

Archiving Methodology

The following methodology has been developed to ensure that our customers understand the importance of archiving, the various tools which are available, and to actually select the tools and processes that would be most appropriate to meeting and managing their business requirements. Throughout all stages of the implementation cycle the full participation is required by the client to ensure that they are fully conversant with the strategy and selection of solutions. The information archiving methodology (IAM) consists of 7 phases:

- PROJECT PLANNING
- SOLUTION (S) OVERVIEW
- DEFINITION OF RETENTION AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS
- STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND SELECTION OF SOLUTION (S)
- TESTING AND TRAINING
- PRODUCTION
- SUPPORT

PROJECT PLANNING

In this phase we meet with the project sponsor and outline the scope of the project, time line for completion and the need for full participation of client's personnel in the various phases of the project.

Also arrangements are made to provide the consultants with the required access to a development/test version of the system that contains representative complete information that is ready for archiving. This will be used as a basis for testing of the software/hardware and training of the various users. Typically a copy of the production environment would fulfil the requirements for testing and training.

The identification of personnel that is involved in the business process /functional aspect of the organization as well as the systems administration – technical (basis) area and their full commitment to the project is essential. These individuals are expected to understand the needs of the client in order to select and implement the most appropriate solution that fulfil their needs

SOLUTION (S) OVERVIEW

In this phase we introduce the client to some of the popular archiving solutions that are available and their features. We provide a comparison of the solutions in terms of their nature (on-line vs. optical imaging, hardware vs. software etc), their strengths and weaknesses and also the costs involved for the solution - both hardware and software.

This information will form an integral part of the selection process to define the strategy and decide on the solution that is most appropriate to meet the needs of the client.

DEFINITION OF RETENTION AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

The need for retention and degree of access to archived information are established, driven by business processes that are internal to the client as well as external agencies.

Working with our clients we establish all of the requirements with the following in mind:

Internal operational needs

Legal/Statutory requirements

Taxation requirements

Regulatory agencies

At the end of the review the requirement of each data object is defined in terms of when it can be archived degree of access required and the time period for retaining this information in the archives.

STRATEGY DEFINITION AND SELECTION OF SOLUTION(S)

With the information obtained from the Solutions Overview Phase and the Definition of Retention And Access Requirements phase, the client is now ready to select one or more of the solutions that satisfies the requirements of internal and external agencies for both short term and long term. The cost effectiveness of the solution, ease of implementation and user friendliness is also considered during this phase in order to select the most optimum solution and strategy.

TESTING AND TRAINING

During this phase the software is loaded and the hardware configured in a test environment. The processes are tested and the results documented. Any abnormalities are resolved and users are trained on the system through hands on exercises and training documentation, which we develop specifically for the client. Stress testing is also done in order to establish optimum run times and select the optimum batch size of data to be used in each run. Insight into scheduling of the runs is also obtained through monitoring each of the computer jobs in order to execute them at a time that does not adversely affect normal daily production activities.

PRODUCTION

Having done all of the testing and users trained to use the system and processes, the configuration is now transported into the production environment. Responsibilities and authorizations are given only to the appropriate personnel in order to maintain control over the archiving process. Table sizes are reviewed in the production system to identify the areas that are more critically in need of archiving.

The various runs are scheduled in conjunction with the Scheduler to ensure that the jobs are executed at the optimum times. After each run the results are reviewed for completeness and any abnormalities addressed before proceeding further in the process.

Controls are also established for retrieval of the archived information to ensure that only authorized personnel has access to this data.

SUPPORT

We work in partnership with our clients and want to make sure that the system and processes function productively after implementation. We are therefore prepared to provide our clients with the necessary support during the Go-live and after, to ensure that there are no unresolved issues.