



PART 3

Records Management Principles and Practices

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Before we can travel on a journey, we need to know where we are going, and how to get there. We do not necessarily need to know how to draw a map ourselves, but we need to have a map available, and we need to know how to read it. If we are driving ourselves, we do not need to know how our vehicle works, but we do need to know how to drive it.

The records management journey is similar. If our organization is going to reach the desired destination of effective records care, everyone involved with making and keeping records needs to know what records and evidence are, why it is important to manage them well, and how each person can support the goal of managing records to support effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and transparency.

This overview offers a brief outline of central records management principles and practices. It is the records management equivalent of a driver's manual: it offers some "rules of the road" for records management. This overview will not teach you records or archives theories any more than a driver's manual explains how a combustion engine is designed. The goal is to introduce some basic records management concepts and outline some of the central practices of effective records management. The primary goal is to provide useful context to help you understand the importance of the milestones and destinations in **Part 4**: the records management assessment tool.

Therefore, the topics covered in this overview relate closely to the destinations in the *Roadmap*: What is a record, and what is records management? Why is records management important, especially in a digital age? What is the purpose of records management? What are the core actions in effective records management? What is "good" records management?

WHAT IS A RECORD?

A record is a source of documentary evidence. It is a piece of proof.

Just as we rely on maps to tell us where we are now and where we might go, we rely on records to tell us what our organizations have done or decided. We use records and other sources of evidence to execute current actions, confirm past actions, and plan future actions.

If we did not have access to records and other sources of evidence, we would not have any proof of our plans, actions, or decisions. Organizations, especially those with public-sector responsibilities, need documentary proof. Personal assumptions or vague recollections do not allow organizations to work effectively and efficiently, and they do not ensure organizations are accountable or transparent.

Before we explain the importance of those principles – effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and transparency – we need to define evidence and records.

Evidence is data, records, or other forms of recorded information deemed to be an objective representation of actions, transactions, decisions, opinions, or ideas, and so can serve as a source of authentic proof.

A **record** is information that has been captured on some fixed medium, which was created and kept, to support a government, organization, or individual to perform activities, remember events or information, and provide proof of decisions or actions.

Evidence serves as proof – in judicial proceedings, in business planning, or in any other situations where it is important to establish or confirm facts. Evidence can take the form of a written record – a letter, an email, a report – or evidence can be found as elements in a database – names, addresses, payments, and so on. A record is a form of evidence, but it is not the only form of evidence.

Records and evidence are also assets. They help an organization complete its daily operations, confirm decisions, or uphold legal obligations or rights. If records and evidence are going to be useful assets, they must be protected so that they remain authentic and reliable sources of proof.

INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE ARE DIFFERENT

Not every piece of data or information is an authentic source of proof.

The path from data to evidence is illustrated below.

Data, from the Latin datum or “thing given,” is an element of raw content: a letter, a symbol, a number. The number “11-01-2020” is a data element.

The number 11-01-2020, the data element, becomes **information** when it is contextualized – when we realize that 11-01-2020 represents a day, month, and year.

The information becomes **evidence** when we can confirm that it serves as authentic proof. When we see 11-01-2020 clearly written on the signature page of a contract, we can prove the contract was signed on January 11, 2020.

To determine if a piece of data or information is evidence, we need to ask this question: Can we confirm that the information is authentic and reliable proof?

Imagine your organization signs a contract with a supplier on January 11, 2020. The names, signatures, and date provide **evidence** that you and your supplier have agreed to the terms of the contract.

You need to keep a copy of the contract, and so does the supplier. You both may need to refer to the contract periodically to confirm the terms and conditions. You may be asked to revise the contract later, which means you will need your original as a source of information and evidence. Someday, perhaps, the contract will become part of your organization’s archives – a resource for historians and the public to understand how your government carried out its business at some time in the past.

Data, information, and evidence are not the same. This *Roadmap* focuses on issues associated with managing records and other sources of documentary evidence. Data management and information management are separate areas of expertise: important, but different from records management.

THE FORM OF RECORDS

Records can come in any form.

Not all records come in a “traditional” form: physical pieces of paper, bound reports, a black and white photograph, or a hand-drawn map. Videocassettes, reel-to-reel tape recordings, and films can also be records – we refer to these types of evidence as analog or multi-media records. Records might also be in

electronic form: computer files, data tapes, digital photographs, and so on. Data in databases can provide proof, and so can email messages, social media posts, text messages, and Instagram photographs. The challenge with managing records, especially in the 21st century, is distinguishing between valuable evidence and obsolete records or non-evidential data or information.

Many other forms of evidence exist around the world, that do not fall easily into the definition of physical paper, analog or multi-media, or electronic. Oral traditions, stone carvings, woven beads, and carved wood can all be defined as evidence, depending on why they were created and the kind of information they hold.

Whatever the form, a piece of evidence can hold information that might be needed as proof. That piece of proof needs to be protected. Our focus in this *Roadmap* is primarily on physical, analog, and electronic records, which are the common forms of record and evidence produced in organizations today. But the principles we outline in this tool also apply to the management of any other type of documentary evidence.

If something is intended to provide proof, it should be protected so it remains authentic and reliable.

WHAT IS RECORDS MANAGEMENT?

Records management ensures records and evidence remain authentic, safe, and usable.

Records management is the process of ensuring that the evidence created, collected, and used by an organization is created, managed, stored, and used in such a way that it remains authentic, safe, and usable, now and in the future.

Records management allows organizations to

- establish **strategies, policies, and procedures** for making and keeping records
- allocate **resources** to manage records effectively
- ensure records are **accurate** and **reliable** regardless of form or medium
- **create** and **manage** records consistently
- distinguish between **valuable** and **obsolete** records and evidence
- **store** records safely and **dispose** of records appropriately.

Citizens and the public have a right to see evidence of an organization's actions or decisions, especially if those actions or decisions affect someone's life and welfare. To meet this responsibility, organizations must ensure their records are authentic and accessible for as long as needed, which may be forever.

Records management helps organizations achieve their public responsibility by helping them manage the way they create, use, and keep records and evidence.

WHY IS RECORDS MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Records management helps an organization be efficient, effective, accountable, and transparent.

Organizations that develop and maintain a sound and well-planned records management program are **efficient** – they work at peak performance; they are **effective** – they accomplish tasks successfully; they are **accountable** – they are able to justify their actions or decisions; and they are **transparent** – they operate in an atmosphere of openness and inclusiveness.

Let us look again at the imaginary contract between your organization and a supplier, signed on January 11, 2020. Records management helps you create, store, and retrieve that record effectively by helping you decide the following:

- naming conventions: how do you find the electronic copy of the contract if you name it “document” or “agreement” or “supplier contract”?
- metadata standards: how do you know if 11-01-2020 refers to DAY-MONTH-YEAR or MONTH-DAY-YEAR? How can you find a record if the date is not clear?
- retention periods: how long do you need to keep the contract? What are the different legal or administrative reasons for keeping it?
- storage: where is the contract kept – in a filing cabinet or computer? In which folder or drive?
- disposal: should you keep the contract permanently, or can it be destroyed when it is obsolete?

It is not difficult to make these decisions and manage records effectively. But the decisions need to be consistent, based on organizational needs, not individual preferences.

But what happens when these decisions are not made? When everyone in the organization manages records their own way? One officer may keep all her records in the same computer folder and never deletes anything. Another may choose to destroy everything when he no longer needs to refer to them.

Officials rarely *choose* to mismanage records. But without guidance, staff members are left to make their own decisions. Some will make effective decisions; others will not. The result is confusion and a loss of accountability and efficiency.

RECORDS ARE ASSETS

Records and evidence are essential to an organization’s operations.

Finances, employees, buildings, and equipment are all important resources for any organization. So are records and evidence. To ensure these resources are managed as assets, not liabilities, organizations establish structures and processes, rather than let officials act independently.

- To manage finances, organizations pay invoices on time and document and track expenditures consistently.
- To manage staff, organizations follow clear hiring processes and regularly evaluate staff performance.

- To manage buildings, organizations ensure they are well built in the first place and then maintain them, so they remain safe and strong.
- To manage equipment, organizations purchase the best items they can afford, maintain them in good working order, and replace them when they become obsolete.

Organizations need to execute similar actions to manage records. Establishing and maintaining a formal records management program ensures that records are treated as assets – which they are!

THE BENEFITS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records management improves public accountability, enhances organizational efficiency, increases public access and transparency, and supports effective work practices.

When an organization follows an effective and efficient records management program, it can

- locate an original signed agreement right away by filing it logically
- resume negotiations with a client easily by accessing a complete set of records
- send final annual reports to shareholders quickly by removing obsolete copies right away
- protect a citizen’s personal information by storing sensitive records safely
- reduce storage costs by destroying obsolete records consistently
- remember past actions and decisions, allowing the organization to work more effectively.

Without records management, organizations are vulnerable. We read news stories every day about data hacks, lost files, mismanaged government information, and breaches of personal privacy. Many of these stories highlight weaknesses in the management of an organization’s records.

The costs of poor records management are high. Resources are poorly used, staff cannot perform effectively, and the organization’s reputation is at risk. It does not have to be that way. We hope this *Roadmap* will help your organization reduce your level of risk and improve your daily operations.

IS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY THE SOLUTION?

Technology is not a solution; it is a reality.

Computerization can save money, time, and space – if organizations use them effectively. Staff can use technology to work remotely, but only if electronic records are easy to access. Officials can access critical evidence online, but only if important records can be found easily. Organizations can share information with the public quickly, but only if personal or sensitive records are adequately protected. To ensure information technologies improve daily business *and* protect evidence, organizations need to adopt systematic processes for managing the records and evidence created using those technologies.

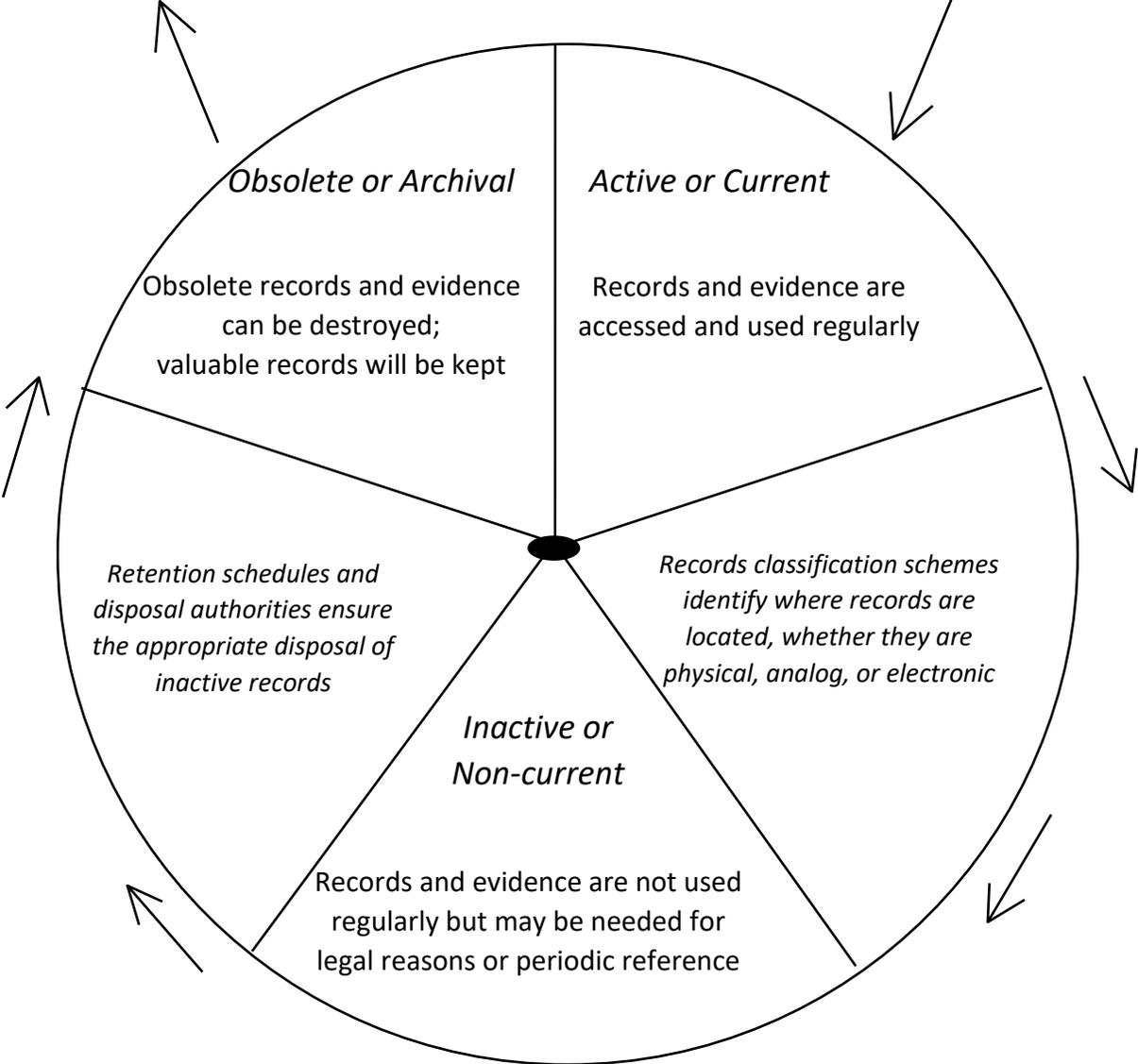
WHAT IS THE RECORDS LIFE CYCLE?

Records need to be managed as a continuum of care across their life cycle.

The life cycle of records is illustrated below.

Records are destroyed or might be transferred to a separate archival agency, leaving the custody and care of the organization.

Records and evidence are created or collected, coming into the custody and care of the organization.



The Records Life Cycle

Organizations protect records and evidence by adopting a strategic approach to their care. A **continuum of care** is a consistent, policy-driven approach to the management of records. Decisions are planned, not ad hoc; resources are sufficient; and all officials are committed to the same goal: the management of records from beginning to end.

The records **life cycle** represents that “beginning” and “end.” By adopting a life cycle approach, organizations apply effective processes from the moment actions are taken or decisions made, through to the creation, use, and storage of records and evidence, to their ultimate disposition as obsolete records or as archives.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT?

Records management supports the goals of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and transparency.

To manage records as a continuum of care across the life cycle, organizations establish processes designed to achieve various goals. In this *Roadmap*, we have defined those goals as seven different but related destinations, as follows:

Goal/Destination 1: recognizing the value of managing records effectively

Goal/Destination 2: managing the records management program strategically

Goal/Destination 3: committing sufficient resources to support records management

Goal/Destination 4: recognizing the link between records and information technology

Goal/Destination 5: managing records effectively and accountably

Goal/Destination 6: providing appropriate access to records

Goal/Destination 7: storing records appropriately and disposing of them regularly.

This *Roadmap* is designed to help your organization reach those goals/destinations by outlining specific milestones to achieve for each destination. The milestones are outcomes – successful results of the work your organization carries out to improve its records management capacity.

As we mentioned in the introduction, the *Roadmap* focuses on *outcomes*, not *outputs*. If the goal (the destination) is managing records effectively and accountably, then a key objective (milestone) would be to identify and organize records. The two outcomes for that milestone would be (1) that records are identified and (2) that records are organized. The outputs might be a records inventory – which identifies records and achieves the first outcome – and a classification scheme – which helps organize records and achieves the second outcome.

The rest of this overview explains those destinations and milestones, to outline the core goals and objectives of an effective and sustainable records management program.

DESTINATION 1: RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF MANAGING RECORDS EFFECTIVELY

Records management is valued by the organization.

We cannot go on a journey if we cannot find the road. But we will not even want to go on the journey if we do not know what welcome views await us at the end. Similarly, we cannot build a path to sustainable records management if we do not understand how our organization will benefit.

Destination 1, Milestone 1 is raising awareness of the value of records management.

If an organization just places all old records in a storage locker instead of managing them effectively, it cannot retrieve legal agreements when they are needed. It cannot ensure staff pensions are paid because human resources files are inaccessible. It cannot prove it owns a building or piece of land because it cannot find certificates and title records. Change happens when organizations realize the benefits of managing their evidence better. Change begins when awareness is raised.

Destination 1, Milestone 2 is obtaining senior management support.

Public officials want to do their jobs well, and they want to manage the documentary evidence of their work so they can access it easily again later. But if their efforts are not supported by senior management, they will not be given the time and resources they need to work effectively. Awareness needs to be matched with firm and sustained support from those in decision-making positions.

Destination 1, Milestone 3 is linking records management with legal, regulatory, and policy requirements.

Laws and regulations ensure that organizations remain accountable to the public. Financial management laws ensure departments do not overspend scarce resources. Military regulations ensure officials do not abuse their power. Procurement policies reduce the risk of corruption or fraud. Records help ensure those laws, regulations, and policies are followed. Records provide evidence of compliance – or non-compliance – with formal requirements, ensuring those in power can be held to account.

Destination 1, Milestone 4 is working with allied agencies.

Publicly accountable organizations need to respect personal privacy and protect public safety. Managing records well supports access and privacy. Organizations are more effective when they work closely with allied agencies responsible for administering access, privacy, and security services, rather than make independent decisions that may contradict laws or regulations. Organizations also benefit by establishing close working relationships with national or state archival institutions or other agencies responsible for preserving and making available records and evidence. Some organizational records have long-term value; protecting them for the future benefits the organization and society.

DESTINATION 2: MANAGING THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM STRATEGICALLY

Records management is strategic.

A driver cannot tune the car's engine once but never check the oil again. Regular maintenance is essential. Similarly, an organization cannot impose a few records management processes now and not maintain them. Strategic management supports a policy-based approach to records management. Establishing a strategic plan, developing policies and procedures, training and supporting staff, and monitoring and auditing operations help organizations succeed with records management.

Destination 2, Milestone 1 is developing a strategic plan.

An organization plans a new building strategically to ensure that architectural drawings, engineering plans, budgets, and time frames all work together. An organization should also build a records management program by starting with a well-researched strategic plan. An effective, accountable, and transparent records management program begins with a formal strategic plan.

Destination 2, Milestone 2 is following records management policies and procedures.

Organizations benefit from developing formal records management policies and procedures based on best-practice standards. Policies and procedures are like a highway code. They help staff manage records and evidence consistently, so the sources of proof remain authentic and reliable.

Destination 2, Milestone 3 is confirming records management responsibilities for all staff.

Staff need time, resources, and recognition to perform their records management duties. Defining staff responsibilities helps achieve consistency. If everyone is given formal records management duties (and trained adequately, as discussed in **Destination 5**), records operations improve significantly.

Destination 2, Milestone 4 is monitoring and auditing records management operations.

Monitoring and auditing help an organization assess its success with records management. Monitoring – an internal activity – assesses the organization's compliance with legal or regulatory requirements and how well the organization is performing records management tasks. Auditing – an external activity – looks identifies strengths and weaknesses that need to be addressed and changes that need to be made to improve operations. Both monitoring and auditing help an organization reach its full potential.

DESTINATION 3: COMMITTING SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO SUPPORT RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records management operations are adequately resourced.

A train cannot run if there are no train tracks and no source of fuel. A records management program will not “run” if is not supplied with adequate resources: finances, infrastructure, equipment, technology, and people. Organizations need to plan, obtain, and allocate the resources needed to ensure records can be created and protected appropriately.

Destination 3, Milestone 1 is committing adequate financial resources.

Records management programs need to be adequately and sustainably resourced. Funds are needed for staff, buildings and storage areas, equipment and technology, and overhead costs such as light and heat

and water. Providing adequate financial resources allows the organization to complete records management operations successfully and demonstrates a commitment to records management.

Destination 3, Milestone 2 is securing appropriate physical infrastructures, equipment, and technology.

Paper/analog records need to be stored safely in file cabinets or storage rooms. Electronic records need to be kept in secure computer drives, with regular backups and up-to-date security controls. Planning and obtaining adequate physical infrastructures, equipment, and technology allows the organization to ensure all records are managed effectively, no matter their form.

Destination 3, Milestone 3 is employing qualified professionals.

Everyone in the organization needs to support records management. But ideally, one individual – or one team of individuals – will oversee the program. Records management professionals bring expertise, training, and knowledge to the job, just as architects and engineers support building works, and doctors and nurses provide expert medical care. Of course, other officials have an important role to play in records management, caring for their own records and evidence under guidance from experts.

DESTINATION 4: RECOGNIZING THE LINK BETWEEN RECORDS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Records and information technologies are linked strategically.

Most people in a city may ride bicycles to work, but the city may be planning to install a light railway to improve travel for people in remote districts. Both forms of transportation are legitimate. Ensuring that both forms work together means planning growth strategically. Similarly, a records management program may consist of “traditional” physical, analog, and multi-media records, but if the organization wants to rely more heavily on electronic information technologies, it needs to plan that transition effectively. That work starts by recognizing the close link between records and information technology.

Destination 4, Milestone 1 is managing records effectively regardless of form or medium.

Records management professionals argue that “a record is a record is a record.” From a policy perspective, form or medium does not matter. What matters is that the evidence is protected so it can serve as a source of proof. The challenge is to establish strategies and practices that ensure the evidence is protected, whatever its form. By managing records appropriately regardless of form, an organization succeeds with its records management goals and makes a smooth transition to an electronic workplace.

Destination 4, Milestone 2 is selecting information technologies strategically.

Making the transition to an electronic work environment means selecting information technologies strategically. Most computers, smartphones, personal digital assistants, cloud computing systems, or other tools and devices are used to create, manage, and access records and evidence. These tools need to be managed strategically so that the evidence they hold remains safe and accessible.

Destination 4, Milestone 3 is collaborating with information technology providers.

Close collaboration with information technology providers – such as officials in the organization who manage computers or third-party suppliers of technology – helps ensure records and evidence remain authentic, reliable sources of proof. No single person can address the records management implications of new technologies by themselves. Working as a team, and collaborating with specialists when needed, helps organizations plan strategically.

DESTINATION 5: MANAGING RECORDS EFFECTIVELY AND ACCOUNTABLY

Records are managed consistently and strategically.

Imagine if every person in the city were given a car, but no one knew how to drive a car, and there were no rules about which side of the road to drive on? Chaos would ensue. A records management program will not work if those involved are not given the tools they need to do their work. Important guidance includes duty to document requirements, inventories, classification schemes, metadata structures, and formal identification of record-keeping responsibilities. Once this guidance is in place, the organization should provide sustained staff support, including formal training and informal but consistent help.

Destination 5, Milestone 1 is making records when needed.

Duty to document requirements, usually bound in formal legislation, define records that *must* be created. For example, an organization may comply with duty to document requirements by declaring that it will *always* produce minutes of annual meetings, document financial expenditures, or record changes in land ownership. Duty to document policies emphasize not just record *keeping* but record *making*. They help agencies remain accountable, efficient, effective, and transparent. A record that exists is a record that can be used.

Destination 5, Milestone 2 is identifying and organizing records.

Creating and capturing/filing records should be done consistently and appropriately. Records inventories and classification schemes identify all existing records in the organization and then group them into categories. For example, annual meeting minutes would be grouped separately from finance committee minutes; human resource policy statements would be separate from monthly staff newsletters, and so on. When records are identified and classified, staff can manage them much more effectively.

Destination 5, Milestone 3 is describing consistently.

Capturing metadata – descriptive information such as names, titles, dates, and so on – allows records to be identified clearly. Metadata conveys descriptive information consistently, confirming, for instance, that 11-01-2020 means January 11, 2020, not November 1, 2020. Metadata can also be added to a record to indicate if it is an official version or reference copy. Capturing metadata and descriptive information about records supports preservation and access.

Destination 5, Milestone 4 is assigning responsibility for records.

Staff also work more effectively if they know their responsibilities for managing records. Is their office the Office of Primary Responsibility for a function, which means they will be in control of the records of that function? Who is the Official Record Holder – the person in the office responsible for managing the files of a project or initiative? Defining responsibilities allows staff to determine if the records in their hands must be kept or can be destroyed, keeping records systems clear of unwanted duplicates.

Destination 5, Milestone 5 is supporting staff to manage records and evidence.

Just telling staff what they should do will not help them succeed. No one understands records management – or any other office practice – without training, guidance, and support. Formal training sessions, staff orientations, and day-to-day support help staff carry out their duties effectively.

DESTINATION 6: PROVIDING APPROPRIATE ACCESS TO RECORDS

Records are accessible whenever possible, while privacy and security are protected.

We love to journey along an open road, free of obstacles. But inevitably, some roads are closed – only temporarily, we hope. Some records are closed too. Organizations demonstrate their commitment to openness by adopting a proactive approach to access, releasing as many records as possible to the public by default, rather than waiting to be asked for records. But some restrictions are necessary. Access to records containing personal or secret information may need to be restricted.

Destination 6, Milestone 1 is proactively releasing records to the public.

Forward-thinking organizations proactively release records or information to the public whenever they can. The concept of proactive disclosure is the philosophy that organizations will produce records *before* being asked. Of course, privacy and security must always be respected, which means proactive disclosure policies must be linked with access and privacy requirements.

Destination 6, Milestone 2 is protecting private and personal information.

Broad access to records and evidence is a cornerstone of accountable and transparent public service. But personal and private information must also be protected. An organization may need to keep medical records about staff or clients, for instance, which means it must protect that evidence from inadvertent disclosure. Establishing privacy controls helps protect personal information.

Destination 6, Milestone 3 is protecting sensitive or secret information.

Protecting sensitive or secret information, such as military records, government negotiations, or trade agreements, protects the organization and the people whose interests are at stake. A government may need to protect records identifying the location of defense systems, to prevent potentially hostile forces from gaining access. Establishing security controls helps protect sensitive and secret information.

DESTINATION 7: STORING RECORDS APPROPRIATELY AND DISPOSING OF THEM REGULARLY

Records are stored appropriately and disposed of regularly.

Very few vehicles keep working forever. But the better we care for our vehicles, the longer they will last. A records management program involves storing records appropriately so that the organization can access and use evidence when needed. Protecting records also means planning for emergencies. How will the organization access the records it needs to help staff resume work after an earthquake or flood? But not all records should be kept forever; some can be destroyed when at the end of their life cycle. Other records have enduring value and will be kept for ongoing use: a decade or century from now.

Destination 7, Milestone 1 is storing records and evidence appropriately.

From the moment records are created to the end of their life cycle, they need to be protected, so they remain safe and accessible. The life cycle of a draft report may only be a few months. The life cycle of a legal agreement may be decades. The life cycle of property records may be forever. Records need to be stored appropriately for as long as needed, no matter their form. A record is a record is a record.

Destination 7, Milestone 2 is planning for emergencies.

An emergency plan helps an organization prepare for, reduce the impact of, and recover from an emergency. An emergency plan identifies vital records, ensures originals or copies of key records are easily accessible, and confirms the processes to follow to protect records and evidence in an emergency. Without an effective emergency plan, an organization is vulnerable to disaster.

Destination 7, Milestone 3 is retaining and disposing of records and evidence appropriately.

Once records come to the end of their useful “active” life, some will still be retained for legal, policy, administrative, or archival reasons. Contracts for office supplies may become obsolete once the supplies have been delivered, but property records may be permanently valuable. Establishing retention schedules and disposal authorities formalizes the process of managing records through their life cycle.

Destination 7, Milestone 4 is destroying records and evidence securely.

If records are no longer needed, they must be destroyed. An organization places itself at risk by not managing destroying obsolete evidence, particularly records containing personal or sensitive information, appropriately. Destruction must be secure, complete, and irreversible.

Destination 7, Milestone 5 is preserving and making available records and evidence with archival value.

Some records should be kept permanently. They provide evidence of significant actions or decisions or insights into past events. Archives support accountability and transparency, illuminate history, and foster individual and shared memories. Organizations should preserve archives themselves or transfer them to the care of an archival institution, so the evidence is safely stored and publicly available.

WHAT IS “GOOD” RECORDS MANAGEMENT?

By following the destinations and milestones outlined in this *Roadmap*, your organization will achieve the goal of “good” records management: effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and transparency.

- An **effective** records management program is based on consistent, policy-driven records care.
- An **efficient** records management program makes good use of money, time, space, and staff.
- An **accountable** records management program guarantees that evidence is authentic, reliable, and usable, to help uphold responsibilities and protect rights.
- A **transparent** records management program allows the organization to operate openly and keeps the public informed about the organization’s actions, transactions, and decisions.

A good records management program: recognizes the **value** of records and records management; manages records **strategically**; provides sufficient **resources** for records management; recognizes the **link** between records and technology; **manages** records effectively and accountably; provides appropriate **access** to records; and **stores** records appropriately and **disposes** of them regularly.

How does your organization develop a good records management program? This *Roadmap* is designed to help you get there. Let’s get started on your journey!

