

U.S. Government Accountability Office Experience with Duty to Document:

GAO's Transition to Electronic Records Management (ERMS)

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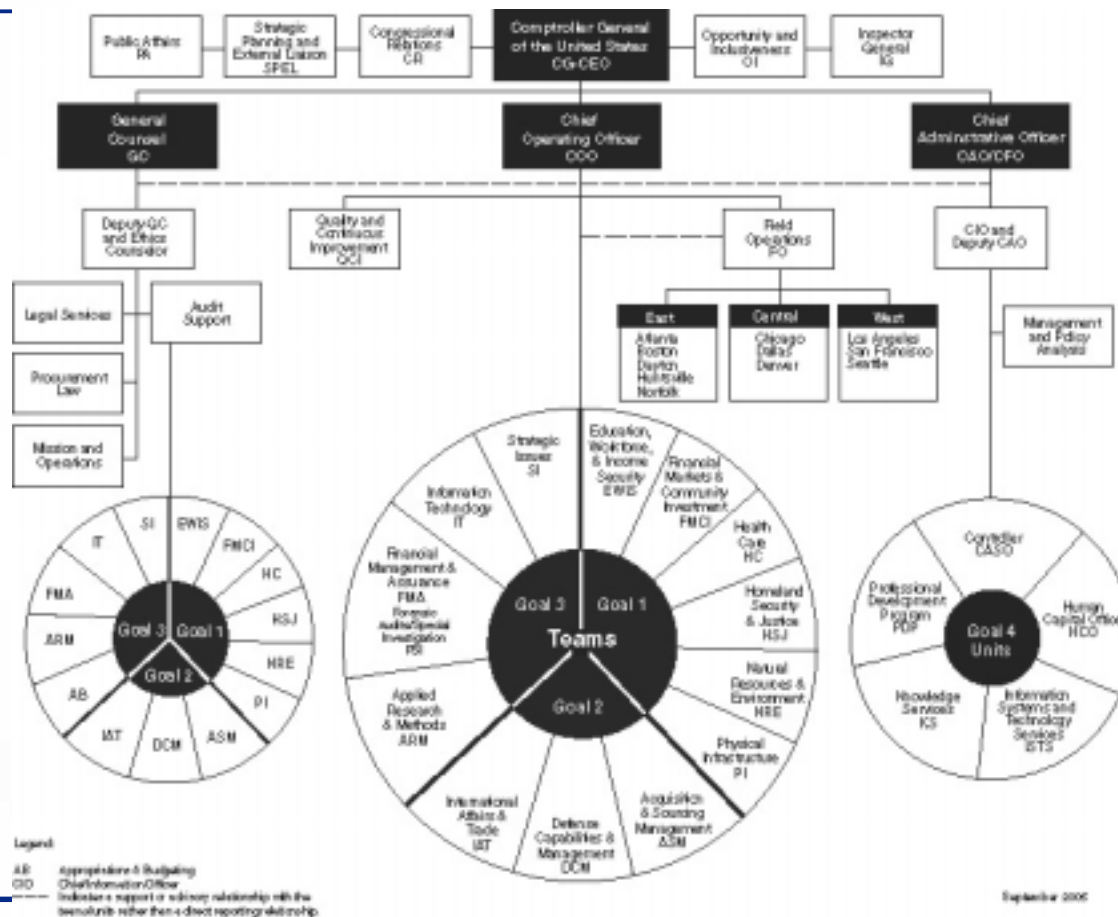
Who is GAO?

- Agency Head: David M. Walker, Comptroller General of the United States
- Staffing: 3200 employees in 11 office locations
- Budget: \$474.5 million (FY2005)
- Work Product: Approximately 1,000 reports, testimony and other issuances, annually
- Measurable financial benefits from GAO work: \$39.6 billion - - an \$83 return on every dollar invested in GAO.
- Recommendations to improve government operations: 1,900. At the end of fiscal 2005, 85 percent of the 1,752 recommendations GAO made in fiscal year 2001 had been implemented.

GAO Mission and Scope

- Mission: To support the US Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the benefit of the American people.
- Scope of Work: Most of GAO's engagements are conducted in response to congressional mandates or requests and include:
 - Evaluations of federal programs,
 - Performance, financial and management audits,
 - Policy analyses and legal opinions,
 - Bid protest adjudications, and
 - Investigations.

GAO's Organizational Chart



Duty to Document Statutes & Policy

- US Federal Records Act (Title 44 of the US Code, Chapter 31)
- Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS)
 - Apply to audits of government organizations, programs, activities, and functions, and of government assistance received by contractors, nonprofit organizations, and other non-government organizations.
 - Pertain to auditors' professional qualifications, the quality of audit effort, and the characteristics of professional and meaningful audit reports.
- Section 380: Audit Documentation, of GAO's Policy Manual

Context for GAO's ERMS Initiative

- Pioneered electronic document management in the US federal government in the mid 1990's
- Structured engagement process
- Structured Quality Assurance and Annual Inspection process to assess adequacy of audit documentation (Peer Review completed in April 2005)
- Stable and supportive senior leadership
- Increased Project Matrixing
- Increasing need for/interest in
 - Information Reuse
 - Knowledge transfer

Context for GAO's ERMS Initiative

(continued)

- Recognition of
 - Increasingly electronic environment for creating, receiving, using, and managing documents and datasets in the course of audits and operations
 - Inefficiencies in managing physical documentation
 - BUT –
- Documentation processes have remained labor-intensive and paper-based
 - AND –
- Automated business processes require a validated ERMS to capture electronic records

ERMS Vision

- Embed records retention into GAO's business processes
 - Records captured at point of creation/receipt
 - All engagement documentation stored in ERMS
 - ERMS tied to e-business initiatives
- Minimize end-user responsibilities for records management (RM)
 - Simplified document profiles
 - No duplicate system entry
 - Secure access, version control, audit trails
 - Records management staff make critical records decisions

ERMS Vision (continued)

- Enhance access to organizational assets
 - Powerful retrieval tools
 - Platform for
 - Electronic engagement and administrative business processes
 - Knowledge sharing and information reuse
- Streamline records retention
 - “Big Bucket” approach – Mission, Policy, Administrative
 - Business process reengineering to manage administrative and policy tasks and documentation in ERMS

Goal – Cost Avoidance

- Leverage the existing document management (DM) infrastructure and electronic repository
- Limit additional IT investment by integrating electronic records management with GAO's existing DM application
- Reduce the
 - Time spent looking for records and recreating files
 - Need for records cleanup, paper storage, secure destruction, and courier services
 - Volume of paper records encumbering office space

Benefits – User Community

- Knowledge sharing and information reuse
 - Ready access to and retrieval of records
 - More records captured for retrieval and reuse, including E-mail and hardcopy scanning and integration
- E-business support (electronic indexing/referencing)
- Reduced records management burden
 - Minimized need to maintain paper files and to sort and pack boxes of records for storage
 - Documents saved to ERMS are automatically linked to the appropriate records retention schedule

Benefits - External Organizations

- GAO's ERMS implementation may have a practical impact on how other agencies approach electronic records management
- GAO has partnered with the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as a pilot for simplified records retention

ERMS Requirements/Selection

- Based requirements on US Department of Defense Standard 5015.2
- Incorporated GAO-specific requirements:
 - Integrated system
 - Easy to use
 - No additional burden on the audit staff
- Assessed Requirements against certified products
- Selected Hummingbird DM based on
 - Ability to meet requirements
 - History with GAO (existing significant repository)

Managing Cost and Risk

- The existing DM system and, now, ERMS are integral components of GAO's enterprise architecture
 - Proven technology
 - Staff familiar with DM
 - Product migration fits GAO vision
- Leadership commitment
 - IT investment committee
 - GAO's Executive Committee
 - Senior leadership support for ERMS Work Group
- Partnership between CIO and Knowledge Services (functional responsibility for RM)

Managing Cost and Risk (continued)

- Phased approach
 - Prototype
 - Pilots
 - Phased Implementation
- Metrics
 - Existing Processes – “As-Is”
 - Size, nature, time, and cost to capture and maintain
 - ERMS - “To-Be”
 - Documentation files are complete and auditable
 - File plans are appropriate
 - ERMS functionality does not impede the work
 - Reduced need to print and file paper records

Implementation Strategy & Timeline

- Concept: July – December 2003
 - ERMS concept introduced
 - Concept of operations and project proposal developed
 - Approval for prototype by IT Investment Committee (ITIC) and GAO's Executive Committee
- Prototype: December 2003 – July 2004
 - Prototype successfully developed and tested
 - System and application tests successfully run on the production system
 - Developed pilot strategy
 - Approval to proceed with pilots by ITIC

Implementation Strategy & Timeline

(continued)

- **Pilots: August 2004 – March 2006**
 - Solicited and trained pilot participants
 - Monitored phased pilot rollouts
 - Used actual audit engagements, processes, and staff
 - 25 pilots initiated, 15 completed as of September 2006
 - Surveyed participants and reviewed results with ITIC
- **Decision: December 2005 – March 2006**
 - Updated Executive Committee and GAO Employee Advisory Council on progress
 - Developed phased agency-wide implementation plan
 - Authorized to proceed with GAO-wide implementation

Implementation Strategy & Timeline

(continued)

- Implementation: March – September 2006
 - Targeted communications and training strategy
 - Leadership – group and individual
 - Staff
 - ERMS
 - Effective use of document management tools
 - Phased GAO-wide implementation
 - CIO and Knowledge Services organizations
 - Audit/Engagement Teams
 - Administrative and Staff Offices
 - After-action reviews to assess adequacy and auditability of ERMS pilot documentation

Implementation Strategy & Timeline

(continued)

- Post-Implementation: October 2006
 - Complete implementation
 - Conduct post-implementation surveys
 - Assess necessary modifications
 - File plans
 - Results of after-action reviews
 - Provide targeted follow-up and refresher training
 - Just in time training being developed
 - Conduct quarterly operational reviews with the ITIC

Critical Success Factors

- Leadership Support - At all levels
- Partnerships
 - CIO/IT and RM
 - CIO/IT/RM and organization staff
- Sell the vision and benefits. Do they really address the organization's
 - Enterprise architecture
 - Culture – What's in it for me (WIIFM)?
 - Critical mission needs and business processes

Critical Success Factors (continued)

- Detailed planning and project phasing
- Oversight – quality reviews
- Meaningful metrics
- Training, training, training
 - Basic technology – how to use it effectively
 - Application specific - targeted to specific units and functions
- Constant Communication
 - Implementation Team
 - All levels of the organization
 - Other organizations

Cautions

- Take your time – “Speed Kills”
- Technology can and will expose existing process and documentation flaws

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