

Re: Slightly OT: The paperless office: How far can we go?

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- *From:* Joerg <notthisjoergsch@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Tue, 18 Sep 2007 00:46:40 GMT
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Benj wrote:

Joerg wrote:

b. Document retention: Are there any "cast-in-concrete" rules over what constitutes proper records after they are scanned in? Can you really, really toss the paper copy afterwards?

One "cast in concrete" rule about paper retention is how IMPORTANT are the documents?

Many aren't after a while. For example, design docs will also reside at my clients and sometimes my consulting agreements require the destruction of my copies after a phase is complete. So here backup times are short. Other docs aren't important in general but maybe an agency such as the IRS wants to see some.

Now, assuming that I am diligent enough to store on media that are safe, keeping multiple copies and so on, what constitutes a document scan to be good enough in authenticity versus the paper original? That's what I want to know.

Never forget the "Jacoby rule": "If it's on magnetic media it AIN'T backed up!"

Sure but there are ways to increase security. As we all know drive space becomes plentiful and ever cheaper. I still have docs on magnetic storage from back when I started in the late 80's. The old floppies are still readable but important stuff is also copied onto newer media. And those will be copied onto the next generation, so it's always on a fresh carrier. All the electronic docs from the first ten years of my career will fit onto the new network storage here about 50,000 times over. Yep, that's fiftythousand. Plenty of space for cheap backup, as

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long as you don't trust in a single device and keep offsite copies as well.

The real question about "tossing paper copies" is how stable is your archival storage media. In case you didn't notice paper has EXCELLENT archival properties. Acid-free paper even more so. Magnetic media just plain sucks which means data must be constantly regenerated to be archival. Optical media has promise but lifetimes are unknown. All digital media have the obsolescence problem where after so many