MODERNIZING RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Federal government goes
electronic to meet
M-23-07 requirements

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Records are essential to all aspects of government, and in the age of IT modernization, the federal government is working on moving from paper-based records to electronic records management. Several policies are in place to help agencies navigate the transition.

A key driving factor is the M-23-07 directive for all federal agencies to manage permanent records in an electronic format. By June 30, 2024, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) will stop accepting permanent paper records altogether.

So, why electronic records? Using paper records currently wastes millions of dollars and thousands of hours to maintain within the federal government. The IRS is estimated to have issued $361 million in erroneous tax refunds last year due to paper-based processes, when implementing an electronic solution is estimated to only cost $4.1 million. The cost isn't just in errors. Gathering paper forms for manual data entry is much more difficult than electronic records and requires much more time for employees. Moving away from manual data entry is exactly the type of modernization supported by the President's Management Agenda and the goal of shifting from low-value to high-value work.

The White House is requiring federal agencies to ensure that all federal records are created, retained and managed in electronic format with appropriate metadata. Agencies must also remain consistent with records management laws and regulations. They must also develop plans to close agency-operated storage facilities for paper and other analog records and transfer those records to Federal Records Centers operated by NARA or to commercial storage facilities.

While the mandate may seem imposing for agencies, the right tools can ease the move and make records management more effective than ever before. A key example of records management driving overall IT modernization is the Centers of Excellence (CoE) initiative at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In combination with the General Services Administration (GSA), HUD operates a CoE focused on moving away from paper records and developing a cloud-based electronic records system.

HUD is not alone when it announced that it wants to stop accepting millions of paper forms, under its electronic records management solicitation released in September 2019.

Paper-heavy agencies like the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office have launched efforts to digitize, and the White House is looking at giving NARA more resources and authority to help agencies with electronic records management. The move to electronic records will also further agencies' data analytics capabilities for more efficient use of data, paving the way for other advances to follow.

INTELLIGENT MANAGEMENT, INVISIBLE GOVERNANCE

A big challenge agencies face is the volume of data and time needed to get information declared and filed accordingly across millions, if not billions, of records. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is leading the charge for new methods of filing and hosting on a cloud-native platform, enabling migration on demand and enhanced search. As more organizations are moving to the cloud through IT modernization efforts, cloud also supports the ability to scale to support any volume of records, spinning up compute resources as needed.

Let's be honest: no one wants to spend time filing — whether manually or electronically. A Gartner study found that "poor user adoption is the biggest obstacle to effective implementation of records management programs." Add to that the fact that many agencies are currently managing records across dozens of disparate systems, and complexity becomes the enemy of effective management.

Agencies should turn to a records management solution with automated end-to-end processes using business rules and metadata to power the automatic declaration and filing of records — with little to no user action involved. When information governance is invisible, the user's work is easier, and adoption increases.

Applying AI services also enhances the capture of metadata for increased accuracy. With more accurate metadata to use in the declaration process, the process is streamlined for managers who spend valuable time correcting incorrect files.
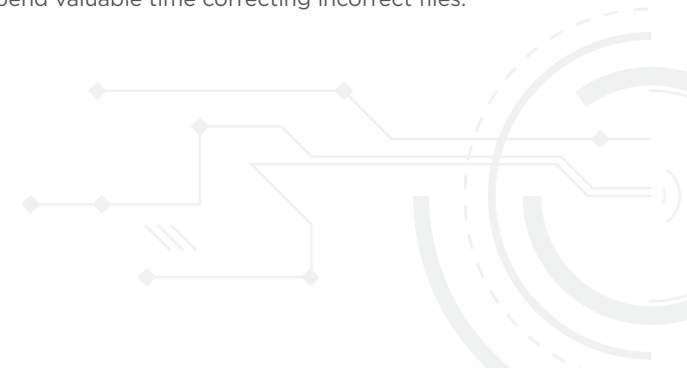
> "By 2024, federal agencies will manage all permanent records in an electronic format and with appropriate metadata."
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> Executive Office of the President OMB Memo

HYLAND'S ALFRESCO DIGITAL BUSINESS PLATFORM

The NARA 2024 deadline is quickly approaching, and agencies need solutions that can help them speed digitization of records and meet the requirements.

Hyland's Alfresco Digital Business Platform (DBP) is a content services platform that digitally manages all of your records and automates agency processes to dramatically increase efficiencies so you can always find the information you need, fast. From a security standpoint, Alfresco DBP is the only open-source-based platform certified to the U.S. DoD 5015.02 Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 Standard for Records Management, providing the ability to transform other content formats to PDF/A for unalterable format, long-term preservation and single version of truth. A combination of access controls, security classification levels and security marks offers highly granular control over security and permissions.

The platform's federation services also allow agencies to manage their content as in-place records without migrating to an Alfresco repository. The platform can tackle the challenges of legacy systems and be deployed on-premises, in the cloud or in a hybrid-cloud configuration. Alfresco Cloud platform as a service offers a fully managed environment with access to content, process, governance and AI services.

Hyland is committed to helping federal agencies consolidate records management for billions of digital assets — including emails, documents, video, audio and other unstructured content — to drive your mission forward. The path ahead to electronic records management needs a cost-effective strategy and an enterprise content services and records management platform that will help future proof your agency with robust, scalable and secure capabilities.

Learn more at **Hyland.com/FederalERM**

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