WHAT ABOUT THE RECORDS?

Making smart decisions about information systems
WHO IS TALKING TO ME?

Christian Skipper
Appraisal & Outreach Archivist
Maryland State Archives

- Detail enthusiast
- Has forgotten more about technology than most will ever know

Kristopher Stenson
ORMS Administrator
Oregon State Archives

- Professional talker
- Is “in charge” of a large state-wide electronic records management system
Records live in many different types of information systems.

Systems may not be designed or intended for long-term record storage.

Decisions about information systems are driven by budget, business needs—not RM concerns.
SECTION I

BUYING OR BUILDING A SYSTEM
WHAT RECORDS WILL RESIDE IN THE SYSTEM?

Will this software be used to store and access records?
  - Must consider records management implications.
  - Consult state records law/rules

How long will the records be kept in the system?
  - Can it meet full retention requirements?
  - How will records (& metadata) be exported for storage elsewhere?

What is the capacity for storage?
  - Might not perform well over time if too much content is retained
HOW WILL I ACCESS THEM?

Must consider how records will be searched & used.

Can you search across content (ala Google) or just browse?

Will the system contain all info you need to find records later?

- Storing digitally is not a solution to poor inventory control: garbage in = garbage out
- Groundwork needed *before* moving your records into a management system.

Ease of access critical to comply rapidly with FOIA/PIA/PRR requests.
MONITORING YOUR RECORDS

Digital content can deteriorate without attention
Who is responsible? You? IT? Outside help?
Who can write, upload & delete content?

- Rules needed to protect authenticity of records
- Can you apply different levels of access?

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PRESERVING YOUR RECORDS

How will records be preserved over time?

- Fixity is key for ensuring public trust.
- What metadata will be captured, & how do you ensure completeness?
- Automation can be helpful for identifying files that are at risk.
EXPORTING RECORDS

If your system contains long-term records, they will not likely be in it forever.

- How many systems from 20 years ago are still being used?
- Think about those who will take over after you retire

Long-term records will likely need to be exported in the future

- Will their metadata come with them?
- Contracts can limit who owns aspects of imagery or metadata.
- Software developer gone? May not be able to count on support
- Should plan for migration every 10 years as benchmark
RECORDS DISPOSITION

Need to plan for regular records destruction

- Non-permanent records will eventually be destroyed.
- Does the system allow destruction of specific records?
- Can it destroy in bulk, or is it one-at-a-time?
- Does the system automate deletion, and does it give you reports of this for auditing purposes? Is there human oversight of the process?
SECTION 2
DEALING WITH EXISTING INFORMATION SYSTEMS
SO I’VE GOT THIS SYSTEM…

Legacy systems of all types present RM challenges

- Lack of contextual metadata
- Intermingled record/non-record content
- Poor or no export functionality
- Software layers between you and the records

- Records exist only “virtually”
- Retention not considered
CONDUCTING TRIAGE

How much life is left in the system?

What records are stored in the system?

Is life of records > life of system?

Is there an export function (and how complete is it)?
ARE YOU COMPLIANT?
Consult state statutes & rules regarding e-records management

Are records legally allowed to live in system long-term?
Are records kept in an acceptable format?
Are you legally required to destroy records at full retention?
SCENARIO ONE: MANAGE IN-PLACE

Records either short-term or there are significant barriers to export

Purge possible? Delete from system as appropriate

End of life for system = keep afloat in the background until ALL contents at full retention
SCENARIO TWO: EXPORT AND RETAIN ELSEWHERE

Records have significant retention or will outlive system

Identify logical export point, pull out records (& metadata?)

Must decide whether to duplicate data for ready access or move entirely when semi-active
CONSIDER ACCESS NEEDS

Does the system accommodate ready search & retrieval?

What is the active vs inactive life of the records?

Do you have an alternative search elsewhere?
WHAT TO DO WITH EXPORTED RECORDS?

Know your state requirements- Physical vs Electronic

Is there a system of management in place?

More than a decade or so need to consider ERMS
ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Allows for comprehensive management of records:

File plan, Search, Access,

Security, Retention & Disposition

Automates many routine tasks

Ensures accountability
ADAPTING TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES

We don’t know what will be used in a decade

Always ask “what about the records?”

Think about appropriate usage

Plan for creation, capture and retention before you’re in the thick of it
QUESTIONS & COMMENTS
STAY CONNECTED & INFORMED

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