



Electronic Records Management Guidelines

GLOSSARY

Application: A piece of software that performs a function; a computer program.

Architecture: The design and specifications of hardware, software, or a combination of thereof, especially how those components interact. An enterprise-wide architecture is a logically consistent set of principles that guide the design and development of an organization's information systems and technology infrastructure.

Archive: To transfer records from the individual or office of creation to a repository authorized to appraise, preserve, and provide access to those records. *Computing* — Data stored offline and retained for recordkeeping purposes; *also* — A backup that supports restoration of the entire system after a disaster.

Archives: The division within an organization responsible for maintaining the organization's records of enduring value; can also refer to government agencies such as the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH).

Authenticity: The judgment that something is genuine, based on internal and external evidence, including its physical characteristics, structure, content, and context.

Backup: A copy of all or portions of software or data files on a system kept on storage media, such as tape or disk, or on a separate system so that the files can be restored if the original data are deleted or damaged. In information technology, archive is commonly used as a synonym for backup.

Backward-compatible: The ability of a software program or piece of hardware to read files in previous versions of the software or hardware.

Bit rot: Also known as data degradation, it is the gradual corruption of computer data due to an accumulation of non-critical failures in a data storage device. Overtime, the bits and bytes (the 1s and 0s) of computer data will reverse until the data is no longer readable. This is another reason digital files must be migrated and converted at least every 10 years.

Bitmap (BMP files): A relatively low-quality digital image file format, used most often in word processing applications. BMP format creates a lossless compression. Files end with a .bmp extension.

Bits: The smallest discrete units of digital data. Short for binary digit.

Blu-ray: A high-capacity optical disc medium similar to CD and DVD. It was developed to record, store, and playback video and audio at higher resolutions and storage capacities than DVDs or CDs.

Browser: A browser is an application program that provides a way to look at and interact with all the information on the World Wide Web. Popular browsers include, but are not limited to, Internet Explorer, Netscape, Firefox and Mozilla.

Byte: Eight consecutive bits of digital data.

Checksum: A checksum is a count of the number of bits in a transmission unit that is included with the unit so that the receiver can check to see whether the same number of bits arrived. If the counts match, then one can assume that the complete transmission was received.

Compact Disk (CD): A type of optical disk storage medium, compact disks come in a variety of formats. These formats include CD-ROMs that are read-only, CD-Rs that you can write to once and are then read-only, and CD-RWs that you can write to in multiple sessions.

Compound document: A document with multiple elements (e.g., images, text, animation, hypertext).

Compression: A process, using special software, that reduces the file size of a given electronic file.

Content management system (CMS): Software, policies and procedures that collect, manage and deliver information for an enterprise. Content management may include records management as a function of the overall system.

Convenience Copy: All copies of a document that are not the “official” or “record” copy. These are secondary copies of any document and do not need to be kept for any set amount of time.

Conversion: Changing a record’s file format, often to make the record software-independent and in a standard or open format.

Digital Asset Management System (DAMS): A system for organizing, storing, and retrieving electronic files (both born digital and digitized).

Digital Audio Tape (DAT): A type of digital storage media, DATs are in a cartridge format a little larger than a credit card. The industry standard for DAT cartridge format is a digital data storage (DDS) cartridge. DDS cartridges provide sequential access.

Digital Linear Tape (DLT): DLT is a high speed magnetic tape and drive system in cartridge format that can hold up to 70 Gigabytes of data. *Super DLT* can hold up to 100 GB on a single cartridge. DLT offers significant speed and storage advantages over DAT.

Digital certificate: A file issued by a certificate authority that binds an individual or organization to a public key so that the identity of the individual or organization can be authenticated.

Digital data: Data that consist, at their most basic level, of 0s and 1s.

Digital Obsolescence: A situation where a digital asset is no longer readable because of its archaic format. This can be due to its software or its hardware. For example, the floppy disk drive was ubiquitous in the 1990s but floppy disk drives are no longer available in modern computers. Digital obsolescence is one of the main reasons digital files must be migrated or converted every 10 years.

Digital signature: Extra data appended to a message identify and authenticate the sender and message data using public-key encryption. A digital signature (not to be confused with a digital certificate) is an electronic signature that can be used to authenticate the identity of the sender of a message or the signer of a document. Digital signatures can also be used

to verify that the original content of a message or document is complete and unaltered.

Digital Versatile Disk (DVD): An optical disk with more storage capacity than CD-ROMs. DVDs are also called digital video disks, but do not necessarily include video. They are accessed using a DVD drive attached to a personal computer. No single standard exists therefore several varieties of DVD are available to consumers.

Digital Versatile Disk — Random Access Memory (DVD-RAM): Rewritable DVD disks with exceptional storage capacity.

Digital Versatile Disk—Read Only Memory (DVD-ROM): These DVDs are pressed and molded, non recordable read-only disks that also have enough storage capacity for a full-length feature film. Most of these drives are backward-compatible with CD-ROMs and can play DVD video disks.

Digital Versatile Disk-Write Once (DVD+R, DVD-R): DVD-Rs and DVD+R's can be written to once and are then read-only.

Digital Versatile Disk + Rewritable (DVD+RW, DVD-RW): DVD+RW and DVD-RW is a direct competitor to DVD-RAM with similar functionality and slightly greater storage capacity. They permit the erasing of earlier information and the recording of new material in the same location on the disk.

Disposition: Either the destruction or permanent retention of a record as authorized by the Public Records Act.

Document: Information or data fixed in a medium. A document has content, context and structure. It is not limited by media or format type and may, in some instances, qualify as a record (see *Record*).

Dublin Core metadata set: The Dublin Core metadata standard is a simple element set for describing a wide range of networked resources. The Dublin Core standard includes

two levels: Simple and Qualified. Simple Dublin Core comprises fifteen elements; Qualified Dublin Core includes an additional element, Audience, as well as a group of element refinements (called qualifiers). The semantics of Dublin Core have been established by an international, cross-disciplinary group of professionals from librarianship, computer science, text encoding, the museum community, and other related fields of scholarship and practice.

Electronic document management system (EDMS): Electronic document management systems are programs, procedures and/or software that manage, control and provide access to electronic documents. EDMS provide document version control, collaborative work environments, indexing, and some access controls but do not usually incorporate records management processes. EDM systems usually focus on streamlining work flow.

Electronic mail (e-mail): Electronic correspondence sent from one user to one or more recipients.

Electronic record: As defined by the South Carolina Uniform Electronic Transactions Act [UETA] (*Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, Section 26-6-10 through 26-6-210*) an electronic record is “a record created, generated, sent, communicated, received, or stored by electronic means.”

Electronic record management system (ERMS): A software application coupled with program and procedures that prevents the modification of records and permits deletion based on records retention rules. An ERMS provides a secure records repository that preserves the business context of an individual record.

Electronic signature: As defined by UETA, “an electronic sound, symbol, or process attached to or logically associated with a record and

executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record.”

E-mail account: An email account includes an email address and mailboxes. Incoming emails are held in your mailbox and accessed via an email client.

E-mail client: A program that can retrieve email from an email account, allowing a user to read, forward, delete, reply to, and manage email messages.

Erasable Optical (EO) disk: The user can write to, read from, and erase from EO disks as often as they can magnetic disks. EO disks require special hardware.

Extranet: A type of Internet site to which organizations allow only selected external access.

File name: The name of a computer file independent of location.

File path: The location of a computer file as it is stored in a series of directories.

File transfer protocol (FTP): A set of formal rules used to exchange files between computers.

Forward-compatible: The ability of a software program to create files that can be read by more advanced versions of the software.

Freedom of Information Act: The South Carolina Freedom of Information Act [FOIA] (*Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, Section 30-4-10 through 30-4-165*) supports government accountability by ensuring the right of citizens to inspect or copy public records. The establishment of fees, formal public notification, and restrictions limiting public disclosure of certain records is covered.

Free-text search/Full-text search: A document searching function that searches every word in a document or specified group of documents.

Geographic Information System (GIS): A system of hardware and software used for storage, retrieval, mapping, and analysis of

geographic data. A GIS can be as complex as whole systems using dedicated databases and workstations hooked up to a network, or as simple as “off-the-shelf” desktop software. A GIS is able to combine and overlay separate layers of geographic data, making it a valuable tool for organizations needing to map and analyze spatial information.

Gigabyte: 1,024 megabytes, or 1,024,000,000 bytes, of digital data.

Gopher: A URI protocol used primarily in academic and governmental settings that is rarely used today. HTTP and the World Wide Web supplanted Gopher as the primary means to transfer information.

Graphics Interchange Format (GIF): A digital image file format, GIF supports color and grayscale. Limited to 256 colors, GIF is a lossless compression more effective for images such as logos and graphics rather than color photos or art. It should be noted that although the format is widely used, it is technically proprietary. GIF files end with a .gif extension.

Group list: A list of names and e-mail addresses, organized into a group, that enables the e-mail message sender to enter only the group list name when sending an e-mail message to the group list members.

Hypertext: Connected associations that users make to incorporate and organize large amounts of information content. Hypertext links are fundamental to the Internet.

Hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP): A set of rules used by computers to transfer files on the Internet.

Information: Organized data in various formats including text, images, sounds, motion, codes, computer programs, software, and databases. Information that has content, context or structure may qualify as a record (see also *Document*).

Instant Messaging (IM): A service that permits individuals to quickly exchange electronic

messages with selected others in an informal manner that mimics conversation among users and computers. The Internet relies on TCP/IP network protocols to facilitate data transmission and exchange.

Intranet: A network belonging to an organization that is accessible only by the organization's members, employees, or others with authorization. Intranets are protected by a firewalls to prevent unauthorized access.

Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG): A digital image file format, JPEG is a lossy compression technique for color and grayscale images. Depending upon the degree of compression, the loss of detail may be visible to the human eye. Files in JPEG format end with a .jpg extension.

Kilobyte: 1,204 bytes of digital data.

Linear Tape-Open (LTO): Linear Tape Open is an open standard magnetic tape system similar to DLT in capacity and speed. LTO's standardized format allows interoperability between tapes and tape drives made by different manufacturers

Long-term value: Applies to records established as useful and/or significant to an individual or organization for 10 years or longer.

Lossiness: The degree to which data are lost during file compression.

Lossless compression: Refers to data compression techniques in which no data are lost.

Lossy compression: Refers to data compression techniques in which some amount of data is lost. Lossy compression technologies attempt to eliminate redundant or unnecessary information.

Mailto: This protocol is used for e-mail exchange.

Magnetic disk: A type of digital storage medium, magnetic disks include the hard disk found in your computer that stores the

Internet: The vast network of computer systems that enables worldwide connectivity programs and files you work with daily.

Magnetic disks provide random access. Also included are removable hard disks, floppy disks, zip disks, and removable cartridges.

Magnetic tape: A type of digital storage medium; magnetic tapes come in reel-to-reel as well as cartridge format (encased in a housing for ease of use). The two main advantages of magnetic tapes are their relatively low cost and their large storage capacities (up to several gigabytes). Magnetic tapes provide sequential access to stored information, which is slower than the random access of magnetic disks. Magnetic tapes are a common choice for long-term storage or the transport of large volumes of information.

Master: An item from which duplicates are to be made. (see *Original*)

Megabyte: 1,024 kilobytes or 1,024,000 bytes of digital data.

Metadata: Data about data. Information (e.g., creator name, creation date) that is used to facilitate intellectual control of, and structured access to, other information.

Migration: Moving files to another computer platform which may require changing their formats.

Near-line storage: Storage in a system that is not a direct part of a network, but that can be accessed through a network.

Off-line storage: The storage of digital data outside a network (e.g., on backup tapes) only accessible through an offline storage system.

Official copy: (see *Record Copy*)

On-line storage: The storage of digital data as fully accessible information on a network.

Open source software: Computer source code made public so that anyone can copy, refine, and redistribute free of distribution restrictions, not necessarily free of charge.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR): OCR is the recognition of printed or written text characters by a computer. This involves applied by libraries, businesses, and government agencies to create text-searchable files for digital collections.

Original: The most authentic form of a document, based on the assumption that any copy involves some loss of fidelity. An original may have preceding versions, which may themselves be considered distinct originals. Such an assumption is questionable in the electronic environment, where a sequence of digits may be demonstrated to be identical although the display of those digits may vary depending on the system used to view them.

Personal Storage Table (PST): An open proprietary file format used to store copies of messages, calendar events, and other items within Microsoft software such as Microsoft Exchange Client, Windows Messaging, and Microsoft Outlook.

Persistent uniform resource locator (PURL): PURLs are functionally Uniform Resource Locators. They act as an intermediary for the URL of a web site by redirecting the client browser to a PURL server instead of the web site host server. The PURL server associates the PURL with the real URL and returns the web page to the viewer's browser.

Pixel: A unit of measure used to describe the size or resolution of an image. A pixel may be represented by a single bit.

Pixel Bit-Depth: Defines the number of shades that can actually be represented by the amount of information saved for each pixel. These can range from 1 bit/pixel for binary (fax type) images to 24 bits per pixel or greater in high quality color images.

Platform: A group of technologies that are used as a base upon which other applications, processes, or technologies are

analysis of the scanned-in image, and then translation of the character image into character codes, such as ASCII. OCR is being developed. Gmail, Microsoft Outlook, Facebook and Twitter are examples of platforms.

Portable Document Format (PDF): PDFs are useful for viewing and printing documents and images. Commonly used to capture, distribute, and store electronic documents, PDF preserves the fonts, images, graphics, and overall "look" of the original digital files. As with the GIF format, the PDF format is proprietary, although widely used. Files in PDF end with a .pdf extension.

Portable Document Format-Archive (PDF-A): An open standard, PDF-A was developed by the Adobe corporation with governmental and independent advice. The format is intended for electronic data archiving and excludes proprietary and executable codes.

Portable Network Graphics (PNG): A lossless digital image file format, PNG files are designed to replace GIF files. The format is completely patent and license free and is of higher quality than GIF. PNG files can be ten to thirty percent more compressed than GIFs. Files in PNG format end with a .png extension.

Public record: FOIA affirms that a "public record" includes all books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings, or other documentary materials regardless of physical form or characteristics prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by a public body."

Public Records Act: The South Carolina Public Records Act [PRA] (*Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976*, Section 30-1-10 through 30-1-140, as amended) governs the management of all public records created by agencies or entities supported in whole or in part by public funds in South Carolina.

Raster graphics: A type of graphics file that stores the images as a collection of pixels. Also called bitmapped images.

Record: UETA defines a record as “Information that is inscribed on a tangible medium or that is stored in an electronic or other medium and is retrievable in perceivable form.” *also* — Information created or received during the course of government business that becomes part of an official transaction.

Record copy: The single version of a document that is designated as the official copy for reference and preservation.

Recordkeeping: The act or process of creating, maintaining, and disposing of records. (see also *Records management*)

Records continuum: An archival concept that reduces the distinction between current and historical recordkeeping. The records continuum promotes cooperation between records managers, archivists and creators in identifying and managing records.

Records life cycle: A concept for the management of records used by records managers and archivists. The life cycle recognizes distinct stages of a record’s life including creation, maintenance and use, and disposition.

Records management: The planning, controlling, directing, organizing, training, promoting, and other managerial activities related to the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of records. (see also *Recordkeeping*)

Records retention period: The length of time a given records series must be kept for administrative, physical, legal and historical reasons, expressed as either a time period (e.g., four years), an event or action (e.g., audit), or a combination (e.g., six months after audit).

Records retention schedule: A document describing records by series that specifies the length of time required for their maintenance and final disposition. General schedules are

designed for records that are common to many government offices. Specific schedules are designed for records that are unique to one government office. Both may be applied to agency records.

Records series: Records arranged according to a filing system or kept together because they relate to a particular subject or function or result from the same activity.

Reliability: The quality of being consistent, dependable and worthy of trust. A reliable record is one whose contents can be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities or facts to which they attest and can be depended upon in the course of subsequent transactions or activities.

Resolution: A measure of the sharpness or detail in an image or optical system. The greater the resolution, the higher the quality of an image. Factors such as the size of the display device also affects overall sharpness.

Server: A computer on a network that is dedicated to a particular purpose and which stores all information and performs the critical functions for that purpose.

Social Media: Interactive, computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation or sharing of information, ideas, career information, etc. via virtual communities and networks.

Tagged Image File Format (TIFF): A digital image format, TIFF supports black and white, gray-scale, and color. TIFF is a non-proprietary format offering the option of lossless compression. TIFF files are usually indicated with the .tif extension.

Telnet: An access protocol that provides the user remote control (not just access) to another computer. Most commonly used for interactive, text-based sites.

Terabyte: 1,024 gigabytes or 1,024,000,000,000 bytes of digital data.

Transfer protocol: A series of commands that defines how information is formatted, retrieved, and delivered. Usually used in reference to information transferred over the Internet.

Uniform Electronic Transactions Act: The South Carolina Uniform Electronic Transactions Act [UETA] (*Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, Section 26-6-10 through 26-6-210*) facilitates electronic commerce and electronic government services by legally placing electronic records and signatures on equal footing with their paper counterparts. The law does not require the use of electronic records and signatures but allows for them where agreed upon by all involved parties.

Uniform resource identifier (URI): A short text string that describes an item on the Internet. Also known as the resource's "address."

Uniform resource locator (URL): A type of URI scheme that allows users to access resources on the Internet.

Uniform resource name (URN): A type of URI scheme that is designed to serve as a persistent, location-independent resource identifier.

Vector graphics: A type of graphics file that stores the image as a collection of geometric formulas.

Vital record: A record that is essential to the organization's operation or to the re-establishment of the organization after a disaster.

Voice mail: A highly sophisticated, computerized system for receiving, recording, saving, and managing voice messages.

Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP): A term used for a set of facilities that manage the delivery of voice information in digital form using the Internet Protocol (IP).

Web site: A collection of Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs) in the control of one administrative entity. May include different types of URIs (e.g., file transfer protocol sites, telnet sites, as well as World Wide Web sites).

Web site snapshot: The capture of a complete web site using special software.

Workflow: A series of tasks or procedural steps required to complete a process. In digital imaging systems, workflow is divided into stages. Each stage contains a series of tasks that must be completed before moving on to the next stage.

World Wide Web: Computer network consisting of a collection of internet sites that offer text, graphics, sound, and animation resources through the hypertext transfer protocol (http) for viewing with a browser.