

# REPORTS FROM THE FILE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP TO THE ERC

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[15 February 2000](#) [5 October 2000](#) [12 June 2001](#)

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## 15 FEBRUARY 2000

While drafting the Ohio Electronic Records Policy, the Electronic Records Committee (ERC) became increasingly aware of the need for more guidance on specific issues and technologies. Subcommittees and working groups were formed to address specific electronic records issues common to state agencies. Effective file management is an area that needed further attention and the File Management Working Group was established.

The file management working group was charged to create a set of naming conventions to facilitate effective file management within state agencies. A list of working group members is attached. The working group met four times in 1999 and 2000 to prepare a set of guidelines that would effectively serve for both paper and electronic records management. The working group also used electronic mail to communicate and review drafts of documents.

The main recommendations are:

- Records management is most effective when paper and electronic records are managed together.
- One set of guidelines should serve for both paper and electronic file management.
- The General Schedules should serve as a model filing directory.
- For any agency records not included in the General Schedules, agency submitted records retention schedules should be used for directory structures.
- OhioGILS can serve as an appropriate mechanism to conduct searches for agency schedules, general schedules and schedules that can serve as examples for other agencies.

The file management guidelines are now in draft form. The next step is to have an agency conduct a test or pilot project implementing these guidelines. A small agency (or larger agency focusing on a subset of records) can conduct a test, implementing these guidelines. The results would enable us to revise these guidelines and provide the best possible recommendations to state agencies for effective file management.

Once the guidelines are revised satisfactorily, we will submit them to the ERC for their consideration.

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**5 OCTOBER 2000**

The Kansas Historical Society agreed to do a pilot implementation project of the Draft File Management Guidelines. Based on the results of their implementation and on feedback requested from ERC members the File Management Working Group is revising the Draft File Management Guidelines.

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**12 JUNE 2001**

File management is especially important in the electronic environment. However, establishing guidelines for file management should be based on the administrative, computing, records management, and functional environments of an office or agency. Given these variables, creating useful file management guidelines that would apply to all state agencies is fairly difficult. Consequently, the File Management Working Group makes the following recommendations to the Electronic Records Committee:

1. The File Management Working Group should be combined with the Records Management Application Working Group. File management is an important subset of a recordkeeping system. Thus, these two groups have similar purposes -- to recommend ways for agencies to file and retrieve electronic information. We acknowledge, however, that the focus of the RMA is broader in that it encompasses the entire concept of recordkeeping (security, file structures, access, records management, authenticity and reliability of records, etc.)
2. The resulting guidelines should consist of the importance and necessity of good electronic recordkeeping tools; setting up a file management system within an agency; and using an RMA tool to establish a formalized electronic recordkeeping system. The guidelines should discuss the relationship between file management and recordkeeping, the differences between them and the importance of both.