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Council Members and Delegates

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Department of Information Resources
representing the Executive Director, Department of Information Resources

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Office of the Attorney General
representing the Attorney General

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representing the Comptroller of Public Accounts

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representing the Executive Director, General Services Commission

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Office of the Secretary of State
representing the Secretary of State

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State Auditor's Office
representing the State Auditor, who serves as a non-voting member

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Texas State Library and Archives Commission
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Records Management Interagency Coordinating Council

Biennial Report, 1999-2000

Part I. Background

The Records Management Interagency Coordinating Council (RMICC) was established by Senate Bill 366 of the 74th Legislature. It replaced the State Library and Archives Commission's Records Management and Preservation Advisory Committee, which was abolished by the same act. During the 75th Legislative session, the RMICC's responsibilities were expanded to implement Senate Bill 897. The Council is composed of the following officers or the officer's designee:

- (1) the Secretary of State;
- (2) the State Auditor, who serves as a nonvoting member;
- (3) the Comptroller of Public Accounts;
- (4) the Attorney General;
- (5) the Director and Librarian, State Library and Archives Commission;
- (6) the Executive Director, General Services Commission; and
- (7) the Executive Director, Department of Information Resources.

The Council is charged to:

- (1) review the activities of each member agency that affect the state's management of records;
- (2) study other records management issues; and
- (3) report its findings and any recommended legislation to the governor and the legislature.
- (4) Monitor compliance of Senate Bill 897 (Sections 1-3 concerning telephone directory blue pages; Section 4 concerning the Electronic Records Research Committee).

Mission Statement. The RMICC coordinates the management of government records by:

- Informing the legislature on records management issues and making recommendations to improve records management processes and accountability;
- Facilitating the transition from paper to electronic records; and
- Developing consistent records management in state agencies.

Part II. Senate Bill 897, Sections 1-3

Senate Bill 897, Section 1 through 3, enacted by the 75th Legislature (1997), required the RMICC, in conjunction with the General Services Commission, to implement a telephone listing by subject matter in addition to the present "Blue Page" telephone listing. This listing is to be clearly identified, and must be located or clearly referenced at the front of the directory before the main listing of residential and business telephone listings.

Progress Report

Senate Bill 897/Blue Pages - RMICC's Blue Pages Committee surveyed all state agencies to compile subject matter telephone listings and 1-800/888 listings. Working directly with Senator Eliot Shapleigh, sponsor of SB 897, Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, U.S. General Services Administration staff, and the Texas Performance Review Division of the Texas State Comptroller's office, the RMICC established subject categories for state government services. The committee matched many of the listings with federal government listings for similar services. Separate categories were created for state listings that were unique or otherwise made an awkward match with existing federal categories.

The Committee's newly established listings were delivered to Southwestern Bell for publication in the 1999/2000 Austin Telephone Directory. The categories and 1-800/888 listings were delivered to the General Services Commission for implementation in other state telephone directories.

The Public Utility Commission notified telephone directory providers of the new Blue Page requirements by adopting a new rule that provides detailed specifications for publication of the subject matter listings. The rule became effective January 20, 1999 (16 Texas Administrative Code §26.128) and requires local telephone companies to contact the General Services Commission for the subject matter listings and associated state telephone numbers for publication.

RMICC convened an ad-hoc subcommittee to investigate how to integrate subject access to present and projected state government information resources, such as TRAIL, the Blue Pages, web indexes, and the Yellow Pages. The subcommittee's recommendations facilitate easy, direct, one-stop access for Texans to state government information, both online and offline.

Recommendation

1. RMICC should seek partners within the academic community to conduct research into the informational needs and information-seeking behavior of Texas citizens. With the large number of agency web sites, hotlines, information and referral services, and reference desks, citizens and agency staff often have difficulty determining the best resource to meet a specific need. The results of the research will be used to identify potential solutions to enhance the success of finding desired state government information. Any solutions will be integrated with other efforts in Texas state government such as the e-government initiative.

Part III. Senate Bill 897, Section 4

The 75th Legislature required RMICC to form a research group to study the challenges introduced by digital formats to the management of state records and public access to state government information.

Progress Report

Senate Bill 897/Electronic Records Research – Some progress has been made regarding the broader issue of management of Electronic Records. TSLAC and DIR have collaborated on rule making to provide a consistent voice to agencies on security issues related to electronic records.¹ TSLAC and DIR worked together to provide joint training to Information Resource Managers and Record Management Officers through an annual conference about electronic records management.² The level of importance of electronic records management has been raised through the passage of HB 1085, which requires that RMO's report directly to the agency head or chief deputy. TSLAC continues to enforce state standards through audits, education outreach and consultation.³

In an attempt to broaden the applicability of its rules for managing electronic records the TSLAC, in the proposed rules, has removed the provision that only records kept for 10 years or more were subject to the rules, as well as the provision that paper copies can be substituted for electronic records. The proposed rules also require that electronic records must be preserved and retrievable for the duration of their currency as public records.⁴

The DIR and the TSLAC have prepared guidelines for functional requirements for managing electronic records and plan working groups to further develop the guidelines.⁵

Findings

Despite this progress, the practice of electronic records management remains difficult and uncertain. Recent passage by Congress of the E-Sign bill crystallizes the issues associated with electronic records management. By providing legal authority to transactions conducted electronically, the bill forces the issue of how those records are maintained, retrieved, authenticated and preserved for the life of the contract, or in cases of historical significance, in perpetuity. In a recent focus group, state information resources managers ranked electronic records retention and public information requests for information in electronic form as the third highest priority issue facing their organizations. The recommendations that follow are intended to continue to bring clarity and practical solutions to this issue.

¹ Section 6.92(b)(7) of the proposed TSLAC rules state that a security program for electronic state records is established that is in compliance with subsection (b) of 1 TAC 201.13 (relating to Information Resource Standards).

² On March 10, 2000, TSLAC and DIR jointly sponsored "Strategic Planning for E-Records" conference for Information Resources Managers and Records Management Officers. Over 200 agency and university staff attended.

³ The Library has provided over 3,344 hours of training to over 1,316 state agency staff, and has provided over 1,901 hours of consultation to state agencies in FY2000.

⁴ Section 6.93(b)(1) of the proposed electronic records rules state that electronic records systems developed or acquired by a state agency, after the effective date of the rules, must have the capability for preserving any electronic state record resident in the system for its full retention period; or, there must not be any system impediments that prevent migrating the record to another electronic records system, in as complete a form as possible. In addition, the rules require agencies to be able to identify electronic records sufficiently in order to retrieve, protect and carry out disposition. Agencies must also provide a standard interchange format, when necessary, to permit the exchange of records between different systems.

⁵ Functional Requirements for Managing Electronic Records, <<http://www.tyc.state.tx.us/errc>>.

Recommendations

2. RMICC should convene a work group of agencies and universities to discuss the need for a centralized electronic records management facility and program. Such a facility and program could expedite improved electronic records management and reduce costs through economies of scale.
3. To continue implementing Senate Bill 897, Section 4, staffing resources for the Council is required. A Secretariat for the Records Management Interagency Coordinating Council should be established in the State and Local Records Division of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), to coordinate the continuing study of electronic records issues. The TSLAC should communicate the specific needs for this Secretariat function, in terms of staffing and operational costs. The Legislature should authorize additional FTE staffing and appropriate funds commensurate with the needs outlined by the TSLAC.
4. The membership of RMICC should be expanded to include a faculty member of a Texas graduate school of library and information science. Historically, librarians have been the principal organizers and providers of information to the public. The advent of electronic records have posed major challenges to this traditional place in society, but librarians and the faculty of graduate schools of library and information science have responded with vigor to the potential disruption of their natural role. They have assumed a leadership position in researching and attempting to find real-world solutions to the many problems raised by electronic records, the most critical of which are how electronic records are made accessible to the public and how to preserve those of long-term or enduring value for future generations. RMICC, in the past biennium, has often called on members of the library and information science community who have researched electronic records issues to aid it in its projects. The addition of a faculty member from a graduate school of library and information science would add a new and needed prospective to the work of the council.

Part IV. Other Issues

Pursuant to RMICC's charge to review the activities of each member agency that affect the state's management of records, RMICC created the Privacy and Access to Electronic Records Workgroup. This team evaluated electronic records privacy issues and focused on gaining a better understanding of the privacy issues that relate to records management.

The Team is composed of personnel from the following agencies: Office of the Attorney General, State Auditor's Office, Comptroller of Public Accounts, General Services Commission, Department of Information Resources, Department of Insurance and Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

The Legislature assigned other interim committees to address and research privacy issues; therefore, RMICC does not have any findings or recommendations on privacy issues at this time.