

Report to the Legislature

Paper Records Reduction

December 31, 2015



SOS

Office of the Secretary of State

Washington State Archives

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Executive Summary

- In response to the Supplemental Operating Budget (2014 ESSB 6002, Section 119), the Office of the Secretary of State convened a work group to:

“study methods for retaining records in electronic formats and for shorter periods of time, with the goal of reducing the volume of stored paper records by ten percent by the end of 2016, and an additional ten percent by the end of 2018.”

- This report updates the action taken on the six strategies below during calendar year 2015, updates the Records Center storage chart and the number of records stored in the Records Center by agency.
- Strategies adopted to achieve the goal of reducing the volume of stored paper records are:
 1. Increasing scrutiny of retention periods and archival designations;
 2. Aligning Records Center holdings to current records retention schedules;
 3. Increasing agency timeliness in authorizing destruction of records;
 4. More focus on coordinating reviews of retention schedules across government;
 5. Encouraging increased use of “Scan & Toss”; and
 6. Continuing work on Information Governance / Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Initiative.
- Action on the six (6) strategies has resulted in a reduced number of boxes stored in the Records Center for the first time. Additionally, the mandated 10% reduction by 12/2016 has been achieved one year early.

Introduction

During the 2014 legislative session, the Office of the Secretary of State requested funds to lease warehouse space to store paper archival and short-term records, while a longer-term solution continues to be investigated. Without these funds, the State Archives and the State Records Center would not have been able to accept any more records, immediately creating negative consequences for state agencies.

In the Supplemental Operating Budget (2014 ESSB 6002, Section 119), the Legislature funded the request for space, but found that the “volume of state records retained in paper format continues to grow, increasing the records storage costs for the state.” The Legislature directed that the Secretary of State “convene a work group to study methods for retaining records in electronic formats and for shorter periods of time, with the goal of reducing the volume of stored paper records by ten percent by the end of 2016, and an additional ten percent by the end of 2018.”

The Legislature further directed the Secretary of State to invite certain agencies to participate in the work group and to report to the appropriate legislative committees by December 31, 2014, and December 31, 2015.

Background

In addition to other responsibilities, the Office of the Secretary of State is responsible for archiving documents for the state executive, legislative and judicial branch agencies. The Office also assists those agencies in managing the life cycle of records, thereby helping to ensure the most efficient and cost effective use and storage of state records. Savings in

space and funds are achieved by the timely destruction of records according to retention schedules and by maintaining a central State Records Center that achieves significant cost savings for storing records no longer needed in immediate office space.

The State Archives is responsible for permanently storing the important long-term legal and historical records of state government. These records, which comprise about 1%-3% of all records created, go back to 1853 and include state laws, Supreme Court case files, legislative committee files, executive files from state agencies, and the files of legislators. The current State Archives building, built on the east capitol campus in 1963, has been full since 2005. For the last 10 years, while a longer-term storage solution has been sought, the Archives has had to store the State's important legal and historical records at the State Records Center in Tumwater, which lacks the necessary environmental conditions for the long-term preservation and storage of archival records.



The State Records Center in Tumwater, constructed in 1992 and expanded in 2003, is a major state government productivity and cost-savings initiative that is 15 times more cost effective at storing paper records than typical office or warehouse space. The Records Center uses low facility lease costs, economies of scale, barcode and storage technologies, and 40' high-bay shelving systems to keep its costs down. It is responsible for storing the other 97%-99% of state government records that are usually shredded within 6 years of creation (see Appendices 1 & 2). These include purchasing documents, leave requests, and other short-term legal, fiscal, or administrative records.

Due to the overflow of records from the Archives, the Records Center has not had available box storage since 2012 and has also been using additional inefficient temporary storage space.

Strategies for Reducing Stored Paper Records

The second part of the legislative directive was to keep records for "shorter periods of time, with the goal of reducing the volume of stored paper records by ten percent by the end of 2016, and an additional ten percent by the end of 2018." The Archives is interpreting this to mean a 10% - 20% reduction in the volume of paper that would have come into the State Records Center based upon the average growth between 2009 and 2013.

The Archives has adopted multiple strategies to reduce the volume of paper records being stored by building upon process improvements that we have made over the past few years. These strategies include:

1. Increasing Scrutiny of Retention Periods and Archival Designations

As part of the review processes of agency records retention schedules, the Archives and the State Records Committee have been asking for solid justifications for retention periods longer than 6 years. This scrutiny ensures that records are not being retained longer than necessary, and documents the justification for longer retention periods when required.

The Archives has also been re-evaluating records designated as "Archival" and increasing the appraisal process before records are transferred to the State Archives. This results in more timely destruction of those records that do not need to be retained in the archival collection.

2015 UPDATE: This past year 26 state agencies reviewed and updated their retention schedules to reflect current practice. These reviews included assessing each records series to ensure it was still applicable, the retention period was appropriate for agency fiscal, legal and administrative need, the series were properly described, and the archival designation is appropriate. This process has also drastically reduced the number of records series used by state agencies, making it much easier for agency employees to identify the information they need.

2. Aligning Records Center Holdings to Current Records Retention Schedules

Since 2012, the Archives has been facilitating major revisions and consolidations of agency records retention schedules. One of the most notable results in this process is the shortening of many retention schedules. The Archives has worked with agencies to ensure that the new retention periods get applied to the existing records stored in the Records Center. In the past, this has not always happened, resulting in older boxes of records left on the shelves until the old retention period expires.



2015 UPDATE: This past year the Archives compared our list of “discontinued” disposition authority numbers against the current holdings of the Records Center. Analysis showed that there are 17,515 boxes stored under old retention schedules that have been updated, usually with shorter retention periods. The Archives is in the process of notifying these agencies to have the records migrated to the new disposition number. This will result in less paper records stored in the Records Center.

3. Increasing Agency Timeliness in Authorizing Destruction of Records

Even when agency records are due for destruction, the records are not actually destroyed until the agency has authorized the destruction. When an agency delays signing off on the destruction, records are not being destroyed in a timely fashion. The Archives is working more proactively with agencies to ensure that destruction reports are authorized more quickly.

2015 UPDATE: An extra emphasis was placed by Archives staff on ensuring timely responses by agency Records Officers to destruct notices. In several instances agencies were over a year behind in approving notices and in one agency the lack of response required contact by agency management. This push resulted in thousands of boxes being destroyed. All agencies are now caught up to within 2-3 months on their destruct notices.

4. More Focus on Coordinating Reviews of Retention Schedules Across Government

Over the past three (3) years, the Archives has been working with state agencies to consolidate their numerous records retention schedules into single comprehensive documents. This has allowed the Archives to get a better overall picture of what records are created statewide.

For example, while the Department of Revenue’s schedule was being reviewed and preliminary work was beginning on the County Assessor’s schedule, it made sense to revise the retention schedule of the Board of Tax Appeals since there is considerable inter-connectedness between these agencies’ records.

2015 UPDATE: Consolidation and updating of the schedules continues to help the Archives ensure that government functions are documented.

5. Encouraging Increased Use of “Scan & Toss”

In 2011, the Archives greatly streamlined the process of granting permission to state and local agencies to destroy “Non-Archival” paper records than have been scanned/imaged. Instead of each agency having to individually apply to destroy records after scanning, a general permission to destroy was granted to all agencies, provided the records were scanned and the resulting images managed in accordance with the *Requirements for the Destruction of Non-Archival Paper Records after Imaging* (a.k.a. “Scan and Toss”).

While many agencies have made good use of this option, the Archives is working to further promote “Scan and Toss” through training sessions and agency consultations.

2015 UPDATE: Continued to promote “scan & toss” by presenting a number of webinars to assist agencies to better utilize this option for reducing paper records. A recording of the webinar is also available on the agency’s website.

6. Continuing Work on Information Governance / Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Initiative



The Information Governance/Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Initiative that the Office of the Chief Information Officer and Washington State Archives are currently leading (in conjunction with a number of state agencies) presents a real opportunity to make ECM and better management of unstructured data an affordable choice for state agencies.

The Information Governance/ECM initiative has been a multi-discipline approach to deliver both the principles and the technology tools to manage agencies’ information security, disclosure/access, retention and destruction in a coordinated and coherent way. This initiative includes creating master contracts for multiple ECM products which meet fundamental criteria, and allowing state and local governments to purchase the appropriate system for their needs. By taking a whole of government approach, Washington state agencies will be able to take advantage of enterprise-wide pricing to make these tools much more cost-effective.

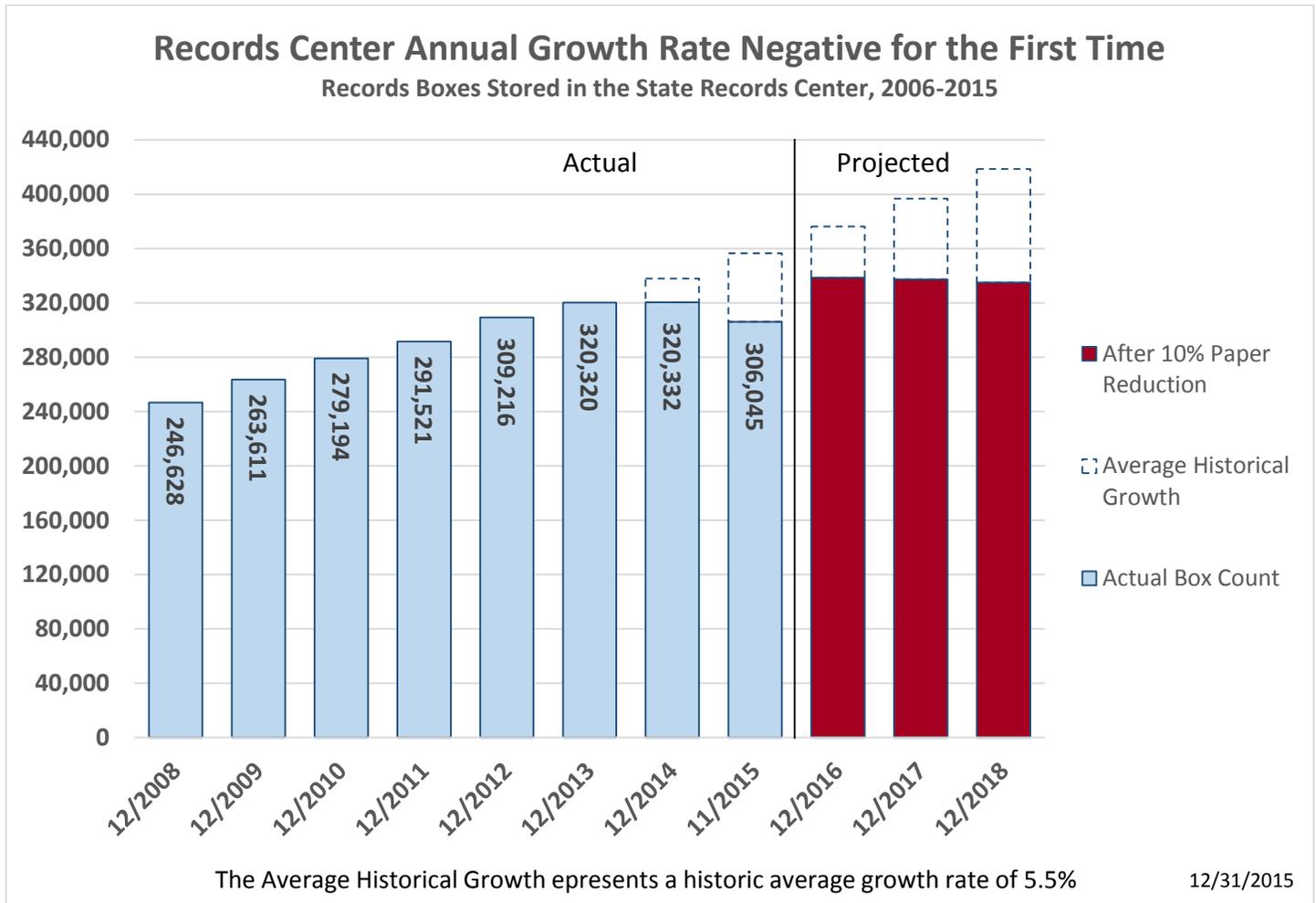
Having the right tools to manage electronic records will enable state agencies to continue to move away from paper-based processes and the need to store paper records.

2015 UPDATE: This year, the Department of Enterprise Services concluded an open competitive bidding process to select four (4) vendors to offer their ECM products to state agencies. The Archives conducted four (4) trainings throughout the State on how state and local agencies can get ready for Enterprise Content Management (ECM). Additionally, four (4) vendor fairs were held to demonstrate the products and give opportunities for agencies to talk with vendors.

Results

The use of these strategies to date has been encouraging. Here are examples of the progress:

In calendar year 2015, the State Records Center reduced the number of boxes in its holdings by over 14,000. This is in stark contrast to the consistent rise in records received by the Records Center in previous years:



Appendix 1 – Records Center Holdings Alphabetically by Agency (11/2015)

Agency Name	Boxes
Accountancy, State Board Of	42
Actuary, Office Of The State	25
Administrative Hearings, Office Of	85
Agriculture, Dept Of	962
Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Dept. of	120
Arts Commission	36
Attorney General, Office Of The	26,719
Auditor, Office Of The State	206
Beef Commission, Washington State	13
Blind, Dept Of Services For The	771
Clover Park Technical College (CPTC)	764
Code Reviser Statute Law Committee	570
Community & Technical Colleges, St. Brd	149
Conservation Commission	48
Consolidated Technology Services	259
Corrections, Dept Of	1,673
Court Of Appeals	8,000
Criminal Justice Training Commission	61
Dairy Products Commission	49
Department of Commerce	1,191
Early Learning, Department of	1,053
Eastern Washington University	1,385
Ecology, Dept Of	6,350
Employment Security Dept.	5,388
Enterprise Services, Dept Of	2,798
Environmental and land use Hearings office	371
Financial Institutions, Dept Of	5,582
Financial Management, Office Of	559
Fish & Wildlife, Dept Of	2,626
Gambling Commission, Wa State	717
Governor, Office Of The	95
Grays Harbor Community College	3
Health Care Authority, Washington State	3,251
Health, Dept Of	38,308
Higher Education Facilities Authority	10
Hispanic Affairs Commission	3
Horse Racing Commission	4
Housing Finance Commission, Washington	2,831
Human Rights Commission	201
Indian Affairs, Governor's Office Of	3
Industrial Insurance Appeals, Board Of	3,057

Agency	Boxes
Insurance Commissioner, Office Of The	1,644
Investment Board, State	685
Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee	105
Labor & Industries, Dept Of	18,733
Law Library, State	1
Licensing, Dept Of	5,337
Liquor Control Board	7,458
Lottery, Washington State	484
Military Department	903
Minority & Women's Business Enterpris	435
Natural Resources, Dept Of	5,140
Parks And Recreation Commission	1,770
Pollution Liability Insurance	129
Public Defence, Office Of	41
Public Disclosure Commission	186
Public Employment Relations Commissio	315
Public Instruction, Superintendent Of	3,687
Puget Sound Regional Archives	404
Recreation and Conservation Office	1,107
Retirement Systems, Dept Of	6,233
Revenue, Dept Of	535
School Directors Association	50
Secretary Of State, Office Of The	3,692
Senate, WA State	26
Shoreline Community College	288
Social And Health Services, Dept Of	67,947
South Puget Sound Community College	769
Southwest Regional Archives	2,682
State Patrol, Washington	11,826
Supreme Court	949
Tax Appeals, Board Of	336
Traffic Safety Commission	46
Transportation Commission	2
Transportation Improvement Board	58
Transportation, Dept Of	27,997
Treasurer, Office Of The State	683
Utilities And Transportation Commissi	3,502
Veterans Affairs, Dept Of	2,167
Volunteer Firefighters, Board Of	207
Washington State University	1
Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)	635
Workforce Trng & Educat Coordinat Bd	46

Appendix 2 - Records Center Holdings by Box Count (11/2015)

Agency	Boxes
Social And Health Services, Dept Of	67,947
Health, Dept Of	38,308
Transportation, Dept Of	27,997
Attorney General, Office Of The	26,719
Labor & Industries, Dept Of	18,733
State Patrol, Washington	11,826
Court Of Appeals	8,000
Liquor Control Board	7,458
Ecology, Dept Of	6,350
Retirement Systems, Dept Of	6,233
Financial Institutions, Dept Of	5,582
Employment Security Dept.	5,388
Licensing, Dept Of	5,337
Natural Resources, Dept Of	5,140
Secretary Of State, Office Of The	3,692
Public Instruction, Superintendent Of	3,687
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Fish & Wildlife, Dept Of	2,626
Veterans Affairs, Dept Of	2,167
Parks And Recreation Commission	1,770
Corrections, Dept Of	1,673
Insurance Commissioner, Office Of The	1,644
Eastern Washington University	1,385
Department of Commerce	1,191
Recreation and Conservation Office	1,107
Early Learning, Department of	1,053
Agriculture, Dept Of	962
Supreme Court	949
Military Department	903
Blind, Dept Of Services For The	771
South Puget Sound Community College	769
Clover Park Technical College (CPTC)	764
Gambling Commission, Wa State	717
Investment Board, State	685
Treasurer, Office Of The State	683
Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC)	635
Code Reviser Statute Law Committee	570

Agency	Boxes
Financial Management, Office Of	559
Revenue, Dept Of	535
Lottery, Washington State	484
Minority & Women's Business Enterpris	435
Puget Sound Regional Archives	404
Environmental and land use Hearings office	371
Tax Appeals, Board Of	336
Public Employment Relations Commissio	315
Shoreline Community College	288
Consolidated Technology Services	259
Volunteer Firefighters, Board Of	207
Auditor, Office Of The State	206
Human Rights Commission	201
Public Disclosure Commission	186
Community & Technical Colleges, St. Brd	149
Pollution Liability Insurance	129
Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Dept. of	120
Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee	105
Governor, Office Of The	95
Administrative Hearings, Office Of	85
Criminal Justice Training Commission	61
Transportation Improvement Board	58
School Directors Association	50
Dairy Products Commission	49
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Traffic Safety Commission	46
Workforce Trng & Educat Coordinat Bd	46
Accountancy, State Board Of	42
Public Defence, Office Of	41
Arts Commission	36
Senate, WA State	26
Actuary, Office Of The State	25
Beef Commission, Washington State	13
Higher Education Facilities Authority	10
Horse Racing Commission	4
Grays Harbor Community College	3
Hispanic Affairs Commission	3
Indian Affairs, Governor's Office Of	3
Transportation Commission	2
Law Library, State	1
Washington State University	1

Appendix 3 – Findings and Recommendations

FINDINGS

1. The State Records Center is about 15-times more cost-effective compared to storing agencies records in office buildings.
2. Statutes governing digital and electronic signatures and statutes requiring manual signatures are impediments to conducting more transactions online.
3. Imaging systems and born-digital electronic workflow systems require an upfront investment of staff time and money, and require periodic investments of both time and money into the future.
4. Even if imaging systems and enterprise content management systems cost more than using and storing paper records, there are good customer service and business reasons to replace paper-based systems with digital ones.
5. If there is a genuine question as to the authenticity of a duplicate copy, the federal and state Rules of Evidence provide: “To prove the content of a writing, recording, or photograph, the original writing, recording, or photograph is required ...”
6. Almost every state employee works with a PC or laptop, or both, generating a growing volume of electronic records that are more difficult to search and manage, increasing staff time searching for records and increasing the likelihood of not fully responding to public records requests.
7. The greater deployment of imaging systems, born-digital electronic workflow systems, and enterprise content management systems throughout state government will require culture changes and leadership and executive sponsorship.
8. Many state agencies with dispersed geographical locations often lack sufficient bandwidth to convert all paper transactions to digital.
9. The need to protect sensitive data often prevents the deployment of digital solutions to mobile devices such as cell phones, tablets and laptop, or sharing such data between remote locations across the Internet.
10. Cost is often an obstacle for state agencies to deploy an Enterprise Content Management System (ECM).
11. The current six-year retention period for many paper fiscal records is driven by the three year audit cycle and the need to retain paper contracts until the statute of limitations has passed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Imaging and Enterprise Content Management (ECM) systems should be standardized within state government so they can be deployed across multiple agencies of varying sizes.

2. Reducing the retention periods in the State Government General Records Retention Schedule would reduce the paper held by all state agencies.
3. Deploying Enterprise Content Management (ECM) systems throughout state government would reduce staff time spent searching for records, and would reduce the costs of litigation and fines resulting from the failure to meet public records requests in a complete and timely manner.
4. Archival appraisals and decisions should be made “up-front” when a record retention schedule is being developed avoiding future “appraisal required” and speeding up the shredding of records scheduled for destruction.
5. State agencies should have greater online access to data about their records being stored at the Records Center.
6. The definition and classification of official public records in RCW 40.14.010 should be updated and simplified.
7. To facilitate the imaging of paper records, implementation of content management systems across the enterprise, and have records be “born” digital, many state agencies will have to increase their bandwidth.
8. ECM systems and agency applications deployed over a Wide Area Network (WAN), or the use of mobile devices in field operations, will require technology to secure the hardware and all sensitive data stored on it.
9. State Government needs to continue vetting and procuring ECM systems that capitalize on economies of scale, including partnering with local government and other state governments to contract for cost-effective ECM solutions.
10. While it may not be practical to reduce the current six-year retention period for many paper fiscal records, state agencies should be encouraged to use “scan-and-toss” imaging technologies now permitted by OFM, the State Auditor and the State Archives.