Introduction

These days almost every organization needs to implement a records management program. Putting a program in place helps to make sure you manage your records and information to meet your business needs and comply with laws and regulations.

Although the importance of comprehensive records management programs is not a new phenomenon, over the last few years, events surrounding COVID-19 have brought records management into increased focus.

This world health crisis has required most companies to change their normal ways of working. These include:
- work from new locations
- use different technology and devices
- providing employees with access to key records

Companies are recognizing the need for robust records management programs that run across all areas of the enterprise and that when done correctly, good records management lowers storage and records management costs, reduces data breach and discovery risks, and increases control over data for analytics.

Note:
"It is only through the operation of a well-run records management program that an organization retains control of its organizational or corporate memory, which allows your company to conduct its business."

New compliance regulations and statutes, and happenings in the environment have raised pressure on organizations to implement structured and standardized records management programs. Among them are:

- RA 10173 on DATA PRIVACY ACT, PROTECTION OF ALL INFORMATION.

- ISO 9000/9001 DOCUMENT CONTROL – requires all organizations to control documents with policies and procedures and guidelines

- RA 9470 of the National Archive of the Philippines, Article 1 Par.3 of the IRR of says that "The State shall give utmost priority for the safeguard, protection and preservation of its public documents and records.

- Memo Circular 210401 from NAP re Electronic Records Management Policies directing government agencies to manage and preserve electronic records to establish a culture of efficiency as well as to provide easy access to accurate information.

- Hybrid work environment wherein Document management plays a key role in aiding hybrid workforces, so organizations must ensure their document management strategies enable safe and accessible hybrid collaboration

Common Challenges to Maintaining Hybrid Records include:
- Making sure everyone has access to the same documentation.
- Creating a documentation method allowing for collaboration between remote and office-based employees.
- Documenting standard office procedures.
- Combating siloed and multiple sources of information.

Additional Challenge would be the fact that documentation is a communication problem.

A key problem still experienced with documentation and digitalization is keeping a single source of truth (SSOT). By keeping an SSOT, your teams have access to reliable and accurate information that's up to date.

The co-existence of electronic records and non-electronic records creates a hybrid RM environment.

Under this environment, it is important to maintain the links between related electronic and non-electronic records to ensure that the records are complete and the necessary contextual information is captured to facilitate understanding of the records.

Factors to Consider in Managing Records in a Hybrid Environment:

- Paper is still the preferred medium by many people.
- The dependency on technology to allow access and use
- IT security
- Review related policies
- The Skill Set of Staff

The Inside Scoop: For the record!
(Important Terms in Records Management)

Records Management is the efficient and systematic control of records (both paper and electronic) throughout their life cycle from creation or receipt until the time of their disposal.

Hybrid Records Management, a business environment in which records may exist in either paper or electronic formats.

A document is any piece of written information in any form, created or received by an organization or person, and is not necessarily kept as evidence of business transactions or as a result of legal obligations.

A record is any information created, received and maintained by the organization, regardless of medium, that is used to control, support, or document its activities and transactions.

Documented Information refers to information that must be controlled and maintained.

Maintain. Documented information maintained by the organization for the **purpose of communicating** the information necessary for the organization to operate.

Retain:
Documented information needed to be retained by the organization for the **purpose of providing evidence** of result achieved.

The key identifier of a record versus a document is that records are documented information that is "retained" and documents are documented information that is "maintained".

All records start off as documents, **but not all documents will ultimately become records."**
RECORDS are EVIDENCES of what your Company does.

Authenticity - an authentic record is one that can be proven
Reliability - a reliable record is one whose contents can be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities or facts
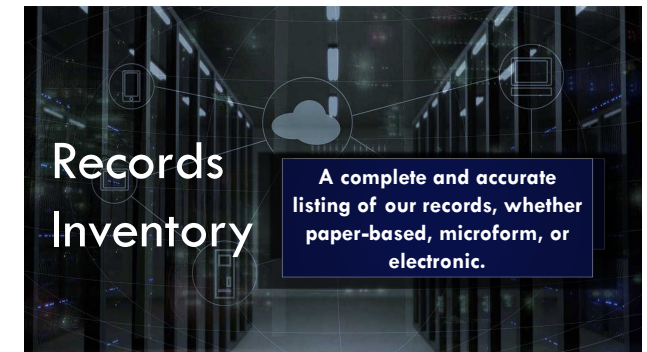**Integrity** - the integrity of a record refers to its being complete and unaltered; and
Usability - a usable record is one that can be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted.

Get Your Program Off the Ground!

Records Management System, simply put is "is knowing what you have, where you have it and how long you have to keep it."

The foundation of a good records management program are **The inventory appraisal and the retention schedule.** Let's look into these foundations.

Records Inventory — A complete and accurate listing of our records, whether paper-based, microform, or electronic.

The *inventory* appraisal approach requires an in-depth review of a department's records and information.

During this process, your goal is to document a department's content at the folder level, not at a document level.

Records Retention and Timely Disposal

Legal and Regulatory requirements:
- **Maintained in accordance with security and access controls.**
- **Kept as long as legally and operationally necessary.**
- **Securely disposed of when they reach the end of their retention period.**

Your records retention schedule is a policy that defines your system's legal and regulatory requirements so that your records are:

- Maintained in accordance with security and access controls.
- Kept as long as legally and operationally necessary.
- Securely disposed of when they reach the end of their retention period.

An authorized retention schedule serves as your universal guide for the retention and disposition of records.

The record's lifecycle is determined through analysis of:

3 primary needs:
legal
fiscal
administrative

3 secondary needs:
evidential
historical
informational

Factors that may be considered by a company in determining retention periods of records would include, but not limited to:
1. Legal requirements to which the company may be subject to;
2. Applicable prescription periods in existing law (i.e. money claims);
3. Department of Labor and Employment Rules;
4. Bureau of internal revenue regulations for bookkeeping requirements; and
5. Industry standards, and other laws and regulations that apply to the sector.

Records Disposal

The final administrative action taken by an organization with regard to records; these actions typically fall into two categories:
First, Destruction via disposal in trash or recycling, shredding, macerating, incinerating, pulping, and deleting or other electronic obliteration; (Click)
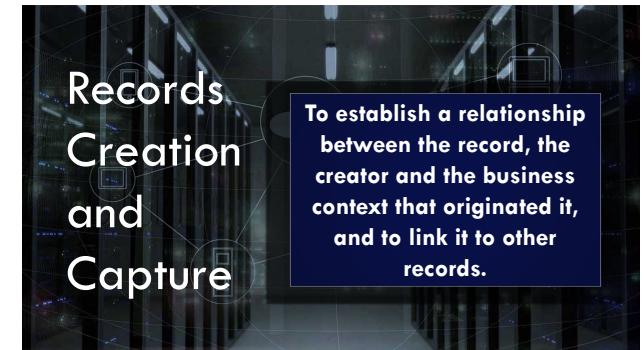**Second, Transfer to an archive for permanent preservation**

It's a Matter of Policy

The first steps in determining what to include in a records and management policy involve understanding the overall objective of the program, who it applies to, why it applies, and the goal of each individual part.

The policy provides employees with direction on how to navigate the records management program.

Records Management Policies:

1. **Records Creation and Capture**

Records Creation and Capture

To establish a relationship between the record, the creator and the business context that originated it, and to link it to other records.

Principles on creation and collection of records

Records should be created and collected to -
- meet operational, policy, legal and financial purposes; and
- document accurately and adequately government functions, policies, procedures, decisions and transactions to serve as reliable evidence.

Capture the Appropriate Form of Record

Consider whether the paper records can be digitized into an electronic form (e.g. by scanning) for integrated management with the electronic records created/received under the same business function, process or transaction.

This would facilitate search and retrieval of records by users as well as the management and preservation of the records by RM staff.

2. Search and Retrieval of Records
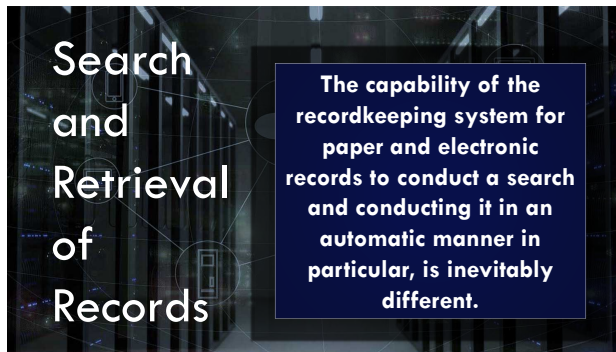
Searching and retrieving records are the day-to-day operations of records users as well as RM staff.

Owing to the inherent difference in managing paper files from managing electronic records, the capability of the recordkeeping system to support a records user to conduct a search and conducting it in an automatic manner in particular, is inevitably different.

Best Practices for Search and Retrieval:

1. Similar to paper records, active electronic records, in particular those which are frequently retrieved, should be kept online (for computer systems or servers) or as near to the users as possible.

2. The names and contact details of RM staff, and the division of duties among them to maintain different electronic records should be made known to records users.
3. Designate the same RM staff to manage both paper and electronic records of the same parts (or subjects).
4. Records storage equipment should be labelled accurately and conspicuously.

3. Classification and Organization of Records

Linking Paper Records to Electronic Records Approaches

1. *Different Record Series for Different Media of Records*
This approach is particularly effective when records of some subjects are predominantly in paper form while those of other subjects are predominantly electronic.

2. *Adopting same records series for paper and electronic records*

This approach is more suitable when paper and electronic records co-exist for various subjects and records of a one form (usually electronic) are significantly fewer than the other.

4. **Storage and Preservation of Records**

Records should be stored in such a manner so as to facilitate user access and ensure that they are protected from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, removal, deterioration, loss or destruction.

5. **Access Control, Security and Tracking**
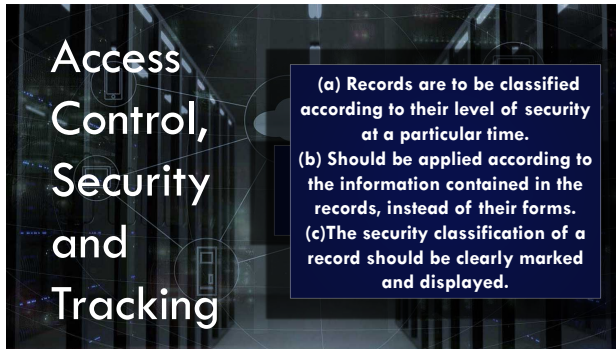
Irrespective of forms of records, access control and security should be established and implemented in the recordkeeping systems to protect the security and integrity of records stored therein.

6. **Proper Protection of Vital Records**

Vital records are fundamental to an organization's ability to function. Vital records contain information organizations need to continue operations during or shortly after a crisis.

Remember, what's vital for one organization may not be for another. Use your organization's mission as a guide for determining which records are truly vital.

Staying on top of the hybrid environment

To help you optimize your hybrid environment, here are a few key hybrid RM strategies:

1. Embrace the hybrid environment
2. Move more of your paper records into electronic format
3. Reduce the amount of paper you create and retain
4. Education and Training are key

Records Management Starts with People

The key is a change in mindset to information being a critical driver of the organization's future success.

When people view themselves as the information stewards (rather than gatekeepers) only then will they be able to push records management forward.

Thank you!

Note: For a more comprehensive discussion on this topic, please look into our training on Office Files and Records Management at Businessmaker Academy.