

Implementing an Electronic Document and Records Management System: The Dorset County Council Experience

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1 Introduction

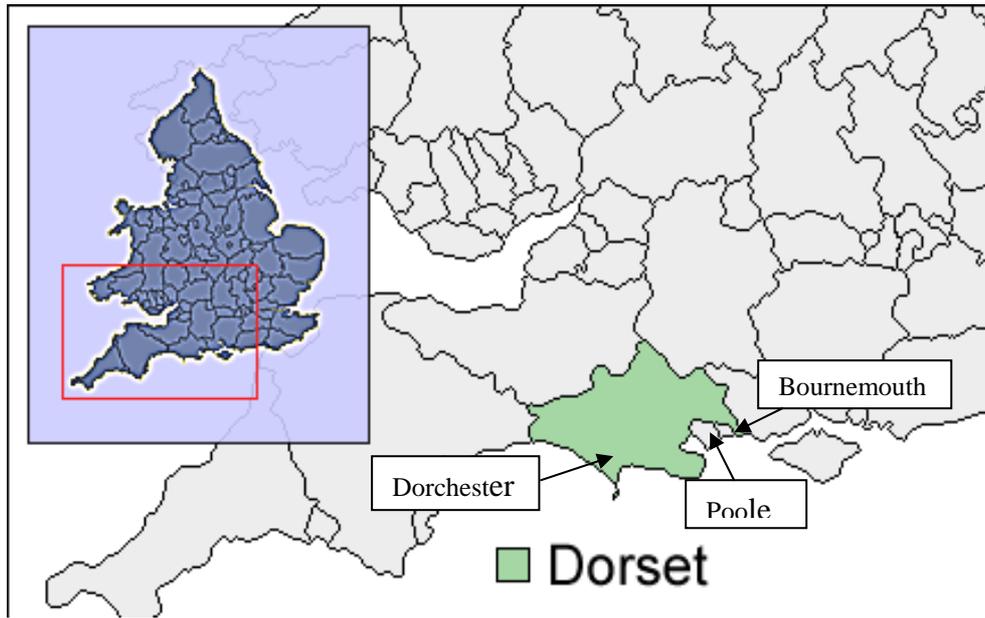
In the UK local government is undertaking considerable change with a number of external and internal drivers putting pressure on the management of electronic information. These include:

- The Gershon efficiency agenda (Dorset County Council has to make £18 million efficiency savings (3%) in the 3 financial years 2005 to 2008).
- Legislative requirements such as Freedom of Information, Data Protection Act, the Children's Act etc.
- Comprehensive Performance Assessments (CPA) - In-depth inspections of how county councils are run by the Audit Commission with councils being rated from 1 star (poor) to 4 stars (excellent). DCC has currently a 3 star rating.
- Joint agency working with external partners such as the local Hospital Trusts or the Dorset Police Authority.
- The funding position (Dorset County Council receives the lowest revenue funding for any county council from central government).
- The Customer Connect Project which is providing easier, better and cheaper services to customers and includes a Contact Centre and an integrated system to help front office to back office function more efficiently.
- Flexible and remote (home) working.
- The strategic approach to becoming more efficient & effective.

As part of the response to these internal and external drivers for change Dorset County Council (DCC) is introducing an Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) system to improve the management of its electronic information.

This paper seeks to consider the practical implementation of an EDRM system. Firstly I will discuss the initial stages of the project, concentrating on the records management aspects such as carrying out an information audit, designing the corporate file-plan and tackling retention scheduling issues. I will then discuss the phase one pilot stage, where we integrated the system with existing databases so that the electronic documents are stored in the EDRM system but accessed through the existing database. I will then explain the phase two corporate deployment and where DCC now stands with it. I will also discuss the lessons learnt, the benefits and the challenges still being faced.

2 Dorset and Dorset County Council



Dorset is a predominantly rural county in the South West of England. It is an average sized English county at 2542 square km but it has one of the smallest populations for a county at 401,100 inhabitants. Tourism is crucial to the Dorset economy and the Dorset coastline (the Jurassic Coast) has been designated a World Heritage Site, the only natural World Heritage Site in the UK.

The main urban centres are at Poole and Bournemouth which are run as separate unitary local government authorities. The remaining area is managed by Dorset County Council (shown in the green shaded area above). The county town of Dorchester is recognised as the administrative centre of the county and is the headquarters of Dorset County Council; however it has offices in all the main towns within the county. Dorchester has recently received national attention following the Prince of Wales' decision to develop his land on the western edge of the town and this suburb has been called Poundbury.

Dorset County Council employs 8000 staff and is organised into four directorates.

- Adult and Community Services deliver cultural services (Libraries and archives), regulatory services (including trading standards), adult social care (particularly support to the elderly, those suffering with mental health issues and physical disabilities) and adult learning services.
- Children's Services provide support to meet the needs of the children and young people in Dorset, this includes support for schools and teachers, children with special needs and learning disabilities, and youth and community services providing a wide range of informal educational activities.
- Environmental Services provide support for: Highways and Transportation including the maintenance and construction of the

highways network and road safety; Planning including the coast and countryside and historic environment; Policy (including tourism); Property Management maintaining DCC property; and waste management including recycling and waste centres.

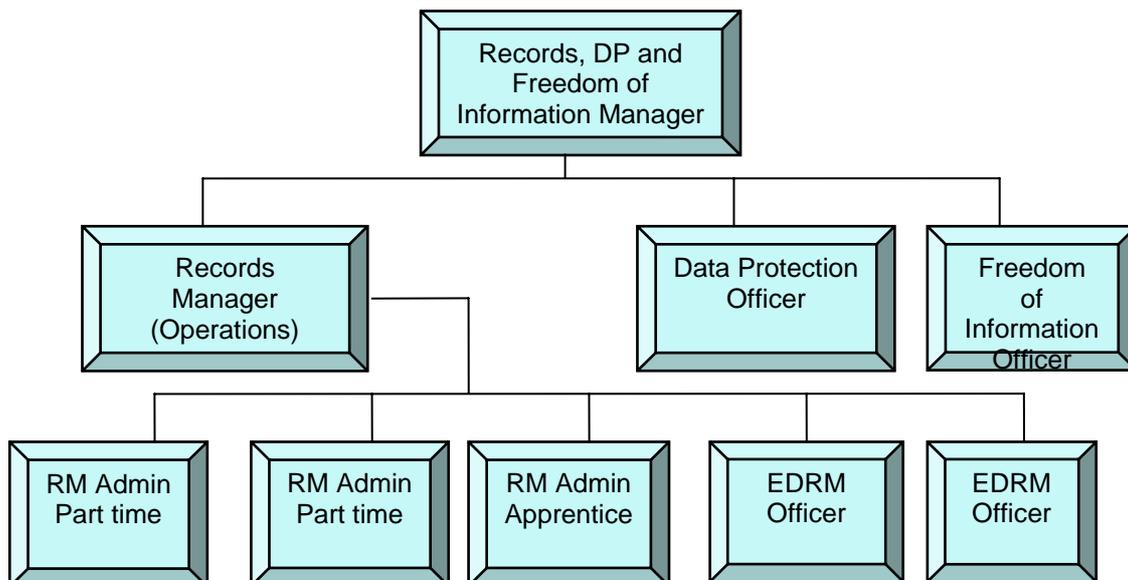
- Corporate Resources Directorate contain support services for the other three directorates such as Human Resources, IT, Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and Records Management.

3 Records Management at Dorset County Council

The Records Management Unit was established in 1996 to provide a storage and retrieval service for the authority's non-current paper based records. It serves all the directorates, space permitting, and does its best to accommodate all customers. It has been calculated that the unit holds about a third of the authority's non-current records. The rest is stored in an unmanaged way in attics and basements around the authority.

We also offer advice on office storage systems and records classification. We have developed and agreed retention schedules with many departments in the county council. These identify the 'life-cycle' for each class of record from when they are created to when they are closed and sent to the RMU. From then how long they are held there until they are reviewed and either destroyed or transferred to the Dorset History Centre if they have historic value.

The EDRM Project (known as ShARE) has been introduced to manage the authority's electronic records and the role of the RMU team is to build areas of the file-plan with the relevant department and administer the records management elements of the system (such as overseeing the destruction process).



Dorset County Council Records Management Unit Staffing Structure

The Records Management Unit is also responsible for the authority's compliance with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts. The

table above shows the staffing structure of the unit. The Records, Data Protection and Freedom of Information Manager has overall management of the unit, particularly with its strategic importance and direction. The Records Manager (operations) has the day to day management of the records management unit and has two teams, one dealing with the paper records and the other dealing with the ShARE (EDRM) project. There are also two dedicated officers administrating the authority's response to the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.



The Records Management Unit controls 2 ½ miles of records in the basement of county hall (formerly used by the Dorset Archive Service before it moved to a brand new purpose built office in 1991).

The unit can track the location, retention periods and operate a retrieval service for all files held in the unit using a simple database. The database fields include the title of the file, the covering dates, any original file reference, the transfer number, location and date that the file needs reviewing for destruction or permanent preservation. It also has a booking-out facility for when a file is taken out and there is an audit trail of who and when a file has been booked out.

4.1 The ShARE EDRM Project

ShARE is a key tactical project using EDRM technology to deliver and underpin our work in response to the external and internal drivers for change discussed earlier. Ultimately the product will enable us to store, retrieve, manage, and destroy our electronic information.

During 2003 a lengthy process took place defining and specifying the purpose of the project. Once a business case had been accepted a tendering process took place. Valid Information Systems was awarded the contract for their

R/KYV EDM Product. In 2003 the company was acquired by Hummingbird Ltd which in turn was acquired by Open Text Corporation in 2006. The ShARE project began in earnest in June 2004, with the objective of providing a secure, accessible, Authority-wide EDM system, which was to be both sustainable and robust, with proof of concept work stream pilots deployed in 4 areas across the Authority. The phase 1 project was successfully completed in June 2006 and funding was given for a phase 2 corporate deployment.

4.2 Initial Stages: Records Management Issues

When embarking on an EDM project there are a number of key activities that the records manager needs to undertake at the initial stages. It is advisable to carry out an information audit to identify the functions and activities carried out by each department and what type of classes of records are being produced. A decision needs to be made on how the information is going to be structured within the EDM system. Work needs to be carried out to define the lifecycle of each of these classes including when they need to be destroyed or retained for permanent preservation.

4.2.1 Information Audit

RECORDS AND INFORMAL SURVEY	
Department: SC & H Purbeck Office Date: 27/1/04	Contact Name: Telephone:
1. Title of record series/collection:	Service User Files
2. What information do the records contain?	Personal details, legal information, reports, case plans, diaries, meetings and minutes
3. For what purpose are the records created?	Case file of individual clients covering a number of specialist areas such as adoption, child in need, drug and alcohol, learning disability, mental health etc (areas to be defined)
4. Date range:	Varies depending on how long clients have been dealt with.
5. Format of the records:	Paper.

6. Filing system (numeric, alphanumeric, etc)	Alphabetical
7. Finding aids:	None. The files are simply labelled with the school's name
8. Who refers to the records and how often?	Specialist teams and admin
9. Status:	Official record
10. Is there information in other records which duplicates information contained in these records?	No
11. Do the records provide evidence of the origins, structure, policy and functions of the organisation?	No
12. Do the records have historical value?	No

An information audit is a key prerequisite for any EDM project. Records are the reflection of an organisation's activities and the survey's aim is to identify these activities and the types or classes of records that arise from them. The example of the DCC's Information Audit above identifies these classes of records, the contents, whether they have an historical interest (though this is ultimately reviewed by the archive department) and identifies any disposal criteria. An information survey gives an objective view of an organisation's record collections and their uses. It is the first and most important step to the proper control of records whereby procedures are considered in a systematic

and disciplined way. It is also a useful tool for records management to get a better understanding of the role of the business units within the organisation.

The collection and analysis of data from an information survey is time-consuming and labour intensive. At the time of the survey DCC was divided into 5 directorates. The two Records Managers conducted audits of two of the directorates. Two of the directorates employed a part-time member of staff under records management supervision and the remaining directorate asked a number of existing staff in administrative roles to carry out the survey, also with records management guidance. This process took 8 months during the same time that the EDM business case and procurement processes were taking place.

4.2.2 The Corporate File-plan Structure

A corporate file-plan is the structure by which the information is classified and organised. There are a number of different ways to construct a file-plan. These can include filing by organisational structure, filing by subject, filing by personal surnames or a mix of all. There is a new way to manage information as advocated by the Records and Information Management profession. This is organising the filing structure based on the authority's key functions and activities.

At present the authority's electronic data is stored on a number of shared drives, with each Directorate's information held on separate servers (over 40 at present). The top levels of the filing structure reflect the organizational structure. The problem arises when there is a restructure within the organisation. Since the start of the ShARE Project DCC has undergone a major structural reorganisation. Two of the directorates, Education and Social Care, were reorganised into a Children's Directorate and an Adult and Community Directorate. Two other directorates merged into one with some business Units being moved into the Adult and Community directorate. This has caused the IT Department a lot of problems when trying to manage the infrastructure since it no longer reflects the new organisational structure.

There is no control on how each business unit constructs their parts of the filing structure. Whilst it is easy for users to create new folders there are a number of drawbacks.

- Unstructured – anyone can create folders with no naming standards. This type of folder plan rarely is structured with seemingly random folder titles being created. This often results in documents being misfiled or new folders being created in an uncontrolled manner.
- No metadata means unreliable searches and results in duplication.
- No version control leading to confusion and reduced information integrity.
- No retention schedules in place meaning storage requirements are always increasing (users rarely weed and destroy old documents).
- Organisational structures are vulnerable to structural changes and cause IT a lot of trouble (and cost) trying to change the information.

- With no area for work in progress, draft documents are either stored on the PC's local drive which contravenes data protection and freedom of information legislation, or in the public domain on the shared drive.

A common way of organising a filing structure is to base it on individual staff surnames. Each member of staff has their own folder with their data organised in an unstructured, subject based way at the next levels down. A number of these staff may work in the same team and documents are duplicated in their own individual areas. Often when these documents are amended different versions are created and there is no means of identifying which is the current version. When staff leaves, their data is 'hidden' within the file-plan and difficult to locate. If a member of staff is off sick then it can be difficult to find files that they are storing in the file-plan structure.

Classification and filing organised by business function and activity is the only method that can overcome the disadvantages evident with the other methods of classification and filing.

- Function based classification and filing organises information by its *business purpose* rather than by subject, theme, organisational structure, project, case or staff surname.
- Business functions and activities do not change over time in the same way that subjects and organisational units change. Indeed, the business activities of an organisation are usually unaffected by changes in subject matter or organisation structure.
- By organising information in this way it is possible to define policies for a much broader range of information management functions (e.g. retention or disposal, FOI disclosure, sharing and access control etc.) and to easily implement these policies with minimal resources.

The situation under ShARE would be different in that the authority's documents would be stored in a corporate functional file-plan, with access governed by group security. Nineteen top level functions have been identified with the top 2 levels being mandatory. As the corporate file-plan is developed, documents can be migrated to the relevant area in the file-plan. The aim is to replace the shared drives by the end of the corporate rollout.

As an example the Freedom of Information filing structure has been developed using the functional file-plan approach. The top two functions are:

- Information Management and Technology
- Freedom of Information

At the third level are the main activities carried out by the team:

- Access Requests and Complaints
- Guidance and Training Materials
- Policies and Reports
- Publication Scheme and Re-use of Public Sector Information

At the fourth level there are a series of folders that hold the relevant documents

During the lifetime of the Project the FOI team have been moved from one Directorate to another. However this has made no effect to the functional file-plan structure within the EDRM.

4.2.3 Corporate File-plan Process and Senior Management Support

For a corporate file-plan deployment to be successful it is crucial to gain senior management support. The results of the information audit were analysed to identify the functions, activities and types of documents being created by business units through out the authority. This was then used for a first draft of the top levels of the file-plan. The Local Government Classification Scheme, which had been issued by the Records Management Society in 2003, was analysed with the audit results. This scheme has been developed to ease the burden of developing classification schemes to support business activities undertaken in the predominantly (but not exclusively), local government environment. Whilst this is a useful starting point it is not the answer since it is too general, each authority's file-plan needs to capture local terminology and variation. It is available on <http://www.rms-gb.org.uk/resources/796>.

The key to any successful EDRM project is to have senior management support. At DCC the Corporate file-plan was approved firstly by the Directorate Management Teams (comprising the relevant director and heads of service) and then ratified by the County Management Team (the chief executive and the four directors). The business case for the project was approved and funded by the Information Systems Strategy Group whose membership consisted of senior managers.

4.2.4 Retention Schedules for Paper Files

The Records Management team also used the information audits to define the life cycle of the documents from creation to destruction/permanent preservation and create retention schedules. Retention Schedules identify each type or class of record/file that a business unit creates. It will give recommendations on when these files need to be closed and transferred to records management and how long they need to be kept for until they are either destroyed or preserved. Any statutory reasons guiding the retention are also recorded. Whilst we already had retention schedules with our client this gave us an opportunity to carry out retention schedules for all the authority's business units. We hope to publish these on our intranet site sometime in the future (other authorities have already done such as the records management unit at Staffordshire County Council).

4.2.5 Retention in an EDRM System

One of the most difficult areas of the ShARE project has been dealing with the retention and disposal management of the electronic data. In the paper file process at DCC file title lists are sent to clients to review. They may appraise the files by using the list or may wish to view the actual files. Once files have

been selected for destruction then the records manager and the archivists have to apply appraisal criteria to identify the core files that need to be held for permanent preservation. This can be a time-consuming process.

For EDRM systems retention management is equally problematic. There are really only two approaches available. The first is to apply retention on individual documents saved into the system. One of the main drawbacks is that it is not possible to build in automatic triggers. The only way to make this retention work would be to get the user to apply retention when saving documents into the EDRM system. Experience suggests that users are reluctant to carry out burdensome administrative tasks when using an EDRM system. For a user filling in one or two extra metadata fields when saving into the system is the usual limit. It is unlikely that users will want to apply complicated retention rules at the record creation stage since this is time-consuming. The results would also be very inconsistent.

The second approach is to set retention at the class or folder level. All documents within these classes will inherit the retention set. This has the advantage that the records manager can set the retention automatically. It also means that retention schedules can be consistently applied to both paper and electronic records.

This approach works best when retention is time based such as “destroy x number of years after the end of a financial or calendar year”. However there are a number of retention scenarios which are difficult to replicate with electronic records:

1. Classes/folders needing to be reviewed. With paper files users will either make a decision based on the file title or by physically reviewing the files. This is difficult to replicate with electronic files. At present we are testing a means for users to review the contents of an electronic folder, highlighting any documents that need to be kept and being able to destroy the remainder.
2. Events based retention. Retention based on date of birth or when documents are superseded is difficult to replicate in an electronic system. At present the only means is for the users to review the documents on an individual bases.

Retention then is a difficult issue which has yet to be satisfactorily resolved for electronic data. There is a big culture change issue needing to be addressed since users have never had to worry about electronic retention before. The EDRM systems at present are relying on a lot of time, effort and input by users who are reluctant to do so.

5.1 ShARE Phase One: The Pilots

Whilst the records management unit were working on the information audit, corporate file-plan and retention issues the remaining EDRM team successfully produced a business case which led to the procurement of a system. There then followed an 18 month pilot phase to test the suitability of

the product by integrating it with four existing back office information management systems. These were:

Pilot one: The first pilot was the integration of ShARE with the Adult Services case management database so electronic case management files could be created and therefore delivering the Electronic Social Care Record (ESCR) programme. This is a Government target to store all new case management records electronically by October 2005.

The screenshot shows a software window titled 'New Loc System' with a menu bar (File, Edit, Query, Block, Record, Field, Window, Quick Menu, Help) and a toolbar. The main area is titled 'CLARIS - Basic Information [LOC]' and contains a form for 'ShARE'. The form has several sections: 'Basic Details' with fields for Ref. (NEW 639797), Surname / Organisation Name (LEWIS), Title (MR), Forename 1 (ANTHONY), and Forename 2; 'Address Details' with fields for 1 MAIN STREET, WOOL, WAREHAM, DORSET, DT7 8UJ, and Postcode; 'Personal Information' with radio buttons for Gender (Male selected), Date of Birth (12-MAR-1967), Birthplace (TAUNTON), and Deceased Date; 'Religion' (SPIRITUALIST), 'Marital Status' (MARRIED), and 'Resp. Authority' (DORSET); and 'Geographical' information with Local Office (PURBECK LOCAL OFFICE) and Local Office Supervising (04). There are also fields for 'Overall Record Status' (CLOSED), 'Add Type' (PERMANENT ADDR...), 'Phone Type' (HOME), and 'Destruction Date(Archiving)'. A 'Show All Tabs' button is at the bottom left.

The diagram above shows a service user details within the existing database. By clicking the ShARE button the care worker gets the list of electronic documents relating to that service user. The key metadata information is the unique service user id. The search will bring back all documents relating to the service user from all areas of the file-plan that the user has access rights to. This is in effect a virtual case file. This pilot was short listed for a national IT computing award.

Pilot two: This was to integrate ShARE with the Highways EXOR/PEM system so that the highways management team can view all documents relating to a maintenance enquiry by using the EXOR unique reference. This pilot won a national award and was short listed for another.

Pilot three was to introduce a Freedom of Information electronic case file system. This allowed the authority to monitor and manage freedom of information requests.

Pilot four was to integrate with the Corporate Property Database and allow the scanning of 6000 large format plans and retrieve them through ShARE.

5.2 The ShARE Phase One achievements

The Phase One achievements included:

- Agreement of the top two levels of the DCC functional corporate file-plan, which has subsequently been shown to support best practice.

- A solid technical and organisational foundation made for the rollout of the functional file-plan in order to support the Authority's information management initiatives.
- Gershon efficiencies have already been realised in the Adult Services pilot of the Electronic Social Care Record (ESCR) And the Highways PEM/EXOR pilot.
- Within the pilot work streams, ShARE facilitates improved quality of service delivery through faster, more accurate information retrieval, in addition to greatly improved management of organisational information through the many benefits of an EDRM system.

5.3 Records Management Lessons Learnt from Phase One

There are a number of important lessons learned during Phase one and the following are records management related.

- It will take significant time and effort to develop the corporate file-plan and migrate information from the current, unstructured shared drives to ShARE. It is estimated that a team of 2 people working on the file-plan development will take 5 years to complete the rolling implementation programme.
- A corporate file-plan is the principal means for the implementation of the retention periods since disposal dates form part of the EDRM metadata fields. This will mean that electronic documents will be destroyed in a systematic way. This will greatly reduce the amount of server space needed and also mean that the authority is Data Protection and Freedom of Information compliant.
- The pilots showed both the advantages of integrating the EDRM system with existing databases through workflow and the disadvantages, namely that it is a complex and time consuming process. If this process was done on a corporate scale the project would take many years to complete. There will only be limited scope for full ShARE deployment with integration and workflow in Phase two.
- It is vital for the success of such a project to get top level support. The County Management Team approved the Phase 1 project and the corporate file-plan. Without this level of support it is hard to see how a corporate EDRMS project would be successful.

6 Phase Two: The Corporate Deployment

The vision for the ShARE project was the complete deployment of an EDRM System across the Authority within five years. The ShARE project began phase two in July 2006 by adopting the ShARE Dual Deployment Framework. The first phase was the corporate deployment (called ShARE 'Lite') The main objective of the programme was the corporate rollout of the functional file-plan in order to establish the Authority's primary information repository and underpin future information management projects as a standard component of the IT toolkit. This would involve the replacement, where appropriate, of unstructured shared file storage with the ShARE file-plan in a phased

programme. Corporate funding was given for the ShARE Lite programme, initially for 2 years.

Full ShARE deployment involved the integration of existing database systems with ShARE. It is likely to be undertaken in conjunction with other projects where the Authority deems that the deployment of ShARE would bring most business benefit, such as Customer Connect, the Fit for the Future Programme, ESCR, and the Integrated Children's Service database, all of which can be underpinned and enabled by ShARE.

7 Benefits of the ShARE EDRM system

There have been a series of benefits of the EDRM system identified for both the customer and the authority.

7.1 For the customer:

- The functional file-plan approach identifying key functions and activities to provide a logical filing structure.
- The EDRM system has a superior search engine which means that staff can quickly retrieve information.
- By organising the information by function and activity it means that staff can share information instead of producing different versions.
- There is an opportunity for the directorate business analysts to look at each business unit's processes with the prospect of recommending more efficient ways of carrying out office processes.
- By organising business information by functions there is the potential to share related information across the authority. In the past when different business units carried out related functions, different versions of the same documents would often be stored in each business unit's filing structure. With a functional file-plan these business units could have access to the same part of the file-plan. In this way a single document can be accessed by different teams.
- One of the major drawbacks of a filing structure based on the organisational structure is duplication. A functional file-plan will eliminate duplication since access permissions can be granted to parts of the file-plan or links created to individual documents.
- The EDRM system has an audit trail of changes (and by whom) to individual documents.
- By scanning in paper documents or saving emails and electronic documents, information can be shared immediately.
- With paper filing there are often delays in filing new documents. This can cause bottlenecks when trying to access this information. With an EDRM system documents are available as soon as they are saved and indexed into the system.
- By organising the filing structure by a business unit's functions and activities if a member of staff is off ill electronic documents are available regardless.

- In a similar way documents are still available when a member of staff leaves/retires. This enables a much smoother transition of knowledge and information for remaining and new members of staff.
- The EDRM system has the ability to scan and save paper documents. Whilst an EDRM will not lead to 'a paperless' office it does give potential saving of office space.
- The EDRM system gives the ability for business units to manage and store their business emails by saving them into the filing structure. This allows for a complete record of an activity.
- It gives the ability to manage and store case files in an electronic format, and for a more effective and efficient means of retrieving the information.
- If information is easy to file and quick to retrieve then it will improve staff morale.

7.2 Benefits of an EDRM system for the authority as a whole:

- The EDRM system means that Dorset County Council is meeting its legislative compliance as directed by various acts such as the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations, Human Rights Act and the Electronic Social Care Record.
- The full ShARE programme gives the ability to underpin other major information management projects.
- One of the aims of the ShARE project is to give the potential to shut down the uncontrolled shared drives with the EDRM system being the default repository for all electronic documents and records. This will lead to a large potential saving of electronic storage space.
- At present there is very little destruction of out of date information within the shared drives. The retention and disposal function of the EDRM will mean that only electronic information that is needed will be retained.
- At present there is little management of emails in the authority. A large proportion of emails held in the server are out of date and obsolete. Once a business unit has ShARE it can save its business emails into the system and delete the copy held on the email server. All non-business emails stored on the email server could automatically be deleted after 6 months. This would be large potential savings in electronic storage space.
- Vital records can be held and stored electronically within the EDRM. These can be recovered as part of a business continuity and disaster recovery plan.
- There is the potential that the EDRM could facilitate and underpin future potential information management developments such as Microsoft Sharepoint collaboration tool.

8 Challenges

There are a number of challenges that need to be carefully considered.

8.1 The length of the Project

It has been estimated that the corporate roll out of an EDRM project will take at least 5 years to achieve. There is always a risk for long term projects with budget constraints and cutbacks. At Dorset County Council, one year into phase two, the IT department was restructured (October 2007). It was decided that the EDRM project be disbanded and the roll out continue as part of the IT's portfolio of common systems.

If a business unit wants ShARE then they contact one of the four Directorate IT Business managers. They in turn send their business analyst to write a business case which goes to the Directorate Steering group and then to the Information Systems Strategy Group for approval and appropriate resources allocated. This is a time-consuming process and it is unclear how successful it will be. The former dedicated ShARE project team of seven (project manager, business analyst, IT developer, IT desk side support and security officer, IT trainer and two records management officers) have made a lot more progress than the new method in place and there are issues and concerns around upgrades and maintenance of the system.

8.2 User Expectations

One of the issues we have had is user expectations. When making initial contact with a new business unit there is often a misconception about what the EDRM is. A lot of customers think that the system includes a collaboration site (such as Microsoft Sharepoint) or allows for the electronic tracking of correspondence. We now manage these expectations by issuing a product sheet at the beginning of every new work stream. This gives a brief outline of what the EDRM product is (and is not).

8.3 Storage issues

At Dorset County Council there has been a concern raised in IT at the amount of versions of a draft or working document will be created since the technology is geared to save all version changes. Whenever someone makes change to a document a new version of it is created. The user always views the most recent version but can, if they wish, see one of the earlier versions. Some in IT are very concerned with talk of 5 terabytes of space needed within 5 years even with disposal. It has been calculated that around 80% of documents created in DCC don't need version control for legal admissibility or for permanent preservation but it is the national standard requirement. However changes in the new international Moreq2 standard will allow version control to be disabled at class/folder level so only those areas that need version control will be enabled. This should drastically reduce the amount of storage needed.

8.4 Draft documents

Linked to the storage issue is what to be done with draft documents. At present these would be available to all within a business unit who have

access permissions. The system needs to have individual working areas for users so that they can work on drafts. This area needs to have version control disabled. This area should have limited space to encourage users to save documents into the main part of the file-plan as soon as possible. I am at present working with the vendors so that such an area can be included within the EDRM system.

9 Conclusion

The corporate deployment of an EDRM system is not an optional extra but an important enabler underpinning electronic service delivery. It can provide big improvements to back office functions and councils and vendors are now looking at EDRM as a key driver for meeting the efficiency agenda.

For an EDRM project to be successful it is important to:

- Define the scope of the project and the work streams within it.
- To have it properly resourced, both with funding and staff.
- Set a realistic timescale.
- Tackle the culture change issues (users don't like change so the benefits of the system have to be explained).
- Adopt project management principals in running the project.
- Keep the profile of the project high.
- Get senior management support.

At Dorset County Council the ShARE Phase 2 Project has the potential to provide the foundation for all present and future information management programmes by addressing the fundamental information requirements of the Authority, organising the Authority's information in line with best practice in a consistent manner, and making it accessible (with appropriate restrictions) across the Authority. In this way the ShARE project and EDRM technology can underpin future information management projects.

Dr David Reeve January 2008