

A

Accession

The transfer of legal and physical custody of permanent records from an agency to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

Active Records

Records used to conduct current Agency business and are maintained in office space and equipment.

Agency Records Officer

The individual responsible for overseeing the overall recordkeeping programs of a Federal agency. This person coordinates with NARA, the agency head, and subordinate records liaison officers.

Appropriate for preservation

The term applies to records suitable for filing, storage, or systematic maintenance by the agency.

Archivist of the United States

The head of the National Archives and Records Administration, who oversees records management in the Federal Government and authorizes disposition of all Federal records.

B

Born-digital

The term refers to materials that originate in a digital form.

Business Information

All documents, files, and other information required to carry out an agency's mission. Not all business information items are legally Federal records, but all Federal records are considered business information. An example of non-record business information would be a copy of a meeting announcement kept for reference purposes. Such information still needs to be managed and may be legally discoverable.

C

Capstone

NARA's new approach to managing email records through automated systems, as opposed to print and file systems.

Classification

A method used in computer science, library science, information science, and records management to assign a document to one or more classes or categories according to its *subject* or according to other attributes (such as document type, author, date of correspondence, etc.)

Classification Scheme

In metadata a classification scheme is the descriptive information for an arrangement or division of objects into groups based on characteristics which the objects have in common (e.g., Keywords, File Locations, etc.)

Content

The information contained within the records itself that was produced by the creator of the records.

D

DOD 5015.2 Standard

Design Criteria Standards for Electronic Records Management Software Applications. It sets forth mandatory baseline functional requirements for Records Management Application (RMA) software used by the Department of Defense (DOD) components in implementing records management programs; defines required system interfaces and search criteria that RMAs shall support; and describes the minimum records management requirements that must be met based on current National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) regulations.

Discovery

Part of the pre-trial litigation process during which a party may request relevant record or non-record information in an attempt to “discover” pertinent facts.

Disposal

The procedure of destroying a record in adherence to a records retention schedule authorizing its destruction.

Disposition Date

A cut-off date that projects when a document can be disposed of and/or deleted from an electronic records management system.

Disposition Schedule

A document that describes agency records, establishes a period for their retention by the agency, and provides mandatory instructions for what to do with them when they are no longer needed for current Government business. The disposition schedule must be approved by NARA before it is effective. Also called a records schedule, records disposition schedule, records control schedule, records retention schedule, records retention and disposition schedule, or simply schedule.

Document Presevation

See ["Hold"](#).

Documentary Materials

Documentary materials means all information used to document agency decisions or actions, such as ledgers, meeting minutes, and official directives.

E

Electronic Discovery or e-Discovery

Part of a government investigation or pre-trial litigation process during which a party may request relevant record or non-record information in electronic format (often referred to as electronically stored information or ESI) in an attempt to “discover” pertinent facts.

Electronically Stored Information (ESI)

Information created, manipulated, communicated, stored, and best utilized in digital form, requiring the use of computer hardware and software.

Evidence

Evidence means documentation of the organization, functions, and activities of an agency.

F

Federal Records

Informally, all materials, regardless of physical form, made or received by a Government agency or in connection with the transaction of public business.

File Plan

Office guidelines that describe what to file, how to file it, how to make records more accessible to program staff, and the proper disposition of records when no longer needed for current business.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

A law created to allow public access to certain records, subject to restrictions. The act applies only to Federal agencies and does not create a right of access to records held by Congress, the courts, or by state or local Government agencies.

Freeze

See "[Hold](#)".

G

H

Historical Value

Historical Value refers to the measure of significance of a record that justifies its permanent retention and accession to NARA (also called Archival Value).

Hold

A hold (or freeze) is a process that an organization uses to preserve all forms of relevant information when a government investigation is being conducted or when litigation is reasonably anticipated.

I

Inactive Records

Records that are not needed for current business are generally maintained in less expensive off-site storage.

Information Asset

A body of knowledge that is organized and managed as a single entity.

Information Governance

The set of multi-disciplinary structures, policies, procedures, processes and controls implemented to manage information at an enterprise level, supporting an organization's immediate and future regulatory, legal, risk, environmental and operational requirements.

Information Retrieval

The area of study concerned with searching for documents, for information within documents, and for metadata about documents, as well as that of searching physical storage units, electronic records management systems, and relational databases.

Information Value

The usefulness of information documenting the persons, places, things, or matters dealt with by an agency.

J

K

L

Life-Cycle Management

Life-cycle management in records management refers to the following phases of a record's lifespan: Creation/Receipt, Classification, Maintenance, and Preservation (Archives) or Disposal.

Litigation Hold

See "[Hold](#)".

M

Made

Made means by agency employees, including documentary materials circulated by them.

N

Native File

The term *native files* refers to user-created documents, typically in Microsoft Office formats.

O

Optical Character Recognition (OCR)

OCR is the electronic conversion of scanned or photographed images of typewritten or printed text into computer-readable text.

P

Permanent

A record deemed by NARA to be worthy of preservation in the National Archives forever.

Personal Files

Documentary material maintained in Federal offices that belongs to an individual because they relate solely to an individual's own affairs or are used exclusively for that individual's convenience and were not used in the transaction of Government business.

PDF

Portable Document Format (Adobe)

Predecisional

Predecisional correspondence are those that are antecedent to the adoption of an agency policy.

Preserved

Preserved refers to filing, storage, and systematic maintenance of document materials performed by the agency.

Q

R

Received

Received means documentary materials accepted or collected by agency employees.

Record

A document that represents proof of existence and used to recreate or prove state of existence, regardless of physical form.

Records Custodian

The person within an individual office tasked with records management duties, such as ensuring records are listed in the file plan and advising staff on records-related issues.

Records Liaison

An individual who helps coordinate records management at the component level, ensuring individual offices receive guidance from the agency records officer.

Records Management

The planning, controlling, directing, organizing, training, promoting and other managerial activities related to the lifecycle of records, which are conducted to achieve adequate and proper documentation of federal policies and transactions, and effective and economical management of Agency operations.

Records Officer

An individual responsible for overseeing the overall recordkeeping programs of a Federal agency. This person coordinates with NARA, the agency head, and subordinate liaison officers.

Regardless of physical form

Regardless of physical form refers to the fact that records may be kept as paper, film, disk, or in another physical type or form. This is simply legal language to include any new technology that might come about in the future.

Retention Period

The period of time a record should be kept or retained both electronically and in paper format. (Also see "[Disposition Date](#)")

Review of Records

A procedure involving the analysis and evaluation of records to determine whether the records should be destroyed or archived after the end of its retention period or disposition date.

S

Section 508 Compliance

Section 508 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act, requiring Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities.

Scanning

The process of converting paper documents into a digital format as a surrogate of the original.

Schedule

See "[Disposition Schedule](#)".

Subject Files

The alpha-numeric filing system arranged by subject-matter used to control how data is stored and retrieved, in both electronic and paper format.

T**Taxonomy**

The practice of classification of things or subjects, including the principles that underlie such classification.

Temporary

A records deemed by NARA to have a certain lifespan - from very short to many years long - after which it will be destroyed.

Trustworthy

You can be reasonably sure a document is free from tampering, that is, it has been handled correctly throughout its life, and that its security was never compromised.

U**V****W****Working Papers**

Documents such as rough notes, calculations, or drafts assembled or created and used to prepare or analyze other documents. These documents can sometimes be records and require management.

X**Y****Z**