

The Records Inventory

Documenting what you
have and where it is

M.S. 138.17, Subdivision 8

“Public officials shall prepare an inclusive inventory of records in their custody...”

Why do a records inventory?

- You can't manage it if you can't count it.
- It will help identify the official government records that require protection and preservation.
- It provides the foundation for appraising your records and developing your retention schedule.

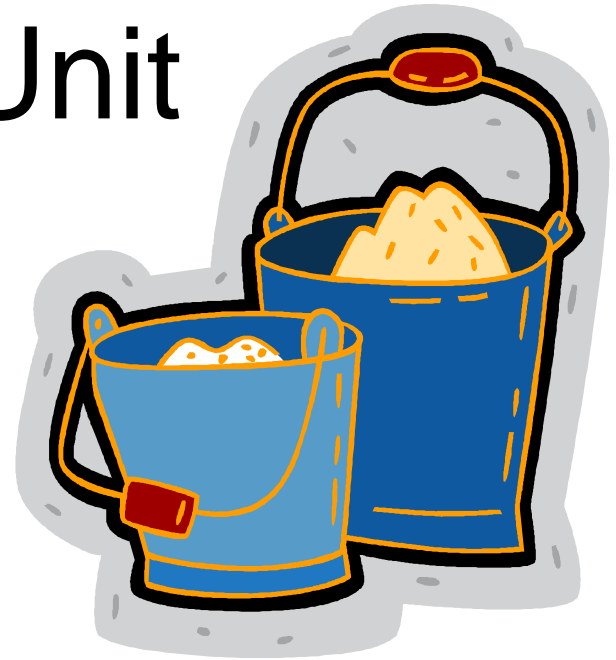
1. Obtain senior management support for the “project”

- Compliance with law
- Elimination of unnecessary paperwork
- Reallocation of resources after identification of efficiencies
- Improved ability to respond to public data requests

2. Determine scope of the project

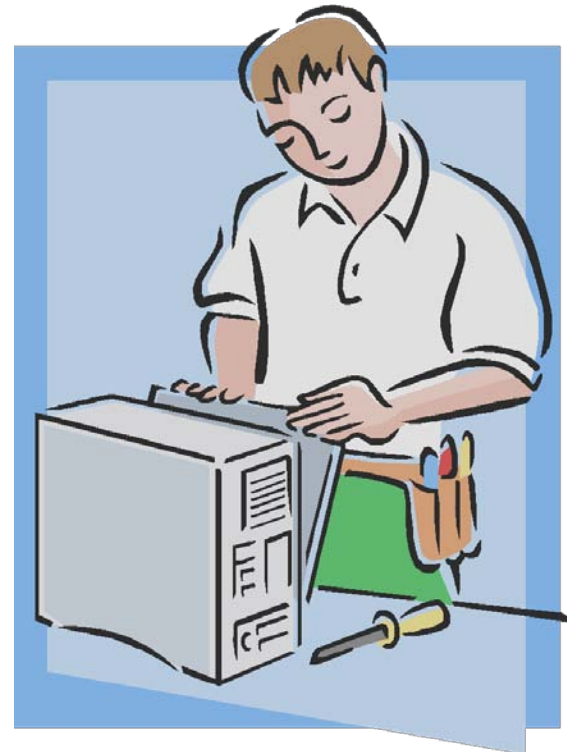
- Enterprise wide
- Organizational Unit
- Function

“Big Buckets”

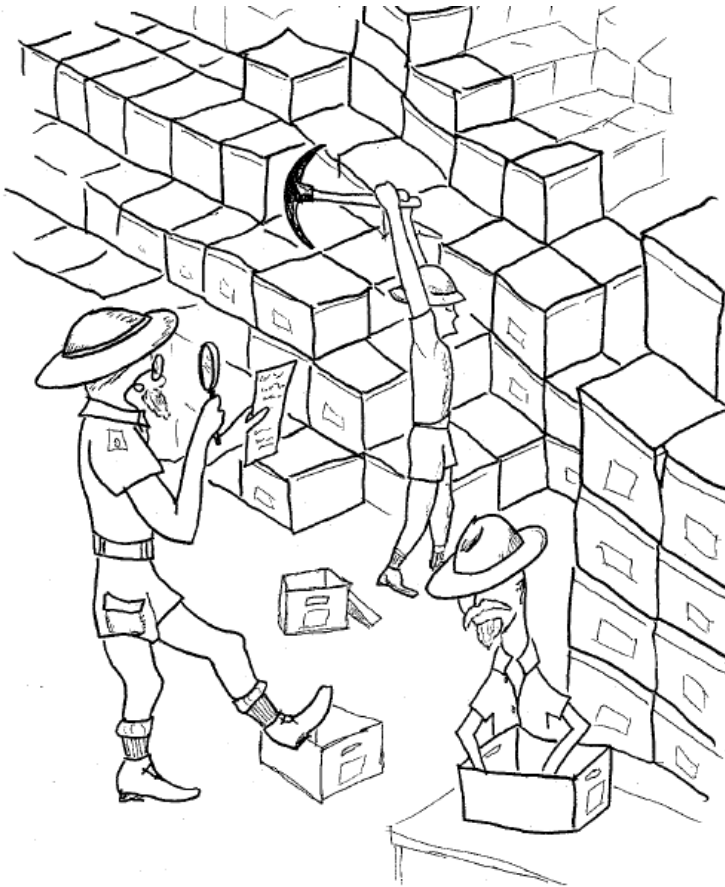


3. Determine inventory method

- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Survey
- ✓ Interview
- ✓ Hybrid



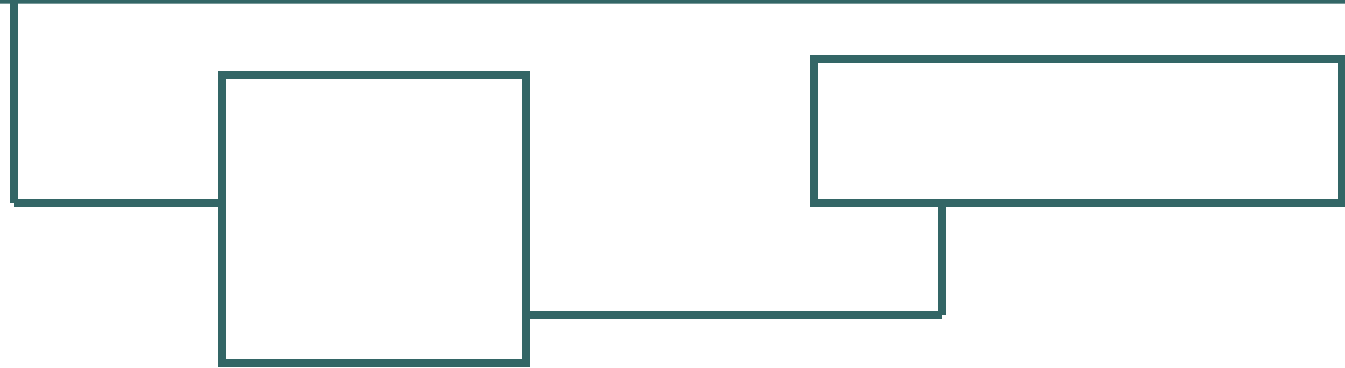
PHYSICAL RECORDS INVENTORY



- Most accurate
- Consistent results
- Training required
- Labor intensive
- “Hidden” records
- Business processes



“Data Mapping”
is a special kind of
records inventory used for
Electronically Stored Information.



INVENTORY BY SURVEY

- Quick
- Involves everyone
- Subjective
- Definition of “record” may not be the same for everybody



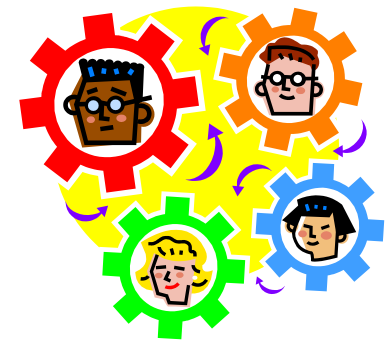
INVENTORY BY INTERVIEW



- Managers, supervisors and power users
- “Big picture” view
- Identifies records that have greatest effect on business decisions
- Could be biased

CUSTOMIZED OR "HYBRID" RECORDS INVENTORY

- Take a look
- Ask the boss what is important
- Send a survey to the employees to find out what they work with every day ...
- ... and how they relate to others in the workflow

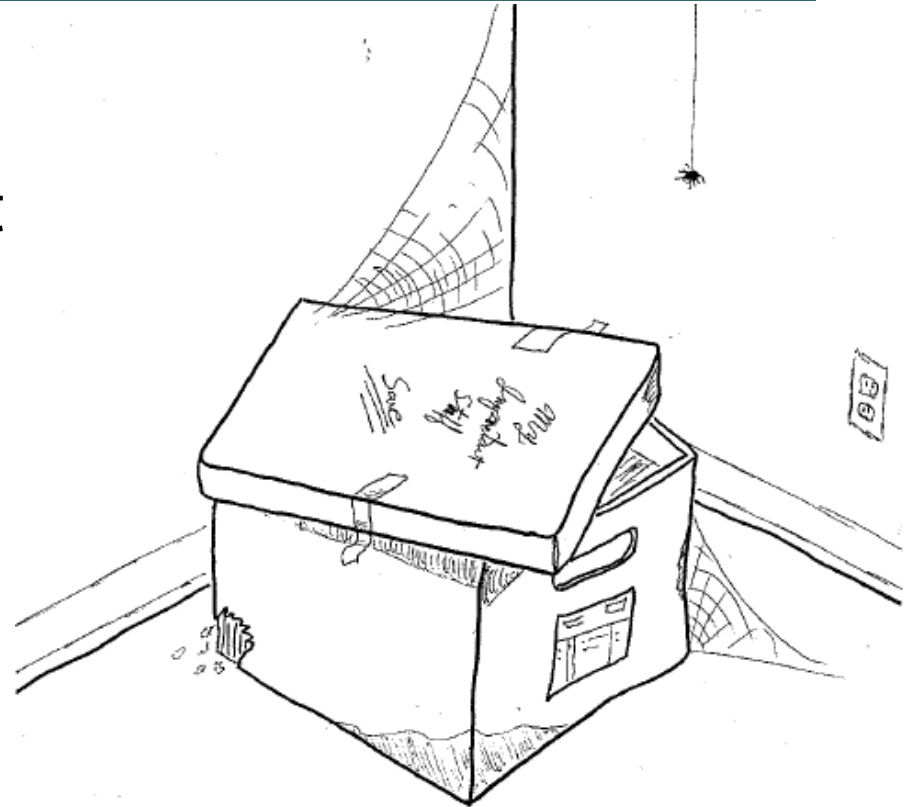


4. Train the inventory “crew”

- Definition of “record” in the entity
- Definition of “records series”
- General records retention schedules
- Retention for “administrative” records
- Final retention decisions are not made during the inventory

5. Do it

- Fair warning
 - Who is going to do it
 - When
 - Time commitment
- Do it quickly
- Feedback



6. Analyze Results

- Organize the results into logical groups
- Consolidate whenever possible
 - Similar retention period or requirements
 - Records with the same value
 - Same business process
- Separate public data from not public

Forms provide structure

- Minnesota Records Inventory
- Record Series/Data Set Description and Inventory
- Records Inventory (Identification and Risk Assessment of a Records Series/Data Set)
- “Roll Your Own”

“Roll Your Own”

- Who did the inventory?
- When?
- Who “owns” it?
- What is it called?
- Why is it collected?
- Where is it stored?
- How many are there?
- Any data elements that identify individuals?
- Who else can see it?
- Do any statutes or regulations specify retention requirements?
- Was is the priority for disaster recovery?

Summary

- The inventory is the only part of a records management program that could be considered a project.
- There are several ways to do it.
- There is more than one form that can be used to structure the inventory.
- The appraisal of the record's value can be done at the same time.

Contact

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