



Start The New Year Fresh: Using ECM To Automate Document Retention & Destruction

The New Year is widely viewed as a clean slate, a time to let go of the old and bring in the new. Data retention policies follow a similar cycle. Documents are created or received, stored for a specified amount of time, and then inevitably disposed of to make room for new documents. These policies are crucial to mitigating business risk but enacting these policies manually can also be resource intensive. There is another way to handle your retention strategy though. Automated policies can streamline the record keeping process and give your company a competitive edge.

Reducing Risk

Each industry and document type have varying recommended retention periods, many of which are outlined in this [ICPA guide](#). A good rule of thumb, though, is to keep documents until they are no longer of use and all legal and regulatory requirements have been met. Early removal and late retention of documents both have legitimate risks making it essential to dispose of them on time. While early removal can create regulatory headaches, late retention can lead to unnecessary security risks.

Early Removal: One of the most widespread reasons organizations retain their documents is to ensure they have all their paperwork together in the event of an audit. Accounting, manufacturing, nonprofits, and numerous other sectors of business must show their paperwork to prove they are operating according to industry standards. If these organizations cannot prove this, they may face steep penalties. Failing to keep proper records for compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, for example, can lead to fines as high as [\\$2050 per violation](#).

Late Retention: Plenty of industries store documents that hold protected information. Financial information, medical information, and any information that can be used to reasonably identify someone must be properly safeguarded according to several federal laws including HIPAA and

the Financial Modernization Act of 1999. While securely storing this information and limiting access to select employees are great places to start, once there is no longer a need for the information, it doesn't make sense to risk having it in the first place. Keeping irrelevant documents also just makes things a pain to organize.

The Cost of Manual Retention

Keeping up with a manual retention policy can be costly and disorganized at best. Tracking hundreds or thousands of documents that need to be timely destroyed is difficult enough, but remembering to do it when the time comes is even harder. The sheer number of documents many organizations process can also mean hours of wasted employee time a week searching for and destroying them. The search process may even take longer if your organization doesn't have an effective [content management system](#).

Gain a Competitive Edge

With an effective retention policy backed with digital solutions to keep up with it, your organization can see drastic improvements in cost savings and efficiency. With a proper ECM system, you can find documents quickly and easily during each audit, boosting regulatory compliance and reducing fees and preparation costs. You can also save tremendously on storage. By storing your documents digitally, you can make better use of your space and save on each square foot of file cabinet space you may have used. General document maintenance costs can also be cut with automated file searching and destruction. Lastly, with all irrelevant documents and information consistently being removed, you benefit from better information security and clean data sets for your business operations

Square 9 softworks provides powerful digital transformation tools that are easy to use and scalable to any sized business. To learn more about document retention and our library of solutions, [request a demo](#) or visit our [product pages](#).



Sam Young

Sam is one of the dynamic voices behind Square 9 Softworks. Delivering highly effective messaging across reseller channels, end-user communities, and outside agencies, Sam develops, drives, and executes communication plans that effectively support Square 9's overall marketing goals and objectives.

To learn more, visit www.square-9.com.