Chapter 14

Functional Requirements – Physical Office Documents

OVERVIEW

This chapter addresses the functionality for managing physical office documents using IDCIT technology, so that the organization has a solution that enables them to manage digital and physical documents.

Our objectives are as follows:

• Consider the context of the requirement to manage specific types of physical documents as a business record.

• Analyze some key aspects of the functional requirements that are relevant when registering and managing physical documents.

• Provide a checklist to guide enterprises that might act as a primer for defining their requirements for managing physical files and documents.

CONTEXT

Many organizations associate the management of physical documents with centralized or decentralized registries under the province of “registry” or “records” staff who are the custodians of records. However, this may not always be the case, because in many enterprises, physical documents are handled by most business units, as part of an “official” or “corporate” file, or as part of a business unit’s own filing management.

The terminology “records management” is frequently associated with “physical documents,” yet the term “records” applies to a wider variety of information assets other than simply physical documents. Therefore, there may need to be a paradigm shift in thinking in some organizations about what type of information constitutes a record. For example:
• Transactions involving electronic objects (such as email and attachments) may represent a record of a business transaction.
• Database transactions in an ERP system may represent a record of a business transaction.
• Content published to an Internet or intranet Web site upon which a business transaction or decision is made may represent a record.
• A business transaction managed as part of an automated forms processing or workflow application may represent a record.

Some organizations maintain “records management systems” that do not manage all the records of an organization. Furthermore, these systems primarily reference physical documents at a corporate level and might not be used to manage important physical documents at the workgroup level. Workgroups might maintain word-processing or local database registers of important physical documents, such as policies and rules that apply within the workgroup.

Issues that must be considered include the following:
• Although physical documents may be required as evidence of business transactions, there are many to which this does not apply — they may simply be printed copies of electronic documents used by an end user for local reference purposes.
• Some physical documents that are records might be registered in a system other than the corporate registry system. For example, invoices might be registered in an ERP system.
• Other types of physical documents might be workgroup collaborative documents or personal documents held by individuals to facilitate their day-to-day work activities. These physical documents might be escalated from a level of workgroup ownership to become corporate documents.
• Some physical documents might represent records of business transactions but do not end up being registered in the corporate registry system.

It is important that the requirement to manage physical documents be adequately addressed in the enterprise’s document management policy, which we discussed in Chapter 7. The policy should adequately identify those types of physical documents that need to be managed as records and provide examples of those that do not.

Elements of information policy (Chapter 7) should also address the privacy, copyright, and intellectual property issues associated with documents, and the archival policy should address the requirements for retention and disposal of documents that are records.

It is expected that there will be requirement for evidential physical documents that support business transactions to be maintained for the foreseeable future to meet legislative, evidential, and enterprise policy requirements. Consequently, the IDCM solution must support effective management of physical documents and enable relevant physical documents to be captured and retained as a record of a business transaction for the period required by disposal authorities developed under archival policy.

There may also be a requirement to maintain physical copies of workgroup documents, printed from electronic documents, produced from database systems, or received
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