

# Reimagining Government Records in the Age of AI

Overcoming paper backlogs, digital sprawl, and rising expectations for transparency, compliance, and auditability.



Government agencies are expected to maintain active, ongoing records management programs that govern how records are created, used, and maintained throughout daily operations. They must also make certain records accessible to the public.

Yet many government agencies continue to rely on large volumes of paper files, which require manual tasks such as opening mail, sorting documents, entering data, and redacting sensitive information before public release—activities that are labor-intensive, error-prone, and costly.

At the same time, governments face escalating challenges with digital information.

Most records are now “born digital,” and the ease of generating and duplicating content has resulted in massive volumes of material dispersed across diverse formats, systems, and repositories.

This growing complexity—combined with increasingly strict expectations from regulators, the public, and the courts—has created significant operational and compliance pressures that demand a fundamentally new approach to records management.

In this report, three experts discuss technological trends to make records management easier and less costly.



## Zero-Click to Reduce Manual Reviews

Records management activities can be a big strain on government. For example, [in 2024, U.S. agencies received approximately 1.5 million FOIA \(Freedom of Information Act\) requests](#), a 25% increase over the previous year. The backlog of unprocessed FOIA requests also grew to 267,056, up 33% from FY 2023.

FOIA processing times have also worsened, rising from an average of 39.4 to 44 days for simple requests alone. Although agencies have invested in digital transformation, [only 71% are managing their permanent records in an electronic format](#).

This rise in requests and processing times translates into greater litigation exposure, higher processing costs, delays in public access to information, and greater frustration for citizens and stakeholders. Internally, agencies trying to keep up are experiencing mounting workloads and budgetary pressure as staff struggle to handle both paper and digital content.

### Move to “zero-click”

To meet this challenge, John Beglan, senior operations and technology sales executive at [Tungsten Automation](#), says that agencies need a new class of intelligent automation designed specifically for the scale and complexity of government records. “With zero-click, intelligent automation handles document capture, classification, routing, compliance checks, and secure storage, freeing government staff to focus on mission-critical work.”

According to Beglan, traditional OCR (optical character recognition) extracts text from scanned documents, PDFs, or images, but relies on templates, manual configuration, and frequent tuning to classify information.

In contrast, zero-click uses advanced machine learning models that interpret documents based on their content rather than their layout. As a result, records can be captured, classified, validated, routed, and securely stored with minimal manual intervention.



### Significant improvements

Zero-click represents a dramatic leap forward, notes Beglan. Manual review that once consumed 8 hours per 100 documents now takes about 30 minutes. A classification that previously took 6 hours can be completed in 12 minutes. Routing tasks fall from 4 hours to 6 minutes, and compliance checks shrink from 5 hours to 12 minutes.

Beglan adds that agencies leveraging intelligent automation have achieved up to a 95% reduction in manual record classification work. Processing speeds have also improved by up to 95%, allowing organizations to eliminate years of backlog in just months.

“ Many mid-size agencies that have moved to zero-click records management break even within 6 months and go on to realize more than \$600,000 in annual savings. ”

- John Beglan, Tungsten Automation

Faster, more accurate processing not only reduces FOIA fulfillment costs and lowers litigation risk, but also frees staff to focus on higher-value work at a time when agencies face increased workloads and reduced staffing.

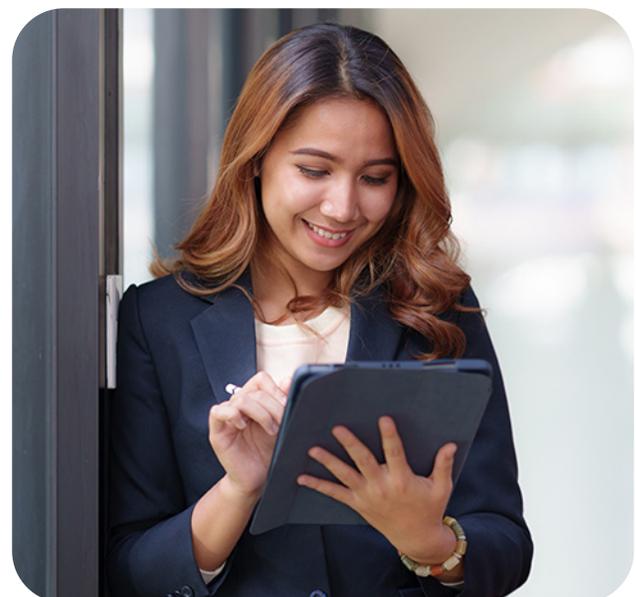
## AI: Transforming Records to Intelligence

Artificial intelligence is reshaping how governments address long-standing challenges in records management. Intelligent technologies can now intake and analyze paper and digital records at scale, giving agencies structured and reliable information that unlocks the full potential of AI.

According to Allison Young, senior director of presales and service delivery at [Laserfiche](#), agencies can use AI-assisted classification to identify document types instantly, apply the correct retention schedules, and launch automated workflows that route materials to the right individuals or departments.

Sensitive information can be flagged and secured the moment a document enters the system, ensuring that protection and compliance begin at the point of ingestion rather than becoming an after-the-fact activity.

Because these capabilities are built on natural language understanding rather than rigid templates, agencies can keep pace with new versions, layout changes, and shifts in document formats without the constant reconfiguration that once weighed down IT and administrative teams.



### AI and document libraries

Once documents and records are enriched with structured metadata, staff can interact with information in more intuitive and meaningful ways. Caseworkers, contract officers, and policy analysts can ask natural language questions across entire libraries of documents, including contracts, case files, policy archives, permits, or benefit applications, and receive precise information in seconds.

Young notes that AI can, for example, identify specific clauses across hundreds of contracts, show which case records contain evidence of a particular benefit, or highlight inconsistencies that staff might otherwise miss.

For high-volume environments such as human services case management, this significantly accelerates how quickly staff can gather context, validate information, and prepare decisions. Instead of manually opening and reviewing each document, they can rely on the system to surface the most relevant insights and point them directly to the sections that matter.

AI-powered auto-redaction adds another important advantage. AI can detect personal or confidential information, including names, addresses, identification numbers, or sensitive case details, and redact it before documents

are released. This reduces response times and lowers the risk of human error in transparency processes.

### Beyond staff efficiencies

The benefits extend far beyond staff productivity. Young explains that by removing repetitive tasks such as manual indexing, document searching, data entry, redaction, and exception handling, agencies can shift staff to more meaningful work that supports the public.

For agency leaders, high-quality and connected data becomes a strategic asset. AI enables automated reporting, trend analysis, and predictive modeling, helping agencies anticipate workload spikes, identify backlogs, and allocate resources more effectively.

Ultimately, AI does not replace human expertise in government operations. It strengthens it.

“ By transforming fragmented records into structured, actionable knowledge, AI enables government agencies to deliver services that are faster, more accurate, and more personalized. ”

- Allison Young, Laserfiche



## Transparent and Auditable Records

Rising expectations for transparent, auditable records and emerging zero-click access models are straining government records management systems and teams.

According to Chris Huff, chief executive officer at [Adlib Software](#), a major challenge for auditability is the sheer volume of unstructured content arriving in formats that legacy systems cannot easily interpret.

Compounding this is that many government agencies have rapidly adopted AI tools without sufficient data governance, increasing the risk of errors, hallucinations, and audit exposure—the kind of issues that undermine any move toward zero-click experiences. Additionally, as Huff notes, many existing records management processes were never designed to handle today’s scale and complexity of information.

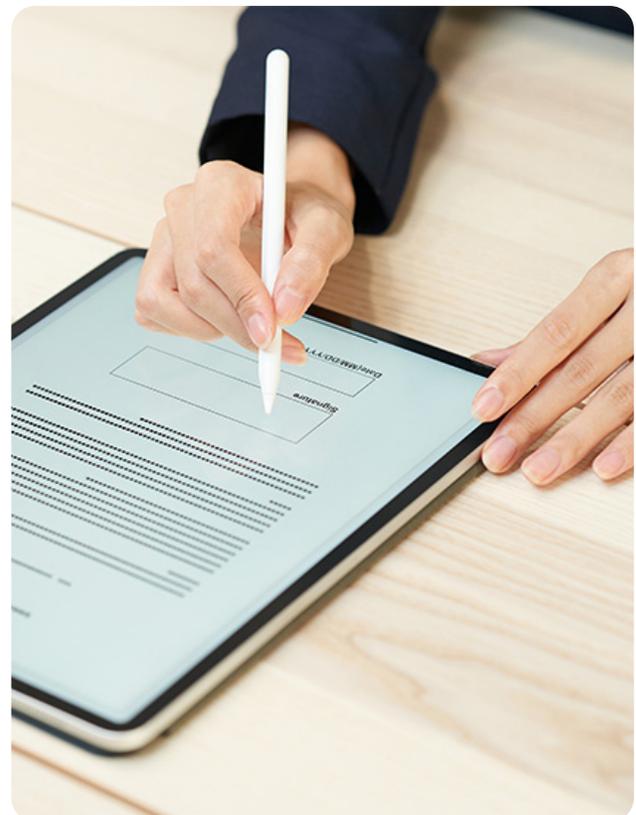
Ultimately, the lack of standardized document reading and controls makes it difficult for agencies to maintain provenance, validate information, and demonstrate the clear chain of custody required for true transparency and auditability. It also causes clogged workflows, high exception rates, and a growing dependency on manual reviews.

### **Adding a “records quality gateway”**

Huff says the solution lies in establishing a “records quality gateway” that is stationed at the threshold of an agency’s content or records management systems, where it can make zero-click access technically and operationally possible. Such a quality gateway ingests, standardizes, validates, and enriches documents before they enter into any records or case management system.

The ability to ingest data in one of hundreds of formats ensures complete, rich records. Standardization allows precise data extraction via multilayer OCR, while validation and cross-checking against official systems of record ensure accuracy, flag discrepancies, and redact sensitive information when needed.

To support auditability, this type of gateway automatically applies provenance stamping that records who touched the document, when, and why—creating a tamper-resistant chain of custody. With these processes complete, the gateway delivers documents into existing content or records management systems in a structured, searchable, compliant format.



**Value in consistency**

Huff explains that the gateway approach to records management significantly reduces exception handling—those cases where staff must manually intervene because automation breaks down due to unrecognizable, missing, or inconsistent data.

The gateway's ability to standardize documents at intake with a consistent structure, accurate metadata, and required elements such as headers, footers, watermarks, and version control also makes records easier to validate against internal systems, and to search, discover, and audit long after their creation. Built-in provenance tracking also strengthens the chain of custody, increases reviewer

confidence, and supports compliance, transparency, and audit readiness.

In Huff's experience, when agencies standardize and validate documents at intake, they cut exceptions nearly in half, accelerate response times by up to 50%, and achieve first-pass accuracy approaching 99.9%.

“ That level of document discipline is what makes true straight-through record management automation and transparency possible. ”

- Chris Huff, Adlib Software

## Intelligent, Auditable, and AI-Ready Records

As these technological trends converge, a clear picture emerges: government records management is no longer simply an administrative obligation but a strategic capability that defines an agency's speed, transparency, and public trust.

AI-driven automation, modern preservation tools, and quality gateways are transforming records from fragmented, labor-intensive burdens into reliable, ready-to-use assets that support mission delivery.

The innovations in this report signal a shift from reactive records management to proactive information stewardship, where data is trustworthy from the moment it enters the system, workflows run straight through with minimal human intervention, and staff can focus on high-value service rather than document wrangling.





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