

Clark's *Encyclopedia of Records Retention*

Frequently Asked Questions

The following is a compilation of questions that we are often asked about Clark's *Encyclopedia of Records Retention* and Intersect Systems' *Retention VR* and *Retention DMR* software, and our response to each. If you need additional information or further details regarding any of the following, please contact us at our e-mail address, newintel@newintel.com, or call us toll-free at (888) 745-4151, or in the Dallas area at (972) 641-7747.

About Clark's *Encyclopedia*

Q: What is the purpose of Clark's *Encyclopedia* and the *Retention VR* and *Retention DMR* software options?

A: Properly managed records are one of a company's most valuable assets. However, many American businesses are justifiably confused about the rules for appropriate retention and disposition of corporate records. Companies often keep too many records, and they keep them too long. But the consequences of erring in the other direction are even more daunting than lost floor space, wasted labor, and misused equipment: premature disposal of records, especially those under litigation, can result in prosecution, heavy fines, even time in prison. A major problem is the lack of suitable retention guidelines. The most authoritative source for records retention, the Code of Federal Regulations published by the Federal Register, applies primarily to the records of government agencies, or to banks, brokerages, and financial institutions; in fact, the majority of the records created by American businesses are not even mentioned in the Federal Register. Another common problem for corporate records managers is inconsistent labeling of records by various departments in an organization. Variations in naming conventions among different departments and divisions, as well as changes in naming conventions over a period of time, can seriously compromise the integrity of a company's records and greatly complicate the process of identifying and locating records when required. Clark's *Encyclopedia* contains 4,000 standard records titles and descriptive information, derived from years of experience in managing company records, that help records managers establish and maintain standard records designations. Clark's *Encyclopedia* also includes suggestions for records retention and disposition for each of the 4,000 records titles, based on company practices that have been researched and documented over a period of years. The two software options, *Retention VR* (*Retention Viewer / Researcher*) and *Retention DMR* (*Retention Developer / Manager / Researcher*), are Windows®-based applications that provide access to the *Encyclopedia* with Find and Query functions for research purposes, and include other features for preparing and maintaining a Records Retention Schedule.

Differences between *Retention VR* and *Retention DMR*

Q: What are the differences between the *Retention VR* and *Retention DMR* software programs?

A: *Retention VR* is primarily a research tool, allowing look-ups with Find and multi-step Query functions. *Retention VR* also provides for limited customization of the information in the *Encyclopedia* for saving descriptive information and references to legal sources that apply to an organization's business for records series titles, and also allows revised retention periods to be entered. *Retention DMR* includes these functions, and adds the ability to create and print schedules and sub-schedules for an organization, making it very easy to create, maintain, and publish a retention schedule. *Retention DMR* includes a convenient editor that allows the user to create additional record series titles, and to edit existing record series titles in the *Encyclopedia*. *Retention DMR* will also export the schedule and sub-schedules produced for interaction with other records management applications, or for publishing on a private intranet or on the Internet. (For more information about the export formats, contact Intersect Systems Inc. at the e-mail address or telephone numbers listed above.)

Printed version of Clark's *Encyclopedia*

Q: Is Clark's available in printed form as in the past?

A: Clark's *Encyclopedia* is no longer published in printed form. While an extensive resource, the printed version, like any encyclopedia, required that the user either know the specific record series title being sought, or manually search the pages in a section according to the record schedule category. The *Retention VR* and *Retention DMR* software allow the user to search on any word or phrase in seconds. In addition, the Query function allows selection and display of all records series that include a specified word or phrase, and the multi-step query capability allows the user to easily "drill down" step-by-step on each query selection.

Availability of CD without *Retention VR* or *Retention DMR*

Q: Is the Clark's *Encyclopedia* available on CD without the *Retention VR* or *Retention DMR* software programs?

A: The *Encyclopedia* is only available with either *Retention VR* or *Retention DMR*.

Compatibility with other software

Q: Is Clark's *Encyclopedia* compatible with other software such as Microsoft® Access® or Excel®, other general-purpose databases or commercial records databases, or other records management systems?

A: *Retention DMR* will export the schedule and sub-schedules produced for use with software such as Access, Excel, or other records management applications, or for publishing on a private intranet or the Internet. (For more information about file export and formats, contact Intersect Systems Inc.) *Retention DMR* also interacts directly with Intersect's RCAMS series of records management applications, providing point-and-click export of the retention schedule into RCAMS. RCAMS then uses the retention schedule when creating records container definitions and assigning retention periods.

Software Updates

Q: Are software updates to Retention VR and Retention DMR available?

A: Software updates for Retention VR and DMR are provided without additional charge during the first year of a license. For the second and additional years, an update program is available for an annual charge.

Citations and Retention Information

Q: Does Clark's Encyclopedia include retention information and references to supporting legal references?

A: Clark's Encyclopedia includes retention suggestions for each of the 4,000 records series titles; these retention suggestions reflect common business practices, and are based on operating, research, historical, and audit / tax requirements. These have been developed collaboratively with attorneys, controllers, auditors, tax specialists, information managers, and executives in corporations and financial institutions of all types and sizes. However, as much as one might wish otherwise, there is no universal retention schedule or set of retention criteria for business records, making it impossible to include citations in a general-purpose resource such as Clark's Encyclopedia. Intersect does recommend that users further research records titles used, and revise retention suggestions or insert citations as appropriate; the nature of a business, the states a company operates in, and various other business considerations all can affect the retention requirements for various documents. Further, the Code of Federal Regulations – the most authoritative source for statutory retention requirements – doesn't include the majority of records created by businesses today. For records managers, researching various sources and identifying retention requirements, and adding citations or references as appropriate to a control schedule, goes with the territory. Retention DMR includes a unique *Citation / Comments List Manager and Insertion Editor* that makes it easy to add citations and comments to any record series.

Retention Sub-Schedule

Q: What is a Retention Sub-Schedule?

A: A successful records management program requires the awareness and participation of all departments and employees. However, a comprehensive retention control schedule can run to well over a hundred pages containing hundreds of records titles – with the records titles of interest to any particular department typically representing only a small fraction of the total in the retention schedule, scattered throughout the schedule – making the total document cumbersome and difficult to use. Once a master retention control schedule is created in Retention DMR, the user can easily create and publish sub-schedules, or groups of selected records titles, for various departments or divisions within a company, allowing distribution of only the records titles and retention requirements appropriate for each department. This typically results in much shorter sub-schedules – often less than a dozen pages -- with each department sub-schedule containing only the records titles for which the department is responsible. These concise sub-schedules can be an important factor in enlisting departmental cooperation and support in a records management program.

Software License

Q: What are the terms of the software licenses available?

A: All software licenses are one-time, paid-up licenses. Options include single-station installations, multi-station installations, and networked installations for multi-station access on a local or wide area network. Updates are provided without additional charge for the first year; an option is available for updates after the first year.

About Intersect Systems

Q: How long has Intersect Systems been in business? What are the company resources?

A: Intersect Systems Inc. has been in business for ten years. Incorporated in 1993, the company specializes in developing and publishing software for records management, including specialized software for retention schedule development and publishing, and records management database applications. Intersect Systems is a software developer, and is also a royalty-based publisher, providing the company the flexibility to engage a variety of experienced records management specialists, as well as authors experienced in records management, in the design and development of Intersect software applications, and authoring of reference resources.

Other Records Management Software from Intersect

Q: What other software is available from Intersect Systems?

A: Intersect Systems offers over two dozen software applications for records management. For a complete list, contact Intersect Systems Inc. at the e-mail address or telephone numbers listed above. Intersect Systems also publishes the local government and state agency retention schedules in electronic format compatible with Intersect software for its customers for the states of Texas, Florida, and Georgia. Plans are underway to add other state retention schedules to the list.

Demonstration Copy of Software

Q: Are demonstration copies of Intersect software available?

A: Demonstration copies of Clark's Encyclopedia and Retention DMR, as well as Intersect's RSM Retention Schedule Manager and RCAMS Records Control and Management System, are available on request.

In Summary, Clark's Encyclopedia of Records Retention and the Retention VR and DMR software options are Windows-based software applications that support corporate records management by providing a user-friendly resource and development system for researching, developing, maintaining, and publishing a company's records retention schedule.