

In This Issue: Formats for records archiving
Updates on ELNs and Archiving.

eOrganizedWorld
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for Information Professionals
from Charlie Sodano

Formats for Records Archiving

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Have you taken a close look at the myriad of file formats that you utilize every day? Most of the ones that I have in my archive have formats like; Microsoft Office, pdf, gif, tif, jpeg, txt, xml and html. However there are a bunch in other formats, like mp3, zip, qdf and tax.

If you expect to be able to access these files in the future, think long and hard about the formats. Microsoft probably will be with us for some time. However, will they really be around 50 years from now? Microsoft has embedded field codes into their products that actually boost efficiency if you know how to use them. See <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa163918%28office.10%29.aspx>

These proprietary features make it easy to use Microsoft products, but will make future retrieval more difficult.

PDF/A is a file format for the long-term archiving of electronic documents defined by ISO 19005-1:2005, an ISO Standard that was published on October 1, 2005. This format has restrictions that should help preserve content for the future:

- Audio and video content are forbidden.
- JavaScript and executable file launches are prohibited.
- All fonts must be embedded and also must be legally embeddable for unlimited, universal rendering. This also applies to the so-called PostScript standard fonts such as Times or Helvetica.
- Colorspaces specified in a device-independent manner.
- Encryption is disallowed.
- Use of standards-based metadata is mandated.

Over the past few years there has been increasing support for this format and today there are many software vendor choices to create this format from other document types. PDF/A is also being used to preserve image records, such as photographs. It's nice to dump all archiving records into this format. Even if things change in the future, a batch conversion should be fairly easy to execute

Let's say that you have converted all of your files that you intend to keep longer than 5 years to PDF/A. Now what? Assuming that this archive will be added to over the years, how the heck will you be able to find specific files in the growing repository 50 years from now?

Let assume that you are diligent and have created a file tree. But what kind of tree design is best? I strongly support storing by year first, then by subject category. There is a high likelihood that the

subject categories will change over the years. If you were to try to search for information by navigation alone you would have a higher probability of finding what you are looking for searching by year.

Of course if your archive grows into millions of records, navigation is not the way to go. Searching the metadata will be most efficient.

My next EZine will focus on how to select appropriate metadata for each PDF/A file and how you can search your archives in the future, knowing that all current computer technology will be long gone.

Please pass on this EZine to those in your network.

To leave list or change email address, scroll to bottom.

A link to the EZine is also found at www-eorganizedworld.com

Contact us (consultants@eorganizedworld.com) for additional information about getting your records management program started. We'll give you more free advice and explain how we can continue to work together.

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What's new?

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Records Management / Archiving

Senior executives at the British Library and the National Library of Scotland (NLS) are dismayed that legislation giving them the right to collect online and digital material is still not in force, more than six years after it was passed by parliament.

The omission has meant the libraries – which are legally required to archive books, newspapers and journals – have failed to record online coverage of major events such as the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the release of the Lockerbie bomber and the MPs' expenses scandal.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has admitted that the powers, set out by the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003, will not become law before the next election, after a series of delays in getting proposals from an advisory panel and hold-ups in Whitehall.

The legislation was heralded in 2003 as evidence that Britain was at the forefront of the digital media revolution. It meant that "a vital part of the nation's published heritage will be safe", said Chris Mole, the Labour MP, now a junior transport minister, who introduced it as a private member's bill. It gave six libraries – the British Library, the NLS, the National Library of Wales, the Bodleian in Oxford, Cambridge University Library and Trinity College Dublin – the same legal authority to collect digital material that they have for printed works.

Copies of every book, journal and newspaper printed in Britain must by law be deposited in one of these libraries. Once the new powers come into force, the same rules would apply to digital publications, under a system known as electronic legal, or e-legal, deposit.

At least 26 other countries, including France, Germany, Canada, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand and Norway, now have similar laws in force.

Iron Mountain Incorporated announced a partnership with Orchestria Corporation, the global leader in software designed to manage risks associated with electronic communication, to offer its

real-time active policy management software with Iron Mountain's Digital Archives, an outsourced electronic records management service for secure, legally compliant and cost-effective archiving of electronic records such as e-mail, instant messages and images.

Sunbelt Exchange Archiver(TM) v4.0 and Sunbelt File Archiver(TM) v4.0 enable administrators to view management consoles of both email and file archiving tools in same user interface. They enable Microsoft Enterprise Search and 3rd party search with support for full-text search, while reports are generated based on archival/retrieval of email and files. Programs feature Web interface that allows search results to be viewed in reports or exported to internal mailbox or as PST files.

According to a survey carried out by the AIIM, an industry body focusing on electronic content management, some 26% of organisations admitted that no records management disciplines are applied to the majority of their electronic records.

The survey found that for most organisations the volume of paper records is increasing rather than decreasing. But the same report found the 70% of respondents also reporting that the volume of electronic records is increasing rapidly.

The AIIM research report 'Electronic Records Management - still playing catch-up with paper' found that the volume of paper records is still increasing in over half of organisations surveyed, and only 21% is it showing signs of going down.

Electronic records are twice as likely to be unmanaged compared to paper records, according to researchers AIIM, with 26% of organisations admitting that no records management disciplines are applied to the majority of their electronic records.

In addition, IT staff rather than records management staff are expected to carry out records management processes on electronic documents and emails.

Over half of the respondents now scan newly received paper items and file them electronically. On the other hand, as well as directly filing incoming paper documents, 40% admit that they print newly generated electronic documents and emails for the purpose of filing them as paper records.

ELN / LIMS

Symyx Technologies, Inc announced it has joined SAFE-BioPharma Association, a non-profit association that created and manages the SAFE-BioPharma digital identity and signature standard for the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. The membership enables Symyx to implement the SAFE-BioPharma(r) digital signature standard for records signing to safe-guard critical scientific data. The membership also enables Symyx to participate in SAFE-BioPharma working groups to further secure the electronic laboratory environment.

Contur Software announced the launch of a high-end electronic laboratory notebook system available as an online service. The service, called iLabber, builds on the company's server-based ELN solution, ConturELN, and basically holds the same features. However, iLabber does not require users to invest in any hardware, licenses or maintenance. Using a software as a service (SaaS) model, Contur Software is making iLabber available to single researchers and smaller research

groups that previously have not been able to utilize the advantages of high-end ELN systems to increase the productivity of the research process.

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