

## **SPRING CLEANING ELECTRONICALLY**

It's Springtime again! Many of us have our Spring projects well underway. Some of you, like me, may be looking at interior construction projects to make our homes a bit more livable. One interior construction project that seems to be common to all of us is building new or expanding old closets. We have run out of room for all of those things we store - clothes, junk, boxes, memorabilia - so, instead of weeding out the old stuff, we expand the space to put more in.

Interest in Records Management has often been primed by a similar lack of closet space. Instead of purging records according to UCS Guidelines, it has often been easier to box the records up and stuff them away in a closet, attic or basement - you know, somewhere out of sight (out of mind). When there was no more room in the storage area (and the area could not be expanded) a real interest in records management developed. Purging and microfilm were the available solutions and they were often done in due diligence until the space was clean and useable again.

Interest in Electronic Records has been overwhelming but one new and unintended item has cropped up. Storage of information in electronic forms has created new closets. Information is being created, scanned and stored on a server or CD where, even though it will eventually reach its retention period, it will remain until your IT Director informs you that there is no more space to store new information. You are then left with the same two choices that you had with paper and film records - purge or "build new closets". The new closets in the electronic world are an expensive luxury. They entail additional disc drives, jukeboxes or servers.

Electronics offers us a way to manage our records and make the purge process easy and efficient. When you set up your electronic storage medium, set aside fields that will include the record series title, year and retention period according to the UCS Retention Schedules. When it is time to purge, you can easily find the records by looking for those fields. Once records are identified, you can submit a Records Disposition Request Form to the Division of Court Operation's Records Management Unit. Identifying purgable records is often a very time consuming, labor intensive task. By conducting the search electronically, it takes little effort and hardly any time .