Forms Management and the US Federal Government

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Background

- Federal government has consistently led the drive to establish forms management as an important business function
- Forms Management evolved with government efforts to improve process efficiency
- Let’s take a brief look at history
Forms Management History

- Cockrell Committee, 1887–1889 – one of the earliest attempts to improve efficiency
- Brief History of Administrative Reform
- National Archives, 1935–1937 study found widespread inefficiencies
- First Hoover Commission–1947 – made many recommendations
- Second Hoover Comission–1953

The Hoover Commissions and Federal Recordkeeping
Forms Management History

- National Archives defines:
  - Records management
  - Forms management (Page 223, in article below)
  - Correspondence management
  - Reports

The Relationship of Records Management Activities to the Fields of Business
“A forms management program eliminates extra paperwork, improves office communications, reduces operating costs, and reveals inefficient or unnecessary procedures.”

“Efficient forms provide accurate, dependable and readily accessible information for policy formation, decision making, and the direction and coordination of operations.”
“Forms analysis is a companion to systems analysis and work simplification.”

“The clerical and administrative costs of handling and processing a form are as much as twenty times the initial production costs.”
“Forms designers attempt to eliminate, consolidate, standardize, or combine forms.”

“A continuing program for the monitoring of forms control procedures and the application of forms design standards should be built into the regular forms procurement procedures.”
Standards

- FAR requires federal agencies to have a forms officer
- The Federal Forms Management program [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/type/SF](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/forms/type/SF)
- Most states had a central forms management group—now abandoned
- Business Forms Handbook, now discontinued
- Rob Barnett’s books – *Managing Business Forms* and *Forms for People*
- Canadian Standard for Forms Management
Today’s Structure

- OMB role
- GSA / GPO role
- US Courts
- Executive agencies
- Legislative branch
- Forms management structure
  - Standard forms
  - Optional forms
  - Agency forms
GSA and GPO Role

- GSA Program Information
  - https://www.gsa.gov/reference/forms#

- GPO Program Information

- GPO Printing Procurement Regulations
The Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AO) is the administrative agency of the United States federal court system. It was established in 1939.

The AO is the central support entity for the federal judicial branch. It provides a wide range of administrative, legal, financial, management, program, and information technology services to the federal courts.

The AO is directly supervised by the Judicial Conference of the United States, the body that sets the national and legislative policy of the federal judiciary, which is composed of the Chief Justice of the United States, the chief judge of each court of appeals, a district court judge from each regional judicial circuit, and the chief judge of the United States Court of International Trade.

The AO implements and executes Judicial Conference policies, as well as applicable federal statutes and regulations. The AO facilitates communications within the judiciary and with Congress, the executive branch, and the public on behalf of the judiciary.

http://www.uscourts.gov/services–forms/forms
Issues

- Complicated workflows, caused by laws and regulations
- Privacy, security, signature requirements make automation difficult
  - Example: IRS – forms we love to hate
  - Example: FAFSA
  - Example: HIPAA
Department of Defense Forms Management Program

- Let’s take that deeper dive into just one comprehensive program...
Department of Defense
Forms Management Procedures Manual
DoD 7750.07–M (incorporating changes 8–14–2012)

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This Manual Applies to:

- All Department of Defense activities (collectively called DoD Components)
- All forms development activities
- All forms, paper and electronic
- All display media
Definitions

- DoD FMO. The position responsible for managing the DoD Forms Management Program in accordance with DoD Directive 5110.4 (Reference (d)).
- DoD Component Forms Management Officer (FMO). The point of contact (POC) in the DoD Component responsible for the DoD Component forms management program.
- DoD Forms Management Program Web Site. The Internet portal to forms available in the Department of Defense, with hyperlinks to DoD Component forms. This Web site at http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/formsprogram.htm is the official site for DD, SD, and DoD-sponsored SFs and OFs.
More Definitions

- **OPR.** The DoD Component having responsibility for the overall ownership of and the prescribing document or issuance for a specific form. This term means the same as the term “promulgating agency” as used by the Standard and Optional (SF and OF) Forms Management Program.

- **Public.** Individuals, partnerships, associations, corporations, business trusts, legal representatives, organized groups of individuals, States, territories, or local governments, or components thereof. Current employees of the Federal government are not members of the public for the collection of information within the scope of their employment.

- **Stocked and Issued (S&I) Form.** A form or non-form item that is stocked and issued by a DoD Component. The DoD Component whose office symbol appears with the title of the form (e.g., SD Form 7777, “Listing of Forms Managers (S&I by WHS(ESD))”) is the office that stocks and issues the form. The forms distribution centers may NOT requisition or stock this form.
Policies and Roles

- It is DoD policy that:
  - DoD forms shall, in accordance with Reference (a):
    ◦ Satisfy a valid need and be necessary for the efficient and economical operation of the Department of Defense.
    ◦ Be properly designed with clear instructions.
    ◦ Be standardized and promote consolidation throughout the Department of Defense.
    ◦ Be created, distributed, and used electronically to the maximum extent possible.
    ◦ The use of social security numbers within DoD forms shall be reduced or eliminated wherever possible in accordance with Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum (Reference (i)).
Types of Forms

- Standard Forms (SF) – All Federal agencies mandate SFs for use.
- Optional Forms – OFs are forms developed by a Federal agency for use in two or more agencies and approved by GSA for non-mandatory Government-wide use.
- DD Forms – DD Forms are for use by more than one DoD Component.
- DoD Component Forms – are for use only within the given Component as indicated by the form designation
- Other levels – Depending on the size of the DoD Component’s forms management program, there may be several levels of forms below the Component level.
Forms Media

- Electronic Forms – An officially-prescribed set of data residing in an electronic medium that is used to produce a mirror-like image of the officially prescribed form (also identified as a computer-generated form).
- Paper Forms – forms having a specialized use (e.g., tags), when there are special security or integrity concerns (e.g., DD Form 2249, “DoD Building Pass Application”), and when there are unusual production costs (e.g., DD Form 2220, “DoD Registered Vehicle Decal”).
Many publications are available, including:

- GSA provides a list of SFs and OFs on the GSA Forms Library Web Site.
- IMD provides a DD Forms Inventory that lists current approved and canceled DD Forms by form number and title on the DoD Forms Management Program Web Site.
- A database that produces an accurate inventory of all current and canceled DD Forms. (Director, WHS)
- An accurate inventory of all current Component forms. (Component FMO)
Prescribing and Citing Forms

- All forms must have a prescribing document or issuance.
- This document has several requirements:
  - the form designation, number, and title
  - the purpose of the form, who prepares it, how to complete it, the number of copies required, and when and where to submit it.
  - the form’s location on the Internet
  - where to submit requisitions
Applicable Regulations

- DoD Information Management Program
- Privacy Program
- Computer Matching Program
- Freedom of Information Act Program
- U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Requirements
- DoD Net-Centric Data Strategy

See page 26 in the Manual for details
Evaluation Suggestions

- Changes in format, content, or construction
  - Changes in the format, content, or construction of a form may lead to improved use, effectiveness, and/or reduced costs.

- Use DoD Component suggestion program
  - Suggestions for changes to forms shall be submitted in accordance with the appropriate DoD Component suggestion program.
Creation or Revision of Forms

- SF and OF Forms
  - A DoD Component OPR establishing or revising an SF or OF shall submit a request to his or her Component FMO in accordance with Component procedures. The originating Component FMO shall submit the forms request package to the DoD SF and OF Liaison Representative, who shall validate the package and forward it to GSA for approval.
  - A flow chart of the approval process for the creation or revision of a DoD-sponsored SF or OF is provided at Figure C3.F2. in the Manual

- DD FORMS
  - Verify that an existing form cannot meet the requirement
  - Prepare a DD Form 67 completed through item 19
  - A flow chart of the approval process is provided at Figure C3.F5.
Creation or Revision of Forms

- DoD Component Forms
  - Verify that an existing form cannot meet the requirement
  - Submit a completed DD Form 67 together with other supporting documentation
- SF 152
  - “Request for Clearance or Cancellation of a Standard or Optional Form”
Forms Design

- **Size** – 8 ½ X 11
- **Border margins** – With the exception of certificates, tags, and labels, the entire body of a form shall be enclosed in a lined border
- **Form layout** – Forms shall be designed in box style with fillable fields having upper-left captions. Group common items – may use sections
- **Font Styles** – see page 44 for details
- **Form title, number and date** – see page 44–45 for details
- **Suffixes used in form numbering** – see page 45
Forms Design

- Supercession notice – see page 45
- Software designation – The name and the producer and/or vendor of the software used to create the electronic form is shown in the lower right corner on the first page of the form.
- Report control and expiration date and OMB control number – The OMB Control Number and its expiration date must be displayed on forms that are used to collect information from the public.
- Privacy Act Statement (PAS) – if required, its placement is specifically defined on pages 46–47 of the Manual
Forms Design

- Agency disclosure notice (ADN) – must be displayed on all forms that require an OMB Control Number
- Placement of instructions – should be consistent on the entire form
- Abbreviations and acronyms – Spell out the first time they are used and follow with the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses
- Illustrations and graphics – The use of decorative illustrations or graphics, including official logos, is prohibited. The illustration or graphic may be used only if it serves a functional purpose
- Fillable fields – see pages 47–48
Forms Design

- Accessibility – should be designed to be simple and usable, with meaningful captions and clear and concise instructions
- Locking final forms –. Final electronic forms are locked by the forms designer
- Design process – must meet DoD Component OPR needs and conform to GSA and DoD design guidelines
Exceptions to Forms

- Exceptions are approved deviations from the normal, prescribed usage of a form.
- All SFs, OFs, and DD Forms must be used as prescribed unless the user has obtained an exception to do otherwise.
- Standardized exception requests shall be made at the Component level.
Forms Authorized for Electronic Use

- A form may be electronically generated without exception approval provided it has been approved for electronic generation.
- Forms NOT approved for electronic generation may NOT be created without exception approval.
- All generations of electronic forms in a different software or format other than the official electronic form must be approved.
- See pages 53–54 for details.
Exceptions to SF and OF

- A Forms Exception Request package shall include:
  - A letter from the requesting DoD Component
  - A draft of the proposed exception to the form including electronic and hard copies of the form
  - A justification statement explaining the reason for the request
  - A copy of printing specifications if applicable

- A request for an exception to an approved form shall be processed through the proper channels and approved before it is implemented. A flow chart of the SF and OF exception process is at Figure C5.F1
Exceptions to DD Forms

- Forms Exception Request Package Must Include:
  - a written request
  - user’s form requirements
  - the type of exception that is requested
  - justification explaining why the exception is needed.
Exceptions to DoD Component Forms

• The procedure for obtaining an exception to a DoD Component form is established by the DoD Component.
Printing of Forms

- PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION COSTS – If printing is required, DoD Component FMOs should consult with their printing procurement and distribution specialists.
- PAPER (PHYSICAL) MEDIA REQUIREMENTS – if available electronically, contact Component FMO for procedures to obtain on paper.
Reproduction of SFs and OFs

- SFs and OFs stocked by Federal Supply Service (FSS) must be purchased from FSS unless otherwise authorized by GSA
Security of Forms

- Classified forms shall be processed and stored in a manner equivalent to the highest security level of the form.
- When a blank form is classified, appropriate security procedures shall be followed in the design, printing, distribution, and stocking of the form.
- When a completed form is classified, appropriate security procedures shall be followed in the routing, distribution, and filing of the form.
Control of Forms

- Methods of safeguarding and accounting for the form shall be employed when necessary.
- Safeguarded Forms shall be kept in approved storage and access to the form shall be restricted to authorized individuals. Electronic forms shall be password-protected.
- Consecutive or serial numbering of forms – printing specifications shall define the need for consecutively-numbered forms.
- When missing or duplicate numbers in a series of consecutively-numbered forms is not allowed, the printing specifications shall stipulate that guaranteed numbering is required.
Cancellation of Forms – SF and OF

• Only the form OPR may cancel an SF or OF
• To request cancellation, submit SF 152
• Announce the cancellation and the reasons for it in the Federal Register
• Upon receipt of GSA approval of the cancellation, the DoD SF and OF Forms Liaison Representative shall forward a copy of the approving SF 152 to the DoD Component FMO and WHS shall place an entry about the cancellation on the DoD Forms Management Program Web Site.
Cancellation of Forms – DD

- Only the DoD Component OPR may cancel a DD Form for which it is responsible
- Forward a completed DD Form 67 through the Component FMO to IMD
Cancellation of Forms – DoD Component

- To cancel a DoD Component form, the form OPR shall contact the Component FMO regarding Component procedures
Thank you for attending this presentation

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