
THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DIGEST

A Service of Data Storage, Inc.

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CONTAINERS—THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

The good containers are standard-size record boxes that will fit on steel racks having exact dimensions to accommodate X-number of boxes. The bad containers are off-size, non-standard boxes that waste rack space and may not be stackable. The ugly ones are the boxes so broken down that they are not protecting their contents, or are in danger of falling apart when handled, or are contaminated with mold or insects.

The merits of cardboard record boxes made of “virgin” cardboard vs. those made of recycled materials prompted a lively on-line discussion among records managers. Some participants felt there was no difference in strength. Others stated the difference came in how a box was made: whether it was glued or stapled; single wall or double wall; and how it was folded and assembled. Construction of hand holes was mentioned as well. (For some detailed information on how paper is processed to become the inner and outer linings of corrugated cardboard, especially as it relates to the 200 pound test that is frequently quoted in talking about storage boxes, go to www.paigecompany.com and click on the catalog link.)

Ratings for compression and drop strength were important. For most, 35 pounds was the maximum load although 40 pounds was used by one records manager. Another factor is how often boxes will be pulled and then replaced, with their weight being dragged across the lid of the box below. To be considered is the retention schedule and usage level. If it is short and the records are not actively used, then lower-priced boxes (of either kind of material) may make sense.

Some managers stacked boxes four high while others stacked five high. Keeping boxes stacked correctly so that weight is distributed on the sides of the boxes and not the center is highly important. In its directions for



transferring records from an office or agency to a Federal Records Center, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) gives a detailed diagram for stacking 50 boxes of records on a pallet with 10 boxes in each of five layers. Four boxes on each row are placed perpendicular to the rest of the boxes in that layer. These boxes were numbered 1 through 50, and Box 50 is on the bottom row and Box 1 is on the top row. NARA specifies that pallets should be banded with steel, plastic or cord straps before shipping. Find a link to this diagram under Shipping of Records at www.archives.gov/frc/records-transfer.html.

How to pack a box for transferring records to offsite storage.

In addition to NARA's instructions, other institutions have their own guidelines for readying records for movement to storage. All state that boxes should not be packed tightly, leaving 1-1/2" to 4" of space for retrieval of records and refileing them. Make sure all records are facing the same direction and can be easily read. There should be no materials stuck into the

sides of the files nor on top. Some organizations do not want hanging folders in the boxes, saying they break down boxes and make them dangerous for staff to handle. Others do not want plastic file folders, manilla folders only, to aid in eventual shredding or recycling.

Each organization will determine exactly how boxes should be labeled but generally this information will include the company or department name, the record series with earliest and latest dates of records within, what portion of a series is within the box, and the box number and total number of boxes (Box 1 of 12, 2 of 12, etc.).

All records in a box must have the same date for destruction. The box may contain more than one series, but only if all the records have the same destruction date. This is a crucial necessity to make retention and destruction schedules function as they should.

What about using large transfer boxes?

Generally sized about 15"x10"x24", these boxes may have internal cardboard drawers that slide out for better access. Standard-sized record boxes, 12"x10"x15", usually weigh about 35 pounds when full. But the large transfer boxes may weigh as much as 60 pounds. Whether in a corporate record center or at offsite storage, staff members should be trained on how to handle these larger, heavier boxes in ways that will prevent accidents that lead to back injuries or other forms of physical harm. According to the United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration, back injuries are the number one workplace safety problem, accounting for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses, and one-fourth of all compensation indemnity claims.

Why non-standard boxes are non grata.

The steel shelving used in commercial records storage centers is sized to fit standard size boxes for paper records. When non-standard boxes are used, they waste shelf space and usually require more shelf space to accommodate them. The client ends up paying for this. In some situations involving large amounts of records, it may be advantageous for the owner of the records to have them re-boxed into standard containers if the records must be kept for a very long time. Standard boxes are useful if large quantities of records must be transferred back to the owner's office for searches by staff or attorneys. Maintaining standardized systems for moving records as well as storing them will maintain the economies of scale that benefit both sides.

There are times when containers with special dimensions are needed for rolled up maps or blueprints or charts. X-ray boxes are generally 18"x15"x5-1/2" and some have handles. Microfilm or microfiche records need acid-free boxes; diazo prints need sealed plastic film boxes.

There is a wide spectrum of containers tailored for electronic media such as hard disks, cartridges, optical disks, floppy disks, magnetic tape reels, removable hard drives and more. Some cases are designed for transporting media while others are storage cases. Electronic records copied to optical or magnetic media need secure storage in climate-controlled space or Electronic Records Vaults (ERVs). This is the place for backup and vital records as well.

These boxes have a bad case of the uglies.

The following are the kinds of boxes that a storage contractor does not want to find on his or her dock. Boxes with mold whose spores can spread in the air and serve as food for pests including silverfish or firebrats. Boxes with corners nibbled away by mice or rats. Boxes with tiny bits of black or brown debris that indicate insects have made this their home. Boxes full of records still damp from some past disaster with rain or a flooded office or a sprinkler system that went off intentionally or by mistake.

Also suspect are boxes with loose lids and torn hand holes, and in such broken and battered condition that they may fall apart when lifted up to shelving, or may collapse if one or two boxes are stacked on top of them.

Boxes that arrive without clear identification as to subject or series, with labels that have been torn during transit or lost entirely, or with numbers partially covered with tape, will slow down the process for everyone and will cost the client money.

As for the contents of containers, storage contractors cannot accept items or materials that are hazardous such as flammable items, those that exude fumes such as silver nitrate film, or those that would attract insects or other vermin. There may be times when a contractor will have to consult his or her attorney to see if storing certain items or materials will be a liability issue.

Before making a large purchase of containers, talk with your storage contractor to learn about the variety of containers that would be right for your purpose.

3 -Three- Day UCLA Extension Course in Document Imaging and Document Management: Fall 2007

COURSE DATES

Three days (Fall 2007):

Friday, November 30, 2007, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Saturday, December 1, 2007, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and Sunday, December 2, 2007, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at UCLA in Los Angeles.

Please see below for a detailed course description. To enroll, visit <http://www.UCLAExtension.edu>, click on 'enter keyword', then enter 'document imaging' and click on the 'search' button. Click on first instance of 'view results' on the results screen. Then, click on 'Document Imaging and Document Management'. The course will appear with enrollment instructions, click on the 'add to my study list' button. Please be careful to wait until Fall 2007 enrollment opens on August 8, 2007.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is for managers who have been assigned to manage a document imaging system, and must start immediately, but can spend three days to study the subject and its background. This course is designed to assist managers to be more effective in bringing the immediate and long term benefits of document imaging and document management to their organizations and to their organizations' clients, customers, and constituents. Students will gain an understanding of how document imaging can be used and managed in both small and large-scale organizations. Document imaging is the process of scanning paper or microfilm documents. Document imaging moves the documents from their hard-copy format on shelves and in file cabinets to a digital format stored in computer based document repositories. Document management organizes scanned documents, paper documents, and born-digital documents in their native-format, for compliance with records retention requirements, including permanent preservation. This course provides an understanding of the details that there is often no time to review in the rush to implement a system. The course content is intended to be useful to students in their professional work for twenty years into the future and is also intended to be useful for planning to preserve digital documents forever. The course may be too broad for those students seeking to learn a specific software application. Students will learn about the technology of scanning, importing, transmitting, organizing, indexing, storing, protecting, searching, retrieving, viewing, printing, preserving, and authenticating documents for document imaging systems, and archives. Image and document formats, metadata, XML (eXtensible Markup Language), multimedia, rich text, PDF (Portable Document Format), GIS (Geographic Information Systems), CAD (Computer Aided

Design), VR (Virtual Reality) and GPS (Global Positioning System) indices, image enabled databases, data visualization, finite element analysis models, animations, molecular models, RAM (Random Access Memory) based SQL (Structured Query Language) databases, knowledge management, data warehousing, records inventories, retention schedules, black and white, grayscale, and color scanning, OCR (Optical Character Recognition), multispectral imaging, audio and video digitizing, destructive (lossy) and non-destructive (lossless) compression, digital signatures and seals, encryption, the three components of vision: resolution, color, and motion, the imaging technology of continuous tone, halftoning, dithering, and pixels, RAID (Redundant Array of Inexpensive Disks) fault tolerance, ECCs (Error Correcting Codes for RAID, CD, and DVD), and mirrored site disaster planning will be discussed. System design issues in hardware, software, networking, ergonomics, and workflow will be covered. Emerging technologies such as the DVD Digital Video Disc, HDTV (High Definition TV), and very high speed Internet, intranet, and extranet links, Internet protocol stacks, and Internet 2 will be presented. The course will include the DVD's role in completing the convergence of the PC and television, the convergence of telephony, cable, and the Internet, the merging of home and office, the merging of business and entertainment, and the management of the resulting document types. Can everything be digitized? The course follows Shakespeare through being (or not to be), love, wisdom, knowledge, information, data, bits, and discernable differences (optical disc pits). Many professionals including records managers, librarians, archivists, and compliance officers work with document management issues every day. While not limited to these professionals, this course builds on the broad range of tools and techniques that exist in these professions. The class content is designed so that students can benefit from each part of the class without fully understanding every technical detail presented. This course is designed for non-technical professionals. Several system designs will be done based on system requirements provided by the students. System designs are done to provide an understanding of the design process, not to provide guaranteed solutions to specific problems. There is no hands-on use of scanning equipment. The course is designed to improve the ability of non-technical managers to participate in, and to direct, technical discussions. Instructional techniques include storytelling, iconic objects, and videos. Interaction between students is considered an important part of the learning experience.

The course covers a wide variety of materials and provides a foundation for understanding the many types

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of document management. However, some people might find the materials presented too broad for their purposes. If, in the course materials, you find a single area of great interest to you, but you have no interest in the other topics, it might be better if you included just a portion of the class in a self-study plan. Because the technology continues to evolve rapidly, and the spread of technology is also occurring rapidly, the course continues to evolve and is different each time it is taught.

Instructor: SteveGilheany@WorldNet.ATT.net, BA Computer Science, MBA, MLS Specialization in Information Science, CDIA (Certified Document Imaging System Architect), CRM (Certified Records Manager), California Adult Education teaching credential, Sr. Systems Engineer, 25 years of experience in digital document imaging.

Enrollment is limited. Please call the instructor at +1 (310) 937-7000 for questions about the course. Students are encouraged to read the course materials and to speak with the instructor to determine if the course will be suitable for their purposes.

Because there is no charge for making a room reservation, and room costs increase when availability is limited, students are encouraged to make reservations as early as possible. For information on nearby hotels

please see:

<http://www.cho.ucla.edu/housing/hotels.htm>

The instructor has taught classes similar to this course to document imaging users and managers, in legal records management, to librarians and archivists, and to various industry groups. He has worked in digital document management and document imaging for twenty-five years. His experience in the application of document management and document imaging in industry includes: aerospace, banking, manufacturing, natural resources, petroleum refining, transportation, energy, federal, state, and local government, civil engineering, utilities, entertainment, commercial records centers, archives, non-profit development, education, and administrative, engineering, production, legal, and medical records management. At the same time, he has worked in product management for hypertext, for windows based user interface systems, for computer displays, for engineering drawing, letter size, microform, and color scanning, and for xerographic, photographic, newspaper, engineering drawing, and color printing.

The following is an example of the course materials available at:

<http://www.ArchiveBuilders.com/whitepapers/index.html>. There are also several papers that describe various document management topics in prose.



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