

## **What Makes an Electronic Records Management system DoD compliant?**

Electronic Records Management (ERM) distinguishes itself through its focus on the life-cycle of records (creation, distribution/use, storage, maintenance, retention/disposition, etc...) and audit trail tracking. Unlike simple Document Management (DM), ERM effectively lays out a foundation and structure for how you will work with your records over time. Many government agencies today rely on ERM solutions to accomplish a broad spectrum of retention-compliance regulations. The Department of Defense has instituted a stringent set of requirements for electronic records management in DoD certification 5015.2. The most discerning government agencies rely on DoD 5015.2 to guide them through this important process.

An ERM solution allows documents and records to be searched and retrieved instantly, right from your desk. Document distribution is easy, whether via the web, fax, email, published to a CD or printed. Web tools close the gap between filing cabinets and the internet, making public records immediately accessible to employees and citizens. ERM allows retention schedules to be administered as well as an audit trail/chain of custody reports, while remaining compliant to both state archival policies and procedures and the DoD 5015.2 certification program for electronic records.

### **History**

DoD 5015.2 certification was developed over several years by the Department of Defense as a requirement for records management applications (RMAs) implemented within its departments. There are very specific criteria requirements, and an RMA must undergo a formal testing process to determine whether it meets 5015.2 standards. Because of the stringent requirements, it has become a government and industry 'best practice' to use 5015.2 as a starting point for evaluating RMAs for their own use. DoD 5015.2 is the most demanding standard by which RMAs are tested, so it provides a great degree of confidence to compliance officers and records managers alike.

### **Requirements**

In order to become a DoD 5015.2-certified RMA, the system must have a record series—that is, a group of records with instructions governing the life cycle of the constituent records. (Record folders are created within record series as areas to file documents.) Every metadata field must have a readable name or designator, and corresponding data which can be stored in that field. The system must allow users to define and establish relationships between documents through document links. It must be able to do versioning—that is, to indicate an auto-incremented sequence of revisions to a particular record.

The RMA must have the ability to create security markings which allow users to assign certain markings to records upon filing. These markings serve as a security-based metadata field and are intended to define and restrict access as well as aiding in classification and retrieval. The system must have the ability to maintain vital records—essential agency records that are subject to periodic review and update. It must also have the ability to maintain cutoff parameters each record series' set of retention and disposition instructions. These parameters include cutoff criteria, retention period, and a list of disposition actions. Additionally, the system must allow for closing records once an event or time-event has occurred (no new records can be filed and all the records in the folder held Inactive, with no modifications allowed).

Another requirement is that folders may be frozen at any time by the appropriate records manager. "Freezing" a folder halts all dispositions and no records may be removed. DoD-certified RMAs must allow

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for retention schedules, which can be of any duration including zero. Once the retention period is over, the records in a folder are said to become eligible for disposition. Finally, the DoD requires that the RMA allows for disposition. After the hold period is over, inactive documents can be subject to one or more disposition actions. Two types can be handled by the RMA: interim transfers and final dispositions.

### **What it means for you**

DoD 5015.2 is a proven way to evaluate an Electronic Records Management system. Instituting an ERM solution, as more and more governments are doing, can sometimes seem daunting but the right system will work for your budget and your schedule. As always one of the best resources for mitigating risk and selecting the best system/vendor, other than using the DoD standards, is to consult with other municipal clerks in surrounding communities to discover what is (or is not) working for them. Don't reinvent the wheel; find a solution that is proven and trusted by many other government entities. Electronic Records Management will help you maintain comprehensive security, as well as disaster preparation and recovery, while improving the public's access to records.

*For more information visit [www.mccinnovations.com](http://www.mccinnovations.com) or contact MCC Innovations, a subsidiary of Municipal Code Corporation, at 1-800-342-2633 or [info@mccinnovations.com](mailto:info@mccinnovations.com).*