

Australian Local Government Records & Information Management Benchmarking Report

October 2016

An independent, comparative assessment of records and information management services in Australian Local Government.

VOTAR PARTNERS
BUSINESS CONSULTING SERVICES



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Executive Summary

Votar Partners were engaged by the Wyndham City Council to benchmark their records and information management service against other Local Governments in Australia. An online survey was conducted during September 2016 to gather data to benchmark records and information management activities, staff and systems, with a particular focus on the handling of incoming mail.

Survey responses were received from 188 organisations across Australia, including Local Governments and Water Authorities in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory.

The most common records and information management services provided to organisations in the benchmarking group are fairly traditional records management focussed services, such as record sentencing and disposal, incoming mail opening and distribution, and secondary storage and retrieval. Other information management services are less common, such as Freedom of Information (FOI), and privacy compliance. There is also a noticeable decrease in the centralised handling of records between this study and the last study in 2014.

Most organisations are using their Electronic Document & Records Management System (EDRMS) to capture electronic documents, emails, and digitised documents. Only a small proportion however are capturing social media records despite their current popularity in Local Government, however this is increasing.

Customised reports are available, allowing you to understand how your organisation compares against your peers as captured in the benchmarking process. The customised report analyses the similarities and differences between your organisation's records and information management service and comparative organisations (in terms of size, volume, system or service profile) from the benchmarking group. This personalised analysis will provide you with an assessment of your current position and importantly identify opportunities for improvement that can assist you to position and achieve business benefits through improved records and information management.

Key Findings

- Outsourcing is fairly uncommon
- Record capture rates are improving
- HP TRIM/RM/ECM is the most commonly used EDRMS
- Level of EDRMS integration has decreased
- Recordkeeping metadata standards are not widely adopted
- 36% still aren't utilising workflows
- 87% are digitising hardcopy incoming mail
- Average time to process an item of incoming mail is 5.7 minutes



1. Background

Votar Partners were engaged by the Wyndham City Council to benchmark their records and information management service against other Local Governments in Australia. An online survey was conducted during September 2016 to gather data to benchmark records and information management activities, staff and systems, with a particular focus on the handling of incoming mail.

Participation in the survey was optional and respondents could choose to remain anonymous. Individual results haven't be disclosed to our client or any other organisation. Anyone who completed the survey and provided a contact email address has been provided with a copy of the de-identified results through this report.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this study were to benchmark the:

- Range of records and information management services being provided
- Volume of incoming mail being received and captured
- Types of electronic document and records management systems being used
- Quantity of metadata being captured for incoming mail
- Level of integration between systems
- Efficiency of service delivery

3. Scope

The scope of this study includes the central provision of records and information management services in Australian Local Governments. It includes the staff, systems and key processes utilised to deliver these services.



4. Benchmarking Group Profile

Survey responses were received from 188 organisations across Australia, including Local Governments and Water Authorities in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory. Most organisations in the benchmarking group have less than 500 staff and operate from 10 or less physical sites. A profile of the organisations that participated in this study is provided in figures one and two below.

Figure 1: Number of Staff

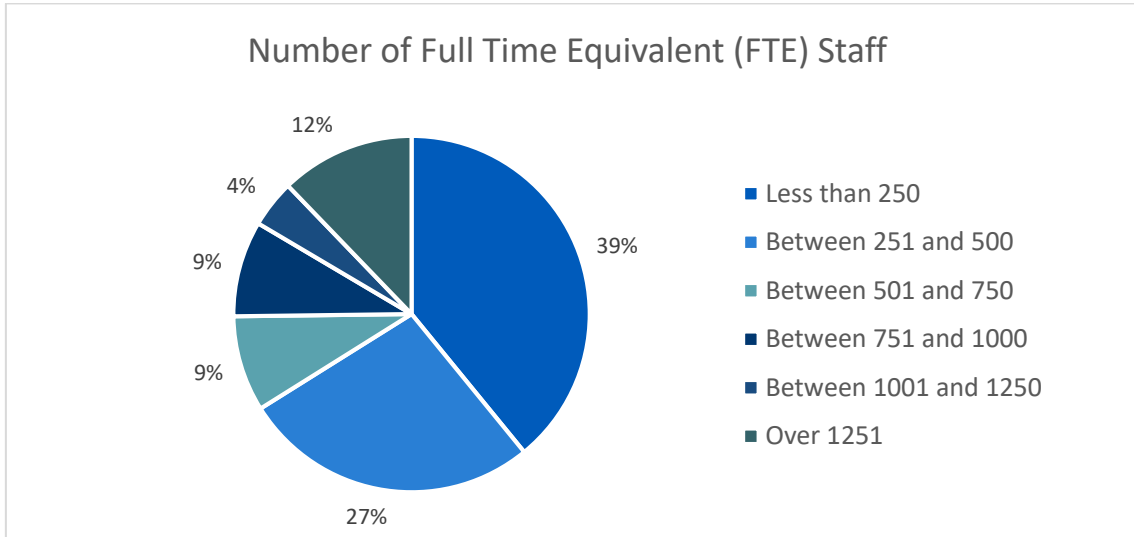
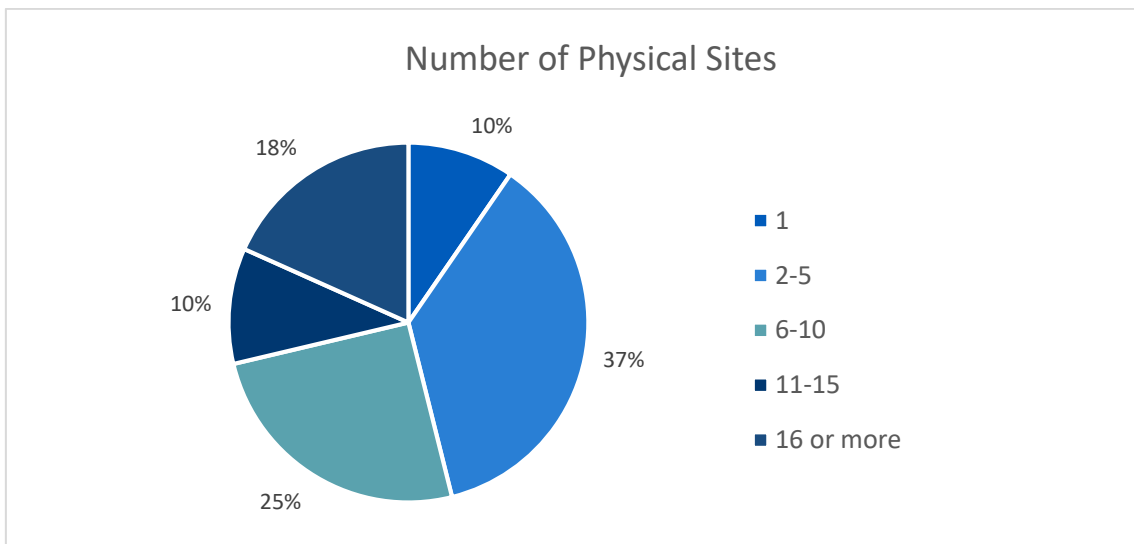


Figure 2: Number of Sites



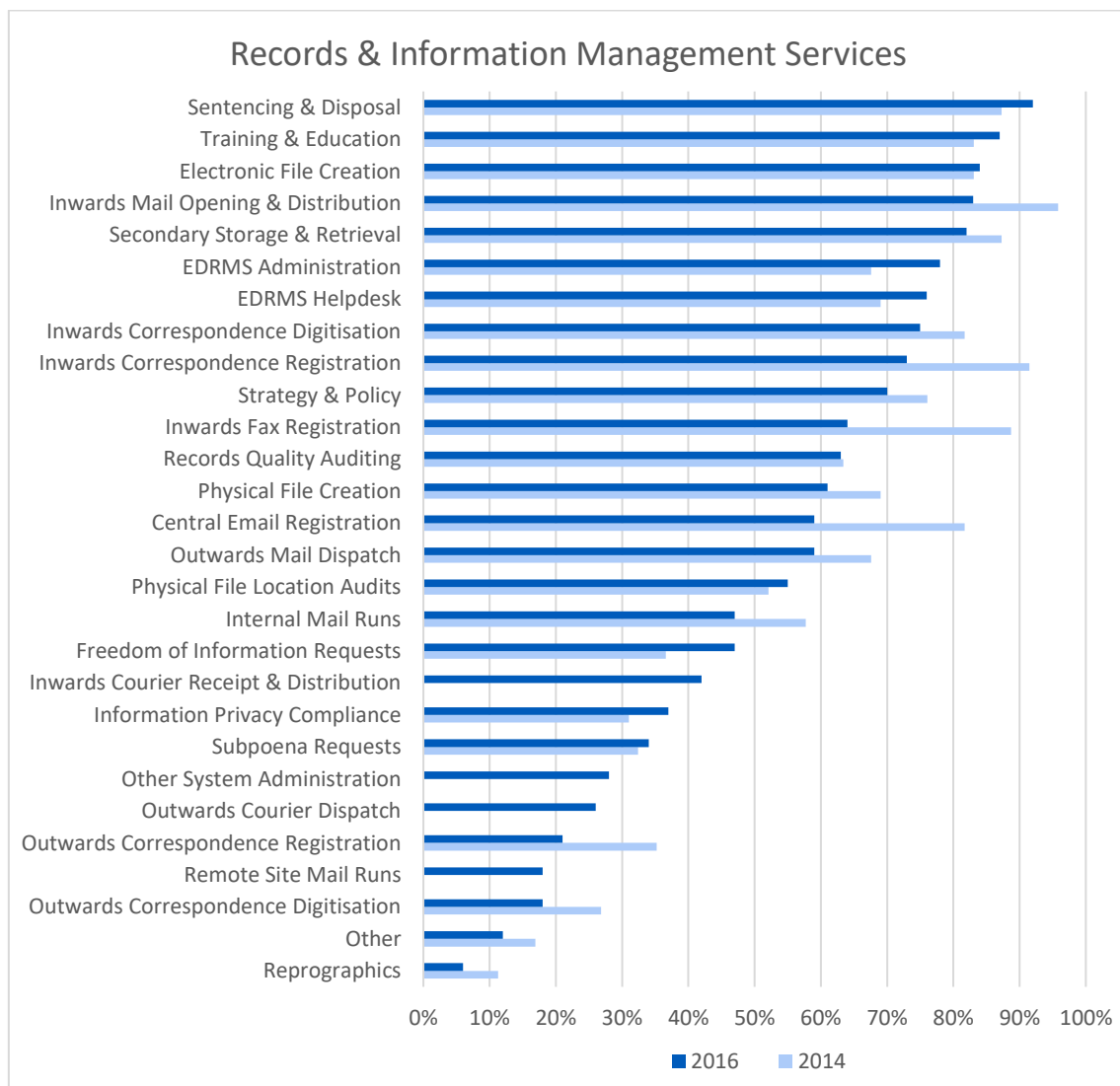


5. Findings

5.1 Services

The most common records and information management services provided to organisations in the benchmarking group are record sentencing and disposal (92%), training and education (87%), electronic file creation (84%), incoming mail opening and distribution (83%), and secondary storage and retrieval (82%). These are all fairly traditional records management focussed services. Other information management services are less common, such as Freedom of Information (47%), privacy compliance (37%), and subpoena requests (34%). There is also a noticeable decrease in the centralised handling of records between this study and the last study in 2014, as shown below.

Figure 3: Records & Information Management Services



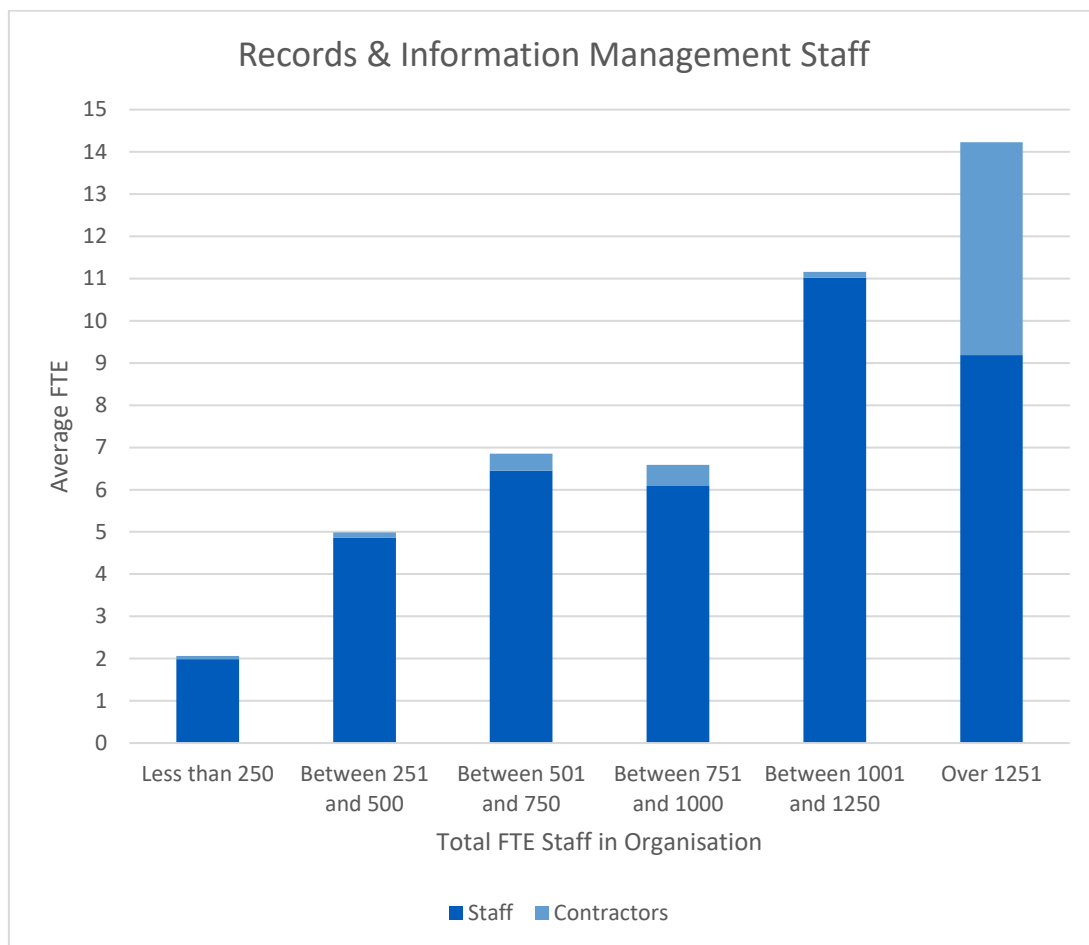
Outsourcing records and information management services to external service providers was not common among the benchmarking group, with 49% not outsourcing any of their services. The most commonly outsourced services are secondary storage and retrieval (33%), remote site mail runs (9%), and outwards mail dispatch (7%).



5.2 Staff

The number of people working in an organisation’s records and information management team varies considerably based on the size of the organisation, the number and type of services provided and the volume of records handled. The average for small organisations (less than 250 FTE staff) was 2.06 FTE, and the average for very large organisations (over 1251 FTE) was 14.23 FTE. The use of contractors by organisations in the benchmarking group appears to be minimal, except for in very large organisations. The average number of records and information management resources in organisations in the benchmarking group is shown in figure four below.

Figure 4: Number of Records & Information Management Staff



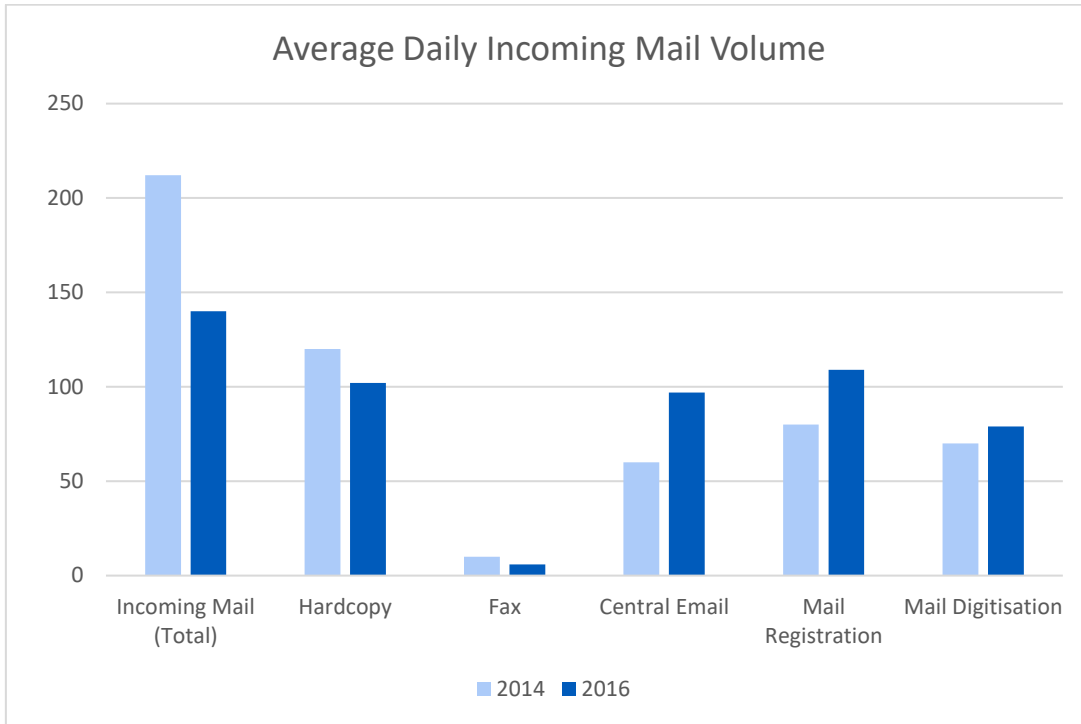
5.3 Transaction Volume

The volume of incoming mail handled by an organisation’s records and information management team also varies considerably based on the size of the organisation and the type of services they provide. The average number of incoming mail items handled is 140 per working day. The average number of items registered into an organisation’s EDRMS is 109 (78% of the total), and the average number digitised is 79 (77% of hardcopy mail), as shown in figure five below. The graph also shows a significant drop in mail volume from when the last study was conducted in 2014, however the volume of central emails has increased and the proportion of mail being digitised and registered



into an EDRMS has also increased. This suggests an improvement in record capture in Local Government as more records are received electronically.

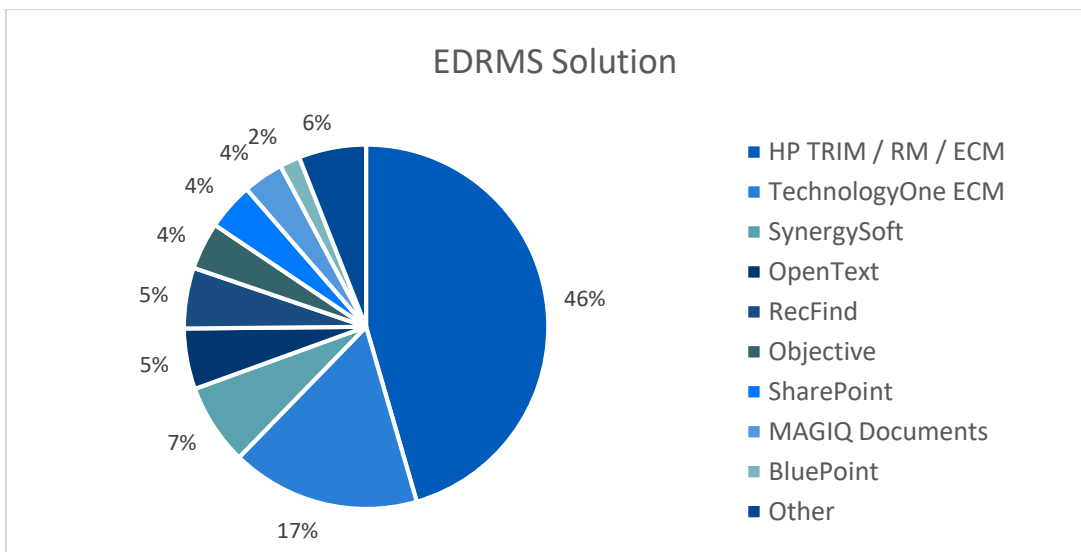
Figure 5: Incoming Mail Volume



5.4 Systems

HP TRIM/RM/ECM was by far the most commonly used Electronic Document & Records Management System (EDRMS) in the benchmarking group (46%). TechnologyOne ECM (17%) and SynergySoft (7%) were the next most commonly used systems, as shown in figure six below. Most systems were installed within the last 10 years (56%) and have been upgraded in the last two years (64%).

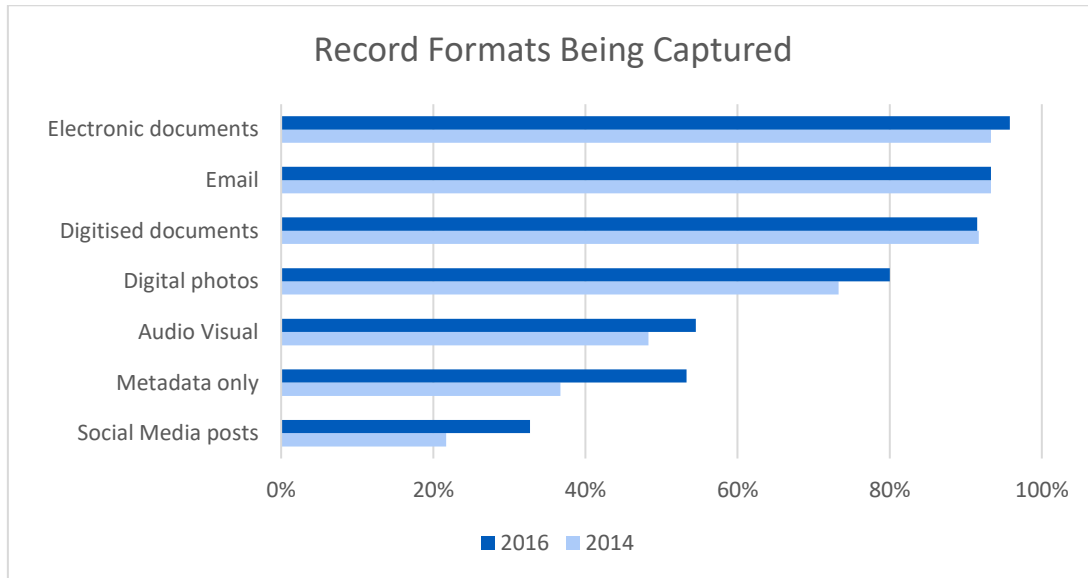
Figure 6: EDRMS Solutions





Despite a range of systems being used, most organisations in the benchmarking group are using their system in a very similar way. Most are using their system to capture electronic documents (96%), emails (93%), and digitised hardcopy documents (92%). While capturing digital photos is fairly common (80%), less organisations are using their system to capture audio visual material (55%), and only a small proportion are capturing social media records (33%) despite their current popularity in Local Government, as shown in figure seven below. It is however good to note that the capture of social media posts has increased significantly since the last study in 2014.

Figure 7: Record Formats Captured

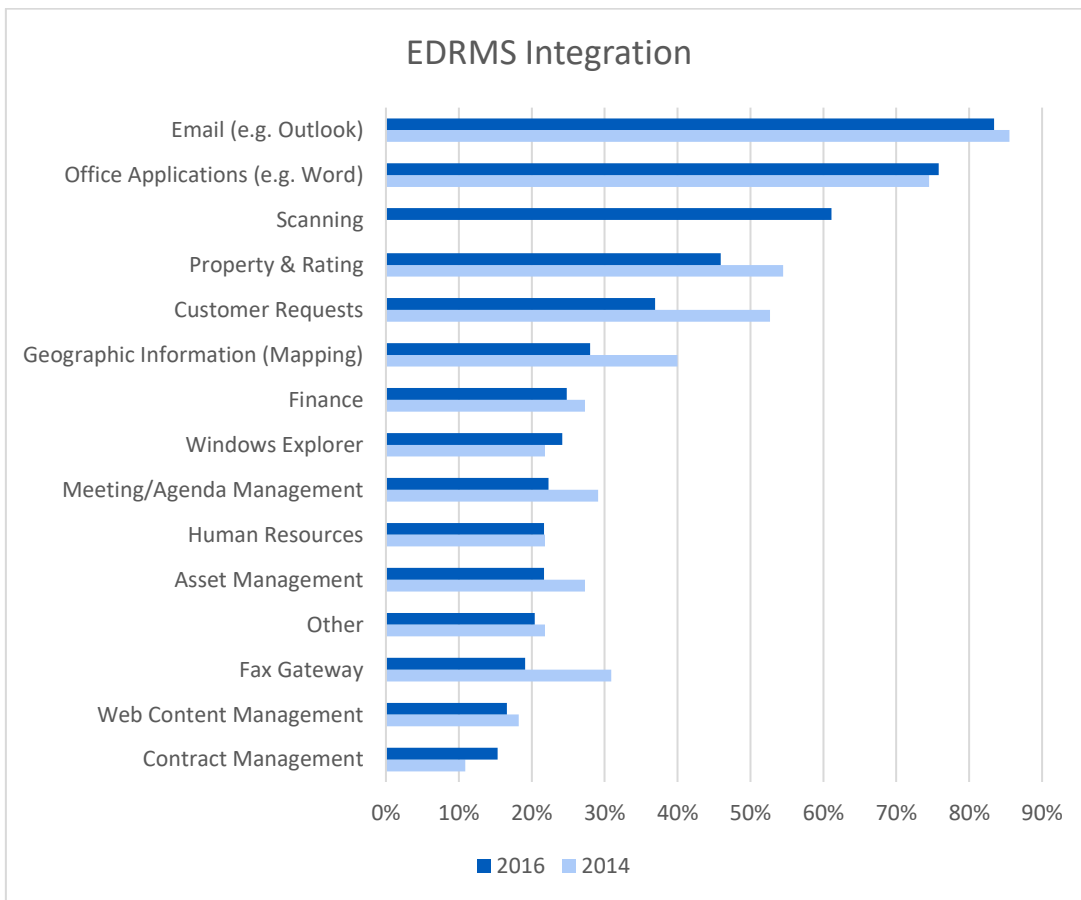




5.5 Integration

Not surprisingly, email (83%) and office applications (76%) are the most common systems for an EDRMS to be integrated with. Integration with other core systems such as Property & Rating (46%), and Customer Requests (37%) is less common. Integration between the EDRMS and other corporate systems is considerably less common as shown in figure eight below. The level of EDRMS integration appears to have decreased for most systems since the last study in 2014. This indicates that EDRMS capabilities are still not being fully utilised to improve the efficiency of record capture and retrieval in Local Government.

Figure 8: EDRMS Integration

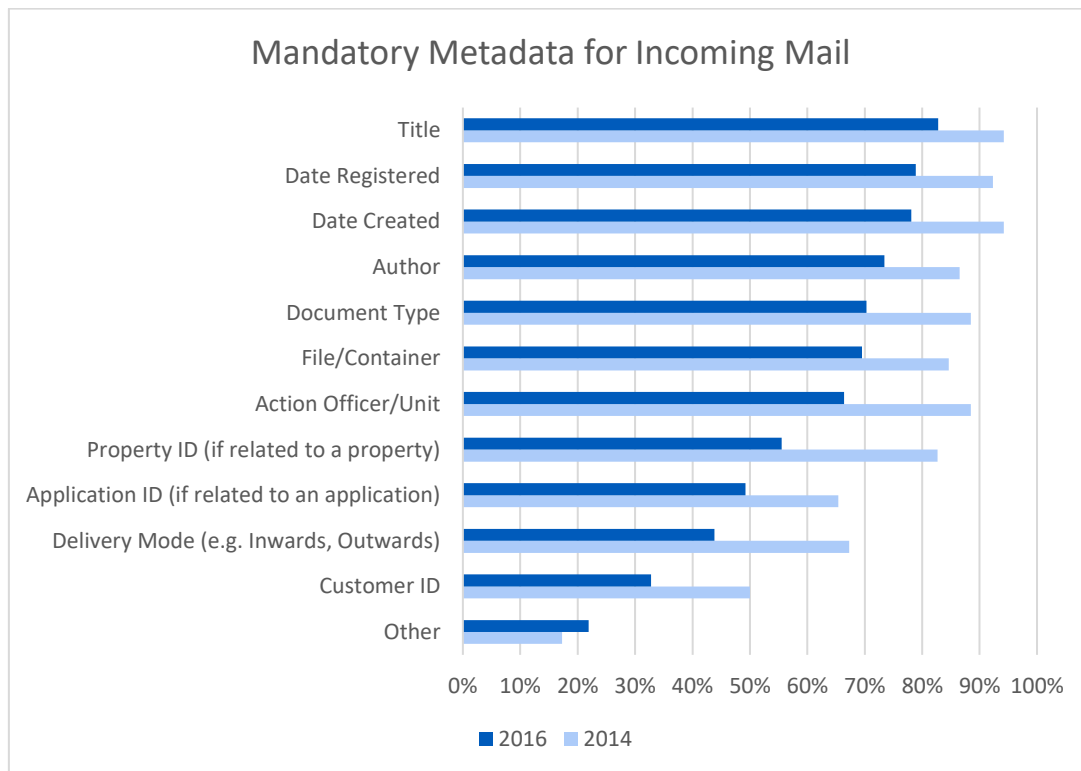




5.6 Metadata

The metadata elements being captured for incoming correspondence by organisations in the benchmarking group is mostly similar. Standard metadata elements such as the title (83%), date registered (79%), date created (78%), author (73%), document type (70%), file (70%) and action officer (66%) are captured by most organisations. Property ID is also being captured by many organisations (56%) if the record relates to a property. Some organisations are also capturing additional metadata elements which are less common, such as delivery mode (44%), application ID (49%) and customer ID (33%) as shown in figure nine below. Although there are similarities in the metadata being captured, the variation still points to a lack of adoption of well-established recordkeeping metadata standards in Local Government. There also appears to be less metadata being captured than when the study was last conducted in 2014.

Figure 9: Mandatory Metadata for Incoming Correspondence



5.7 Workflow

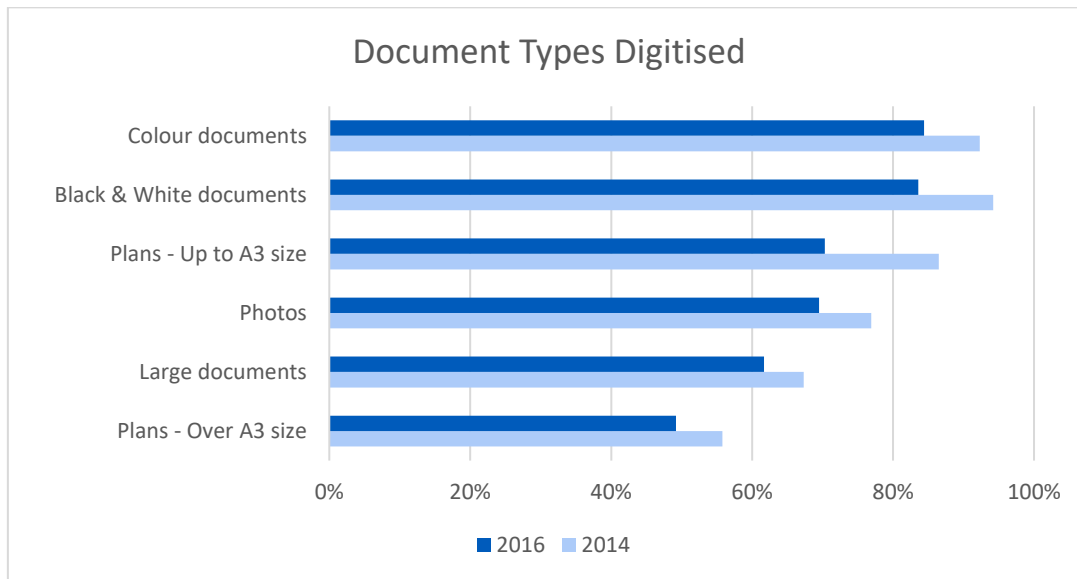
Many organisations in the benchmarking group (64%) are using automated workflow functionality to distribute incoming correspondence to action officers. However 36% of organisations still aren't using workflow technology to improve process efficiency and customer service responsiveness. This is similar to when the study was last conducted in 2014, indicating that there has been no improvement in this area.



5.8 Digitisation

Most organisations (87%) are digitising at least some of their hardcopy, incoming mail. It is very common to digitise both black and white, and colour documents (84%). It is also fairly common to digitise photos and plans up to A3 in size (70%). Plans over A3 in size are less commonly digitised (49%), as are large documents (62%), as shown in figure 10 below. There also appears to be less document types being digitised than when the study was last conducted in 2014, possibly due to more documents now being received electronically.

Figure 10: Document Types Digitised





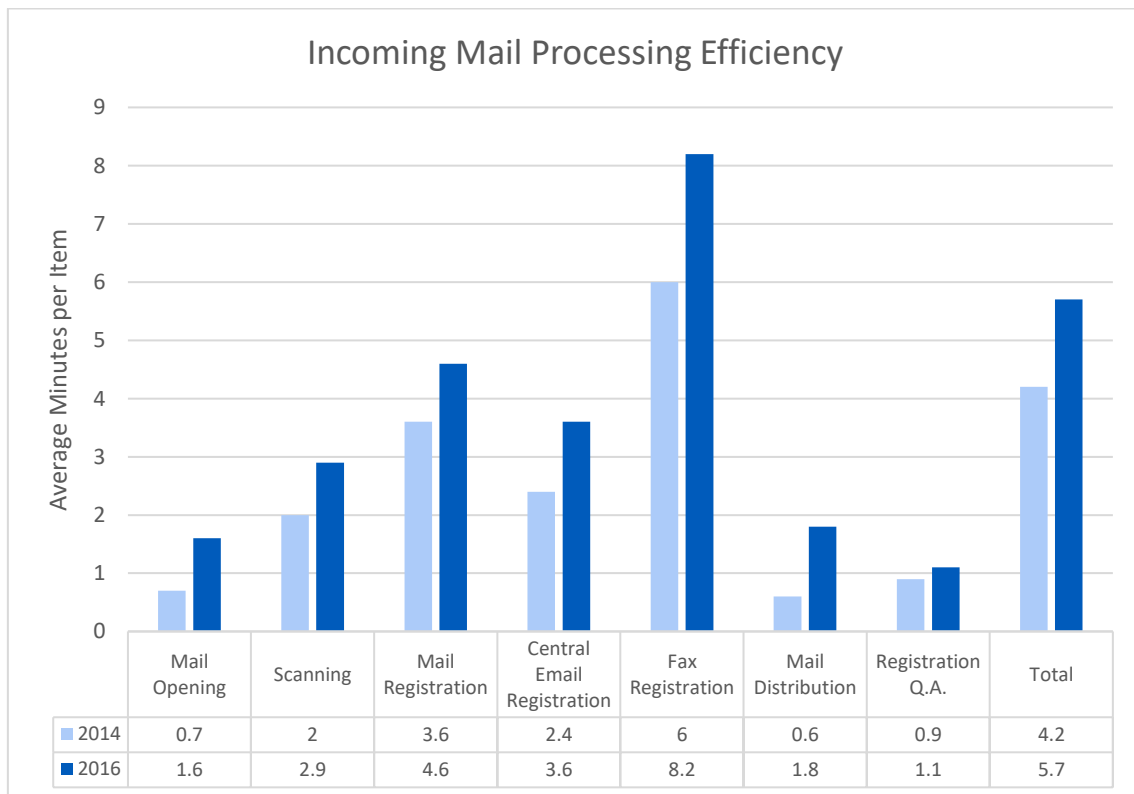
5.9 Efficiency

Benchmarking participants estimated the daily number of person hours being spent by records and information management staff on six key activities related to the processing of incoming mail. The average number of minutes being spent processing an item of incoming mail has been calculated based on the average daily volume of records handled by each organisation in the benchmarking group. The most time consuming activity is registration, with an average time of 4.6 minutes per item of hardcopy mail. Interestingly, central emails are slightly quicker to register (3.6 minutes per item). Faxes are significantly slower to register (8.2 minutes per item), possibly due to low volumes and the need to monitor this channel throughout the day. The next most time consuming activity is scanning, with an average time of 2.9 minutes per item.

There is a significant variation in processing efficiency in the benchmarking group. One organisation processes each item (on average) in less than one minute, where as another takes over 21 minutes per item. The average time to process each item is 5.7 minutes, as shown in figure 10. Interestingly, incoming mail processing efficiency has decreased in all activity areas since the last benchmarking study in 2014.

The results of this study indicates that there are significant opportunities for many Local Governments to streamline the processing of their incoming mail. More sophisticated scanning software can reduce the time spent manually correcting images, and registration can be simplified through system configuration changes and the establishment of clear and consistent business rules and record titling protocols.

Figure 11: Incoming Mail Processing Efficiency (Average Minutes per Item)



Note: Statistical outliers have been excluded to account for survey response errors.



6. Records & Information Management Trends

Records and information management practices are now changing quicker than ever before due to the massive growth in data, increased workforce mobility, social media, email dependence, the emergence of digital natives and stricter compliance requirements. These long-term changes to the way society works are often referred to as 'megatrends'. Key megatrends that are having a major impact on information management include:

Data Growth

90% of the world's data has been created in the past two years. The sheer volume of data now available for analysis is resulting in an explosion of new information being created each day that needs to be captured and managed by organisations.

Mobility

65% of Australians currently have a smart phone. This means that consumers, citizens and staff are increasingly expecting information and services to be delivered directly to their mobile devices.

Social Media

73% of Australians are regularly using social media to engage with their family and friends, and increasingly to interact with companies and governments. Social media is disrupting traditional communication channels such as the telephone and email, creating new digital channels that organisations must monitor and manage.

Email Dependence

55% of 183 billion emails sent each day are business related. Our continued reliance on emails for business communication poses a great challenge for records managers, with most of these records not being captured into official recordkeeping systems for ongoing retention and access.

Compliance

61% non-compliance with recordkeeping standards among organisations that Votar Partners have assessed in the past two years. Across Australia government recordkeeping standards have become more specific and measurable, however most organisations are yet to achieve compliance with mandatory requirements.

Digital Natives

86% of young internet users in the developed world are 'digital natives'. These people are the employees of the future and will come to organisations with high levels of computer literacy and expectations of highly usable and efficient information management systems.



7. More Information

Customised reports are available, allowing you to understand how your organisation compares against your peers as captured in the benchmarking process. The customised report analyses the similarities and differences between your organisation's records and information management service and comparative organisations (in terms of size, volume, system or service profile) from the benchmarking group. This personalised analysis will provide you with an assessment of your current position and importantly identify opportunities for improvement that can assist you to position and achieve business benefits through improved records and information management.

To order your report, or for more information on how you can successfully address the records and information management issues facing your organisation, please contact Mark Williamson via email at markw@votar.com.au or call (03) 9895 9672 or 0425 317 770.