

Department of Parliamentary Services Case Study – the importance of measuring success



Australian Government



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Initiating and implementing an EDRMS

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Summary

Formed in 2004, the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) is the principal service agency for Parliament House, and is one of three agencies that support the operations of the Australian Parliament and its committees. A percentage of departmental records need to be retained as national archives. Many are generated from activities that relate to preserving the heritage value of Parliament House and surrounds. The scope of DPS staff ranges from nurses, research academics, Parliamentary security and librarians to broadcasting specialists, *Hansard* editors and building maintenance personnel.

DPS was concerned about the inability to control or centrally manage email messages, versioning of electronic documents, and the inconsistencies with which desktop collaboration was carried out by staff.

It therefore initiated a project with a policy mandate to facilitate the capture, control and retrieval of electronic documents and records into an electronic document and records management system (EDRMS). Approved in June 2007, the project business case cited compliance as the primary business driver, with three targeted outcomes:

- increased staff productivity through defined business rules and training
- efficient information storage, retrieval and access
- decreased physical storage costs for hardcopy files.

This case study looks at the implementation of the project, and shows how critical it is to measure the project outcomes against original objectives to ensure continuous improvement.

Agency overview

Formation

Following recommendations made in 2002 by the Parliamentary Service Commissioner to the Presiding Officers, three discrete parliamentary departments were amalgamated into one by resolution of both Houses of Parliament to form the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) on 1 February 2004. DPS is currently one of three agencies that support the operations of the Australian Parliament and its committees, the other two being the chamber departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

As a service department, DPS is the principal support agency for Parliament House – a building that nearly 1 million people visit each year and where more than 3500 people work on sitting days of Parliament.

Business activities

Approximately 750 DPS staff are responsible for providing a broad range of services to Senators, Members and their staff, the chamber departments, other building occupants, the Australian community and government agencies. These include:

- *Hansard* and broadcasting services for Parliament
- information, communications and technology
- library and research services to members of Parliament, parliamentary committees and other building occupants
- Parliament House building maintenance, including the surrounding landscape
- a project management office, which manages a large number of building, security, and information and communications technology projects each year.

The Secretary is the Chief Executive Officer and the principal officer of the DPS leadership team. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives jointly administer DPS as the Presiding Officers.

Records management

When DPS was formed, three central registries with six dedicated staff moved into one unit, with one staff member dedicated to records management in the department's Knowledge Management section in the Content Management Branch. There are now two records management staff in the Knowledge Management section, which has four staff in total. Staff use a function-based business classification scheme to assist with classifying their documents and titling hardcopy files.

Files that are no longer needed for business use are sentenced with a National Archives approved records authority.

A percentage of DPS records need to be retained as national archives. Many are generated from activities that relate to preserving the heritage value of Parliament House and surrounds (building, furniture, artworks, gardens and landscapes).

Up to 2009, DPS maintained a print-to-paper policy with documents printed and retained as hardcopy files. A records management system, used since the early 1980s by one of the previous departments, maintained summary details of DPS files.

About the project

Case for change

DPS was concerned about the inability to control or centrally manage email messages, versioning of electronic documents, and the inconsistencies with which desktop collaboration was carried out by staff. The scope of staff ranges from nurses, research academics, parliamentary security and librarians to broadcasting specialists, *Hansard* editors and building maintenance personnel.

In May 2007, DPS initiated a project to be managed by a senior DPS project manager using internal project resources. The main aim of the project was to acquire and implement an automated system to support the creation, capture, retrieval and management of documents and records by:

- mandating and facilitating the capture of electronic documents and records into an EDRMS
- defining a content management framework and business rules to enable staff to better manage electronic documents through their lifecycle from creation to disposal.

The project's business case identified compliance with the *Archives Act 1983* as the primary business driver, with three targeted outcomes:

- increased staff productivity through defined business rules and training
- efficient information storage, retrieval and access
- decreased physical storage costs for hardcopy files.

The business case was approved in June 2007.

Engagement of EDRMS consultants

The project team visited agencies that used 'best practice' models of EDRMS, and identified two main features as critical to the success of system implementation – the need to ensure adequate training and change management. Several implementation options were subsequently developed and put to the project board for consideration. The preferred option – to engage external independent consultants with EDRMS experience to partner with internal project resources – was approved towards the end of 2007.

Upgrade of existing system

The project team prepared a request for tender to procure a commercial off-the-shelf EDRMS solution. However pending its release, a decision was made by the DPS Executive to upgrade the existing electronic records management system (ERMS) that managed paper-based records to a full EDRMS solution. As a consequence, the implementation stage of the project was brought forward.

In February 2009, the existing ERMS vendor was contracted to supply and configure the EDRMS solution, and the project team took on system integration, testing, deployment, change management and staff training. In addition, a third party was engaged for the migration process and technical support.

Phased approach to implementation

As part of the phased approach to EDRMS implementation, a proof of concept with 20 people lasting one month, and a pilot with 80 people lasting three months with production datasets, were carried out between February and July 2009.

Project team members liaised with all directors early to explain the rollout and training strategy. A 'face' of the EDRMS was created to engage staff interest – Mr Ed (**Managing Records and Electronic Documents**). The Mr Ed cartoon was used as a change management tool and to educate staff on how to use the new EDRMS. Mr Ed, along with regular articles published in the DPS newsletter, targeted and tailored presentations and briefings, and a page on the intranet to communicate project details and updates, were critical to engaging support for, and commitment to, the project.

As part of the training strategy, two discrete datasets were set up for the trials – one dataset for training and the other as a practice 'sandpit' environment. End users were invited to use the sandpit dataset to familiarise themselves with the EDRMS two weeks before attending official training sessions. Each three-hour end user tailored training session, with a capacity for 10 users, covered basic searching, user interface, creating folders, adding documents to folders, saving emails and access controls.

Enquiry users (that is, staff who do not create records but need to search the system and view documents), received very basic training that dealt with finding a folder or document, opening a reference and how to search the system.

Departmental rollout

From July to October 2009, the EDRMS extended its reach to targeted DPS staff, change management activities, staff training, onsite configuration and handover to business-as-usual mode of operations.

Work groups were trained in order of strategic need and keenness to participate. For example, executive assistants were seen as an important group because of their strategic position within DPS. Following training, users started creating folders and

saving electronic documents, and were contacted and offered assistance by the project team. Additional ongoing support involved a combination of floor walking, a telephone enquiry service and tip sheets on the project portal. Additional support was provided by internal DPS helpdesk staff.

As part of the change management plan, Mr Ed provided advice in the online staff magazine. Mr Ed has proven to be very popular and a very successful way of promoting TRIM throughout the department.

Integration of EDRMS and SharePoint

SharePoint is used by several areas in DPS, and the original implementation plan included the need to integrate SharePoint with the EDRMS. However, the TRIM/SharePoint interface at that time only worked with 32-bit operating systems, and DPS used SharePoint 2007 in a 64-bit system. Therefore, integration could not proceed when the proof of concept stage started in February 2009.

Suitable versions of both SharePoint and the EDRMS were subsequently released, which enabled integration to occur. However, the project consultants recommended that the integration of these systems be delayed until a review of SharePoint status in DPS was completed and upgrading of the EDRMS was considered towards the end of 2011.

Project completion

In May 2011, formal activities to close the project were undertaken by the project team in accordance with the DPS' Project Management Office requirements. By June 2011, the EDRMS had been rolled out to 500 end users and approximately half of these were regularly creating and saving records in the system. It is expected that many users will require re-training as they are not regular users and may forget how to use the system.

Project outcomes

Successful uptake

A large number of EDRMS users have reported a high satisfaction rate, stating that email management in particular is much more efficient. More than 1700 documents are registered in the EDRMS each week.

One of the main factors contributing to the successful uptake of the EDRMS was the support of the DPS Executive. They demanded all correspondence to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary's office have an EDRMS reference number. This forced branch heads and their directors to use the system.

Another factor was identifying work groups who would adapt quickly to the EDRMS and get them trained and using the system early. For this to occur, an understanding of how each work group manages their documentation assisted in

mapping work group folders to EDRMS folders. The new system then started to make sense to users.

Enhanced business processes

Where business processes could be enhanced, specific record types were used. For example, a 'project' record type was developed to assist project staff manage project documentation. To make it easier to create project folders, terms from the DPS business classification scheme were mapped to the project management methodology (PRINCE2).

Training and support

Continual training and support were essential, and users eventually 'got it' once they were confident with the system. Patience and perseverance were sometimes required for staff with a low level of computing skills, but they are now able to effectively use the EDRMS. As mentioned earlier, the regular Mr Ed cartoons, tip sheets and TRIM advice have proven to be an innovative and successful training and promotion tool for TRIM in the department.

Measuring success

Eighteen months after the full rollout of the EDRMS, external consultants carried out a post-implementation review of the project. Measuring success of the EDRMS project was important because it provided a means of determining if the original objectives had been met and whether the benefits to the organisation had been realised.

Post-implementation review

The key objectives of the review were to:

- assess whether the EDRMS has been implemented in a way that ensures it is meeting the requirements of its users and original objectives
- ensure security aspects have been properly addressed.

The scope of work included examining and reporting on:

- whether the key objectives of implementing the EDRMS as per the original project plan and business case documentation had been met
- whether the system is meeting the needs and requirements of users, through discussions with a sample of DPS staff (this included ascertaining whether appropriate training and guidance had been provided)
- the security measures in place, the policies and procedures around these security measures, and whether they are appropriately administered.

Outcomes of the review

The review found that the EDRMS implementation project had met all of its objectives, although some areas for improvement were identified. This included integration with other applications, remote access, limited use of workflow technologies and restrictive document controls.

Users found that the EDRMS met their overall needs for records management, and were effectively supported by the records management unit during and after the rollout. Appropriate training and guidance had been provided to staff.

The review also found that the EDRMS was able to effectively capture records and make them easily available to staff in a secure manner. The system's security controls were appropriately administered.

Although the potential benefits of the EDRMS workflow technologies had only partly been realised, the expected benefits of the system relating to the reduction of hardcopy records and duplicate storage were achieved.