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# The Experience of Electronic Records Management in the Russian Federation

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## The Experience of Electronic Records Management in the Russian Federation

### *ABSTRACT*

A possibility of documentary information exchange without paper use in the electronic and digital form became a reality with the development of computer technics and communication information networks. A new type of documentation which is necessary to store both in the process of records keeping and in archives appeared.

## L'esperienza della gestione dei documenti elettronici nella Federazione Russa

### *SINTESI*

La possibilità di scambio d'informazioni documentale in formato elettronico e digitale senza uso di carta è divenuta una realtà con lo sviluppo di tecniche di computer e reti d'informazione e comunicazione. È comparso un nuovo tipo di documentazione che è necessario memorizzare sia nel processo di tenuta del documento che negli archivi.

## Izkušnje z elektronskim pisarniškim poslovanjem v Ruski federaciji

### *IZVLEČEK*

Z razvojem računalniške tehnologije ter informacijsko-komunikacijskih sistemov je postala možnost izmenjave informacij, izvirajočih iz dokumentov v elektronski in digitalni obliki, realnost. Pojavila se je nova vrsta dokumentacije, ki je potrebna za hrambo obeh oblik, tako pri pisarniškem poslovanju kot v arhivih.

## Опыт управления электронными документами в Российской Федерации

### *АННОТАЦИЯ*

С развитием компьютерной техники и коммуникационных информационных сетей открылась возможность обмена документированной информацией без использования бумаги, т.е. в электронно-цифровой форме. Появился новый тип документации, которую необходимо хранить как в процессе делопроизводства, так и в архивах.

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## Introduction

A possibility of documentary information exchange in electronic and digital form became a reality with the development of computer systems and communication information networks. A new type of documentation, which is to be managed professionally and effectively both in records keeping and in archives, at all stages of records life cycle.

Some part of electronic records (ER) needs long-term (permanent) storage. Therefore, it is necessary to create a stable normative and methodical base of work with electronic records in records keeping and archives. This base is insufficient and imperfect now.

## State informatization policy

In Russia the state policy in informatization and transition to electronic records cycling in the government has been developed.

The acting Strategy of information society development, approved by the President of Russia in 2008, became the logic continuation. It is also the improved version of the corresponding Concept of 1999 with its positions to be concrete. It means that the state policy in this field is clearly formulated and carried out step-by-step. At the higher state level main directions of the country progress are accurately defined; criteria of the tasks in view are defined; detailed plan of the strategy directions realization is accepted; advisory and control bodies, which are to monitor the results of the planned actions are assigned.

The practice of using the state target programs is successfully applied as a tool of managing the budget financing of projects in the creation of information society and «electronic government» for the long-run prospect.

The key features of the current stage are the following:

- regular consideration of the country top leadership to the problems of the information society creation and «electronic government»;
- responsibility for projects and programs results in this field is on the Russian Federation government;
- control of actual carrying out the positions defined in the Concept (the practical confirmation of plans with control indicators);
- wide public reaction to the problems of the information society development.

The positive tendencies mentioned above are a great step in Russia forward to the way of creation the information society. The basic trends of the state policy are reflected in following instructions:

Concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation till 2020<sup>1</sup>;  
 Strategy of information society development;  
 Long-term program «Information society»;  
 Concept of the electronic government formation and its realization plan;  
 The priority directions of the state policy in these records are the following:  
 creation of the uniform infrastructure of legally significant electronic interaction;  
 development of interdepartmental system of electronic records cycling;  
 creation of necessary normative legal base of the electronic government formation.

## Normative and legal base of electronic records cycling

The introduction of the electronic records cycling is based on the national legislation, the following laws:

- «On the information, information technology and protection» from July 27, 2006, n. 149-FZ;
- «On personal data» from July 27, 2006, n. 153-FZ;
- «On archival matter in the Russian Federation» (2004).
- «On digital signature» from April 6, 2011, n. 63-FZ

Recently the Federal law from July 27, 2010, n. 210-FZ «On organization of state and municipal services» was added to the normative and legal base of the electronic records application. At the same time the Federal law n. 227-FZ «On changes in some legal acts of the Russian Federation», dealing with the acceptance of the Federal law «On organization of state and municipal services» was approved. These laws have essentially expanded the sphere of the electronic records use. The Rules of records keeping in the federal executive authorities were confirmed by the order of the Russian Federation government from June 15, 2009, n. 477. These Rules establish the uniform order of records keeping in the federal executive bodies.

The electronic record is defined as equivalent to the document on paper in these rules if documenting the established order of its registration is observed. Thus, for the first time in the Russian records and archives management history the electronic record was given an official legal status by the Rules from 2009. These rules are based on the positions of GOST R ISO 15489-1-2007 on records

1. The Concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation for the period till 2020: Approved by the order of the Russian Federation government from November 17, 2008, n. 1662-r.

management. The executed electronic records are classified according to the filing system of the federal executive bodies. It is pointed out that a file is kept in electronic form while making the filing system. The electronic records as the similar documents on paper are stored according to the disposal dates. After expiration of disposal dates the electronic records must be destructed on the basis of the act about their destruction, confirmed by the federal executive authorities.

In September 22, 2009, for introduction of the interdepartmental electronic records cycling (MEDO) system the Russian Federation government has approved the Regulations about the system of interdepartmental electronic records cycling, which is a normative fundament for creation of the uniform interaction infrastructure of public authorities and local governments. At the same time the Order of the Russian Federation government from June 15, 2009, n. 478 «About the uniform system of information and reference provision of citizens and the organizations, dealing with interaction with executive authorities and local governments, using the information and telecommunication network of the Internet» was accepted. Now the Uniform system of interdepartmental information interaction is realized in the country.

The Plan of transition of the federal executive bodies to paperless records cycling, adopted by the Order of the Russian Federation government n.176-r from February 12, 2011, has been started to be put to life now.

At present there is a set of normative and legal acts regulating the wider application of electronic records in management practice. However, legislative and other legal statutory acts of the Russian Federation still regulate the electronic records application in administration only in general. The fragmentary character of the legislative regulation of electronic records complicates their usage in all spheres of society and state life. And it also does not allow us to use the advantages of the electronic records in full. But in Russia a certain stage of the automated information systems development in the state bodies is taken place.

### Informatization of the system of records provision for the Russian Federation state bodies

Informatization of the system of records provision for the Russian Federation state bodies is a process of large-scale introduction of information technologies in their activity, concerning records keeping and archival matter.

The material base of this process is information infrastructure of the state authorities and administration, including the automated systems (networks) of these bodies and the connected communication environment, which is created by the system of interdepartmental electronic records cycling (MEDO), the system of interdepartmental electronic interaction (SMEV), and also the allocated fragments of open general networks (Internet).

The necessary condition of large-scale informatization of the records provision state system is creation of the essentially new operating activities of public authorities with legal use of documentary information on any types of carriers. The procedures of decisions acceptance and documenting will minimize the quantity of operations on records transformation from one form into another.

The total amount of financing from the state budget on the IT of the state bodies is 81 billion rubles, and real expenses are more than 95 billion rubles (News, July 3, 2012). Unfortunately, there is no uniform state system in the country because of the uncoordinated actions in information sphere. As a result the advantages of information technologies are lost in connection with the various information systems not compatible with each other. For a example, the automated systems of the records provision of administration (DOU) of various types and manufacturers, which are not connected with each other, are introduced and in operation now in the ministries and departments. These systems are not even passed the state certification. According to VNIIDAD monitoring more than 40 types of the electronic cycling systems (SED) are used in the state bodies.

Such systems do not allow to organize really effective records cycling as they need repeated records transfer from electronic form into paper and vice versa. And mail and messenger services instead of electronic communications are still used between the state authorities.

So now the Department of information technologies and communications of the Russian Federation government is considering the problem on creation of the uniform centralized system of electronic records cycling according to the SaaS technology («software as service»). And it is necessary to connect the federal and regional executive bodies and municipalities, which do not have their own effective systems of electronic records cycling, to it.

It will make it possible to improve the records cycling system quality, to reduce expenses for their working out, introduction and operation in each body. And also it will provide the introduction of the uniform records keeping standards and the interdepartmental records cycling, coordinated with MEDO. With such system it will be real to provide records cycling «transparency», the uniform registration and effective control of records fulfillment, and also to optimize the structure of applied records. This decision will lead to further transfer of electronic records to the archival storage and integration with corresponding information systems of archival bodies and organizations.

VNIIDAD has developed methodical recommendations on preparation by the federal executive bodies the records schedules, creation, storage and usage of which should be carried out in electronic form. Practically half of all the federal executive authorities have already prepared such records schedules. It means that archivists can predict the receipt of electronic records into archives.

It is necessary to point out that there is no body with corresponding responsibility on the state policy realization, normative and legal regulation, control, and also provision of state services and state property management in documentary provision of administration, including electronic records cycling within the federal authorities structure now. Such situation also negatively affects a state of records keeping and introduction of modern information technologies in this sphere.

### Terminology and concept problems of the electronic record

In our opinion, there is a terminological uncertainty what the electronic record (ER) is. It is the main problem in the way of universal and effective electronic records introduction. Unfortunately, this concept is not fixed in any statutory act.

We think that «the electronic record» can be included into the category of:

- actually electronic records, the life cycle of which is proceeding only in the electronic environment;
- electronic (digital) copies of records on paper and other data carriers;
- databases in the form of complex record (registers, lists, cadastres, catalogues, etc.);
- web - records.

The first two mentioned groups of ER are of the greatest interest in modern conditions. As the question concerns practical use of ER, it seems that we can speak only about the substitute of traditional paper records for their electronic analogues today. Such records should be included into the filing system and then be transferred into archives. The order of the Russian Federation government n. 176-r from February 12, 2011, inserts the Plan on transition of FOIV to the paperless records cycling within the internal activity, which is put into life now.

According to the order the RF Federal Archival Agency (Rosarchiv) and VNIIDAD have developed methodical recommendations about the preparation of records schedules in all federal executive authorities with the aim to creation, storage and use of records in electronic form. These recommendations are published on the site of the RF Federal Archival Agency. In practice more than half of the federal executive authorities have already developed such records schedules.

From our point of view, while working out the records schedules, the methodological approach must be taken into account while defining three types of documentary masses (TDM) of organizations according to the records archival value. The first mass of records consists of the permanent storage records, the second mass are the records of long-term storage and the third one are the records with 5 years period of storage. The last group of records represents the most solid (not less than 60%) mass of documentation in any organization. And that is why such records should be considered, first of all, as an object for their consecutive replacement with electronic forms. The risk of the valuable information loss will be minimal.

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**Mikhail V. LARIN: The Experience of Electronic Records Management in the Russian Federation**

In due time VNIIDAD has developed several projects within the Federal target program «Electronic Russia»:

- methodical recommendations on work with electronic records in records keeping and archives of the state organizations;
- methodical recommendations for the state archives on organization of permanent (long-term) storage of electronic records.

The positions of the «Rules on organization of storage, acquisition, control and use of the records of the Russian Federation Archival fund and other archival records in the state and municipal archives, museums, libraries, and in the organizations of the Russian Academy of Sciences», approved by the order of the Russian Federation Ministry of Culture from January 18, 2007, n. 19, and also the positions of «Main rules of work in archives of organizations» (2002) have been considered and developed in these methodical recommendations.

Both methodical guidelines should become the first manuals for archives of organizations and for state archives on work with electronic records, in particular, in processes of the records appraisal, acquisition, control, preservation and use of electronic records.

They may be used as an additional tool in practical work with electronic documents. But still these documents are only projects and already need serious improvement.

The question about a destiny of new modern information resources is still not solved: databases, electronic registers, web-records, etc. It is necessary to study more deeply the characteristics of these information resources from the point of view of their conformity to the requirements of archival theory and practice as the objects of archival storage.

Only after serious scientific understanding of these questions it will be possible to make recommendations about archival storage of these modern information sources.

The question about the electronic-digital signature is a point at issue among archivists. Unfortunately, our legislation has not still solved all the problems connected with practical application of the law. It is obvious that the transfer of records with electronic-digital signature to the state archival storage can complicate the activity of archives. When the digital signature's validity on the ER is expired there is a necessity to provide an acknowledgement of authenticity of such document through different ways which are not supported by operating specifications.

In order not to burden the archivists with additional duties on getting acknowledgement of ER digital signatures authenticity, it is necessary to provide legal mechanism of removing the electronic-digital signature from the records when they are transferred to the state permanent (long-term) storage and to make the organization – creator of records fund be responsible for the electronic records authenticity. The problem of electronic records formats is still not solved; in what formats one should:

- store archival electronic records permanently;
- provide a safety insurance fund of archival electronic records;
- create the fund of the archival electronic records usage.

Nowadays it is suggested to transfer the electronic records to the state archives in the format, established by the archives. It is better to transfer them in the format recommended by the ICA – a format RDF-A. At the same time, there are also other proposals in the world practice. For example, one may consider the format TIF as an alternative. **It is an important and actual problem for the Federal Archival Agency (Rosarchiv) and for the Center of electronic records storage, created within the Russian State Archives of Scientific and Technical Documentation.**

The questions on the electronic records specific type structure, proper correlation between registry units and storage units, necessity of the new registration forms introduction for electronic records are not worked out to the completion in operating specifications. The decisions of these and some other scientific and methodical archival problems need international experience and experience of progressive archives in informatization activity.

We hope these questions will be solved during realization of the Program of archival branch informatization, accepted this year.

*SUMMARY*

The main aspects of the report are the following:

- Analysis of legislative and statutory normative acts of the Russian Federation which regulate the electronic records application in administration and actual problems of legislation development
- Terminological and conceptual problems of the electronic record. Replacement of traditional paper records by their electronic analogues, as the main direction of electronic records workflow introduction
- Recommendations on the work with electronic records in records keeping and archives
- Theory and practice of new modern information resources: databases, electronic registers, web-records, digitized copies of traditional records. Study of characteristics of the given information resources from the point of view of their conformity as the objects of archival storage to the requirements of archives management theory and practice
- Questions on specific structure of electronic records, about the necessity of new registration forms introduction for archives for electronic records and other methodical questions of records keeping and archives management.



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