

Realising the benefits of implementing an eDRMS

Queensland public authorities are increasingly establishing projects to implement electronic Document and Records Management Systems (eDRMS). The purpose of this Public Records Brief is to highlight some of the benefits of eDRMS and the importance of effective planning and management to successfully realise these benefits.

Benefits

A number of benefits can be realised from implementing and using an eDRMS. However, it is important to recognise that these benefits will not derive from deploying the software alone, but from a well planned and implemented project that effectively addresses the associated change management and training issues for staff.

These benefits may include, but are not limited to¹:

For the individual

- Quicker and more convenient discovery and access to required information
- Improved administrative efficiency and effectiveness
- Facilitation of evidence-based and informed decision making, and
- Collaboration and avoidance of 'reinventing the wheel' when developing documentation.

For the organisation

- Secure and systematic management of unstructured data such as emails, documents and spreadsheets
- Efficiency gains with improved quality and consistency of organisational processes
- Enhancement of an agency's recordkeeping culture and promulgation of organisational standards for recordkeeping procedures and practices
- Improved information security, through greater control over and access to corporate information
- Reduced risk of loss of records
- Reduced legal liability exposure
- Ability to integrate core business applications with the eDRMS enabling improved records capture through automation, and
- Facilitation of compliance with legislative obligations and standards.

For society

- Improved accountability and transparency of government administration
- Improved customer service, and
- Evidence of the authenticity, integrity and reliability of electronic public records.

The above list is aimed at assisting agencies to identify their own benefits, relevant to the scope of their eDRMS project. Identification of benefits will involve a range of stakeholders and will require consideration of different perspectives and viewpoints. It is most important to identify a focused set of realistic and measurable benefits, rather than an overly extensive list that cannot be tracked.

¹ This list has been grouped according to the area that will receive the benefit, however benefits can be categorised in many different ways. Agencies may have organisational or jurisdictional guidelines for structuring project benefits that must be followed. For example, these may include structuring by subject, by degree of explicitness, or by identifying new capabilities, improved capabilities or existing activities that can be stopped or avoided as a result of the change.

Benefits Realisation

It is important to note that achieving the benefits will be dependent on the overall approach taken to the project. Successful realisation is reliant on such factors as:

Project Governance

- Effective governance of the program of work and a project vision that is in line with the organisation's strategies and objectives.
- Strong links between the objectives of the eDRMS investment, the identified benefits and the changes required to achieve the benefits.
- Identification of specific staff who will have responsibility for the delivery and measurement of the benefits.

Project and risk management

- Identification of the risks that may impact on achieving the benefits and ensuring these are managed as part of the project's overall risk management plan.
- Project processes, whereby any changes to the scope and design of the project are assessed for their impact on the realisation of the benefits.

Change management and stakeholder engagement

- Effective change management and engagement strategies. Insufficient attention to change management, engagement with users and the usability aspects of the system will increase the risk of resistance to the adoption of the system and thereby limit the return on investment.

Technology and procurement

- Effective positioning of the eDRMS and alignment with other technologies within the ICT architecture of the organisation.
- In the selection process, regard is given to the system functionality required to be able to achieve the identified benefits. The functions of an eDRMS can be divided into document management and records management. eDRMS software products will have varying strengths in these two functions and it is important that the selected system is able to adequately perform the functions which have the capability required to realise the benefits.

Training and awareness

- Awareness by all key stakeholders of the agreed benefits and how they will be realised and measured.
- A formal training program which is developed and delivered in support of the realisation of the benefits.

The inclusion of a plan for benefits management from the outset can help to determine agreed mechanisms for identifying, tracking and measuring the benefits. While it can be difficult to quantify benefits that may be of a qualitative nature, methods such as surveys can prove effective. Initiating a process for capturing data and metrics to act as a baseline, prior to the eDRMS implementation, such as key performance indicators and workload statistics is important to be able to demonstrate the success of the implementation.

More Information

While agencies may have different organisational frameworks to follow, the following tools and resources may provide useful information for identifying and structuring benefits.

- Department of Infrastructure and Planning (n.d.) *Business Case Development Guidance Material, Project Assurance Framework* <http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/resources/guideline/project-assurance-framework/paf-business-case-development.pdf>
- Queensland Government Chief Information Office (2007) *Queensland Government Benefits Management Framework* and supporting Guidelines
- The National Archives, UK, *Guidelines on the Realisation of Benefits from Electronic Records Management* http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/benefits_realisation.pdf

For more information from Queensland State Archives on eDRMS, see:

- Exposure Draft: [Guideline for the planning of an eDRMS](#)
- Public Records Brief: [Responsibilities required for planning, implementing and operating an eDRMS](#)
- Public Records Brief: [File management in an eDRMS](#)
- Public Records Brief: [Capturing emails into an eDRMS](#)

For more detailed guidance on the management of public records visit the Queensland State Archives website at www.archives.qld.gov.au or contact us on: Telephone: (07) 3131 7777 or Email: info@archives.qld.gov.au