



VERITAS™

Information in the Public Sector

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President Barack Obama issued a [Presidential Memorandum on Managing Government Records](#) to the heads of all executive departments and agencies of the U.S. Government back in 2011 beginning “an executive branch wide effort to reform records management policies and practices. Improving records management will improve performance and promote openness and accountability by better documenting agency actions and decisions,” and explaining that “Modernized records management will also help executive departments and agencies minimize costs and operate more efficiently.”

The President goes on to explain the challenge that gave rise to the memorandum, saying:

“Decades of technological advances have transformed agency operations, creating challenges and opportunities for agency records management. Greater reliance on electronic communication and systems has radically increased the volume and diversity of information that agencies must manage. With proper planning, technology can make these records less burdensome to manage and easier to use and share. But if records management policies and practices are not updated for a digital age, the surge in information could overwhelm agency systems, leading to higher costs and lost records.

We must address these challenges while using the opportunity to develop a 21st-century framework for the management of Government records. This framework will provide a foundation for open Government, leverage information to improve agency performance, and reduce unnecessary costs and burdens.”

While the public focus regarding government and information is on the inappropriate collection of private data, from the long-term perspective of preserving institutional intelligence and providing future generations with clarity of perspective, it is critical that this “21st-century framework for the management of Government records” be developed.

Deadlines specified in the memorandum stretch out into the next decade. Today, almost five years after the issuance of the memorandum, signs of

progress are beginning to emerge. “We’re making significant progress,” said Ed Killen, director of privacy, governmental liaison and disclosure at the IRS in a [February 2016 article in FCW](#). In the article, Killen says the agency’s goal is to have “all employees’ email archived electronically by the end of the year as part of a plan to move away from an approach that has long relied on printing and filing and the use backup tapes.”

CHALLENGES

Consider the sheer number of diverse executive departments and agencies involved, and the tremendous volume of data generated daily by a country with hundreds of millions of citizens. The Federal Records Act requires that all agency communication, including documents, emails, texts, “tweets” and other social media,



Security concerns, isolationism, and a variety of other issues have made the resistance to information sharing among government agencies legendary.

must be documented and preserved in a readily accessible manner to permit rapid response to eDiscovery and Freedom of Information Act requests among others.

According to an [article in Forbes magazine](#) from July 2012, “90% of the data in the world today was created in the last two years, and data volumes are rising faster than storage prices are declining and technology is improving. That rate of data collection continues to accelerate.

How will government agencies address managing this massive volume of information? [Federal Times](#) points out that “The main problem for agencies is a lack of resources available to meet the goals of the Managing Government Records Memorandum issued by President Obama in 2011,” quoting Liz Icenogle, director of government affairs for ARMA International, as saying

that, “NARA and OMB are forcing the hand of agencies to make sure they’re upgrading their infrastructure. The directive is wonderful but it doesn’t recognize the challenges.”

Icenogle’s organization initiated The Coalition for Public Sector Information Governance Leadership in 2015 to help bring private sector industry best practices in records management to the government. According to *Federal Times*, “As budgets fall or remain flat and mandates increase, the coalition plans to advise agencies on best practices that can help them management records more efficiently and effectively.” The coalition includes RMA International, the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM), the Information Governance Initiative (IGI), the National Association for Information Destruction (NAID) and Professional Records and Information Services Management (PRISM) International.

Data Quality Issues

With information coming in from a vast variety of sources in a myriad of different ways, forms, and volumes, data validation prior to processing and storage generates a host of challenges. The first line of defense must come from clearly stated policies and procedures to provide guidance to anyone and everyone entering information into any government subsystem anywhere at any time.

Agency cultures regarding information sharing

Security concerns, isolationism, and a variety of other issues have made the resistance to information sharing among government agencies legendary. From an Information Governance standpoint, this becomes a question after-the-fact. Each department and each agency storing their own data removes the opportunity to extract larger-scale insights from the vast body

of knowledge created by all this information. Again a balance is required, this one between the need to preserve secrecy, privacy, and security with the desire to learn as much as possible from the data collected.

Balancing Retention Requirements with Cost

Mandates such as the President's Memorandum stimulate a tendency to store everything. This seems to be the easiest way to assure that required information is not lost or discarded, but it comes at a staggering cost. Gartner estimates that it costs \$5 million annually to manage a petabyte (that's \$5,000 per TB) of data.

View this in the context of another observation from the Forbes article that 69% of all data that organizations store contains no legal, regulatory, or business value. More than two-thirds of all data stored is debris, and therefore \$3,450 of every \$5,000 spent on every terabyte stored is wasted.

The scale of the challenge makes this into an astounding waste, so simply storing everything is simply not a viable solution.

The Need for Governance

This points out the need for an overarching governance model that establishes standards for what must be retained as well as clear specifications for data which must be deleted.

This is clearly a policy challenge. The Federal Rules for Civil Procedure (FRCP) basically stipulate that policy must be firmly established and rigidly adhered to. The process of establishing policy is meant, in part, to provide clarity to those managing information as to what information must be deleted and what must be stored. This provides resistance to the temptation to store everything.

Providing and maintaining consistency is also challenging in the context of government. Agencies and their requirements are so numer-

ous and so diverse that it is all but impossible to establish taxonomies, syntax, policies, procedures and other standards that will be uniformly applicable to all.

Government executives storing their email on their own private servers has been an issue in the news recently, and the debate still continues as to whether this is permissible, much less acceptable, under current law and policies. The lack of clarity and certainty becomes painfully obvious.

In their [2014 Annual Report](#), The Information Governance Initiative provides a useful, clear definition:

"Information Governance is the activities and technologies that organizations employ to maximize the value of their information while minimizing associated risks and costs."

THE PROCESS OF TRANSITIONING TO A DIGITAL FUTURE

While the President's Memorandum on Managing Government Records seems like a very logical next step in the management of the country's business, it actually represents nothing short of a cultural transformation, very similar to those seen in private sector companies that have sought to create "the paperless office" over the past several decades.

In the Memorandum, the President offers excellent guidance in requiring the appointment of a Senior Agency Official (SAO) in each agency to oversee the review and revision of their records management, each working closely with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). He aptly points out that "Records are the foundation of open government, supporting the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration. Well-managed records can be used to assess the impact of programs, to improve business processes, and to share knowl-

edge across the Government. Records protect the rights and interests of people, and hold officials accountable for their actions. Permanent records document our nation's history."

This sets the stage for what has been, and will continue to be a massive process improvement initiative.

Policy Development & Implementation

The President specifies in his Memorandum that the SAO "has direct responsibility for ensuring that the department or agency efficiently and appropriately complies with all applicable records management statutes, regulations, and NARA policy, and the requirements of this Directive. The SAO must be located within the organization so as to make adjustments to agen-

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cy practices, personnel, and funding as may be necessary to ensure compliance and support the business needs of the department or agency."

This creates the feedback loop necessary to achieve the development and deployment of such a wide-ranging array of policy changes and improvements.

Policies are required to characterize information in a variety of ways. Most critical to most government employees are the issues surrounding retention or deletion, in which they must identify whether to retain, protect, or delete each item of information. They must also evaluate potential risks represented by each item, including:

- **Financial Risk** — storage costs become exorbitant

- **Legal/Compliance Risk** — ability to meet deadlines compromised
- **Security Risk** — lack of oversight opens door to malicious activity
- **Productivity Risk** — finding information becomes a time sink
- **Reputational Risk** — negative press can dramatically impact perception

IT System & Personnel

These policies require specific infrastructure to support their implementation, including information management systems and expert personnel.

Information Management Training and Enforcement

Any policy is only as good as its enforcement. Enforcement begins with thorough training of all involved personnel as to their responsibilities and duties regarding information.

Once trained, vigilant scrutiny must be maintained to assure continuous adherence to published policies. At any given time, employees must have clear, comprehensive documentation of all policies available for reference and review.

Providing Information

Ultimately, the goal of all information retention and related policies must be to quickly and efficiently deliver all requested or required information needed for eDiscovery processes, Freedom of Information and other requests.

All of this will require the availability of the right information management tools.

VERITAS

Veritas' Information Governance Suite offers an unmatched set of integrated solutions that provide real-time insight into an organization's information footprint and empower information leaders to make decisions about what information to retain and protect and what information to delete.

Through Veritas' portfolio of file classification and analysis tools, enterprise information archiving solutions, and eDiscovery products, organizations experience a streamlined approach for limiting their information-based risk exposure.

Veritas arms organizations to fight back against the exponential data curve with the following market-leading technologies:

VERITAS™ DATA INSIGHT

Data Insight helps organizations improve unstructured data governance through actionable intelligence into ownership and usage, as well as access controls. Data Insight's reporting, analytics and visualization capabilities help drive efficiency and cost reduction across the data life-cycle and provide imported protection of sensitive data helping to achieve compliance. Veritas Data Insight

VERITAS™ INFORMATION MAP

The Veritas Information Map renders your unstructured information in visual context and guides you towards unbiased, information governance decision making. Using the Informa-

tion Map's dynamic navigation, customers can identify areas of risk, areas of value and areas of waste across their environment and make decisions which reduce information risk and optimize information storage.

VERITAS™ ENTERPRISE VAULT

Available on-premises and in the cloud, Enterprise Vault enables organizations to efficiently store, effectively manage, and easily discover and retrieve unstructured information as needed for business. Enterprise Vault helps customers deduplicate information, manage organization-wide retention policies, and control the costs of compliance and litigation support.

VERITAS™ EDISCOVERY PLATFORM

The eDiscovery Platform powered by Clearwell brings transparency and control to the electronic discovery process. From collection to production, our work-flow speeds time to resolution, improves accuracy and lowers costs. With better insight and less complexity, the eDiscovery Platform enables you to focus on strategy and create business value. ■