



KNOWLEDGE ENGINEERING

Transforming Information into Knowledge

Knowledge Engineering (KE) provides comprehensive solutions to successfully leverage intellectual capital (IC) within an organization. It 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 benefits of an effective RM program.

What is RM?

Federal RM is the planning, controlling, directing, organizing, promoting, and managing activities involved in the records life cycle, which has three stages – creation, maintenance and use, and disposition. RM provides for the adequate and proper documentation of the policies and transactions of the Federal Government and effective and economical management of agency operations (44 U.S.C. 2901).

Who is Responsible for RM?

RM is a statutory requirement all Federal agencies must follow (44 U.S.C. Chapter 31). Each Federal agency is responsible for managing its records in compliance with legal requirements and regulations from both the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and General Services Administration (GSA). NARA is the Federal agency responsible for overseeing the adequacy of Federal records programs and the disposition of Federal records. GSA is responsible for economy and efficiency in RM throughout the Federal government. (<http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/faqs/general.html>).

All Federal employees, as well as government contractors, are responsible for managing their own documentary materials in an efficient and responsible manner. Every new document, including email, created or received by a Federal employee or government contractor has the potential to become a Federal record.

Why do we need RM?

RM enables a Federal agency to document its mission requirements and associated actions to successfully execute that mission, and ensures important information is available and accessible when needed for critical decision-making and daily operations.

During Personnel and Readiness Information Management's (P&R IM) 2011 records inventory, the KE team identified 85 standard-size archive boxes of program-related records. At approximately 3,000 documents per box, this amounts to 255,000 sheets of documents. At roughly 20 pounds per box, that amounts to 1,700 pounds. As the RM team inventoried the boxes, they were able to reduce the amount by 21 boxes.

This **25% decrease** amounted to an approximate reduction of 63,000 pages of documentation, or 420 pounds of disposable records. That's a lot of space!





KNOWLEDGE ENGINEERING

Transforming Information into Knowledge

The Benefits of Records Management (RM)

Aside from maintaining compliance with Federal regulations, a robust RM program provides many benefits to agencies that increase efficiency and improve overall business operations:

1 Manage Creation and Growth of Records

As the amount of paper and electronic data increases, implementing records life cycle management (LCM) processes (creation, maintenance and use, and disposition) will result in waste avoidance by reducing the amount of obsolete and inactive records, duplicate copies, and space (physical and electronic) required to store records unnecessarily.

2 Reduce Operating Costs

Keeping obsolete and inactive records requires storage space (physical and electronic), filing equipment, software systems, and manpower; all of which demand valuable financial and physical resources from the agency. A compliant RM program contributes to a more efficient use of limited resources. Those freed resources can be invested into programs, operations, or initiatives that directly impact the mission of the organization to support those who have served, are serving, or will serve in our nation's armed forces.

3 Improve Efficiency and Productivity

Time spent searching for information can be tedious, frustrating, and unproductive. Applying proper records LCM to recordkeeping systems (paper and electronic) helps improve effectiveness and efficiency of an organization's intellectual capital by getting the right information, to the right person(s) as fast as possible.

4 Reduce Liability

The United States' governance on the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and associated penalties for failure to adhere to those acts are for the protection of every U.S. Citizen. The maximum penalty for the unlawful destruction, damage,

and alteration of Federal records is a \$250,000 fine per occurrence, three years in prison, or both¹. Not complying with these regulations can result in fines, legal penalties, or other legal recourse. It is important for organizations to operate a good RM program to ensure compliance and minimize legal penalties and agency liabilities.

5 Increase Trust and Confidence in the Organization

Proper records LCM will instill a sense of confidence in the organization. Compliant RM fosters openness, transparency, and overall integrity, and protects the rights and interests of the agency, its employees, and its customers.

6 Preserve Organizational History

An organization's files contain unique insight into its operations, mission execution, and history of significant events, which become important resources for future decisions by leadership, historians, scholars, and authors seeking to capture and report on our nation's story for future generations.

7 Safeguard Vital Information and Continuity of Operations

Proper RM provides an organization with the ability to identify and protect its vital records. Proper RM allows for continuous operations following a disaster or catastrophic event and access from remote off-site locations.

8 Reflect Professional Environment

Proper RM can result in a clean, professional, and organized office area; one without clutter or the appearance of disorganization. An organized environment reflects positively on the perceptions of customers, senior leadership, and employees, contributing to an overall stronger and more professional corporate culture.

¹ 36 CFR 1230.12