



Winter 2007

Volume 4, Issue 1

# Great Lakes Wave



Photo by Anthony Beard

Published by the Great Lakes Region

## Big Bucket Scheduling!

By Galen Wilson

Remember being told not to put all your eggs in one basket? Mark Twain advised “Put all your eggs in one basket—and watch that basket!” NARA agrees with Twain in advocating a type of flexible records schedule fondly called “big buckets.”

### What it is and how it works

A big bucket schedule focuses on a business process rather than on the records it produces. For instance, the process of “paying bills” may include outgoing orders, incoming invoices, utility bills, credit card statements, cancelled checks, and ledgers posting transactions. A traditional records schedule might include those six series as separate items, despite their similar or identical retention periods. A big bucket schedule merges them all into “Pay bills” (the process) and—voilà!—one item.

Big buckets may prove longer lasting than their traditional counterparts. A business process is less likely to change than the records it creates. A traditional schedule for court reporter records might mention audio tapes, machine paper tapes, and transcripts. As technology changes, tapes may be superseded by digital voice recordings on an intranet. A big bucket schedule,

focusing on the process, easily rides the media merry-go-round without falling off.

As agencies move to electronic record keeping systems, keyword e-access replaces thumbing through folders in which paper was placed. Big bucket schedules offer a clear advantage. They enable speedier searching via a streamlined directory tree.

### A case study: NASA

The backbone of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) mission is research. Hundreds of research projects are active at any one point in time. These are frequently grouped into larger programs. For instance, the Apollo Program was composed of many projects.

Many NASA records schedule items concerned one project. Such items couldn’t expand to cover other closely related projects. What to do? The solution was realizing that all NASA programs and projects pass through eight common stages: formulation, approval, design development, manufacture/fabrication/assembly, system integration/verification, implementation/operations, observational data, and evaluation/termination. Could a schedule be written to

cover *any* program or project that NASA ever undertook or will undertake?

Here’s how the answer became “yes.” NASA programs and projects were divided into two camps: those in which historians will be interested forever, and those whose value is temporary. The first camp produces records needed forever, for a long time (but not forever), and for only a short time. Records of the second camp are divided between long and short retention, based on how long NASA needs the information. When the dust settled, 187 items had become just 13.

This schedule clarifies another important truth. Usually there is only one *record* copy of anything. If it is properly managed, all other copies are non-record and can be destroyed when no longer needed.

### One caveat

A flexible records schedule provides opportunity, but you still have responsibility. Your office should determine its retention period within a band at the time records are created. Then your program is consistent. Here’s why it matters. Imagine that an investigator is on your doorstep looking for records. The big-bucket retention band is 5 to 10

### Inside this issue:

NARA’s Online Registration System for Records Management Training	2
Business Analysis and Records Management	2
New NARA Course - Vital Records	3
Award Winning National Science Team	3
RM Training Opportunities	4

“Information may be accumulated in files, but it must be retrieved to be of use in decision making.”

**Kenneth J. Arrow**  
Nobel Laureate in Economics  
*The Limits of Organization*  
(Norton 1972)

years but you never determined how long *your* records would be kept. Lots of records could have been thrown out four years ago...but they’re still here. You give the order, “Start shredding *now!*” What kind of trouble are you in? Possibly a lot.

### Can big buckets work for you?

NARA’s crystal ball says “probably.” It may make life simpler for agency staff responsible for putting records in the right place. Interested in discussing whether it could be of benefit to you? Call one of our Senior Records Analysts—John Stewart in Chicago (773-948-9024) or Galen Wilson in Dayton (937-425-0613) for guidance.

## Great News!!! New Online Registration System for NARA Training

By **Anthony Beard and Marybelle Yeazel**

The National Archives & Records Administration (NARA) has a new way to enroll students in the different records management courses that NARA offers. NARA's National Records Management Training Program is now supported by a learning management system (LMS). Course listings, search capability, registration, and payment will all be handled online (the payment function will be automated online by early 2007). Please visit the site at:

<http://nara.learn.com/recordsmanagement-training>

Once on the LMS site, you identify the course you wish to take. Then you obtain approval and payment specifics from your agency. With this information in hand, follow these steps:

1. Click on "registration new user," and complete the brief user information sheet.
2. Complete the registration page.
3. Provide payment by credit card, training form, purchase order, or check. Before the payment function is automated online, you'll receive a Payment Information Sheet by e-mail; complete

and return it by fax or e-mail to the appropriate NARA facility. Your seat in the class will then be confirmed. Registration in LMS closes ten business days before the first day of class.

NARA's Great Lakes Region (Chicago, IL and Dayton, OH) are offering the following courses during FY 2007: Basic Records Operations, Disaster Preparedness and Response, Vital Records, Knowledge Area 1 (KA1) Records Management Fundamentals, KA2 Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information, KA3 Records Scheduling, KA4 Records Schedule Implementation, KA5 Asset and Risk Management, and KA6 Records Management and Program Development.

NARA offers an optional certification program for individuals who successfully complete training in Federal records management. Training is delivered at NARA regional facilities, the National Archives at College Park, and other locations across the country. Participants may take examina-

tions upon completion of KAs 2-6. Those who successfully pass all five examinations will receive NARA's Certification of Federal Records Management Training, signed by the Archivist of the United States. KA1 is recommended as a foundation course for those seeking certification, but is not required to obtain certification.

In the Great Lakes Region, there are two LMS Coordinators: Marybelle Yeazel (937-425-0624) in Dayton, for training in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana, and Anthony Beard (773-948-9025) in Chicago, for training in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.



*As easy as 1,2,3!*

## NARA Links Business Analysis to Records Management

By **John Stewart**

NARA is providing Records Management staff at its national headquarters and regional offices training in Business Analysis techniques and methodologies. This training links records management to the changing forms of information in Federal agencies. After training, NARA staff will be able to assist agencies with records situations encountered when the agencies are undertaking upgrades, merges, or replacement of information systems.

Business Analysis training is in line with the published Records Management Profile, released as a joint product by OMB, the Federal CIO Council, and NARA in December 2005. The Records Management Profile overlays the Federal Enterprise Architecture and integrates records management requirements with developing business and IT investment strategies.

The Records Management Profile utilizes an approach based on the Systems Development

Life Cycle concept and encourages standardization of IT capital investment and information system development. NARA has found that an effective way to link records requirements with IT systems is to focus on Business Analysis techniques and methodologies, especially during the concept development and requirements definition phases. A Business Analysis approach also supports activities during the design, construction, testing, implementation, and retirement or roll-over phases of information system development. NARA hopes

that records analysts trained in Business Analysis techniques and concepts will assist agency records staff with a standardized approach in framing a business problem, and determining



root causes, in order to define information solutions, develop models of a future state, and define system requirements. With NARA's assistance, agency records management staff will work with their IT staff and assist them in designing, constructing, testing, and producing information systems that meet necessary records requirements.

NARA records management analysts are planning guides and toolkits on applying Business Analysis techniques for agency use. One of the first of these products will be a series of checklists that provide formality and standardization to the process of system modeling and defining systems requirements. It's not your father's records management, but it will provide new and useful products to assist agencies in complying with required record keeping standards as they implement more effective information systems.

## Announcing a New NARA Records Management Course

By Joseph Suster

Do you know the difference between a record and a vital record? Can you identify your organization's critical business needs if an emergency or disaster befalls it? Can you identify and assess various risks to your records? NARA is introducing a new records management course during FY 2007: Vital Records. This one-day course provides the knowledge and skills required to identify, protect, and make readily available the vital records needed to support the resumption of critical business functions after a disaster, and to establish and administer an ongoing vital records program.

This practical, hands-on presentation consists of four instruction modules that target Federal employees and/or contractors who have records responsibilities, Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) managers, line managers and staff, information technology personnel, and employees of state and local governments involved with vital records programs or emergency planning. Tuition is \$150 per attendee.

Vital Records is being offered by NARA at various locations across the U.S. through September 30, 2007. Please go to [www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/training](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/training) for a list of scheduled dates and sites. This course can also be tailored to your individual agency's needs.

For more information on course customization, contact Joseph Suster at 773-948-9040 or [Joseph.Suster@nara.gov](mailto:Joseph.Suster@nara.gov). Please note that Vital Records is *not* one of NARA's Certification courses.



## National Science Records Team Wins Archivist's Award

By James Hurst

On October 16 it was announced that the National Science Records Team had received the 2006 Archivist's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Achieving Organizational Goals. The announcement stated that the team's award was for "innovative appraisal guidance that will be invaluable in helping preserve our Nation's valuable scientific assets."

The National Science Team consists of NARA staff appraisers from both headquarters and the field and includes James Hurst from the Dayton office of the Great Lakes Region.

The team's chief accomplishment was to create a toolkit of appraisal aids to assist NARA records management staff in appraising specific categories of science records. In this instance, the toolkit was based on case studies relating to environmental, health, and safety (EH&S) records from a variety of Federal agencies, including the Department of Energy, the Envi-

ronmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Coast Guard, and the Corps of Engineers.

The goal of the National Science Team's toolkit is to aid the appraiser in determining the value and disposition of EH&S records. The toolkit includes a

The announcement stated that the team's award was for "innovative appraisal guidance that will be invaluable in helping preserve our Nation's valuable scientific assets."

checklist that supplements the guidance on appraising EH&S records provided in Appendix 2 of NARA Directive 1441- Appraisal Policy. The guidance sets forth a series of considerations that an appraiser should use in determining the value of records relating to certain EH&S functions:

production and use of hazardous materials; environmental planning and monitoring; emergency response and remediation; and claims and litigation.

Information on the appraisal guidelines for EH&S records is available at [http://www.nara-at-work.gov/archives\\_and\\_records\\_mgmt/nmp/science-records-resources.html](http://www.nara-at-work.gov/archives_and_records_mgmt/nmp/science-records-resources.html)

The National Science Records Team is currently working on the development of appraisal considerations for the vast quantity of scientific observational data created primarily by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the United States Geological Survey, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.





NARA-Great Lakes Region  
3150 Springboro Rd.  
Dayton, OH 45439

## **Upcoming Records Management Training**

### **KA1 Records Management Fundamentals**

Dayton - January 23, 2007 \* Chicago - February 26, 2007

### **KA2 Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information**

Dayton - January 24-25, 2007 \* Chicago - February 27-28, 2007

### **KA5 Asset and Risk Management**

Chicago - March 1-2, 2007

### **KA3 Records Scheduling**

Dayton - March 12-13, 2007

### **KA4 Records Schedule Implementation**

Dayton - March 14 -15, 2007

### **Basic Records Operations**

Indianapolis - February 6, 2007 \* Milwaukee - March 28, 2007 \*  
Madison - March 29, 2007

*See page two for workshop contact information and how to register online!*

## **Building Partnerships for Better Records Management !**

You know your office better than anyone else does. Experts at the National Archives and Records Administration know records management. Together, in partnership, we can improve records management in your agency through Targeted Assistance.

### **What help is provided? This depends on your needs.**

We can provide:

- \*Expedited review of critical schedules
- \*Tailored records management training
- \*Inventory form design
- \*Review of draft schedules
- \*Help in records disposition/transfer
- \*Analysis of electronic recordkeeping needs
- \*and much, much more

To find out about Targeted Assistance partnership opportunities, call one of our Senior Records Analysts -John Stewart in Chicago (773-948-9024) or Galen Wilson in Dayton (937-425-0613).