- ☐ Disaster Prep.pdf
- ☐ File_Plan_Final.docx
- ☐ Filing Plan Final Version.docx

STANDARD 4: A NUMBER OF CONSIDERATIONS

Yes!

OfficeProceduresV01
OfficeProceduresV02
OfficeProceduresV03
OfficeProceduresV04
...
OfficeProceduresV101
OfficeProceduresV102

No!

OfficeProceduresV1
OfficeProceduresV10
OfficeProceduresV11
OfficeProceduresV2
OfficeProceduresV3
OfficeProceduresV4

STANDARD 5: SAVE THE DATE

Yes!

No!

Back to Front by Year:

- ☐ YYYYMMDD (20231019)
- ☐ YYYYMM (202310)
- ☐ YYYY (2023)
- ☐ YYYY-YYYY (2021-2023)

Front to Back

- ☐ Feb12023
- ☐ FebruaryFirst2023

Middle to Back

- ☐ 24Mar2023
- ☐ TwentyFourthMarch2023

STANDARD 6: INITIAL IMPRESSION

Yes!

☐ SmithJ20230922.docx

☐ SchmoeJ20230712.pdf

☐ PublicJQ20230630.jpg

No!

☐ Ms.JaneSmith20230922.doc
X

☐ JosephSchmoe20230712.pdf

☐ PublicJonathanQuincy20230
630.jpg

STANDARD 7: LETTER IMPERFECT

On One Hand

❑ CmteReportDraftV04.docx

❑ OrgChartDraftV02.docx

❑ RecordsPolicyDraftV01.docx

On the Other

❑ DraftCmteReportV04.docx

❑ DraftOrgChartV02.docx

❑ DraftRecordsPolicyV01.docx

STANDARDS 8 & 9: ORDER UP!

By Date

☐ Folder: CityCouncil

☐ Contents:

- ☐ 20230104Agenda.docx
- ☐ 20230104Minutes.docx
- ☐ 20230111Agenda.docx
- ☐ 20230111Minutes.docx

By Type

☐ Folder: CityFinance

☐ Contents:

- ☐ Purchasing2020-2021.xlsk
- ☐ Purchasing2021-2022.xlsk
- ☐ Purchasing2022-2023.xlsk
- ☐ Purchasing2023-2024.xlsk

STANDARDS 10 & 11: CORRESPONDS TO WHAT?

Yes!

☐ Folder: Complaints

☐ Contents:

- ☐ PublicJQrecd20220717.msg
- ☐ PublicJQ20220814.pdf
- ☐ PublicJQ20220828.docx
- ☐ PublicJQrecd20221107.msg

No!

☐ Folder: Complaints

☐ Contents:

- ☐ EmailJohnPublic17Jul2022.msg
- ☐ HandwrittenLetterPublicJQAug142022.pdf
- ☐ LetterFromJohnQPublic28Aug2022.docx
- ☐ The city ruined my tomato plants.msg

STANDARD 12: WHICH VERSION?

Yes!

☐ StrategicPlanV02Draft.docx

☐ StrategicPlan2023Final.docx

☐ OrgChart2022V01.pdf

☐ OrgChart2022V02.pdf

No!

☐ Thestrategicplan_draft3.docx

☐ Thestrategicplan_final2.docx

☐ Org Chart 2022 version 1.pdf

☐ Org Chart 2022 version 2.pdf

SEARCHING AN ECM OR FILE DIRECTORY

Some strategies to consider:

- ❑ Keywords
- ❑ Abbreviations
- ❑ Boolean operators
- ❑ Truncation



KEYWORD SEARCHING

- ❑ Keywords can occur throughout a record and its metadata
- ❑ Traditionally, most ECMs organize keyword by different fields:
 - ❑ Examples:
 - ❑ Title
 - ❑ Subject
 - ❑ Author
 - ❑ Date Sent
 - ❑ Date Received
- ❑ In some cases, ECMs will search contents of records

ABBREVIATIONS

- ❑ Like keyword searching, but more specific
- ❑ Examples:
 - ❑ “Cmte” for “Committee”
 - ❑ “Memo” for “Memorandum”
 - ❑ “Recd” for “Received”
- ❑ Abbreviations can be part of an electronic file policy or procedure

BOOLEAN SEARCHING

- ❑ Boolean operators (and, or, not) narrow or broaden searches
- ❑ AND searches for all terms *and* can narrow search
 - ❑ Example: “land use” *and* “final plan”
- ❑ OR searches for all terms *and* can broaden search
 - ❑ Example: “permit” *or* “application” *or* “certificate”
- ❑ NOT eliminates one term *and* can narrow search
 - ❑ Example: “permit” *not* “certificate”

TRUNCATION

- ❑ Truncation searching uses asterisks to help find results
- ❑ This method is great for finding different versions of a keyword
- ❑ Example: searching tax* in an ECM could yield results for:
 - ❑ Tax
 - ❑ Taxes
 - ❑ Taxing
 - ❑ Taxation
 - ❑ Taxonomy

HAVE QUESTIONS? WE WANT TO KNOW!



WASHINGTON
Secretary of State

Washington State Archives

THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT TEAM IS
HERE FOR YOU WITH FREE
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