



The BRM

Bulletin



A Service of Business Records Management, Inc.

1st Quarter 2006

RECYCLING AND CONFIDENTIAL DESTRUCTION:

What is the Difference?

The security of company records is one of the top five critical issues facing business, according to a Conference Board survey of chief executives from 300 companies. Security does not stop at the door of the building in which an organization is housed, nor does it stop at the door of an offsite facility in which records are stored. Security must extend over the full life of the records, whether paper, electronic or film, and that includes their destruction as part of a disposition schedule.

There is a high awareness that recycling, especially of paper, is an ecologically sound practice. However, some organizations may hastily set out for recycling materials that contain information that should be kept private. It may be proprietary information that a competitor can use, or which could be used against the organization in a lawsuit or audit by a regulatory body. It may be personal information about employees or clients, with names, Social Security numbers, ages, or medical histories. It may have information about customers, their purchases and their paying habits. The responsibility for this information remains with the originator; it does not get passed on to the recycling company.

In December, 2005 in Stockton, California, patient files from San Joaquin County Mental Health Services were found at a recycling center. The files were to have been converted to microfilm and then destroyed. Instead, after filming, workers from Delta MicroImaging, Inc. left the records in a drop-off area at a recycling center. Although the microfilm company had been authorized to destroy certain files after filming them, the owner of the company said his contract did not spell out procedures for disposal and that his company did not have an obligation to see that the records were destroyed. The records were eventually taken back to a county repository.



Do you know what happens to your office paper that goes to recycling?

It likely is sorted by workers who have not undergone stringent background checks, working under conditions that could be termed unsecured. The "good" paper that has value may be stored for a long time until enough is accumulated to sell. It is then baled and sold to the highest bidder to be shipped anywhere, possibly overseas. There is no way for the original owner of the paper to know if or when the paper is destroyed. Thus, it is obvious that sending records out to be recycled as a means of getting them destroyed is extremely poor from a risk management point of view.

Daily trash can be your downfall.

Did you ever stop to think that discarded phone messages, drafts of letters or contracts, or price quotes could be of interest to your competitors, or to persons unknown to you who could use this information maliciously? The only way to prevent this is to be sure your daily trash is securely collected and destroyed. If trash is set out for public collection, your control is gone.

Australian news accounts from February, 2005 explain that the Tobacco Institute of Australia paid a private detective agency to search through the trash of anti-smoking groups for information on their plans and funding. This admission was made by John St. Vincent Welch who had been chief executive of the Tobacco Institute in 1991-1992. It was done with the approval of the Institute's members, and targets included the NSW Cancer Council and the Heart Foundation. The private investigator, Winston Gregory, said "Everything we did was legal...we didn't go onto people's premises or property....it was done in free range."

Another incident of sensitive materials found in trash also occurred in Australia. In Cranbourne, Victoria, a shopping center dumpster contained hundreds of photos of police crime scenes, autopsies and murder weapons. The images clearly identified victims of crime and depicted torture, abuse and violence. The photos, used as evidence in court, should have been shredded.

Set a destruction schedule for records that are stored.

Stored records must not be out of sight, out of mind. Their retention schedule depends on how long your organization needs them, and the governing legal requirements as well. But stored records should be destroyed on a systematic basis, with a dated certificate of destruction as a legal record of compliance with the retention schedule.

Records that are routinely destroyed by a predetermined schedule are thus unavailable for legal discovery in case of a lawsuit. This will limit the amount of material an organization must search through to comply with discovery requests. Under Federal Rule 26, each party must provide all relevant records to opposing counsel within 85 days of the defendant's initial response.

An organization remains responsible for the confidentiality of its information.

Although a company may contract with an information destruction provider, and that service can provide a certificate of destruction that is viewed as a legal record of compliance with a retention schedule, the responsibility for confidentiality is not transferred to the destruction service. If damaging information comes to light after the records are in the hands of the destruction service, the fault will still fall on the original owner of the records for not choosing a vendor with the necessary level of security.

The responsibility of an information destruction company has been carefully scrutinized by AHIMA, the American Health Information Management Association (www.ahima.org). AHIMA has published a Document Destruction Practice Brief as a guideline for its members. Two recent recommendations were added concerning insurance provisions in contracts

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Hard drives can produce hard times.

There are numerous stories about computers thrown out as trash, with hard drives full of information that is private, personal, embarrassing and lawsuit-provoking. Or full of customer data with names, addresses and credit card numbers that are sold to the highest bidder. For erasing disks and deleting all data, there are many systems or utilities on the market. Robert L Mitchell sets forth five criteria for utilities in an article called "Kill Your Data" in the January 31, 2005 issue of Computerworld. You can read the article at www.computerworld.com.

How do you find a reliable information destruction company?

Your offsite storage contractor will have knowledge of such companies in your area. Also, you can do some homework by reading "Interesting Facts" or items from the newsroom of the National Association for Information Destruction, www.naidonline.org. This association has a certification process for its members to insure integrity. You can find certified NAID members in your area by typing in your state.

Learn To Speak Geek!

SAN = Storage Area Network.

A storage area network is a collection of computers and storage devices that are connected over a network and are dedicated to storing and protecting data. This allows the devices to pool resources and share them for data archiving, restoration and data protection purposes. These devices are frequently linked by a special type of fiber optic cable that is known as a fibre to differentiate it from other types of fiber optic cable. This type of connection protocol is known as a fibre channel. SANs are very efficient at allocating available storage space, which allows fewer people to manage more data.

Thoughts About Information

"All of the books in the world contain no more information than is broadcast as video in a single large American city in a single year. Not all bits have equal value."

Carl Sagan
US astronomer & popularizer
of astronomy (1934 - 1996)

"The IRS spends God knows how much of your tax money on these toll-free information hot lines staffed by IRS employees, whose idea of a dynamite tax tip is that you should print neatly. If you ask them a real tax question, such as how you can cheat, they're useless. So, for guidance, you want to look to big business. Big business never pays a nickel in taxes, according to Ralph Nader, who represents a big consumer organization that never pays a nickel in taxes..."

Dave Barry
"Sweating Out Taxes"
US columnist & humorist
(1947 -)"

"Data is not information, Information is not knowledge, Knowledge is not understanding, Understanding is not wisdom."

Cliff Stoll & Gary Schuber

"Non Judgment: In our world where it seems we are taught to judge everything all around and about us and we spend so much of our time doing just that, it might be wise to ask if we can judge anything. To judge anything with any degree of clarity and accuracy we would need all the information past, present and future and how it will affect all concerned to make a perfect judgment. Since no one has that skill, ability or information, you might agree, it may be unwise to

judge. This idea may be hard to accept, but when you look back over your life and the judgments you made, ask yourself. How many of your judgments, when you made them, were you perfectly sure they were correct, would you want to change now with the benefit of 20-20 hindsight? Since every judgment is only an opinion based on the limited information at hand, filtered through one's personal value system, it might be safe to assume no two people will judge anything exactly the same. Even concepts of right and wrong, good or bad, good or bad morals and ethics are only opinions, for what may be good in one case may be a disaster in another."

Sidney Madwed

"What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence, a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it."

Herbert Simon
Economist

Introducing BRM-Online

BRM has recently added a new web-based records management tool called **BRM-Online**. This new feature will provide clients with the ability to manage their account via the Internet, adding new and exciting features such as viewing signed printer receipts, work orders and invoices online!

BRM-Online will replace BRM's previous online management system, OSCAR.

The new tool provides a fast and easy way of placing orders, adding and editing inventory, reporting and exporting data, and managing account authorizations.



One of **BRM-Online's** most exciting new features is Scan on Demand. With Scan on Demand, documents stored at BRM can be digitally scanned and delivered to clients instantaneously. The electronic digital files are viewed through BRM-Online and transmitted directly to clients using a secure Internet connection. Demonstrations of BRM-Online are being held for clients who are interested in the new tool.

For more information about demonstrations on this new service, or to schedule training from your account manager, please contact the BRM customer support department at **412-321-0600**, or e-mail us at brmdetails@businessrecords.com.

Making a Difference at Holiday Time

In lieu of holiday presents or candy for our customers, each year BRM selects a charitable organization and makes a special holiday donation. For 2005, BRM donated \$1000 to *Toys for Tots*. The *Toys for Tots* mission is to generate toy and monetary donations during October, November and December each year and distribute holiday gifts to needy children in the community. This donation was made in honor of our customers. We thank you for a wonderful 2005, and we look forward to serving you in 2006!

Congratulations to our First Quarter Subscriber Winners!

First quarter newsletter subscriber winners receive two tickets to this season's PNC Pittsburgh Symphony Pops! Congratulations to Mr. Carl Bongiovanni of Bon Tool Company, who will receive tickets to the showing of "A Tribute to Cole Porter" and to Ms. Patty Fisher of Bordas & Bordas, who will receive tickets to the showing of "The Golden Age of Television!" On behalf of everyone at BRM, thanks again and we hope you have a great time!

BRM Employee Profiles



Cat Coughenour

Customer Support Specialist

Cat Coughenour began her career at BRM in November 2005. Cat's role of customer support specialist in the customer support department, includes serving as a liaison to BRM

clients. Cat's favorite part of the job is working alongside her co-workers and believes that her greatest contribution to BRM is a positive attitude. In her downtime, Cat enjoys listening to classic rock and alternative music and relaxing with friends and family to watch any sporting event. Shopping is also a favorite past time of Cat's, along with vacationing with her husband Derek in Montauk, New York.



Scott Kemmler

BRM Greentree Supervisor

Scott Kemmler has been part of the BRM family since September 1996. Scott's current position is supervisor of BRM's Green Tree facility, where he oversees daily operations.

He appreciates the family atmosphere of BRM and believes he creates a secure environment at the satellite facility. Outside of BRM, Scott views his biggest accomplishment as his marriage to wife Marcie and his son, Michael. When not hard at work, Scott enjoys listening to late eighties and hip-hop music or hitting the golf course. When vacation time rolls around, he enjoys visiting Myrtle Beach, North Carolina, which just so happens to be the golf capital of the world!

Brain Teasers

What Is Unusual?

This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it? It looks so plain you would think nothing was wrong with it! In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is unusual though. Study it, and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out! Try to do so without any coaching!

(Answer: There are no "e's")

The king dies and two men both claim to be his long-lost son. One of the king's advisors proposes a test to determine the identity of the true heir. One claimant agrees to the test; the other refuses. The one who agreed is sent packing; the one who refused is identified as the rightful heir.

(Answer: The test is a blood test. The false son knows that these tests can be inaccurate so he agrees. The true son knows he is a hemophiliac and refuses to give blood.)

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"We back up our data on sticky notes because sticky notes never crash."

A black man dressed all in black, wearing a black mask, stands at a crossroads in a totally black-painted town. All of the streetlights in town are broken. There is no moon. A black-painted car without headlights drives straight toward him, but turns in time and doesn't hit him.

(Answer: It is daytime and the man is clearly visible)

A woman has incontrovertible proof in court that her husband was murdered by her sister. The judge declares, "This is the strangest case I've ever seen. Though it's a cut-and-dried case, this woman cannot be punished."

(Answer: The sisters are conjoined (Siamese) twins.)

What is greater than God, more evil than the devil, the poor have it, the rich can't get it and if you eat it, you die?

(Answer: Nothing.)

A man gave his young son the following challenge. He offered his son \$1000 if the son could accomplish the following task. The father gave his son ten envelopes and a thousand dollars, all in one dollar bills.

He told his son, "Place the money in the envelopes in such a manner that no matter what number of dollars I ask for, you can give me one or more of the envelopes, containing the exact amount I asked for without having to open any of the envelopes. If you can do this, you will keep the \$1000."

When the father asked for a sum of money, the son was able to give him envelopes containing the exact amount of money asked for. How did the son distribute the money among the ten envelopes?

(Answer: The contents of the ten envelopes (in dollar bills) should be as follows: \$1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 489.)



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