



The  
**BUSINESS RECORDS MANAGEMENT**  
**BULLETIN**



A Service of **BUSINESS RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

3rd Quarter 2007

## **HARMONIZING AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN SHREDDING STANDARDS**

With the fear of identity theft casting a long and pervasive shadow, the necessity for shredding information is a given in today's organization of any size. Numerous laws in the United States and elsewhere have increased the pressure for custodians of information, especially personal information, to properly dispose of such data when it is no longer needed.

In May 1988 the United State Supreme Court decided in *California v. Greenwood* that once information has been discarded as trash in a location that is available to the public, the owner's rights of privacy and ownership are forfeited. When personal data put out as trash falls into the wrong hands, the result is bad publicity for the owner splashed across page one and the 10 p.m. TV news.

In June 2005 a United States law called FACTA, the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, went into effect requiring employers to properly destroy information belonging to their customers and employees. Employers who do not shred or destroy such information can receive sizeable civil, state or federal fines.

In the United Kingdom, the Data Protection Act became law in 1998. As part of the eventual follow through, British Standard 8470:2006 covering destruction of confidential material was launched by the British Security Industry Association (BSIA), the trade association for secure destruction of information.

In Canada the House of Commons looked for ways to improve information destruction provisions of PIPEDA, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Document Protection Act. Called to testify before the Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics Committee were members of NAID, the National Association for Information Destruction, which has a presence in Canada.



### **So everybody should be shredding, right?**

Yes, but before you start, consider these questions about using a shredder. They are taken from a six-page shredder guide that can be viewed on line at [www.abcoffice.com/shredder](http://www.abcoffice.com/shredder). Will you be shredding documents that are very sensitive or not so sensitive? Will you be shredding a few pages at a time or larger quantities? What size is the paper you will shred? Do you need smaller shredders in various locations or one large shredder, and do you have room for a large shredder?

There are strip-cut shredders and cross-cut shredders. Shredders range from desk size to departmental size to industrial or cardboard shredders. From a security point of view, there are levels of shredding based on size of strip or particle, with Level 6 designation requiring that a letter-sized document be reduced to more than 12,000 tiny particles.

### **Are there industry standards for shredders?**

Yes. They were established some time ago by DIN, the German Institute for Standardization (Deutsches Institut für Normung). Much of the European Union has adopted the German standard known as DIN 32757-1 which includes, among other things, safety stages of document shredding.

**Security Level 1** is designed for general records including those that must be rendered illegible at the end of their retirement period. Measurements are:

- Strip cut 3/8" or metric 10.5mm or 11.8 mm
- Cross cut particle 3/8" x 1-1/2 to 3-1/8" or metric 10.5mm x 40 to 80mm

**Security Level 2** is designed for internal documents without strict security needs. Measurements are:

- Strip cut 1/8" or 1/4" or metric 3.9mm or 5.8mm
- Cross cut particle 1/2" x 9/16" to 2"
- Cross cut particle 1/4" x 9/16" to 2" or metric 7.5mm x 40 to 80mm

**Security Level 3** is designed for confidential documents including personal data. Measurements are:

- Strip cut 1/16" or metric 1.9mm
- Cross cut particle 1/8" x 1-1/8" to 2" or metric 3.9mm x 30 to 50mm

**Security Level 4** is designed for shredding secret documents, sensitive information and confidential documents. Measurements are:

- Cross cut particle 1/6" x 9/16" to 5/8" or metric 1.9mm x 15mm

**Security Level 5** is designed and approved by the U.S. Department of Defense and the Canadian R.C.M.P. for top secret, high security needs such as proprietary research or government applications. Measurements are:

- Cross cut particle 1/32" x 3/8" to 1/2" or metric 0.78mm x 11mm

**Security Level 6** is the highest level currently available. Level 6 shredders have met standards mandated by the U. S. Department of Defense, the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Central Security Service (CSS) for shredding top secret documents. These shredders must reduce a letter-size document to over 12,000 particle pieces. Measurements are:

- Cross cut particle 1/32" x 5/32"
- Cross cut particle 1/26" x 1/5" or metric 1mm x 4mm to 5 mm

### **Are you interested in high security shredders?**

A good starting point to learn about the many brands and models of shredders that are considered high security is the NSA/CSS Evaluated Products List, on line and free at [www.nsa.gov/ia/government/MDG/NSA-CSS-EPL-02-01](http://www.nsa.gov/ia/government/MDG/NSA-CSS-EPL-02-01). This list identifies hundreds of shredders by model name or number, distributor and manufacturer, and sales contact

personnel. In addition to the particle specifications given above, this list also shows the size of feed opening (such as 9 inches or 12 inches) and capability for a one-hour durability test which used 500-sheet reams of 8-1/2"x11" 20-pound uncoated paper. Results can range from 5 reams when feeding 3 sheets to 25 reams when feeding 9 sheets.

### **There are companies that specialize in destruction of information, including shredding.**

Complete and thorough destruction of information, in paper or any other format, has become a thriving industry, thanks to the fear of identity theft or of proprietary information becoming public. Not only paper but also CDs, DVDs, hard drives, credit cards, ID badges and even company uniforms are falling victim to the shredding knives. Mobile shredding trucks can shred up to 5,000 pounds of paper per hour, and offer the security of doing it at a company's own dock, meaning that boxes of records don't get lost in transit while on their way to a distant shredding site. Beyond shredding paper, the process of sanitizing hard drives is now being scrutinized with the intent of developing security standards, and the United States government is soliciting comments on this during the Spring of 2007.

### **Can shredded material be reconstructed?**

Yes, document reconstruction is possible, especially if materials have been shredded into strips rather than cross cut into particles. Such reconstruction was used to produce evidence that was integral to the Enron accounting scandal.

An interesting article called "Back Together Again" by Douglas Heingartner appeared in The New York Times ([http://tech2.nytimes.com/mem/technology/tech\\_review.html](http://tech2.nytimes.com/mem/technology/tech_review.html)) detailing instances in which shredded documents were reconstructed. After the United States Embassy in Tehran was taken over by Iranians in 1979, shredded embassy documents were reassembled by nimble-fingered local carpet weavers. Similarly, after the 1989 fall of East Berlin, attempts were made to reconstruct shredded documents of the dreaded Stasi secret police which hastily left 16,000 bags of shreds.

Advanced scanning technology is speeding up the process. A document reconstruction company called Church Street Technology, Inc. ([www.churchstreettechnology.com](http://www.churchstreettechnology.com)) has as customers law enforcement, legal teams, crime labs and forensic accountants. Its process has been described as "scanning each shred and using algorithms to reassemble all the materials on a computer."

Talk with your records storage contractor. He or she will likely have some good advice about starting or improving your shredding program.

## Storing Records: How to Decide if an Off-Site Storage Solution is For You

### *Guideline for evaluating records storage facilities released*

Daily, millions of records are being created and stored each in every organization worldwide. It is crucial to an organization's success that they properly manage all of their records. To help individuals and organizations decide on the best storage alternatives ARMA International, the authority on managing records and information, announces the *Guideline for Evaluating Records Storage Facilities*.

This guideline helps explain the essential elements to consider when making the decision to store records inhouse or to move your inactive records to an off-site storage facility.

Increasingly, organizations are required to account for their records through the demands of regulations and the threat of litigation. Using the recommended guidelines, organizations can make the correct decision with respect to records storage in order to remain compliant.

ARMA International also provides other standards and guidelines to create professional environment "best prac-

tice" procedures. Created and vetted by professionals, these standards and guidelines help enable organizations to create systems, policies, and procedures that lead to exceptional records and information management.

To obtain your copy of the "*Guideline for Evaluating Records Storage Facilities*" and view the other standards and guidelines provided by ARMA International please visit [www.arma.org/bookstore](http://www.arma.org/bookstore) or [www.arma.org/standards](http://www.arma.org/standards).

### **About ARMA International**

ARMA International ([www.arma.org](http://www.arma.org)) is a not-for-profit professional association and the authority on managing records and information. Formed in 1955, ARMA International is the oldest and largest association for the records and information management profession with a current international membership of more than 10,000. It provides education, publications, and information on the efficient maintenance, retrieval, and preservation of vital information created in public and private organizations in all sectors of the economy. It also publishes the award-winning *Information Management Journal*.

### **National Archives Honors Pennsylvania Brothers for Helping to Recover Stolen Documents**

#### *Help Us Recover Lost and Stolen Documents*

Washington, DC...Archivist of the United States Allen Weinstein honored two Pennsylvania brothers, Dean Thomas and Jim Thomas, in a ceremony today for assisting the National Archives in recovering stolen Civil War documents.

In presenting the brothers with certificates of appreciation and facsimiles of some of the stolen documents, Professor Weinstein said, "The National Archives has a great responsibility to keep the nation's documents safe and secure, but we can't do this without the public's help. When private citizens such as the Thomas brothers join us in this effort—it's extraordinary. If you help the government recover stolen documents, others will follow. You set a good example."

The brothers, book publishers in Gettysburg, PA, saw documents up for sale on eBay in September 2006. Dean Thomas recognized them as ones he had seen and photocopied while researching at the National Archives Philadelphia Regional Archives 20 years ago. Mr. Thomas immediately contacted the National Archives, which began an investigation of the

thefts. The investigation led to the arrest of former National Archives intern Denning McTague. 164 documents were stolen by Mr. McTague. The investigation is ongoing with 161 recovered to date. Mr. McTague will be sentenced on July 12, 2007.

At the ceremony, National Archives Inspector General Paul Brachfeld presented the Thomas brothers with special paper weights encapsulating original pieces of Civil War era red tape. "It just doesn't get any better for us. You are models for other citizens to follow and we hope it will encourage others to help the government recover alienated documents," Mr. Brachfeld said.

While accepting the gifts of appreciation, Dean Thomas said "All I can tell you is, 'if it's not yours don't take it.'"

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## Employee Profiles



**Kevin Carter** joined BRM in February 2007 as a Sales Executive for the Erie market.

He has four children and one grandchild, and his interests include all sports (especially in the summer), music and spending time

with family and friends. Kevin has an eight-year military background. He worked with the Nuclear Missile Defense System while in the U.S. Air Force, and then ventured into something more challenging with the U.S. Army, where he began his lifelong passion of Nursing School. He then ventured into the world of sales, an area in which he feels he has found his niche.



**Mariela Antunes** joined BRM in August 2007 as a Graphic Designer. Her duties include designing BRM's printed advertising, promotional materials and corporate literature.

Mariela holds a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and Digital Design and has been involved with art and design since she was very young. Before joining BRM, she taught Art Therapy to children with autism, and later worked as a freelance Graphic Designer and Illustrator. Outside the office, Mariela spends time with her husband Luiz and enjoys camping, skiing and traveling to her home country, Argentina.



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