KNOWLEDGE ENGINEERING

Transforming Information into Knowledge

Key Elements of an Effective Records Inventory

Knowledge Engineering (KE) provides comprehensive solutions to successfully leverage intellectual capital (IC) within an organization. KE incorporates enterprise content management technologies and transforms information into knowledge on demand, enabling effective decision-making and information sharing. Among other things, KE incorporates Records Management (RM) compliance requirements and best practices to manage IC. This document outlines the key elements of an effective records inventory.

What is a Record?

As defined by 44 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 3301, "records" include all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine-readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the United States Government under federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency.

What is a Records Inventory?

A records inventory is "a detailed listing of the volume, scope, and complexity of an organization's records."[1] It allows offices to assess their document holdings to determine the appropriate storage or destruction actions for their electronic and paper files. An inventory is a major component of an office's RM program.

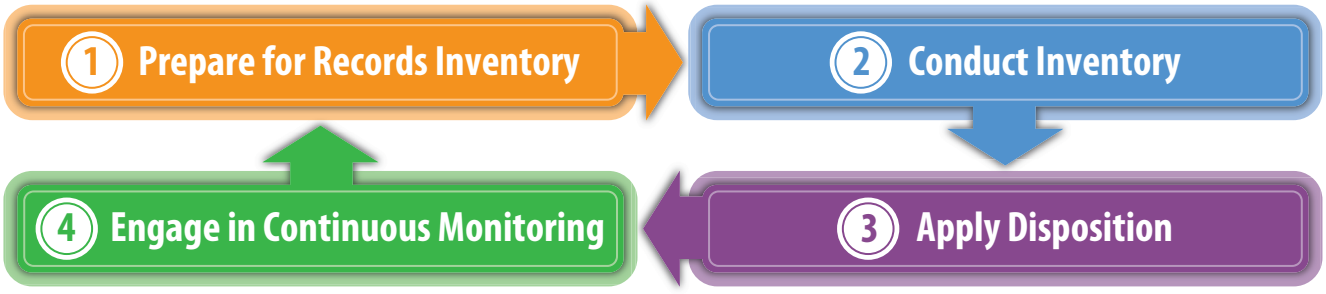
Why do a Records Inventory?

Conducting a records inventory benefits your organization in the following ways:

1. Ensures compliance with federal, Department of Defense (DoD), and Office of Secretary of Defense/Washington Headquarters Services (OSD/WHS) RM requirements
2. Avoids the unlawful or accidental removal, defacing, alteration, or destruction of official records
3. Ensures ability to respond to congressional, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and/or court order requests for records, as well as Inspector General audits
4. Ensures an organization's ability for timely and accurate information retrieval
5. Reduces inefficiencies and operational costs while increasing work productivity

How should a Records Inventory Be Conducted?

Conducting a records inventory is a critical step in establishing a compliant RM program. The key elements of an effective records inventory are identified below and described in more detail on page 2. Understanding these elements will help Records Managers establish inventories according to industry-accepted principles.



[1] *A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers*, Society of American Archivists: Chicago, 1992, p. 19. (http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/faqs/inventories.html)

KNOWLEDGE ENGINEERING

Transforming Information into Knowledge

The four key elements of a records inventory are outlined below. Additional resources are available on the Personnel and Readiness Information Management (P&R IM) website: **http://www.prim.osd.mil/cap/KE_policy.html?p=1.1.5.2**

1 Prepare for Records Inventory

Key Activities

A. Designate Project Manager (RM specialist recommended)
B. Establish project scope and mission
C. Develop project schedule
D. Establish effort champion
E. Conduct stakeholder briefing and/or communication(s)

2 Conduct Inventory

Key Activities

A. Determine inventory method
B. Develop internal tracking metrics/mechanism for office responses
C. Conduct inventory (paper and electronic) according to method chosen

3 Apply Disposition

Key Activities

A. Obtain inventory approval from leadership
B. Establish inventory maintenance plan
C. Compare inventory to records schedule
D. Apply approved disposition actions to scheduled files, organized with permanent or temporary, active or inactive, and record or non-record status
E. Develop plan to schedule any unscheduled records

4 Engage in Continuous Monitoring

Key Activities

A. Capture results
B. Analyze overall effort and results to create lessons learned and identify best practices for a compliant RM program
C. Communicate findings and recommendations to leadership and other stakeholders