I.   BACKGROUND

The records management program that the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) currently administers was designed primarily for people who created, maintained, and used paper records. It has served us well for several decades. But, while agencies continue to generate paper, most records are created electronically and remain in an electronic format for at least a portion of their lives. This change has been accompanied by a number of other developments in the Federal record-keeping environment. Some of these developments are:

- Software manufacturers specialize in providing expanded tools for creation and modification of electronic documents, but tools to manage these records lag behind. As a result, agencies are trying to manage most records in paper filing systems, despite the fact that some of the new electronic formats cannot be rendered well (and in some cases cannot be rendered at all) in a paper environment.
- Email often replaces phone conversations and face to face meetings that would not have been included in files in the past, resulting in more records being created.
- Email replaces written memoranda, letters and other types of written, "formal" communications.
- There has been a proliferation of copies made possible by photocopy machines and other devices that quickly and cheaply duplicate all types of paper-based information.
- It is easier to disseminate, revise, and reuse records to support knowledge management. This complicates the job of managing the records to document business processes.
- Changing technology and a decline in the number of personnel who specialize in filing agency records places greater records management responsibilities on program staff whose main focus must be to carry out the mission of the agency, not manage records.

Finally, the advent of electronic records brought another party into the mix of records creation and management – the information technology (IT) staff, turning the two-way (program staff and records management staff) records relationship into what is often a dual, two-way relationship: program/records management staff and program/IT staff. The IT staff manages the systems that contain electronic records and does so according to its own practices, which are sometimes different from records management practices.

To meet the challenges posed by these developments, NARA is embarking on a redesign of Federal records management. The redesign grows out of the July 2002 NARA "Proposal For a Redesign of Federal Records Management," and from a number of valuable comments that interested stakeholders provided us about the proposal. This document presents a strategic framework for the redesign effort and outlines how NARA will move forward to implement the redesign.

II.   GOALS

Our Strategic Plan states that NARA will ensure ready access to essential evidence that documents the rights of American citizens, the actions of Federal officials, and the national experience. In support of the NARA Strategic Plan, we will partner with stakeholders to ensure that:

- Federal agencies can economically and effectively create and manage records necessary to meet business needs,
- records are kept long enough to protect rights and assure accountability, and
- records of archival value are preserved and made available for future generations.

III.   STRATEGIES

These are the strategies that we will use to achieve our goals.

1. We will create mutually supporting relationships with agencies that advance agency missions and effective records management.

2. We will demonstrate that effective records management adds value to agency business processes. Our guidance, training, and assistance to agencies will focus on using records management as an important tool for supporting agency business processes.

3. We will stress that there is no one level to which all records must be managed. Resources, techniques, and tools should be allocated based on business needs for the records as information assets, legal requirements (e.g. the Federal Records Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and the Privacy Act), risks, and resources.

4. We will stress that agencies may choose a variety of means to manage their records, including traditional records management programs, automated tools, or other approaches. Our concern will be how well records are managed, not whether agencies have all the elements of a traditional records management program.

5. Our approach to records management will be based on the ISO Records Management Standard 15489. We will focus on the importance of trustworthy records, and we will stress the concepts of authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability found in the ISO Standard. We will stress that records management processes occur throughout the records life cycle, rather than in a fixed, sequential manner. In developing regulations, policies and guidance, NARA will stress the importance of agencies documenting their business processes, assessing the value of their information assets, and using risk assessment to determine appropriate records management approaches.

6. We will focus on those records that are essential to the government as a whole for accountability, protection of rights, and documentation of the national experience. This will help NARA and Federal agencies to focus attention and resources on a smaller number of government activities (work processes) - those areas and programs that create and produce such records.

7. We will establish priorities for committing NARA resources based on three criteria: the degree to which records relate to rights and accountability; the degree to which they create records with archival value, and the degree to which records in a program area are at risk.

8. We will partner with Federal agencies and others to develop, adapt, or adopt products and practices that support good records management. Our experience shows that we are more effective in partnerships than working alone. Potential partners and sources will include standards organizations, other governments, and the private sector.

9. We will provide leadership, in partnership with other key stakeholders, to focus agency attention on electronic records needs and to guide and support solutions to electronic records issues and problems.

IV.   Tactics

We will use the following tactics to help us carry out our strategies and achieve our goals.

Communications
Good communications are essential to any program. These tactics are related to all nine strategies in Section III.

- Advocacy
   To meet statutory requirements and the needs of agency records managers, NARA will take a more active role in raising records management awareness.
- Change Management
   NARA will address internal and external stakeholder needs so that together we can make the necessary changes in our records-related business processes.

Guidance and Training
We will modify our guidance and training program to reflect strategies 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9 in Section III.

- General and specific records management training
   Training for the Federal records management community can take many forms, and NARA will take advantage of as many training opportunities as possible, particularly as new policies and procedures are established.

- ▪ <u>Certification Program</u>
  NARA is establishing a program that will certify individuals as having demonstrated knowledge of Federal records management requirements.
- ▪ <u>Guidance in implementing records management regulations and procedures</u>
  NARA will provide a variety of tools to agencies, including guidance documents, handbooks, and FAQs.

Assistance to Agencies

The tactics in this group will help us set priorities for providing assistance to Federal agencies. We will be able to provide assistance appropriate to the business needs of the agency while ensuring the protection, preservation of, and access to records of archival value. These tactics support all nine strategies in Section III.

- ▪ <u>Resource Allocation</u>
  NARA will focus its resources according to the defined set of priorities found in Section III.
- ▪ <u>Targeted Assistance</u>
  NARA will form partnerships with agencies to solve specific records management problems.

Oversight

The United States Code authorizes NARA to inspect agency records and record management practices and to conduct records management studies (44 U.S.C. § 2904-2906). A streamlined program for inspections and studies supports strategies 2, 7, 8, and 9 in Section III.

- ▪ <u>Inspections</u>
  NARA will undertake inspections when an agency, or a series of agencies in a specific line of business, fails to address high-level records management risks or specific problems identified through NARA's risk-based resource allocation model or other means such as Government reports or the media.
- ▪ <u>Studies</u>
  Records management studies will focus on cross-Government issues and will be undertaken to identify and analyze best practices and develop Government-wide recommendations and guidance.
- ▪ <u>Reporting</u>
  NARA will report to Congress and OMB regarding problems and recommended practices discovered as part of targeted assistance projects, inspections and studies that we carry out.

Business Process Reengineering
We will change our own life cycle work processes so that they more effectively and efficiently support the needs of our customers, and so that they better support and complement one another. This tactic supports all nine strategies in Section III.

Planning and Evaluation Tools
These tactics support all nine strategies in Section III

- Planning Tools
  We will work with stakeholders to build records management considerations into the planning and procurement processes for new records systems.
- Evaluation Tools
  We will work with stakeholders to develop methods that agencies can use to evaluate how effectively they are managing their records.

Records Management Tools
We will support the development of automated tools that will help agencies manage Federal records. These tactics support all nine strategies in Section III.

- DOD Standard
  We will continue to support the Department of Defense (DoD) 5015.2 Standard and will partner with DoD to further develop the standard.
- Records Management Service Components
  We will champion an effort to develop records management service components that can be built into agency enterprise architectures.

Scheduling and Appraisal
We will find ways to minimize routine scheduling activity so that agencies and NARA will be able to focus resources on the priority records identified in Section III. These tactics support all nine strategies in Section III.

- Flexible Scheduling
  NARA will change its process so that, except for permanent records, agencies can schedule records at any level of aggregation that meets their business needs.
- Expanded GRS
  NARA will provide additional general records schedules to include more types of records that are common to Federal agencies.
- Retention standards
  When appropriate, we will develop retention standards that cover broad functional areas of the Government.

- Appraisal policy

  NARA will codify the strategic framework, objectives and guidelines that it uses to determine whether Federal records have permanent value.

- Front-end scheduling

  We will work with agencies to schedule their records as early as possible in the records life cycle, including building scheduling into the design of new records systems.

- Mandatory destruction

  We will seek to change the statutory requirement for mandatory destruction on records and substitute a more flexible and less labor intensive approach to meeting agency needs to keep some records longer than their NARA approved disposition authorities (retention schedules) specify.

Records Center and Archival Activities

These tactics will help us provide agencies with modern records center services and will help us preserve permanent records and make them available for research. These projects support strategies 1, 3 through 6, 8 and 9 in Section III above.

- Records Center Program and electronic records services

  To the extent viable from a business perspective, the NARA Records Center Program will accept and service electronic records.

- Custody policy

  We will publish a policy directive that defines affiliated relationships and establishes criteria for affiliated archives. This will clarify when it is appropriate to establish such relationships and will help NARA and our affiliates combine our resources to preserve and make accessible records of archival value.

- Expanded formats for archival records transfers

  We will accept a broader range of formats and data types for permanent electronic records.

- Pre-accessioning

  We will work with agencies to obtain permanent electronic records as soon as possible and before they are legally accessioned so that we can ensure their preservation.

- Pre-description

  We will work with agencies to capture archival descriptive information about permanent records as part of the scheduling process.

V.   Success

We will measure our progress through the performance plans associated with tactics outlined in Section IV above. We will know we have succeeded when:

- NARA is recognized as providing leadership in records management throughout the Federal government.
- NARA is agile in adapting to changes in information technology and in the Federal recordkeeping environment.
- Records management is viewed by agency leaders and managers as an important component of asset and risk management.
- Federal agencies have the records management tools necessary to support their business needs.
- More people, inside and outside of the Federal government, know about, use, and benefit from NARA services.
- Current and future users of records have ready access to essential evidence regardless of where it is or where they are.