



Electronic Records Management Systems (ERMS)

An electronic records management system is a software application that uses automated techniques to ensure that information stored in digital formats is properly distributed, used, stored, retrieved, protected, and preserved according to established policies and procedures. These systems come in various configurations and may be referred to as the following:

- Electronic Content Management Systems
- Document Management Systems
- Digital Asset Management Systems

as well as similar names. Regardless of what they are called, there are some basic questions to keep in mind when selecting a system to manage your electronic records. If you are interested in more information or have further questions, contact the Records Management Unit at retentionhelp@sec.state.ma.us.

Some questions to consider when selecting an ERMS

How hard will it be to get your records out?

Systems, software projects and vendors changes, and chances are you are going to need to get out everything you put in. Having an exit strategy upfront can ease your transition down the road.

How does it track/index the records?

Once you put your records in a system, you want to be sure that you can find them. Are you able to customize the fields you are indexing? Is indexing a manual or an automated process?

Can you apply the applicable Records Retention Schedule to your records?

One of the benefits of using an ERMS is that you can attach metadata to your records. Does the system support actively managing your records by allowing you to assign retention periods to the records? Does the system prompt you when a retention trigger is met?

How do you control access, particularly if the system will be storing files with protected or

confidential information (and does it meet all the legal requirements for safeguarding these types of data?

Much of records management involves ensuring that people who have a need and authorization to access records can do so and people who aren't authorized to access the records can't do so. How will the system support managing appropriate access control? The last thing you want is to be explaining a data breach on the nightly news!

Update on COVID-19 on Records

Reopening Archives, Libraries and Museums (REALM) is a research partnership between OCLC, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and Battelle research group to create and distribute science-based information and recommended practices designed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 on museum, library, and archival materials, including records.

Through two rounds of testing, researchers have provided information on how long the virus was detectable on some common record types:

- Hardback book cover (buckram cloth) – 1 day
- Paperback book cover – 1 day
- Plain paper pages inside a closed book – 3 days
- Plastic book covering – 3 days
- DVD cases – 1 day
- Archival folders – 2 days

Two additional rounds of testing are currently underway and you can follow up the project and sign up for updates at

<https://www.webjunction.org/explore-topics/COVID-19-research-project.html>.

Past newsletters now available online

You can now access past *On the Record* newsletters online in the Massachusetts Archives online digital archives portal.

http://digitalarchives.sec.state.ma.us/uncategorised/collection_a0d4b9c4-ff77-42b4-8598-ad0088b7efae/