



Records and Information Management Update

Winter 2010-2011

VSARA is Using SharePoint for Managing Its Electronic Records

VSARA Records Analysts recently adopted the State’s Enterprise SharePoint System for sharing electronic records and information and managing workflow on our internal projects. While SharePoint is best known as a collaboration and information sharing tool, it can also be used to support records management activities. The ability to classify records for quicker search and retrieval and to manage the lifecycle of records and information (i.e. dispose of records when retention requirements have been met) are all features within SharePoint.

We are also piloting the use of SharePoint for accessioning electronic records into the Vermont State Archives. With SharePoint, archival electronic records can be uploaded by agency staff to our SharePoint site, tagged with appropriate recordkeeping metadata (creator, record type, date of the record, etc.), and transferred to our legal custody. Eventually, SharePoint could even be used to provide access to electronic archival records through the web.

If your office is currently using or is planning on adopting the State’s Enterprise SharePoint System, contact VSARA to learn more about using this tool to support your records management program. By using records management principles to develop document libraries and site structures and to tag records with recordkeeping metadata, SharePoint can become a very useful part of your office’s records management program. For more information about the State’s Enterprise SharePoint System, see:

http://dii.vermont.gov/DII_Divisions/Server/Sharepoint

A RIM New Year’s Resolution

January 10th is Clean Off Your Desk Day! Take advantage of this opportunity to kick off the new year right by cleaning up your desk and files. By referencing active retention schedules and disposition orders, you can weed out duplicate copies, outdated reference sources, and records that are past their scheduled disposition date. And don’t forget your computer’s desktop!



2011 Open House Dates

Open houses are held at the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration twice a month. At these events we provide informal, basic training in records management and using the State Records Center, as well as giving our users the opportunity to tour our facilities and meet staff here at VSARA. We encourage new records officers and liaisons, or anyone who has never been to VSARA, to attend! We tailor our open houses to meet the needs of attendees, so call or email today to schedule a visit!

Tuesday Morning Sessions

(9:30 - 11:00 am)

December 7

January 4

February 1

March 1

Thursday Afternoon Sessions

(1:30 - 3:00 pm)

December 23

January 27

February 24

March 24

Email us at

rim@sec.state.vt.us or call Rachel Muse at 828-2397 if you’d like to attend an open house.



A Record is a Record, No Matter the Format

In VSARA’s interactions with various agencies, departments, municipalities, and personnel, we sometimes get questions as to whether various electronic communications or electronic documents fall within the definition of “records” in the same manner as paper records.

The answer is a definite YES!

Vermont’s statutory definition of a record is very broad, and is entirely format-neutral: “public record” or “public document” means any written or recorded information, *regardless of physical form or characteristics*, which is produced or acquired in the course of public agency business.” 1 V.S.A. § 317(b).

As a result, electronic files and e-mails (whether with or without attachments) most definitely are “records” that must be managed in accordance with Vermont law. In the legal realm, electronic records have become known as “ESI” for Electronically Stored Information.

If the importance of managing records as records regardless of format needed any emphasis, in a recent ruling in the civil case of *Victor Stanley v. Creative Pipe, Inc.* a United States Federal Court Magistrate Judge issued an order sentencing a litigant to up to two years of jail time for civil contempt of court until he paid his opponents’ legal costs that resulted from the litigant’s deliberate destruction of electronic files and e-mails.

The outcome of jail time in *Victor Stanley* came in response to the deliberate destruction of electronic files known to be pertinent to the litigation. It represents a resounding ‘wake up call’ that should dispel any doubt as to the importance of managing electronic records with no less care than traditional paper records.

Vermont agencies and departments can and should utilize VSARA and DII as resources in developing and implementing comprehensive, format-neutral, records management programs. Questions regarding litigation and discovery should be directed to legal counsel and/or the Vermont Attorney General’s Office.

Public Records Information Available Online

Lately, we’ve been hearing a lot about public records laws in the news. The VSARA website provides a [Right to Know database](#) to help you navigate Vermont public records laws; it draws data from our record appraisal database, making connections between legal citations and agency records. The database is searchable by agency, exemption or keyword and is updated as laws are added or changed. You can find this database on our website at: <http://vermont-archives.org/records/access/database/index.htm>.

New Year, New Secretary or Commissioner?

If your agency secretary or department commissioner changes in 2011, please let us know. Your secretary or commissioner is your agency’s legal records custodian and the only one who can designate records officers and approve changes to your records management policies, records retention schedules or other RIM projects in your office. Contact Rachel Muse at rachel.muse@sec.state.vt.us or 828-2397 with any changes or questions about the disposition of an outgoing officer’s records.

RIM Fast Fact!

“Eighty-six percent of IT professionals are still reliant on paper records despite impending government mandates and other regulations requiring updates to electronically stored information.”

-Messaging Architects, Security and Compliance News

Questions or Comments? Email us at rim@sec.state.vt.us.

Vermont State Archives and Records Administration
1078 US RTE 2, Middlesex • Montpelier, VT 05633-7701
Tel: (802) 828-3700 • Fax: (802) 828-3710

<http://vermont-archives.org/>

Find the RIM Update online at:
<http://vermont-archives.org/publications/records/index.htm>