Government Business Council

Industry Insights

Your Agency's Information:
There When You Need It?

A Candid Survey of Federal Employees

Underwritten by:

OPENTEXT

To view an infographic of the research findings, visit www.opentext.com/GovEIM

About

The Research Intelligence Division

Of Government Executive Media Group

Dedicated to Advancing the Business of Government

Through analysis, insight and analytical independence

Extension of GEMG's 40 Years of Editorial Standards & Ethical Values

GBC studies influential decision-makers to produce intelligence-based analysis

Purpose and Methodology

In this study, the Government Business Council (GBC), in collaboration with OpenText, sought to assess the perception, attitudes, and experience of federal employees regarding information management systems.

On June 5, 2012, the Government Business Council deployed a survey on information management to a random sample of Government Executive print and online subscribers. At least 207 federal employees began the survey, and 150 managers completed all of the questions. Respondents include federal employees from the GS/GM-11 through SES level in defense and civilian agencies. Eighty-nine percent of respondents are from the GS/GM-12 grade level or above and about half (52 percent) manage at least one employee.

Please note: During the distribution of the survey instrument, respondents were asked to answer questions regarding "content management" systems. Over the course of the project, the term "content management" was found to be interchangeable with "information management." The term "information management" therefore replaced the results for "content management" for the purposes of distribution by OpenText.

Respondent Profile

Respondent Profile: Departments and Agencies Represented*

Department of Homeland Security

Department of Veterans Affairs

Department of the Air Force

Department of Agriculture

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of the Navy

Department of the Interior

Environmental Protection Agency

Department of the Army

Department of Defense

Department of Labor

Department of Treasury

Department of Energy

Department of Transportation

Office of Personnel Management

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of Justice

Department of State

Small Business Administration

Social Security Administration

United States Postal Service

Department of Commerce

General Services Administration

United States Marine Corps

Department of Education

Executive Office of the President

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

National Science Foundation

Nuclear Regulatory Commission

United States Agency for International Development

United States Government Accountability Office

Other independent agencies

Agencies listed in order of frequency

Respondent Profile

- Respondents include GS11-15 grade level employees and members of the Senior Executive Service in defense and civilian agencies.

- A full 70 percent of respondents are GS/GM-13 or above and over half (52 percent) oversee at least one direct report
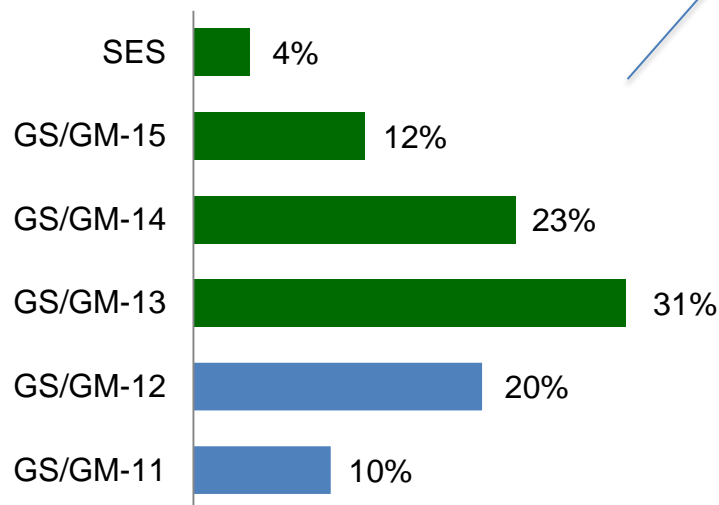
Oversees/Reports *n=150*

- None: 48%
- 1-5: 22%
- 6-20: 15%
- 21-50: 6%
- 51-200: 6%
- Over 200: 3%
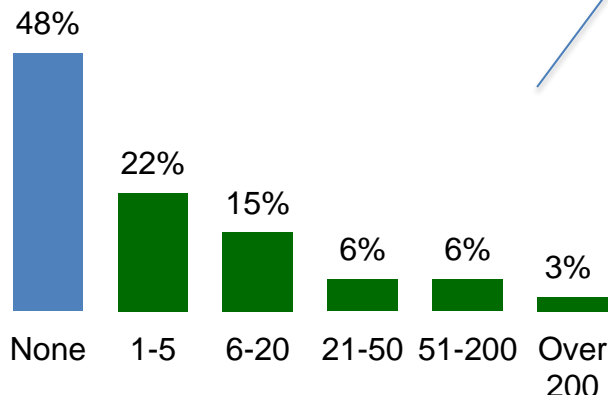
52% of respondents oversee at least one report

Job Grade / Rank *n=206*

- SES: 4%
- GS/GM-15: 12%
- GS/GM-14: 23%
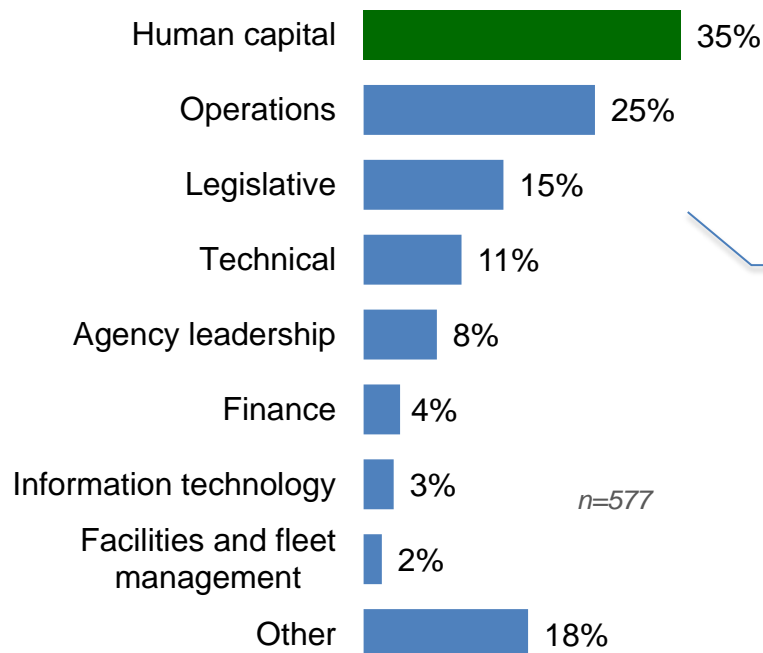- GS/GM-13: 31%
- GS/GM-12: 20%
- GS/GM-11: 10%

70% of respondents are GS/GM-13 or above

Percentage of respondents
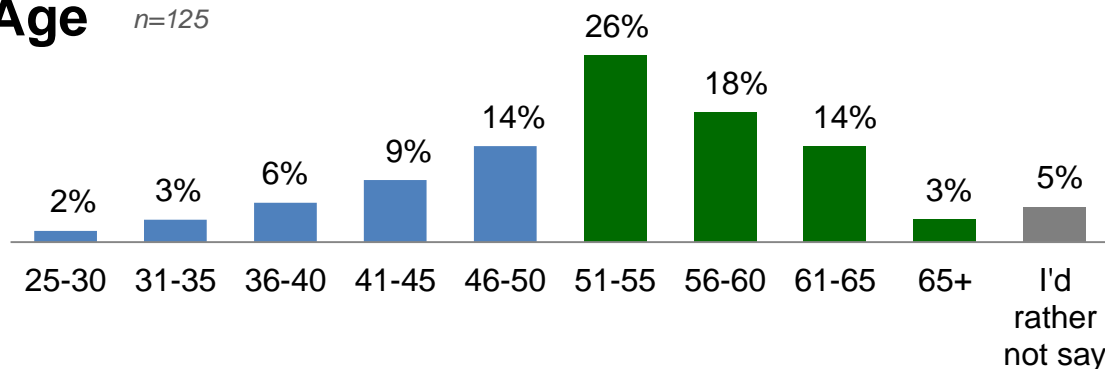
Respondent Profile

- Over one third (35 percent) of respondents work in human capital (e.g., personnel, training, or manpower).

- One fourth (26 percent) of respondents are 51 to 55 years old. Sixty-one percent of respondents are above age 50.

Job Function
n=150

Job Function	Percentage
Human capital	35%
Operations	25%
Legislative	15%
Technical	11%
Agency leadership	8%
Finance	4%
Information technology	3%
Facilities and fleet management	2%
Other	18%

n=577

35% of respondents work in human capital

Age
n=125

Age	Percentage
25-30	2%
31-35	3%
36-40	6%
41-45	9%
46-50	14%
51-55	26%
56-60	18%
61-65	14%
65+	3%
I'd rather not say	5%

Percentage of respondents

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Information Management Is Essential to Agency Operations

Eighty-two percent of respondents indicate that information management is "essential" or "important" to agency operations, a category that includes responding to FOIA requests, complying with government-wide mandates, audits or e-discovery requirements, improving citizen service delivery and many others. Only six percent believe that information management is non-essential to agency operations.

Current Information Management Practices Are Ineffective

Though managers recognize that information management is vital to the business of government, there is room for improvement. Current information management systems (IMS) receive an average grade of "C" by federal managers, with only 22 percent assigning grades of "A" or "B." The reliance of federal agencies on paper records (and even older methods such as microfiche and microfilm), rather than digital documents or files may be part of the reason for inefficiency. Just over half (54 percent) of agency information is believed to be available digitally.

Resources, Comprehensive Strategy Needed for Fuller IMS Implementation

A lack of resources, which may include both monetary and human assets, is the top challenge to agencies as they attempt to improve information management at their agencies. Full implementation of a information management system is also challenged by the absence of a clear, comprehensive agency strategy. Sixty-six percent of managers indicate that an agency-wide approach to information management is needed.
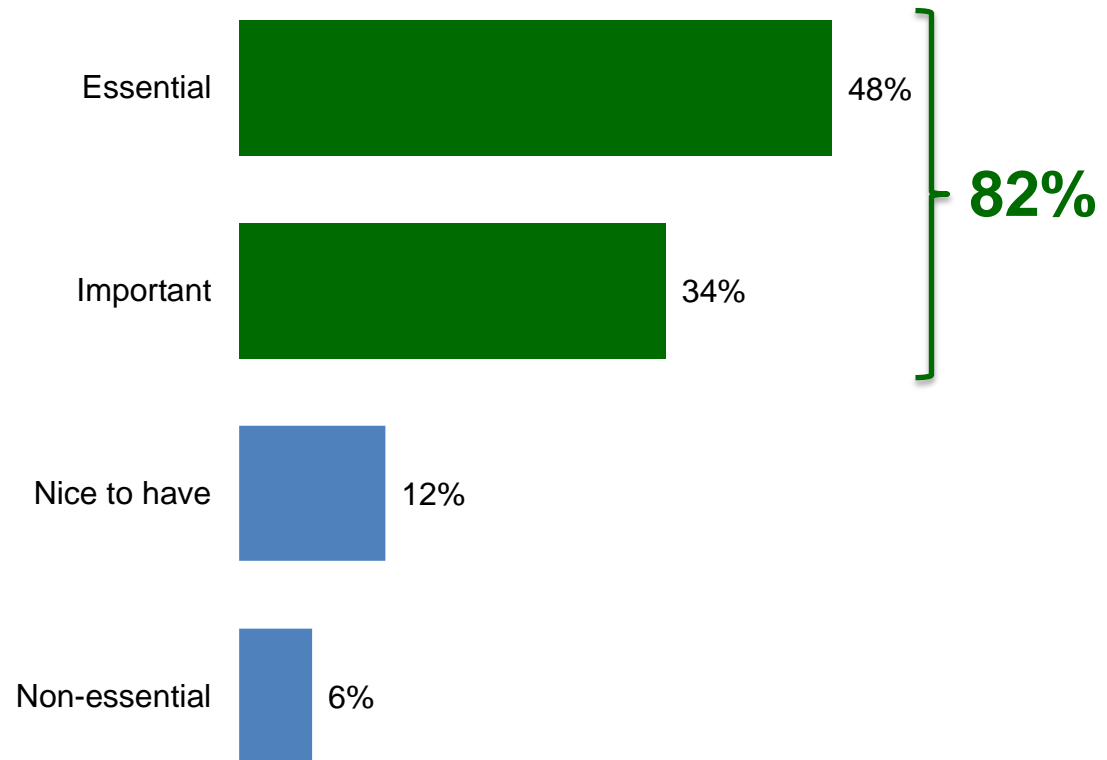
Survey Findings

Improvement Needed: The Current State of Information Management

Information Management Is Essential to Agency Operations…

- Eighty-two percent of respondents indicate that information management plays an essential or important role in agency operations. Nearly half (48 percent) of respondents label information management as "essential."

- Only six percent of respondents feel that information management is a non-essential part of agency operations.

Percentage of respondents, n=186

Role of Information Management in Agency Operations

Category	Percentage
Essential	48%
Important	34%
Nice to have	12%
Non-essential	6%

82%

…But Current Information Management Gets Mixed Results

- Twenty-eight percent of managers describe information management in their agency as "adequate," while 58 percent prefer negative words such as "inefficient," "confusing," or "outdated."

- In elaborating upon their answers, several managers comment on the amount of redundancy present in agency recordkeeping and the prevalence of paper records despite available technologies.

Which word best describes information management in your agency?

Confusing 21%

Efficient 8%

Inefficient 27%

5% Clear
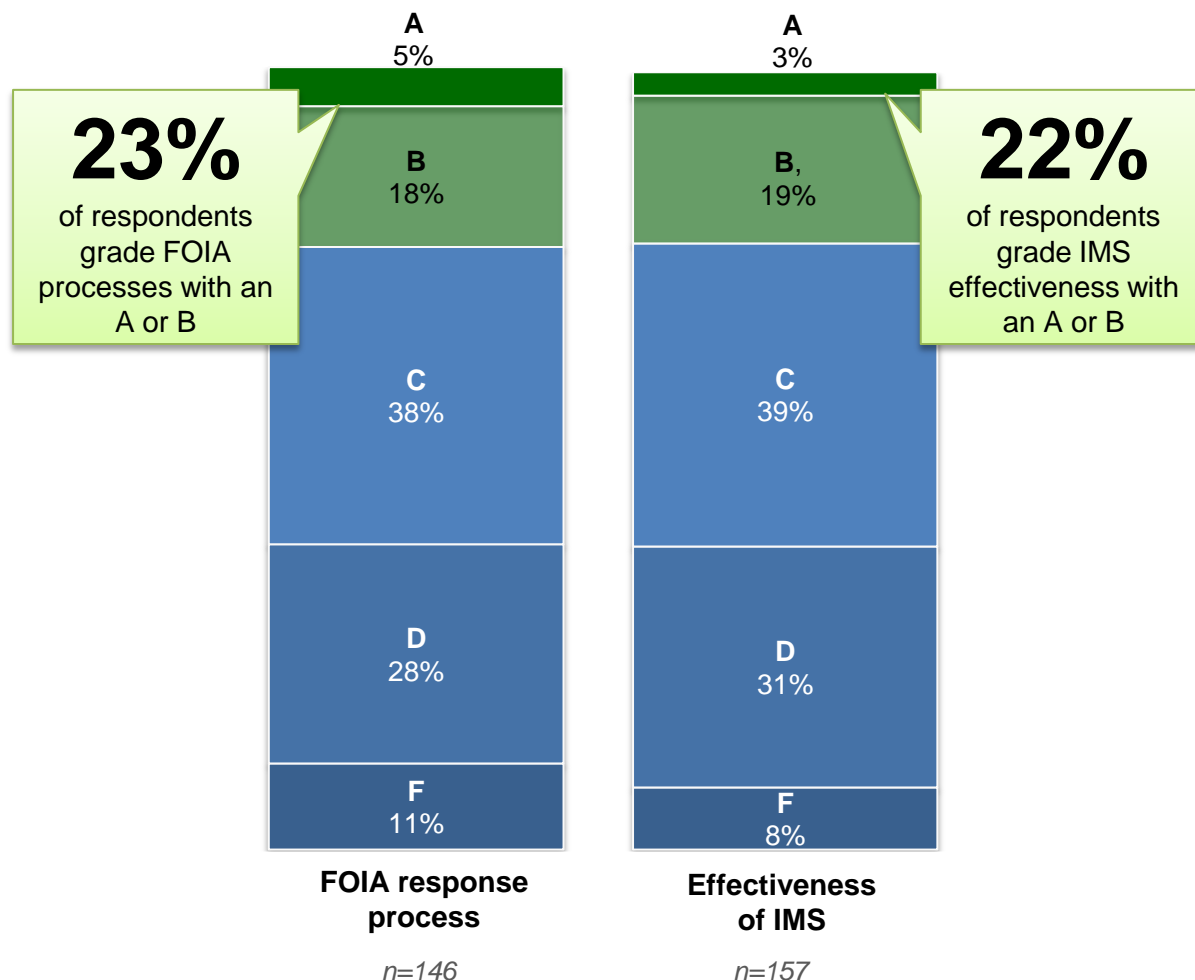
Innovative

Adequate 28%

Outdated 10%
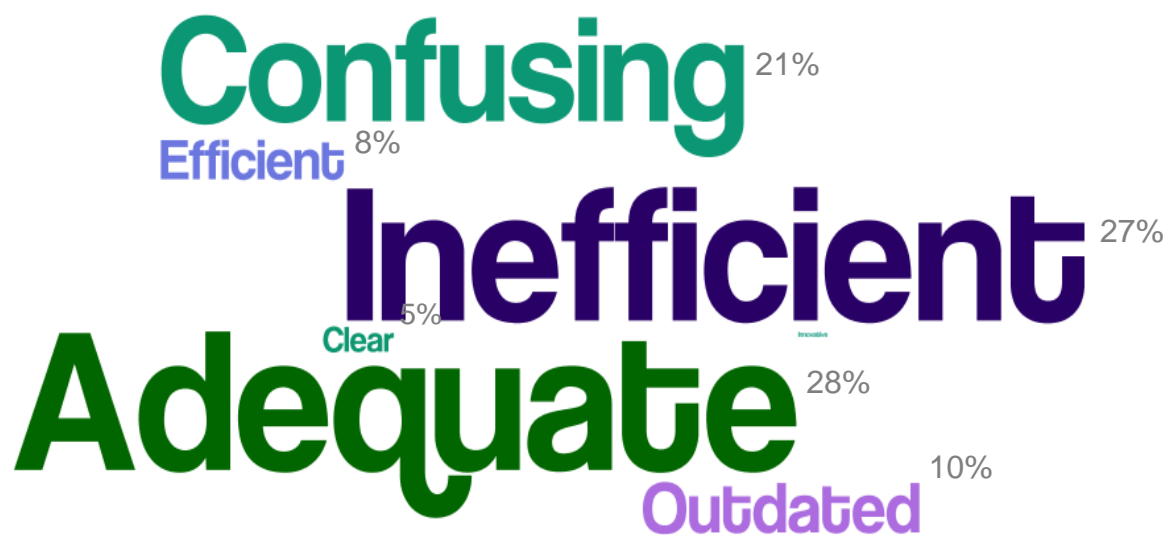
Word cloud generated using Wordle.net, with prominence given to responses that appear more frequently
Percentage of respondents shown, n=202

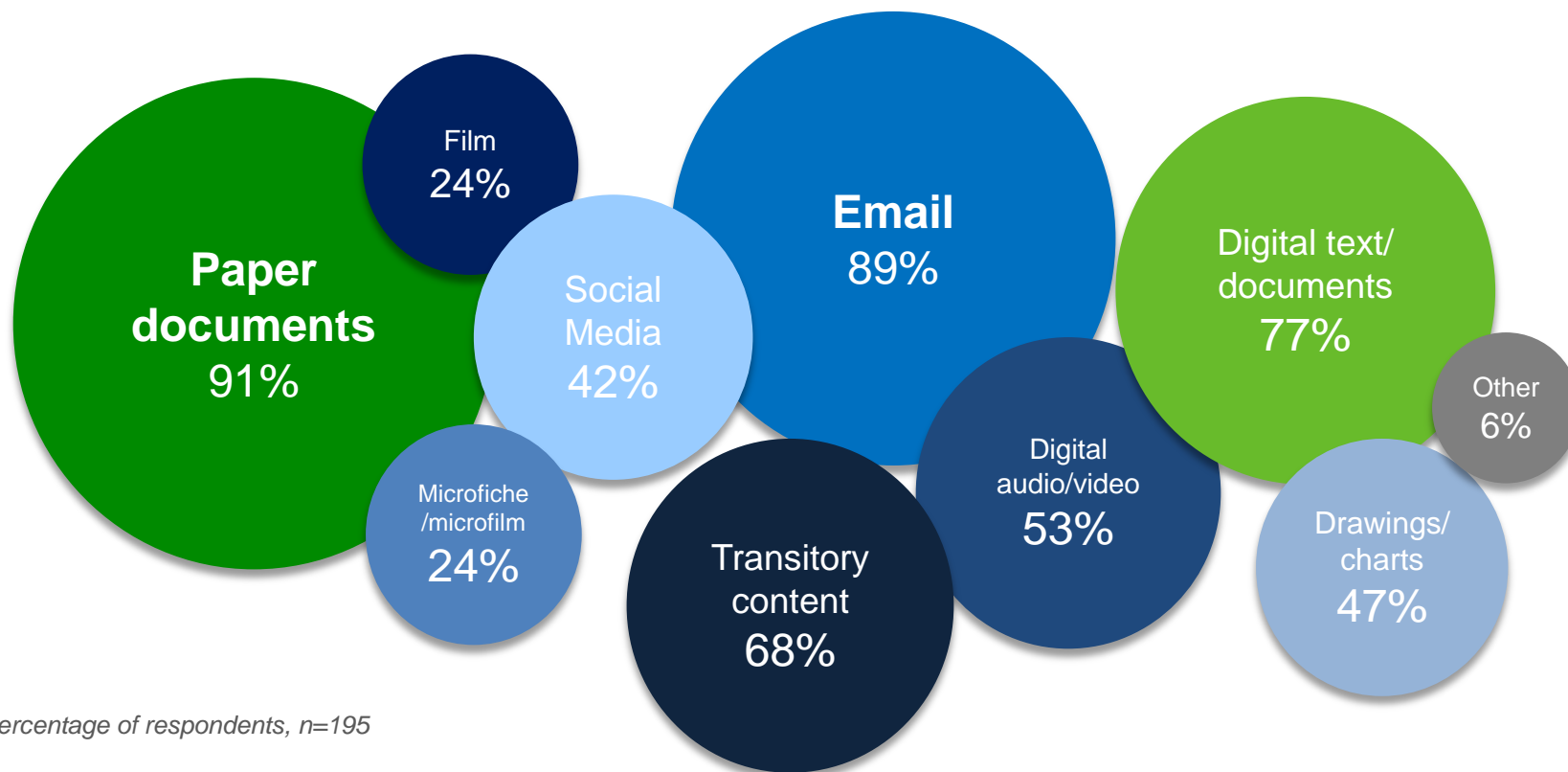# Agency IMS, FOIA Processes Display Room for Improvement

- Less than one fourth of respondents give positive grades to the overall effectiveness of agency information management systems and to the process of responding to FOIA requests.

- Just 23 percent of respondents grade FOIA processes with an A or B, while 22 percent grade their agency's IMS with an "A" or "B."

Percentage of respondents

Grades Assigned by Managers

23%
of respondents grade FOIA processes with an A or B

A
5%

B
18%

C
38%

D
28%

F
11%

FOIA response process

n=146

22%
of respondents grade IMS effectiveness with an A or B

A
3%

B,
19%

C
39%

D
31%

F
8%

Effectiveness of IMS

n=157

Nearly All Agencies Manage Paper Records

- When asked what types or formats of information their agencies currently manage, respondents identify various forms of information. A full 91 percent of managers say their agency manages paper documents, while 77 percent manage digital text or documents.
- Nearly one quarter (24 percent) of managers say their agencies still manage microfiche or microfilm.

Film 24%

Paper documents 91%

Social Media 42%

Email 89%

Digital text/ documents 77%

Other 6%

Microfiche /microfilm 24%

Transitory content 68%

Digital audio/video 53%

Drawings/ charts 47%

Percentage of respondents, n=195

About Half of Agency Information Is Available Digitally

- When asked what percentage of an agency's information is available in digital format, managers give varying answers, ranging from 0 to 100%. Fifty-four percent of responses falls between 34.5 percent and 80 percent.

54%

of agency information is available digitally, according to respondents

"There continues to be a lot of paper records that could be kept electronically."

"Information management is confusing, inefficient, and outdated in that most of it is paper, and I don't think anyone is really retaining electronic records other than an email archive."
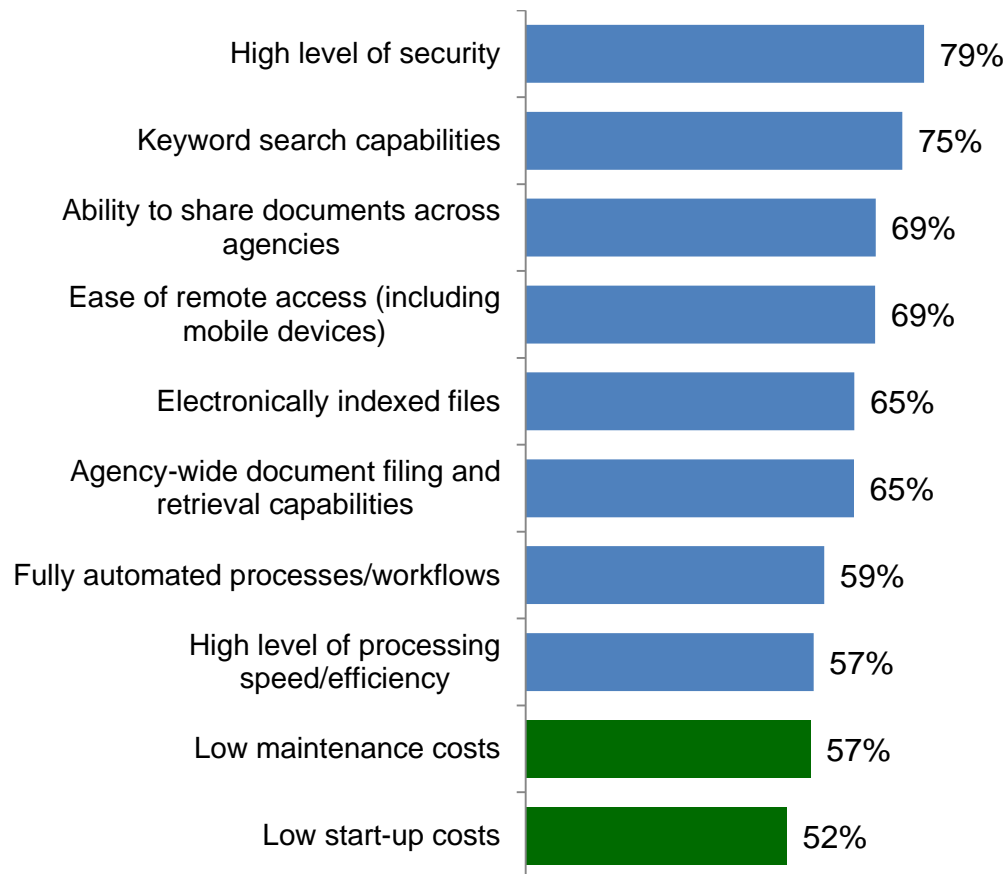
Percentage of respondents, n=180

Information Management Is Secure, Not Necessarily Cheap

- The most common attribute of an agency's information management system is security. Seventy-nine percent of respondents indicate that their agency's IMS operates with a high level of security. Security is closely followed by keyword search capabilities, which is enjoyed by three fourths of respondents.

- Over half of managers indicate that their IMS has low maintenance costs (57 percent) or low start-up costs (52 percent), but affordability comes in last on the list of attributes.

Percentage of respondents, n varies

Attributes of Current Information Management Systems

Attribute	Percentage
High level of security	79%
Keyword search capabilities	75%
Ability to share documents across agencies	69%
Ease of remote access (including mobile devices)	69%
Electronically indexed files	65%
Agency-wide document filing and retrieval capabilities	65%
Fully automated processes/workflows	59%
High level of processing speed/efficiency	57%
Low maintenance costs	57%
Low start-up costs	52%

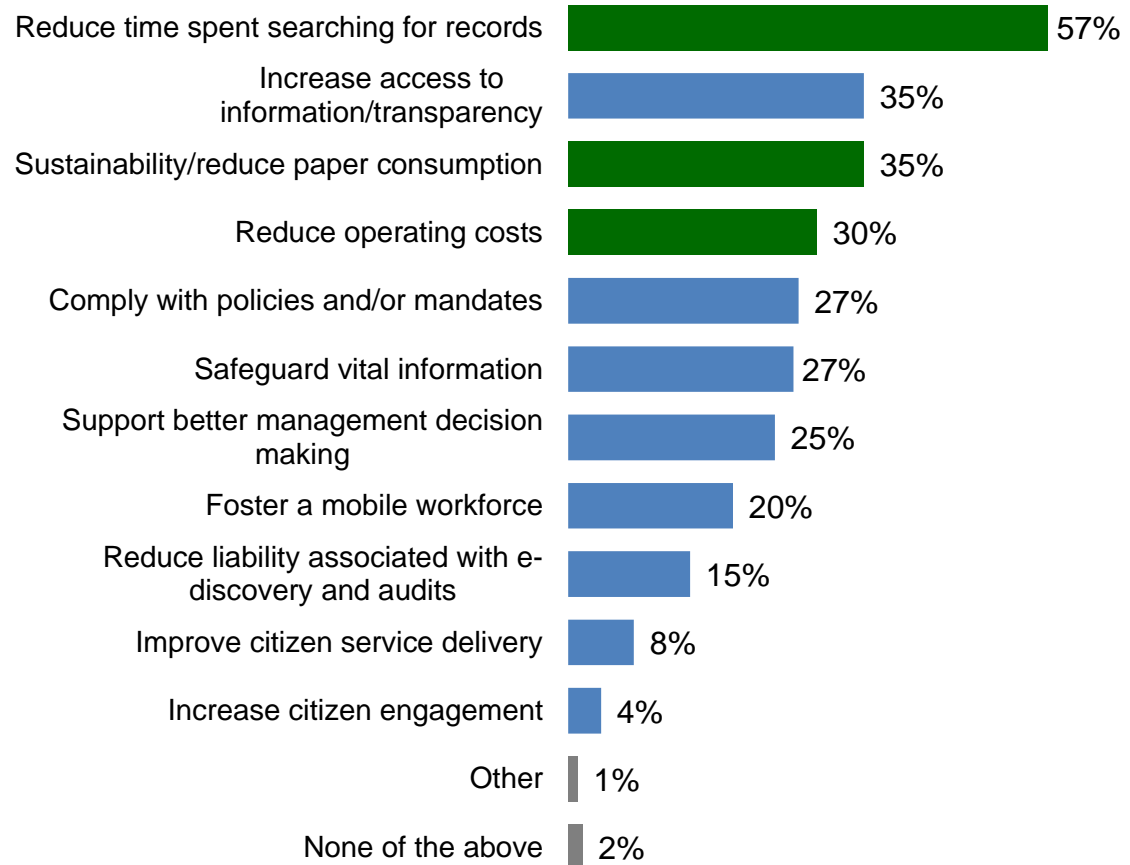# Looking Forward: Improving Information Management

Information Management Can Improve the Business of Government

- The top benefits of improved information management are not necessarily direct benefits to citizens, but rather assist the business operations of federal agencies. The ability of an IMS to reduce time searching for records is viewed as a useful benefit by more than half (57 percent) of managers.

- While improving business operations will likely indirectly benefit citizens, goals such as improved citizen service delivery and citizen engagement rank at the bottom of tested benefits.

Percentage of respondents, n=179

Most Useful Benefits of Improved Information Management

Benefit	Percentage
Reduce time spent searching for records	57%
Increase access to information/transparency	35%
Sustainability/reduce paper consumption	35%
Reduce operating costs	30%
Comply with policies and/or mandates	27%
Safeguard vital information	27%
Support better management decision making	25%
Foster a mobile workforce	20%
Reduce liability associated with e-discovery and audits	15%
Improve citizen service delivery	8%
Increase citizen engagement	4%
Other	1%
None of the above	2%

Lack of Resources, Unclear Strategy Hinder Progress

Roadblocks to Full Implementation of an Electronic IMS

	Index
Lack of resources	100%
No clear information management strategy/policy	88%
Volume of files/records	82%
Not an agency priority	79%
Insufficient technical knowledge	77%
Security concerns	64%
Accountability gaps/unclear who is in charge	61%
Prohibitive start-up costs	44%
The belief that 'paper' is more official/authentic	43%
Inability to locate files/records	42%
Prohibitive maintenance costs	29%

- A lack of resources, which may include monetary as well as human assets, is the top challenge to fully implementing an electronic information management system.

- The next most common challenges, a lack of a clear information management strategy or policy, is twelve points behind "lack of resources."

Percentage of respondents, n=150

Agency-wide Approach to Information Management Is Needed

- In order to fully implement an electronic information management system at their agencies, two thirds (66 percent) of managers indicate the need for an agency-wide approach to information management. A change in agency culture and increased funding are needed by over half of respondents.

- Just eight percent of respondents indicate that they have already fully implemented an electronic information management system at their agency.

Percentage of respondents, n=144

What do you need in order to fully implement an electronic information management system at your agency?

# 1	Agency-wide approach to information management	66%
# 2	Change in agency culture	57%
# 3	Increased funding	56%
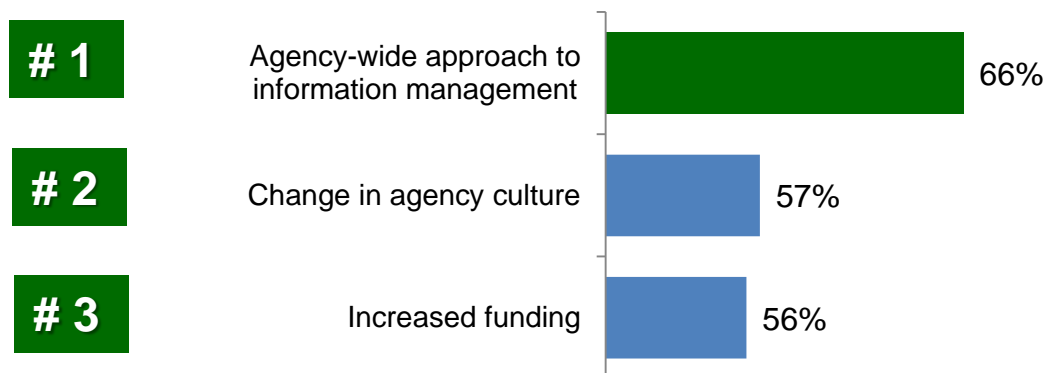
Additional responses	
Increased staff	43%
More information on solutions available from the private sector	24%
Adequate metrics by which to measure improvement	23%
More authority given to person in charge of information management strategy	22%
Other	3%
We have fully implemented an electronic information management system	8%

Finding Solutions for Using Information: Enterprise Information Management (EIM)

Underwritten by:

About OpenText

OPENTEXT

OpenText is the leader in Enterprise Information Management (EIM). EIM enables government agencies and departments to continually improve citizen service levels, lower costs of operations, and reduce information governance and security related risks. OpenText focuses on the key success factors to improve business insight, strengthen business impact, accelerate process velocity, address information governance, and secure information.

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