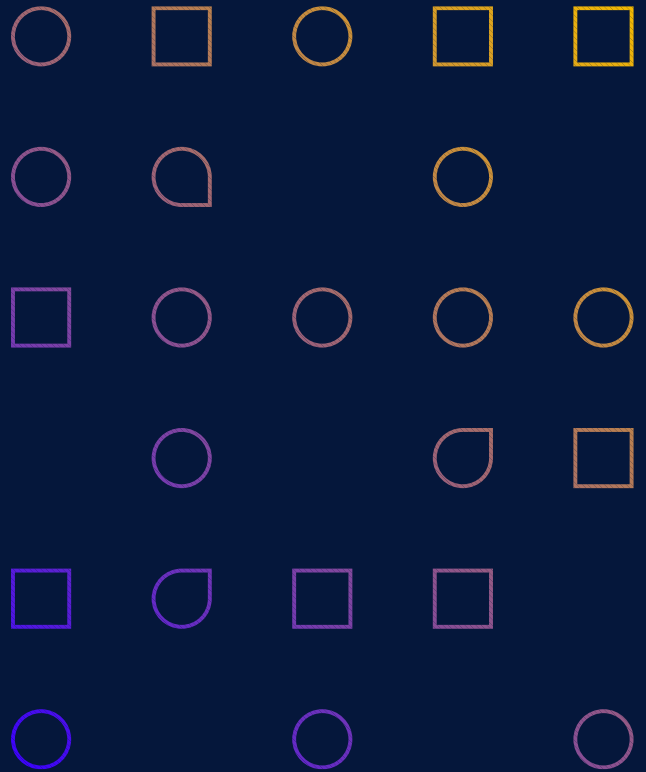


# How the State of Vermont Gained Visibility into Their Unstructured Digital Records and Information Governance Needs



The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) wants to create a cooperative framework for bringing together systems, technology, people, and processes. This framework will support information governance, records, and information management initiatives in the State of Vermont. VSARA's mission is to "provide, protect, promote, and preserve Vermont public records, in collaboration with other public agencies, for the benefit of the public collectively served." Therefore, it is imperative to their mission that they understand the information management needs of the State of Vermont.

## The "Storage is Cheap" Conundrum

Like many organizations, VSARA continually fights the "storage is cheap" battle. Keeping everything forever is a bad practice from a compliance and risk perspective. It also has various visible and hidden costs that add up quickly over time.

As Tanya Marshall, State Archivist and Chief Records Officer for the State of Vermont, explained, **"No one has gone back and looked through any of the State's servers, and that's been a big information management gap. And as long as IT keeps moving data from space to space saying, 'Oh, storage is cheap, don't worry about it,' this gap continues to snowball, creating more liabilities and risk to the State of Vermont."**

## At a glance

### CHALLENGES

- Disparate and siloed information sources
- Exponential growth in unstructured data
- Classifying and cleaning data to meet requirements

### BENEFITS

- Visibility into retention requirements
- Identification of ROT for quick defensible disposition
- Compliance reports readily available within minutes

### ABOUT

- State of Vermont
- Montpelier, VT
- 8,000+ Employees



**“ActiveNav was very helpful. Being able to show how many resources are getting bogged down by files was eye-opening. Anything you want to do for records at scale, this is the right tool. The software really highlighted significant gaps in our internal workflows.”**



## A Clear Vision and Project Plan

VSARA chose to pilot ActiveNav because they want to strengthen the State of Vermont's records and information management program. They also want to gain more visibility into the makeup of state digital records and information. Finally, they want to prepare state agencies to apply record schedules to their digital records. This includes migrating records from state servers to the State's Microsoft 365 environment or the digital state archives.

Right from the start, the VSARA team, which included a partner state agency, had a clear set of goals they wanted to achieve. Using Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles® and the Information Governance Maturity Model, along with customized rules and workflows that could go across disparate systems and repositories, their objectives were to:

- Prepare state digital records and information for migration through customized rules and workflows
- Automate the indexing and classifying of state digital records and information
- Identify and delete state digital records and information that have met their retention requirements
- Facilitate compliance with legal recordkeeping requirements, including exemptions to public access

The State of Vermont handles large amounts of information that are subject to federal and state laws and regulations. VSARA wants to ensure that the State of Vermont has the tools necessary to readily identify records and information for continuous governance. More importantly, VSARA want to ensure that the State also stays in compliance as laws and regulations related to protecting personal, health, and tax information continue to evolve.

## Driving Action with Improved Visibility

ActiveNav's software was influential when communicating the risk present in the State of Vermont's digital records and information.

***"With our partner agency, we were able to generate out-of-the-box reporting very quickly. We uncovered a huge amount of personal work drives from former employees. All of a sudden, when the first-level reports showed that our partner agency had content that didn't belong to them on their shared drive, that's when engagement in the pilot really took off,"*** shared Tanya.

The initial pilot also provided concrete evidence of high levels of older content.

***"We found the majority of files indexed hadn't been modified in five to ten years. When half of the file shares we looked at are not unique files, then there are some practices that might be happening, beyond just record-keeping, that can be improved from an efficiency standpoint."***

Improved management and governance practices will allow the State of Vermont to leverage its records and information to meet mission-critical needs and better serve Vermont citizens.



**“We couldn’t have done this manually. I don’t think it’s possible at all to do the file analysis the way that ActiveNav was able to, even with some of the best practices and tools we have, including SharePoint.”**





## Seeing Information in a Different Way

The State of Vermont relies on its records and information for the betterment of its citizens. ActiveNav helped illustrate how the State could be transformed by better understanding what is in their files and not spending as much time figuring out how to manage records. ***“We want to make sure that the right people have the right information at the right time – all the time.”***

## Identifying and Protecting Sensitive, Personal Data

Regulated content, such as protected Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Federal Tax Information (FTI), and other records and information exempt from public inspection and copying needs to be found. They then need to be quarantined and mitigated to protect them from accidental or intentional destruction or alteration. ActiveNav highlighted where potential risks were hiding. ***“We were able to run a couple of different reports just to show an agency like our partner agency how much regulated content is kind of just sitting out there. Being able to demonstrate risk with the agency’s legal staff and privacy officer was eye-opening for everyone involved.”***

## Identification of Areas for Potential Cost Savings

IT infrastructure costs are a little opaque in the State of Vermont. The VSARA team was impressed with ActiveNav’s ability to drill down and learn how much storage was costing them.

***“We found we could use ActiveNav to take that large infrastructure cost and have it broken down into cost per gigabyte so our partner agency could see how much just keeping personal work drives of former employees was costing. The agency had no baseline and this was really helpful.”***

The other areas identified for costs savings centered around legal and eDiscovery: ***“Storage is not cheap when you’re spending thousands of dollars for eDiscovery requests or public records request response.”***





## Looking to the Future

After a successful pilot, the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration understands how ActiveNav is useful for discovering, mapping, cleaning, and actioning digital public records and information to ensure they are managed in accordance with record schedules.

They are confident that they can use lessons learned from the pilot to strengthen the State of Vermont's records and information management program, particularly in areas of information governance, digital records management, enterprise systems, and repositories at a statewide level.

### The Bottom Line

*"ActiveNav was very helpful. Being able to show how many resources are getting bogged down by files was eye-opening. Anything you want to do for records at scale, this is the right tool. The software really highlighted significant gaps in our internal workflows."*

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