Since becoming the first court in Australia to implement an electronic court file (ECF), the Federal Court has been acknowledged as a global leader in the practice of managing electronic court documents and received a number of awards in recognition of this achievement. Having accomplished the digitizing of its Court case files the Court has now turned its attention to the challenge of digitizing the Court's administrative records held in its Principal and eight district registries.

The Court is tackling this task with the rollout of Knowledgeone's RecFind 6, an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) and the RecFind digital application product the' Button'. These products are assisting in the capture and classification of a range of corporate records including emails and administrative documents.

Lyn Nasir, the Courts Records Manager, said the Court is committed to the recently released Digital Continuity 2020 policy, which builds on the Digital Transition Policy and aims to transition Australian Commonwealth agencies to digital information management.

The new policy encourages agencies to continue progress made under the Digital Transition Policy and move towards efficient digital information governance and management.

To achieve this end, the Court extended its use of their existing RecFind 6 system to transition from paper based files to a fully digital environment.

Documents for retention are now saved in RecFind; the Court's endorsed EDRMS, in digital format only. From January 1, 2016 paper files will no longer be the Court's accepted format.

The Court's relationship with RecFind goes back to 1993, when it managed the physical court case files in the Court's Queensland registry. From there its use was extended to track all court case files around the country.

While the Court case files are now electronic, RecFind 6 still manages all the physical court case files created prior to the digitization process.

Many case files began in the paper era and are yet to be resolved, for example Native Title case files, so the ongoing management of paper records held on site or with external providers is important.

Meanwhile the digitizing of the administrative files has been moving quickly and has now been rolled out to all the registries of the Court.

Each registry has its own file folder profile in RecFind 6 for adding administrative records, while access to the information is controlled by registry security groups that are created within the RecFind 6 security model. Additional levels of security can also be created within each registry to manage access to confidential information.

To assist users in making it easier to capture digital records the Court committed to an enterprise wide rollout of the RecFind 6 'Button', which is now the primary tool used to add emails and electronic documents into the RecFind repository.

Having the RecFind 6 Button embedded in the Office applications makes it easy for staff to save documents, and particularly emails, directly to a virtual file within RecFind 6. Since implementing the RecFind 6 solution, the Court has found some obvious benefits – particularly around management of emails.

"This has made the management of emails so much easier, as previously emails were only kept for 30 days before being archived in a vault system, which made retrieval very time consuming" said Lyn Nasir. "Now we can access all emails directly from within RecFind 6".

Lyn also sees the benefits of having one repository for all the Courts administrative records and files, rather than having information duplicated in several places. She feels that once staff are confident in the knowledge that documents stored in RecFind 6 can be easily found and retrieved, they will no longer keep copies on shared drives and within Outlook folders.

The Court is also considering the RecFind SharePoint integration platform for capturing finalized documents in SharePoint.