

Abstract

Some agencies have moved to electronic contract files, while others retain paper-based contract files. The primary research objective is to determine why agencies are hesitant to adopt paperless contract files. The secondary research objectives are to determine what can be learned about contract files from various contracting activities and whether the Department of Defense (DOD) plans to provide guidance for contract files going forward.



Limited storage space

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Virtual access	Audit requirements	Telework	Cyber intrusion
No physical file	Server space	3 rd party review	System crashes
Reduced storage space	Training required on the new system	Travel and cost savings	Resistance to change
Files will not fade	Some activities supplement electronic files with paper	Physical space available	Some audits mandate the use of paper
Less reliant on printers, paper, and toner	Documents with a wet signature	Positive environmental impact	Accidental deletion of a document
No need to locate a file outside of the workstation	Technical Drawing packages	Time savings	Conversion of existing contracts
Version control	Lack of enterprise compatibility	No need to create or locate a paper file	Cost of the new system
System help features		Cost savings	Regulation is not planned to mandate the use of electronic contract files
		Search feature within the contract	
		Time available to work on emergent tasks rather than filing	
		Decrease PALT	

Electronic Contract File SWOT Analysis

Methods

Survey responses provided the major source of data considered in this project. While it was anticipated that efficiencies would be identified with electronic contract files, the challenge was to uncover the issues with converting to electronic contract files. Therefore, the interview questions were crafted in order to avoid bias toward any single methodology. The intent of this approach is to allow the investigator to uncover issues, provide lessons learned, and identify efficiencies found.

Results

- 43% of the survey respondents utilize paper-based contract files
- 57% of the respondents utilize electronic contract files
- DPAP and ASN RDA's survey responses indicate that existing regulation allows the use of electronic contract files, and further policy is not expected
- The primary strengths of utilizing electronic contract files are accessibility, resource savings, and value-added features
- The primary threats of utilizing electronic contract files are lack of security, system unavailability, and resistance to change

Recommendations

- Mandating the use of electronic contract files prior to mitigating security threats is not prudent
- Provide further research by cyber experts to protect electronic contract files from intrusion
- For agencies adopting electronic contract files:
- Engage employees rather than place a suspense date on the conversion
- Utilize the Army Paperless Contract File software
- Utilize document storage on a share drive