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# Great Lakes Wave



## Flexible Scheduling— *The Big Bucket*

by Galen Wilson

The “flexible schedule”—a new agency records schedule philosophy—achieved practical application recently when the Archivist signed NASA’s new schedule for program and project records. Here’s how it differs from the traditional way...and why you should care.

A traditional schedule is based on the records “series”—records that “match,” such as motor vehicle maintenance records or time and attendance records. Many general office files do well when scheduled by series, as each document a different purpose. For instance, General Records Schedule (GRS) 10 contains 8 items for different aspects of managing motor vehicles. These differences are underscored by differing retentions—ranging from 3 months to 6 years.

The new way of scheduling records is based on work processes. Rather than focus on the work product (a records series), this approach focuses on the work itself. For the second example given above—time and attendance—GRS 2 contains one item

for “source” records and another for “input” records, but retains both for 6 years. The new way of scheduling would use one schedule item for all records created by that work process.

Reducing two series to one may not excite enthusiasm. But the advantage increases when this philosophy is applied to scientific research records. By considering records of different research products in tandem because they are produced by the same work process, NASA was able to replace 185 separate series with just 13 items.

Here’s how it works. The first three items are for programs or projects that are “first of a kind, establish precedents, produce major contributions to scientific or engineering knowledge, integrate proven technology into new products, or are/have been subject of widespread media attention or Congressional scrutiny.” Item 1, permanent retention, includes any record “essential for understanding the history of a program/project from inception to completion.”

Item 2 covers all records with “operational value to the Agency” throughout program/project life, and keeps them between 5 and 30 years. Item 3, retention from 2 to 15 years, includes all routine records not essential to operations.

Another flexible schedule feature is the retention “band.” Under Item 2 above, an office can legally destroy records when 5 years old but can retain them as long as 30 years if it has a good business reason to do so. Retention bands put front-line users and records managers in the driver’s seat. They provide latitude to make decisions based on local need for records.

If you think a flexible schedule model would be useful to your records, send an e-mail to [galen.wilson@nara.gov](mailto:galen.wilson@nara.gov). We might be able to make efficient changes to how government works.



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### FY 2006 Training Program

*Coming up...*

#### Chicago:

Nov 29-30, 2005 KA 2 - Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information

Dec 1-2, 2005 KA 4 - Records Schedule Implementation

Dec 5, 2005 KA 6 - Records Management and Program Development

Dec 6-7, 2005 KA 3 - Records Scheduling

Dec 8-9, 2005 KA 5 - Asset and Risk Management

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#### Dayton:

Dec 7-8, 2005 KA 2 - Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information

**Contact: Marybelle Yeazel**  
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[marybelle.yeazel@nara.gov](mailto:marybelle.yeazel@nara.gov)

*The FY 06 Records Management Training Opportunities Brochure for the Great Lakes Region is enclosed with this mailing. Please take a moment to browse through it and plan your FY 06 training schedule!*

## More Guidance on E-Mail!

by James Hurst

GRS Transmittal No. 15 of September 14, 2005 revises General Records Schedule (GRS) 23, Item 7, Transitory Records. Included in this transmittal is guidance on disposition of short-term (180 days or less) e-mail messages having minimal documentary or evidential value.

Examples of e-mail covered by GRS 23, Item 7 include:

(1) routine requests for information, publications, copies of replies requiring no administrative action or policy decisions; (2) original office copies of transmittal letters that add no information to the transmitted material; (3) quasi-official no-



nces not pertaining to official action, such as notices of holidays, charity fund appeals, bond campaigns, etc; (4) records documenting routine activities containing no substantive information, such as messages about meetings and schedule related activities; (5) suspense and tickler files serving as reminders for future actions.

Don't forget: 36 CFR 1228.50(d) requires that you disseminate GRS changes within 6 months of receipt. Please notify NARA within 90 days of this GRS Transmittal No.15 if you intend to use your agency's approved schedule in lieu of the GRS. Also, submit a Standard Form (SF) 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority, if you intend to apply a retention period for records that differs from GRS instructions.

Copies of the General Records Schedules are available at

<http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/ardor/records-schedule.html> (HTML, MS WORD, and PDF formats).

For further information please contact the appraiser in NARA's Life Cycle Management Division with whom your agency normally works. Your agency's records officer should be able to supply the name of this contact.



## The Federal Electronics Records Services Team

by John Stewart

The Assistant Archivist for Regional Records Services has appointed a group of records management and records center staff to the Federal Electronic Records Services Team (FERST). FERST has been assigned tasks of investigating, planning and developing a business case for electronic records services in Federal records centers (FRC).

FERST has been gathering information relating to current Federal records center capabilities and surveying Federal agency records officers to determine what e-records services Federal agencies would make use of if NARA offered the services. Among the services that agency records officers expressed interest include document conversion and document storage. In response, FERST is sponsoring pilot projects at selected Federal records centers to determine

the potential of document conversion production scanning and SmartScan. FERST is also overseeing two pilot projects testing the viability of electronic media storage alternatives. One NARA pilot project site at Kansas City, MO is currently concentrating on receipt and processing procedures for e-media storage while a second pilot project site in Suitland, MD is working on electronic records media storage environment design and construction requirements.

FERST is also developing a formal business case for an e-Vital Records/Multi-Agency COOP Site pilot focused at the Denver, CO FRC. The business plan incorporates findings from the Denver Continuity of Operations 2005 Functional Exercise sponsored by the Denver FEB and the regional offices of GSA, NARA, and FEMA.

FERST is working with NARA's website manager to provide information on NARA's website about the envisioned FRC e-records services and the pilot projects sponsored by FERST.

All of these FERST's efforts are in preparation of actions that will integrate FRC electronic records services with the envisioned Electronic Records Archives (ERA). As the ERA comes on line, integrated records management and records center staff will be required to establish the business processes for e-records services for non-permanent e-records within the ERA umbrella.

Watch NARA's website for information about the developing services.

## Federal Records Management Training

by Anthony Beard

Training is presented at NARA regional facilities, NARA Washington, DC, area facilities, and other locations across the country. NARA's national training program includes courses in six "Areas of Knowledge" that are relevant to anyone responsible for managing Federal records and comprise NARA's Certificate Program in Federal Records Management. Other courses in the national curriculum include Basic Records Operations, Advanced Electronic Records Management, and three half-day courses targeting program managers, legal counsel, and information technology professionals. In addition, NARA training locations nationwide offer tailored records management workshops of particular need in their regions.

Participants in NARA's records management courses receive a comprehensive

overview of managing information by performing practical, task-oriented, hands-on exercises throughout each course. The courses focus on using records management as a tool for supporting agency business processes. Upon completion of these courses, participants will have the information and skills necessary to perform their records management duties more efficiently and effectively.

NARA offers an optional certification program for individuals who successfully complete training in Federal records management. The goals of NARA's certification program are to:

*\*Raise awareness and improve effectiveness of Federal records management;*

*\*Increase the level of professionalism of those managing Federal records;*

*\*Give Federal records professionals a set of*

*benchmarks to gauge their professional development;*

*\*Give NARA the ability to better assess the effectiveness of its training program.*

Participants may take examinations upon completion of Knowledge Areas Two through Six. Those who successfully pass all five examinations will receive NARA's Certificate of Federal Records Management Training, signed by the Archivist of the United States.

Knowledge Area One is recommended as a foundation course for those seeking certification but is not required to obtain certification.

For more information please visit our website:

<http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/training/index.html>

## New NARA Strategic Plan Being Developed

by Joseph Suster

With a new Archivist, Dr. Allen Weinstein, at its helm since February, NARA is now drafting a new strategic plan to replace the current one that has guided the agency since 1997.

That plan, which features both vision and mission statements and five strategic goals related to the life cycle of

essential evidence, control of electronic records, ease of records access, records preservation, and staff and resource management, will soon be replaced by a new plan. Already during the past summer, teams of specially trained NARA employ-



ees hosted focus groups at agency facilities around the country to collect information from resident staff on what the substance of new vision and mission statements should be. Such sessions were held at both the Chicago and Dayton Federal Records Centers in August.

While the new strategic plan may have somewhat different goals and enabling strategies than the current one, those that reflect the direction Archivist Weinstein wants NARA to go, customer agencies can be sure that the high level of records service and assistance they currently enjoy in the Great Lakes Region will continue. An ever more responsive Federal Records Center Program, Targeted Assistance, the soon to be built Electronic Records Archives, and continuing NARA

outreach to its Federal, state, and local constituencies, especially in the area of education, will be the hallmarks of an agency strategic plan that will emphasize measurable performance and tangible results for all citizens.





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## NARA - Great Lakes Region's E-Forum

by Marybelle Yeazel

On August 11, NARA's Great Lakes Region presented its annual Electronic Records Forum in Columbus, Ohio. There were forty-six attendees from Federal, state, and local government as well as the private sector. The forum was co-hosted by the Columbus Chapter of ARMA. Mr. Richard Marcus' presentation "You mean we can really delete them?!" was well received by the group.



Richard Marcus discusses NARA's E-Mail Sort-Out Campaign.

Mr. Marcus, NARA's records officer, discussed NARA's e-mail sort-out campaigns, how they started, and how far they have come. He showed the group posters that have been used to advertise the sort-out campaigns over the years.



Joe Suster discusses the GRS updates .

Joe Suster (RM-Chicago) did a brief presentation on recent updates to the GRS as they relate to electronic records. James Hurst's (RM-Dayton) presentation cov-

ered NARA's new e-mail rule. A highlight of the forum was the encore presentation of "To Tell The Truth" a one-act Readers' Theatre drama about authentic electronic records, written and directed by Galen Wilson (RM -Dayton). The premier of this presentation was at this year's NAGARA Conference in Richmond, Virginia.



Galen Wilson watches as Jennifer Gerth , Archivist of the Marianist Archives at the University of Dayton plays the part of the General Counsel in "To Tell The Truth".