

In This Issue: Scanning Paper Records or Not Updates on ELNs and Archiving.

eOrganizedWorld
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from Charlie Sodano

Scanning Paper Records or Not

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I occasionally get mildly chastised about doing “paper” work. However, there are a few things that I will probably continue to do with paper and pencil for awhile. Transient information is often much easier to jot on a piece of paper rather than creating an electronic file to be discarded immediately. The popularity of Post-Its supports this sort of usage. For the record, my use of Post-its has dropped substantially and I do use an electronic version (Windows 7) every day.

So what kinds of paper information do I work with? There is some old reference information that I refer to a few times a year and despite my diligence some accumulated junk that should be discarded. Other than those, I do have a box that I throw some snail mail and receipts into. When the box is full, I sort through it, discarding about 95%. The residue, mostly consisting of tax related information is filed into paper folders.

I collect a lot of on-line information and occasionally print it for easy reading if it's more than a few pages. However, if it has continuing value I will create a pdf file from the source and discard (recycle as scratch pads – see how green I am!) the paper after I've read it. The files are indexed for searching using Microsoft's Vista/Windows 7 search engine utility. One of these days, I will invest in dual screen technology, with one of them being a touch screen, save my eyes and some time too.

I do have a scanner and good OCR software, but it is probably only used about 10 times a year. So why don't I scan more paper? My legacy paper collection is aging. I have not added to it for a few years and probably will trash all of it within the next few years. Things change; ideas, rules, regulations. It's not worth the effort to scan my paper archive since I don't consult it very often.

Commercial scanning services will cost a minimum of 10 cents a page, and the price for do-it-yourselfers is dropping, if you don't include labor. The best way to minimize the need for scanning is to establish your business practices so you don't get sent paper. Have your vendors send e-invoices and have your customers transact their business with you on-line. Legal contracts do NOT have to be kept in a paper format. You can scan them and throw out the paper. More and more contracts are e-signed and kept electronically from the start.

There's still a big population of people who swear that the FDA absolutely requires the use of paper records. I don't get it. The FDA, EPA and all of the other regulating government agencies are begging people to keep their records in an electronic format. I guess that people just feel more comfortable with their paper.

Next month's EZine will talk about how to select appropriate metadata for PDF/A files and how you can search your archives in the future.

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

IBM unveiled plans for a new Smart Business System called IBM Information Archive, a universal archiving repository for all types of content that addresses the complete information retention needs of midsize and enterprise clients faced with managing an increasing volume of information.

Iron Mountain announced that it is extending its industry-leading Archive Services Platform to application providers, including corporate developers and independent software vendors (ISVs), so that they may offer cloud storage with their applications. Through the new Iron Mountain Developer Program, the Company will offer developers the tools and resources necessary to integrate Iron Mountain's secure enterprise-class cloud archiving services.

Autonomy Corporation announced the availability of Autonomy Arcpliance, a new on-premise digital archiving appliance. Autonomy Arcpliance leverages the next-generation archiving capabilities of Autonomy Digital Safe, Autonomy's cloud-based archiving solution, to provide a turn-key and cost-effective archiving appliance. The appliance is ideal for mid-sized businesses or organizations seeking a simplified yet scalable solution for specific tasks - such as archiving application, divisional, or location-specific data.

DocuLex announces the company's Archive Studio component WebSearch compatible with the Microsoft Windows 7 operating system. With Windows 7's added security features and fortified user experience, WebSearch is enhanced as an effective, affordable content management system enabling collaboration, email archiving and compliance, knowledge management, customized workflow and records retention for any business or public sector entity.

ELN / LIMS

Symyx Technologies announced an out-of-the-box integration of Symyx Notebook and Thermo Scientific Watson LIMS. The integration enables scientists engaged in biological and bioanalytical workflows to electronically pass study information, sample lists, experimental results and reports between the electronic laboratory notebook (ELN) and the LIMS, thereby reducing time-consuming manual transcription and data manipulation that can result in costly laboratory errors and regulatory compliance issues.

eCAT is an electronic lab notebook (ELN) developed by Axiope Limited. It was developed in response to feedback from users of a predecessor product. By late 2006 the basic concept had been clarified: a highly scalable web-based collaboration tool that possessed the basic capabilities of commercial ELNs, i.e. a permissions system, controlled sharing, an audit trail, electronic signature and search, and a front end that looked like the electronic counterpart to a paper notebook.

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