RECORDS MANAGEMENT 101

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INTRODUCTION

- Records are written or recorded data that are made for future use.

- They are the memory of the office or organization.

- They are informational documents used by the organization to carry out its major functions.

- They include papers, invoices, reports, vouchers, files etc.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- **Records management** refers to a set of activities required for systematically controlling the creation, distribution, use, maintenance, and disposition of recorded information maintained as evidence of business activities and transactions

Types of record found within the collections

- Some of the most significant record types are:
  - ❑ **Property records** - title deeds and settlements
  - ❑ **Accounting papers** - including rentals, vouchers, surveys and valuations
  - ❑ **Legal papers**
  - ❑ **Inventories**
  - ❑ **Correspondence**
  - ❑ **Enclosure papers**
  - ❑ **Manorial papers** - court rolls, custumals, terriers, surveys etc
  - ❑ **Personal and political papers**
  - ❑ **Maps and plans**

Stages of Records Management

1. **Creation of records**

- It is the first stage of records management. It is the most important stage.

- In this stage records are either created inside the organization or are received from outside the organization inform of letters, notices etc.

2. **Storage of records**

- It is the second step of records management. Once records are created they must be retained or protected. This stage is also known as retention of records.

- It is the preservation of records for future reference. The records are stored in such a way that it can be easily located in the required time.

3. Use of records

- It is the third stage of records management.

- In this stage of records management the stored records in the past are used for planning, organizing, decision making and preparation of accounts and so on.

4. Disposal of records
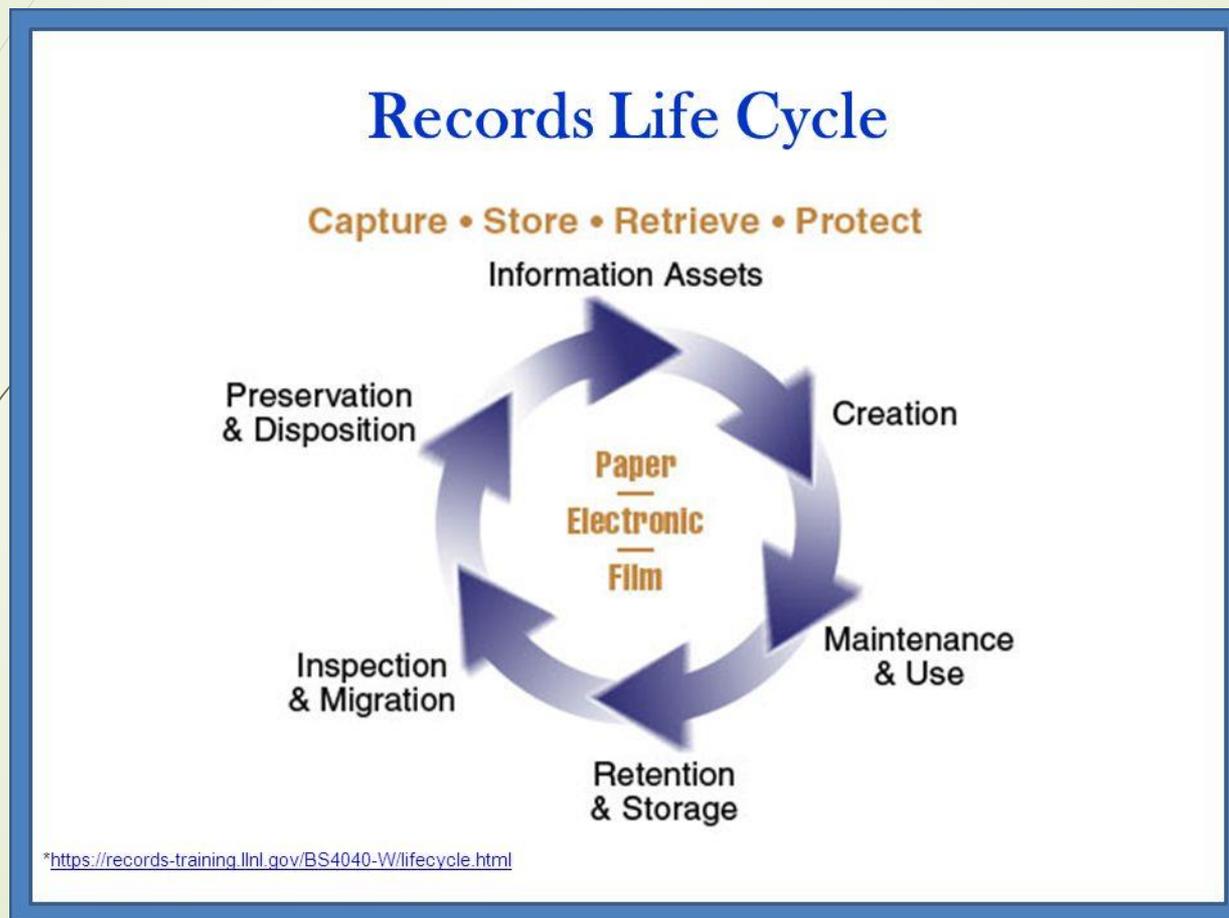
- It is the fourth and last stage of records management. Records cannot be stored forever.

- Outdated records must be destroyed or disposed.

The Life Cycle Concept

- All records have a lifecycle, albeit some longer than others.

- Records are created, used, kept for valid legal, fiscal, or administrative reasons, and more likely than not destroyed at the end of their lives, although some with enduring historical value will be maintained in an archives.

- The Life Cycle is based on the concept that a record has a life similar to that of a biological organism: It is born (creation phase); It lives (maintenance and use phase) and; It dies (disposition phase).

Figure: Records Life Cycle

Records Life Cycle

Capture • Store • Retrieve • Protect

Information Assets

Preservation & Disposition

Creation

Paper — Electronic — Film

Inspection & Migration

Maintenance & Use

Retention & Storage

*https://records-training.llnl.gov/BS4040-W/lifecycle.html

Creation and/or Receipt:

- Records maybe created within an organization in many different ways including but not limited to typing/word processing of a document, typing and sending of an email, construction of a spreadsheet, recording of a meeting, entering of a transaction within an enterprise system, the receipt of documents, the receipt of spreadsheets, the receipt of email

Distribution & Use:

- Once a record has been created or received it goes through a phase of distribution and use.

- During this phase the record is frequently in use.

- This phase may last only a few hours in the case of a transient record or may last a few years in the case of a short to long term record.

Storage & Retrieval:

- While many records may be disposed of after their initial use, others are required to be kept for a longer period of time for legal, fiscal, or other administrative reasons.

- Since immediate access to these records is no longer required during this phase, they are typically stored offsite or offline so as not to burden the storage capacity of the operating office or the efficiency of the operating system.

Destruction:

- The final phase for the majority of an organization's records is destruction.

- Destruction is accomplished in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- ❖ disposal in trash or recycling bin
- ❖ shredding
- ❖ incineration
- ❖ deleting of electronic file
- ❖ shredding of optical disk
- ➡ Records destruction should be documented appropriately.

Archives:

- ➡ For records that have an enduring historical value, their final disposition will be to reside in an archive, where they will be preserved for future research and use.

Electronic Records Management

- Most organization's records are not created on paper anymore.

- As computer systems and applications proliferate and are further embedded into regular work processes, information is being created in a digital medium (commonly referred to as being "digitally born") at an ever-increasing rate.

- This presents unique challenges for many private organizations, as well as all state agencies who are concerned about managing electronic information and records.

The state as well as private entities must address two goals:

1. to provide policies and standards for the world of electronic records and

2. to provide technological solutions to manage electronic formats.

There are several solutions to manage electronic records. These include, but are not limited to:

- *e-Discovery* and the requirement to *produce records in electronic form* at as part of the litigation process.

- *e-record vulnerability* with the ever-increasing use of technology that puts at risk important records for business continuity and loss of investment.

The challenges are great, but the State Archives and the relevant ICT Departments must identify and implement an Electronic Records Management (ERM) strategy; otherwise there are great

Records Continuum Theory

- As defined in the Australian Standard 4390, a record continuum is;

    "… a consistent and coherent regime of management processes from the time of the creation of records (and before creation, in the design of recordkeeping systems) through to the preservation and use of records as archives."

- The International Council on Archives (ICA) defines the continuum as;

    "…a consistent and coherent processes of records management throughout the life of records, from the development of recordkeeping systems through the creation and preservation of records, to their retention and use as archives."

Creation
Who will create and upload records into the system?

Managing Records throughout their Lifecycle

Disposition
Who reviews and approves the destruction of records in the system?

Active
Who will need to access, edit and approve the records in the system?

Inactive
Who still needs access to the records? Who will need edit rights?

Characteristics of Records

- The purpose of any records management policy, practices, guidelines and procedures is to ensure that records should have these characteristics, as follows:

- **Authenticity:** An authentic record is one that can be proven;

    i. to be what it purports to be;

    ii. to have been created or sent by the person purported to have created or sent it; and

    iii. to have been created or sent at the time purported;

- ➡ **_Reliability_**: A reliable record is one whose contents can be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities or facts to which they attest and can be depended upon in the course of subsequent transactions or activities;

- ➡ **_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. It should be capable of subsequent presentation as directly connected to the business activity or transaction that produced it.

- An organization should formulate and communicate its records management policy, set out the organization's intentions on records management and identify a senior staff member(s) who will lead with responsibilities for records management to enhance governance in this aspect.

- A records management policy should be underpinned by procedures and guidelines for compliance by staff.

Importance of Records Management

- Records management (RM) objectives usually fall into one of the three categories below:

  - ❑ Service (effective and efficient),

  - ❑ Profit (or cost avoidance) and,

  - ❑ Social (moral, ethical and legal) responsibility.

What are the objectives of records management?

The most important objectives of a records management program are:

❑ Information security. Information security is a key objective of a records management program.

❑ Preservation of vital records.

❑ Regulatory compliance.

❑ Controlling overhead costs.

❑ Streamlined file retrieval processes.

The following are the benefits of records to organizations:

1. To control the creation and growth of records
2. To reduce operating costs
3. To improve efficiency and productivity
4. To assimilate new records management technologies
5. To ensure regulatory compliance
6. To minimize litigation risks
7. To safeguard vital information
8. To support better management decision making
9. To preserve the corporate memory
10. To foster professionalism in running the business

- Records management programs are not generally an organization's primary business, and even though RM programs don't usually generate income, they are still important in the running of an organization.

- Records management programs must manage organizational information so that it is timely, accurate, complete, cost-effective, accessible and useable.

- Better information, at the right time, makes better business.

Principles of Records Management

1. ***Principle of Purpose***

- While maintaining the record, the purpose of record keeping should be clear.

- Records without purpose are a waste of time, labour and money. The purpose of records keeping should not be unsuitable for organizations.

2. ***Principle of Verification***

- There must be evidence of all the documents which are preserved in an office.

- If the verification is not possible, it has no value as proof in court.

3. ***Principle of Classification***

- All the records should be classified on the basis of nature of documents.

- Proper classification of records helps to avoid confusion. It helps in proper evaluation of business performance.

4. *Principle of Reasonable Cost*

➡ While maintaining the records, the cost factor should be considered. Therefore, the valuable information should be recorded systematically and useless information should be disposed.

5. *Principle of Elasticity*

➡ The process of records management should be elastic in capacity i.e. it should be capable of being expanded or contracted according to requirement.

6. *Principle of Retention of Records*

➡ The main objective of record management is to preserve the required documents for future reference.

➡ The unnecessary document should be discarded and only vital records should be preserved.

Records Management Guidelines

- Effective management of recorded information requires the ongoing cooperative interaction between the records manager and the archivist to:

  ❑ Ensure the creation of the right records, containing the right information and in the right format;

  ❑ Organize the records and analyze their content and significance to facilitate their availability;

  ❑ Make them available promptly to those who have a right and a requirement to see them;

  ❑ Systematically dispose of records that are no longer required; and

  ❑ Protect and preserve the information for as long as it may be needed.

Signs and Causes of Poor Records Management

1. Wasted time searching for a record

2. Failure in locating a record

3. Poor productivity

4. Lost files

5. Poor organization and clutter

6. High cost of maintaining records

Resources, Tools, Facilities and Equipment in Records Management

1. Legal and regulatory tools

2. Policies and procedures

3. Records management standards

4. Physical management tools

5. Software

6. Human resources (Knowledge based workers Vs Unskilled workers)

7. Institutional resources

Records Managers

- Records managers are responsible for accurately, securely and effectively managing information received and produced by a wide range of public and private sector organizations.

- Candidates must be patient, meticulous and logical in their work and capable of prioritizing tasks.

- Records managers oversee an organization's records from their creation and preservation through to disposal.

Typical responsibilities include:

- ❑ establishing new records management systems
- ❑ developing, maintaining, verifying and evaluating existing systems
- ❑ overseeing the switch from paper to electronic record-keeping
- ❑ writing reports and publications
- ❑ dealing with enquiries and requests for information from both internal and external clients
- ❑ ensuring that financial, legal or administrative requirements and regulations are complied with
- ❑ ensuring that data is protected
- ❑ classifying and indexing records
- ❑ destroying or archiving finished data/records
- ❑ ensuring that records are easily accessible when needed
- ❑ providing training to staff who require access or have responsibility for maintaining records

Modern Records Management Practices

- Use of ICT's in RM
- Digitization of Paper Based Records
- Use and Enforcement of Born Digital Records
- Forms Management
- Adoption of RM Standards and Procedures (RM Compliance)
- Networking

- Web Archiving
- Cloud Storage
- RM Outsourcing e.g E-Manage Africa
- Integration of Different Professions in RM Functions
- Training
- Use of Mata Data in Records Management

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

Q&A?