

National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) Implementation of the E-Government Act of 2002 – Report for FY 2006

I. Brief overview of agency's implementation of the Act, including a description of an internal agency-specific E-Government initiative

- **Describe how the initiative is transforming agency operations**

The Electronic Records Archives (ERA) is a revolutionary NARA project to build a comprehensive, systematic, and dynamic information system that preserves and provides continuing access to authentic electronic records over time. ERA will enable NARA to process and make available permanently valuable Federal and Presidential electronic records. NARA's mission, to preserve the records created by our nation's government over more than 200 years, must change to address the electronic records being created in e-government, as well as the paper records of the past. NARA first received electronic records in the 1970s. Over the past ten years, our electronic records holdings have grown 100 times faster than holdings of traditional paper records. In the next three years, an unprecedented volume of historically important electronic records will be ready for transfer to NARA, including approximately 40 terabytes of Presidential and Vice Presidential records of the George W. Bush Administration.

NARA's mission capability must fully evolve to deal with both the increasing volume and the complexity of electronic records. Our ability to preserve, find, manage, use, and make electronic records available is vital for the effective functioning of our Democracy and the preservation of the nation's history. Electronic records are created in many forms including text documents, e-mail, web pages, digital images, videotapes, maps, spreadsheets, presentations, audio files, charts, drawings, databases, and satellite imagery. The records are often complex, including e-mail with attachments and web pages with images and links. Many text documents have other embedded documents or are actively linked to the Internet. ERA will ensure the right technologies and business procedures are in place to accept, appropriately process, preserve and provide search and retrieval capabilities to access the huge volume of electronic records soon to transfer. ERA will simplify the transfer of electronic records from across the Federal Government to NARA and will make it easy for NARA customers to find the electronic records they want and improve NARA responsiveness to citizens' requests for information.

NARA must also have the ability to respond to a variety of time-sensitive and often high-visibility special access requests for these records. The special access requests will include those from former and incumbent Presidents, the Courts, and Congress. Electronic records from the Clinton Administration required more than a year to process. With ERA, that time will be measured in days.

- **Explain how your agency maintains an ongoing dialogue with interested parties to find innovative ways to use information technology for the initiative**

To ensure continued engagement and partnership with ERA stakeholders, NARA established the Advisory Committee on the Electronic Records Archives (ACERA). The committee consists of members considered to have particular expertise, knowledge and experience in electronic records. To ensure a balanced representation, members were chosen, insofar as practical, from the following groups: (1) recognized experts and leaders in organizations having an active interest in records management and electronic records; (2) academia and researchers; (3) Information Technology; (4) individuals with an interest in records management and electronic records; and (5) state officials with responsibility for electronic records. ACERA serves as a deliberative body to advise the Archivist of the United States, on technical, mission, and service issues related to ERA. This includes, but is not limited to, advising and making recommendations to the Archivist on issues related to the development, implementation and use of the ERA system. ACERA membership includes:

Dr. Robert E. Kahn, Chair

CEO and President, Corporation for National Research Initiatives

Dr. Daniel Atkins,

Executive Director, Alliance for Community Technology

Laura E. Campbell

Associate Librarian for Strategic Initiatives, Library of Congress

David Carmicheal,

State Archivist, Georgia State Archives

Sharon Dawes,

Director, Center for Technology in Government

Luciana Duranti

Director, InterPARES Project, University of British Columbia

Dr. Richard Fennell

Chief Technology Officer, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

Daniel Greenstein

Associate Vice Provost Scholarly Information, University of California

Jerry Handfield,

State Archivist, Washington State Archives

Robert Horton,

Acting Director, Minnesota Historical Society

Andy Maltz

Director, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Richard Pearce-Moses

Director, Digital Government Information

John T. Phillips

Management Consultant, Information Technology Decisions

Jonathan Redgrave

Partner, Redgrave Daley Ragan & Wagner LLP

Dan Reed

Director, Renaissance Computing Institute
David Rencher
Director, Federation of Genealogical Societies
Mr. Richard L. Testa
Director, Records and Information Division, Air Force
Dr. Kelly A. Woestman
Professor and History Education Director, Pittsburg State University

Further, ERA maintains a robust communications, advocacy and outreach effort to ensure ongoing dialogue with stakeholder and user communities regarding the status of the ERA project and the potential impacts of its implementation.

- **Identify external partners (e.g., Federal, State or local agencies, industry) who collaborate on the initiative;**

NARA is partnering with four Federal agencies (Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Nuclear Security Administration, Naval Oceanographic Office, Patent and Trademark Office) that will serve as early adopters for ERA Increment 1, which will provide basic transfer, preservation and search and retrieval capabilities for their Unclassified and Sensitive But Unclassified electronic records. NARA will progressively open the system to all agencies. NARA is also collaborating with the Government Printing Office and the Library of Congress to share knowledge and technologies in support of the life cycle management of electronic records.

Since its inception, ERA has been active in an extensive network of research partnerships. In 2006, the National Science and Technology Council invited NARA to become a member agency of the Subcommittee on Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD). This membership reflects recognition of the importance of research NARA sponsors under the ERA program on problems that must be solved for effective lifecycle management of records in the context of e-government. (*Reference: The Networking and Information Technology, R&D (NITRD), SUPPLEMENT TO THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET FOR FY 2007, A Report by the Subcommittee on Information Technology Research and Development National Science and Technology Council, February 2006.*) The President's National Science and Technology Council report stated that NARA's ERA Program won one of four competitively awarded 2006 Internet-2 international IDEA awards for exemplary applications of advanced networking technologies. The award was for a transcontinental persistent archives prototype which provides an analytical test bed for preservation and advanced national access to Federal, Presidential, and Congressional electronic records.

In similar research collaborations, NARA's ERA Program supports a portfolio of collaborative research that includes:

- evaluations with the San Diego Supercomputer Center, the National Center for Supercomputer Applications, and the Pittsburgh Supercomputer Center of innovative systems technologies and advanced decision support systems demonstrating promise to reduce future operational costs for processing the very

- large, fast growing electronic records that support electronic government and continuity of government operations;
- investigation with the US Navy and the Department of Defense of advanced technologies to support long term robust access to complex engineering electronic records and data; and
- computer security technology test beds with the US Army Research Laboratory providing the sound foundation for high confidence safeguarding of electronic records responsive to the Nation's security and defense.

The ERA research program also participates in supporting the President's agenda for achieving the purposes of the Next Generation Internet Research Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-305). The research enriches the knowledge base required for management and preservation of electronic records and fosters the development of advanced technologies for the management of electronic records supporting current operations of government, and for the preservation and sustained access to valuable records in the National Archives, Presidential Libraries, and other agencies.

- **Identify improved performance (e.g., outcome measures) by tracking performance measures supporting agency objectives and strategic goals;**

ERA will become operational at the end of FY 2007. During FY 2008, it is anticipated that the system will support agency performance improvements, including:

- Increasing the percentage of Federal agencies satisfied with NARA scheduling and appraisal services;
- Decreasing the per-megabyte cost of managing electronic records;
- Increasing the percentage of transfers scheduled that are actually received within 12 months of the date the records are eligible to be legally transferred to NARA;
- Increasing the volume of archival electronic holdings processed for opening to the public;
- Increasing the volume of electronic records that can be ingested by NARA; and
- Increasing the percentage of records schedules that are submitted, appraised and approved electronically.
- **Quantify the cost savings and cost avoidance achieved through implementing the initiative (e.g., reducing or eliminating other investments in information technology)**

Pending availability of requested funding, the ERA system will result a life cycle benefit of \$298 million (FY 2006 dollars) compared to continuing operations of existing systems. The total net present value for ERA is \$119 million. ERA is also anticipated to reduce the costs of storage for electronic records.

- **Explain how your agency ensures the availability of Government information and services for those without access to the Internet and for those with disabilities for this initiative.**

NARA provides Internet access at most of its facilities to ensure availability of Government information and services for those without access to the Internet. NARA specifies Section 508 compliance in all contracts, including small acquisitions to ensure that assistive technology, devices, and services are available to all NARA employees and members of the public with disabilities who use NARA information technology equipment in NARA facilities. Contractors are required to design, develop, implement, maintain and upgrade all technologies to demonstrate full compliance with all existing accessibility legislation.

II. Describe your process for determining which information will be made available on your agency's public website and the Internet as required in Section 207(f)(2) of the Act

- **Describe your process for determining which government information the agency intends to make available and accessible to the public on the Internet and by other means**

Our process for determining which information will be available on our public internet is based upon the following inputs and priorities:

- Our process for determining which information will be available on our public internet is based upon the NARA priorities and schedules found at <http://www.archives.gov/comment/web-priorities.html>. The NARA Web Program works with NARA program offices to identify and post the information.
- Information associated with requirements stated in applicable laws, regulations, and directives (Priority 1 content) is posted on or before deadlines, or as soon as the information is ready to be posted if a deadline had not been stipulated. Priority 2, 3, and 4 content is posted on an as-needed basis as soon as the information is ready. This content is developed based on customer comments provided through our American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) online survey; e-mail, phone calls, faxes, and paper-based mail from the public; comment cards submitted to staff in our public facilities; training course evaluations; meetings with the public; web site usability studies and testing; and staff and management assessment of needed additions and updates.
- Additionally, NARA is establishing partnerships with both governmental and private institutions to facilitate the availability of NARA holdings over the Internet, while ensuring that NARA obtains ownership of the digital versions.

By putting our country's records literally at the public's fingertips, we will be able to share our rich resources with more people than ever before.

Accessibility: our web site is accessible to persons with disabilities, per requirements under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d), as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220), August 7, 1998.

- **Include a copy of the priorities and schedules for making your information available and accessible**

Our priorities and schedules for making NARA information available and accessible on our public internet are as follows:

- Priority 1, as required by law, regulation, Presidential directive or other official directive or national security.
- Priority 2, mission-critical and essential for program operations but not required by law, regulation, or Presidential directive (i.e.: information or services tied directly to NARA's mission and/or strategic plan).
- Priority 3, frequently requested information or services that would improve organization business processes and/or customer service to the public.
- Priority 4, other information.

Schedules: All content noted above currently exists on our public Internet.

- **Explain how and when such final determinations, priorities, and schedules were available for public notice and comment**

These priorities and schedules are available on our web site for public comment, located at: <http://www.archives.gov/comment/web-priorities.html>

The public may send comments through a link on the same page that lists the priorities and schedules.

- **Identify progress to date for permitting searching of all files intended for public use on the website, displaying search results in order of relevancy to search criteria, and providing response times appropriately equivalent to industry best practices**
 - Archives.gov (main public web site). Less than 1 second to generate the search results screen; results displayed in order of relevancy
 - Ourdocuments.gov. Less than 1 second to generate the search results screen; results displayed in order of relevancy
 - Nixon.archives.gov. Less than 1 second to generate the search results screen; results displayed in order of relevancy

- Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum web site – Less than 1 second to generate the search results screen; results displayed in order of relevancy
- Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum web site – Less than 1 second to generate the search results screen; results displayed in order of relevancy
- Harry S Truman Presidential Library and Museum web site – Less than 1 second to generate the search results screen; results displayed in order of relevancy
- John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum web site – Less than 1 second to generate the search results screen; results displayed in order of relevancy
- Historic websites of the William J. Clinton White House administrations. Less than 1 second to generate the search results screen; results displayed in order of relevancy
- Available from archives.gov (<http://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/search.html>) searching of all Presidential library websites, less than 1 second to generate the search results screen, with results displayed in order of relevancy.

There are six Presidential Library web sites that have partial search capability, not yet providing access to all files or relevancy (Hoover, Roosevelt, Johnson, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton). There is one web site not yet providing search capability (Eisenhower). The remaining Libraries will follow the Truman Library model of using the powerful Google-search tool, pending approval from NARA's legal counsel. The Presidential Libraries web sites rank among the highest in the Federal government and private industry for customer satisfaction from the ASCI index. Specifically, the Presidential Libraries collectively scored a satisfaction score of 78, which outperforms the overall e-Government satisfaction score and other industry benchmarks. We plan to continue to respond to customer expectations by following this successful model and building upon the success of the collective Presidential Library web sites.

IIIa. Describe how your agency's information dissemination activities are coordinated with its FOIA operations in order to improve both access to and dissemination of government information to the public.

- **Coordination with FOIA operations**

As required by the Electronic FOIA amendments of 1996, NARA has established, in addition to its conventional reading room, an electronic reading room that provides ready access to some NARA policy statements and administrative staff manuals that affect the public. As noted in our FOIA Improvement Plan, which is available from our webpage at <http://www.archives.gov/foia/improvement-plan.pdf>, NARA continues to evaluate our efforts to ensure a customer focused FOIA process. Accordingly we continue to review the NARA website to make sure that we are offering our requesters appropriate types of information in our electronic reading rooms.

In addition to the traditional categories of reading room records, NARA has reviewed its practices concerning the affirmative disclosure of what are commonly referred to as “frequently requested” records. With regard to NARA’s operational records, we conducted a review of the FOIA requests received over the course of the last three fiscal years and determined that we have posted all appropriate documents that have been requested three times or more and continue to be the subject of recurring FOIA requests. We attempted to conduct the same type of review for NARA’s accessioned records, but noted that there is no systematic way of publishing all records that are likely to become the subject of future requests to our electronic reading room. Note, however, that the records that have been processed in response to FOIA requests as well as those records containing no restrictions to access continue to be publicly available in the research room at the appropriate NARA facility.

- **Improving access to and dissemination of government information to the public**

NARA has proactively disclosed, through our website, scanned versions of highly requested Federal and Presidential records, e.g., most recently, NARA provided access to records related to John G. Roberts, Jr. and Samuel A. Alito, Jr. during their confirmation hearings. In addition we have made efforts to give the public on-line descriptive information about our holdings, known as “finding aids.” NARA’s website includes the *Guide to Federal Records*, which is a high level description of accessioned records among NARA’s holdings identified at the Record Group and series level. The web also has finding aids for particular topics, such as Unidentified Flying Objects - Project Blue Book, the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection, and Holocaust Era Assets. NARA administered Presidential libraries also post finding aids of records that are publicly available to facilitate access to our holdings. These efforts are consistent with our obligations under FOIA and serve to improve both access and dissemination of government information.

In addition, NARA’s website contains the Archival Research Catalog (ARC), an online catalog of NARA’s nationwide holdings. ARC allows users to perform keyword, digitized image and/or location searches. ARC’s advanced functions also allow researchers/customers to search by organization, person, or topic. As of September 2006, there are a total of 1,653,863 cubic feet of holdings described in ARC. This breaks down to: 498 Record Groups; 2,014 Collections; 31,452 Series; 679,993 File Units; and 255,826 Items. There are also 4,509,041,200 logical data records and 308,513 artifacts described in ARC.

Some archival materials have already been digitized and are available through ARC. They include: 55 architectural and engineering drawings items; 60 artifact items; 321 maps and charts; 57,907 still pictures; and, 15,194 textual documents. Currently, the amount of archival materials described in ARC represents approximately 50% of our holdings.

We plan to create digital versions of additional selected records, including those most requested by researchers. Digitizing materials from our holdings will improve access to

those holdings, and will help preserve and protect the original materials from excessive handling. To help achieve those goals, we are in discussions with several private companies and non-profit organizations to explore mutually-beneficial opportunities to digitize – and make available – our holdings. The resulting non-exclusive partnerships will become an important component of our effort to further expand online public access to our nation’s archival records.

NARA also makes proactive disclosures through the Access to Archival Databases (AAD), which provides on-line access to a small selection of electronic databases preserved permanently in NARA. Out of the nearly 200,000 data files in its holdings, NARA has selected approximately 475 of them for public searching through AAD. NARA selected these data because the records identify specific persons, geographic areas, organizations, and dates. The records cover a wide variety of civilian and military functions and have many genealogical, social, political, and economic research uses. AAD provides access to over 85 million historic electronic records created by more than 30 agencies of the U.S. federal government and from collections of donated historical materials.

To further its goal of providing ready access to Federal and Presidential records, NARA is developing the Electronic Records Archives (ERA). Upon completion, ERA will be a comprehensive, systematic, and dynamic means for preserving virtually any kind of electronic record, free from dependence on any specific hardware or software. When operational, ERA will make it easier for NARA researchers/customers to find electronic records they want and for NARA to deliver those records in formats suited to customer's needs. Ultimately, ERA will preserve essential evidence and make it more accessible in every sector of society. This system will provide ready access to fully released and redacted electronic records from virtually any location.

IIIb. Your description must include a link to your agency’s Information Resources Management (IRM) Strategic Plan and FOIA Improvement Plan.

Below is a link to NARA’s Strategic Information Resources Management Plan
<http://www.archives.gov/about/plans-reports/info-resources/>

Below is a link to NARA’s FOIA Improvement Plan -
<http://www.archives.gov/foia/improvement-plan.pdf>

IIIc. You must also describe specifically how you are fulfilling your responsibilities under three provisions of the Act:

Section 207(d), “Categorizing of Information”

Section 207(e), “Public Access to Electronic Information”

If your agency funds Federal research and development (R&D) activities, Section 207(g), “Access to Federally Funded Research and Development, including how your R&D information is available through Radius, Science.gov, or other means

- **Categorizing of Information**

NARA categorizes and organizes its information dissemination activities in accordance with the Federal Enterprise Architecture's (FEA) Data Reference Model (DRM) through the use of websites, online catalogs, authority sources, catalogs and databases. These tools make use of sophisticated searches and indexes as well as hierarchical references and descriptions. As previously stated above, NARA maintains priorities and schedules for making NARA information available and accessible. NARA currently participates on the Federal Data Architecture Subcommittee which continues to provide input into the categorizing and defining of data across federal agencies.

- **Public Access to Electronic Information**

NARA has an ongoing records management program that oversees the management and scheduling of all NARA operational records, including its electronic records. As part of its efforts to develop an agency-wide electronic records management strategy, NARA is piloting records management application (RMA) technology. Deployed in five offices located at the College Park facility and in the Regional Records Facility in Denver to manage unstructured data (documents, email, spreadsheets and other office automation applications), the RMA is supplying data and experience needed to make an informed decision on how best to satisfy NARA's electronic recordkeeping needs. As electronic system development processes are being revised, we are refining and revising internal processes that assure the inclusion of records management requirements in electronic systems and the scheduling of these systems' records. We have identified 12 unscheduled electronic systems and have begun to draft records schedules for them. Records schedules (SF115s) for two of them have already been submitted to NARA's Lifecycle Management Division for review and approval. Five additional systems are in varying stages of progress prior to submission. We will address the remaining five systems during FYs 2007 and 2008.

- **If your agency funds Federal research and development (R&D) activities, Section 207(g), "Access to Federally Funded Research and Development," including how your R&D information is available through Radius, Science.gov, or other means.**

The means through which Electronic Records Archives (ERA) research results have been made publicly available in FY2006 is through the NARA ERA Research Program web site at <http://www.archives.gov/era/research/>

Beginning in FY2007, NARA ERA Research and the associated RA research budget will be reported in the President's Federal government-wide Networking and Information Technology Research and Development Program and associated federal wide budget crosscut. As a result of this elevation, ERA research will conform to OMB R&D reporting requirements assigned that NITRD program, including requirements for future R&D results dissemination.