



Working with the Information Asset Register

With spring biting at our heels and hints of sunshine in the sky, I would like to take your hand and follow on from the last LPM article where we discussed your Legal Practice needs for an Information Asset Register (IAR). I know from the emails that we received from many of our readers, LPM's up and down the country have already hit our webpage www.archivestorage.net/IAR to download their IAR tool. If not, why not? It's a great tool and it's free so get a scoot on to the webpage and get your copy! In this article we will be using IAR V2 as the example from this page.

The IAR tool we have placed together is modelled on the FQ's IAR used for many legal practices inspired by the guidelines from the National Archives and ARMA International.

Further information can be found here:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/info-asset-register-factsheet.pdf

I can hear you all now! Yes I have my tool but what on earth should I now do with it? This is why I am here to help guide you through. So firstly we are going to solely concentrate on tangible hard copy assets, aka files, documents, index cards, deeds, wills ect (we will move on to digital at a later stage).

For the purpose of this training plan we will use the FQ IAR V2 template as the example throughout. Please note at this stage, every legal practice is different, you all have different process, record and information management system. This is just my brief overview of the FQ's experience of helping legal practices place together IAR's. It is my personal opinion on how to combat the IAR.

As you can see from the IAR downloaded from the ADDS website, there are a number of tabs along the bottom of the page. Some of these tabs will be used during a later article but let's run through them now...

The first five tabs display different office names...

During my IAR journeys with different Legal Practice I have found it extremely important to separate the offices if you have more than one location. There are a number of reasons for this...

- 1 When you present the IAR to the legal practice partners it must be in a manageable format. There will be a great amount of information recorded on these sheets and by keeping office locations separate the IAR will be broken down into bite size presentations.
- 2 Each office may have different formats of managing / storing information. Yes ideally this would not be the case but as you venture around to the different office you may find archiving procedures / storage policies may differ.
- 3 We have included a fifth location tab; this is for any offsite storage facilities. If you use more than one, each individual storage facilities must have their own tab. Whether they are managed record centres, self-storage units or a partner's garage / basement they too hold information assets and must be marked as a location.

Tab Six – IAF Figures

Yes think back to your school or university days, whenever you found evidence for an argument or gathered information you had to log the source. This time though the 'Figure's' are mostly for you! You may discover Information Assets (IA) that you need to log and remember, for many of you IAR will be long (yet fruitful) journey. You are bound to forget certain asset status', for example you logged an index card draw located in the London office yet on presentation to the partners you may not be able to remember what this draw looked like or the exact location! Use the IAF figures to host photographs to help you, just as the example shows.

Tab Six – IAF Figures

Recommendations for change! Oh yes LP's this is what the IAR it is all about. On your journey you will find some IA's which may be a risk to your practice, whether that's through disaster recovery situations, security or data breach. Firstly no one is expecting you to have all the answers but when presenting a problem to practice managers it is always a good idea to have recommendations for change! The FQ will be able to give you some examples of this in a later article.

Tab Seven – Projects

My Practice Managers, this will be your favourite tab! Once you have presented the IAR to the partners along with your recommendations for change, this is where we will log the projects that you will be undertaking in order to bring Information Governance and higher IA security to your practices.

In April's article we will start to populate the IAR location tabs and give you some great examples of what you should be looking for and how to approach this. For a sneaky peak check out www.archivestorage.net/IAR and click on V3

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