



# Revising Your RM Program: Moving Forward Using What You Have

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# Records Management at MSU

- Mandate from the Board of Trustees in 1969 to
  - Be the repository for University records
  - Approve destruction of all university records
- Program not overhauled since early 1990s
  - Many changes to MSU Business Practices
  - Adoption of EBS system for human resources and fiscal management
- Highly decentralized organization
  - Change is slow
  - “Recommended, but not required”

# Goals for the Program

- Strengthen the core RM operations
  - Improve intellectual control of records
  - Modernize RM processes to increase data accuracy
- Consider the needs of our users
  - Increase outreach with program users
  - Use technology to work within the environment
- Provide updated RM procedures
  - Ensure procedures are accurate and up to date
  - Have procedures in place to assist users with following appropriate policies

# Small Projects...Big Improvements

- Short term projects
  - Finite time period
  - Limited financial resources
- What could we do with what we had?
  - Build a RM staging area
  - Implement electronic retention schedule approvals
  - Create a process for documenting “in-office” records destruction

# #1: Build a RM Staging Area

- Records staged temporarily at secure storage facility
- Boxes shipped to off-site storage once every 6 weeks
- Log-in and transfer process required paper forms
  - No consistent wireless connection
  - Delayed data entry and multiple errors
- General confusion over the status of boxes at Storage
  - What has arrived? What has not arrived?
  - Time spent correcting data entry errors
- Poor intellectual control of RM inventory

# #1: Build a RM Staging Area

- Archives was already expanding due to space concerns
  - Incoming donations
- RM area included as part of ongoing expansion project
  - Unused office space
  - Includes space for RM staging and Archival staging
- Additional expenses included:
  - Pallets
  - Laptop
  - Movement of one employee to a new cubicle

4 pallets

Holds 120  
boxes

Completed  
March 2015



**New Records Management Staging Area**

# #1: Build a RM Staging Area

- Increased ability of archivists to review records boxes
  - Make decisions on value of materials before sending boxes off-site
- Use the off-site vendor's electronic data entry system
  - More accurate data entry
- Faster pickup
  - Multiple times a month
- Increased intellectual control and strengthened the core RM program



# #2: Implementing Electronic Retention Schedule Approvals

- Retention schedules approved using paper process
  - Send schedules to General Counsel, Office of Record, and Archives for signature
  - Messy system with lots of confusion
- In 2013, MSU began using Versatile Retention to manage retention schedules
- Schedules were drafted and stored in VR, but not approved in system
  - Software was not used to full capability

# #2: Implementing Electronic Retention Schedule Approvals

- Archives worked in concert with MSU IT to get Versatile Retention fully functional
  - Software tested
  - Patches installed
  - Software add-on purchased
- Electronic retention schedule approvals went live September 2015
  - Approvals completed via email and secure login
  - Using technology fully



# #2: Implementing Electronic Retention Schedule Approvals

- Easier for university departments to approve retention schedules
  - Multiple departments may review at once
  - Faster approvals
- More accurate change tracking
  - See what changes were made when by who
- Increases intellectual control and works within user environment

# #3: Creation of In-Office Records Destruction Form

- University Archivist is responsible for signing off on all University records destruction
  - Board of Trustees mandate
- Not an enforced policy
  - Records transferred to Archives documented
  - Not all offices transfer records to Archives
- No consistent procedure in place for documenting “in-office” records destruction
  - Handled haphazardly upon request

# #3: Creation of In-Office Records Destruction Form

- Form created in April 2015
- Simple, easy-to-use process
- One page form requires:
  - Records series
  - Date Range
  - Volume/Extent
  - Signature of Office Representative
  - Signature of Archivist

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**In-Office/Unit/Department Destruction of University Records**

In accordance with previously established guidelines and records retention schedules, inactive records with no permanent value to the university will be destroyed. The following records are ready for in-office/unit destruction in the unit/office listed below. These records will be destroyed in office and will not be transferred to University Archives for storage. Please sign the form below and send to University Archives for approval. University Archives approval is required before proceeding with destruction. Retain a signed copy of this form for your records.

**Primary Contact:**  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

University Office/Unit/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Record Series/Type	Date Range (Years)	Volume (c.f./MB)	Destruction Method (Shred/Recycle/Wipe)

By signing this form, the following MSU personnel state that the records listed also were approved for destruction in the above named office and that, to the best knowledge of the signer(s), there is no litigation, audit, or other legal proceeding pending that would require destruction of the records to be postponed.

**Approval of Unit/Office Representative:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name/Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Approval of University Archives:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name/Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

University Archives and Historical Collections  
Phone: 517-353-2330 Fax: 517-353-9319 Email: archives@msu.edu

# #3: Creation of In-Office Records Destruction Form

- Form introduced in RM training sessions, website, and via consultations
  - Most employees have found process easy-to-use
  - Over 130 cubic feet of records documented in less than one year
- Documented process for “in-office” records destruction
- Helps demonstrate that offices are following university best practices

# Lessons Learned

- Understand your current resources
  - Don't be afraid to ask “stupid” questions
  - Can you collaborate with others?
- Don't try to reinvent the wheel
  - Use other institutions as resources
- Consider your organizational culture
  - Change your process rather than culture
  - Go out and find your users
- Start with some “low hanging fruit”
  - Leverage easy wins into additional support





Thanks For Attending!

Questions?

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# *ArchivesFest*

**Session Evaluation Form Available @**

***bit.ly/MAC16-Session-Eval-Form***

**or**

**complete paper copy  
and turn in at back of room**

Clockwise from upper left: Festival goes dance at Summerfest, 1984, Milwaukee Public Library Historic Photos; PrideFest Milwaukee parade heads to Veterans Memorial Park, 1995, Archives Dept., University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Libraries; Papa Lou leads woodwind band at Festa Italiana, 1983, Milwaukee Public Library Historic Photos; & Indian Summer Festival at Henry Maier Festival Park, late 1980s (?) Archives Dept., University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Libraries