

Paper records preferred to electronic ones claims survey

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Despite new technologies enabling electronic storage of information, 90% of local businesses are still storing documents in paper format, according to a study released by JSE-listed storage management company Metrofile.



Metrofile's Guy Kimble says that most South African businesses prefer paper records to electronic ones. Image: Metrofile

The survey found that 75% of respondents store the original paper documents on site, while only 45% of businesses scan the original paper documents as a back-up. New technologies such as cloud computing enable businesses to store documents electronically using servers located remotely or on the companies' premises.

Metrofile Records Management Managing Director Guy Kimble said it was not surprising that most local businesses were still storing paper-based documents as required by legislation such as the New Companies Act and Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act. "This proves that paper-based records management is not dead, but is in fact a very necessary part of many business operations."

The 2014 Metrofile Information and Records Management trends index surveyed more than 200 management executives from local businesses operating mainly in the financial services, consumer goods and services, and business services industries.

Global research firm Gartner said recently the physical location of data still mattered, but would become increasingly irrelevant and be replaced by a combination of legal location, political location and logical location in most organisations by 2020. Gartner said that, historically, people equated physical proximity with physical control over data and security.

"Although everybody knows that locally stored data can be accessed remotely, the desire for physical control still exists, especially among regulatory bodies," said Gartner Research Vice-President Carsten Casper.

"The future will be hybrid - organisations will be using multiple locations with multiple service delivery models," he said.

Kimble said the new era of offsite records management included both physical and electronic records management which ensured that documents that were required to be kept for legislative reasons could be physically archived and those that required frequent access could be stored in active filing environments.

Source: Business Day via I-Net Bridge

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