

Cutting the Cost of Long Term Tape Archives

A Solution for Eliminating Unnecessary Tape Storage

by Thomas Bookwalter, CEO FMDC

Changes in regulations and business best practices are causing long-term storage requirements and costs to skyrocket. ACS has developed a solution that can reduce long term storage costs and requirements by as much as 70-90%; sometimes even more.

Companies commonly use disaster recovery tapes to meet their long-term storage requirements. It is easy and seemingly convenient. It is also costly. By approaching a company's long-term storage requirements from a different perspective, companies can save thousands and sometimes millions of dollars in unnecessary storage costs.

Disaster Recovery Tapes Have Limited Value

Disaster Recovery tapes are designed to address a specific problem. They store information in a manner that optimizes the time required to back up or restore an operating environment or an application. The restore value of these tapes has a limited horizon. There is a point back in time when the data on the disaster recovery tapes is not current enough to recover the business. That point in time is the Business Recovery Threshold (BRT). The tapes may restore the data perfectly but the data is too old to recover the business. For some companies, this is only a few days or weeks. For others it is a few months.

Beyond the BRT, disaster recovery tapes have no disaster recovery value.

Long-Term Tape Retention

So why keep those tapes beyond the BRT. If they have no Disaster Recovery value, why not save the money and just get rid of them. The answer is that companies try to use their disaster recovery tapes to meet their business and regulatory retention requirements. Choosing this approach substantially increases the amount of storage required and subsequently the cost of archiving.

The Difference Between Disaster Recovery and Archive Retrieval

Disaster Recovery tapes are designed to restore complete systems. They contain images of an entire environment. They are not selective. They are tuned for storage efficiency. They are designed for reliability, completeness, accuracy and speed of recovery. They are not designed for record level retrieval. Yet, record level retrieval is exactly what is needed of the data in the archive. The archive exists to facilitate timely access to individual records. Companies use the archive to review activities internally to protect themselves from fraud. Companies use the archive in litigation to respond to court ordered discovery or to assemble a defense. Companies use the archive to respond to regulatory inquiry. In every case, if disaster recovery tapes are the source of the data, then the cost of access and retrieval is higher; often much higher.

The Inherent Inefficiency of Periodic Disaster Recovery Storage

Disaster Recovery storage keeps system images. As time progresses, it makes repeated copies of the same data plus any new data that has been added. For every year of storage in the archive there is an average of six copies of the data. In five years, there are 30 copies. All those copies are stored on tapes in archives that are paid for every month. As the tape count mounts, the storage costs mount. At tape refresh cycles, the costs are staggering. Further, the management of those tapes becomes increasingly complex. For many companies, deep archive storage is out of control. The costs are growing wildly. The meta-data to access the records is sketchy at best. The cost and difficulty of recovering records is nearly overwhelming.

Intelligent Archiving

ACS has developed solutions that change the way long-term storage is created and managed. The result is drastic reductions in the size of archives and as a result, the costs. For some companies that reduction in storage is more than 90%. All of the savings reduce operational expenses. But in addition to the cost savings there are significant other benefits including:

- Reduced litigation support costs
- Improved litigation support responsiveness
- Better regulatory compliance
- Effective record classification for retention management
- Better privacy protection
- Tamper-proof records for better forensic value

This is a solution that self-funds the improvement of the entire storage approach. The solution not only creates saving in storage but it reduces the resource requirements for managing that storage.

PROTECTING ENTERPRISE VALUE

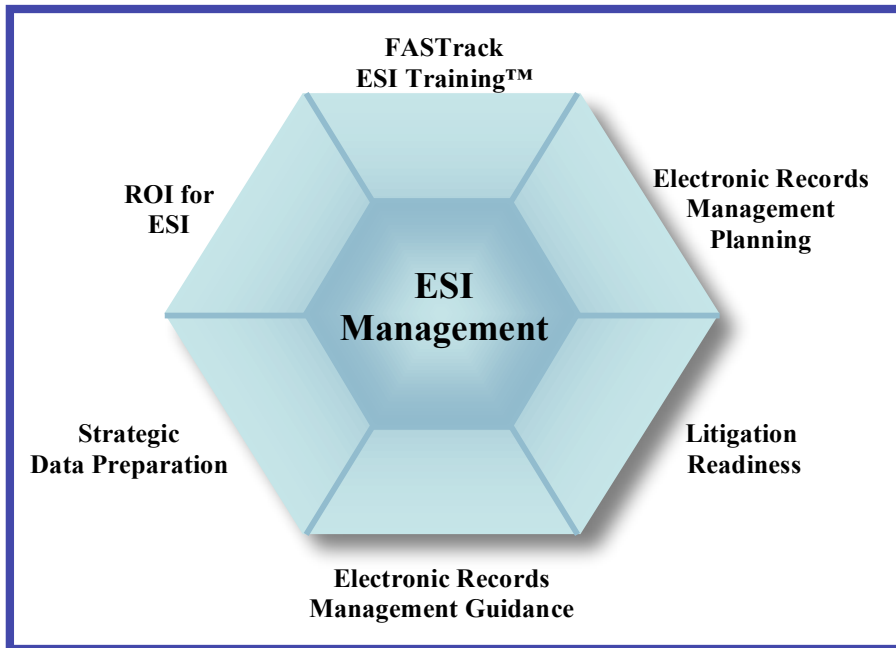
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About FMDC

Founded in 1987, FMDC has focused on the issues relating to the processing and management of information in regulated environments. Since its inception, FMDC has been at the nexus of regulation, industry and information technology. With projects in over twenty countries, FMDC professionals have gained first hand knowledge of the nuances of the different regulatory jurisdictions and how they impact the use of technology. In early 2002, FMDC turned its attention to the issues relating to the handling of e-mail, instant messaging and other records in the context of regulatory requirements and litigation.

The advent of laws and rules such as SEC Rule 17a-4, the Sarbanes Oxley Act, State and Federal privacy legislation, industry standards such as PCIDSS and most recently, court rules or guidelines such as FRCP, CCJ-ED, local federal district rules and the Sedona Conference has changed the standards by which companies must manage their information. FMDC professionals work to guide companies through the morass of regulations to find cost effective solutions for the management of ESI. Our services include:

- FASTrack ESI Training™
- Electronic Records Management Guidance and Policy Development
- Strategic Data Preparation
- Litigation Readiness
- ROI for ESI
- Electronic Records Management Planning



If you are concerned about ensuring that your ESI management meets your business, litigation and regulatory obligations or if you must find ways to reduce the associated costs contact FMDC.

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