

Chapter 1: Filing Systems

Overview

This chapter is a thorough introduction to filing systems. It is important that students are aware of the rationale behind choosing methods and equipment before utilizing a new system. *Use this opportunity to emphasize the importance of managing information effectively with an appropriate filing system.*

Lecture Notes

A. Analyzing Records and Records Systems

Records are official documents that should be stored for later use. Nonrecords are temporary and destroyed after usefulness passes.

1. **Classifying Records** is done by their activity or by their importance, or both
 - a. Record activity or use refers to a record being active or inactive.
 - b. Importance of records can be broken down into vital, important, useful, or nonessential.
2. **The Records Cycle** extends from the moment the record is created until it is disposed of. *Refer to figure 1-1 to see the cycle in a flow chart format.*
 - a. Creation of records is taken care of by people who have the authority to do so. *Review the list of considerations on p. 3.*
 - b. Utilization of records should be handled efficiently so that usage, storage, and retrieval follow specific procedures.
 - c. Retention of records is based on each record's value. Retention schedules are based on value that is determined by an appraisal.
 - d. Transfer of records from inactive to active storage (and the reverse) can happen multiple times during a record's life. Transfers take place with the perpetual or periodic transfer methods.
 - e. Disposal of records is done once a record is no longer needed; procedures for purging or destroying records should be followed.

B. Records, Creation, Design, and Control

Records must be controlled throughout the cycle for efficiency and security; control in the creation and design phase makes for higher quality, improved productivity, reduced costs, and more effective storage and retrieval.

1. **Conventional Records Formats** should be formatted appropriately to make control of the information easier.
 - a. Correspondence includes letters, memos, and emails.
 - b. Business forms include constant information and variables.
 - c. Business reports summarize an activity.
 - d. Card systems are used as a means of filing 3x5 or 4x6 cards that reference other items.
 - e. Other conventional records include engineering documents, maps, charts, catalogs, manuals, etc.

2. **Nonconventional Records Formats** have increased in use because of automation in offices. *Point out the different spellings in disk and disc; this was discussed in the Office Systems Technology Text.*
 - a. Microforms are records that are stored on film and include microfilm, fiche, and aperture cards. Microforms can be packaged in cartridges, cassettes, or jackets. *The microfilming process is summarized in figure 1-2 on p. 13.*
 - b. Audiovisual media includes photos, slides, and CD or cassette recordings.
 - c. Electronic media includes information on magnetic disks, tapes, and CDs

C. Records Management Equipment Systems

Storage equipment is used to keep records safe during their useful life; costs represent 20% of the cost of maintaining a records storage and retrieval system.

1. **Filing Equipment for Paper Storage** is available in a variety of types.
 - a. Vertical file cabinets are used to store paper documents in a vertical fashion; they can be designed for letter-size or legal-size paper and may contain two to six drawers.
 - b. Lateral file cabinets are two to five drawers tall; they are similar to vertical files except the drawers are wider and open only 16 inches.
 - c. Stationary shelving units are a form of lateral file with an open view of the files.
 - d. High-density mobile storage includes sets of storage units on wheels that slide on tracks that are attached to the floor.
 - e. Rotary file is also known as a carousel system; it is available in horizontal and vertical formats. The operator can use a rotary file to bring a file to the point of use by turning the file.
 - f. Automated filing system has an operator that enters a code to let the system know what file is needed; a conveyor moves to the location of that file.
 - g. Card file equipment is determined by the size of the cards used; equipment may be vertical, visible, wheel, or rotary style.
 - h. Filing equipment for non-correspondence storage is determined by the type of system necessary to keep the record safe.
2. **Equipment for Microforms Preparation and Storage** is necessary to produce and use the microforms once they are developed.
 - a. Microform cameras record the image; three types are available: rotary, planetary, and step-and-repeat.
 - b. A processor is used for developing in a darkroom.
 - c. A microform reader displays images on a viewing screen.
 - d. A fiche reader helps locate images; a zoom lens allows enlargement and reduction of the image.
 - e. A microform reader-printer does both; it allows you to view images and also print them.

- f. Microform storage equipment allows easy access while keeping the microforms safe.
 - g. Automated microform retrieval equipment is used to store and retrieve microforms; they are available as self-contained units or remote-controlled.
3. **Equipment for Optical Disc Preparation and Storage** is necessary for transferring images to disc.
 - a. Optical character recognition (OCR) scanners convert documents into digital images.
 - b. Glass discs are heavier, cost more, and do not spin as fast; polymer discs have a faster access speed and the same life span as glass.
 - c. Storage for optical discs is in “jukeboxes.”
 - d. Intelligent retrieval methods are used to access information from the computer.
4. **Equipment for Digital Storage** is also necessary.
 - a. The computer is the vital link between users and information in files and records.
 - b. Office systems software is used to prepare records; file management is a critical issue because of the need to keep certain documents and purge others.
 - c. OCR systems read typewritten, printed, or handwritten information and convert them into a digital form for processing.
 - d. Optical discs can be used to store all types of documents.
5. **Non-computer Assisted Storage/Retrieval Systems** refer to those systems used with paper documents or records on microform that don't need computer retrieval.
 - a. Paper storage and retrieval systems have a variety of benefits, including:
 - File security
 - Space-saving system
 - Automatic charge-out features
 - Standardized filing procedures
 - b. Microform storage and retrieval units require the following equipment:
 - A reader-printer
 - A microfilm camera
 - An indexing system
6. **Computer Assisted Storage/Retrieval Systems** are especially helpful because of the file management tools. *Review figure 1-3 on p. 24 to further explain this type of system.*
 - a. Automatic indexing utilizes a file inventory, records usage, file management, and bar code indexes.
 - b. Electronic filing uses a combination of word processing, information processing, and micrographics technology. It includes:
 - Storage of incoming documents

- Storage of in-house documents
 - Document imaging
 - Database management
- c. Electronic mail messages should be stored, managed, and purged as necessary.

D. Utilizing Filing Classification Systems

Classification systems are used so records will be stored according to a set of rules; this makes retrieval systematic.

1. **Needs Analysis for Filing Systems** will assist in determining the best classification system.
 - a. Identification of records problems might include overcrowding, misfiling, or lack of tracking system.
 - b. Identification of records and their use will help trace their use throughout the organization.
 - c. Retrieval of records helps determine a good filing arrangement.
 - d. The number of records maintained will help determine the filing arrangement.
 - e. The size of the organization will impact the number of users needing access to the records and the number of people needed to maintain the records.
 - f. Users of the records must be able to work well with the classification system.
 - g. The possibility of expansion will provide insight on the possibility of expanding the filing system.
2. **Types of Filing Arrangements**
 - a. Alphabetic systems file by the name of the correspondent or document.
 - b. Numeric systems code items with numbers.
 - c. Alphanumeric systems code items with letters and numbers.
 - d. Subject systems file by topic.
 - e. Geographic systems file by location.
 - f. Classification systems should be standardized and consistent.
3. **Standardization of Classification Systems** allows for consistency in setting up files and records and an effective records management program.
 - a. Standardization of filing terms should be enacted throughout the organization; be sure everyone in the company is familiar with them.
 - b. Documentation of filing procedures is important so that everyone is following the same rules. *Discuss the problems that can occur if the standardization is not complete.*
4. **Identification Aids and Supplies**
 - a. File folders store documents pertaining to one correspondent, case, or account. *Define Individual, miscellaneous, and out folders.*
 - b. Folder tabs are used for captions; various tab placements are available.

- c. Guides form an outline of the classification system.
 - Primary, secondary, out, and special guides are used.
- d. Color coding is used in an open-shelf system to show the starting and ending points for various sections.

E. Electronic Records Systems

1. **Collection of Data Files** are found in a database; the size and design of databases will vary.
 - a. Data entry has to be done only once for each piece of information.
 - b. Volume of information that can be stored in a database is very large; different storage devices may have to be explored.
2. **Databases for a Variety of Topics** allow for data to be combined and avoids duplication of data.
3. **Quick Access to Data** as information is needed from the database.
4. **Records Tracking Systems** automatically track in-and-out activity.
 - a. Types of systems include database management software, commercial CBRM systems, and in-house developed software.
 - b. Considerations in CBRM system selection are many. *Be sure to review the list on p. 30.*
5. **Integration with Other Systems** is useful with optical disc and micrographics technology. Examples include:
 - a. CAR system with off-line indexes and off-line reader
 - b. CAR system with online index and off-line reader
 - c. CAR system with online index and online reader
 - d. CAR system with online reader and minicomputer

Additional Resources for Students

Recommended readings (no texts should be more than two years old):

- Kallaus, Norman and Judith Read Smith. *Records Management*.
- Keeling, B. Lewis and Norman F. Kallaus. *Administrative Office Management*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Oliverio and Pasewark. *The Office: Procedures and Technology*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Quible, Zane K. *Administrative Office Management – An Introduction*. Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Ricks, B., A. Swafford, and K. Gow. *Information and Image Management*. South-Western Publishing Co.
- Robek, Brown, and Stephens. *Information and Records Management*.

- Scriven, Kozell, Myers, and Hapke. *Professional Office Procedures*. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill.

Current issues of periodicals or business publications are also an excellent resource. Some of the following periodicals have an accompanying Web site.

<i>Current Periodical</i>	<i>Web Address</i>
<i>Gregg Reference Manual</i>	
<i>IAAP Complete Office Handbook</i>	http://www.iaap-hq.org/products/handbook.htm
<i>Modern Office Technology</i>	
<i>OfficePro</i>	http://www.iaap-hq.org/officepro/toc.htm
<i>The Office</i>	