Adventures in Digitization

THE ELECTRONIC LAND FILES
PLAYBOOK Chapter 2

2022
Version 1.0

Bringing Order to The Chaos: The Next Step in Your Digitization Journey

Digitization of information is more important than ever. With remote and hybrid work environments becoming common practice, access to information and large quantities of data is essential. Ensuring employees can easily find the information they need, when they need it is imperative to maintaining efficient, productive and profitable operations.

In 2021, CAPLA and Access partnered together to release "Adventures in Digitization – Electronic Land Files (ELF) Playbook". This resource provides a roadmap to guide organizations through their respective digitization journey and navigate the various stages required to join the digital world, where accessing information is seamless, regardless of location.

The resounding response from the CAPLA membership, as well as the energy industry in North America, validated how needed this resource was at this moment in time. We also heard that our readers wanted more details, especially as they relate to metadata, folder structure and naming conventions. In other words, with the millions of documents and files that are typically part of any energy company, there is a need to bring order to the chaos.

The CAPLA Technology and Innovation Committee set to work on "Chapter 2" of this playbook, which dives deeper into the best practices of how to set up a method of organization that will help companies easily access and use their data. The Committee's mandate is to:

> "Promote awareness and increase knowledge around systems and data
> to maximize the use of technology to improve efficiencies and streamline
> processes by providing educational opportunities and resources."

Drawing on a wealth of experience from our Committee members, as well as the depth of resources and knowledge from Access, we have created a follow up to the original digitization roadmap, our original ELF playbook. As you continue to evolve and bring more structure to your information management programs, this will be a valuable reference to guide you through those important next steps.

Thank you to our Committee members who have spent countless hours developing this content, and our deepest appreciation to Access for its commitment and support of CAPLA.

Enjoy this next phase of your digitization journey,

Deb Watson

Deb Watson
Executive Director, CAPLA

Hi, I'm Phila!

Your personal Document Assistant. Let's begin.

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WATCH FOR TIPS FROM OUR EXPERTS!

ABOUT THIS PLAYBOOK

Bringing order to your information unlocks its value. Without a method of organization, your information is essentially lost to you. The utility of your information directly corresponds to the quality of your method. Within this playbook, we cover the three main components that are foundational to an organizational method, including:

- **Folder Structure**
- **Naming Conventions**
- **Metadata**

Within each section, you will find guidelines, practical examples, system considerations and impacts, and expert tips. Our virtual assistant, Phila, also provides helpful insights.

Folder Structure

Folder structure is the backbone of organizing your data and information and will help reduce clutter. The simpler your folder structure, the easier it is to find the information you seek. Think how important it is to have strong structure with physical files — it's no different for digital files. As you design your folder structure, think about how users will look for information.

It is also essential to ensure that your folder structure is consistent across all data. Not only will it be easier to access current information, but future retrieval and archiving will be much more efficient.
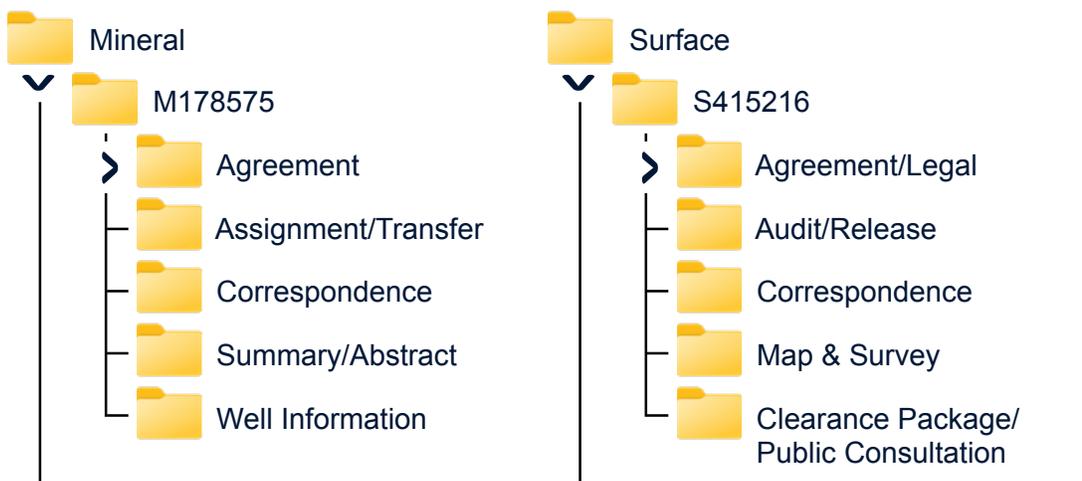
Phila Says

It is useful to mirror the organization's folder structure within the working directory as well.

GUIDELINES

- **Keep it simple. Limit the number of levels created to no more than five.**
- **Avoid creating folder structures that may be subject to change over time such as area-based teams.**
- **Replicate the structure of physical file naming for consistency and ease of transition from paper.**
- **Consider naming the parent folder for each file the same as the primary identifier/file number.**
- **Gain agreement on the name for each folder section, document that and do not deviate.**

EXAMPLES

Mineral
  M178575
    Agreement
    Assignment/Transfer
    Correspondence
    Summary/Abstract
    Well Information

Surface
  S415216
    Agreement/Legal
    Audit/Release
    Correspondence
    Map & Survey
    Clearance Package/Public Consultation

Level 1 – Discipline

Level 2 – File Number/Primary Identifier

Level 3 – File Section

Pros

- Folders sort in numerical order making it easy to spot if there is any duplication.

- A relatively flat folder structure facilitates easier access if drilling down to find information.

- Maintaining the same structure as the physical file makes the transition from paper more manageable and requires less retraining.

Cons

- This templated folder structure may be too rigid to accommodate exceptions, changes, or differences between legacy and new formats.

SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS AND IMPACTS

It is highly recommended that you link the source system at the file level so any changes, additions or deletions do not require individual and manual attention.

It is helpful to store objects or placeholders that represent available physical files in the same folder at level 2 (the file number or primary identifier level).

Consider the length of the file and folder names, especially if it will be used as the naming convention for potential PDF files and folders within the entire system. Typically the combined length of the PDF name and any corresponding folder/system path names during the conversion process must be less than 244 characters. Long file/folder name combinations may cause issues with downloading and storing files.

Naming Conventions

Naming conventions make it easier to identify your files when you name files in a way that describes what the file contains and how it relates to other files, such as version, date, etc. Think about how users will access information. If it is by date, that information should be first in the file name, but if it is by content or topic, ensure that appears first in the file name.

GUIDELINES

- **Keep it simple. Try limiting the name to include a maximum of three key pieces of information.**

- **Focus on using information that is static.**

- **Try to use information that is unique to the document itself.**

- **Include a primary identifier that can also be used as a parent folder name within the folder structure.**

- **Ensure uniqueness and consistency by using the international date standard format (YYYY-MM-DD).**

- **Have your organization agree on specific document titles, document it for easy reference, and update it as needed.**

Phila Says

Avoid use of any special characters in naming (such as : /, *, &, \ ) that could cause issues within Windows.

EXAMPLES

M173387__2014-05-27 __Lease

DOCUMENT LEVEL
(recommended for active/go-forward records)
**File Number Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
Document Title**

S415216__1972-02-17 __Correspondence 1972-01-11 to 1972-02-17

PANEL LEVEL
(recommended for legacy/inactive/correspondence records)
**File Number Last Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
Document Title/Date Range**

Pros

- File names sort in chronological order regardless of whether there is a folder structure.

- Limit length of characters in the naming convention to facilitate easier file copying and exports.

- Format is technology agnostic and can easily be migrated to new systems, environments, and upgrades.

- Use static information that is not subject to frequent changes or updates to limit maintenance requirements.

- Avoid the need to manually synchronize files by using information that is unique to the document itself and avoid duplication of attributes that are already in your source database/system.

Cons

- With no logical primary identifier, it can be difficult to determine what the first part of the naming format should be.

- If the same document is associated with multiple files, it would need to be copied and re-named for each file, although this can be automated through a .CSV upload.

SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS AND IMPACTS

Use of the 'space-dash-space' between key elements of the file name can facilitate effective descriptions and more searchable metadata elements. If OCR has not been applied, searching text across large numbers of documents becomes limited to the name/metadata used.

Use of a standard "delimiter" between file name segments, such as an underscore, allows for potential parsing of file name, if needed, and will assist with searching and file retrieval. For example, M173387_2021-05-27_Lease.

Metadata

At its most simplistic, metadata is data about data. It tells you what the contents are within a file or folder. The more consistency and order you can put into your metadata, the more effective it will be at helping users access the documents they need.

In building the index and metadata tags, you must first understand who is searching, how they do their work and how they search for things.

GUIDELINES

- **Pull in searchable metadata from your source systems where possible.**

- **Keep it simple. Avoid using any more than five pieces of searchable metadata.**

- **Focus on information that facilitates business searching as system metadata is already collected.**

- **Try using key words that are unique to the document itself, or optionally use your system or database structure.**

- **Metadata may be automatically applied to documents within a folder through inheritance.**

- **Consider including metadata to help manage document lifecycle requirements including termination and retention.**

- **Have the organization agree on required metadata, document it for reference, and update it as needed.**

- **Think ahead – design for the future state of your collection and ensure scalability.**

Standardize metadata values to fixed list values, if possible, to ensure consistency with naming (e.g., file type, document type). Establish formatting rules for each metadata field (e.g., dates). Allow for subjectivity and typos for any manually keyed or extracted values (e.g., document name).

EXAMPLES

- **File Number**
- **File Type**
    Contracts
    Leases
    Other
    Sale Agreements
- **Document Type**
    Agreement
    Assignment/Transfer
    Correspondence
    Due Diligence
    Financial
    Well Information
    Map & Survey
- **Document Date**
- **Document Title**

BUSINESS METADATA
(Mineral)

- **File Number**
- **File Type**
    Leases, Right of Ways
    Easements
    Sale Agreements
- **Document Type**
    Agreement/Legal
    Correspondence
    Map & Survey
- **Document Date**
- **Document Title**

BUSINESS METADATA
(Surface)

Consider how metadata will be controlled after imaging is complete, to ensure CGSB compliance. For example:

- Audit log to track any metadata changes.
- Establish controls to restrict metadata from being modified.
- Add controls to ensure metadata stays attached to, and/or accessible for corresponding electronic documents.

- **Batch ID**
- **Imaging Tech**
- **Source**
- **Group**
- **Release Date**
- **Source Type**

SYSTEM METADATA
(Imaging)

- **Date and Time Created**
- **Created By**
- **Size**
- **Date Modified** *(if applies)*
- **Owned By**
- **Record Classification/ Retention**

SYSTEM METADATA
(Repository)

SYSTEM CONSIDERATIONS AND IMPACTS

Consider a variety of search options or tools that can be created as well as how metadata can be leveraged to enhance document retrieval and filtering. Associated metadata can be exported as a .CSV file to accompany digital files for divestitures and applied to any new system.
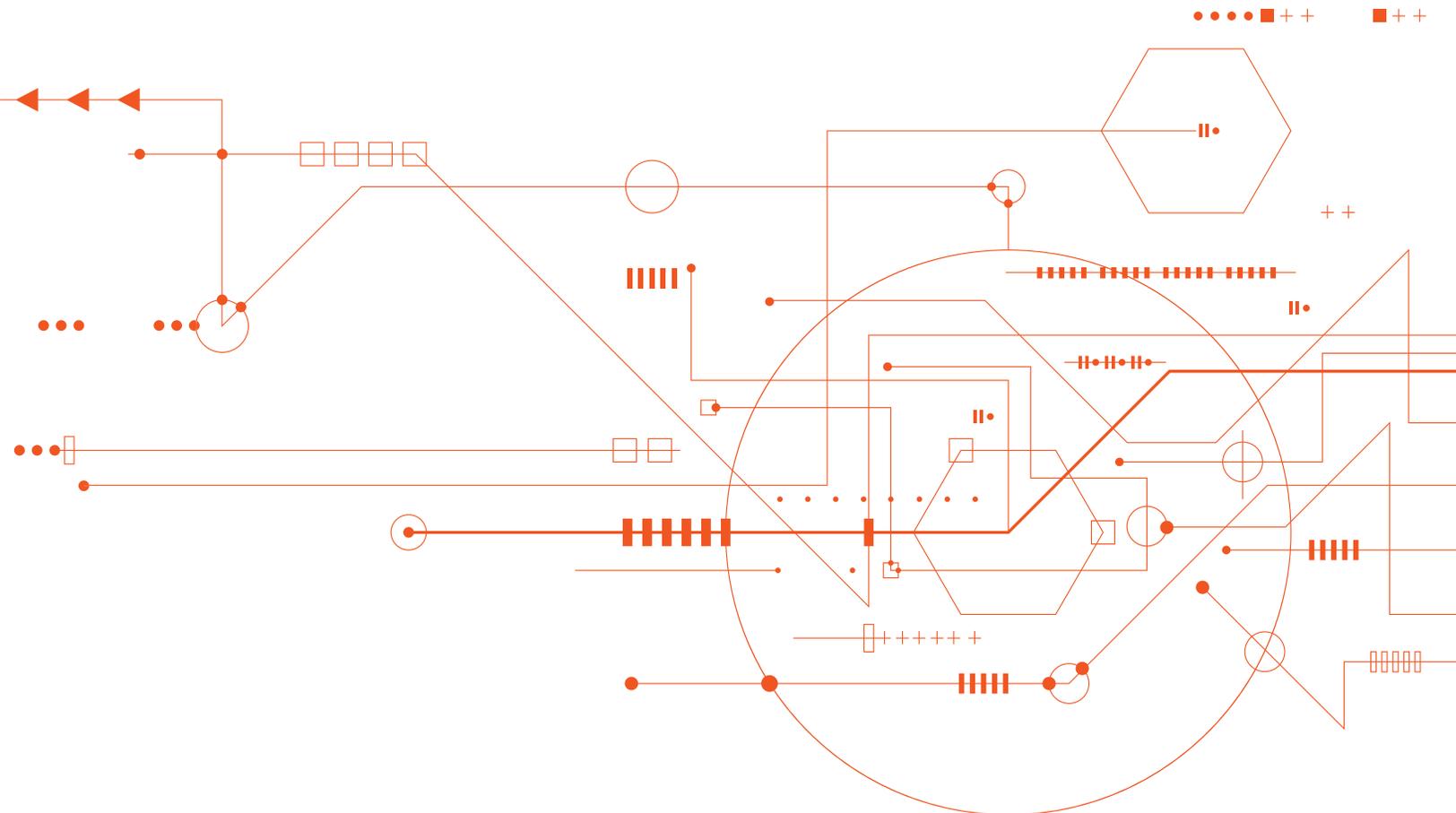
Metadata Indexing and Structure: Bringing Order to the Chaos

https://www.accesscorp.com/blog/metadata-indexing-and-structure-bringing-order-to-the-chaos/

Enabling World Class Quality Scanning and Digitization in a Remote Work World

https://www.accesscorp.com/blog/enabling-world-class-quality-scanning-and-digitization-in-a-remote-work-world/

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CAPLA
Canadian Association of Petroleum Land Administration

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Access

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