

Modernizing with electronic records management in mind

Electronic records management has proved key to business continuity during the pandemic.



“An agency’s most important asset [is] its information and content,” said Scott Swidersky, President of Quality Associates, Inc., and Vice President of Enterprise Content Management at Konica Minolta Business Solutions.

Unfortunately, these are often found in the basement of a building: volumes of paper with perhaps some history of microfilm or microfiche transition.

“Analog records were not intended to be digitized. Nobody managing these records in the past had said, ‘there’s an [order] that’s going to come, so we need to manage all of this content as if we’re going to digitize it someday,’” he said in reference to the 2019 Transition to Electronic Records directive from

the Office of Management and Budget and the National Archives and Records Administration.

Digitization is more than putting paper and other media through a scanner, and it has been a major undertaking for agencies to determine the best process for effective, efficient and accurate conversion of records. QAI provides

enterprise-scale content and document management solutions to federal and other customers, and is part of Konica Minolta.

“A lot of agencies are reaching out to us, wanting to know what everybody else is doing,” he said. Agencies vary in size, resource pools, and mission – and where they in digital transformation. “Everybody is doing something a little

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— SCOTT SWIDERSKY, VICE PRESIDENT OF ENTERPRISE CONTENT MANAGEMENT, KONICA MINOLTA BUSINESS SOLUTIONS U.S.A., AND PRESIDENT, QUALITY ASSOCIATES, INC.

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bit different, he said, “we’re seeing a lot of variation.”

Swidersky described the two building blocks of success in these endeavors: expert knowledge and the overall plan. “The goal is to have a well-oiled machine that operates efficiently and effectively every single day without risk to cost, productivity, and security,” he said.

“This is not just a technology play,” he said; digital conversion requires IT teams, developers and process engineers, records managers and operators working to digitize materials on a day to day basis, and security, the people responsible for facilities and maintenance, and even trainers for scaling staff.

The other building block is to have a plan that addresses all of the right components, such as fixed and ongoing costs, staffing, the role of cognitive technology, selection process for hardware and software, IT infrastructure, reporting, security, and transportation and storage.

The best approach starts with stakeholders engagement, Swidersky

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advised. “Developing stakeholder endorsement has been extremely valuable,” he said, adding that strategic committee formation has been a useful tool to move things forward. “These are not the kind of projects you want to get involved in without having a very clear understanding. Everybody has to know their role,” he said.

“One of the biggest challenges to finding the best approach for an agency is that the level of effort required to prepare documents is often underestimated. For example, thinking that all materials can be

digitized adequately on the same type of equipment,” Swidersky said.

To identify the correct conversion package – down to scanner type – it is important to first understand the requirements, he said, pointing to NARA rules for what agencies can submit, and Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative standards. QAI offers solutions that are FADGI 3-star compliant and meet NARA standards.

With the volume of information coming in and the complexities of privacy and security, organizations need to know how and when to deploy AI and robotic processing automation.

Emerging technologies are changing the understanding of capture from something done as an afterthought and with an archive focus to something that must be done as soon as information enters the organization, he said.

“Intelligent capture is the key to maximizing value. ... The desired result is not just static scanned images, but documents that are easily findable and process-ready for digital government.”



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