The Ideal State: Perfecting Electronic Workflows

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Action Planning Toolkit

Records Management Services

UNIVERSITY *of*
WASHINGTON

The purpose of this toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to help you and your colleagues work together to create well considered electronic workflows that will intentionally set you up for success. Completing these steps will prevent your office from backsliding into old, outdated processes just because they are familiar. It will provide the meeting structure to help you ask the *right* questions in order to find the solutions you need.

Action Planning Toolkit contents:

- Sample invite email
- Sample meeting agenda
- Work plan templates

Use the work plan templates during the meeting to guide the discussion:

Step 1: Take stock of the core functions of your office
Step 2: Make a plan for digitizing or improving workflows
Step 3: Into the future and beyond

Top Tip

Different individuals in your office have different levels of technological skills and comfort. Create solutions that work for everybody, or they won't *really* work for anybody.
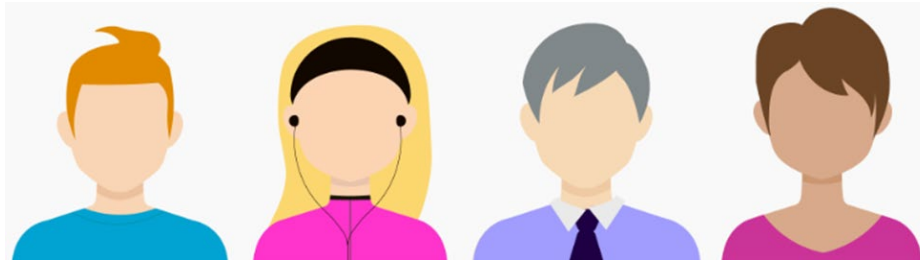
Sample Email

To: Holly Husky; Hendrix Husky; Hadid Husky
From: Dubs McDubersons
Subject: Perfecting Electronic Workflows Meeting

Hi Team,

We're realizing more and more how important it is to be able to manage electronic records effectively so that we can easily collaborate with each other, access information, ensure we meet retention requirements, and keep records safe from damage. This seems like a good time for us to imagine our **ideal state** of electronic records management and work toward that goal.

Join me in an hour-long discussion about our electronic records management practices. We'll take stock of the core functions of our office, discuss what's working in our current processes, and what can be improved. We'll decide on where and how to save our records, pick a deadline for our ideal state of digital records, and finally figure out what to do with all those older records we have hanging around.

Did you know...

You can run the meeting all on your own, or you can have a member of our staff sit in, waiting in the wings, in case there are questions we can answer.

Feel free to ask questions and bring up any pain points you have with specific technology solutions you've tried. I hope that you will also see this as an opportunity for a clean slate, and that you can share what an ideal situation would look like for you.

I look forward to seeing and hearing from each of you at the meeting.

Best regards,

Dubs

Sample Agenda

Don't allow the conversation to get bogged down in the details. Focus on solid solutions rather than placing blame on specific people. There may need to be follow up conversations around specific problems or workflows; this meeting is simply intended to get everyone marching in the right direction.

Set the stage (*5 minutes*)

Tell your team that you appreciate them taking the time to participate in the discussion. Explain the importance of good management of electronic records.

Step 1: Take stock of the core functions of your office (*20 minutes*)

- Give each attendee a couple of minutes to list which workflow processes they think should be focused on.
- For this meeting, choose to focus on the ones that have the **most impact** on the **most people**. Consider the time investment it would take to solve each one, and what the office's current priorities are. Make a list of what can be improved and then decide as a group which order to tackle them in. Some examples are:

  - How and where to save records on the shared drive (avoid saving the same type of document in several places)
  - What to do about records that are in both paper and electronic forms (such as a student form that used to be in paper but became a webform)
  - What to do about a group of records that are saved somewhere that is an outlier for your office (you use Sharepoint for one process but nothing else)

- Once you've decided which workflow processes to focus on, discuss what's working well, and what can be streamlined for each.

Step 2: Make a plan for digitizing or improving workflows (*20 minutes*)

- Determine where and how records should be saved (Check out resources on our website for inspiration).
- Check that retention requirements can be met for each type of records, based on a legally approved retention schedule.
- If a type of record requires a special solution, figure out who will do that work by which date. These could include the following: a Docusign account, web form creation, onboarding into EDM, or folder structure set-up.

Step 3: Into the future and beyond *(10 minutes)*

- Consider what to do with the older materials you have hanging around. Is any of it **R**edundant, **O**bsolete or **T**ransitory? Is scanning a good option for older paper materials?
- Discuss the details and planning of future office records clean-up days. (How often? What might the structure/focus be?)

Thank everyone for attending! (*5 minutes*)

Tell your team that spending this time will pay off in the future, that having streamlined electronic workflows will allow them to spend more focus and energy on the core parts of their jobs in the future.

Step 1: Take stock of the core functions of your office

Once you create the ideal digital state for one workflow in your office, you'll notice you can do the same for just about everything. Check out our resource for types of materials we've seen around the university as well as questions and considerations.

Work function 1: Describe a work process that can be improved.

Before: What are the pain points?

After: What would an ideal state look like?

Did you know…

You may be surprised about how many processes that can be converted into an ideal digital state. Even post-its used in brainstorming can be replaced by free project management programs like Miro. This allows for searching, tagging, real-time collaboration from remote locations, and avoids the dreaded tape drying on the whiteboard or paper scrap flying away.

Work function 2: Describe a work process that can be improved.

Before: What are the pain points?

**After:** What would an ideal state look like?

Step 2: Make a plan for digitizing or improving workflows

What are actionable steps that need to be accomplished to make each process digital and streamlined going forward?

Check out these resources on our website for guidance:

> Structuring Electronic Files
> Choosing an Electronic Storage Location
> Best Practices for Folder Structure

Make smart goals:
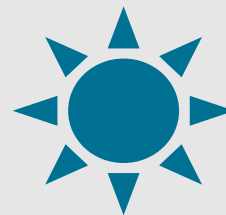
Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Relevant
Timely

The steps below are suggestions for analyzing each workflow process. Feel free to edit the steps based on what makes more sense for your office. Already decided on the electronic storage location, but instead you need to need to decide on naming conventions? It's fine to edit the rows on this form. It is important to think through each of the steps (whatever they may be for your office), decide who will work on each one, and when they will be finished.

Workflow 1: Actions to be taken:	Who will work on it?	When will we finish?
Decide on electronic storage location		
Create file plan		
Check that retention requirements can be met		
Any special requirements for digitizing this work flow (DocuSign account? Creating a webform? Etc.) Fill in here:		

Workflow 2: Actions to be taken:	Who will work on it?	When will we finish?
Decide on electronic storage location		
Create file plan		
Check that retention requirements can be met		
Any special requirements for digitizing this work flow (Docusign account? Creating a webform? Etc.) Fill in here:		

Step 3: Into the future and beyond

1 **Pick a date**

Think of it like flipping a switch—there's no going back!

Your date for ideal electronic records: _____

2 **Deal with old records you aren't sure about**

Free!
Every UW
campus

Get help with your
Redundant, Obsolete,
and Transitory records

ROT SQUAD
rotsquad@uw.edu
206-685-6573

Call or email today!

Not sure all those records hanging around that need to be retained? Contact the RMS ROT Squad for help. The ROT Squad can help you determine whether records on a shared drive, emails, databases or in paper can be destroyed. Check out our list of common types of ROT to get started on your own.

A lot of paper still hanging around? Scanning paper records is worth considering, because then you could conveniently file them with your electronic records. Check out our resource on What, When and Why to Scan Paper Records in order to determine if scanning is right for you.

Search to see if your department has a scanning policy here. Don't have a policy, but think you may need one? Use our Scanning Policy Builder , and a member of our staff will get back to you.

Did you know…

In order to be compliant with state statute, the UW requires that any office scanning records with the intention of legally replacing the paper source document with the scanned image must have a **scanning policy** on file with our office. By following the procedures in an approved scanning policy, the scanned image becomes the official record and the paper source document can be destroyed.

3 **Commit to clean-up days**

Choose how often your office can schedule them:

Quarterly: ____ Biannually: ____ Annually: ____ First Cleanup Date: _____

Have Records Management staff help out:
Be on call for questions: ____
Do a training presentation to kick things off: ____
Supply a relevant activity with tasks to do: ____