



Introduction

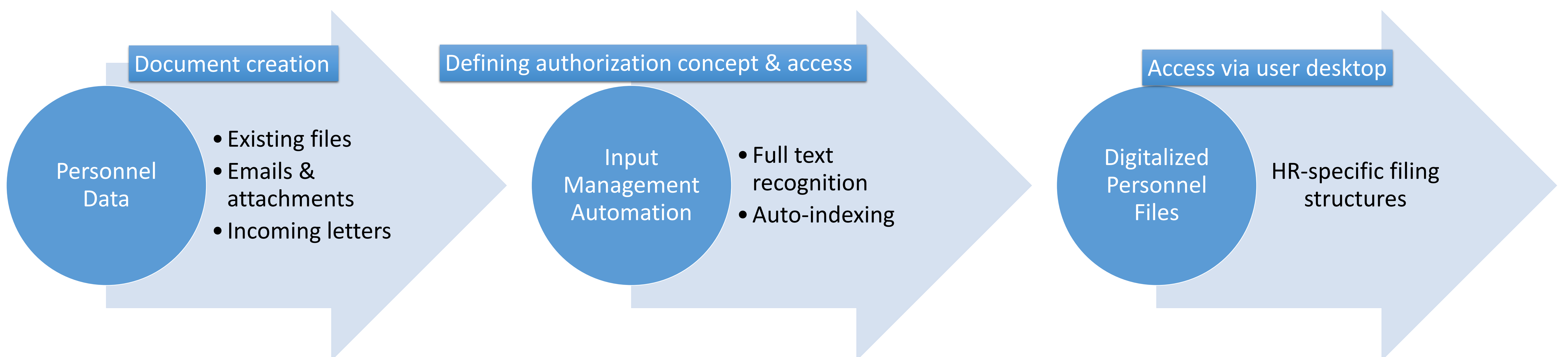
The fundamental nature of work is changing with automation, digital platforms and other innovations¹. Recognizing the increasing local talent shortages, the public healthcare is moving towards leveraging on technology to increase productivity. Likewise, the Human Resource Department of SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) has embarked on automating tasks that are tedious and laborious via the digitalization of employee personnel files.

With the aim of increasing productivity and improving experience of searching through physical employee personnel files (P-File), SHP-HR Department set about our journey of P-file digitalization. By converting P-Files from hardcopies into digital formats, an increase in productivity and efficiency has been observed. In addition, P-File digitalization also reduces physical space needed in the workplace for the storage of P-Files.



Methodology

SHP-HR maintains close to 1,200 P-Files of employee lifecycle management for the entire organization. All P-Files are stored in a secured room and only authorized HR staff has access to the room. Anecdotal evidence shows that a typical HR staff spends, on average 20 minutes per day filing and searching for paper documents, files and emails. This translates to close to 2 hours a week of the typical work week is lost in filing or searching for documents. Hence, gives rise the reason for digitalization of employee P-Files whereby electronic documents are organized in a structured environment allowing targeted search results without spending time going through pages.



The current traditional method of storage is progressively replaced by P-Files digitalization. Of which, the digitalization process is within the legal boundary of the Evidence Act² under stringent controls of converting physical P-Files into electronic P-Files. The outputs reside in the SingHealth network and can be remotely accessed securely by multiple authorized HR users across different locations. Thus, easing the effort of information retrieval and eliminating misplacement/ loss of documents.



Results

With the completion of the digitization efforts of the P-Files records for the Nursing, Pharmacists, Allied Health, Administration & Ancillary staff categories, SHP-HR has reported the following:

- HR staff are able to engage in higher value work as manual efforts of identifying records, annual archiving of documents, extracting records from P-Files or retrieval from warehouse are reduced.
- Higher staff productivity as the digitalization can support multi-users of different sites to access P-Files' records. This leads to greater response time in the retrieval of electronic records and transmission of required information to stakeholders.
- Better optimization of space constraints with the need for lesser physical storage cabinets for P-Files.
- For business continuity, the digital records support the ease of record retrieval in disaster recovery and back-up at any time remotely;
- With the adoption of digital records, it enables institution to be future-ready for flexible work arrangements and preparing for the digital economy.



Future Developments

The management of an employee lifecycle is a strategic personnel task and SHP-HR had embarked on the journey of P-Files digitalization in early 2016.

The initial digitalization efforts which the organization has undertaken create opportunities for future developments. Potentially, HR staff with authorized access are able to access electronic P-Files and any electronic employees' records via the smart phones. Intelligent search options according to the preferences of HR staff through full-text searches, the navigation or predefined queries can be enhanced to access the requested information quickly and directly from the desktop.

The digital P-File of an employee can potentially integrate into the HR system environment to support collaborative processing and approval processes for increased efficiency and timely completion of important tasks.

1. Gaskell, A. 2018, *New Report Explores the Forces Affecting The Future Of Work*. Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adigaskell/2018/02/09/new-report-explores-the-forces-affecting-the-future-of-work/#20c64d1143b1>
2. Evidence Act (Cap 97)