

TRENDS ARTICLE**MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR RECORDS STANDARD ENCOURAGES HOLISTIC THINKING**

By Louisa Venter, chairperson of the South African mirror committee, SABS TC46D and Datacentrix senior enterprise information management (EIM) consultant

C-level management must understand that records management can no longer be considered a mere support function that takes place after work has been completed. Along with risk management, information security management and quality management, records management has to be viewed as a strategic management function, says Louisa Venter, chairperson of the South African mirror committee, SABS TC46D and Datacentrix senior enterprise information management (EIM) consultant.

In the past, records management only took place within a paper-based environment once all the work was done – almost as a behind-the-scenes "sweeper". Now, within the more complicated electronic environment, there is no longer a physical "passing on" of documents to records management practitioners to take care of them as part of the corporate memory.

Digital work practices require that employees add descriptive information (metadata) to each document, in order to classify documents according to prescribed classification rules and to make decisions about declaring such documents official records. Records management became a shared responsibility. Thus, the sharpened focus on records management increasingly requires that it should be tightly integrated into business processes. However, many organisations are unsure as to how to tackle this process.

According to ISO (the International Organization for Standardization), the ISO management system standards provide a guideline for companies of any size and within any sector wanting to set up and operate a management system. The Management System for Records specifically (ISO 30300) was published by ISO TC46/SC11 in 2011.

The Management System for Records is not synonymous to a "records system", which is an "information system that captures, manages and provides access to records over time". A management system is a strategic framework that supports an organisation to establish objectives, as well as the supporting policies, structures and processes to achieve those objectives.

Management systems provide methodologies to make decisions and manage resources to achieve the organisation's goals. The Management System for Records is intended to place the benefits of good records creation and control on the management agenda as a strategic function, which is relevant to the modern organisation. It promotes a tight integration between records processes and business processes, with a view to provide a systematic and strategic approach to the creation and control of records.

Ellis, J, 2012.06.21, An overview of ISO 30300:2011 – Management System for Records – Fundamentals and vocabulary, and ISO 30301:2011 – Management System for Records online at:
http://www.iso30300.es/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/MalaysiaNationalArchives2012_ConferencesJEllis_ISO30300.pdf

It was designed to help organisations to implement, operate and improve an effective system for managing records for as long as they are needed for functional, legal and historical use.

This particular standard was initiated due to the need outlined above for the tighter integration of records and business processes, as well as the requirement for a strong message to management around the benefits of good records creation and keeping. It was also a critical step in ensuring the alignment of records management with other evidence-based processes, such as risk management and compliance.

ISO 30300 was not created to replace ISO 15489 (the international standard on records management), but rather to emphasise the importance of the integrated nature of records management and strategic management, by taking a systems-thinking approach to records management.

A third part of the Management System for Records standard was recently approved for publication at the June 2015 SC11 meeting in Beijing, China. Known as ISO 30302, this part will provide companies wanting to roll out a records management system with a specific implementation guideline. At this stage, ISO 30303 (requirements for bodies providing audit and certification) and ISO 30304 (a self-assessment guide) are also in the planning and drafting phase.

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