

# FOR THE RECORD

OCTOBER 2007

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ENTERPRISE PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE (EPMO)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>DIVISION OF PUBLIC RECORDS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>DRAFT POLICY ON FILE FORMATS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>GOT MAIL? MANAGING ELECTRONIC MESSAGES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>VIEW FROM THE VILLAGE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IN THE NEWS</b>	<b>4</b>

## PRESERVING ELECTRONIC RECORDS



Information technology (IT) professionals have been evaluating solutions for the long-term *storage* of electronic data and records. Archivists and records management professionals, and some attorneys, have been researching the long-term *preservation and access* of electronic data and records.

As it turns out, long-term storage does not equal long-term preservation or access. Sure, the tapes may be designed to last 30 years, but will we be able to read and access the information on them 30 years from now?

Lessons learned from the past clearly show that long-term storage, preservation, and access means (1) using appropriate file formats, (2) selecting the proper digital media, and (3) planning to migrate or convert records as necessary. The industry is making progress in standardization and recommendations on all fronts. This month we are addressing the first task at hand: [appropriate file formats.](#)

Most of us are familiar with Microsoft Office formats, such as .doc, .xls, and .mdb . Other common formats are .pdf, .tif, .jpeg., html, and .xml. In reality, however, there are thousands of file formats available to us.

In September 2005, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) approved PDF/A, a version of Adobe Systems Inc.'s Portable Document Format (PDF), as a file format suitable for the long-term storage, preservation, and access of structured objects such as text, vector, graphics, raster images, etc.

PDF/A will certainly be a preferred file format for Vermont public agencies. In the coming months, with [your feedback and help.](#) iSTART will develop and publish guidelines describing how to use and exploit PDF/A and other standard formats such as Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), Extensible Mark-up Language (XML), and Open Document Format (ODF) for long-term storage, preservation, and access of our valuable electronic records.

## VERMONT HIGHLIGHTS

The Department of Human Resources has updated its personnel policy on *E-communications and Internet Use.*

iSTART is working on a policy to help agencies understand when electronic messages, such as e-mail, are records and how to manage them.

SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE...

## WHAT IS PAST IS PROLOGUE?



Among the records at the Middlesex record center are four boxes of tabulating cards from a 1966-67 legislative study of the correctional system. We have saved the file format on a reliable medium (punch card) but not the systems for reading and accessing the information.

The tabulating cards underscore the need for including file formats within your record and information planning. From analog tapes to long-gone word processing programs, unmanaged file formats are left behind in the wake of technological change and shifting market forces.

It is this experience with unmanaged file formats that inspired iSTART's efforts to identify standards and practices that will allow you to manage your records so that they remain accessible and authentic for how ever long they retain their legal and informational value.

## VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES

The Office of Professional Regulation (OPR), within the Secretary of State’s Office, is partnering with DII’s Enterprise Project Management Office (EPMO) and the Vermont State Archives to select and implement a new system to help manage the credentialing of regulated professions. This partnership is the first of its kind within the State.

Drawing on the expertise of

EPMO and Archives staff in the areas of project management, business process management, and archives and records management, OPR was able to identify critical business and recordkeeping requirements and articulate them in a recent *Request for Proposals*.

EPMO and Archives staff assisted OPR in reading proposals, interviewing vendors, and making a final selection.

The Archives will continue to work with OPR to ensure that the system meets the Office legal and administrative recordkeeping requirements.

As a result of this partnership, OPR will likely be the first agency to transition its records program from a system of disposition orders to one that is based on comprehensive retention schedules.

**Want to know more about managing your agency’s records?**

**Visit:**

[vermont-archives.org/records/](http://vermont-archives.org/records/)

## DII’S ENTERPRISE PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

What is Enterprise Content Management (ECM)?

Simply stated, it is the process we, an enterprise, use to create, manage, store, preserve, and share information. Content can be used synonymously for information.

In the past, when we spoke of content management, we were generally referring to information presented in web pages. Although web content

is still a valid reference to a category of information, it is merely a subset of the body of information we want to manage in ECM.

We want to help organizations manage all content, today and in the future. We recognize that agencies and departments have different needs, and our goal is to provide a roadmap that lets you manage your specific

content in a way that works best for you, and your customers.

Our work should result in customer service improvements, strengthened document security and integrity, and better regulatory and legal compliance.

**“...our goal is to provide a roadmap that lets you manage your specific content in a way that works best for you, and your customers.”**

## BGS’ DIVISION OF PUBLIC RECORDS

The BGS Public Records Division is pleased be involved with iSTART and will be using this space to keep our customers informed of procedure changes, records pick-up schedules, helpful tips and any other information that will allow them to efficiently use the services that we provide. On that note I

would like to introduce the most recent additions to the Public Records supervisory team:

Chris Flora, Records Center Coordinator – Chris has been a Records Center employee for 15 years. Chris has a profound understanding of Records Center procedures and a keen eye for details.

Lisa May, Microfilm/Imaging and Reference/Research Supervisor – Lisa comes to us with 18 years of experience in corporate records management. Her records management knowledge and research skills have proved to be a real asset.

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## DRAFT POLICY ON FILE FORMATS

iSTART is pleased to announce that a draft policy on file formats is open for public review and comment. The draft is available online at: <http://vermont-archives.org/records/iSTART/policies/>

Managing the State's vast collection of digital information requires a great deal of thought and collaboration. Public agencies have hundreds of file formats to chose from for creating, receiving,

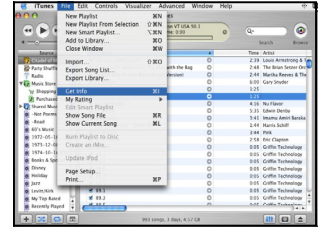
disseminating information.

At the same time, some of our State's information is locked in legacy file formats that have fallen by the wayside due to technological obsolescence.

The goal of the policy principles outlined in the draft is to help agencies keep their records and information *secure and intact; preserved without loss to vital informa-*

*tion; and accessible and retrievable* for as long as necessary.

If these concepts sound familiar, it is because the file formats policy is a subset of the [Records Management Policy for All Public Agencies](#) adopted by iSTART in July 2007.



*File formats are not limited to just text files. Above are instructions from the University of Vermont showing students how to convert audio saved in a WAV file format to MP3 file format.*

## GOT MAIL? MANAGING ELECTRONIC MESSAGES

As noted in last month's newsletter, iSTART's next project is to develop a state-wide policy for managing electronic messages, such as e-mail.

Many public employees have questions about their electronic messages. Are they records? Where should they be saved, if at all? When can they be destroyed?

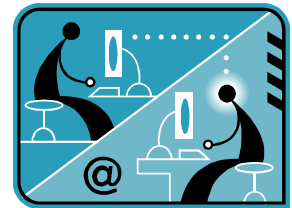
The proposed e-messages

policy will address these kinds of questions and more. In addition to the policy, agencies using the State's communication systems can also look forward to guidelines and other tools to assist them in managing their e-messages.

The iSTART e-messages policy falls on the heels of a related policy revised and released this past month by

the Department of Human Resources as part of their *Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual*. We anticipate the two policies to complement each other.

Individuals interested in working with iSTART on the e-messages policy are encouraged to contact iSTART at: [iSTART@state.vt.us](mailto:iSTART@state.vt.us)



*Public agencies rely on e-communication systems for various activities, including external correspondence, internal memos and directives, and transferring drafts and official records.*

## VIEW FROM THE VILLAGE BY DICK PECOR



Why is someone from the Town of Colchester participating in a State interdepartmental working group like iSTART? Good question. I bring the perspective of a town that is attempting to define content management goals, policies and procedures to better serve our customers. Towns across the State will also benefit from iSTART's research and development of content management policies and guidelines.

The "View From The Village" will appear regularly to focus on content management issues faced by local government. Dick Pecor can be reached at: [rpecor@town.colchester.vt.us](mailto:rpecor@town.colchester.vt.us)



#### MEMBERS

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#### About iSTART

iSTART is a volunteer collaborative group drawn from three public agencies with broad, cross-government responsibilities for the management of records and information technologies.

#### iSTART

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**RIGHT INFORMATION. RIGHT PEOPLE.  
RIGHT TIME. EVERY TIME.**

#### IN THE NEWS

- The National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) has a new report entitled *Seek and Ye Shall Find? State CIOs Must Prepare Now for E-Discovery*. The report explains the impact for State CIOs of e-discovery requests and encourages a holistic approach to enterprise records management as part of a team of state government stakeholders, including state legal counsel, archivists, records managers and agency business leaders: <http://www.nascio.org/publications/>
- A recent survey of the Storage Networking Industry Association (SNIA), *SNIA 100 Year Archive Requirements Survey Report*, found that long-term data retention technologies and practices are not up-to-date in most organizations and that the risk of losing vital and valuable data is significant. Learn more at: <http://www.snia-dmf.org/100year/>
- The National Archives and Records Administration has released for public comment a copy of its proposed *Plan for Digitizing Archival Material for Public Access*. While the plan looks at archival material it offers a perspective that maybe useful to agencies considering digitizing their records for public access: <http://www.archives.gov/comment/nara-digitizing-plan.pdf>

