Electronic Records: Challenges Overcome, and Issues to Come

Andrew Waugh
Digital Records Technical Advisor
Public Record Office Victoria, Australia
Andrew.Waugh@prov.vic.gov.au

ABSTRACT

Digital record keeping is a journey that we have started, but cannot yet see the end. The Public Record Office Victoria has been on its digital record keeping journey since the late 1990s. We released the first version of the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy in 1999, updated it in 2004, and released a new version in 2015. We have had operated a digital archive since 2004 and are currently replacing it with a new system. Above all, we have been assisting Victorian agencies with their digital record keeping problems. In our journey we have come sufficiently far that we do not see digital record keeping as a technical problem; we are confident in our ability to preserve and provide access to digital records. However, completing one section of the journey opens up more challenges. At PROV, we have come to realise that technology is not currently the key problem of digital record keeping. Instead, the challenge now for us is to reimagine how digital records are created and how they are managed within agencies. Using email as an example, I will explore why this is so, and explore what this change in thinking could mean. We cannot yet see the end of our journey - we do not yet have solutions or answers to all our questions - but we think that we can see the next direction our journey must take us.