HINDSIGHTS AND FRESH PERSPECTIVES: DOCUMENTING IN-OFFICE RECORDS DESTRUCTION

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HOW DO YOU DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION?

Records destruction
- “process of eliminating or deleting records, beyond any possible reconstruction” (ISO 15489-1:2001)

Destruction and compliance
- Can you prove the organization is no longer in possession of specific information?  
- How do you document destruction when you don’t have custody of the records?

RECORDS ENVIRONMENT AT MSU

Board of Trustees mandate
- “records of the official activities of University officers and offices...[are] not to be destroyed without the approval of both the department officer and the Director of Archives”

RM program works as consultant
- Option of records storage at off-site facility  
- Offices not required to use Archives’ records storage
ESTABLISHING IN-OFFICE DESTRUCTION

Consider needs of RM program and user base
- No procedures for documenting in-office records destruction

Review other institutional practices
- Colleges and Universities
- State Governments

Draft form and instructions
- Keep process as simple as possible
- Increase consistency across procedures

In-Office Records Destruction Form

Implemented Summer of 2015

IMPLEMENTING IN-OFFICE DESTRUCTION

Brand new process for campus users
- Gradual implementation
- Form introduced through presentations and consultations

Usage statistics after one year
- Used by over 25 campus departments
- Over 150 cubic feet of records destruction documented
LESSONS LEARNED

Don’t reinvent the wheel!
Make things as easy as possible for users.
Don’t expect 100% acceptance.
Be prepared to evaluate and adapt as needed.
  • Difficulties with documenting high volume electronic records, such as e-mail
  • Issues with definition of “volume”
  • Increase usability

THANK YOU!

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Photos Courtesy of Pexels and University Archives and Historical Collections
In-Office/Unit/Department Destruction of University Records

In accordance with previously established guidelines and records retention schedules, inactive records with no permanent value to the university will be destroyed. The following records are ready for in-office/unit destruction in the unit/office listed below. These records will be destroyed in office and will not be transferred to University Archives for storage. Please sign the form below and send to University Archives for approval. University Archives approval is required before proceeding with destruction. Retain a signed copy of this form for your records.

Primary Contact:
Email:       Phone:

University Office/Unit/Department:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Records Series/Type</th>
<th>Date Range (Years)</th>
<th>Volume (c.f./MB)</th>
<th>Destruction Method (Shred/Recycle/Wipe)</th>
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By signing this form, the following MSU personnel state that the records listed above are approved for destruction in the above named office and that, to the best knowledge of the signee(s), there is no litigation, audit, or other legal proceeding pending that would require destruction of the records to be postponed.

Approval of Unit/Office Representative:

Name/Signature       Date

Approval of University Archives:

Name/Signature       Date