

# New York City Records Management Conference

August 30, 2007

City Council Chambers

Co-sponsored by

The New York City Department of Records and Information Services and  
The New York State Archives

The conference started at 9:40 AM with **Opening comments and introductions** by **Fred Grevin**, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Information Officer, NYC Department of Records

## Objectives of Conference

To open channels of communication between NYC Department of Records / NYS Archives and agency officials involved in records management as well as between agency officials involved in records management. To professionalize the records management function in New York City.

**Brian Andersson**, Commissioner, NYC Department of Records

The Department of Records is mandated in the City Charter. This is the first records management conference. New York City should be the leader in records management, stressing the partnership between agencies and Department of Records.

**Anthony Crowell**, Counsel to the Mayor

Hallmarks of Bloomberg administration include openness; efficiency; and accountability; as well as preparing to aggressively invest resources for efficient and reliable information management needs.

**Christine Ward**, New York State Archivist, New York State Archives

The NYC Department of Records and the NYS Archives have a long history of cooperation and mutual support with complementary goals, such as meeting the challenges of rapidly changing technology. Good records management results in efficient operations and cost savings. Services to agencies provided by NYS Archives:

- 1) Grants from the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (replenished by fees collected through County Clerks and the New York City Register).
  - Total of \$8M–\$12M in competitive grant funds.
  - By statute, \$1M is designated for New York City Mayoral agencies, and administered by the Department of Records.
- 2) Monthly workshops including topics, such as “Disaster Planning and Response” and “Grant proposals”. The workshops provide participants an opportunity to network.
- 3) In NYC, Regional Advisory Officer Brenda Parnes provides advice on complex and / or technical issues, as well as on implementation of NY State retention schedules.
- 4) Technical publications (available electronically at <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/publications/index.shtml>)

## Department of Records Keystone Projects

**Keystone project 1—Revising the City’s records retention schedules** (Fred Grevin) Today, linking a specific document to its schedule is a huge problem for paper records, impossible for electronic records (especially under the existing system where one document = one schedule, resulting in too many schedules. Modern records retention thinking is based on business process (see table below).

Business Process Analysis			Retention Schedule
Function	Activity	Transaction	
Human Resources			No schedule
	▶ Hiring process		No schedule
		▶ Classification	Schedule (1)
		▶ Recruitment	Schedule (1)
		▶ Interviews	Schedule (1)
		▶ Selection	Schedule (1)
		▶ Etc.	Schedule (1)
		▶ Etc.	Schedule (1)
▲ Logical structure (“taxonomy”) improves access ▲			▲ Fewer schedules, and those tied to clearly-defined business processes

A consultant will be hired for this project (RFP). Partnering with and getting buy-in from Law Dept.; DoITT; OMB; Comptroller; and DOI is essential. Most agencies are tied to other entities: City–State–Federal–private sector. Project timeline: **First stage:** identify records used by all agencies. **Second stage:** identify mission-critical (“vital”) records specific to a few agencies (for example, land title records). **Third stage:** identify all other records. **Fourth stage:** review and maintain schedules.

**Keystone Project 2—Off-site storage of records** (Shana Whitehead, Senior Policy Analyst, Mayor’s Office of Operations (Operations expert, working to make things better). A study of DORIS revealed: outdated off site records storage facilities. OMB will perform cost-benefit analysis to compare options; it is likely some agencies will benefit from off-site storage and some won’t. We need a City-wide assessment of the off site records storage needs (the last survey was conducted in the mid 1990’s) to determine: What volume of records should be stored off-site? How frequently are records retrieved from off-site storage? What are the security issues for off-site storage? Archival records (as opposed to common business records) are a different matter. Issues specific to off-site storage of archival records include: longevity; space requirements; climate control. The question is whether to build and staff our own warehouses or outsource off-site records storage.

**Keystone Project 3—Electronic records management** (Shana Whitehead). This is one of the first administrations to have records born and living entirely within electronic media (truly paperless from creation to disposition). How to handle electronic records? Think of them in a comprehensive process way as paper: business processes; how to file; keep them safe; retrieve them. We have to think of electronic records as retrievable and sustainable and must make allowances for digitizing hard copy when necessary. Perspectives: technological; legal; people; space; migration (we need to know the pathway and keep current with technology and the transfer from one mode to another); to maintain integrity; to track and retrieve. Partnering with appropriate agencies (Law Dept., DoITT, etc.); hire consultants; experienced staff; define technical requirements as well as training.

**Closing Remarks** (Fred Grevin): Where do we go from here? We need to use the next 18 months to analyze and recommend solutions; where possible, to produce actual solutions. Set up committees: To revise retention schedules; look at off-site records storage facilities; electronic records management.

**Questions** (asked at various times during the conference)

**Q:** Synchronize retention schedules?

**A:** Yes. Standardized City-wide retention schedules—will result in the same schedule for the same business functions (no matter which agency).

**Q:** Eventually put retention schedules on Web site?

**A:** A program for accessing and searching retention schedules will be distributed.

**Q:** Retention of case ledgers?

**A:** Analysis required: What is the function of the records? Case tracking business functions. What processes does the function require? One schedule or two?

**Q:** Is the volume of paper records still growing?

**A:** We're not sure, but population and services are growing (emphasizing the need for a survey)

**Q:** Security regarding off-site storage of confidential records?

**A:** Municipal Archives does not accept confidential information

**Q:** What about the existing individual agency off site records storage, either in-house, or by contract?

**A:** Could switch over to City-wide contract as existing space leases or service contracts expire. Plan to benefit the City by offering a vendor bulk pricing—hopefully cheaper!

**Q:** Shouldn't agencies store their own records themselves to ensure faster retrieval? (experience of court archives—Queens: Court records from 1998-2003 maintained at their own off-site facility)

**A:** "Does it matter who does the work (own facility or commercial facility) as long as you get the service?" Storage committee will examine issues (retrieval: how active is "active"? How often requested?), review and comment on RFI, OMB will perform cost-benefit analysis. The idea is to make a coordinated approach to vendors, representing agencies with millions of cubic feet of records, instead of agencies negotiating piecemeal. Concept of DCAS Requirement Contract with multiple vendors (MOCS says it's possible), obtained through RFP rather than Bid. Small-agency storage needs vs. large-agencies storage needs (but small agencies can benefit from economies of scale in a global RC).

**Q:** What happens when long-term storage contracts expire?

**A:** As with any contract, create and issue new RFP.

**Q:** Recommendations for electronic content management packages?

**A:** DoITT is evaluating software—will roll into what we are doing to leverage project benefits.

**Q:** Eventually image everything?

**A:** Complicated, not cost-effective for everything. Paper storage is cheap relative to microfilming and scanning, which are expensive.

**Q:** Electronic discovery? Need unique software?

**A:** Core issues: What do we have? Where is it? Can we get it? Metadata is an approach to looking at stuff (ex: library catalog). New Federal rules of procedures; Litigation issues: Courts' electronic records policy; Document management issues: Data models; Communication Basic information, Ties together agency interoperability. Schedule built in from inception of records? Carry along to printouts? "Universal" content management system? DoITT hosting: in 6-8 months will offer email management software from Law Dept.

**Q:** Destruction [records disposal] process?

**A:** Hopefully, revising the retention schedules and doing a better job of managing the records will result in easier/quicker review by Law Dept.

**Next records management conference:** In 3 to 6 months. Schedule next conference with committees.

**Documents:**

The records management contact list is distributed by email. All other documents are on the Department of Records Web site at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/about/records.shtml>

- Department of Records “Records Management Manual”
- Records Management Conference agenda and presentation
- Minutes of the 30 August conference
- NYS Archives Newsletter, September, 2007 (for Region 1—New York City).