

Case Study:

Implementing Legally Defensible Policies and Procedures for Disposing of Paper Records After Scanning

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Is it possible to dispose of paper records after they have been scanned?

- Yes.
- Requires:
 - Policy
 - Process
 - Additional considerations



Disclaimer



Objectives

- Digitization Project Concerns – Why bother?
- Development of:
 - City Ordinance
 - Office of the City Clerk Procedure
 - Approval process for City department procedures
 - Noncompliance reporting
- Impact of digitization approval
- Lessons Learned
- Questions



City of Austin Reporting Structure

- **City Departments**

- Report to City Manager
- Department Records Administrators provide leadership for records management program in their departments
- Department Records Analysts execute records management program in their departments

- **Office of the City Clerk**

- Reports to City Council
- Corporate Records Analysts serve as consultants to all City departments
- City Clerk staff issue Annual Reports to Department Directors on the progress of their records management programs



Digitization Projects Overview



Common Traits of Digitization Projects

- Result from visible, perceived problems
- Time-sensitive
- Underfunded
- Understaffed
- Often misunderstood and poorly planned



Common Types of Digitization Projects

- Desk sweeps
- Clear out the cabinets
- Paperless directive



Risks Inherent to Digitization Projects

- Poor or no scope
- Low-priority, but high-impact
- Liability for long-term data



Goals of Developing Defensible Procedures

- Reduce risk
- Improve Department project planning
- Enhance the records
- Save taxpayer money



Developing Defensible Procedures



Ordinance Development



2014 Records Management Ordinance

- First major revision to Chapter 2-11 (Records Management) of the City Code in over a decade
- In development for ~2 years
- City Code Chapter 2-11 (Records Management) was entirely repealed and replaced via Ordinance No. 20141120-015 (effective 12/1/2014)
- Changes now codified and available in MuniCode:

https://www.municode.com/library/tx/austin/codes/code_of_ordinances



RIM Ordinance Updates

- Updates the scope of the Records Management Program to clarify that it **includes records in digital form** and that the creation, maintenance, preservation, and storage of digital records must comply with the records management program
- Requires the establishment of guidelines and standards for **converting records to a digital format**, and guidelines for the disposition of source records after conversion



RIM Ordinance Updates

- Department directors and officials must **consult with the Office of the City Clerk before implementing** an information technology system or service that creates, stores, manages, protects, preserves, destroys, or provides access to digital City records to ensure that the system or service is consistent with the Records Management Program



§ 2-11-1 - Definitions

[...]

(5) **DIGITAL**, when used in reference to a record, means the record is maintained in an electronic data format that requires an electronic device to create, store, access, retrieve, or read the record.

[...]

(9) **PHYSICAL**, when used in reference to a record, means that the record is maintained in a tangible form, such as paper, photographic film, analog tape, or a similar medium.



§ 2-11-3 - Records Management Officer

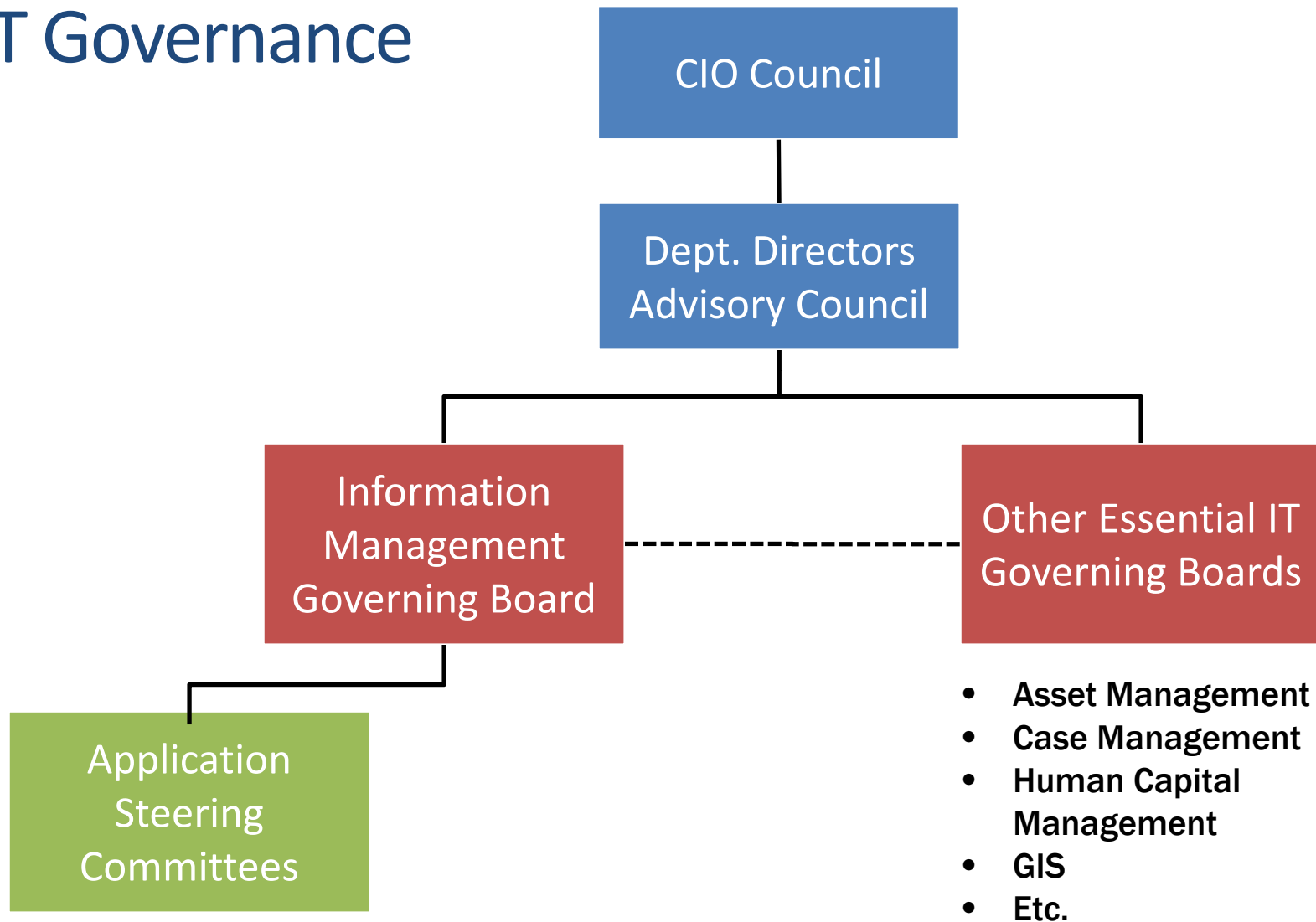
(A) The city clerk is the records management officer under Local Government Code, § 203.025 (Designation of Records Management Officer) for the City, and shall:

[---]

(3) serve on **each director-level technology governance or oversight committee** established by a City department;



IT Governance



§ 2-11-5 - Records Management Program

(B) The records management program must:

[...]

(5) **establish guidelines for City information technology systems and services** to ensure that the systems and services create, store, manage, protect, preserve, dispose of, and provide access to records in compliance with the records management program;

[...]

(11) establish guidelines and eligibility criteria for **transferring records to microfilm, or to an electronic or digital format**, including guidelines for the disposition of records that have been transferred;



§ 2-11-7 - Duties of Department Directors

(F) A department director [...] must consult the city clerk or the city records manager **before recommending or implementing a change to records management or information technology** that is reasonably likely to affect:

(1) compliance with the records management program; or

(2) the City's processes or capabilities relating to the creation, storage, retention, destruction, disposition, security, or accessibility of records.



§ 2-11-8 - Department Records Administrators

(A) Each department's records administrator shall:

[...]

(8) review each new information technology system or system enhancement to ensure that the new system or system enhancement addresses and complies with the records management program;



§ 2-11-11 - Destruction /Disposition of Records

[...]

(E) Before an official or employee may destroy the original or source document of a record that has been transferred to microfilm or to an electronic or digital format, **the employee or official must obtain written authorization from the city clerk.**



§ 2-11-13 - Management of Digital Records

(A) The creation, maintenance, preservation, and storage of a digital record, **including the conversion of a physical record to a digital record**, must comply with the records management program.

(B) **The city clerk shall review a department or inter-departmental plan to acquire or implement an information technology system** or service that creates, stores, manages, protects, preserves, destroys, or provides access to digital records. If the system or service is inconsistent with the records management program the city clerk shall report the inconsistency to the appropriate director and the city manager.



§ 2-11-15 - Ownership of City Records

(E) A record received or created by a City contractor in fulfillment of the contract, except a record specifically relating only to the contractor's internal administration, **is the property of the City.** The contractor may not dispose of or destroy a record that is City property, and shall:

- (1) maintain the record within compliance with this chapter; and
- (2) **deliver the record, in all requested formats and media, along with all finding aids and metadata, to the City at no cost:**
 - (a) when requested by a director or an authorized City employee; and
 - (b) when the contract is completed or terminated.



From Ordinance to Process

- Ordinance approval language:

(E) Before an official or employee may destroy the original or source document of a record that has been transferred to microfilm or to an electronic or digital format, the employee or official must obtain written authorization from the city clerk.



Developing a Defensible Process



Next step: Developing Defensible Procedures

- Total timeline: 18 months
- Goal: Approve conversion of official records from paper to digital format
- Components:
 - Approval Process for Departmental Projects
 - Standardizing Operating Procedure (SOP) Template to document conversion and disposition procedure
 - Approval Memo
 - Noncompliance Reporting if necessary
 - Recordkeeping System Functional Requirements



Developing an Approval Process

- Staff questions:
 - How do we authorize conversion?
 - What happens if the ordinance is ignored?
 - Are we (as consultants) approving disposition?
- Project Answers:
 - We issue a formal memo from the City Clerk.
 - We issue a noncompliance memo to Council.
 - No. We approve the conversion process.*

*This depends on your organization's structure.



Roles and Responsibilities

- OCC Records Analysts:
 - Review department projects
 - Enter information into a template
- Departments Records Analysts (and team):
 - Document their processes
 - Ensure their processes are defensible
 - Iterate until City Clerk issues approval memo
- City Clerk:
 - Issues approval authorization memo
 - Issues noncompliance memo



Stakeholder Benefits: Reduce Risk, Improve Process

- Departments receive SOP template
- Departments use a crosswalk document to complete SOP template
 - Corresponds to Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles
- OCC Consulting services include:
 - Project analysis
 - Workflow improvement
 - Procedure creation review & approval



SOP Template Sections

- Purpose
- Introduction
- Scope
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Procedure
- Disposition
- Forms/Templates
- Internal and External References
- Change History



Highlight: Scope

Transparency

An organization's business processes and activities, including its information governance program, shall be documented in an open and verifiable manner, and that documentation shall be available to all personnel and appropriate interested parties.

Departments must create policies and procedures to document records conversion projects. This ensures transparency for open records requests, litigation, audit, and additional reviews as applicable.

SOP Section 1

Before the records conversion project starts, work with the departmental Records Management Team.

Ask the following questions to improve departmental resource management:

- What is the goal of the scanning project?
- Is it a good use of resources to pursue the scanning project?
 - Consider a cost/benefit analysis.
 - What are the consequences if not proceeding with the project?
- Is there another way of achieving the goals of the project?



Procedure

- Preparing documents to be scanned
- Storage of paper documents & digital files
- Indexing and naming conventions
- Configuring and testing the scanner
- Scanning documents
- Image enhancements
- Quality Control
- Additional considerations



Example: Quality Control

- Q: Appropriate level of risk to consider?
- A: Depends on project
 - Consider longevity, risk, and access requirements
- *Resource*: Northwest Territories - Public Works and Services Guidelines for Scanning Projects
 - Identifies risk types and acceptable standards for error in large scanning projects



Template: Quality Control

5.10 Quality Control for scanned images

The amount of quality control that you perform on your records will vary, depending on the level of risk, the type of record, and the time dedicated to the project.

At a minimum: every 10th document (10%) must be reviewed to ensure the scanning quality is consistent and the images are usable.

For vital records, permanent records, legal documents, or high-risk records, **every** document must be reviewed.

Image files should also be checked to ensure that the scan team followed procedures listed in 5.8 regarding the content of an individual image file (individual pages, multi-page documents, or multiple documents per file).

Notify [person responsible] that the images have been reviewed.

Determine how you will notify scanners/indexers if a batch is rejected. How will you handle the rejected files (delete or correct digitally)? How will you control for duplicate files?



Crosswalk: Integrity (Quality Control)

Integrity

An information governance program shall be constructed so the information generated by or managed for the organization has a reasonable and suitable guarantee of authenticity and reliability.

SOP Sections 2, 5.10

Quality Control

- Available staff time and resources that must be allocated
- Quality controls in place to ensure accuracy of initial scanning
- Procedures to scan and index records/boxes
- Identify staff responsible for conducting quality control
- How quality control results are documented and reported
- Measures in place to ensure that all created records are uploaded into the system and content of the record is complete
- Acceptable levels of accuracy for both legibility and percentage of pages missing
- Frequency of image auditing.
 - Ex. Daily, weekly, or percentage.
- System controls to capture duplicate/missing files, if available



Wait - where are the digitized records stored?

- Problem: Records land on unsecured drives or external services for long-term storage
 - Increases risk of loss, obsolescence, and tampering
- Solution: Recordkeeping System Functional Requirements



Recordkeeping System Functional Requirements

- Correspond to Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles
- Provided at onset of scanning projects and native electronic projects

Recordkeeping systems must support the following functional requirements:

- **Preservation.** Recordkeeping systems must prevent the loss or unauthorized deletion of records before the expiration of their retention period as authorized by an approved records control schedule or with the written permission of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. *Texas Local Government Records Act §202.001(a).*
- **Integrity.** Recordkeeping systems must prevent the unauthorized alteration of records before the expiration of their retention period. A best practice is for systems to provide logs or audit trails that document edits and views of records. This is a requirement for records governed by HIPAA and depending on the type of record there may be additional integrity requirements.



Typical project results

- Stakeholder departments:
 - Focus on smarter scanning projects
 - Develop standardized procedures
 - Mitigate common risks to records and technical systems
- Records Management built into workflows
- Time, resources and money saved
- Historical documents moved to archives
- Records Management Team members develop technical and project management skills



Resources:

- TSLAC Webinars: Planning an Imaging Project Parts 1 & 2
- ANSI/ASQ Z1.4–2003 (R2013): Sampling Procedures and Tables for Inspection by Attributes
- Northwest Territories - Public Works and Services Guidelines for Scanning Projects (free)
- NARA - Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Archival Materials for Electronic Access: Creation of Production Master Files – Raster Images
- ALCTS - Minimum Digitization Capture Recommendations



Questions?



Thank you!

Contact us if you would a copy of any of the templates/documents we've discussed today

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