How to Simplify Complex Records Management in Compliance-Driven Organizations
On the Cusp of History—Again

If you take a brief look back at the history of Records Management, you’ll notice that Records Management experiences shift when two things happen:

1. When new and evolving regulatory requirements arise;
2. And when there’s a spike in the amount of information and records being created.

Records management effectively began in the 1950s with the establishment of the Federal Records Act. It created the legal framework for federal records management, requiring federal agencies to establish an ongoing program for records management. The Federal Records Act became “the touchstone for subsequent developments both in federal records management and in the management of records in other organizations.”

Since then, organizations have been continuously adapting to new and evolving regulatory requirements at the international, federal, state, and local levels. Different states and countries have different rules relating to how organizations must store and maintain records. And different industries—from healthcare and life sciences to financial services, aviation, and others—add another level of complexity by mandating how personal, confidential, and even technical information is handled.

In regards to data growth, the numbers are staggering. A 2016 article titled “Digital Data Storage is Undergoing Mind-Boggling Growth” cites several impressive statistics:

- In the 2010-2020 decade, the world’s data will grow by 50X; i.e., from about 1ZB in 2010 to about 50ZB in 2020.
- “Between the dawn of civilization and 2003, we only created five exabytes; now we’re creating that amount every two days. By 2020, that figure is predicted to sit at 53 zettabytes (53 trillion gigabytes)—an increase of 50 times.” -- Hal Varian, Chief Economist at Google.
- IBM found that humans now create 2.5 quintillion bytes of data daily; that’s the equivalent of about half a billion HD movie downloads.

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1 “Closing an Era: Historical Perspectives on Modern Archives and Records Management,” Richard J. Cox
2 EEtimes, September 14, 2016, http://www.eetimes.com
What’s more, if that information were all contained in structured databases as rows and columns, the problem might be manageable. In reality, however, 80% of content created is unstructured (not stored in traditional RDBMS systems), in the form of emails, documents, and web and multimedia content. And 90% of that unstructured content is not managed at all.

**The Cambrian Explosion...of Data**

![The Cambrian Explosion...of Data](image)

Given the complex regulatory environment and sheer volume of records subject to a multitude of regulations, what worked for Records Management even a few years ago is no longer sustainable. This is especially true for larger organizations that have multi-tiered policies covering multiple types of data that are specific to individual countries and different regulations.

As a result, Records Management is at its next crossroads. Yesterday’s Records Management approaches simply cannot keep up. What’s needed is a strategic and technologically savvy solution that simplifies the complexity of Records Management for compliant-driven organizations. This paper explains why traditional methods fall short and what to look for in a next-generation Records Management solution.

**Why Traditional Solutions Fall Short**

Managing records effectively is at the heart of any information governance initiative. Tracking records from the moment they are created and destroying records on a predictable, consistent basis ensures compliance with regulatory requirements and reduces risks related to litigation and data theft.
Organizations typically take one of two approaches to managing electronic records. The first is simply to save everything. The second is to implement software solutions that reproduce the records management processes used to manage paper records. Neither is effective.

The problems with the first approach—retaining everything indefinitely—are pretty obvious. It’s expensive, and it creates a great deal of risk. Retaining all records without regard to specific regulatory requirements is not only negligent, but risk also increases as you retain information beyond the required retention period because it increases the chance that a legal action or data theft will expose content unintentionally.

The problem with the second approach—software solutions that collect records as if they were paper records—is that they usually fail to be adopted effectively. These solutions rely on users to take explicit actions to “declare,” tag, and move records to a specific storage location. When records management is dependent on user actions, adoption rates are abysmal.

A Better Approach to Records Management

Organizations that have complex, compliance-driven requirements should approach Records Management from a strategic perspective and employ the latest advances in technology that encompass records and policies across all systems through a single tool.

A. A Strategic Business Analysis

Records Management technology is only as good as the processes and policies that an organization identifies and establishes to be managed by the system. Organizations cannot afford to purchase technology and overlook the very foundation that will enable it to prove effective.

This is why a smart Records Management solution begins with a strategic business analysis. The analysis should identify and define retention policy rules across all geographies, data types, and specific regulations. It should include a consideration of the scale of the solution required to support an organization’s needs, along with appropriate deployment technologies, archiving strategies, and other key factors that impact effective Records Management throughout the content lifecycle.

Without a strategic approach, any Records Management solution will only be piecemeal. Organizations will spend more time patching holes as their requirements change, and they will incur greater risk from short-sighted solutions.

By 2020, 80% of content that should be classified as “records” will be so classified automatically without user interaction, due to the maturity of analytics technology - according to Gartner.
B. Comprehensive Records Management—From One Place

Second, a modern Records Management solution should connect directly to all of your systems that produce records, providing the ability to see all of your information across all systems through one tool. The system should capture electronic records as they are created, automatically, without the need for any action by a user, leveraging today’s advanced software technologies.

This is the foundation for effective Records Management through the entire lifecycle, until a scheduled destruction date when an automated workflow activates the destruction process as required by each record.

Such a bird’s eye tool will ease the burden of managing records and policies across your infrastructure and will prove an essential capability to reduce complexity.

7 Core Capabilities

Beyond the function of encompassing all systems, a next-generation Records Management solution should include these seven capabilities:

1. Connectors for Real-Time Data Ingestion

A next-generation solution should include connectors that provide a simple way to connect to the systems that produce records, whether they are human resource information systems, ERP solutions, manufacturing management systems, enterprise content management systems, or archival storage solutions.

Using a connector, the core systems should ingest records as you produce them or when they hit a trigger date, or, alternatively, track records and leave them in place. Records can then be automatically captured, ingested and classified on an on-going basis without human interaction.

2. File Analysis

You likely have content located in a number of applications and repositories that require records management. File analytics lets you connect into repositories such as business applications, Office 365, SharePoint, file shares, and cloud-based file sharing apps to find out what content you have, so you can decide how to manage it.
Once connected and the content analyzed, you can identify and classify personal information, credit card data, and redundant, obsolete and trivial content (ROT) to determine the necessary actions to take. Not all content should be retained, and file analytics provide the ability to cleanse the content, remove duplicates, and mask, move or delete improperly stored personal information.

3. Ingest Records, or Manage Them in Place

Another characteristic to simplify records management is the ability to either ingest records or leave them where they are, while still enabling effective search, retrieval, and management.

Most records management systems take the approach of ingesting records and collecting them in a central location. Sometimes, however, it is more effective to manage records in place, to leave them in the system that created them while adding the ability to search, retrieve, and track them. A next-generation solution supports both models, creating a universal records management solution that keeps track of all the organization’s records, wherever they are.

The result is a single point of management and a single point of search for records produced by any system in the organization: one place to search, retrieve, and manage records.

4. Classify Records Automatically

An intelligent solution also should provide embedded content analytics capabilities. Such capabilities classify every record based on the format and content of the item as well as by explicit metadata. Instead of relying on users to tag every item, each record is analyzed and classified based on the system that produced it, the type of file or format, and the actual content of the item.

Auto-classification means that records are much easier to categorize using a defined taxonomy on an on-going basis, and they are much easier to search for and find when needed for business or legal purposes.

5. Search Records Wherever They Are

When you must retrieve a record as part of a business or legal process, the effectiveness of an organization’s records management system is put to the test. If you have to search multiple systems and locations, then your system has failed the test.
The next generation of Records Management solutions allow federated search across multiple systems, sources, and locations where records may be located. They provide a “single pane of glass” through which any record can be located and retrieved by an authorized user.

The ability to locate records wherever they are, based on their content as well as their metadata tags, is not only more convenient, it is essential to meeting legal requirements. When an external document request is received, compliance within a strict time limit is required, and failure to provide requested documents can result in legal ramifications.

6. Apply Complex Retention Rules Effectively

One of the most critical capabilities of a technologically savvy Records Management solution is the ability to handle complex rules that govern records retention. Records retention rules must reflect business decisions by the organization as well as often-conflicting regulatory requirements. The most effective solutions will help automate the application of complex retention policies.

For example, by associating every record with one or more retention rules, which in turn are based on business policies defined in the system, the system can review every retention rule at each stage of a record’s lifecycle—from creation and modification to inactivity—determining which rules apply at each juncture and which rules take precedence.

The most sophisticated solutions will be able to apply different retention rules to records after their initial creation. This capability is particularly important because business rules change over time, and systems that can only define a retention rule at record creation cannot effectively model the changing retention requirements of an organization.

The result is a system that can effectively support complex retention, including hierarchical retention rules that address overlapping organizational and geographical boundaries with different regulatory requirements.

7. Automate Disposition Tasks

Removing the requirement for user action is the seventh core capability to look for in a solution. Automated workflows should be configurable to manage tasks such as moving an item from a source system to the archive, or triggering the final disposition of an item.
Items that have reached the end of their retention period can be added to a queue and presented to the administrator for approval. After approval, they can be scheduled for destruction, and all evidence of the record can be removed from the system.

Getting Started with a Comprehensive, Intelligent Records Management Solution

Records Management remains at the center of a comprehensive information governance program. And today, effective records management is at a crossroads. It is more critical than ever because records management plays a critical role in addressing regulatory requirements and reducing the risk of data theft. At the same time, successful records management is more challenging than ever before, with the exponential growth of electronic content created every day in every business. Organizations that are able to address complex requirements successfully will see success while those that don’t will struggle against the consequences.

Flatirons Jouve and Everteam have partnered to help organizations in compliance-driven industries address their toughest Records Management challenges. Together, we provide an intelligent records management solution that combines strategic business analysis along with the newest analytics and artificial intelligence technologies to automate the collection, indexing, and management of all the records in an organization, no matter what system produced them or where they are located.

everteam

Everteam specializes in enterprise content management solutions for compliant-driven environments. In an ever-increasing legal and compliance environment, Everteam’s range of products support the improvement of content-driven processes and enable enterprise customers to easily monitor and align their content strategies for overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Its everteam.records solution acts as a single system for the collection, indexing and analysis of records (digital or paper-based, structured or unstructured) produced anywhere, and by any system, in your organization. Everteam partners with Flatirons Jouve as its primary integrator for deploying everteam.records into highly complex environments across North America.
Flatirons Jouve provides content lifecycle management consulting services and solutions to content- and data-driven organizations. Flatirons Jouve’s strengths are:

1. **Business Analysis and Solution Design:** helping large organizations wrap their heads around their toughest content lifecycle management challenges and developing a manageable plan using the most advanced technology available to address them.

2. **Implementation:** Flatirons Jouve deploys solutions based on business analyses and solution design, managing all aspects of the project and ensuring that the solution delivered meets client expectations.

Flatirons Jouve partners with technology providers like Everteam, whose everteam.records solution covers the capabilities described above to help clients simplify their most complex, compliant-driven Records Management challenges. Flatirons Jouve is Everteam’s partner of choice for implementing the everteam.records system across North America.
ABOUT FLATRONS JOUVE

Flatirons Jouve™ (www.flatironsjouve.com) provides solutions and services that organizations need in order to harness their most complex data, optimize their business processes, and create compelling digital experiences. A longtime leader in content driven markets like aviation and publishing, Flatirons Jouve™ also provides disruptive innovations to meet knowledge delivery requirements in the manufacturing, banking, insurance, education and public sector.

Flatirons Jouve™ counts 2,500 employees and operates worldwide in 15 countries from offices in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

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