

Digital Records Transition Benefits Realisation

Planning to realise the benefits of any new or changed policy, process or technology is an important part of project and change planning. Digital Records Support (DRS), which administers the ACT's two electronic document and records management systems (EDRMS) has developed a performance framework that sets out its targets for deploying and supporting these systems for agencies. However, most of the benefits to be realised by transitioning to digital recordkeeping will be experienced by the business areas using these systems, and will be highly dependent on the nature of business processes and how the EDRMS is used to support them. For this reason, benefits realisation plans should be established and monitored by agencies, rather than relying solely on the DRS framework to measure success.

The outcomes and benefits of improved records management can be hard to quantify. Because the potential savings to be derived from a transition to digital records and information management are closely related to the ways in which business units do their work, they can be highly variable. They may come from decreased costs (such as for paper storage, file movements, or data duplication) or increased revenue, such as through the ability to perform revenue-generating tasks more quickly and efficiently.

During their transitions to digital recordkeeping some ACT Government agencies have experienced benefits such as:

- for one business unit, seven minutes of staff time saved per file created
- a simplified business processes, from one requiring 12 steps across four systems to eight steps across two systems (including the EDRMS)
- addressing significant business risk regarding business continuity and disaster recovery
- reduced reliance on support staff to manage filing for a paper-based system
- reductions in requirements for manual tracking and reporting systems for some business processes
- improved collaboration by allowing many business units to access a single, authoritative document.

The greatest benefit of a transition to digital recordkeeping is an opportunity benefit – the opportunity to support transformation of business to digital working. Progressive implementation of a digital records capability also 'turns off the tap' for the creation of paper records by providing a mechanism for digital recordkeeping across government. While the costs of managing the ACT's existing paper records cannot be entirely avoided, their rate of increase can be halted or substantially reduced by a change to digital recordkeeping across government.

An additional category of benefits is in costs avoided. These primarily relate to a slowing in the demand for paper records storage. However, another potentially significant category of costs avoided is those that arise from poor recordkeeping, such as legal, compensation and similar costs incurred by the government or the community. Poor records management routinely contributes to poor administrative, accountability and client outcomes. For example, all of the twelve audit reports

published by the ACT Auditor-General in 2021 made findings or recommendations related to the quality of agency records management and its impact on business process, outcomes and accountability.

Measuring the benefits of a Directorate, agency or business unit's transition to digital recordkeeping can therefore take many forms. A [Sample Benefits Realisation Register](#) is provided as part of this advice. When identifying their own benefits for realisation as part of an EDRMS or other digital recordkeeping project, agencies could consider identifying and measuring the benefits of:

- **auditability:** increased accountability and community confidence in controlling access to confidential information by providing audit trail capabilities to control and track access to ACT Government held information
- **availability:** supporting business continuity and flexible work arrangements because information is available outside standard business hours and locations; reduction of hardcopy file "wait times" for files to be delivered to act on
- **collaboration:** multiple users can work on the same document, reducing document duplication, improving version control and providing for a single source of truth. The use of automated workflows also give clarity to where the document is in the authoring, review and approval process
- **compliance:** full recordkeeping and metadata functionality supports agencies to meet their responsibilities under the *Territory Records Act 2002*
- **discoverability:** using keyword search and other strategies to locate records, allowing end users to easily find and act on information
- **efficiency:** reducing the time to file information, data silos and possible duplication of information. Searching and finding authoritative information for quicker service delivery and information re-use
- **innovation:** provides opportunities for automation and a platform for greater information sharing, supporting increased data analysis and improved decision-making
- **security:** customisable security with options to limit access to files and documents when it is needed, ensuring that access is restricted to only those who require it
- **transparency:** workflows and action trees accurately track the progress of work being completed.

Potential measures that reflect some of these benefits could include:

- reduction in adverse audit or review findings for a process
- improved performance against the annual Records Management Maturity Assessment
- reduction in information privacy or security breaches
- reduced case or service processing times
- increased re-use of information.

Sample Benefits Realisation Register

Benefit			Metrics	Dependencies	Target Performance		Stakeholders		
Ref#	Description	Link to strategic objective	Measure	Dependencies/Enablers/Outcomes	Current	Final	Stakeholders impacted	Benefit owner	Expected date of realisation
1	Single source of truth	Support digital service delivery	Reduction in duplication of records across paper and digital systems	EDRMS must be available to all units participating in business processes Would be assisted by turning shared drives to read only			Business units	Business unit managers	Year following deployment
2	Staff efficiencies	Support digital service delivery Enable maximum efficiency from ABW	Business units report efficiencies and savings in staff time	Sufficient training must be available for staff in using the new system			Business units	Directorate records managers Business unit managers	Year following deployment

3	Improved security and accountability	Support increased efficiency in accountability processes	Reduction in FOI processing times Reduction in adverse audit findings relating to records management Reduced incidence of information security breaches by staff	Sufficient training must be available for staff in using the new system			FOI Information Officers Auditor-General & other accountability officers ICT Security	Directorate governance leaders	Year following deployment
4	Reduced license duplication	Support digital service delivery	Reduction in duplication	Directorates must abide by EDRMS selection policies to avoid duplication of processes across systems			All relevant business units	CIOs	At deployment
5	Reduced cost of database maintenance	Support digital service delivery	Reduction in number of EDRMS database instances	Directorates can transition to central systems and appropriately manage legacy data			DDTS	CIOs	At deployment



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