

Translating Classification and Retention for ERMS Implementation

ARMA Canada Conference
Session M-14
May 31, 2010
1:15 - 2:30 PM

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Agenda

- Address core operational concepts of:
 - Functional classification and taxonomy
 - ERM Systems (ERMS)
- Pre-requisites for implementation of classification and retention schedules in an ERMS
- Practical examples using 'mindmap' technology
- Case Study examples of Lessons learned

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The Challenge

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graph LR; A["(Functional) Classification"] --- B["Retention and Management Policies"]; B --> C((ERMS));
```

The diagram illustrates the challenge of integrating existing organizational policies into an ERMS system. On the left, two boxes are stacked: a dark grey box labeled "(Functional) Classification" and a white box labeled "Retention and Management Policies". A white box is positioned between them, with lines connecting it to both. An arrow points from this central box to a dark grey oval on the right labeled "ERMS".

- Three part question:
 - What is Functional Classification?
 - What are the ERMS concepts of operation and requirements?
 - How do we make our Classification/File Plan and Retention Schedules effective in an ERMS?

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ERMS Realities

- ERMS Systems are complex, highly-capable software platforms
- Require significant up-front preparation
 - What will it manage?
 - How do we organize what we put in?
 - What metadata do we need to find, use and dispose of what we put in?
 - Who can see and do what?
- Require up front, advanced understanding of the ERMS system
 - Most 'Don't Know What They Don't Know'
- Effectiveness measured by fit of configuration : intended use
- Only manage a minor percentage of content

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Primer on Classification

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Classification

- A RIM Classification Schema (CS) has three purposes:
 - Provide a structure that guides how to organize records
 - Provide a means to easily find and use records
 - Provide a means to manage the records over time
- Characteristics of a Good CS:
 - Knowable
 - Consistent
 - Predictable
 - Flexible
- Most classification schema are hierarchical

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Functional Classification

- Classification based on the *business activity context*
- FUNCTION -> ACTIVITY -> (SUB-ACTIVITY) -> RECORDS
- Why?
 - Stability of FUNCTIONS and Activities (unlike Org Chart)
 - Connects activity to information flows
 - Provides a larger context beyond the activity-record link
 - Allows for application of retention at point of records creation and linked to business context
 - Example

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Functional Classification

- Most implementations are 'hybrid'
 - Not purely 'Functional' - Practical exceptions needed
 - Forms, Topics/Subjects, Entities (Projects, Case Files, Committees), doc types, etc.
 - Incorporated in lower levels
- Functional Classification Objectives:
 - Align with business process context
 - Reduce File Plan levels by linking retention at the Activity/Sub-Activity level
 - These fit well with translation to an ERMS

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Limitations to Classification

- Hierarchical schema have a 'Breaking Point'
 - The point where it grows too large to be useable in the form of a single taxonomy type
 - Does a single rule fit for each level of the hierarchy?
 - Does the introduction of new terms force restructuring?
- This weakness adversely impacts most ERMS implementations that depend only on File Plan structure
 - Retention often deployed as extra File Plan levels
 - Need to constantly tweak and rebuild structure
 - Endless debate/dissatisfaction over ONE hierarchy
- Flexible, 'hybrid' Functional Classification can be the answer

Primer on ERMS

ERM Systems

- Glossary:
 - Metadata - information about a thing
 - Class - a virtual set of metadata forming a set, 'type'
 - Property - metadata field
 - Object - an electronic file
- ERMS manages record classes with like behaviours
 - 'Invoice' class has same metadata set
 - This can apply to an actual electronic file (MS Word), or to a collection of properties (physical records)

ERM Systems - 2

- Visual structure = 'File Plan'
 - Almost always rigidly Parent/child: Folder/'contents'
- The ERMS links retention policies to Classification folders
 - Retention series are separate from the File Plan
- Most ERMS use Folder-based disposition
 - The folder is the entity that is disposed of, along with the 'contained' (or child) folders and records
 - DoD 5015.2 requirement
- ERMS is a 'metadata system' - depends on correct linkage of metadata to records classes to File Plan structure

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Map Retention to Classification

Classification	Retention Schedule Series
<ul style="list-style-type: none">FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT<ul style="list-style-type: none">Accounts Payable<ul style="list-style-type: none">[Name of Supplier][Year]Accounts ReceivableAgreements and ContractsAuditing<ul style="list-style-type: none">[Type of audit]Audit Working PapersFinal Audit ReportsUTILITIES<ul style="list-style-type: none">Accounts Payable<ul style="list-style-type: none">[Name of Supplier][Year]Accounts ReceivableAgreements and Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Accounts PayableAccounts ReceivableAgreements and ContractsBudget Working PapersFinal BudgetFinal Financial AuditsPayroll

Graphic source: Charmaine Brooks, CRM Session M-14 ARMA Canada 2010

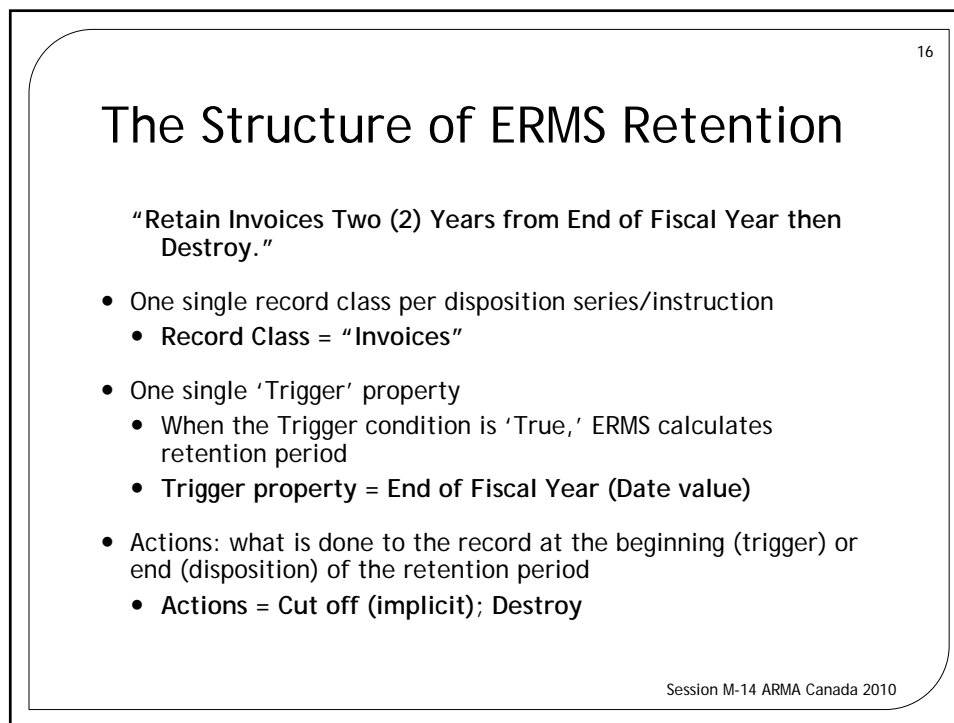
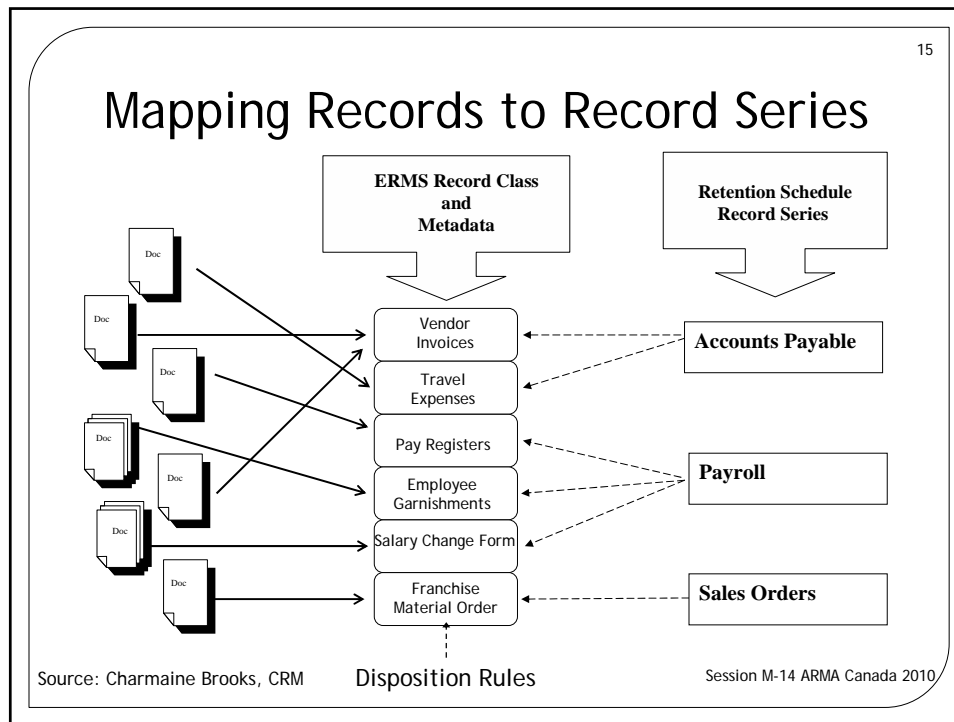
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Map Retention to Classification

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The diagram shows arrows pointing from the Retention Schedule Series to the Classification tree. Specifically, arrows point from 'Accounts Payable', 'Accounts Receivable', and 'Agreements and Contracts' in the Retention Schedule Series to their corresponding sub-items in the Classification tree. There are also arrows pointing from 'Final Financial Audits' and 'Payroll' in the Retention Schedule Series to 'Final Audit Reports' and 'Agreements and Contracts' in the Classification tree, respectively.

Graphic source: Charmaine Brooks, CRM Session M-14 ARMA Canada 2010



Successfully Implementing Classification in an ERMS

Case Study: U.S. State Agency

- Common Scenario:
 - Lots of documents and records scattered on many systems
 - No official classification rules
- Litigation prompted decision for ERMS
- Purchased a DoD 5015.2 certified ERMS
- Began implementation without significant advance work
- Project successfully concluded after 16 months...

Background

- Agency had not done advance work on File Plan
 - Depended upon Network Shares - 'Rabbit Farm'
- Agency had Retention Schedules that were at least 10 years old, but did include electronic records
 - Had sub-parts (A, B, C ...) with separate records classes and retentions
- Business processes were not well documented
- Metadata requirements were not documented

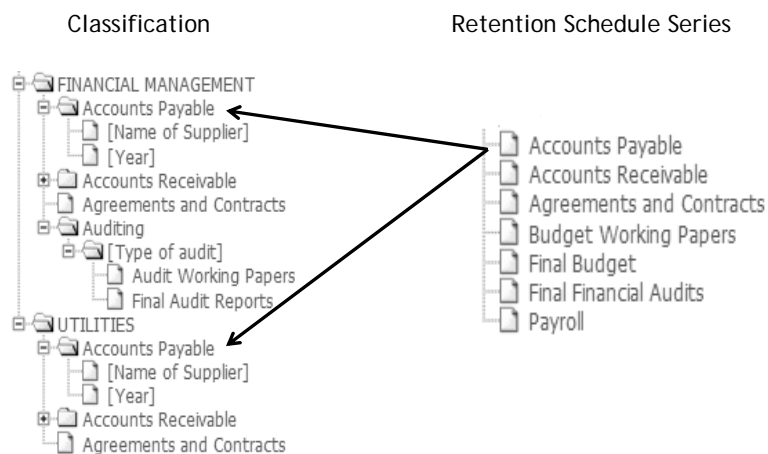
Lessons Learned - 1

- Need to learn the ERMS product thoroughly as an early step
 - Understanding guides translation of File Plan & Policies
- "Retain Invoices Two (2) Years from End of Fiscal Year then Destroy."
- Retention series must be written for electronic implementation
 - Series must use practical disposition instructions that ERMS can interpret
 - Count the number of different Trigger instructions - REDUCE!
 - Each series should clearly identify the trigger property and value needed to effect disposition
 - Series must have a unique or sequential disposition instruction(s)

Lessons Learned - 2

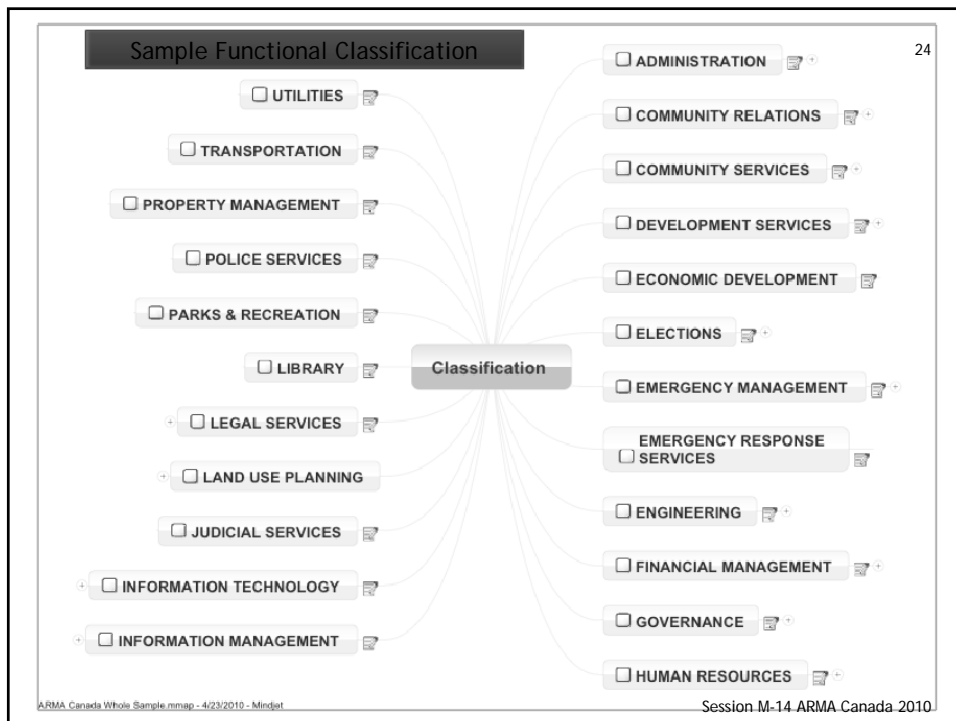
- Objective of Implementing The File Plan / Classification?
 - Records are filed accurately with needed metadata to insure ease of use and ultimate retention and disposition
- A well-built Classification:
 - Presents a filing structure that users understand
 - Presents filing help through Scope Notes, logical rules/relationships
 - Links retention series to higher levels of the File Plan to apply retention, invisibly to the user
 - ~'Buckets'
 - Permits Activities, etc. to be repeated across Functions
 - 'Poly-hierarchy'

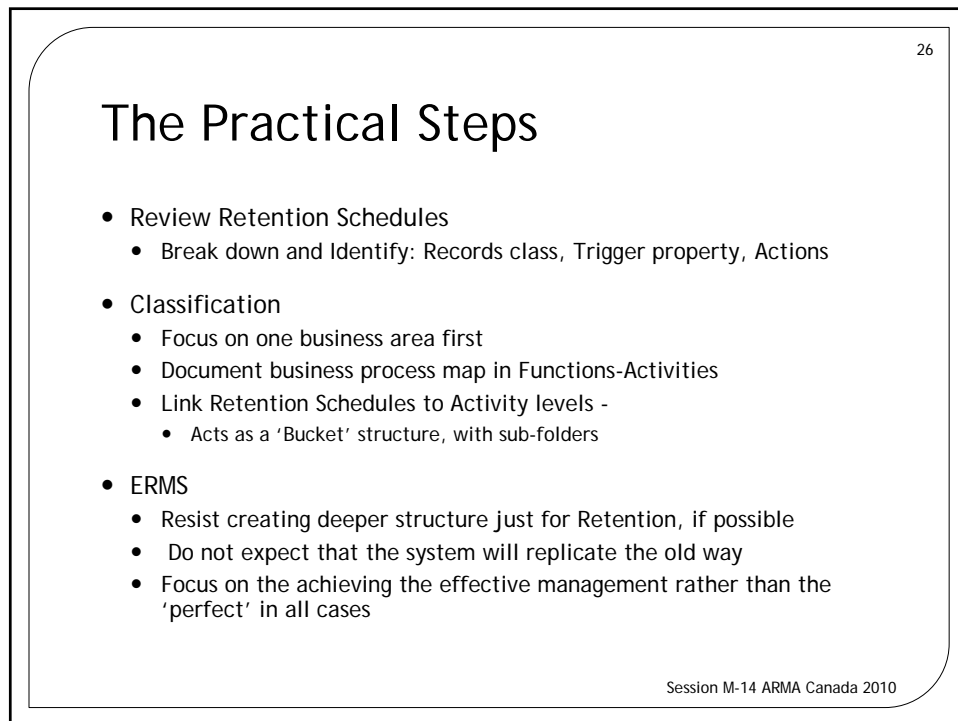
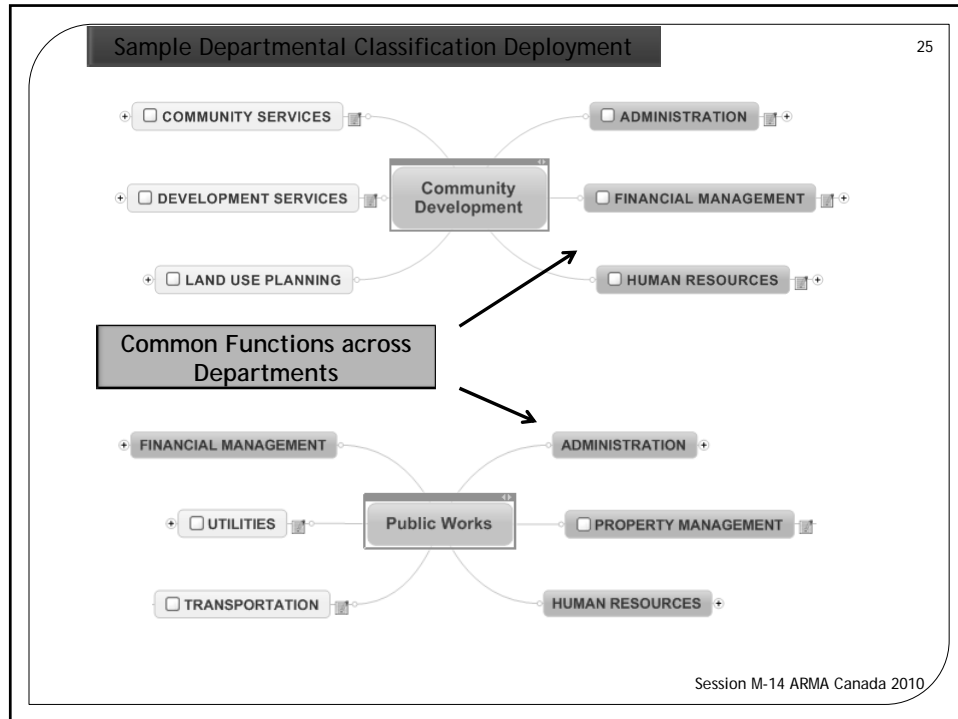
Map Retention to Classification



Lessons Learned - 3

- Insure that Classification serves more than the ERMS
 - Classification Schema as Central Information Structure
- Classification is not a single Whole, but a set of smaller classifications/taxonomies
- Deployment within a Content System can be 'à la carte'
 - Different segments of Schema are used in different systems





Thank You.

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