

# Merak UPDATE

Paper archiving  
Digital archiving  
Media storage  
Film storage  
Software escrow  
Demagnetising  
Vital documents

16

## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT EXTERNAL ARCHIVING MANAGEMENT

### Quantity or quality?

Search for an external archive manager and you immediately notice that there are not that many specialists in the sector, but rather a handful of very large companies. Perhaps you have received offers from these companies during the past weeks. Lucrative offers: a service "close to you" at an exceptionally low cost. But ... what safety guarantees are they offering you?

#### Quality first

Merak is not a multinational: the six Merak offices in Belgium are centrally located on the Antwerp-Brussels axis. And do you know what the greatest advantage of that is? We are close to you, no matter where you are located in Belgium, both with our mental focus as well as our physical locations. Result: you receive a high-quality service customised to your individual needs, with watertight guarantees. Not on a global scale, but right here ... where you need that assurance.

#### Six locations

Where does Merak store your documents? In a strictly secure infrastructure. Every one of them an efficiently designed building: two in Mechelen and one each in Merksem (Antwerp), Vilvoorde, Overijse and Meer. With systems which can prevent potential damage or restrict this to the minimum. Fire, natural disasters, power failures or even an E-bomb: we don't take any risks - because the integrity of your documents is at stake. And for us, that is sacrosanct.

### More than just storage

*As your external archive manager, we offer you a wide package of services. Merak does much more than just store your papers and tapes. Together, we convert your archive into a practical working tool with which your employees can get going quickly and easily.*

#### Efficient = paying less

We keep you informed about mandatory retention periods. Are these expiring? If so, we ask for your permission to destroy your data. This way your archive only contains the relevant documents at all times. You only pay for what is really necessary and your archive never comes apart at the seams.

#### Digitalisation of archives

Do you want to get working with your data even faster? Or do you want to save space? We digitise your documents and also store - if required or desired

- the originals. You can manage the information via secure internet connections, find what you are looking for quickly, and immediately continue with your work, so that you avoid wasting time and benefit from the ease of use.

#### Quickly on your desk

Order a part of your archive and our courier delivers it to your desk within the agreed time. Your data travels in air-conditioned vans so that, for example, your tapes can gradually reach the usage temperature

during the journey: this considerably reduces the risk of tape breakage. At the same time, security procedures ensure that your archive ends up with the right person responsible for these - and nowhere else.

#### Advice = your solution

Archiving issues sometimes prove to be very difficult. Thankfully, Merak has solutions for a complex relocation, consolidation of different archives, digitising of thousands of originals, etc.

**MERAK: STORAGE AND  
MANAGEMENT OF ALL  
DATA CARRIERS**



## Safely archived, safely returned

Merak offers you a fast and orderly way to archive documents... and return them to you. We ensure the security of your data and safeguard them under optimal conditions. We summarise the simplicity of the system for you using photographs.



1 Fill the anonymous Merak box or case with your archive documents. The box has a life cycle of 25 years and protects your documents against splashes of water and against light.



2 The Merak courier picks up your archive. Every box or case has a unique code. He scans this with a barcode reader to register it directly into the system.



3 Upon arrival at the Merak location, there is a second, automatic security check. After that, your archive is sent to air conditioned storage spaces equipped with a security system against fire or intrusion.



4 To guarantee the privacy of your data, your archives are spread randomly across the warehouse. Without a unique key, nobody knows where your documents are located.



5 You can always check the condition of your archive online. Merak also offers you the option of digitising your archive immediately. In this way, you save space and you can always consult or download documents via the internet.



6 We archive your vital documents and medical samples in specific safes. We protect your digital carriers against dangerous radiations by storing these in our underground bunker.



7 "Dead" archives without a detailed inventory can be stored in secure containers at a low cost. Old archives are destroyed strictly in accordance with your regulations.



8 View your archive in a comfortable consultation room. Every Merak location has a number of such rooms, where you can work discreetly and undisturbed.



9 Do you need physical archive documents? A Merak employee retrieves them for you from the shelves. He scans the codes with his barcode reader and checks the confirmation returned by the system.



10 To maximise your privacy, the courier also checks the codes just before he delivers your boxes or cases. Result? Your data will never end up in the wrong hands.

# Merak - the year in figures

"Merak is only a Belgian company: it can't amount to that much, surely...." You would be surprised. Shall we just illustrate this? We collected some telling figures about the company activities between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009. Absolute figures are of course nothing more than absolute figures. Though they do prove that Merak, as a "local archive manager", is not as small as one would think.

## 60,133 assignments executed

Here, "assignments" may be interpreted very broadly. It can involve the retrieval and return of one folder or making an inventory, or packing and storing 50,000 files. Small or large, each assignment receives our full attention because the difference is in the details. You enjoy the same ease of use as with an internal archive and where possible, even more.

## 985,128 kg destroyed archives

Along with the customer, we keep an eye on the legal retention periods. If these have expired, and with the approval of the customer, we destroy the documents. However, we do this such that the information - even later on - can never end up the wrong hands, whether this involves papers or electronic documents.

Make an appointment with our experts or visit

[www.merak.be](http://www.merak.be)

Merak guides and advises you during each step of the process.

Result: an archive with maximum returns.

**Testimonial: AXA**

# "Integration went off flawlessly"

Myriam Van Driessche, Head of Facilities

*The present AXA Belgium is the result of a number of integrations and takeovers.*

*Myriam Van Driessche: "All these original companies had their own way of archiving via internal and external solutions. Merak advised and guided us during the centralisation of all those documents. Within a few weeks, they correctly archived thousands of archive boxes at their sites, without disrupting our daily operations."*

## Long-term storage

"Merak manages a very large part of our archives, both for our bank as well as our insurance activities. They collect the documents from our various Brussels and Antwerp branches. This primarily involves 'dead archives', which we store for a long time. Legal regulations stipulate that certain documents must be stored for five years, ten years, ... even lifelong. These are only retrieved sporadically. But if this happens, these documents are of course crucial. Merak then delivers them quickly and punctually at the concerned location."

## Big task, minimal worries

"For the external archives, we follow the privacy requirements also applicable for our internal operations. Merak succeeds in guaranteeing these requirements because they allow only those persons, who are directly responsible, to enter their warehouses. And they build in various security systems. As a result, we know that our thousands of boxes are safe.

You notice that the rest of their service is as painstakingly organised. They collected all the

scattered documents from the various former archive managers. Without those documents thereby becoming inaccessible for our people.

Merak drew up an inventory of the documents and repaired old boxes that were damaged. Now they provide additional ease of use via the online management module, which simplifies communication.

The entire conversion to this system went off in a flawless manner - despite the scale of the project."

## More in-depth cooperation

"How do I see the cooperation evolving? Together with the Merak managers, we continuously analyse what can be further improved. In the short term, we want to introduce extra stops, if possible: extra addresses where the courier collects documents.

At the same time, we are studying the possibilities for a further digitalisation. If we could send the archive documents electronically, in conformity with the legal provisions, that would provide even more work comfort."

### Tailor-made security

*AXA Belgium has more than three million customers: private persons, SMEs and large companies. They can approach about 6,000 employees daily for banking and insurance solutions that are customised to the needs in each phase of their life or development.*

### Brokers and agents

*The AXA Agencies are further completed by a network of 5,000 insurance brokers and 950 independent bank agents. The services and products offered provide guarantees in the area of insurances, pension provisions, savings needs, loans and asset management. AXA belongs to the largest insurance groups in Belgium.*

### International basis

*AXA Belgium is part of an international group, active in 56 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, boasting 210,000 employees and 80 million customers worldwide.*

# Tailored to your archive

Which medium do you use the most: paper, tape or optical carriers? Merak has the resources and expertise to store each carrier under the best conditions. Your data remains in top form, even when this involves a mixed archive. We then ensure that each part is stored in the right storage environment. And of course, delivered to you again as a whole.



## Paper archive

When you hear the word "archive", you usually think first of yellowed paper. At Merak, you develop a new view of the matter: all storage spaces are equipped with a precise air conditioning system. At the same time, the white Merak boxes protect your paper against dust and moisture. As a result, "yellowing" is almost completely a thing of the past.

## Media storage and computer backups

There are specific requirements for the storage of electronic data. Naturally, here too we guarantee an optimal air conditioning and in addition, we store your carriers in protective cases. But the greatest villain is electromagnetic radiation. That is why we have built an E-bunker, deep under the ground and with meters-thick concrete walls. The ideal place to store your digital data in absolute safety.

## Medical archive

Pharmaceutical and medical archives often contain more than just paper. Samples, chemical substances and X-rays are certainly as important. We store each part of your laboratory archive for you in the correct way for as long as the law stipulates or you want it - sometimes as long as thirty years. This way, you have archive documents in optimal condition at the time when it really matters.

## Vital documents

Do you need to be doubly certain? We store your vital documents in an archive bunker. That is the safest place within our infrastructure which is, in itself, hermetically secure. The bunker contains your notary deeds, original manuscripts, unique pen and ink drawings, etc., all additionally protected against heat of hundreds of degrees Celsius, water damage or attempted burglaries.

## Is Merak expensive? Or why do others seem cheaper?

Service plus service equals two: is everything going well? Then you're happy with a cheap contract. But what happens if there is a fire, flood or your company's data is erroneously delivered? What guarantees does your archive manager offer against these calamities?

### ISO standard

Merak is straightforward with its customers: we are happy to prove it to you on paper. For example, with our ISO 9001:2008 certificate. Furthermore, there is the ISO /IEC 27001 nomination. We also offer you a clear logbook in which all actions regarding your archive are recorded, so that you know precisely what happens to them.

### The biggest or the best?

Merak is not the biggest archive manager in the world. And this is a good thing. Because sometimes, being big comes at the expense of quality. And on that level, we make no concessions: you deserve

the best care. That is why there is no active expansion policy, but rather a constant search for improvements. So you can benefit even more from a smooth approach.

### Safety prevails

You receive periodic updates about possible changes in legal provisions for archiving via an addendum to our information brochures and on our website. This helps you know precisely which documents you need to store and for how long. Haven't received any free brochures yet? Request your copy now. With this, you will always stay in line.

### Clear prices

How certain are you of the cost price of your external archive? At first sight, a provider's offer may appear to be a chance of a lifetime. But have you also paid heed to possible hidden costs? At Merak, we are very transparent in that area: you know in advance what the budget for our service amounts to, with no surprises.

*Conclusion: compare ... and only buy quality*