

A **Formtek** Whitepaper

Getting Both Best-Practice and Best-Value in a Records Management System



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Executive Summary

Records Management is becoming increasingly important to companies of all sizes. The interest is being driven primarily because of increased government regulation and huge increases that organizations are seeing in the volume of their electronic records data.

Increasingly legislation and statutory requirements mandate that organizations adopt policies and procedures with requirements around Records Management. Complicating the regulatory demands have been huge increases in the volume of electronic records that are being created, overwhelming many organizations and making the job of being a records managers increasingly difficult.

While Records Management is a vital tool for companies to address governance, compliance and retention requirements, the benefits of Records Management go beyond government regulations. For example, the use of Records Management improves a company's overall data management processes, particularly in the areas of data security and data access.

Because Records Management systems have historically been complex and expensive, many small- and medium-sized companies have simply gone without Records Management software, while large companies have taken on Records Management projects that have sometimes totaled in the millions of dollars. But, while it may be slow in coming, deployment and pricing models for Enterprise Software are changing, and that's good news to organizations that are in the market for a Records Management solution.

Companies like Alfresco are turning traditional software pricing on its head. Alfresco Enterprise software is sold via an annual subscription, based on the number of server CPUs. There are no up-front perpetual license fees, and there are no per user fees. The result is that the Alfresco Records Management solution is extremely affordable, and because of its modern architecture and comprehensive feature set, Alfresco is very competitive, if not superior, to rival products offered by top-tier Records Management vendors such as IBM/FileNet, EMC/Documentum and Microsoft Office Sharepoint Server.

The use of Records Management best practices is often a good indicator as to whether a Records Management project will succeed or fail. Because of that, getting a good Records Management process in place and setting up best-practice policies around Records Management should be a top priority for companies investing in a Records Management solution.

This whitepaper examines important drivers behind the need for Records Management within organizations and also looks at deficiencies with traditional Records Management solutions. Best practice guidelines for Records Management are described, and throughout the discussion, references are often made to Alfresco Records Management software as an example of a low-cost fully-functional Records Management solution that adheres to best practices.

The Electronic Records Management Market

Records Management used to be all about managing paper. While the amount of paper records within organizations hasn't changed much over time, that isn't true at all for electronic records. In fact, [AIIM](#) has found that more than 70% of records managers are seeing huge increases in the numbers of new electronic records that they need to manage.

Today only about 35% of organizations have an electronic Records Management System in place. [Gartner Research](#) expects this to change. In fact, Gartner estimates that revenue from Records Management licenses and maintenance totaled \$460 million in 2008 and is growing by double-digit percentages annually.

"The well-established records management market is undergoing significant change. We're now at a "deer in the headlights" phase of the market. Enterprises need consistent records management approaches to grapple with the explosive volume and diversity of content and to meet legal risk mitigation needs... Diverse applications, tools, and file types along with undocumented, disorganized information architectures, increased litigation, rapidly changing case law, and a fragmented vendor ecosystem further aggravate this scenario."

- Forrester

What is Records Management?

Records Management is an on-going process of managing the records in a media neutral basis in accordance with approved policies, procedures and schedules. Records Management as a discipline defines and applies business rules related to the creation, protection, retrieval and disposition of an organization. Retention schedules are the cornerstone of a successful Records Management process. Different record types may have different retention policies according to an organization's legal, regulatory and operational requirements.

A number of functions need to be provided to fully enable the management of corporate records. These include:

- **Creation** - When a record is produced it requires meta-data to be created either automatically or via a profile form. Fields can be either mandatory, optional or have default values.
- **Classification** - Classification should attach a *subject* and a *title* to a record and apply the retention policies for that subject. Classifications are hierarchical and should be automated wherever possible, or have the option of a pick-list.
- **Storage** - Storage should preserve the format and be in a neutral, non-proprietary storage system.

- **Access Control** - Access control should determine the visibility of a record and the operations a user can perform on the record.
- **Review and Approval** - Access may be also determined by the stage a record is at in a lifecycle. For example, a document in a review stage cannot be viewed by non-reviewers.

Governance, Retention, Compliance and Records Management

“While the principal driver for records management in organizations should be maximizing access to information while minimizing storage requirements, the major current business requirement is undoubtedly based around compliance.”

- Ovum

Many organizations are now looking to Records Management to help them deal with an increasing legal and ethical obligation to adopt better Governance, Retention and Compliance procedures. The need to better capture, manage and control corporate information, much of which resides in business documents, emails, financial reports etc., is leading these companies to deploy Records Management solutions to help:

- Ensure compliance with corporate rules and procedures
- Secure systems, documents and other related records from unauthorized (or unintentional) access
- Address compliance with a large number of often overlapping legal and regulatory requirements

Benefits of an Electronic Records Management Program

The implementation of an effective Records Management Program brings with it the following benefits and capabilities:

- Store records safely and securely
- Retain only records that are needed and delete those records that are obsolete
- Archive vital documents needed for business continuity and disaster recovery
- Comply with retention rules, keeping records the correct amount of time
- Apply and enforce retention rules thus limiting litigation exposure
- Reduce costs related to the storage and destruction of records
- Bring everyone in the organization in compliance with Records Management policies and procedures
- Implement legal requirements quickly and cost effectively
- Facilitate eDiscovery

Deficiencies with Traditional Records Management Solutions

[Forrester Research](#) along with ARMA International found that more than half of records manager decision makers expressed low satisfaction with their current records solutions, and 13% said that they were “not at all satisfied” with their current solutions.

Historically Records Management solutions have been:

“Organizations have long known that implementing their records management initiatives is challenging. People and processes are both important elements, but choosing the right records management solution can be the difference between success and failure.”

- Gartner

- **Disconnected** – Standalone solutions that needed to be integrated with other internal ECM systems
- **Complex** – Applications designed to satisfy dedicated Records Management professionals
- **Expensive** – Proprietary systems that have come with a hefty price tag for both purchase and deployment
- **Exclusive** – Lacking wide-scale adoption, only being used by a core Records Management team

Traditional software licenses can be expensive. About one third of records managers that expect to expand the scope of their current software license or pilot new software in 2010 expect to spend upwards of \$250,000. And that doesn't include the cost of services to customize or integrate the records solution into the organization.

How does Document Management differ from Records Management?

If you already have a document or content management system, you may wonder if that system can provide the same level of functionality and benefits as a Records Management System would provide. The two are similar, but Records Management offers unique capabilities not found in a standard Document or Content Management system.

Document Management systems are typically deployed to enable departmental sharing of documents, and to manage document revisioning. But these systems often lack certain key functions that are needed to perform effective records management.

There are distinct differences between Document Management and Records Management which include:

Records contain lifecycle instructions

Records are a special type of document that contains information from which a business decision is made. Lifecycle instructions get assigned to records that describe how long the record should be stored and how to dispose of the record at the end of the lifecycle.

Records need to be classified and categorized correctly

Records are filed with a structure that uses categories based on a specialized classification system known as the “fileplan”.

Records are static and not intended to be altered

Once a document is declared a record, the Records Management system will lock the document to disallow any additional changes.

Records need to track accurately to their lifecycle workflow

The lifecycle instructions attached to a record defines a workflow for how the document should be retained, transferred and disposed of.

Records have strict requirements around who can view them

In most document management systems, document access privileges are not strictly required, but Records Management has detailed requirements around record security. For example, who can declare, access and approve final record disposition.

Records ultimately need to be disposed

A record lifecycle instruction dictates how a record is to be ultimately disposed. For example, a record could be archived for permanent retention, destroyed, or transferred to another body or agency such as NARA, the National Archives.

Best Practices for Records Management

This section lists best-practice recommendations to consider when setting up an efficient Records Management system.

Appoint a Compliance Steering Committee

Set up a records management Steering Committee that includes a records manager, a representative from legal counsel, IT technical staff, finance/accounting, tax, human resources and risk management to provide oversight for the program. The more varied the members on the Steering Committee, the more effective and comprehensive the committee can be in overseeing a records management policy. The Steering Committee should regularly meet to assess the state of the Records Management program to assure that it is properly staffed and operating properly.

Develop an Organization-wide Records Management Team

Records and retention management shouldn't be isolated to a group of record experts. While the Steering Committee exists to set policies and direction for the program, the Records management Team members are the organization-wide implementers. All organizational groups should actively participate and have a representative on this team in order for a records strategy to be successful. The best way to do that is to create a team selected from a cross section of all groups in the organization.

Organization-Wide Communication

The workings of the Records Management team should regularly be communicated with all employees of the company. This is often best done via a company newsletter, an intranet site, occasional emails, or educational sessions.

Apply Policies and Procedures Consistently

Create records management policies and procedures that can be applied consistently and uniformly across the organization. In particular, policies around record disposition and destruction should be consistently and systematically applied. Policies should address both physical and electronic records.

Identify Content Formats Used within the Organization

The types of electronic data and document that are being created and used in the organization should be reviewed. Policies should be put in place as to how to handle the most frequently occurring content types as records.

Create an Organization-wide Retention Schedule

The records retention schedule should be applied consistently across the organization and be based on legal, regulatory and operational requirements. The schedule should define the types of records and how records are to be classified in the fileplan. Legal requirements should be researched to determine the proper retention periods and proper policies for preserving and destroying different types of records. The retention schedule should be kept current by reviewing and updating it at least once every two years.

Access and Indexing

All records should be classified and properly indexed so as to later allow easy search and retrieval. The classification scheme should form the basis for the file plan for the records system. Both paper and electronic filing systems should be based on the same record classification scheme.

Audits

Records Management should be included as part of any regularly scheduled company audit. The audit needs to ensure consistency and compliance with legal requirements.

Record Disposal

The lifecycle schedule associated with a record determines the ultimate disposition of the record. Typically the method of disposal is determined by record type or by the kind of media involved. The method of disposal needs to account for suspended records, or those with holds, and the process should adhere to all confidentiality and security requirements.

Select Implementation Partners, Vendors and Technology Carefully

Organizations should evaluate their current systems to see whether they are capable of meeting government rules on compliance.

Use Technology to Achieve Efficiency

Companies should leverage technology to automate their records management programs. Technology can help companies automate record lifecycle, retention classification, and selected steps of the eDiscovery process.

Select Products with Full Records Management Capabilities

Select products that can readily support a best-practice Records Management framework. 5015.2 certification will generally guarantee this, but also consider functionality like the ability to automate records retention, disposition, migration, and backups. Vendors with products that were architected and built specifically to handle Records Management are better choices than products where Records Management capabilities were bolted on later as an after-thought.

Select Systems that can Span Multiple Repositories

Many organizations already may be storing documents and data across a number of data repositories. Many of these systems may contain documents and information that should be classified as records, but it may not be realistic to consider replacing these systems with a single consolidated records repository. Consider technology products that include inter-repository operability capabilities, such as those conforming to the Content Management Interoperability Service (CMIS) standard.

Integration and Extensibility

Check that the software has ample tools for integration. For example, make sure that there is a Software Developer Kit (SDK) or an Application Programming Interface (API) that is consistent with the technology tools that your company uses. Support for CMIS, REST, Web Services, Java, JavaScript and other standards is a good sign that interoperability with other systems can be achieved.

Advanced Processing Technologies

Beyond Records Management capabilities, the system should support scan/capture, search, email integration, and reporting.

Affordability

Look for a product that fits both into your budget and timeline.

Summary

Implementing an effective Records Management solution involves hard work, careful planning and skillful execution. But much of the risk involved with setting up a new system can be mitigated by adopting accepted Records Management best practices.

Any project that involves bringing in a new system will mean change, and change can be difficult. This is true whether you are transitioning from an existing electronic Records Management system or from a paper-based process, or starting from scratch.

Often getting advice or council on your project from outside experts can save you many hours of later frustration. Consider talking with your Records Management software service provider. Analysis of your process and requirements can help you get started on the right path, and ultimately achieve your goal of an efficient Records Management system.

Appendix I

Alfresco Records Management

Formtek believes that Alfresco software presents a better alternative to traditional Records Management systems. Alfresco provides a much lower cost solution without sacrificing features, functionality, or performance when compared to high-cost traditional vendors. Unlike traditional vendors, there is no upfront perpetual license fee. And in fact, an Alfresco subscription is often much less than the fees charged by traditional vendors for annual maintenance alone.

Simplicity was the major design goal for the Alfresco Records Management system. The emphasis on simplicity was driven by the state of current Records Management solutions, many of which are expensive to buy, costly to implement, and difficult to use. The simplicity of the system allows it to be used universally throughout the organization rather than as a tool only available to the Records Management department.

Other characteristics that make Alfresco Records Management very compelling include:

- **Reach** - Gain wide scale adoption from all users in an organization;
- **Cost** - Deliver the first Open Source Records Management Records Management solution;
- **Implementation** - Minimize, or even remove, the desktop footprint;
- **Extensibility** - Create a Records Management infrastructure layer which can be used to implement other Records Management guidelines and policies such as MoReq2 and NOARK.
- **Simple to Use** - Provides Records Management capability through easy to use interfaces. Available through a web-based interface for easy access from any location, via the Common Internet File System (CIFS) standard B, as a simple to use shared network drive, or through an IMAP compliant email application to provide simple Drag and Drop support for email records;
- **A Single Scalable Repository** - Alfresco uses a single repository to support a company's full ECM requirements, including Document Management, Records Management, Email Archive, Web Content Management, and Team Collaboration. Licensing is per server rather than per user.
- **Easy to Deploy** - Designed and built from the ground up to use today's modern technology. Alfresco ECM can be installed on premise, leveraging both proprietary or Open Source technology stacks, or delivered through a Cloud deployment; and,
- **Cost Effective** - With no upfront enterprise license fees or per user licensing, the Alfresco Open Source solution is typically a fraction of the cost of traditional solutions. The Alfresco Records Management solution provides all of the functionality needed to help an organization capture, classify, control and dispose of a wide range of corporate records.
- **Designed to be a Multi-Repository Solution** - Alfresco offers CMIS as a standard capability with its software. CMIS will allow repositories such as SharePoint, FileNet, and Documentum to be accessed from Alfresco once these systems also support the CMIS protocol, which is something they are all currently implementing.

Appendix II

Alfresco Dual Track Licensing

Formtek provides complete Records Management solutions based on the Alfresco Enterprise ECM/RM software suite. Alfresco software is made available via a dual licensing arrangement. The two Alfresco license options are either the Alfresco Community version or the Alfresco Enterprise version.

Anyone is able to download a snapshot of the Community version of Alfresco. The source code used to create the Community version along with the procedure for rebuilding the software is available for download. Alfresco Community software is licensed under [LGPL](#).

Alfresco encourages the download of the Community version for people to familiarize themselves with the capabilities of Alfresco. The files in the Community version are continually changing and often contain new features in an on-going unfinished state of development. By using the source code from the Community release, Alfresco often works with partners and users in the joint development of software features for upcoming Enterprise releases of the software.

While the Community version is often robust, it has not gone through a complete QA process and may contain unfinished features that are currently under development. Side-effects from the new features can sometimes cause severe usage problems with the software.

Note that Alfresco provides no support or warranty for the usage of the Community version. Formtek strongly recommends against using Alfresco Community software in a production environment.

For production use, the Enterprise version of Alfresco should be deployed. Unlike the Community version, the Enterprise version is not free, but it is about a tenth of the price charged by traditional ECM and Records Management vendors for functionality that often meets or exceeds their offerings.

The Alfresco Enterprise license is a standard commercial software license. It is thoroughly tested and Alfresco provides support should any problems arise.

Appendix III

Department of Defense 5015.2 Certification

While US federal government agencies are required to use only records management systems that have been certified by the Department of Defense (DoD), many non-governmental organizations also consider it an “important check box” for a product to have received DoD 5015.2 records management certification.

[Forrester](#) Research took a survey in Q3 2009 and found that 42% of companies looking for a Records Management solution considered 5015.2 certification to be “important” or “very important”.

But for organizations not in the federal government, why is there so much emphasis placed on 5015.2 certification? Put simply - because 5015.2 is considered to be the *gold standard* of records management best practice. 5015.2 includes very detailed requirements that Records Management systems must comply with, and achieving 5015.2 certification is a very rigorous process. Those companies that can attain it, in effect, also receive a very strong positive and trusted endorsement from the Department of Defense, an influential and neutral third-party.

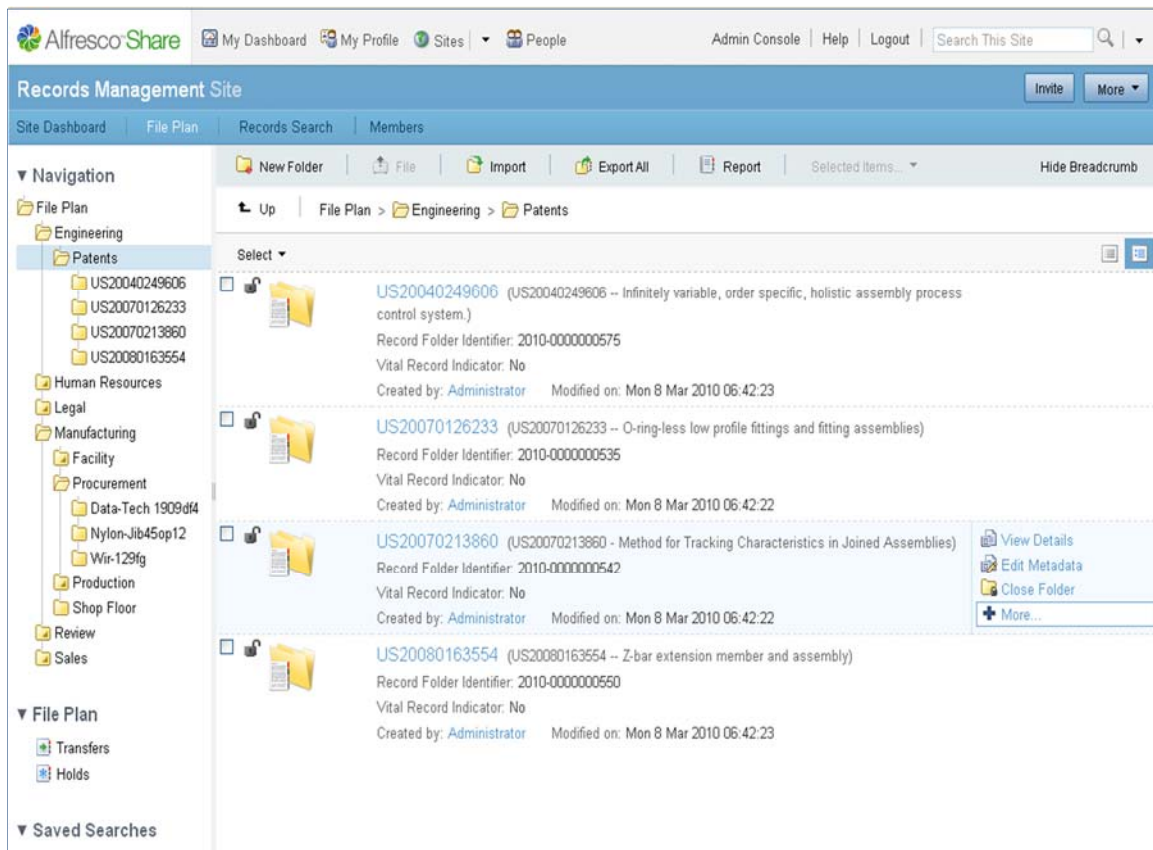
Today there are hundreds of companies that market records management solutions, but the number of those [solutions that have achieved 5015.2 certification](#) is limited to a couple of dozen. And since some vendors with products on the 5015.2 certification list have multiple products certified, there really are only about a dozen vendors that can truly claim 5015.2 certification. Notably, Microsoft is not one of them, at least not yet. In fact, the most recent attempt to certify SharePoint 2007 failed.

Many companies look to the Department of Defense (DoD) 5015.2 standard as a template for best practices around Records Management. While 5015.2 was intended to set up rules and guidance for use by agencies within the federal government, it has been recognized as a gold standard in Records Management best practices, and many companies often use DoD 5015.2 as a basis for setting up their programs, while adjusting it as required for their specific situation.

Obtaining DoD certification for 5015.2 is very rigorous, and very few companies have attained certification. Alfresco is one such company. Products, like Alfresco, that have been certified have received a strong implied endorsement from the DoD that they are fully capable in all areas of Records Management and provide a strong foundation for a Records Management system.

Alfresco received 5015.2 certification in late 2009. The certification was against the most recent version of the 5015.2 standard, version 3, which includes new requirements regarding standardized metadata and information-sharing.

The Alfresco Records Management system is the first Open Source enterprise software product to be certified for the Department of Defense (DoD) 5015.02 standard. The Alfresco Records Management solution provides all of the functionality needed to help organizations capture, classify, control and dispose of a wide-range of electronic corporate records.



But will Alfresco work in your environment and match your records management requirements? It almost certainly will. 5015.2 is a very detailed and thorough standard, but it is also very rigid. Many companies find parts of the standard too restrictive for their needs. For example, 5015.2 specifies that only three levels or tiers of folders can be used in the file plan, but many organizations would prefer to have no restrictions over the number of nested folders that can be used in the file plan. With some systems, this might be difficult. But making a change like this to Alfresco's standard 5015.2 implementation is easy to accomplish.

The Alfresco system is highly configurable and customizable. Alfresco Records Management has been implemented on top of a generalized Records Management metadata model that allows it to support standard or modified 5015.2 requirements, requirements from other Records Management standards like MoReq2 and NOARK, or any other custom requirements.

Appendix IV

Definition of Terms

Records Management has a number of very specific terms. This section provides some guidance on the meaning of some of the most common / widely used terminology.

Attachment - A record, object, or document associated with another document or record and filed in the Records Management Archive or transmitted as part of the other document or record.

Audit Trail - An electronic means of tracking interactions with records within an electronic system so that any access to the record within the electronic system can be documented as it occurs or afterwards. May be used to identify unauthorized actions in relation to the records, e.g., modification, deletion, or addition.

Authenticity - A condition that proves that a record is genuinely based on its mode (i.e., method by which a record is communicated over space or time), form (i.e., format or media that a record has upon receipt), state of transmission (i.e., the primitiveness, completeness, and effectiveness of a record when it is initially set aside after being made or received), and manner of preservation and custody.

Disposition - Those actions taken regarding Federal records after they are no longer required to conduct current Agency business.

Disposition Action - Actions to be taken when a disposition date occurs (e.g., freeze, interim transfer, accession, or destroy).

Disposition Action Date - The fixed date on which the records in a file become due for final disposition.

Disposition Authority - Legal authority that empowers an Agency to transfer permanent records to the National Archives or to carry out the disposal of temporary records. Must be obtained from National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and also, for certain records proposed as temporary, from the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Disposition Instruction - Directions for cutting off records and carrying out their disposition (transfer, retirement, or destruction) in compliance with NARA's regulations and the General Records Schedule (GRS). Disposition instructions in an RMA include retention-related fields such as authority, transfer location, active or dormant chronological retention periods, and conditional retention periods.

Disposition Instruction Type - One of three ways of scheduling a disposition instruction: time, event, or a combination of both time and event.

Electronic Mail Message - A document created or received via an electronic mail system, including brief notes, formal or substantive narrative documents, and any attachments, such as word processing and other electronic documents, which may be transmitted with the message.

Electronic Record Information recorded in a form that requires a computer or other machine to process it and that satisfies the legal definition of a record according to 44 U.S.C. 3301.

File Plan - A document containing the identifying number, title, description, and disposition authority of files held or used in an office.

Freeze - The suspension or extension of the disposition of temporary records that cannot be destroyed on schedule because of special circumstances, such as a court order or an investigation. A freeze requires a temporary extension of the approved retention period. The Importance of Records Management within a Governance, Retention and Compliance Strategy

Life Cycle - The record's life cycle is the life span of a record from its creation or receipt to its final disposition. It is usually described in three stages: creation, maintenance and use, and final disposition.

Metadata - Data describing stored data: that is, data describing the structure, data elements, interrelationships, and other characteristics of electronic records.

Record - A record is information, regardless of medium, detailing business transactions. Records include all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine-readable materials, and other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics. Records are made or received by an Agency of the United States Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business. Records are preserved or appropriate for preservation by that Agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government or because of the value of data in the record.

Record Category - A description of a particular set of records within a file plan. Each category has retention and disposition data associated with it, applied to all record folders and records within the category.

Record Category Identifier - An Agency's alphanumeric or numeric identifier indicating a unique record category.

Record Folder - A record folder is an extension to the file plan, either as a static structure or an aggregate gathering of records. It is used to manage case records and to break other records into periods supporting retention and disposition.

Record Identifier - An element of meta-data, a record identifier is a data element whose value is system-generated and that uniquely identifies a particular record.

Retention Period - The length of time that a record must be kept before it can be destroyed. Records not authorized for destruction are designated for permanent retention. Retention periods for temporary records may be expressed in two ways.

Time Disposition - A disposition instruction specifying when a record shall be cut off and when a fixed retention period is applied. The retention period does not begin until after the records have been cut off. Example: "Destroy after 2 years B cut off at the end of the calendar (or fiscal) year; hold for 2 years; then destroy."

Time Event Disposition - A disposition instruction specifying that a record shall be disposed of over a fixed period of time after a predictable or specified event. Once the specified event has occurred, then the retention period is applied. Example: "Destroy 3 years after close of case." The record does not start its retention period until after the case is closed - at that time its folder is cut-off and the retention period (destroy after 3 years) is applied.

Appendix V

About Formtek

For over two decades, Formtek has been providing mission-critical Enterprise Document and Content Management solutions and services to some of the most demanding operations in the world. Our capabilities and experience, particularly in the areas of engineering drawing management, technical document management, and secure collaboration, have helped both small organizations as well as large global enterprises manage their most important information assets.

Formtek solutions solve real, day-to-day document management, content management, and records management problems for worldwide customers in manufacturing, aerospace, defense, telecommunication, utility, and government. Headquartered in the USA, Formtek markets its software solutions directly, as well as through partners in the Americas, Asia, and Europe.

For more information, please visit <http://www.formtek.com> or contact sales@formtek.com.

Appendix VI

Additional Records Management Resources

A responsibility of the records management Steering Committee for the organization should be to develop the functional requirements for the system. The following list of resources can be helpful in developing the functional requirements.

DoD 5015.2-STD, "Design Criteria Standards for Electronic Records Management Software Applications," April 25, 2007

<http://www.js.pentagon.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/501502std.pdf>

ISO 15489-1 Information and documentation – Records Management

<http://www.archives.org.il/UserFiles/File/119894256812.pdf>

ARMA International

<http://www.arma.org>

AIIM International

<http://www.aiim.org>

Records Management by Alfresco. Alfresco Web site.

<http://www.alfresco.com/products/records-management/>

Records Management. Formtek Web site

http://formtek.com/downloads/solutions/Formtek_Alfresco_Records_Management.pdf