The Process of Institutionalization of Electronic Records Management Systems in Universities: Ankara University e-BEYAS Application

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Abstract: ERMS (electronic records management system) applications are managed by making national/international standards, legal principles (constitution, law, regulation, implementing regulation, et al.) and other related arrangements/applications standard in accordance with the records management and archive system, however, these arrangements are not adequate alone. It is necessary to "structure" and institutionalize ERMSs by transforming into institutional systems. In the notification, the necessary studies which should be carried out in institutionalization of ERMS Applications, will be discussed in the context of Ankara University's "Electronic Records Management and Archive System" (e-BEYAS) Application.

Key words: Electronic records management systems, institutionalization, Ankara University, e-BEYAS application.

1. Introduction[1]

ERMS (electronic records management system) applications should consist of several variants such as the type, management and legal system of the university, its structure (nature) of management applications and administrative system, the traditions of the country, substructure of national records management and development level of records management activities in the country [1].

ERMS means to conduct all processes about the records like production of the records, signing it with electronic signature, destruction and archiving of the

records in electronic media. Considering this, it is understood that the electronic media, on which ERMS are conducted, in other words hardware and software are not adequate alone in order to manage electronic records.

The software in ERMS application should not only be a target for the institution, but also a means for meeting the requirements of the institution and complementing the application [2, 3]. However, ERMS software should be designed and developed according to national and international standards, records management and archive discipline in accordance with the requirements of the institution.

Furthermore, ERMSs, in which all processes about the records are conducted in electronic media, are institutional systems together with its technical infrastructure, work flows and processes, modules, system architecture and other elements. The elements of ERMSs depend on institutionalization and ability to keep this institutional characteristic depends on the institutionalization process.

Institutionalization standardizes the elements forming ERMSs according to institutional needs and

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desires and makes them peculiar to the institution by making them independent from persons. In institutionalization process, the studies carried out in institutionalization are protected and solidity and continuity of ERMSs, which is managed within the frame of long-term plan, purpose and target decided by the institution, has been provided.

In fact, the sample application of our study, Ankara University e-BEYAS application is not only a unique example of ERMS that is applied by being institutionalized in the universities in Turkey, but also an application that can be guide for developed ERMS or ERMS that will be developed in the future.

2. Ankara University e-BEYAS Application and Institutionalization

Since the universities are contemporary education institutions among the foundations and institutions, they are the ones where research and development studies are carried out frequently. Some studies are carried out on records management and archive procedures in universities. Among these studies, BEYAS[2] Model, which was developed by Prof. Dr. Fahrettin Ozdemirci and practiced in Ankara University, is a study that leads for records management and archive system in other institutions.

The successful practice of BEYAS model in Ankara University paved the way for transition of this model into electronic media. The project "Modeling of The Transition Process to Electronic Records Management and Archive System for Universities (e-BEYAS-M)"[3]

which is the second stage of BEYAS project was developed by Prof. Dr. Fahrettin Ozdemirci. The application studies of the project were carried out in Ankara University.

The requirements, organizational structure and work flow process of the university, and basic characteristics of Ankara University ERMS application were determined according to the data obtained in the studies on e-BEYAS-M project and BEYAS model applied in Ankara University.

In this context, Ankara University started to work through preparing the project of "Electronic Records Management and Archiving System"[4], in short "e-BEYAS", application in order to develop and implement its own ERMS application. e-BEYAS is a software and integration project which includes procedures of trainings and practicing through a software conducting establishment and institutionalization procedures in the university that enables transferring work flow of Ankara University into electronic media and producing, managing, accessing, preserving, archiving and reporting of records and documents in electronic media in accordance with the institutional structure and the concerned regulations by of applications [3].

e-BEYAS application, which is ERMS application of Ankara University, is an application completed by implementing following institutionalization works, but its institutionalization process is still ongoing.

• A project on e-BEYAS application was prepared, project plan and project team were created.

• Ways and methods that should be followed in preliminary/differential analysis studies were

determined.

• Preliminary/differential analysis was made through question-answer in rectorate units, all faculties/colleges/vocational schools/conservatories and all research and application centers.

• Some records flow, usage scenarios, work diagrams and schemes were determined in preliminary/differential analysis work flow processes. Records flow diagram [4], which was determined through institutional analysis, was formed according to the institutional structure by taking the Regulation on Official Correspondence Rules and Principles [5] and TS13298 Electronic Records Management Standard [6] as references.

The process of "records production", e-BEYAS application, in which electronic correspondence is created, sent, read, resent, answered and filed, consists of 6 (six) parts as editor, information, template, the associated record, concerned record and annexes. In information part, metadata of e-correspondence are defined. While file plan, theme, classification level of records, priority level of records, and approval flow metadata are defined as "obligatory field", the parts of information, requirement, duration and meaning of law (Right to Information Law, Normal and Personal Data Protection Law) are defined as "arbitrary" fields. The parts apart from arbitrary parts are "obligatory" parts. The obligatory and arbitrary parts are determined according to BEYAS IK 05 Regulatory Statute of Correspondence and document/record registration procedures of Ankara University [7].

• Units having different work flow and work process differences of these units were identified according to the main work flow process determined in the result of preliminary/differential analysis.

• In the preliminary/differential analysis, characteristics, annex types, densities of the records and the programmes from which the units take data/records were determined.

• In the preliminary/differential analysis, the differences between general records flow determined in universities and general records flow in ERMS determined by TURKSAT were specified.

• In the preliminary/differential analysis, general targets and expectations were identified.

• Logical model of e-BEYAS application was formed according to the results of the preliminary/differential analysis.

• Determining technical infrastructure requirements of the university thanks to E-BEYAS application, and necessary hardware, software and systems were bought.

• Numbering machines of e-BEYAS applications were determined.

• E-signatures, e-signature library, time stamp and other applications were obtained in order to use in e-BEYAS application.

• Statement and logo changes in the interfaces in e-BEYAS application software were changed within the frame of records management and archive discipline.

• Characteristics of test servers, where trials and tests can be made independently from live application servers, were determined and related software and applications were established on test servers.

• Codes of units, personnel, titles, duties and institutions, which are the basic data of e-BEYAS application, were prepared in the appropriate format of standard file plan, and transferred to e-BEYAS application.

• The roles in e-BEYAS application were determined by taking the personnel, who take place in usage scenarios of work flow processes in the preliminary/differential analysis, as reference.

• Dynamic system was used in flows and signature routes in e-BEYAS application.

• E-BEYAS responsibles were determined in the units.

• All guide, education and support documents concerning e-BEYAS application were prepared according to the user and manager of e-BEYAS application.
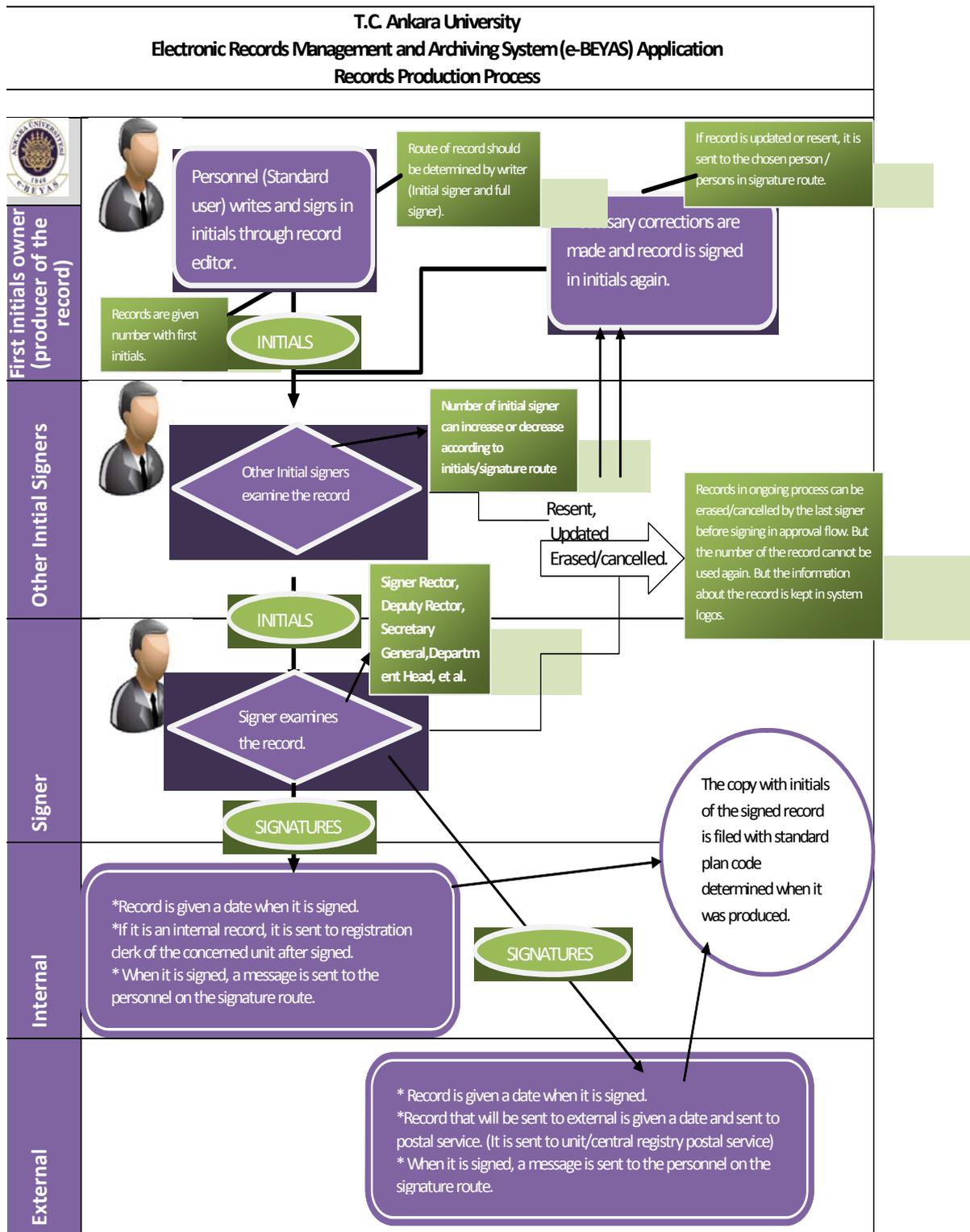
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Records Production Process

Fig. 1   The process of "e-Record production" in e-BEYAS application [4].

• In e-BEYAS application, trainings/informing/meetings were grouped according to the personnel and made in different periods.

• For the BEYAS and e-BEYAS models developed

by Ankara University, trademarks in the name of BEYAS and e-BEYAS Ankara University were registered.

• E-BEYAS application "call center" and "help desk" was established.

• An internet website (http://beyas.ankara.edu.tr) belonging to BEYAS Coordination Office was established.

• A training application of e-BEYAS, different from live e-BEYAS application, was developed in order to make the trainings more efficient and provide the personnel with trials in e-BEYAS applications.

3. Conclusion

To manage electronic records in ERMS application in a succesful way both depends on working type and organizational structure of the institution, and institutional needs and also is directly depends on the success of records management and archive system of the institution.

The success of ERMSs depends on:

(1) Correct and objective institutional analysis;

(2) Institutionalization process;

(3) Records management and archive system done previously in the institution.

Since electronic records management and archiving systems should be "institutional", in other words, each mentioned system should be "peculiar to the institution", these systems cannot be uniform ready to apply in every institution. A system designed, developed and applied for one institution may not meet the requirements of another institution. For example, it is a low possibility to be successful in

meeting the institutional requirements of an independent administrative authority for such a system designed, developed and applied for a university. In fact, institutional structure and activity area of each public institution and foundation is different from each other. Thus, different systems in order to meet different requirements are needed.

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