# Agency ERA Adoption Report

Adoption Goal

According to NARA Strategic Goal 3, NARA will address the challenges of electronic records in Government to ensure success in fulfilling NARA’s mission in the digital era. Central to achieving this goal is the acceptance and use of ERA by Federal agencies. The increased use of ERA to schedule, ingest, process, and store electronic records from Federal agencies, Congress, and the Executive Office of the President will result in better management of Federal records, in particular the preservation of permanent electronic records.

Adoption Plan

With the concurrence of OMB, NARA established the following targets in the fall of 2009:

* ERA will be the preferred method for scheduling records in any media regardless of classification and transferring permanent records to NARA by July 2011 and will be the mandatory method for agencies in 2012.
* NARA current strategy for achieving full deployment of ERA is to add the 30 member agencies of the CIO Council to ERA during the period from March 2011 through November 2011 (ERA Adoption Phase 1) and the rest of the agencies from July 2011 through September 2012 (ERA Adoption Phase 2).

Adoption Progress (as of September 30, 2012)

ERA Adoption Phase 1

All 30 agencies have started using ERA. NARA defines a “start” as at least having staff members go through the training and obtain user accounts.

As shown in the chart below, a number of agencies have done more than obtain user accounts; they have performed an extensive amount of work. Only five of the 30 CIO Council agencies have done no work in ERA.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ERA Users? | Scheduled Records? | Transferred Records? |
| Department of Health and Human Services | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of State | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of Justice | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Environmental Protection Agency | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Small Business Administration | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of Transportation | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of the Army | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of Commerce | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Nuclear Regulatory Commission | Yes | No | No |
| Department of Treasury | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of Interior | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of Housing and Urban Development | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Executive Office of the President | Yes | Yes | No |
| Department of Energy | Yes | No | No |
| Department of Labor | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of Veterans Affairs | Yes | No | No |
| U.S. Agency for International Development | Yes | Yes | No |
| National Science Foundation | Yes | No | Yes |
| Department of Defense | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Office of Personnel Management | Yes | Yes | No |
| Department of Homeland Security | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| General Services Administration | Yes | Yes | No |
| Office of the Director of National Intelligence | Yes | No | No |
| Department of the Air Force | Yes | No | No |
| Department of Agriculture | Yes | Yes | Yes |
|  |  |  |  |
| National Archives and Records Administration | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of the Navy | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| National Aeronautics and Space Administration | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Department of Education | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Social Security Administration | Yes | Yes | Yes |

ERA Adoption Phase 2

Through September 30, all 266 agencies have been briefed on how to start using ERA, access training, and acquire user accounts. Out of the 266 agencies, 155, or 58%, have user accounts started using ERA, and 84, 0r 32%, have used the system to draft records schedules and transfer requests.

Two factors have helped the user adoption process:

1) We require all to use ERA for the annual move of textual records from federal records centers to NARA’s archival units.

2) We added additional training. Starting in January 2012, we conduct one-day “boot camps” in the Washington, DC, area, and in regional areas. Boot camps give active agency users the opportunity for more detailed instruction and the ability to actually use the system with the assistance of NARA experts. Boot camps are scheduled through February 2013.

ERA Policy Changes

NARA issued NARA Bulletin 2012-003 on August 21, 2012. The Bulletin informs Federal agencies that, beginning October 1, 2012, NARA will use the Electronic Records Archives (ERA) for scheduling records and transferring permanent records to the National Archives.

If the following limited conditions exist, NARA may accept a paper SF-258 or SF-115 in lieu of using ERA.

* A permanent General Records Schedule item serves as the disposition authority for records proposed for transfer to the permanent holdings of the National Archives. ERA cannot accommodate the GRS.
* An agency wishes to create a transfer request or a records schedule in ERA that must contain classified information. Such forms can only be created in an unclassified environment.
* An agency submits a paper SF-258 or a paper SF-115 that was originally started by NARA prior to October 1, 2012. An agency would need to re-enter the information into ERA.
* A technical issue such as an agency’s network firewall prohibits connection with ERA, or an agency uses an internet browser that does not render ERA. NARA expects to be able to resolve any such technical issues with agencies.

Feedback from the Users

ERA User Experience Survey for NARA Users

From May 25 until June 6, 2012, NARA surveyed all active NARA users of ERA. The online survey solicited feedback in a number of different ERA areas. Users were asked to rank their levels of satisfaction in eleven functional and user support areas from “very satisfied” to “very unsatisfied.” Respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on why they gave an element a certain rating. NARA also asked for comments on the negative and positive aspects of system and suggestions for improvement. Finally, they were asked to give an overall level of satisfaction with the system.

The chart below shows feedback from NARA staff according to function and support element. The blue line segment depicts the percentage of respondents who were very satisfied or satisfied with the category; red shows neutral feedback; and green indicates unsatisfied or very unsatisfied experiences.

The positive review of the help desk support and the user account process stand in stark contrast to the other ratings related to performance of the system. Only 20% of staff members are satisfied overall with ERA.

ERA User Experience Survey for Federal Agency Users

From September 17 until October 5, 2012, NARA surveyed all of the active Federal agency users of ERA. Over 500 users of ERA were invited to complete the survey. A total of 92 took the survey and answered at least some of the questions.

As with the chart above, users were asked to rank their levels of satisfaction in the above in a range from “very satisfied” to “very unsatisfied.” Respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on why they gave an element a certain rating. NARA asked for feedback regarding their thoughts on positive aspects of system and their suggestions for improvement. Finally, they were asked to give their overall level of satisfaction with the system.

A total of 58% of the Federal agency survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with ERA, slightly exceeding the 56% satisfaction score from the April 2012 survey. The score significantly exceeds the 44% of satisfied or very satisfied ERA users reported in September 2011.

Other positive results include a 15% increase in the satisfaction with the transferring functionality over the April 2012 survey, and continued very good reviews of the help desk (79%) and the training materials (77%).

However, users continue to have negative or neutral experiences when using the system, although the scores improved over the mid-year survey. This condition, in relation to the mostly positive feedback received on ERA support, probably contributed to a relatively low overall satisfaction score.