Electronic Records in the State of Ohio

A Study Prepared for

The Electronic Records Committee

of Ohio

by

David Landsbergen
Landsbergen.1@osu.edu

and

Angela Crandall
Crandall.24@osu.edu

The School of Public Policy and Management

and the

John Glenn Institute of Public Policy and Service

The Ohio State University
310F Page Hall

landsbergen.1@osu.edu

March 30, 2005

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank a number of people who spent considerable time and effort in helping us to complete this work.

First, we would like to thank Raimund Goerler for finding the funds within the Ohio State University Libraries system to support Angela Crandall as a Ph.D. student for two quarters. We hope that this investment in our work will yield many times that value to both the ERC and the Ohio State University.

We would also like to thank our subcommittee members who were very helpful in helping us craft and review the survey. The subcommittee includes Mark Schmidbauer, John Runion, Karen Sorrell and Laurie Gemmill. They made many useful suggestions. They also were able to provide us with very important contacts throughout the state.

We would also like to thank a number of other people who reviewed the survey design and provided valuable comments and suggestions: Charles Arp, Judith Cobb and Pari Swift.

Finally, we would like to thank Doug Alt and Mike Hardenbrook for assistance provided in locating records officers for state agencies.

Preface

This report includes only the most general conclusions. The goal was to provide a readable and accessible report that could tie empirical findings with plausible recommendations. A more detailed analysis of each of the questions will be completed and made available for download in the near future.

Electronic Records in the State of Ohio

Executive Summary

This report assesses the Electronic Records Committee's (ERC) contribution to the development and implementation of electronic records policy in Ohio. The report includes the results of: 1) an online survey of municipalities, and county and state government agencies; 2) an environmental scan of the activities of similar initiatives in other states; and 3) an informal report on the willingness of local government professional associations to work with the ERC.

The report finds that the ERC's work is being utilized throughout all levels of Ohio government. Especially promising is that municipalities are already utilizing the ERC's work at a higher rate than state agencies. Study results suggest that the ERC should now make a systematic effort to include representatives of local government on the ERC committee. The primary barriers to implementing electronic records policy in Ohio are staffing and training issues. The most compelling recommendation for future action is for some kind of organization in Ohio, perhaps the ERC, to represent the interests of state and local governments in the ongoing development of electronic records law and policy.

Electronic Records in the State of Ohio

Introduction

Background

The Electronic Records Committee (ERC) is at a crossroads. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the ERC has published good products that are well regarded. There is also anecdotal evidence that other states have emulated the pioneering efforts in Ohio by creating similar initiatives in their own states. With this success, the ERC is now experiencing a mid-life crisis and asking how successful has it actually been and what should it work on next?

There has also been considerable turnover in the position of State of Ohio Archivist, a position that has traditionally served as chairperson of the ERC. This tradition has a firm foundation in practice. In addition to having subject matter expertise, the State Archivist also enjoys a 'neutral and trusted' position among the members of the committee. By all accounts this position and the people that have occupied that neutral position have been very important to the ERC's success. But the continual turnover within the chairmanship also suggests that the ERC may want to consider a new management structure to support new and on-going initiatives.

Problem Statement

Now that the ERC has produced a number of products, the natural question is how well have the products been utilized? What can the ERC do to improve the utilization of its work? Should it revisit already covered territory to update publications in light of changes in technology and public interest? And what new areas should the ERC explore? How should those activities be governed and managed?

To help answer these questions, a subcommittee was formed to gather information to help the ERC address some of these questions. The charge put forward to the subcommittee was to:

Identify use of ERC-developed products by "current customers"

Identify whether and how to involve "other" local government agencies

This report seeks to provide that information to the committee that was obtained in a number of ways:

1. Through the reporting of the result of an on-line survey.

2. An 'environmental scan' of other state initiatives that make and support electronic records policy.

3. The results of a preliminary discussion with heads of professional associations to determine if electronic records issues are of concern and their preliminary interest in working with the ERC.

Organization of Report

The central feature of the report is the survey since it directly addresses the core questions of primary interest to the ERC. We begin that analysis next. In two separate appendices, we report on the results of the environmental scan and the preliminary results of our initial discussion with representatives of local government.

Who we talked to

The majority of responses came from three distinct groups: municipalities, county government and state agencies. [i]

Table 1: Total Responses Across Unit of Government

Unit of Government	Frequency	Percent
Do Not Wish to Answer	1	.9
Clerk of Courts	5	4.5
County Government	20	18.0
Municipality	28	25.2
Library	1	.9
State Agency [1]	49	44.1
Other	7	6.3
Total	111	100.0

[1] 89 State agencies were contacted and agreed to participate in the survey.

We also collected information on the characteristics of organization that, in past research, have predicted how likely an organization would be to develop and implement electronic records policy. We used these characteristics to help us identify which organizations the ERC should support and the best way to do this.

For example, the 'scale of e-government sophistication' provides us with a score of the sophistication level of each unit of government. This will allow the ERC to identify its target audience and the level of technical sophistication that will be used in its approach.

Finally, these characteristics allow us to explore how robust our findings are, in terms of whether or not the results show a difference. For example, it may seem that there is no significant affect on local government on a particular question, but combining responses of all local government agencies may mask what small counties need as opposed to really large county governments. For all the results listed below, results were further disaggregated using these factors below was conducted, but the results may not be reported. See Table 2, below.

Table 2: Important Characteristics Predicting the Development and Implementation of IT Policy

Organization Size
Total Budget
IT Budget
Ratio of IT budget / Total Budget
Number of Employees
'Level of 'Technical Sophistication'
Whether organization has a website
Number of years that has a website
Whether organization has an e-government strategy or master plan.
Scale of e-government sophistication in increasing order of sophistication:
1. Website provides information
2. Website provides capacity to communicate with agency
3. Website provides individual and isolates services to public
4. Website provides integrated services to public
5. Website enhances and supports citizen participation
Agency has a Government-to-Government intranet
Success with Electronic Records Policy (as measured by agency self assessment)

How much do they use ERC products?

A surprisingly high number of respondents reported some kind of interaction with the ERC.

Table3: Interaction with the Electronic Records Committee

Interaction with the ERC	All Orgs. Avg. (Std. Dev)*	Muni.	Counties	State Agencies
Is **aware of the existence** of the ERC	3.07 (1.2)	3.56 (.99)	2.72 (1.3)	3.15 (1.1)
Has **seen** some of the ERC's work	2.75 (1.2)	3.06 (1.0)	2.64 (1.3)	2.76 (1.1)
Has **used** some of the ERC's work	2.55 (1.0)	2.89 (.83)	2.40 (1.2)	2.44 (.91)

Note: Responses to this question, are scaled 1=Strongly Disagrees with statement to 5=Strongly Agrees with statement with 3=neutral. Thus municipal governments are more aware than not, of the existence of the ERC (3.56). Counties, on average, are slightly less aware of the existence of the ERC (2.72).

* Std. Dev. (or 'Standard Deviation') measures the amount of variation in that response. Put simply it measures how much disagreement there is about the 'average response.' It is a useful measure because it helps identify where there might be subgroups that have different sets of opinions. For example, since there is a high Std. Dev. in 'awareness of the existence of the ERC' we looked for factors, like size of IT budget or 'IT sophistication' that might explain the large variance in opinion.

Our survey shows that, of our total sample, on average that slightly more respondents were aware of our existence (3= neutral). State agencies were slightly more aware of our existence (3.15). Municipalities, as a sample, reported the highest rate of familiarity of our existence (3.56). Meanwhile, the counties responding reported the least familiarity with the ERC (2.72). The higher level of awareness expressed by respondents from state agencies may be due to the fact that they received an explanation of the ERC during the initial phone call.

While these score are somewhat lower than we might expect, what is encouraging is that some elements of local government are aware of, and use, the ERC's work. The belief that the ERC is a 'state only' game is not supported by the evidence. Local government is interested in what we do and is using our products.

Finally, the next section reports the detailed results about how the ERC's work is utilized. Taking into account the above results, on average, fewer people knew of the *ERC products* than knew of the *existence of the ERC*. One immediately obvious way to increase use of ERC products may be by targeting marketing efforts through the various networks of local governments in Ohio. Similar efforts have worked in South Carolina where training is provided to professional groups through these local government networks.

What is the most useful?

By commissioning this survey, the ERC decided to ask a very tough question: how much are people actually using the work that is produced? The numbers are simultaneously disappointing and hopeful.

Table 4: Utilization of ERC Products*

ERC Product	Entire Sample (n=111)	Muni. (n=28)	Counties (n=20)	State (n=49)
Digital Document Imaging	10	4	3	3
Managing Web Content	8	3	1	3
Databases as Public Records	8	2	2	4
Managing Electronic Mail	17	6	4	6
Trustworthy Information Systems	7	3	3	1
Other Electronic Records Policy Issues	7	0	0	1
Total Products Used	**57**	**21**	**13**	**18**

*Numbers of individuals who have used specific ERC products.

The total number of times respondents reported using specific products is fifty-seven. (NOTE: This is a duplicate count of respondents, meaning that one individual could have reported using multiple products.) The assessment of whether or not this is a high number, depends upon one's expectations.

A second point to keep in mind is that for local government, these sample measures only represent a percentage of local and state government. Consequently, the absolute number of products utilized could be higher than the numbers presented here.

What is most surprising, however, is the rate as which local government agencies are using our products, as compared to state agencies. (There are almost similar rates of usage reported by all respondents, but there are twice as many state agencies as municipalities and county governments in our sample.) For a long time, the unstated assumption was that state agencies are heavily represented on the committee and that they are the main consumer of its products.

One possible explanation for this result is that state agencies have the resources to support their electronic policy needs while local governments do not. This is supported by our findings, in that the lower the level of government, the higher the rate at which that unit of government utilizes our work. This could be interpreted to mean that because state agencies are supporting their own needs, they may utilize internal expertise, while local government agencies depend upon external experts.

The good news is that if the ERC decides to move into new areas by supporting local government, they are already doing so without any systematic effort. The bad news, if any, is that more efforts should be directed towards supporting state agency needs. Finally, the ERC has a benchmark against which it can now compare its performance – our products were used fifty-seven times and probably more among local governments – a healthy start.

Who has an Electronic Records Policy?

One of the questions of central interest to the ERC is, how many government organizations in Ohio actually had a records policy and how often was that policy followed? The rationale for asking if the policy was being followed, is that if agencies are not following records policy, why invest efforts in developing electronic records policy?

Table 5: Records Policy in Ohio

Measure	Average Sample	Municipality	County	State
Agency currently **has some kind of records policy**	98%	95%	100%	98%
What percentage of time **is the policy followed**?	85%	95%	90%	80%
What percentage of public records **are electronic records**?*	37%	36%	32%	34%
Agency currently **has some kind of electronic records policy**	72%	85%	75%	62%
What percentage of time **follow that electronic records policy**?	73%	87%	84%	57%

Our sample revealed that most organizations had 'some kind of records policy.' There was, however, quite a variance among the levels of government as to how much they followed that policy. State agencies had the lowest rate of reported compliance, while municipalities had the highest rate. This could be due to the fact that with a few exceptions, most state agencies are larger, and it is logistically more resource intensive to coordinate compliance. Smaller agencies may be able to more closely monitor and provide guidance to fellow employees.

Interestingly, the respondents indicated that on average, fully 30% of the records in their agencies records are electronic. Although this is the first time that this question has been asked of these agencies, it appears to be quite a large percentage and points to the criticality of the ERC in supporting this work.

The importance of the ERC's work becomes even more apparent when one compares the differences in the percentage of time that agencies follow electronic records policy as compared to the percentage of time that they follow records policy generally. The differences are 10% (95%-85% for municipalities), 15% (county) and 18% (state agencies). This indicates that government agencies are finding it harder to develop and implement electronic records policy as compared to 'traditional' records policy.

How well do they judge their own efforts?

Organizations in Ohio were fairly neutral in their self-assessment of how well they were implementing electronic records policy.

Table 6: Success (as measured by their own self-assessment)

Which Organizations?	Mean (Std. Dev.)	N
Total Sample	3.06 (.92)	96
County government	3.20 (1.1)	20
Municipalities	3.19 (.85)	26
State Agency	2.93 (.99)	43

Note: Responses to this question are scaled 1=Very Unsuccessful to 5=Very Successful and 3=neutral.

What is especially interesting is that *on average,* state agencies felt less successful than their local government counterparts. This may be due to the response rate in that relatively more sophisticated local governments would tend to respond as against a larger pool of state agencies, many of which might be smaller than some of the local governments reporting. This may also be due to the fact that state agencies may deal with a larger volume of records, more of which may be stored in electronic form, and thus are feeling the need for support with these issues. State agencies may have also been earlier adopters of electronic methods for storing records, and may have accumulated more years of electronic records, therefore, they may be facing challenges of storing records from legacy systems. If local agencies chose to implement systems for collecting information electronically at a later point in time, they may have used more state of the art technologies. They may also not have electronic legacy systems to convert to the newer electronic systems.

Issues and Barriers to Making and Implementing Electronic Records Policy

Major Issues Dealing With Electronic Policy

The survey identified three basic kinds of electronic records policy issues: 1) how much organizations said that they were aware and understood the issues; 2) the funding issues in effectively making and implementing electronic records policy; and 3) the legal uncertainties which made it difficult to make and implement electronic records policy.

The field of electronic records policy has a large and growing set of difficult issues. In order to limit the number of questions we could ask in a short survey, we used the important issues identified by the ERC to be the most important set of electronic records issues facing Ohio's public organizations.

Overall, there was not much difference in the awareness that municipal, county, and state agencies had of electronic records policy. The table below uses the following the scoring system ranging from 1= 'Little Awareness' to 5='Very Aware'.

As would be expected, respondents were most familiar with electronic mail. Interestingly, respondents' second most familiar issue area was in the area of digital document imaging, a relatively more sophisticated technology.

Table 7: Awareness and Understanding of Electronic Records Issues

AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES surrounding…	Total Sample	Muni.	County	State
Digital Document Imaging	3.88 (.91)	4.00 (.84)	4.08 (.85)	3.77 (.92)
Managing Web Content	3.84 (.91)	3.75 (1.1)	3.92 (.69)	3.86 (93)
Databases as Public Records	3.86 (.96)	3.75 (1.2)	4.04 (.82)	3.79 (.99)
Managing Electronic Mail	3.94 (.90)	3.84 (.77)	4.23 (.71)	3.76 (1.0)
Managing Trustworthy Info Systems	3.73(1.0)	3.79 (1.0)	3.96 (.92)	3.60 (1.0)
Other Electronic Records Issues	3.73(1.0)	4.5 (.71)	3.83 (.98)	3.00 (1.0)

UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES surrounding…	Total Sample	Muni.	County	State
Digital Document Imaging	3.57 (1.0)	3.95 (.91)	3.73 (.92)	3.29 (1.1)
Managing Web Content	3.51 (.99)	3.80 (.89)	3.69 (.93)	3.30 (93)
Databases as Public Records	3.47 (1.1)	3.74 (1.0)	3.62 (.98)	3.21 (1.1)
Managing Electronic Mail	3.58 (1.0)	3.84 (.90)	3.73 (1.0)	3.34 (1.1)
Managing Trustworthy Info Systems	3.28 (1.0)	3.42 (1.1)	3.27 (.96)	3.20 (1.1)
Other Electronic Records Issues	3.42 (1.2)	5	3.40 (1.7)	3.20 (.45)

UNDERSTANDING TECHNICAL ISSUES surrounding…	Total Sample	Muni.	County	State
Digital Document Imaging	3.55 (1.0)	4.05 (.99)	3.54 (.95)	3.36 (1.1)
Managing Web Content	3.58 (1.0)	3.89 (1.1)	3.69 (.79)	3.40 (1.1)
Databases as Public Records	3.56 (1.0)	4.10 (1.0)	3.54 (.95)	3.30 (1.0)
Managing Electronic Mail	3.62 (1.0)	3.95 (.97)	3.73 (1.0)	3.40 (1.1)
Managing Trustworthy Info Systems	3.43 (1.1)	3.89 (1.2)	3.42 (.99)	3.25(1.1)
Other Electronic Records Issues	3.56 (1.1)	4.33 (1.2)	3.67 (.58)	2.67 (1.2)

Note: Responses to this question are scaled 1=Strongly Disagrees with statement to 5=Strongly Agrees with statement and 3=neutral.

A comparison between understanding the general electronic records policy issues vs. the technical issues, reveals that there is no statistical difference across the levels of government. Hence, neither the technical nor the general policy issues seem to be more difficult for our clients.

Legal and Financial Issues

In addition to assessing the level of understanding of the general and technical issues surrounding electronic records policy, the survey also asked about some of the **institutional issues** that might hinder organizations from developing and implementing electronic records policy.

Table 8: Legal and Financial Issues in Developing and Implementing Policy

Financial Issues	Total Sample.	Muni.	County	State
Our organization does not have the funding to pay for *training* about electronic records policy	4.34 (.48)	4.30(.48)	4.29 (.49)	**4.40 (.50)**
Our organization does not have the funding to pay for the *hardware and / or software* necessary to implement electronic policy.	4.25 (.44)	4.18 (.40)	**4.30 (.48)**	4.26 (.45)
Our organization does not have the funding to pay for the *staff* necessary to fully implement electronic records policy.	**4.39 (.49)**	**4.50 (1.2)**	4.25 (.45)	4.39 (.50)
Legal Issues				
Our *legal responsibilities* for maintaining and distributing electronic records under Chapter 149 are not clear.	4.10 (.31)	4.00 (.00)	4.00 (.00)	4.17 (.39)
We are unclear about *how to make* electronic records *accessible* to the public. [1]	2.59 (1.0)	2.40 (.94)	2.65(1.2)	2.57 (1.0)
We have uncertainty about how to handle *privacy* issues as they relate to electronic records. [1]	2.78 (1.1)	2.80 (1.0)	3.04 (1.2)	2.49 (1.0)

Note: Responses to this question are scaled 1=Strongly Disagrees with statement to 5=Strongly Agrees with statement and 3=neutral. Thus, for most of the questions, most of the units of governments reported that they agreed with the statement that they did not have the bolded items listed as important to developing and implementing electronic records policy. The most important item lacking for each unit of government is bolded. (But see note below.)

[1] The last two questions were originally reverse- coded. This may account for the significant difference in score between these two last items and the other statements. Reverse coding is often done in survey research to make sure the reader pays close attention to the wording. In this case, however, the reader may not have picked up on the wording change but scanned the question for bolded items. Whereas the original first four questions were stated in the affirmative, the last two were stated, as now appears, in the negative. All of the questions have been recoded in the negative to make it easier for the reader to interpret the results.

Notice that these means scores are significantly higher than the understanding that state and local government have on specific technical problems. This means that agencies do not have difficulty identifying issues, but do not have the funding to obtain staff and training to implement electronic records policy. This suggests that the ERC ought to begin considering not only particular technologies and best practices but move towards issues on how to meet basic infrastructure needs including legal, financial and staffing issues.

Table 9: Summary Important Barriers and Issues to Ohio Government

Issue Area	Not a problem (High mean scores)	Is a problem (High mean scores)
Understanding of the [policy] issues surrounding **email**	3.58	
Understanding of the *technical* issues surrounding **email**	3.62	
Our organization does not have the funding to pay for the **staff** necessary to fully implement electronic records policy		4.50
Our organization does not have the funding to pay for **training** about electronic records policy		4.40

Note: Responses to this question are scaled 1=Strongly Disagrees with statement to 5=Strongly Agrees with statement with 3=neutral.

Next Steps

Finally, we asked, given the issues and barriers that you now face and the successes and competencies you possess, what should be the next steps in improving the environment for creating and implementing policy?

It is important to note that we DID NOT ask, except for one specific question, what specific actions the ERC could take. Rather, we opened the discussion to what the problems are so that we could elicit what needed to be done next. We did not ask whether the ERC should undertake that next steps itself or could support another institutional initiative to push electronic records policy in Ohio forward. The ERC needs to decide whether it would like to undertake this next action or whether it could support others in developing this action item.

Table 10: Important Action Items for the ERC or Other Organizations to Develop Electronic Records Policy

Action Item	Total Sample	State Agency	Municipality	County
More info should be provided through the ERC's **website**.	3.18 (.87)	3.42[*] (.78)	3.10 (.77)	2.76 (1.09)
Free training on developing or implementing electronic records policy.	3.60 (.98)	3.79 (.98)	3.52 (.95)	3.53 (.91)
There should be **training provided for a minimal cost**.	3.00 (1.14)	3.33 (1.1)	3.09 (1.04)	2.59 (1.1)
More information provided through technical or **program demonstrations**	3.19 (.98)	3.46 (.98)	3.17 (.89)	2.89 (1.0)
More information through **specific technical solutions and suggestions**.	3.21 (1.03)	3.46 (1.0)	3.26 (.92)	2.79 (1.1)
Some **organization or group should represent the interests of government agencies** in the development of electronic records law and policy in Ohio.	3.63 (1.07)	3.72 (1.0)	3.70 (1.1)	3.63 (1.2)

Note: Responses to this question, are scaled 1=Strongly Disagrees with statement to 5=Strongly Agrees with statement with 3=neutral.

* Mean and (Std. Dev.)

Summary and Recommendations

Findings Based on Survey

1. Although it depends on one's expectations, the survey revealed that the ERC's products are used across all levels of government: state, county and local governments. As would be expected, the most widely used product was the electronic mail guidelines.

Expectations aside, the survey has established a benchmark against which future progress can be measured.

2. The ERC has discussed, at varying times and with varying levels of interest, the idea of more aggressively including local government in the ERC's work. This could include a more aggressive attempt to include representatives on the committee or targeting our work towards issues or concerns that are of interest to local government.

Surprisingly, however, our results revealed that some local government agencies are already following our work and utilizing our work product. We need to now formally acknowledge this informal relationship. Using this formal partnership, the ERC could direct its attention in a number of new directions:

> a. Targeting efforts on topics of specific interest to local government
>
> b. More formally including a local government view in our general initiatives to take account of the relatively smaller size, budgets, technical sophistication of (some) local governments.
>
> c. Focus our efforts on the most difficult area of harmonizing state and local electronic records policy among state and local government. This effort could be a firm cornerstone in the building the foundation of Government-to-Government (G-to-G) interoperability.   Given that this is a difficult undertaking, it may be important to invest a low level effort in this area, at least at the beginning.
>
> While the costs and the efforts are high, the rewards in having a truly information-based government to support more efficient and effective G-to-G operations and policy are also great. The recognition that Ohio needs to grow a "Third Frontier Economy" and having a sound public information infrastructure is necessary to support an economy of that nature. The ERC could, once again, help establish Ohio as a leader among states.

3. The reported relatively strong use of the ERC's products by those who are aware of the ERC, combined with the finding that agencies from most levels of government are not

aware of the existence of the ERC, suggests that more efforts should be made to make state and local government aware of the ERC and its work.

4. Governments were asked to identify and rank the various issues that are important to electronic records; 1) awareness and understanding of the general policy and technical issues they face as well as 2) institutional factors such as a) funding and b) clarity and guidance in the law that might affect how well they can make and implement electronic records policy.

The institutional factors proved more important. But asking the legislature to fund staff and training may be a difficult sell. Public organizations are all feeling continuous budget cuts. The legislature is also not sympathetic to fund anything that goes to overhead instead of direct benefits to citizens.

Yet, making information available is critical to the checks and balances of our system of government. Without information it is difficult to know whether government is efficient and effective. Imposing more mandates on public agencies without supplying the requisite funding and support will not necessarily lead to better results. Perhaps a future research project could determine the extent to which minimal investments in information systems yields returns through reducing government costs and by saving lives. Future efforts could also be directed towards identifying and working with stakeholders who need or could benefit from better electronic records.

5. There was a surprisingly strong and robust finding among all levels of government that some organization should represent the interests of state and local governments in the ongoing development of electronic records policy.

Given the increasing attention being paid to public records by both the legislative and the executive branches, this result should not be surprising.

One benefit of such an effort would be to provide a unified voice in the current public discussion of what good electronic records or public records policy in Ohio should look like. Just as important as principled arguments about what policy should look like, public organizations can inform the discussion by talking about the practical barriers and opportunities they face in making better use of information. These practical concerns should be part of the discussion. Some kind of unified representation on behalf of state and local government would go far in insuring that practical matters of costs, staffing needs, hardware and software, and current practice are considered.

Local agency representation on the ERC could contribute in a number of ways. Representatives could talk about the practical difficulties in meeting the simplistic assumptions about how easy it is to manage or provide information. They could also argue for the tools, personnel, and resources that make increase the chances that state and local government can actually implement an executive or legislative branch mandate.

Appendix A: List of Associations Serving Professionals in Local Government

Contact Organization	Contact Person	Contact Info	URL
County Commissioners	Mary Jane Niemann	221-5627 mjneiman@ccao.org	;
KARMA	John Runion		
Ohio Township Association	Michael Cochrane	ota@ohiotownships.org	
Clerk of Courts	James Spaeth	(513) 695-1120	www.occaohio.com
Ohio Municipal League	Cindy	omunileague@copper.net	
Recorders	Kathy Dunn	rossrec@bright.net	www.ohiorecorder.com
Prosecutors	John Murphy	614 221-1266 sent to his assistant: steve@ohiopa.org	www.ohiopa.org
Treasurer's Assoc.	Tom Steenrod	614 233-6818	www.ctao.org
Auditor's Assoc.	Frances Lesser Executive Director	614 228-2226 flesser@caao.org	www.caao.org
Probate Court	Charles Haigue	440 576-3451	Is already working with the Supreme Court
Sheriff's Assoc.	Robert Cornwell	614-531-5500	

Appendix B: Informal Survey of the Interest of Local Government Professional Organizations in Working with the ERC

Background

The sheer number of local government entities required that we reach our respondents through some kind of electronic distribution list. We decided to contact the professional associations that support the various professions that are serving county and local government.

Our subcommittee identified the list of professional organizations and important contacts. The research team then contacted the executive director of each organization. We explained what the ERC is, the purpose of our survey and a request that we utilize their electronic listserv so that we could contact their membership. In most cases, they agreed.

In the course of making our request, we also asked what efforts that that professional organization was making in regards to electronic records. In all cases except for one, the directors reported that they were now beginning to consider these issues or had just begun.

We then explained that the ERC is a voluntary group of professionals who are leading the effort to make better use of electronic records in Ohio. We explained that the ERC is a 'neutral and trusted' body with no agenda other than promoting better policy. It was also explained that the ERC had some preliminary discussion about the possibility of working more formally with local governments. In all cases, the professional associations were interested in pursuing this possibility in future discussions.

Recommendation

Consequently, we recommend that the ERC identify a set of issues that are of interest to both the ERC and local government and begin to explore the possibility of working with a professional organization. One of the goals in this experiment is to learn how the ERC can begin working with other groups to advance electronic records policy. There are two possible groups with which the ERC could work.

Based upon our survey results, county governments are least aware of our work. Substantial gains in the utilization of our work could be gained by working with them. They are represented by the County Commissioner's Association, which is considered a strong professional association in Ohio. A successful partnership with the County Commissioners could quickly open up opportunities with other units of local government.

Another opportunity is working with municipalities. Based upon the survey results, it appears as if the ERC has already built a significant amount of goodwill with the municipalities without any specific effort. In addition, the John Glenn Institute already provides secretarial support for the Ohio Municipal League and this trusted relationship could become another point of reference upon which a trusting relationship could be built with the ERC.

Appendix C: Findings Based on Environmental Scan of Initiatives in Other States to Deal with Electronic Records Issues

Finding 1: There are a variety of approaches to training that other states have used that might work for Ohio (videoconference, stream-lined powerpoint presentations, and broadcasting over public television).

Finding 2: In terms of E-record resource materials other states have developed, there are formats used by other states that Ohio may find effective. This includes annotated lists of resources and technical leaflets.

Finding 3: Ohio has collaborated with other states on e-records projects in the past, but might consider a model similar to that being implemented by North Carolina, Delaware and Wyoming. These three states are working together on projects in order to share expertise without incurring additional expenses. In a time of budget shortages, Ohio might consider this approach.

Finding 4: As the Ohio ERC considers working more closely with local government agencies, it might be worthwhile to talk with the State of South Carolina about how they have develop formal relationships with local agencies. We might also inquire about how the South Carolina Public Records Association (SCPRA) was formed. (This is a professional organization representing public records professionals from across the state.)

A more detailed description of the findings of electronic records activities in other states and the methods used to identify these activities follows.

The National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) publishes a quarterly newsletter, the Clearinghouse, which includes a section for states to provide updates on how states are using and managing government records. In order to identify events pertinent to management of electronic records, a content analysis was done of newsletter issues beginning with winter 1997 through the present, to compare the electronic record management activities of other states to those of Ohio. Themes emerged in the areas of training, collaboration across and within states, e-record planning, and electronic record management resources.

Training

Some states are already partnering with county and municipal agencies to provide training. For example, the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives conducts training sessions at many of the local officials' professional organizations' annual meetings. In Michigan, state agencies include public universities in their state training sessions.

A variety of mechanisms are used to conduct training, such as classes, workshops, seminars, presentations, traditional conferences, and teleconferences. The most innovative examples are from North Carolina. The State Historical Records Advisory Board of North Carolina sponsored a statewide teleconference. A discussion followed

the teleconference and included the participants at down linked sites as well as anyone telephoning on a 1-800 number. In addition, a website was developed that housed supporting materials. The same group also sponsored a panel discussion on "Managing Our Electronic Files", in the form of a call-in program that was broadcast over "OPENet" public access cable channels. They also produced a videotape of the hour-long broadcast.

Minnesota customized training content to individuals filling specified roles in their respective agencies. They designed a data warehouse seminar for individuals from state agencies that have operational data warehouses, and a metadata seminar for state agency staff who have worked with metadata systems as users, analysts, and data administrators.

The state of South Carolina published six streaming audio PowerPoint presentations on their web site of training sessions about electronic records management.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission, in cooperation with NARA, NAGARA, and the University of Texas Graduate School of Information, sponsors an annual electronic records conference that is attended by representatives of federal, state and local governments.

The state of New York also publishes a training catalog that includes workshops on over 50 topics, including "Electronic Document Management Systems".

Collaboration

States engage in collaborative activities related to electronic records management, both within and across states.

Intrastate

In 2002, the state of Nevada sponsored three statewide summit meetings to build cooperation between state and local governments on administrative responsibility, financial sustainability, and accountability for electronic records. Groups included at the meetings were the Legislative Counsel Bureau, the Office of the Attorney General, the Governor's Office of Administration, the Nevada Secretary of State the Department of Information Technology, and professional organizations of librarians, government officials and historical groups with shared interests.

South Carolina stands out in this area, publicly stating on their web site that they collaborate and work closely with three professional organizations that include:

- South Carolina Public Records Association (SCPRA)
- South Carolina Archival Association (SCAA)
- Palmetto Archives, Libraries and Museums Council on Preservation (PALMCOP)"

Interstate

The states of Wyoming, North Carolina, and Delaware are collaborating to complete electronic records management projects. The following description was provided in the quarterly newsletter, the Clearinghouse, published by the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA).

The project on electronic records management is designed to provide all three programs with core competencies on how best to manage different types of electronic records. The project has as its basis a taxonomy that includes fourteen different types of electronic records, including: web pages, email, word processing documents, geographic information systems, databases, and enterprise resource planning systems (such as PHRST and ASAP). Each of the electronic records types has a pilot project identified for it. It is expected that each state will work on the same pilot project for a period of approximately 90 days (per project). At the conclusion of each pilot project, we will gather the core team (two representatives from each state), identify the best practices, and create a training module to distill the results of the project to all staff members. North Carolina and Wyoming have agreed to adopt the taxonomy and have agreed to be participants in the project. Most of the collaborative work is designed to take place electronically with the use of web sites and email distribution lists. All three states have agreed to keep the project with as little overhead as possible. The participation of the state archives programs will allow each program to leverage out needed expertise without paying for consultants or adding additional staff members.

Planning

In the area of planning, the state of South Carolina stands out from other states. The South Carolina State Archives has adopted an electronic records program scope statement, created a plan for electronic records outreach, and with help from consultant Timothy Slavin from the Delaware Office of Information Services, has included a report on electronic records management as part of the South Carolina State Historical Records Advisory Board's strategic plan.

The state of Wyoming has also developed a strategic plan for training in the management of electronic records.

Electronic Record Management Resources

The ERM resources differ from those developed by the state of Ohio in terms of the format in which they are presented, and in some cases, by the subject matter addressed.

Format

The State of North Carolina has prepared technical leaflets on a variety of topics. For example, one leaflet is called "*Legal admissibility of electronic records*". Addressing these issues by various topics allows readers to more easily identify materials on the topic in which they are interested. As well, information is presented in a concise, professionally-packaged brochure.

The state of Minnesota has prepared several annotated lists of resources on various topics: databases, data modeling resources, metadata, and search engines. This allows users to locate additional information on topics of interest.

The states of Oklahoma and South Carolina publish newsletters on records management that also contain information on electronic records management.

Content

The state of New York has developed e-record implementation guidelines, and published them in a document called *Practical Tools for Electronic Records Management and Preservation*. This resource will help "information, program, and records managers integrate records management requirements seamlessly into the design of new information systems by detailing techniques to identify records management requirements, technology specifications, and management practices and policies."

Endnotes

[i] The large variance in the response can be simply explained. State agencies were identified through a series of phone calls to identify the appropriate person within the agency to complete the survey. As would be expected, when specific individuals with an interest and responsibility in this area are personally contacted, they feel a much higher obligation to participate.

The county and municipal respondents were contacted through their professional organizations. We simply did not have the time to use the same approach as we did with state agencies. Instead, we talked with the executive directors of these professional organizations and asked that they send an invitation to complete the survey to members of their distribution lists. To the extent possible, we asked them to provide a measure of encouragement to complete the survey. Our efforts with the professional organizations working with municipalities and county governments were especially fruitful.

The John Glenn Institute provides secretarial services to the Ohio Municipal League. There is a very congenial relationship with this group and thus, a higher commitment to the work we do. Finally, we worked hard to have county government participate for two reasons: 1) to complete the set of governments represented; 2) the County Commissioners Association provides secretarial services for other local government professional services and occupies a 'leadership' position among these associations. If we could learn the views and begin to work with this association, other opportunities might become available.