

**Case Study Number:** 11 **System Type:** Records Management Software  
**Title:** FOREMOST Records Management System  
**Institution or Agency:** Government of Canada  
**Unit:** Department of the Solicitor General, National Parole Board

**Case Study Conducted by:**

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**Duration of Study:**

January 27, 2000-April 3, 2000 (Round 1 of case Studies)

**Functional Responsibility of Respondent(s):**

1. Managing information and information holdings.
2. Managing systems.

**Summary of System Information**

**Business Context:** The FOREMOST System supports all business functions of the National Parole Board (NPB), and is controlled by the Information Management Division. The National Parole Board is an agency within the Ministry of the Solicitor General, which also includes the RCMP, CSIS and the Correctional Services of Canada. The National Parole Board, which was created in 1959, is an independent administrative tribunal, which makes conditional release and pardon decisions and recommends for the exercise of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy. The National Parole Board exercises exclusive authority over parole and certain aspects of conditional release of federal offenders (i.e. offenders serving a sentence of two years or more) and over parole of provincial offenders in all provinces and territories. The National Parole Board follows the specific legal requirements defined by the Criminal Records Act (CRA) and the Corrections and Criminal Release Act (CCRA), as well as in the administration of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy for the Governor-general of Canada. Other relevant requirements are specified in the Access to Information Act and Privacy Act.

**Description:**

**Form, Content and Requirements:** A record in the FOREMOST system always consists of two components: a document and a document profile. The records in the FOREMOST System are restricted to those created by commercial off-the-shelf software products, such as word processing packages and e-mail. The National Parole Board (NPB) also uses other automated control systems dedicated to specific NPB functions, such as the Offender Management System (OMS), which documents the parole process and the Clemency and Pardon System (CAPS), which documents the issuing of pardons. Records filed in FOREMOST can include discussion or analysis of NPB functions (in e-mail messages, memos, correspondence, reports, etc.). Types of records included in the FOREMOST System can be correspondence (e-mail, memoranda, letters); reports (including statistics, graphs, charts) and supporting documentation; spreadsheets; presentations; forms. FOREMOST also controls audiotapes of hearings and certain completed standardized forms. The National Parole Board has created standard forms for use in the office environment that are filed to FOREMOST, i.e. Employee Leave Forms and Notification of Pardon Granted/Revoked (an internal notification record from headquarters to the regions). FOREMOST also constitutes the main depository for records generated by Clemency and Parole investigations that the National Parole Board carries out; these investigations would be undertaken in other jurisdictions (i.e. other countries). All the National Parole Board staff can issue records, within the parameters of their job description. The official responsible for the FOREMOST application is the Director, Information Management Division; working-level authority is held by the Chief, Information Holdings. The Criminal Records Act (CRA) specifies the program services to be offered, i.e. parole, programs, hearings, release, supervision; the content and structure of the records contained in FOREMOST are not, for the most part, dictated by the legislation to the extent that operational systems such as the Clemency and Pardon System (CAPS) and the Offender Management System (OMS) are.

Access to FOREMOST is limited to the National Parole Board staff at Headquarters; users require an account that is password protected. Users must have the appropriate security clearance to see confidential records; only users who have an operational "need-to-know" can access specific file classification blocks, such as human resource records that are available to Personnel staff only; users can be restricted in the actions they can perform in Foremost (i.e. be restricted to read-only access). Foremost maintains audit-trails.

The National Parole Board's retention periods for operational records average 10-15 years; retention periods for the documents stored in FOREMOST are identical to those for the paper files. Retention periods must reflect requirements set out in relevant legislation such as the Criminal Records Act (CRA) and the Corrections and Criminal Release Act (CCRA). The National Parole Board's operational records are appraised by the National Archives of Canada and selected records are identified for transfer to the National Archives at the end of the operational life. Records held in the FOREMOST system are subject to Records Disposition Authority 94/035.

**Characteristics and Appearance:** The languages used are English and French, with some alphanumeric coding. Records can contain words, numbers, drawings, images, and sounds, although words and numbers currently predominate. Records exist in electronic and paper form. Some records and users can employ watermarks; neither seals, digital time stamps or electronic signatures are used. The author is the individual who creates the content of the record and is identified in the document profile. The place of origin is not necessarily identified, but it can be inferred. The addressee can be expressed. Annotations are used.

**Technical Information:** The records are maintained on a Compaq 3000 (with 9 x 4.3 gigabyte SCSI drives) separate from the application server. Backup of the records are made onto tapes. The records are maintained on the National Parole Board Headquarters Local Area Network. The principal application software for the system is FOREMOST V.7.0.2. The profile data and the digital objects (i.e., documents) are managed by SQL Server 7.0. In the context of the Electronic Document and records management software, records may be also created in any number of proprietary software packages. There are two file structures in the system, one for the profile data and one for the digital objects being managed by FOREMOST. The Operating System provides security via a Domain Administrator.

**Additional Information:** Daily and weekly back-ups are stored on-site. Monthly back-ups are stored off-site at the Federal Records Centre operated by the National Archives of Canada.

Overview compiled by:  
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