



Information Society  
Technologies

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SPECIAL REPORT

Electronic Records  
Management Training at the  
European Investment Bank

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Further information on ERPANET and access to its other products is available at <http://www.erpanet.org>.

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

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### **NOTE TO READER**

This Report is linked to the erpaStudy on the European Investment Bank. This explores the organisation's strategies and policies for digital preservation and records management. It discusses in greater depth the process of system change that the organisation is undergoing. It can be found at <http://www.erpanet.org/studies/>.

## **Abstract**

Electronic records management requires entire organisations to adapt to new ways of working if such records are to be successfully created, managed and preserved for the long term. The responsibilities for the creation, management, and preservation of electronic documents and records are more distributed than with traditional, paper based records and knowledge must be held across all areas of an organisation. However, these facts are not always recognised by organisations attempting to implement electronic records management programs. The European Investment Bank (EIB) is one of the few organisations ERPANET has encountered that appreciated this from the outset and which incorporated time and resources for training staff directly into their initial plans for an organisation-wide IT re-engineering and electronic records and document management project.

The value of these efforts cannot be underestimated. Without effective electronic document and records management, there is little chance that organisations will be able to manage their corporate records in the short term (i.e. two to five years), let alone preserve them over the long term. It is for this reason that this report has been developed. Following on from the ERPANET case study on electronic records management and digital preservation at the EIB, this paper addresses the training program that has been developed and implemented at the organisation. It details the reasons why training in electronic document and records management is of such vital importance, and identifies a few non-commercial training programs oriented at a broad range of users (beyond records managers). The EIB training program is then discussed in detail. The training program developed at the EIB is tailored towards their needs but the approach taken offers a structural model for other organisations wishing to implement training for electronic records or documents management.

## **Records Management training in a digital environment**

Since the emergence of electronic records and documents and associated systems to manage them (electronic records management systems (ERMS) and electronic document management systems (EDMS)) in the last decade of the twentieth century, many courses and programs have appeared on the market to educate traditional and newly qualified records managers in the diverse issues regarding electronic records. A growing number of records managers (as well as professionals in other disciplines) are now also beginning to understand the impact these issues have on preserving such records for the long term. Fundamental to the issue of preservation is the fact that if the records are not created in a reliable manner and managed properly whilst in an active Document Management (DM) or Records Management (RM) environment, then they may not be available or authentic in five, ten, twenty or fifty years time.

What often remains under-appreciated is that significantly more training across a wider range of staff is required within an organisation maintaining digital records than was previously required with traditional paper records. This is because:

- The proliferation of desktop computers has led to a wider variety of record creators.
- Responsibilities for managing and preserving digital records are no longer isolated to one department and responsibilities are less clearly defined than with paper records; various stakeholders are now involved – users, administrators, records managers, IT staff and management.
- Preservation of digital records begins at source: the way digital records are created and managed bears significant impact on our ability to preserve them. This was not the case with traditional paper records, where preservation and conservation was not a matter for records managers and did not have to be so explicitly addressed until later in the record lifecycle.
- The wide range of people creating these records have varying levels of technical competency and have received varying levels of training in using the software applications on their desktops; all must be brought up to a minimum standard to ensure that records created using these applications are created in a consistent and lasting fashion.
- Traditional records had fewer attributes to consider than digital ones: traditionally, content, context and appearance were the key attributes; digital records also have extra attributes of structure (independent from appearance) and behaviour. These must also be controlled, but this does not necessarily require the record creators to have an explicit understanding of this difference in record attributes.
- The issue of hardware and software obsolescence must be addressed by other groups of stakeholders (especially records management and IT staff), who must work together to ensure that each understands the other's problems. Both training and effective communication between the different groups is necessary for this. This was not an issue with paper records, where the medium carried the message plainly for the human eye to interpret; with digital records an intermediary device I needed to translate the message before it can be read and understood by the human eye.
- The diverse group of stakeholders is not necessarily aware of the issues relevant to their job functions without explicitly being informed.

- The diverse group of stakeholders must all be aware of their responsibilities if the chain of responsibilities in preservation/records management is to be assured.

In order to ensure that these differences are appreciated where necessary and acted upon, a new digital records management philosophy must be disseminated across the organisation; in order for this to happen it needs to be addressed in policy – which requires management interest – and supported by sufficient finances.

Training across the board is therefore required to ensure that all stakeholders contribute to the ongoing provision of authentic records throughout the record life-cycle. To succeed in this, training must aim to raise awareness of the issues, communicate the incentives for compliance, and educate the required personnel on the relevant technology issues and best practices for their areas of responsibility.

## **Existing non-commercial training programs**

Commercial training programs are starting to appear that may be tailored towards an organisation's unique requirements. However, as will be seen below, such programme creators may not have sufficient knowledge of an organisation's requirements to completely cater for their specific needs.

Non-commercial RM training programs are few and far between. Most available training programs (e.g. summer schools and day/week long training sessions such as those offered by national archival institutions<sup>1</sup>) are targeted simply towards records managers and do not cater for the wider spread of stakeholders involved in the ongoing provision of electronic records. Exceptions to this are however, starting to appear.

### *E-term*

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/e-term/>

E-term is a pan-European program aimed at administrators, information professionals, archivists and records managers, although it initially targeted educators and training managers. The first module outlines parameters to ensure all target groups are starting from the same point, and offers three sub-modules aimed as follows:

1. Teaching administrators and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) professionals basic record keeping concepts – module title: Record keeping concepts for non-record keeping professionals;
2. Teaching records managers, archivists and administrators the basic notions and trends in ICT – module title: Concepts and trends in ICT for non-ICT professionals;
3. Teaching ICT professionals, records managers and archivists the main concepts and trends in business process engineering, e-commerce, e-governance, workflow etc – module title: Concepts and trends in business operations.

After completion of the first module, those using the program pick and choose at will further modules they wish to follow. Modules include: Building Partnerships; The Impact of ICT on Recordkeeping; The Recordkeeping Perspective; The Business Perspective; Design and Implementation of Recordkeeping Systems; and, Records Management Policy.

The program is based on a series of documents with a range of accompanying exercises. E-term was launched in 1999 and ended in 2002 having realised the project goals. Produce from the project is still available through the E-Term website.

### *JISC Electronic Records Management Training Package*

[http://195.10.246.65/intro\\_0.asp](http://195.10.246.65/intro_0.asp)

This JISC developed training package is aimed at all staff involved with electronic records in a Higher Education (HE) environment. The suggested starting point is the section 'Who am I', in which users identify themselves according to their professions:

- Lecturers and Researchers;
- Managers of academic staff and Managers of administrative or clerical staff;

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<sup>1</sup> For example, NARA: [http://www.archives.gov/records\\_management/training/training.html](http://www.archives.gov/records_management/training/training.html); or the UK National Archives: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/training/>.

- Administrative staff and clerical staff;
- Senior management;
- Technical or Ancillary staff, or managers of technical and ancillary staff;
- College or University records managers;
- Trainers.

Relevant topics are then suggested for each profession. The program as a whole offers training along the following lines: RM Awareness; Organising records; Managing email; Legal issues; Assessing risk; Retention and disposal; and, Preservation. There is also a separate section for trainers that offers a selection of training materials to be used during staff training sessions.

The JISC package is very comprehensive and although it is aimed at HE institutions, much of it is also applicable for other types of organisations. However, priorities and requirements for businesses do differ to that of a HE institution and in order for RM to be successful in a business environment, it has been suggested that it actually needs to become part of the business processes of the company.<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, the training materials and package content can form the basis for companies to develop their own training program tailored to their internal and business requirements.

JISC published this training program early in 2004. Prior to this point however, there was little academic material written on training for records management across the spectrum of staff in an organisation, with the exception of the e-term project. Although the increasingly popular ISO 15489 standard<sup>3</sup> recognises the need for records management training, it offers little practical guidance on how to go about it. Only one section addresses training, citing that organisations should establish an ongoing programme of records training that should address any and all individuals with responsibility for the 'whole or part of a business activity of an organisation in making records during their work and capturing those records into record systems'.

With this in mind, when ERPANET was introduced to the training programme in place at the European Investment Bank (EIB) in late 2003, it appeared prudent not only to carry out a case study on RM and preservation at the EIB (as was the original intent), but also to offer a case study focussing in particular on their training program. The EIB training program is comprehensive and caters for all staff in the organisation, with tailored training according to the functions of different staff members.

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<sup>2</sup> McLeod, Julie, et al, 'Education and training for records management in an electronic environment – the research for an appropriate model'. (Paper by staff involved in developing the JISC training model), <http://InformationR.net/ir/9-3/paper179.html>.

<sup>3</sup> The ISO standard is available for purchase from: <http://www.iso.org/iso/en/CatalogueDetailPage.CatalogueDetail?CSNUMBER=31908&ICS1=1&ICS2=140&ICS3=20>.

## **The EIB Training program**

### *Background – the ISIS and the GED programs*

In 2000, the EIB launched a major IT re-engineering project (ISIS) as part of the constant updating of its working methods, including systems for electronic document management. This involved the development of three different software systems to cater for the Bank's three main areas of activity: Borrowing, Treasury, and Back-Office loans were served by the RE system; Front office loans by the SERAPIS system; and, Administration by the OSIRIS system. A transversal Document Management System – the GED (gestion électronique de documents, French for electronic document management) system was to be implemented to cater for the documents and records produced by all three systems.<sup>4</sup>

### *Devising the training program*

Representatives from several of the stakeholder groups devised the training program. Individual project managers represented Records Management, Information Technology, Information Management/Taxonomy, and Users. Furthermore, a Change Manager<sup>5</sup> was appointed and led the implementation of the system in conjunction with the RM and IT managers. This broad array of representatives meant that the respective interests of all stakeholder groups could be accounted for.

External consultants were initially appointed to help develop the training program, but the EIB found that they lacked sufficient knowledge of the organisation and its mentality, and that the training they ultimately recommended was not sufficiently targeted to their needs. Devising the program internally allowed them to tailor it uniquely to their own environment and requirements.

It was clear from the outset that the training and system deployment could not be achieved overnight. A six-month period was therefore scheduled for training *before* the system was rolled out to give users the necessary time to adjust to the new environment and to ensure that all employees could be trained as necessary.

### *The Training Manual*

The training manual is a comprehensive introduction to several aspects of electronic document management and provides a step-by-step guide to using the GED system. It identifies several terms that many users may not be familiar with, such as a definition of what electronic document management consists of and how the GED system reflects this. The document life-cycle is explained with reference to various functions of the GED system, and through several pages of screenshots, users see exactly how to utilise the main creation, accession, permissions, modifications, versions, and access tools provided for them. Document creation is afforded detailed attention, as those involved in devising the program realised that the documents must be well created if they are to last over time and be authenticated as official Bank documents. Metadata is considered primarily from an access perspective and such training is minimal as the system is designed for minimum user metadata intervention.<sup>6</sup>

The manual is very user-friendly and contains many references to the old system environment so that users can draw parallels between relevant aspects, for example, 'your *Personal*

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<sup>4</sup> For more extensive information on this program, refer to chapter 4 of the parallel ERPANET case study on the European Investment Bank, available at <http://www.erpanet.org/studies>.

<sup>5</sup> Training is a recognised aspect of change management.

<sup>6</sup> For example, document templates include fields from which the system is intended to copy content specifically for metadata purposes.

*Workspace* in Livelink [the system] is equivalent to your K:\ drive'. The manual was an integral part of the course and continues to be so for new employees (see below).

### *Incentives and Motivation*

To ensure compliance with the procedures and requirements of the new system and to motivate users to quickly accept the need for the system, a series of incentives and motives were made clear to all those participating in the training program. Possibly as a result, trainers met with very little resistance from the users during the training and received accolades from all sides.

The function of the Knowledge Centre, a specific area of the GED system that acts as the EIB's archives and that is managed by records management staff, was greatly appreciated and provided a major motive for user acceptance of the system. Users could clearly see the benefits of having their formal records stored in one central location. A further motive was the fact that as of 2005, all internal documents may only be approved electronically. This can only be done in conjunction with the GED system; thus users could see that they would have to use the system if they were to continue working at the Bank. The GED offered benefits that were more difficult to achieve from a traditional network drive: simple and straightforward sharing of inter-departmental information, and easy identification of the definitive version of a document (certification scheme is planned for official Electronic Document Administrators (EDA's), although this has not yet been put in place). The training course took pains to make the benefits of using the system clear to all users, appreciating the fundamental change to their working practices. Providing sufficient incentives to use the system is fundamental to achieving user compliance, for if users cannot see the obvious benefits of their efforts, they are less likely to willingly participate, which reduces the speed at which they will become competent in using the systems.

In short, motivation and incentives are necessary to ensure that users accept the need for the system, to decrease the number of users who try to find work-arounds to the system, and to encourage them to use it in a correct and responsible manner.

### *Targeted training*

Training was targeted at specific user groups and sessions were organised per department, with a maximum class size of twelve. A basic structure was followed for each group but tailored to the needs of the group in question, for example, the training used the specific areas of the organisation's file plan that each group of trainees was responsible for, thus using documents with which the trainees were already familiar and which practically reflected the way they would be using the system when roll out was complete. Different aspects were emphasised for different groups, for example, whether they worked on borrowing, lending or translation, thus also reflecting the multiple systems involved in the ISIS programme. Almost everyone in the bank was trained, including secretaries and senior management, through a variety of channels.

A special group of users, Electronic Document Administrators, was created and targeted with special training. These so-called 'GED Correspondents' acted as super-users, or to use the EIB's own term, 'Champions of the system'. One EDA was identified from each division to address small 'teething' problems experienced by users in their respective divisions. The EDA's received more extensive training, including two-hour presentations once a month on aspects of the system that appeared to require further instruction according to feedback received across the board. They also provided feedback concerning the system itself, and ways in which it could be enhanced or improved. Furthermore, the knowledge of the EDA reflected the knowledge of the division; if a user came to the Helpdesk with a relevant issue that could not be resolved through their division's EDA, the whole division would receive training on that issue.

Specific training was also provided for records managers, focusing on the links between the EDMS (GED), new RM procedures and the archives

### *Initial training sessions*

Initial training sessions lasted a full day for each general user group or working group using the GED system on a day-to-day basis. Although this was at first thought to be the most comprehensive way to approach it, the trainers found afterwards that a full day was actually too much for most people in terms of the length of the session and the amount of new information imparted. This was due mainly to the number of new concepts and issues that they were expected to deal with in this time, such as unfamiliar (but basic) document management and archival concepts as well as learning to use a new IT system. The trainers were careful to avoid complicating the issue, thus semantics were given special consideration. For example, explicit discussion of 'records management' was avoided in favour of 'document management', although the importance of centrally managed records was discussed as it was considered a prime incentive behind take up and acceptance of the system (see below).

Alternative forms of training were available for other types of users: for example, the GED correspondents also had access to on-line information and phone-line help. Top-level management generally received training in the form of one-to-one support sessions. Furthermore, online training was available for those who required it.

### *Feedback*

The GED project was devised with the belief that a system design such as this is never truly finished and that iterative design is unavoidable. A system approach was therefore adopted that catered for future corrections to the system through three separate feedback mechanisms: more (or less) IT; more (or different) training; and, more (or different) design. Regarding training, the idea is simply that once the training is developed, time should elapse to let practices develop, and then the gaps in training can be assessed and corrected for the next batch of training. Feedback is received through a variety of channels, as there is no one specific channel though which the feedback is scheduled; the majority is received via the outsourced GED Helpdesk.

One of the changes made to the training schedule as a result of feedback received was the reduction in the amount of time devoted to initial training. Initial training sessions are now limited to four hours, instead of a full day, and are followed by refresher training as and when required (see below).

### *Further training*

Further training is available for users, and is based on the types of questions received by staff at the Helpdesk.

Additionally, due to small delays in the scheduled rollout of the GED system across the whole organisation, a significant amount of time has elapsed between training and actual user use of the system. It has therefore become necessary to carry out refresher training for users who have already completed the initial training program. This is being received well, with many users claiming an increased understanding of the system since their first introduction. These sessions are currently being carried out almost on a daily basis to ensure all users receive it before the system rollout is complete.

### *Costs*

One third of the GED project services budget was dedicated to training. This was not recouped from the departments that received the training as it was recognised from the outset that it was a basic project cost, and it was written off as such.

### *Future Outlook*

*New and future users* – The EIB has an established training program for a number of purposes, not just regarding the EDMS. When new employees arrive, they undergo a three-day initiation program, four hours of which is now dedicated to the GED. This ensures that all new employees are trained to use the system from the outset of their employment at the bank. The Human Resources department initiates this, contacting the GED staff to inform them of the new employees. GED trainers can then create a new login for the employee and invite them for their training.

*Evolutive training* – Training has already been allocated a role in the future development of the GED system and is specified as such in the evolving maintenance model for the GED system.<sup>7</sup> The trainers and GED program managers consider training to be ongoing and are aware that they will have to continue providing training beyond the original scheduled lifetime of the project. They are also aware that training will be required after future system migrations, but will only provide new training when the new version of the system differs significantly from the one currently installed.<sup>8</sup>

*More trainers* – Demand for training is high but only two people are assigned training roles: one part time from the Information Technology department, and the other from the Records and Information Management division. Given the high number of people to be re-trained, this has become insufficient and interviewees estimated that between 4 to 5 FTE would be needed to train other staff over a one month period, in order to ensure everyone is sufficiently trained by the time the systems are fully rolled out.

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<sup>7</sup> Presentation from the EIB: *'Electronic document, records and knowledge management solution for the European Investment bank'*, D. Wortmann 2004.

<sup>8</sup> For example, the EIB implemented version 9 of the current system. They will not migrate to each new release, (i.e. v9.1) but may well migrate to other interim releases and will certainly migrate to the new full version (i.e. v10)

## **Conclusions**

The GED program as a whole is considered by those involved, as well as by users, to have been well conceived and comprehensive, although those working on the project now consider it to have been implemented over too short a time period. The same is said for the training: more time would have been useful, as well as more staff resources. The EIB has a strong tradition of training with it already established at the bank for a number of purposes and discrete training department managed by Human Resources. No doubt this worked in the favour of the training program; staff are used to receiving training and therefore could be said to have a certain pre-disposition to new training programs and procedures.

The structure of the training program as described in this paper can be used as a model for other organisations wishing to develop training programs, bearing in mind the few issues discussed below. The way in which the program was devised is of particular interest, in that the external consultancy that was hired to produce the program was deemed afterwards to have insufficient knowledge of the internal workings of the organisations, to the extent that the program required significant re-working by an internal team to develop it to the EIB's high standards. This implies that such programs should be devised by a combination of both internal and external specialists.

The collaboration of staff from different departments is also worthy of special note. A large range of staff were involved in ascertaining the functional requirements and small customisations of this (commercial) system, and thus it has been developed and implemented with the user perspective explicitly accounted for. This has resulted in a (perhaps simplified) system and training program tailored to user needs. Considering the user perspective from the outset means that it is embedded directly into the initial system design rather than added on afterwards, and this is a arguably a far more effective and efficient way to approach it.

Furthermore, this is a very software-driven training program. Records management issues were not covered in great depth, but users were still provided with the knowledge they needed to understand and effectively use the system. The importance of semantics in communicating these issues was appreciated by the trainers, limiting the number of new concepts to which users immediately perceived as being introduced and thus also their potential perception of an increased workload.

Despite this, interviewees reported that the users were slow in picking up the details of the system. This shows how time-consuming change management can be even within as conducive an environment as this. The training took longer than originally planned: approximately 1,100 people were trained over a period of six to eight months, and further training is still required due to the small delays experienced in system rollout.

Although the program is very comprehensive, there are some further aspects that the program will benefit from if they can be incorporated in the future. Firstly, there is currently an absence of formal feedback from system administrators to staff on compliance monitoring. This means that GED staff are only made aware of issues or incorrect use of the system when they cause problems. Secondly, there does not appear to be any special training for Information Technology staff so that they realise the importance of archival/record-keeping responsibilities; however, communication between the different departments involved with the system is extensive, so this is catered for but just not within a formal framework. Lastly, GED training does not interact with training for the other systems in the ISIS project; given that the

other systems in the ISIS program are to be more closely integrated in the future,<sup>9</sup> they may find this becomes necessary.

By incorporating such aspects in the next evolutive cycle of the program, ERPANET is confident that the EIB will continue to provide a very successful approach to planning and implementing a training program for electronic document and records management across an entire organisation of over a thousand people. From a broader perspective, their approach, as well as the experience gained, provides a structural and organisational model from which other organisations can learn when devising similar programs tailored towards their own needs.

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<sup>9</sup> For more extensive information on this and planned integration efforts in the future, refer to chapter 4 of the parallel ERPANET case study on the European Investment Bank, available at <http://www.erpanet.org/studies/>.

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