

## **Pennsylvania's State Records Center Proactive with Inactive Records**

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania knows about the importance of preserving government documents; some of the most significant documents in Pennsylvania History are the royal [Charter](#) from King Charles II

establishing Pennsylvania on March 4, 1681, William Penn's [First Frame of Government](#) May 5, 1682, and the [1776 Constitution of Pennsylvania](#) which responded to the call for new colonial governments. These documents are still in existence in the Pennsylvania State Archives more than 300 years later



### **THE SITUATION:**

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, in conjunction with the Office of Administration, is responsible for administering all aspects of the Commonwealth's records management program. Through its Bureau of Archives and History (BAH), the Commission operates the State Records Center for all 65 Executive Branch agencies. The Records Center's mandate is to manage inactive government records, for set periods of time, according to retention schedules.

The State Records Center provides free of charge off-site storage to state agencies. Agencies send their inactive files to the Records Center, which retains the files for a designated period according to detailed retention schedules. At the end of the inactive retention period the Records Center acts in accordance to the retention schedule's final disposition and returns the records to the agency, destroys them, or sends them to the State Archives if they have lasting archival or historical importance.

Managing millions of inactive records is challenging. Different records from different agencies need to be retained for different periods of time. Many state and federal statutes affect how long inactive records must be retained. Although the Records Center stores the inactive records, the records remain the property of the various state agencies. Thus the Records Center must be able to quickly and accurately retrieve any file that may be requested by an agency.

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**Linda Avetta,  
BAH Project  
Manager**

It was clear that better approaches to managing the inactive records were needed to serve the agencies. An outdated commercial records management system was proving to be inadequate because of endless patches, bug fixes, and crashes upon upgrading. These problems were compounded by the **vendor's lack of technical support.**

Linda Avetta, BAH Project Manager for electronic archives and records management, and her team went looking for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century solution to records management—one that would facilitate all agency interaction via the web and could handle a large volume of inactive records quickly and accurately.

#### **THE SOLUTION:**

After issuing a detailed request for proposal and evaluating the responses, the winning bid was clear—OmniRIM® Solutions Inc. and its Web-based records management solution.

The Bureau of Archives and History purchased **OmniRIM's Enterprise Web Edition**, which is specifically designed to meet the needs of larger, more complex businesses. OmniRIM® Enterprise Web Edition allows a client to simplify and standardize their most complex records management processes easily through a single Web-based solution. OmniRIM® can be rapidly deployed across multiple departments and divisions without requiring software to be installed on each workstation.

OmniRIM® was selected for the following key reasons:

- The Web-based nature of the software with its inherent cost savings and easy-of- use benefits
- The robust nature of the software and its ability to handle limitless numbers of records accurately
- The ability to allow Records Coordinators in the various state agencies to run Web-based queries on the records being held in the Records Center
- The ability to allow Records Coordinator's and agency authorized personnel to request retrieval of records stored at the Records Center
- **OmniRIM's superior** technical support and personalized attention to detail

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**Steve Musser,  
State Records  
Center Manager**

## **THE RESULT:**

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's **Records Center** now has a superior Web-based system that allows it to manage its inactive records online. Records coordinators and agency authorized personnel throughout the state can quickly and accurately request files from the Records Center via the Internet. This reduces the need for Records coordinators and agency authorized personnel to telephone, fax, or email the Records Center when they need to review inactive records.

OmniRIM's system has brought the following tangible benefits:

**Increased organizational efficiency**—Searching and requesting inactive documents are a mouse click away.

**Reduced transaction times**—Shorter request times mean quicker response times by the Records Center staff. Records Center staff can now concentrate on fulfilling the requests with less distraction from processing paperwork.

**Cost savings**—OmniRIM® is reducing the amount of staff time spent processing email, telephone calls, and faxes. State agencies will spend less on long-distance telephone and fax charges. These savings will allow both the Records Center and the agencies to divert more financial and human resources to needed projects.

**Increased regulatory compliance**—Failure to manage inactive documents correctly could expose state agencies to regulatory and liability consequences. OmniRIM® allows the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to destroy unneeded records on schedule and also ensure that important records will not be inadvertently destroyed. In addition, the software maintains an audit trail to track all aspects of the file destruction.

Government officials know that state agencies follow the proper retention and disposal schedules for inactive records, in accordance with state, local, and federal requirements. When records that are no longer needed are destroyed according to a set schedule and as part of an ongoing procedure, the state reduces its liability exposure.

## **The OmniRIM® Advantage**

Linda Avetta notes that OmniRIM's **Web**-based software has many more features than the previous records management software they were using. In addition she says, "OmniRIM® had a clear idea of what we were facing, what we needed, and where we wanted to go with our records management responsibilities, initially within the State Records Center."

OmniRIM® gets high marks for its technical support as well, according to Steve Musser, State Records Center Manager. "The **support team** at OmniRIM® has been tremendous. They are professional and address issues and implement solutions quickly."