Queensland State Archives
Public Records Brief
A RECORDKEEPING UPDATE FOR QUEENSLAND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES – ISSUED AUGUST 2008

Enterprise Search Technology

This Public Records Brief provides an overview of how enterprise search technology works. It also explains why compliance with *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* (IS40) is best achieved through the use of a recordkeeping system, rather than relying on enterprise search technology.

What is enterprise search?

Enterprise search technology is designed to search, index and retrieve electronic information, including from locations such as shared drives, intranets, databases, applications and content management systems. Enterprise search technology is generally made up of the following three components:

1. Crawling/indexing engine—searches the organisation's repositories and places that information into a structure that can then be searched more efficiently.
2. Query engine—searches the newly formed index for key words and creates a list of the relevant documents.
3. Ranking/relevance engine—orders the documents so that the most useful item is at the top of the list.

Enterprise search technology can increase the accessibility to information resources of a public authority. The amount of time staff members spend searching for internal documents may be reduced by having technology that indexes electronic documents in organisational repositories.

Enterprise search technology is not a substitute for a recordkeeping system

While this technology may provide increased access to internal information, it does not deliver the broader records management practices required in accordance with the *Public Records Act 2002* and IS40, and therefore would not replace a recordkeeping system. A recordkeeping system must:

- Capture and store records so that they can be retrieved for future use and kept accessible for as long as they are needed. This means a recordkeeping system must have the capacity to capture and manage metadata, and incorporate classification schemes.
- Protect records from tampering, unauthorised alteration, unauthorised access, accidental or intended damage and destruction. A recordkeeping system must have the capacity to allow for different access privileges and track usage of records.
- Manage records throughout their lifecycle from creation to authorised disposal or permanent retention. A recordkeeping system must have the capacity to incorporate an authorised Retention and Disposal Schedule for the appropriate management of records.

Improving accessibility of information is only one of the functions of a recordkeeping system. The table below gives examples where enterprise search technology does not provide the functionality of a recordkeeping system, required for compliance with IS40:

Recordkeeping function	Compliance Issues for enterprise search technology
Full and accurate records creation (IS40 Principle 7)	The process of entering public records into a recordkeeping system ensures the capture of appropriate metadata, linking a record to the context of creation, to aid understanding over time. Enterprise search technology does not provide this functionality.
Management and organisation (IS40 Principle 4)	Records held in a recordkeeping system are managed by various control mechanisms such as business classification schemes and thesauri. This maintains relationships between records. Enterprise search technology builds an index of 'related documents'; however they are only related by containing the same search terms. These relationships are temporary and not necessarily functional. Enterprise search technology does not manage records, nor does it organise them.
Monitoring, auditing and reporting (IS40 Principle 2)	Monitoring and auditing activities are harder to undertake without a structured repository. While it may be possible to audit indexes created by enterprise search technology, indexes only contain items that have been retrieved from a specific search, rather than all auditable content. Enterprise search technology can effectively locate auditable records, whereas a recordkeeping system can provide a complete audit trail as well as manage and retrieve all auditable records.
Retention and disposal (IS40 Principles 5 and 7)	Premature disposal of records before their retention period expires and the unnecessary storage of certain temporary records can be prevented by using an authorised recordkeeping system. Enterprise search technology does not provide the controls necessary for the appropriate sentencing and disposal of records.
Security (IS40 Principle 6)	There is a risk that documents held on shared drives are not stored securely enough to prevent unauthorised deletion. While enterprise search technology can be configured to prevent access to protected drives, it cannot prevent deletion of records that are accessible. A recordkeeping system has the functionality to set access and security controls, preventing retrievable records from being deleted.

Conclusion

Enterprise search technology is an effective way to access documents held in organisational repositories. It does not, however, perform any other functions of a recordkeeping system. It is not recordkeeping software and should not be regarded as a substitute for a recordkeeping system, which controls records over their lifecycle in addition to providing access. While enterprise search technology may be used by a public authority to assist with retrieval, public records must still be managed through a system with recordkeeping functionality.

More information

For further information on managing records in an electronic environment, please refer to the following resources:

- *What is an eDRMS?*
- *Managing Shared Drives*
- *Identifying a Public Record in the Electronic Environment*

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