

FOR THE RECORD

SEPTEMBER 2007

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NOW'S THE TIME: IT'S TIME FOR iSTART

Information Strategies: Taskforce on Archives, Records, & Technology (*iSTART*) welcomes you to our initial newsletter on records and information management.

We are a volunteer collaborative group drawn from three public agencies with broad, cross-governmental responsibilities for the management of records and information technologies.

iSTART provides a forum for identifying and addressing common concerns to offer consistent advice on records and information management, including electronic records.

The core membership is drawn from the State Archives, and the departments of Information and Innovation and Buildings and General Services.

Effectively managing records and information can be daunting. We all confront proliferating legal mandates, rapidly evolving technologies, and growing concerns over balancing access with privacy and security.

While there are hundreds of mandates and directives telling us *what* to do with our records and information, there has never been a source for consistent professional advice on *how* to do it. It is our goal to provide such assistance.

As a first step our respective offices have adopted a high level policy for managing records and information (see page 3 for details).

We will use this newsletter to keep you posted as new policies, procedures, and practices are adopted.

JOINT STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR iSTART

As officials with broad, cross-agency responsibilities for recordkeeping and technology we strongly support a collaborative approach for sharing our expertise and providing a unified framework for managing records and information.

iSTART is a unique and exciting alliance. The ultimate goal of this unprecedented collaboration is to provide effective assistance to agencies in meeting their recordkeeping needs and plans.

We therefore encourage your input in identifying needs and sharing your experiences in implementing comprehensive plans for managing your records.



Above: **Gerry Myers**, Commissioner, Buildings and General Services; **Deborah Markowitz**, Secretary of State; and **Tom Murray**, State Chief Information Officer.

VERMONT HIGHLIGHTS

June 29, 2007:

Attorney General Sorrell issued Social Security Number Protection Guidance.

Visit the Attorney General's website for more details:

www.atg.state.vt.us

DEBORAH MARKOWITZ, SECRETARY OF STATE

The Archives is the longest continuous function of the Office of the Secretary of State. In 1782 the General Assembly instructed the Secretary on what records to preserve and keep accessible.

Over the years that function has ebbed and flowed, from passive recipient of records to a fully developed archival management program with associated responsibilities for addressing public record questions.

My priorities for records are:

Transparency: Records and information management shall be used to make government deliberations and actions transparent to citizens and officials.

Trustworthy: Records, regardless of format or media, shall be authentic and reliable.

Accessible: Records and information shall be readily available to citizens and officials while protecting privacy and security exemptions as defined by law.

Those priorities can only be

achieved through the active collaboration of public agencies with broad responsibilities for managing records and information.

The goal of that collaboration is the integration of mandates, policies and best practices into all recordkeeping systems, whether paper or digital.

With such guidance government and citizens can fully benefit from the vast amounts of information generated or received by public agencies.

“...government and citizens can fully benefit from the vast amounts of information generated or received by public agencies.”

Deborah Markowitz

TOM MURRAY, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

The Department of Information & Innovation (DII) was created to establish a single department whose core competencies and business drivers are information technology.

Since the Department was created in July of 2003 in V.S.A. § 901, we have further defined our role to provide technological services to our customers, both in and out of State government.

A major component of our vision is for State agencies to

have the ability to seamlessly share information. To realize success in this area, our government and citizens will rely increasingly on our ability to deploy technology to enhance the production, acquisition, management, and distribution of information.

I strongly support iSTART as a reflection of the partnership required between business and technology experts to accomplish these goals.

We share the same goal - to ensure that our colleagues

and constituents get exactly the right information at exactly the right time. Please make an effort to engage in this initiative.

Our collaborated records management policy is only a start, and explicit, direct feedback from our customers will be invaluable as we enhance our abilities to capture, share and use our vast information resource.

“...our vision is for State agencies to have the ability to seamlessly share information.”

Tom Murray

GERRY MYERS, COMMISSIONER, BGS

It is the duty of all governmental agencies to protect the rights and interests of the people they serve. An active, compliant records management program is a critical tool to help us do so.

Vermont statutes have long required approved records management programs (3 V.S.A. §218) and BGS has maintained the Records Center, the Microfilm/Imaging program, and the Reference/

Research section to help State agencies comply.

The BGS Risk Management Division also has a strong interest in the proper management of State records. In litigation, the ability to find documents when they are needed is a critical element in defending the State; conversely, when records cannot be located the mere absence of documentation can result in a finding of liability even

when the State's actions were appropriate and responsible.

iSTART represents a formalization of our efforts to assist agencies with records management. The jointly-issued *Records Management Policy for All Public Agencies* is the first step in what promises to be long and fruitful collaboration.

“It is the duty of all governmental agencies to protect the rights and interests of the people they serve.”

Gerry Myers

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR ALL AGENCIES

The State Archives, Department of Information and Innovation, and Department of Buildings and General Services have adopted a joint policy on records management for all agencies. The policy can be found at: <http://vermont-archives.org/records/standards/>

The policy sets out, at a high level, the components necessary for a sound records management program.

iSTART will be developing procedures for addressing these components.

These policies and procedures support current mandates rather than create new ones.

We realize that few, if any agencies, currently meet all the components; instead the policy provides targets for creating a sound management program that meets the

criteria established in 3 V.S.A. §218.

iSTART is currently working on policies and procedures for file formats, e-communications, classification/metadata, and record scheduling.

Progress will be reported in future newsletters.



State Records Center in Middlesex, VT

Records management is the systematic control of records from the point of creation to final disposition.

UPCOMING PROJECT: FILE FORMAT GUIDELINES

File formats dictate how data within an electronic file are organized. Programs are then used to process, read and display the files.

Ensuring continuing access to electronic records until their retention requirements have been met is challenging. Thoughtful consideration of the issues surrounding file formats and possible reformatting or file conversion is

necessary.

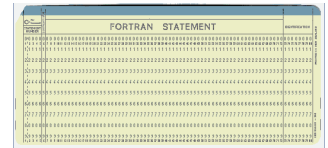
This month iSTART is researching file formats that are suitable for long-term access.

This project embraces not only records born digital, but also paper records that are converted to electronic media.

Many agencies are struggling with identifying suitable for-

mats for their scanned images. Therefore it is our goal to relieve some of these concerns and problems by identifying reasonable formats and developing guidelines to assist agencies.

Individuals interested in working on this project are encouraged to contact iSTART as soon as possible at iSTART@state.vt.us.



Fortran Punch Card

Punch cards were widely used by government agencies to store information. Today, finding machines to process and read the cards is difficult. Will files created with today's technologies be accessible in the future?

UPCOMING PROJECT: E-COMMUNICATION POLICY

Following the completion of guidelines for file formats iSTART will begin working on a new policy for electronic communications, such as e-mail messages. We expect this policy to be finalized and adopted by the end of year.

This policy will replace the existing State e-mail policy adopted by the Information

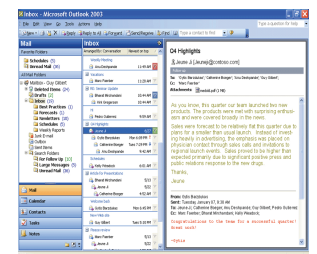
Resource Management Advisory Council (IRMAC) in August 1996.

Electronic communications are forms of recorded business communications that are subject to Vermont's public records laws.

The widespread use of electronic communications by

public employees requires a statewide policy on the management requirements.

Individuals wishing to assist with reviewing the draft and providing comments prior to adoption are encouraged to contact iSTART by e-mail at iSTART@state.vt.us.



Microsoft Outlook Screen

In December 2006, the electronic discovery amendments to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure went into effect. This change has prompted increased need for the management of electronic messages.



MEMBERS

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About iSTART

iSTART is a volunteer collaborative group drawn from three public agencies with broad, cross-government responsibilities for the management of records and information technologies.

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Department of Buildings & General Services

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**RIGHT INFORMATION. RIGHT PEOPLE.
RIGHT TIME. EVERY TIME.**

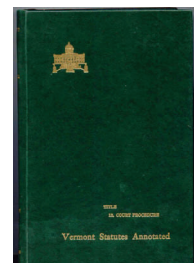
VERMONT'S RECORDKEEPING LAWS

General Statutes

- [1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320. Subchapter III: Access to public records](#)
- [3 V.S.A. § 117. Publication and preservation of state papers](#)
- [3 V.S.A. § 218. Agency/department records management program](#)
- [3 V.S.A. § 219. Records and file equipment](#)
- [3 V.S.A. § 2222. Powers and duties: budget and report \(Secretary of Administration\)](#)
- [22 V.S.A. §§ 451-457. Chapter 11: Public records](#)

Agency Specific Requirements

- [Right to Know Website and Database](http://vermont-archives.org/records/access) (vermont-archives.org/records/access)
- [Legal Requirements Website and Database](http://vermont-archives.org/records/laws) (vermont-archives.org/records/laws)



Vermont Statutes Annotated
are available online at
www.leg.state.vt.us