

The evaluation of these computerized records is made very difficult and often impossible by the inability of the records manager to inspect and compare magnetic records, and by the regrettable lack of understanding on the part of data-processing personnel of the necessity for documenting the business of the State.

Ideally, the records schedule should operate satisfactorily, regardless of the record form it governs. As a practical matter, the printing out of large master files is difficult to justify, solely to provide a record copy. In addition, the newer magnetic files, unlike paper, can be erased and re-used. This is often an inviting option for the hard-pressed data center operator, especially when the tapes and disc records have served the purpose for which they were created and the magnetic base is needed for more current operations.

This fundamental change in the nature and form of documentation has forced the Records Management staff to devote more of its time than in the past to the matter of records creation. During the year, the Assistant Records Administrator served on the Data Processing Coordination Committee established by the Comptroller of the Treasury to coordinate the development of programs for the divisions within his agency. Thus we had the opportunity to participate in the design and development of a records program for the Gasoline Tax Division of the Comptroller's Office.

Although this Division has a high level of automation, its staff has a strong accounting background and a basic understanding of the necessity for documenting the activities of the Division.

The Chief of the Gasoline Tax Division appointed an informal Records Committee, composed of Mrs. Evelyn Friedel, Systems Analyst, Gasoline Tax Division; Robert Waters, Systems Analyst, Ernst & Ernst; and Connis O. Brown, Jr., Public Records Examiner, Hall of Records. The Committee was charged with developing a records program that would:

1. make existing information more accessible to Gas Tax personnel;
2. provide for multiple copies of specified records for distribution inside and outside the Division;
3. be more compact than the present hard-copy system;
4. provide better locators and identifiers for records stored within and outside the Division;
5. permit the timely disposal of records no longer needed by the Division; and