

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

9 July 1984

*also  
Black tape  
file review*

STAT MEMORANDUM FOR: [redacted]  
VIA:  
FROM:  
SUBJECT: **Records Disposition**

STAT 1. The attached paper from [redacted] is a contribution to the dialogue on the need for cohesive and systematic records disposition activities in IMS records management.

STAT 2. The [redacted] Central Files Section's (CFS) ability to effectively carry out its records retrieval and repository responsibilities hinge on continuous removal from DORIC those records which are inactive and outdated. Although [redacted] has neither mandate nor significant resources to resolve this problem, this paper contributes ideas to and organizational support for action to redress a serious deficiency in the management of DO records. We also believe a formal study should be conducted to surface all the facts on this issue and, we hope, to give weight to our belief that a new component is needed.

STAT 3. Much of the substance of the paper is based on the knowledge and experience in this area of [redacted]. Although Jack's current duties preclude further substantial involvement, he, I, and others in [redacted] stand ready to assist in any way we can.

[redacted]

[redacted]

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

9 JUL 1984

PROPOSAL FOR CREATION OF  
IMS RECORDS DISPOSITION SECTIONTHE PROBLEM

The ALLSTAR Upgrade is the beginning of what some IMS planners see as the start of the paperless office environment of the future. Monies have been programmed for this effort and manpower has been committed. This is a necessary effort to use current and future technologies to deal with the massive flow of information coming into the DO. However, have we seriously considered how to deal with all the paper currently on hand? What resources have been allocated for records disposition? Will we ignore current hard copy holdings and keep them in their current form indefinitely? Will we convert them to another storage media and keep them indefinitely? Or will we properly and legally begin disposing of these records before we are in an untenable and unmanageable storage situation? Without doubt, we should begin to dispose of eligible records now in an orderly and controlled manner.

BACKGROUND

Directorate of Operations Instruction  dated 23 May 1984 is the records charter for IMS and details the elements a records disposition program should have and the IMS role in the DO records management program. The DOI lists 16 elements designed to improve the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of records. Throughout DO records systems development (manual and automated), only records creation, maintenance, use and control have been emphasized. Records disposition has remained on the proverbial back burner. The DO has spent enormous energy creating thousands of files while paying only sporadic attention to disposing of these records. The only organized records disposition effort was in reaction to a records storage problem. This happened in 1978 when the Records Center was filling quickly with files and the  was created to review and destroy records; an excellent example of "crisis management."

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

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(Records Disposition Proposal)

Since 1978, IMS has made a few attempts to deal with the records disposition problem. They include:

- o An organized review and destruction process for all files retired to the Records Center (the 141b process).
- o The review and processing of old (currently Pre-1962) Subject and Operational Activity Files held in CFS.
- o The review and destruction processing of 201 files.

The resources devoted to these review and disposition projects have been inadequate to successfully reduce the total DO records holdings.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

IMS should consider any illegalities that might now exist or occur if our records holdings are not continuously reviewed and disposed of in an efficient and timely manner. The National Archives and Records Service (NARS) has established records retention criteria which the DO has applied to its holdings and which by law NARS has authority to monitor. (Note: It was recently reported that NARS may soon become an independent agency, which means it will have even greater oversight authority.) DO Records Control Schedule [redacted] was created to comply with NARS standards. If we do not dispose of our records in accordance with the provisions of the DO schedule, are we breaking any law? In addition, how many FOIA/PA litigation cases owe their existence to our not destroying our files on time? And of the files we have destroyed, did we preserve historically significant material as prescribed by the DO Records Control Schedule? These are issues that we must come to grips with.

OTHER ISSUES

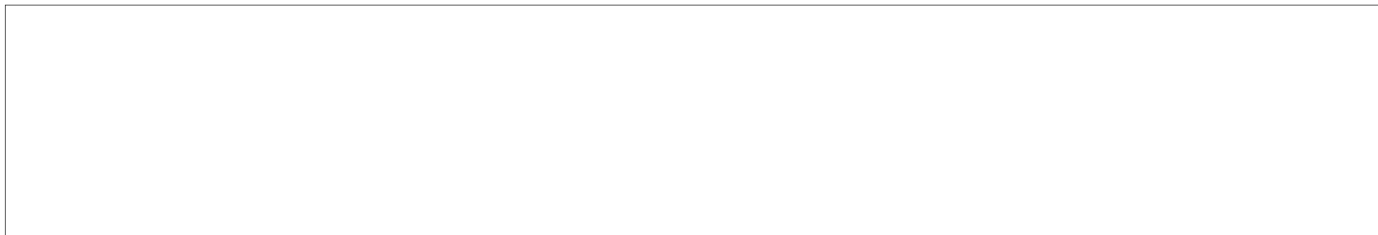
The study on the DO Central Index prepared by the IMS Research Task Force indicated that when the size of the index was reduced (1958-1962 holdings) retrieval productivity increased. There were fewer records to wade through in order to research a name. This continues to be true. It is roughly estimated that if the 2,000 feet of [redacted] files in CFS were destroyed, between 2 to 3 million index records could be eliminated. Currently, the central index has [redacted] records. [redacted] analysts who could perform their duties in a much more efficient manner because of increased computer response time to name search requests.

## C O N F I D E N T I A L

(Records Disposition Proposal)

Another records management function that would benefit from having a dedicated records disposition section is records retirement. Presently, inactive records are retired to the Agency Archives and Records Center by the DO Divisions and Staffs through their Records Management Officers (RMOs). This is an awesome task for the RMOs. At one time, the old archives section of CFS performed this service for the DO. Because of personnel cuts, IMS eliminated this office and gave responsibility for retirement decisions to the file custodians (the concerned area desks). The decentralization of this function has not been effective because of the high turnover of trained personnel in the Divisions and the constant need to train new RMOs and associate RMOs.

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PROPOSAL

ICRB proposes the establishment of a permanent records disposition section. The section would come under the organizational authority of the [redacted] [redacted] currently is responsible for DO records disposition.

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The new section would be tasked with the following:

- o Identification, review, and retirement processing of inactive DO files (excluding 201's which are never retired).
- o Identification, review, and destruction processing of all eligible DO files (including 201's) regardless of their location; e.g., the Agency Records Center.
- o Review and disposition of all documents now held in the Special Index Collection (indexed material removed from inactive files which were destroyed as a result of the 1978 [redacted]).
- o Identification and preservation of all documents deemed historical in nature.
- o Accurate and timely recording of all document and file destruction actions in ALLSTAR.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

4 June 1984

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

VIA:

FROM:

[Redacted]

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SUBJECT: Creation of Records Disposition Component, Study

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1. On 18 May 1984, representatives from the [Redacted] Branch, the [Redacted] Branch, [Redacted] met to discuss the need for a permanent component to manage the ongoing disposition of all DO records and index holdings in all formats that no longer meet DO retention criteria.

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2. I requested the meeting because of a) [Redacted] interest in conversion of Central Files hard copy and microform holdings into a computer retrievable format which would call for elimination of unnecessary records first (Att 1); and b) long-standing concerns in [Redacted] about current and future problems resulting from the low level of resources being devoted to records disposition. Just a few examples:

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- a. The projects aimed at reducing file/index holdings are scattered across three branches: there is no consolidated effort or central authority guiding their day-to-day operations; they are moving at a snail's pace, and there seems to be inadequate managerial attention being paid to their progress or lack thereof.
- b. The [Redacted] Review group has over 900 files approved for destruction that cannot be processed because of too little manpower.
- c. Holding files beyond their prescribed retention period portends possible legal problems for IMS. In addition, IMS will continue to be open to FOIA/Privacy Act and Congressional requests to which we must respond as long as we have these files. If we properly dispose of these files, we will not have to expend the resources this now requires.

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(Records Disposition--Cont.)

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d. IMS has created a vast amount of file holdings related to the FOIA and Privacy Act activities since 1978 when [ ] came into being. The bulk of these files were retired by [ ] in the last few years and will become eligible for disposition review within the next one to two years. The review of these files alone will require substantial manpower.

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3. The consensus of those at the meeting was that a permanent component should be established expeditiously to carry out these information management tasks in a systematic, efficient and expeditious manner. The logical location for such a component would be in [ ]

As can be seen in the attached document (Att 2) dated 18 November 1981 on the subject of reducing file holdings, a solid procedural framework was laid some time ago to deal with this problem. But as is true with most unglamorous activities, serious records reduction appears to have suffered from benign neglect.

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4. An [ ] study is suggested as an appropriate vehicle for bringing these concerns to the IMS and DO management levels necessary for action. Attached are some suggested topics that might be covered in such a study.(Att 3)

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[ ]

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REDUCTION OF FILE/INDEX HOLDINGS

Suggested Topics for [ ] Study On Need for Records Disposition Component

- 1. Document need for separate section (or even Branch)
  - a. Review ALLSTAR development experience of problems we face now because dated, useless, or inaccurate info was loaded rather than purged from DO Records in early and later stages
  - b. Review historical memories of what was/should have been done early on in evolution of DO Records System disposition procedures, Task Forces
    - (1) Consultations with [ ]
    - (2) Review of IMS Task Force findings
    - (3) Damage projection if no steps taken to clean up existing problems and do ongoing purge of material now on hand
  - c. Identify new records management processes that might prevent the reoccurrence of this problem. (e.g., develop disposition criteria at time documents and files are created)
  - d. Consider use of a Central Chrono concept to hold all indexed material

*COMET*

2. Component Tasking/Structure

- a. [ ] Disposition Unit (Including Hqs and Records Ctr files)
- b. [ ] Retirement Unit
- c. 201 Review Unit
- d. Microform/Digital Conversion Unit

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3. Knowledge, Skill Requirements

- a. ALLSTAR
- b. Document Analysis
- c. Central Files
  - (1) Validation Unit Functions
  - (2) Night Shift Special Projects
- d. DO Operations/Historical Requirements
  - (1) Training of IMS/Area Division Personnel
  - (2) Consultation With Divisions on IMS Decisions
- e. National Archives Directives/DO Records Control Schedule
- f. RMO Responsibilities

C O N F I D E N T I A L



C O N F I D E N T I A L

(MPG Study Topics - Cont)

4. Staffing Requirements

- a. Numbers (probably no less than 20)
- b. Grades (senior GS-12 or 13 chief; GS-11 or 12 deputy if component is Section)
- c. Manpower Sources
  - (1)  Area Division Personnel Already Working in this area
  - (2) Annuitants
  - (3) Transfers/trainees

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