

Case Study Number: 24

System Type: Personnel Electronic Records
Management Information System

Title: PERMIS (Personnel Electronic Records Management Information System)

Institution or Agency: Government of Canada

Unit: Department of National Defence, Human Resources - Military

Case Study Conducted by: Andrew Horrall, Paul Marsden

Duration of Study: November 11, 2000 and January 26, 2001 (Round 3 of Case Studies)

Functional Responsibility of Respondent(s):

1. **System contractor**

Summary of System Information

Business Context: The Personnel Electronic Records Management Information System (PERMIS) is under the responsibility of the Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources - Military), within the Department of National Defence. National Defence is charged with the defence of Canada, including the conduct of operations in Canadian territory and beyond. National Defence has two components: the Department (civilian administration) and the Canadian Forces (CF). PERMIS is an image-based personnel system and the basic tool for storing, accessing and, in some limited cases, creating "career" documents which are needed for managing a serving person's career. The system was first implemented in fall 1997.

The legal requirements affecting the system are: the *National Defence Act*, *Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Forces*, Defence Administration and Orders and Directives, Canadian Forces Medical Orders and a host of other regulations, instructions and determinants of action within the Human Resources Military establishment. The external requirements affect the creation, form, and content of the record, their authentication, and the way they are organized in the following manner: specific records or record types are created within the establishment for specific human resource purposes, in relation to all changes affecting the qualifications, pay, availability, or otherwise affecting the status of the service member documented through the proper form or message. For example, if a Canadian Forces member is promoted, a form is created indicating the promotion, and a record is forwarded to Pay Management to notify the change in pay. The official responsible for the business activity in which the records are created or used is the Director of Human Resources Information (DHRIM), who is responsible for the management of records and information on behalf of the Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources - Military). In the military the office name and the office holder is interchangeable. DHRIM is the office and the individual.

Description:

Form, Content and Requirements: PERMIS holds the collection of documents that form the administrative file of a service member used mainly in the management of careers (e.g. academic reports, recruiting and enrollment forms, promotion messages), and includes unit administrative files of released members and documents of the Supplementary reserve. Records stored on PERMIS are created throughout the chain of command of the Canadian Forces and by officials at the Department of National Defence. Exceptions are proof of academic qualifications, citizenship/marriage/birth certificates and statutory declarations by the service member. These documents are authorized and created by outside juridical bodies and serve to establish the member's credentials.

Paper documents are scanned into the system; in the future, documents will be electronically received and integrated into the system.

Records are used at any point in the human resources management function, by officers or supervisors who require access to a service person's career file in order to make decisions, document changes in service status or to assess or evaluate performance. The system is used both by staff and user clientele. The PERMIS system conforms to ISO 9002 for quality control, and ANSI/AIIM TR 34-1996 and Canadian General Standards Board 72.11-93 (amended April 2000) for imaging. Operation of the PERMIS system conforms to internal business rules that

outline who can access records, who can add or alter information on an individual record, and where and how records are stored. Only the personnel in the PERMIS Cell (a small number of trained operators in DHRIM) can remove or delete records from the system. Normal client users have no filing capability. There are security controls implemented for the electronic system, specifically passwords.

All records are classified according to a classification system, marked for security considerations, maintained according to a records schedule and disposed according to a single records disposition authority. All records of an individual are treated collectively as corporate records. The records in PERMIS are active until the member retires from the Canadian Forces. They are then semi-active for a period of five years, after which they are transferred to a third party (Ottawa Federal Records Centre) for ongoing storage and administration of the files. Ninety years after the birth of the service person the files are transferred to archival custody on a selective retention basis. Retention periods for records in PERMIS are in accordance with National Archives Records Disposition Authority 85/012.

Characteristics and Appearance: Federal bilingualism legislation requires that all standard forms within the government of Canada include both official languages (i.e. English and French). Forms are created in both languages, but information can be written on a record in either official language. PERMIS records are created using standard forms. In some instances there are formulaic or boilerplate phrases, paragraphs and clauses that are used in compiling the record. In order to achieve the purpose for which it is created, the record needs to have a specific appearance. When the record is a Canadian Forces standard form, its appearance is obviously predetermined and its content is completed according to instructions contained in orders and regulations. Seven externally-generated document types are also standard forms which conform to conventions and legal requirements outside the Canadian Forces. Digital watermarks are not used on records in this electronic system. Individual documents are certified in that they are issued under the authority of office holders who are empowered on the basis of their professional training, certification, military rank, or position, i.e. medical doctor, provincial registrar, priest, commanding officer, etc. The electronic system does not support digital signatures. The name of the person who has the formal authority to issue the record is included as part of the content of the record. PERMIS users have the ability to determine who entered a document into the system. It is assumed that the departmental agents who supply the documents to PERMIS are authorized in the capacity of the position they hold. Documents issued from PERMIS through printing, contain a header identifying the account holder who printed the document. If the name is not included in the record, the record includes other indications of the identity of the author, such as title or user account name. The date of compilation (defined as the date the document was loaded into PERMIS, by scanning or by export from another system) is included, as a mandatory element.

Technical Information: The electronic system has been designed to conform to record keeping standards such as the ISO 9000 quality assurance standard. The images are stored in a non-proprietary format (TIFF) that is viewable by many image viewing softwares and allows for the migration of the data outside of the system, as per DoD 5015.2 requirements. A mirror server with RAID5 runs in a separate physical location to guarantee system availability to users. For security/recovery purposes, one copy of the records is stored on-site, while a second copy is kept off-site. In addition to this procedure, the records are also transferred to off-line tapes or disks at periodic intervals for the purpose of ensuring their long-term preservation.

Overview compiled by:
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