

# NUCLEAR RM STORAGE: SMART STEPS TO MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

## Part 1



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In today's competitive environment, it is critical to be as cost-effective as possible. We are all forced to do more with less. In this series we will put you on the right track with your records management investment by uncovering some of the inner philosophies of the industry and by offering some practical approaches to it.

### RM Storage Industry Overview

The consolidation of numerous regional records management providers has resulted in the landscape we have in the industry today—primarily large corporations along with a selection of smaller and/or independent providers.

This article will supply you with insight that will allow you to select a vendor that best meets your needs. By thinking through some of the typical pitfalls, you can negotiate a contract that protects your organization.

The industry continues to thrive due to a number of factors, including increased litigation, industry specific regulations and new government rules. It is vital that you review and understand the rules that apply to your business. The nuclear industry, for example, is very specific about how nuclear records are to be stored. For your QA records, do you know if your organization follows NQA1 or ANSI N45.2?

### Consider Record Types

When selecting a records management company, you should consider the types of records you will be storing. Some records require specific handling and environmental conditions, such as nuclear quality assurance (QA) records.

The most common records are the general business documents. These include receivables, payables, reports, etc., that generally have a retention period of approximately seven to ten years. When storing records for that amount of time, there is no need for special environmental conditions. You only want to ensure that fire protection standards are met and that the records are stored in a secure environment.

### Vital Records Requirements

Most businesses have a select group of records that are considered vital records. These include customer lists, contracts, patents, permanent records and other non-replaceable records. These types of records typically make up approximately 5% of a total records collection.

A large percentage of records management companies cannot sufficiently protect vital or nuclear QA records. In addition to superior security, vital records require consistent temperature and relative humidity levels to be maintained. For the nuclear industry, not only are there environmental requirements, but the records management company needs to understand the audit requirements and maintain the proper QA documentation.

### Common Pitfalls to Avoid

The service offerings/charges listed here are not found with all records management companies. If you decide a fee is not

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acceptable to your business, you should be prepared to negotiate your contract. Keep in mind that some companies will not negotiate. You will then need to decide if working with that company is acceptable.

### Placing Orders

An order to a records management company is primarily a request for a retrieval of a box, file, or tape in storage. Vendors usually accept these requests in a variety of manners such as phone, fax, Internet and email. The request triggers a chain of events that results in you receiving your record.

If an order is received by the company in any manner other than the Internet, the order needs to be manually typed into the computer system. Most records management companies prefer to accept orders online so they can avoid the extra cost of entering the order. Some companies are now ‘encouraging’ customers to place orders via the Internet by imposing higher costs for requests received in other ways.

### What to Consider:

- Do you want to place all of your orders through an online product?
- Can every person in your office request records via the internet?
- Do you want to have the option of “talking to a real person” when placing an order?

### Minimum Order Fees

There are obviously fees associated with placing an order. As with any service organization, a records management company needs to charge when a customer uses the service.

When a record is requested from

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## NIRMA Looks to the Future

# Sharing Strategies for the New Nuclear Era

*Editor's Note: As part of NIRMA's initiative to explore strategies for the future of information and records management for new and existing plants, members are invited to share their expertise in these areas by writing an article for the the NIRMA Newsletter, and also by participating in the Programs Business Unit (PBU) meeting in August where planning strategies will be discussed.*

*Our first article features Part 1 of an interview with Tim Fleet, global product manager of the Sword Group.*

### **What kind of challenges do you see for document control in the new build era?**

One of the most important initial challenges will involve the ability to collaborate and share information with the engineers and the owners of the facility, beginning with the license application. If the customer can access and review documents as they are created and gain a clear idea of how the work is progressing, this allows for greater transparency and better-informed communication between the engineering organization and the owner-operator.

### **Have you experienced scenarios that would translate to the nuclear arena?**

Yes, a lot of our customers are forming distributed engineering teams as they

leverage their skill resources in a global manner. For example, if they're working in Angola, they don't need a large team there and can have people in Houston, London, Aberdeen, Dubai, etc., all actively working together. Before this sort of technology, they would need a dedicated team for each individual project and, as a result, it is now possible to do a lot more with the same set of assets.

### **Can you talk briefly about how you would address those challenges in the nuclear new build era?**

In the last five years or so there has been strong growth in the utilization of Software as a Service (SaaS) tools for document collaboration and exchange with suppliers and partners. In many industries this is almost becoming the norm for projects involving up front feasibility and design processes for new complex capital assets. It makes it easy to bring together a collection of companies

and automate business processes that would once have been very paper-intensive.

Our Fusion system, for example, is available installed on the end user's hardware, but also on a SaaS basis. The two environments are connected to support the flow of documents between them. This allows customers to leverage modern document collaboration techniques with their business partners, but at the same time ensure that key documents are stored within their firewall at the appropriate point in each document's lifecycle. This marries modern SaaS collaborative tools—which were not available at the time most current stations were built—with the more traditional records management and document control systems deployed within the current stations today.

**Look for Part 2 of this interview in the next NIRMA Newsletter. Contact Tim Fleet at [tfleet@sword-group.com](mailto:tfleet@sword-group.com).**

### **More Coming up at the Conference:**

- *Tim. Fleet will present a technical session (#19) on SaaS entitled, "Does the Cloud have a Role to Play for Information Management in the Nuclear New Built Era?" at the 2010 NIRMA Conference, at 3:45 p.m., August 16.*
- *The PBU will address the industry's future at its Conference meeting, Monday August 16, 2010. All members are invited to a discussion on new nuclear power plants and fuels facilities, new regulations, advanced technology, and business models, along with analysis of the effect each of these items will have on document control, records management and configuration management programs. Contact [rich\\_giska@hotmail.com](mailto:rich_giska@hotmail.com).*

## Records Storage

storage, that fee is generally referred to as a retrieval fee. Some records management companies, however, charge a minimum order fee. If your order is less than the minimum, you are charged the extra amount. If you order often, this practice could be burdensome.

### **Retrieval: What to consider:**

- Does your company retrieve records in small volumes?
- Do you order records often?

In Part 2 of this series, we will discuss additional criteria you should consider.

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