



Social Security Administration, Senior Agency Official for Records Management
FY 2015 Annual Report



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The *Managing Government Records Directive (M-12-18)* requires Senior Agency Officials (SAOs) for Records Management to provide an annual report to NARA. This report demonstrates how your organization is achieving the goals of the *Directive* and other important initiatives as identified by NARA.

NARA uses the reports to determine the overall progress of the Federal Government in meeting the goals of the *Directive*, including implementing proper email management and transitioning to electronic recordkeeping. Additionally, NARA uses the report for information sharing purposes to provide best practices and model solutions with Federal agencies.

The reporting period begins on November 16, 2015, and reports are due back to NARA no later than COB January 29, 2016.

Please note that NARA will post a version of your 2015 SAO report on the NARA website. This action is in the interest of transparency in Government and to promote collaboration and communication among agencies. Please let us know whether there is a specific justification as to why your report cannot be publicly shared (in whole or in part).

Instructions for Reporting

- This template covers progress through fiscal year (FY) 2015.
- Please be brief and precise in your answers. Limit answers to each question to no more than 500 words.
- Please complete the eight questions/items on the following pages and send the report to prmd@nara.gov. Include the words “SAO annual report” and your agency’s name in the subject line of the email.
- If you are responsible for records management in multiple agencies, components, or bureaus, please determine how you will submit reports to NARA. While NARA prefers a comprehensive report, you may submit separate reports for each component.



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Provide the following information (required):

Name of SAO: Herb Strauss

Position title: Deputy Chief Information Officer/Senior Agency Official for Records Management

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1. What are the agencies, components, or bureaus covered by this report and your position as SAO?

Please list them below:

Social Security Administration (SSA Response)

This report covers the Social Security Administration (SSA).

2. Is your agency going to meet the *Directive* goal to manage all email records in an accessible electronic format by December 31, 2016? (*Directive Goal 1.2*)

Yes No

2a) *Provide a list of actions your agency, components, or bureaus have taken to meet this goal. Include specific information on your progress regarding:*

- *establishing formally approved email policies,*
- *use of any automated systems for capturing email,*
- *providing access / retrievability of your email,*
- *establishing disposition practices for agency email (either destroy in agency or transfer to NARA), and*
- *possible implementation of the Capstone approach for applicable agency email.*



SSA's Response

- We currently have an email retention policy requiring SSA employees:
 - to manage email based on content; and,
 - to apply appropriate dispositions found in approved Agency Specific records schedules and in General Records Schedules (GRS).

 - Our progress on managing emails electronically includes the following efforts:
 - We extensively evaluated commercial vendors and software solutions.
 - During a software pilot, we learned the selected software could not successfully manage emails automatically using formally approved retention policies to achieve the desired success rate of 70% (only achieved a 17% out of a 70% expected success rate).
 - In 2014, we published a Request for Information (RFI) to evaluate software availability to meet our needs. We evaluated the responses to the RFI and the agency's existing software.
 - We determined the agency's Microsoft® Exchange 2013 (Exchange 2013) software is the best option to manage emails electronically according to the Capstone approach. Exchange 2013 has the functionality to store, access, search, and retrieve emails. Therefore, we are working to implement Exchange 2013 to manage all emails electronically by December 31, 2016.
 - We prepared a Business Process Description detailing the process to implement the Capstone approach.
 - To support the implementation of the Capstone approach, we purchased 52 additional servers for email management and storage.
 - In 2014, the Acting Commissioner of SSA approved the list of positions known as Capstone Officials for which the agency will schedule all emails as permanent. The agency will, using Exchange 2013, automatically retain all Capstone Official's emails for 15 years then transfer them to NARA for permanent retention.
 - We are assigning a seven-year retention period to all other agency positions' email accounts. Therefore, using Exchange 2013, the agency automatically will retain such emails for seven years before destroying them.
- 2b) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus plan to take in 2016 to meet this goal.*



SSA's Response

- We will continue to implement the Capstone approach using Exchange 2013 for all employee email by December 31, 2016.
- By March 2016, we will submit form NA-1005 to request NARA's approval for the agency to use GRS 6.1. Specifically, the agency will seek approval for use of GRS 6.1 item 10 (15 year retention for Capstone Official emails then transfer to NARA) and item 11 (7 year retention for all other email accounts then destroy).
- We will install 52 additional servers for email storage by December 31, 2016.
- We will finalize and implement the Capstone approach email policies by December 31, 2016.
- We will develop and implement a training plan and circulate a training video using Video on Demand (VOD) by the third quarter of 2016. The VOD will educate employees about the upcoming change in the management of their emails and instruct employees to cull personal emails out of existing PST and email files before the Capstone approach is implemented.
- We will implement Exchange 2013 functionality to manage emails using the Capstone approach.

3. Has your agency taken actions to implement the 2014 amendments to the *Federal Records Act* requiring Federal employees to copy or forward electronic messages (including email, texts, chats, and instant messaging) that are federal records from their non-official accounts to official accounts within 20 days?

Yes No

Please provide a brief description of the actions taken, such as establishing policies and providing training.

SSA's Response

- We updated policies and training for the implementation of the 2014 amendments to the Federal Records Act.
 - SAO published instructions to all Heads of components (agency-wide) informing them of the amendments to the Federal Records Act as it relates to using non-official accounts and copying or forwarding electronic communications to their official email account within 20 days of creating the federal record.
 - We provide training at our new hire orientation sessions for headquarters employees and training to all of our Records Management Coordinators nationwide that cover the 2014 amendments to the Federal Records Act.



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- We are adding the Federal Records Act amendments, as it relates to using non-official accounts, to our Electronic Records Policy.
- We are updating our mandatory nationwide Records Management training to educate all employees on the 2014 amendments to the *Federal Records Act* electronic messaging requirements.

4. Describe your agency's internal controls for managing electronic messages (including email, texts, chats, and instant messaging) of the agency head and other executives (including appropriate advisers, and other senior management staff).

SSA's Response

- We currently capture and retain some agency officials' email records using agency software Microsoft® Exchange and Symantec NetBackup™.
 - The agency retains the emails of the Commissioner and his or her current staff for an indefinite amount of time on backup media.
 - Per request based on business needs, we retain emails for one year for Office of Inspector General and Office of Acquisition and Grants.
- We are updating our Electronic Records Policy to include procedures to copy and forward all records created via instant messaging, text messaging, and voice messaging to the employee's official email account.

5. Is your agency going to meet the *Directive* goal to submit records schedules to NARA for all existing paper and other non-electronic records by December 31, 2016? (*Directive Goal 2.5*)

Yes No

5a) Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus have taken to meet this goal.

SSA's Response

- We reviewed and scheduled all but one of our existing paper records (furlough notices not covered by GRS 1.30(b)). We are working to implement a Flexible Scheduling Initiative (Big Bucket) for all permanent, temporary, and unscheduled records. While undergoing this effort, NARA directed us not to send new records schedules until we submit our Flexible Schedules for approval, unless absolutely necessary. Therefore, we will submit this unscheduled paper record with our Flexible Schedule submission within the next two years.



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5b) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus plan to take in the future to meet this goal.*

SSA's Response

- We will begin submitting individual Flexible Schedules that will include the unscheduled paper record for NARA approval before the end of 2017.

6. Is your agency going to meet the *Directive* goal to manage all permanent electronic records in an electronic format by December 31, 2019? (*Directive Goal 1.1*)

Yes No

6a) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus have taken to meet this goal. Include specific information on your progress regarding:*

- *establishing formally approved electronic records policies,*
- *use of any automated systems for capturing electronic records,*
- *providing access / retrievability of your electronic records, and*
- *establishing disposition practices for agency electronic records.*

SSA's Response

- Electronic Records Policies
 - We have an electronic records policy in place that we update as necessary to incorporate technological advances to meet this goal.
- Enumeration Transfer
 - In October 2013, we completed our agency's first permanent electronic records transfer of the Numident records to NARA.
- Electronic Management of Assignments and Correspondence
 - In FY 2014, we replaced Assignments and Correspondence Tracking system with the Electronic Management of Assignments and Correspondence (EMAC) system. We use EMAC to store permanent electronic records that enable us to transfer these records to NARA via ERA. EMAC contains permanent correspondence records, in addition to all metadata associated with the correspondence.
- Records Management Questionnaire
 - In developing information systems, we used an architectural artifact to incorporate records management and archival functionality into the design, development, and implementation of our systems development lifecycle.



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- The information compiled in the artifact enables us to assign retention authorities to the permanent records generated by our information systems.
 - Flexible Scheduling Initiative (Big Bucket)
 - We are working on a flexible scheduling approach for all agency records. Flexible Scheduling facilitates successful automation and management of our permanent electronic records.
 - Flexible Scheduling reduces the number of record schedules by combining multiple related series of records, therefore making records schedules more easily accessible and searchable.
 - Permanent Records Survey
 - In 2013, we performed a permanent records survey of SSA components.
 - We used the survey as a tool to discern who creates permanent records and where the records are stored.
 - The survey results indicate that most of our permanent records are stored electronically. We are working with components to automate preservation of the permanent electronic records.
 - Automation of Notice of Eligibility for Disposal (NARA (NA) Form 13001)
 - We developed a tool in Microsoft®SharePoint® (SharePoint) to track and complete the review and sign-off of NA Form 13001s for paper and electronic records we receive from the Federal Records Centers (FRC). The SharePoint tool allowed us to convert the entire review/sign-off process to an electronic format.
 - We receive an electronic NARA destruction list quarterly, which we upload to the SharePoint tool. Disposition approvers log into the tool, view the transfers assigned to them, and complete the sign-off process using the tool.
 - Once disposition approvers have reviewed all transfers for a given cycle, we export the data and email the report to our FRC account manager who facilitates the physical destruction process.
 - In addition, the SharePoint tool logs all history associated with a particular transfer for auditing and knowledge management purposes.
- 6b) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus plan to take in the future to meet this goal.*

SSA's Response

- We will automate the management of permanent electronic records using the file plans.



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- We will implement the Archives and Records Centers Information System (ARCIS) records transfer portal into our FRC workflows. Once implemented, we will electronically process all FRC transfer requests via ARCIS.
- We will digitize our microfilmed enumeration applications.
- We will continue to work to build records retention in our existing electronic systems for structured data.
- We will engage industry to find the most effective solution to manage our unstructured electronic data.

7. Please provide any insight to your agency's efforts to implement the *Managing Government Records Directive* and the transition to a digital government.

Provide a brief description, including any positive or negative outcomes, challenges, and other obstacles.

SSA's Response

- Digitizing thousands of rolls of microfilm that contain enumeration application data is a challenge.
 - It will take several years to digitize all of the microfilm that is steadily deteriorating.
 - We are evaluating the condition of the film, storage, and digitization of the microfilm.
- Identifying an acceptable, mature software solution to manage the retention of our email records was a challenge. We will use Exchange 2013 for managing email records.
- Addressing our legacy emails to satisfy the language in GRS 6.1 is a challenge that we are actively working with NARA to resolve.

8. With regard to records management, is your agency preparing for the upcoming change in Presidential administration?

Yes No

8a) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus have taken to ensure records of departing senior officials will be appropriately managed during the upcoming change in Presidential administration.*

SSA's Response

- Our Office of Human Resources (HR) conducts exit interviews with departing senior officials.



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- HR provides a copy of the NARA pamphlet “Personal Papers of Executive Branch Officials: A Management Guide,” along with a copy of Administrative Instructions Manual System Records Management Handbook, Chapter 3.
 - HR encourages the separating senior official to contact the Agency Records Officer concerning questions related to the retention and removal of their records.
 - HR informs the Office of the General Counsel in the event the senior official is involved in agency litigation so that records and emails are preserved based on a litigation hold.
- 8b) *Provide a list of the actions your agency, components, or bureaus plan to take in the future to ensure records of departing senior officials will be appropriately managed during the upcoming change in Presidential administration, including ensuring that federal records are not improperly removed from the agency.*

SSA’s Response

- Strengthen our current records management policies by clearly defining what is required of departing senior officials.
- Identify all senior officials and notify them during the year of their expected departure of the records management requirements.
- Ensure the retention of electronic data for departing senior officials in a specified repository for appropriate records disposition.
- Conduct Records Management training specific to agency executives, including their responsibilities with respect to not removing agency records.
- Implement the Capstone approach for all executive emails by December 31, 2016 to ensure retention of all email records for departing senior officials.