



Centralize and get control of your information assets.



Contrary to common belief that equipment and supplies are the greatest cost in information management, a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor revealed that 67 percent of records and information management costs are related to labor. These costs can be directly related to mismanaged information. For example, the retrieval cost of a misplaced record is 10 times the cost of an accurately filed one, not to mention the expense of a lost or destroyed record. Organizations that are most effectively managing their information assets are incorporating

systematic filing methods that include consolidating and centralizing files.

In a decentralized system, files are typically located throughout several areas of a facility. They are often in top-tab filing cabinets, which are cumbersome to work with and do not accommodate a systematic filing system, such as color coding or other alpha or numeric indexing.

Another downside to this approach is the cost of inefficient filing methods, including wasted space, excess capital expenditures for storage equipment, and the most significant – lost revenue associated with increased labor costs.

In a centralized filing system, records are stored in one location. While central file areas can be further from the workspace, they tend to take the guesswork out of file retrieval. They also reduce space utilization, capital expenditures and labor costs in addition to providing increased productivity, security, and accountability.

Centralized filing systems also provide greater flexibility in space design, eliminate duplicate records and can easily assimilate new records management technologies.

Some detailed benefits associated with central filing are:

Reduced space costs.

By moving filing out of workstation to a centralized filing location, companies can reduce an average workstation of 250 square feet by almost ten percent - the space occupied by two lateral file cabinets - and thereby reduce space allocation costs significantly.

Additionally, central filing allows companies to maximize office space by utilizing space efficient and cost-effective storage systems. For example, high-density mobile storage systems utilize 50% less space than occupied by traditional alternatives - but this approach is only possible with central filing.

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Reduces labor costs and increases records management productivity.

Central filing eliminates messy, haphazard record management, encourages file organization and locates everything in one place. Employees know where to go to find critical information regardless of where or by whom the documents were originated. Time spent searching for files in multiple areas is often diminished, allowing workers to be more productive and focus on the core business aspects of their jobs. The end result is that companies can be more effective and competitive.

Improves record privacy and security.

Files are safe and secure when located centrally, typically under the watchful eye of a records manager or administrative person. Filing policies, procedures and schedules safeguard information assets by ensuring privacy and security – a growing concern among records managers within all industries. Central filing also allows organizations to further protect their documents by locating them in locked vaults or fire-safe rooms.

Provides tracking and accountability.

Embracing a central filing approach allows the implementation of today's technology tools such as barcode tracking and document management systems. Utilizing record management technology products will help reduce the cost of doing business by eliminating lost or misplaced files, reduce retrieval times and even provide accountability for each and every document. Tracking and document management systems, which can also allow for the implementation of imaging and electronic document storage, can also improve workflow efficiency, manage retention schedules and improve business processes.

Allows greater flexibility in space design.

By removing much of the storage equipment from the office setting and relocating it in a central storage area, facility design can be dealt with in a more flexible approach. It also results in better space utilization by downsizing work stations and allows the workspace to be reconfigured more spontaneously in response to business demands.



Eliminates duplicate records.

Due to the increasing amount of team-based work within organizations, the move toward team filing is increasing. A central filing system allows organizations to eliminate the duplication of records by storing team-based master files in a central area.

Easily assimilates new records management technologies.

Because centralized filing brings all records together in a single location, organizations can easily assemble files in a logical fashion and then assimilate new records management practices and technologies, including retention scheduling, destruction policies, alpha-numeric indexing systems, color coding, file-tracking systems, and more.

A decentralized filing environment, where records are dispersed throughout the organization, makes it merely impossible to categorize files or incorporate a sequential system.

How you gather, store and retrieve data and materials impacts every aspect of your organization. By centralizing your organization's files you will realize the tremendous benefits we have outlined above and can be rest assured that you have complete control of your organization's information assets. ●

SYSTEC Solutions: Centralizing file areas

Converting multiple file locations into one centralized file area is a significant task, especially in cases involving large volumes of records. Your organization's records are vital assets and our experienced professionals will handle them with the utmost care, providing accurate and efficient services throughout the entire consolidation process.

Record Moves. Whether it's moving hundreds of records or thousands, SYSTEC's professionals will coordinate and handle the physical movement of your records. We'll help you to maintain your productivity by professionally handling your file relocations including mapping record locations; sequencing and labeling each series; shrink-wrapping files, unloading, transporting and reloading shelves; and conducting a final inventory - all the while auditing the process to ensure an accurate transfer.

Interfiling. Moving and consolidating volumes of files from multiple areas into one location can be a daunting task. Our team will accurately review each file to determine whether it should be consolidated with another file or kept separate. Handling the entire interfiling process quickly and efficiently, we'll free your staff's time to continue regular business operations.

Filing Systems. SYSTEC partners can provide complete solutions that will keep your files organized and accessible, while eliminating misfiles, speeding retrievals and making optimal use of space. We will carefully analyze your filing needs through an organizational assessment and determine the most appropriate solution. Whether it is changing from drawer-based to shelf-based filing, alpha to terminal digit or introducing barcoding, our team of professionals will conduct your entire conversion project onsite or offsite. File by file, we will sort and organize your files, transfer documents into new files, if necessary, apply new sequential labels, and then load them on shelving in an organized fashion. In addition, we can supply you with everything from file folders and labels to highly sophisticated tracking and labeling systems, making SYSTEC the one-stop source for all of your filing needs.

Storage Solutions. The success of centralizing files often depends on the successful procurement of space-efficient storage solutions. SYSTEC recognizes that your requirements are unique, and our experts will tailor storage solutions to fit your individual needs. We offer a variety of storage products, including cabinets, static shelving, compact shelving, rotary systems and vertical carousels.

For more information on how SYSTEC can help you better manage your information assets, contact us at 1-877-7SYSTEC or e-mail us at info@sys-tecgroup.com.

Paper records aren't going away anytime soon!

The movement to a "paperless office" by the new millennium was a prediction many prognosticators made back in the 1980's. While it may have been assumed that the advancement of technology would drive a decline in the amount of paper records, it has in fact greatly contributed to the increase. Current estimates show that the average office employee consumes a little over 1.5 lbs of paper each day!

While we may be printing a smaller percentage of documents, the advancement of technology allows us to produce more documents at a faster rate, resulting in an overall increase in the volume of records being generated. Consider the number of times you hit the print button during the course of a business day. We print e-mails, pdf's, information found on the Internet and other documents sent to us electronically. More often than not, those documents end up in an existing or new file folder.

Legal reasons can also be cited for the increase in paper records. Fallout from the highly publicized corporate accounting scandals has many corporations re-examining their records management. In

addition, government regulations such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 may also play a role in this increase. The Act created a five member board to register, regulate, and inspect the public accounting industry, including records retention requirements for audit papers.

In addition, many people are still uncomfortable with the reliability of technology and therefore continue to create paper records to compensate. While technology has brought us document imaging, some managers question the legality of imaged documents and continue to use paper. Records identified as vital or important to the continuity of an organization continue to be printed and retained. Binding documents such as contracts and agreements, are also kept in a hard-copy format.

Regardless of how much an organization embraces technology, paper records aren't going away anytime soon. Paper-based documents are still a key aspect of today's business environment and organizations can be successful in managing them by employing effective and efficient processes. ●



One way to decide whether or not to keep a record is by deciding how important, or vital, it really is.

What is a record?

Webster's defines a record as "anything written down and preserved." What comes to mind might be documents such as letters, memos, reports, forms, and permits, but in the twenty-first century, a communication does not have to be handwritten to be considered a record. In fact, the definition of a record can now be expanded to include electronic, audio, and even visual communications. Among the newer types of records are items such as e-mail, instant messaging (IM), messaging pagers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), digital voice mail messages, and computer tapes or disks. Of course, more conventional items such as spreadsheets, maps, photographs, and microfilm, as well as

the items previously named, also meet the definition of a record.

Since a record can be described in so many ways, how does one know what to keep? That question is not easily answered and is specific for each individual business. One way to decide whether

or not to keep a record is by deciding how important, or vital, it really is. A record becomes "vital" when it is needed in order for the organization to go about its daily tasks, to protect its legal and financial interests, or to aid in the recovery should an emergency or natural disaster come about. Keep in mind that although a message written electronically may seem merely conversational, that does not mean it is fleeting. In fact, an e-mail, even with a one-word reply, can constitute a vital record.

Which type of record - electronic communications, printed documentation, or both - should be kept and why? One way to decide is by examining the form the record originated in. For example, a letter that is received by regular mail can be photocopied, if necessary, and stored on paper. A record that was originally created or received digitally usually remains best preserved in paper as well as in the electronic state because its content contains metadata (data such as title, author, reviewers, edits, and storage locations), which is often forfeited or altered when it is put in paper-only form.

While businesses cannot keep every record forever, perhaps keeping in mind what defines a record, what makes it worth keeping and how long it is needed will make the process of determining more manageable. ●



SYSTEC™
systems ♦ technology

385 Williamstowne
Suite 4B
Delafield, WI 53018
1-877-7SYSTEC

www.systecgroup.com
info@systecgroup.com

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