EUPA
Validation of Formal,Non-Formal and Informal Learning: The case study of Personal Assistants

2.5.1 Filling System Documentation and Databases

EUROPEAN PERSONAL ASSISTANT LEVEL 2

2.5.1 Use filing skills to maintain an established system

- Be able to maintain established manual and electronic filing systems **(LO016)**

Developed By: EDIT·C EDUCATION & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

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Module Details

Work Area Code:	2.5
Work area title:	Filling System Documentation and Databases
Unit Code:	2.5.1
Unit Title:	Use filing skills to maintain an established system
Learning Outcomes Ids:	LO016
Learning Outcomes titles:	• Be able to maintain established manual and electronic filing systems.
Recommended Duration:	4 hours
Trainer:	

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Filing systems

- The filing system used by a company demonstrates its level of organisation.
  - Due to the high volume of daily information received and sent, organizations develop and maintain a variety of filing systems, in order to keep track of each piece of information.

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Need for Filing Systems

- The goal of a filing system is to bring order and logic to the task of storing, and later finding, information.

- Filing Defined:
  - the process of designing, documenting and implementing standard procedures for classifying, sorting and storing information to assure cost-effective and timely retrieval.

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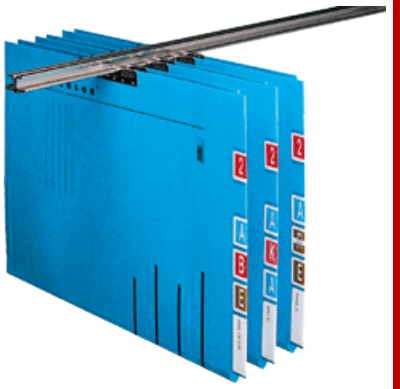
Complexity of filing systems

- Efficient filing systems are not always simple. The complexity of the system increases with:
  - Diversity of information in it
  - User needs
  - Volume of documents to be filed
  - Number of ways in which documents reach the office or (from the office) the recipients
    - Every filing system, even a simple one, is challenging to develop. The system designer must predict the users' needs for information and organize files to meet those needs.



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A note on terminology

- In electronic filing we use the following terms:
  - An electronic document is a file
  - A group of files is a folder
- When we speak about paper based documents and filing systems
  - We usually use the word file (box file) to refer to a group of paper documents
- In this presentation we use the word file to indicate a group of documents, that is a folder.

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Types of documents/ records

- Different types of documents
  - Contracts
  - Billing documents
  - Curriculum Vitae documents
  - Absent leaves
  - Expenses
  - Personnel Documents
  - Email
  - Fax
  - SMS
  - Social Network invitations and messages
  - Confidential archives

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Special Types of documents/ records

- *Special Records:* Records in a non-standard format may require special handling, special filing equipment and attention to particular media requirements. Special records include:
  - Electronic records
  - Audiovisual records
  - Cartographic and imagery records
  - Architectural and engineering records
  - Microforms

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Filing systems today

- Documents can be stored:
  - Electronically (locally on a PC, or on a server)
  - Paper based in filing cabinets, box files etc
  - Some companies are dependent entirely on electronic filing systems where data is organised in an efficient way. This may be also be done in accordance with companies' environmental policies.
  - Most of the companies use a combination of both
    - It is important to note that the philosophy of both systems should match.
  - Some more traditional companies still use the paper based system only.

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The philosophy of a filing system

- It is about
  - How you name your electronic documents
  - How you group your documents
  - How you sort your documents

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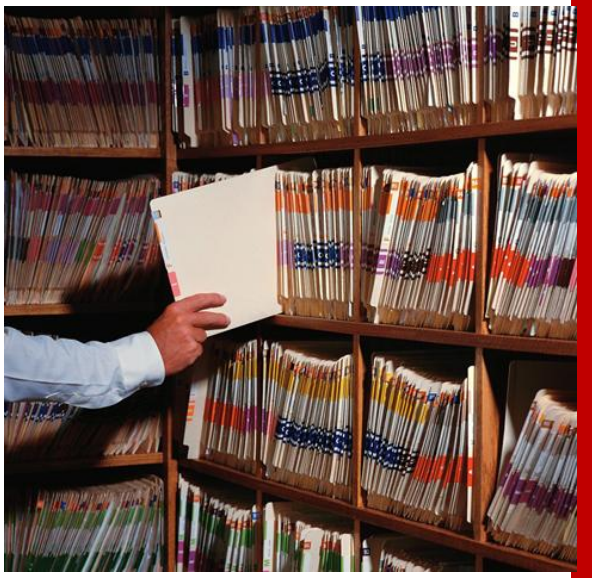
Naming electronic documents

- Usually there is a company policy
  - Eg [Year]_[Month]_[Date]_Title
    - 2012-09-03-Reply _to_HRDA
  - Or [Customer]_[Date]
    - Bank_Of_Cyprus_2012_05_15



- Note the following:
  - Never use a comma or a dot in the file name
  - Avoid full capitals
  - Some times the document name is printed in the footer of the document
  - ALWAYS RESPECT THE COMPANY POLICY

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Grouping documents

- Several methods of grouping
  - By project
  - By entity (eg. by customer, by supplier, by employee etc)
  - By year
- Grouping depends on your line of business
  - And there is no right of wrong. You need to establish your policy and keep it.

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Sorting the documents

- Filing systems utilise one of the following methods of sorting the files:
  - Alphabetically
  - Geographically
  - Subject
  - Chronologically
  - Or other

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File Code

- The purpose of coding is to assign a unique identifier and physical location for a file.
- Code Design
  - Physical order of the file should be evident from the code.
  - The code should also indicate other features of a file such as the department, the year of creation, the main entity it relates to etc.

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File Index

- A file index is a cross-reference tool, containing filing features under which a document may be filed. Information searching systems are based on an index.
  - Several types of separate indexes may be developed. Some are manual indexes on cards, or a computer index which may provide for several levels of indexing, by various data elements.
    1. *Numeric Index*
    2. *Alphabetic Name Index*
    3. *Keyword Index*

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File Index

- In an electronic filing system, the index is a table identifying keys to retrieving records in the file.
- All electronic filing systems require an index. It serves these purposes:
  - Identifies file folders, specific documents or data elements by their primary and other filing features to provide the searcher with elements needed to locate an item in the system.
  - Arranges items in some searchable order: alphabetical, numerical, chronological, or otherwise systematic.
  - May or may not reflect the physical order of the files. May instead serve as a cross-reference to the physical order.
  - May satisfy a part of the user's reference needs without requiring the user to actually retrieve the file or review a particular document.

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Electronic filing

- Electronic record-keeping is the operation of record systems in which a computer is required for the user to create, work with, or delete records. Electronic records are often called "machine readable records" because machinery is required to use them.
  - Electronic recordkeeping offers the potential advantages of:
    - Automated searching and indexing of records,
    - Faster records processing speed,
    - High ratio of records to storage space,
    - Ease of distribution through electronic data transfer,
    - Labour savings

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Responsibility for filing systems

- Every filing system is a challenge to develop. Management should assign this responsibility to a capable individual.
- An outside consultant or expert may provide technical assistance but will not be around to offer continuity during files implementation stages.
- A person within the organization is needed to offer needed continuity and insight into agency informational needs. The individual needs to be able to devote time to the project without feeling that other duties are suffering.

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Physical location of files and documents

- In a specific room:
  - With the right environmental conditions to protect the documents
- In a server
  - Software
  - Drive
  - Directory and Sub-directory
  - File name
  - File name extension
  - Floppy disk
- Outsource
  - Companies that keep the documents safe somewhere far away from the companies. This clients is most of the time banks and confidential public authorities.

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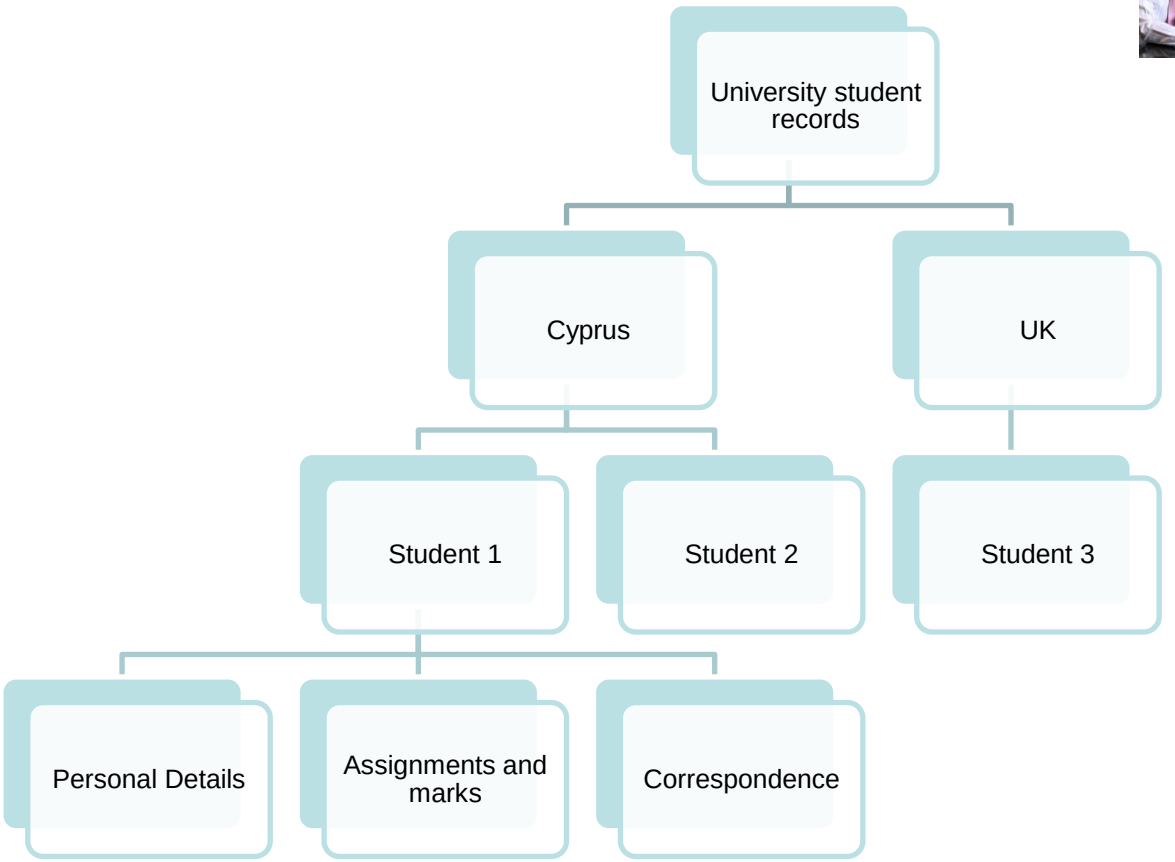
Example of a filing system



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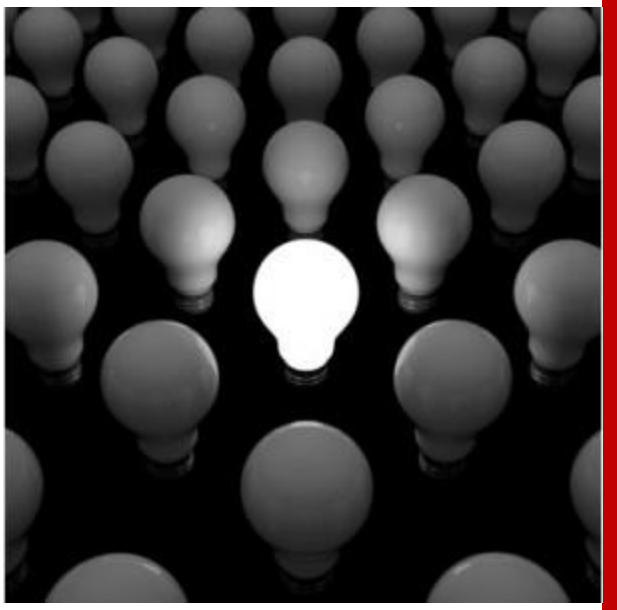
Some good practices

- Use a control of documents where you keep a copy of each document which arrives to the office (irrespectively of where it will be filed)
  - In this way you ensure that even if it was filed incorrectly you can still find it
- You can store all documents that were sent from the office to customers/suppliers etc in a different file
- Use an index for both files



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Exercise

- Imagine you work with a company that deals with imports and distribution of furniture.

- Suggest a filing system for this company.

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Methodological tool

Practice Filing Systems

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