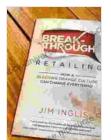
Records Management: A Comprehensive Guide by Jim Inglis

Records management is the systematic control of an organization's records throughout their lifecycle, from creation to disposition. It ensures that records are created, maintained, and disposed of in a way that meets the organization's legal, regulatory, and business needs.

The history of records management can be traced back to ancient civilizations, when scribes and other officials were responsible for maintaining and organizing government records. In the Middle Ages, monasteries and universities began to develop systems for managing their records.

The modern era of records management began in the 19th century, as businesses and governments began to grow in size and complexity. The Industrial Revolution led to a proliferation of paper records, and businesses began to realize the need for efficient ways to manage them.



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In the early 20th century, the development of new technologies, such as the typewriter and the telephone, led to a further increase in the volume of records. Businesses began to adopt new methods of records management, such as filing systems and microfilm.

After World War II, the development of computers and other electronic technologies revolutionized records management. Businesses began to store records electronically, and new software programs were developed to help manage electronic records.

Today, records management is an essential part of any organization's operations. It helps organizations to meet their legal, regulatory, and business needs, and it can also help to improve efficiency and productivity.

There are many benefits to records management, including:

- Legal compliance: Records management can help organizations to comply with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Risk management: Records management can help organizations to identify and mitigate risks.
- Increased efficiency: Records management can help organizations to streamline their operations and improve productivity.
- Improved decision-making: Records management can help organizations to make better decisions by providing them with access to the information they need.
- Enhanced customer service: Records management can help organizations to improve customer service by providing them with

access to the information they need to resolve customer issues quickly and efficiently.

There are a number of best practices that organizations can follow to improve their records management programs. These best practices include:

- Develop a records management policy: A records management policy should define the organization's records management goals, objectives, and procedures.
- Identify and classify records: Organizations should identify and classify their records according to their business value and legal requirements.
- Establish a records retention schedule: A records retention schedule should specify how long records should be kept.
- Store records securely: Records should be stored securely to protect them from unauthorized access and destruction.
- Dispose of records properly: Records should be disposed of properly according to their retention schedule.

Records management is an essential part of any organization's operations. It can help organizations to meet their legal, regulatory, and business needs, and it can also help to improve efficiency and productivity. By following the best practices outlined in this article, organizations can implement effective records management programs that will benefit them for years to come.

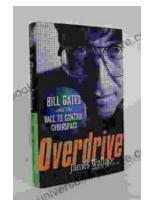
Jim Inglis is a records management consultant with over 20 years of experience. He has helped organizations of all sizes to implement effective records management programs. Jim is a member of the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA) and the International Records Management Council (IRMC).



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