



DOCUMENTING GOVERNMENT

PROMOTING HISTORY

SECURING RIGHTS



Electronic Government Records Tips

www.statearchivists.org

- To safeguard the rights of citizens and ensure public trust, all government agencies, employees, and contractors must prioritize records management, records preservation, and access.
- Assume information you create to conduct agency business is a government record unless your jurisdiction's state archives and records management authority (RMA) advises otherwise.
- Follow all applicable laws pertaining to records in consultation with your state archives and RMA.
- Develop/update retention schedules for your office's records, to establish where records are and how long they must be kept.
- Conduct annual reviews of your electronic record holdings to keep an updated inventory.
- Avoid splitting copies of electronic records among local workstations and network storage, so that it is not difficult to confirm which constitutes the record copy if a legal challenge arises.
- Digital content tends to require migration at least once every decade. Consequently, identify at-risk files or file systems during regular reviews and assess migration plans before relevant vendor contracts expire or systems become obsolete.
- Save electronic records with long-term retention in reliable, open formats, such as JPEG, TIFF, PDF, MP4, MOV, EML, and MBOX.
- Avoid compression of records that may have historical value or that may need to be accessed more than five years in the future; upgrades in computer technology will likely make compressed files more difficult to view.
- Focus on the security of your network and the ownership rights of records stored in the cloud. Contracts should explicitly specify that the government retains ownership of any content in the custody of a vendor.
- Before contracting with a provider of digital records management solutions, ask for references and reach out to others who have used that vendor in the past.