

Streamlining Information Management in Government

A Complete Guide to Efficiency, Security, and Data Centralization



What to Expect from This Guide

This guide provides a detailed overview of how Intelligent Information Management (IIM) technology provides government agencies greater security, regulatory compliance, and efficiency while ensuring the necessary flow of information for smooth operations. Whether you're a state agency or local municipality, intelligent information management can enhance data security, collaboration, and public trust in your operations.



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The State of Information Management in Government

Information is the lifeblood of nearly all government processes. Whether your public agency works with tax records, public health information, permits, contracts, public safety records, environmental reports, or any other of the countless information sources used in governmental administration, managing these records securely, compliantly, and accessibly comes with several key challenges.

Siloed Information

Government departments often operate independently, relying on their own databases and manual processes. This leads to a need for information accessibility and collaboration when records from one department are needed in another. For example:

Citizen Identification Records like birth certificates and social security numbers may be needed by health departments, social services, tax authorities, and law enforcement to verify identities, process benefits, and maintain public safety.

Environmental Reports and Permits like environmental impact assessments and zoning permits are shared between environmental protection agencies, urban planning departments, and infrastructure development departments for project approvals and compliance enforcement.

Cybersecurity Concerns

Government agencies manage countless sources of personally identifiable, financial, and health information, all extremely valuable forms of data to cyber criminals. In fact:

- ✓ In 2023, cyberattacks on public services and government agencies increased by 40%¹
- ✓ Ransomware attacks on government agencies are expected to face a 300% increase by the end of 2024²

This places cybersecurity at a crucial level of importance for public agencies looking to protect citizen data and maintain public trust.

1. www.cbiz.com/insights/articles/article-details/cybersecurity-outlook-risks-and-trends-for-the-public-sector#:~:text=Cyberattacks%20against%20government%20agencies%20and,million%2C%20excluding%20any%20ransom%20payments.

2. www.gdpr.eu

Compliance Management

Government organizations are subject to a wide range of compliance mandates related to data privacy and record retention.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires all organizations handling personal medical information to follow stringent best practices to maintain the security and privacy of these records.³

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) grants the public the right to request records from any public agency to keep citizens informed about their government.⁴ Requestable records range greatly in mandated retention periods, requiring stringent retention tracking from public agencies.

Complying with these mandates can be time-consuming and complex, and non-compliance can lead to hefty fines, legal liabilities, and a loss of public trust. This makes systems that simplify this compliance incredibly time-efficient and cost-effective tools.

3. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK500019/

4. www.foia.gov

Bottlenecked, Time-Consuming Processes

Countless government processes follow systematic workflows that, while monotonous and time-consuming when done manually, are perfect contenders for automation. These processes include:

- ✓ Document requests, transfers, and approvals
- ✓ Permit and License Applications
- ✓ Retention Schedule Management
- ✓ Contract creation, negotiation, and renewal

By streamlining these processes, agencies can improve efficiency, enhance transparency with faster responses, and better serve the public.



Benefits of Intelligent Information Management (IIM) for Government Agencies

Intelligent Information Management (IIM) solutions facilitate the flow of information throughout your public agency, automating processes, providing secure information visibility, and ensuring your data and records meet best practices and compliance standards. With the right IIM solution, your agency will benefit from:

Streamlined Information Management and Accessibility

Public records and information are often distributed across multiple departments, systems, and physical locations, leading to long, time-consuming requests and transfers and, in worst cases, lost or missing documents.

IIM streamlines information access by consolidating data onto a centralized, searchable platform where staff can only access the records they need. This improved accessibility enhances collaboration across departments, allowing for more informed decision-making, faster processes, and response times.

Enhanced Security

Highly secure IIM solutions go beyond industry best practices, offering security features such as at-rest and in-transit encryption, role-based access controls, audit trails, and single tenant sign-in to protect sensitive information from

unauthorized access or cyberattacks. These systems also provide real-time monitoring and threat detection, allowing agencies to mitigate risks before they escalate.

Improved Compliance and Information Governance

Ensuring compliance with established standards and regulations is effortless with IIM. By automating document classification, retention schedules, and audit logs, IIM solutions ensure that documents are retained according to regulation and can be easily retrieved for audits or public requests. Additionally, automated workflows help agencies maintain up-to-date records, reducing non-compliance risk and associated penalties.

Increased Efficiency and Productivity

Manual processes often result in data entry errors, lost records, and bottlenecks that can slow down public operations. IIM automates these repetitive tasks for seamless form completions, approval processes, record management, and more, freeing up staff to focus on bigger-picture tasks.

Key Features of an Intelligent Information Management Platform for Government

With vast amounts of sensitive and mission-critical data to manage, government agencies must focus on features that enhance efficiency, security, and accessibility. With the ability to securely and effortlessly manage and process information across locations and departments, these agencies can enhance collaboration and productivity without sacrificing best practices.

Centralized Information Management

Secure Record Management: Intelligent Information platforms with the right tools and functionality provide a secure repository for government records of all kinds, safeguarding them against unauthorized access and data breaches. Look for IIM solutions with encryption, single sign-on, security compliance certificates, and audit trails to ensure your data will be safe.

Access Controls and Permissions: Intelligent information management solutions offering robust access controls and permissions can help maintain information privacy compliance while limiting the scope of breaches. By permitting information access to only those who need it for their roles, government agencies can ensure those with access to regulated information are properly trained on how to safeguard it.

Cross-Departmental Access: To facilitate seamless collaboration, well-structured IIM systems facilitate information

sharing across departments through tools like workflows, secure, time-sensitive links, and shared repositories for effortless searches.

Public Portals: IIM solutions with public portal functionality encourage self-service by providing citizens with simple documents and forms to access. These portals also help enhance transparency and improve public engagement with government processes.

Data Capture Options

AI and Templated OCR: IIM solutions that offer multiple options for leveraging information on paper documents allow your agency to work accurately and efficiently in any scenario. Unstructured capture using AI, for example, is highly accurate, with few to no updates needed during document format changes. While more prone to errors and necessary updates, Templated OCR is more widely applicable, especially to documents with complex index fields.

Web Forms: Using an IIM solution with web forms allows information to be gathered digitally from the start, removing the need for document capture across many processes. Using web forms, government agencies can efficiently complete internal processes using workflow-guided prompts and collect data directly from the public in a structured format, aiding in faster and more accurate analysis.

Automation of Routine Tasks

Workflow Automation: Automated workflows simplify processes, reducing costs and saving time for other value-generating activities. Document approvals, reviews, and other routine tasks greatly benefit from this functionality, eliminating bottlenecks and improving efficiency.

Advanced Search Capabilities

Full-text Search An effective IIM system offers advanced search capabilities, enabling quick document searches using full-text search and metadata tags. This feature is crucial for quick information retrieval and efficient government archives management.

Multi-Layered Index Searching: The ability to quickly retrieve specific files using narrow searches is essential for responsive government operations as these agencies often have large volumes of documents with shared index values. Advanced search capabilities ensure government workers can access these documents promptly by filtering them through additional search queries.

Data Security and Compliance

Encryption, Audit Trails, and Permissions: Data security is paramount for government agencies as they are frequently the targets of breaches looking for valuable information and ransomware attacks aiming to shut down operations. An IIM system with strong encryption, comprehensive audit trails, and secure access protocols ensures your agency's protection methods exceed security best practices for liability protection and peace of mind.

Meeting Regulatory Requirements (e.g., HIPAA, GDPR):

Compliance with regulatory requirements is a non-negotiable aspect of government operations, and countless state and federal regulations protect personally identifiable (PII), financial (PFI), and medical (PMI) information, all of which is frequently managed by government agencies. PII, such as social security numbers and state identification, for example, are managed by nearly all government agencies, while medical and financial data may be managed by state benefit providers for disability services, public healthcare, etc.

An IIM system designed to comply with regulations like HIPAA³ in the U.S. or GDPR³ in Europe is essential for lawful and ethical data management.

Choosing the right IIM solution equips government agencies with the tools to manage information securely and efficiently, ensuring they meet the high standards required for public administration.

Best Practices for Using an IIM Platform in Government

Implementing an Intelligent Information Management (IIM) platform in government agencies requires adherence to best practices to ensure the system's effectiveness and adherence to regulations and best practices. Here's a comprehensive look at these practices:

Ensuring Data Accuracy and Integrity

Regular Audits and Checks for Data Consistency: Regularly scheduled audits are critical for maintaining data accuracy and integrity within a government IIM system. These checks help identify and correct any inconsistencies or errors in the data, ensuring that all information is up-to-date and accurate.

Leveraging AI, Validation Tools, and Manual Checks for OCR: Tools like validation workflows and Artificial Intelligence (AI) significantly enhance data accuracy through improved character recognition and error detection. AI document capture, in particular, can boast near-100% accuracy, allowing staff to focus on catching the few remaining errors. That being said, manual validation from staff should always be part of maintaining entirely accurate information.



Integrating with Existing Systems

API and Back-End Integrations for ERP, CRM, etc.: Effective integration with existing Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems is a crucial component of eliminating data silos and enhancing cross-department collaboration. Using API integrations, an IIM platform can seamlessly connect with these and other software systems with minimal disruptions, time, and costs during implementation. Back-end integrations are less preferred due to their complexity. However, if current solutions that would benefit from integration lack an API, looking for a solution provider with experience integrating with that solution can help avoid roadblocks and ensure a smooth implementation.

Syncing with Legacy Systems: Many government agencies operate with legacy systems that hold valuable historical data. Ensuring that an IIM system can sync with these systems without data loss or corruption is crucial for a unified approach to information management. Look for IIM providers with experience working with these systems and a technical infrastructure that is flexible enough to support this legacy software.

Managing Access and Permissions

Role-Based Access Control (RBAC): Role-based access control is fundamental for managing who can view or edit specific data within the IIM system. RBAC helps minimize the risk of breaches and ensures that individuals only have access to the information necessary for their roles.

Monitoring and Managing Document Access: Continuous monitoring of document access and usage helps identify unusual activities or potential breaches. It also ensures that document handling within your agency complies with prescribed policies and regulations. Audit trails are a highly effective monitoring tool, providing intuitive insights into your solution's activity.

Keeping Up with Regulatory Changes

Continuous Updates to Meet New Legal Standards: Regulatory landscapes, especially in government, continually evolve. An IIM platform must be capable of receiving updates to ensure compliance with new and existing legal standards. This adaptability is vital for avoiding legal pitfalls and maintaining the trust of the public and other agencies.

Automating Compliance Reporting: Automating the generation of compliance reports can significantly reduce the workload of government employees and ensure the timely submission of necessary documentation to regulatory bodies. This automation also helps maintain a clear audit trail, which is invaluable during compliance reviews and audits.

By following these best practices, government agencies can maximize the benefits of their IIM platforms, ensuring that their data management processes are secure, efficient, and compliant with all regulatory requirements. This strategic approach enhances internal operations and boosts public trust in governmental data handling and decision-making processes.

Managing Change

Change is conflicting for most people, and it can be difficult for people who have worked one way for decades to adopt a new approach. Despite this, there are a few key ways to help your manufacturing plant embrace change and take advantage of the newfound benefits.

- ✓ **Help Your Staff Feel Vested:** Involve them in the solution selection process. Hear their concerns and input and explain the factors that led to the final decision. This will help ease concerns about the suddenness of the change and show them that you are working with their best interests in mind.
- ✓ **Assign Someone to Manage The Transition:** A primary point of contact for any questions or concerns can help ensure a smooth transition and act as a liaison between your staff and your solution provider for additional assistance.
- ✓ **Provide Tools For Success:** Solution education, customer support, and self-help resources such as a knowledge base all ensure your solution kicks off without a hitch and your workforce can hit the ground running.



Implementation Strategies For IIM Solutions

Successfully implementing an Intelligent Information Management (IIM) platform for use in government involves an overarching understanding of your agency's needs, goals, and processes. This will ensure the solution's structure and functionality provide value in the ways most beneficial to your agency. Here's a detailed breakdown of the steps involved in a practical implementation strategy:

Assessing Government Needs

Identifying Departments and Processes That Will Benefit:

The first step towards implementation is to uncover the processes and departments that will benefit most from an IIM platform. This involves evaluating current inefficiencies, such as heavy data entry, inadequate information access, or slow and bottlenecked processes.

Understanding Document Types and Workflows:

Each department may handle different types of documents and follow unique workflows. Departments that handle contracts, for example, will likely benefit from features like full-text search and workflows around contract drafting and approval. At the same time, accounts payable workers managing invoices will find financial integrations and approval workflows key components of their IIM strategy. Understanding these elements is crucial to ensure the IIM platform can provide a significant return on investment.

Selecting the Right Platform

Evaluating Based on Security, Usability, Scalability:

Selecting an IIM platform that will provide strong and sustained value requires careful evaluation of several critical factors:

- ✓ **Security:** The platform must offer robust security features to protect sensitive government data.
- ✓ **Usability:** A user-friendly solution ensures fast and widespread adoption across all levels of government, ensuring the solution's benefits are quickly noticed and utilized.
- ✓ **Scalability:** The platform must be scalable to accommodate growing volumes of information and expanding needs across new departments and processes. A reliable IIM solution can accommodate these needs cost-effectively.

Comparing Features of IIM Solutions in Government:

It is also beneficial to compare the features of competitive IIM platforms in your industry and view case studies and references to see which functionality your peers find most important.

Customizing the Platform for Government Use

Adapting Workflows to Specific Government Processes:

Customization of the IIM platform to fit specific government processes is vital. This might involve adapting the platform's workflow capabilities to mirror existing procedures or creating new, more efficient workflows.

Custom Configurations for Compliance Requirements:

Since government agencies must adhere to numerous compliance standards, the IIM platform should be configured to comply with these regulations automatically. This includes managing data retention policies, ensuring proper audit trails, and embedding necessary security protocols.



Case Studies

Floyd County Clerk

As a government entity, Floyd County handles all real estate deductions, property transfers, tax sales, and much more. Responsible for maintaining the public records of the county as required by Indiana State Statutes. However, with an outdated document management system that was anything but user-friendly, tasks became more time-consuming, and collaboration was made difficult, leaving the Clerk's Office struggling to locate the data they needed to provide top-notch customer service.

When the Real Estate Auditor's Office and the Clerk's Office began implementing a modern intelligent information management solution from Square 9, increased automation significantly streamlined processes. Balancing bills was no longer necessary; deductions and duplicate files could be found by simply searching a name, and one person could complete the administrative quarterly work for all 1,000 sewer lines in the county within a couple of days. In addition, taxpayer savings have increased, over 25% of office paperwork has been eliminated, and Floyd County was able to hire a part-time employee instead of filling the vacant full-time position, saving them around \$18,000 annually.



"GlobalSearch has made daily work much easier for us. Not only have we eliminated stacks of boxes, but now, when we receive the 1,000 lines every quarter, one person can pull and match all the information they need within a few days. Plus, with importing, there's no balancing and no human data entry errors to worry about."

- Amanda Pahmeier

First Deputy Auditor for Floyd County Clerk



Snyder County Courthouse

Located in Middleburg, Pennsylvania, the Snyder County Courthouse is the local court of law focused on the community's well-being and the justice system's regulations. With over 40,500 residents, the Snyder County Probation Department is a fast-paced unit managing a high volume of information.

With a large base of clients, the office staff grew accustomed to using their scanning system on a daily basis for several hours each day. However, as the flow of paperwork continued to grow, their scanning solution proved faulty, causing unnecessary errors when processing paperwork.

However, with an intelligent information management solution from Square 9 implemented across the Probation Department, employees have gained complete control over this information. With automated retention schedules for probation records and bulk updates for all documentation related to an individual, Snyder County Courthouse has increased organization, productivity, and efficiency.



"GlobalSearch has made a huge impact on our Probation Department. The software works great! GlobalSearch is extremely customizable, so virtually anything you could need can be done."

- Angela Franquet

Office Administrator, Snyder County Probation Department





square9
Taking the Paper Out of Work

How Square 9 Can Help

Square 9 is an industry trailblazer in intelligent information management, taking the paper out of work and ensuring a productive, hindrance-free environment where information can flow. Easy to learn, highly supported, and backed by world-class service and extensive education. Square 9 solutions are designed to help you take your organization to the next level.

Square 9's government solutions provide secure information access throughout your organization for increased efficiency, compliance, and information access.

Contact Square 9 for a no-obligation discovery session and see how transforming your government agency can lead to a more efficient, secure, and informed agency.

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