

Some of the symptoms of a failure to manage records effectively are:

- The loss of control over the creation and use of records;
- The loss of control over access;
- The fragmentation of official records;
- The existence of different versions of the same information and the absence of a definitive or authentic record;
- The loss of contextual information, such as the originator and the date of creation;
- The ease with which electronic records can be changed;
- Technology-related difficulties in retrieving records; and
- The misuse of records, such as unauthorized access to or alteration of records.

Assumptions

The management of records is not a professional function

A technological solution will solve the problems created by chaotic paper systems.

Paper-based and electronic system will eventually become integrated somehow.

Reality

Given the size of Government and the volume of paper and electronic information generated, it is essential to have specialist to deal with controlling records.

If manual systems are chaotic, electronic systems will only compound the problem. Moreover, paper records as source materials and output documents will continue to exist even in a computerized environment.

The existing computerized systems are generally operating completely apart from existing manual systems. Unless there is an interface between manual and electronic systems, it is likely that both will lack integrity.

Extracted from the International Records Management Trust, 1999, Managing Public Sector Records: A Study Programme