

Technology Enables Financially Self-Sufficient RIM Program

Ingenuity—coupled with O’Neil software products—creates a cost-effective, automated system for the County of Riverside California

The County of Riverside Records Management Division is organized within the County of Riverside Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder Department. In addition to record center services, it offers micrographics/imaging services, photo lab, and computer-output microfilm (COM) services. To date, it has more than 100,000 boxes, and each month it completes 5,000 retrievals/re-files, indexes 20,000 file folders, and shreds 500 boxes. The county has a highly successful records management program, and it attributes its success to several universal concepts: standardization, teamwork, implementing new technology, and—above all—customer service.

In the early days, the County of Riverside’s records management program was moving forward using a software package that was weak in many areas. The search began for a new piece of software that would provide automation and chain-of-custody tracking. With point-to-point tracking driving the county, it purchased O’Neil Software’s solution for one specific department. Once it started using O’Neil, the county saw the strengths of the package and decided it needed this for the entire record center.

In order to undergo the complete conversion, Mary Cox, who was at that time records and information manager, went to O’Neil’s office. Over two days they laid out the conversion. “I was impressed. It was evident that O’Neil had done this before,” said Cox. In the end, it was a seamless conversion. “I credit this smooth transition to our work on those days. We were all very pleased with how it went,” she said.

O’Neil Software gave the county exactly what it needed. It now had barcode-driven software with business rules that helped it to get completely automated. The county took this automation one step further and created a custom barcode. Various users in different government agencies had internal numbering systems. It wanted its barcodes to mirror its systems instead of applying

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and cross referencing a random barcode. To achieve this goal, the county created a scheme where the first three digits were alpha and identified the record classification or record type, the next six digits referred to the case number, and the last four digits, including the dash as digit (e.g., -001) referred to the volume number (e.g., ASP235145-001). Now everyone was working with numbers that made sense to them.

What helped drive the new barcode home was O’Neil’s point-to-point tracking. When items were picked up, the county could provide the users with a receipt that reflected its internal numbers. With a little ingenuity, the software, and point-to-point tracking, the county had created a cohesive system.

Riverside County takes great pride to ensure that its users can find the information they need, when they need it. It is for this reason the county actually goes out

and completes training on how to send in boxes. The byproduct of this is standardization across all its users. The trainers sit down with each agency and explain how to classify the agency’s information within the box. “We worry about what’s in the box,” Jim Bridges, former administrative director, said. “This is ultimately our responsibility, a responsibility our team takes seriously.”

Implementing new technology is paramount to the county. It is for this reason that it has pushed web access through the use of O’Neil’s RSWeb user interface. “That was one of the key justifications for upgrading to O’Neil’s latest solution—RS-SQL. We wanted our customers to have access to a web interface for ordering,” Cox said.

Another impressive feat the county has been able to achieve is to cover all the costs associated with running its operation. It does work for local agencies and other tax-based agencies. After the work is performed, the county invoices its customers in much the same way a commercial record center would. With these tools, the records management program achieved the goal of becoming a financially self-sufficient program.

The County of Riverside’s record center is efficient, cost-effective, automated, and well-liked. When its customers were asked about the records management services they were receiving, the responses were all positive. One user, Elaine Sanchez, from the Office of the District Attorney, said, “I would like to take a few moments to address the professional and efficient service. They have bent over backwards to service our needs and meet very strict state and federal confidentiality mandates pertaining to our files. We look forward to continuing our superb working relationship and value having a vendor who truly aims to please us—the customer.”

Given the choice to go elsewhere, all of the County of Riverside’s customers have decided to stay put. That says it all.



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