

GLOSSARY OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT TERMS

Access – permission, ability and opportunity to use a record

Active records – records that continue to be used with sufficient frequency to justify keeping them in the office of creation; current records.

Administrative value – the usefulness of a record to an organization in the conduct of its daily business

Alphabetic-subject filing system – a system for ordering topical headings in strict alphabetical order, rather than classifying them on the basis of intellectual relationships

Alphanumeric – belonging to a character set composed of letters and digits.

Alphanumeric filing system – a method of classifying documents or materials for storage &/or access using letters and digits

Appraisal - the process of evaluating records based on their value to an organization, particularly when used to determine if the records have permanent historical value

Archival value – having enduring value; permanent – the long-term usefulness of a record for research that determines whether a record should be kept permanently

Archival record – a record or material created or received that should be kept permanently due to its administrative, legal, fiscal or historical value

Archives – the facility that preserves records with historical value; archival records in general

Case file – a collection of documents (a file) relating to a particular investigation or in support of some administrative action.

Confidential record – a record containing information that is not open to the public, usually to protect the privacy rights of individuals – disclosure of such information generally requires special authorization

Conservation – the repair and stabilization of damaged documents

Destruction – the action of making a record totally unreadable

Disposition – the destruction of a record or the transfer of a record to an archives or other agency

Document – a single record item in any medium (such as a letter, an e-mail message, or a completed form)

Duplicate – an extra copy of a record

Electronic document imaging – the production of digital images of documents, usually in order to improve access to the records

Electronic document management system (EDMS) – a software application that uses automated techniques to ensure that information stored in digital formats is properly distributed, used, stored, retrieved, protected, and preserved according to established policies and procedures

Electronic record – data or information that has been captured and fixed for storage and manipulation in an automated system and that requires the use of the system to render it intelligible by a person

Notes

'Electronic records' can encompass both analog and digital information formats, although the term principally connotes information stored in digital computer systems. 'Electronic records' most often refers to records created in electronic format (born digital) but is sometimes used to describe scans of records in other formats (reborn digital or born analog). Electronic records are often analogous to paper records; email to letters, word processing files to reports and other documents. Electronic records often have more complex forms, such as databases and geographic information systems.

Electronic records management – the process of applying records management principles to electronic records

File management – the process of designing and managing an efficient organization for active office records so they are easy to find, arrange and use

Filing system – a plan using numbers, letters, or keywords or a combination thereof to identify and organize records in a systematic scheme to aid in their use, retrieval and disposition

Fiscal value – the usefulness of a record in documenting financial decisions and activities

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) – the New York State law that outlines the rights of the public to access public records

General schedule – a retention schedule developed to serve the retention needs of a group of related organizations (as opposed to a schedule written for a specific organization)

Historical value – the value of a document to support historical research; similar to “archival value”

Imaging - the process of electronically capturing the visual appearance of a paper document; informally called “scanning”

Inactive records – infrequently accessed records preserved and stored for occasional legal, historical, operational or other use until ready for disposition

Inactive storage – the maintenance of inactive records in a storage area separate from active office

Legal value – the usefulness of a record to support an organization's business agreements and ownership rights, and to document the rights of citizens

Life cycle – the span of time of a record is kept, from its creation, through its useful life, to its final disposition or retention

Metadata – as it regards electronic records – information or data making it possible to identify, manage, access, use and preserve digital records

Migration – the process of moving data from one information system or storage medium to another to ensure continued access to the information as the system or medium becomes obsolete or degrades over time

Nonrecord – an information format (such as an outside publication, blank form, or instruction manual) that is not an official record and that therefore does not require retention

Obsolete record – a record that has met its retention period, is no longer useful to the organization, and may be destroyed

Office retention schedule – an abbreviated records retention schedule that includes only those records in a particular office and, in addition, indicates when those records should be transferred from active office space to inactive storage

Official copy - an original record or a copy of an original record that is used to meet the minimum retention period for that record; also called "record copy"

Offsite storage – a secure location, remote from the work location, where inactive or vital records are stored

Record preservation – the protection of records through procedures designed to minimize chemical and physical deterioration or damage in order to maintain records as usable with no or minimal loss of information; in law – the obligation to protect records and other materials potentially relevant to litigation and subject to discovery.

Purging – the process of pulling and disposing of unwanted records

Record – any information kept, held, filed, received, produced or reproduced in any physical or electronic form by an organization in the formal operation of its responsibilities, including but not limited to reports, statements, examinations, memoranda, opinions, folders, files, books, manuals, pamphlets, forms, papers, designs, drawings, maps, photos, letters, microfilm, computer tapes or discs, rules, regulations or codes

Record copy – (copy of record, official copy, principal copy) the single copy of a document, often the original, that is designated as the official copy for reference and preservation – the official copy of a record

Recordkeeping – the systematic creation, use, maintenance, and disposition of records to meet administrative, programmatic, legal, and financial needs and responsibilities

Records destruction authorization form – a form that documents permission to destroy certain records and that often includes documentation of the actual destruction

Records management – the systematic and administrative control of records throughout their life cycle to ensure efficiency and economy in their creation, use, handling, control, maintenance, and disposition

Records management program – the activities, policies, and procedures within an organization to implement records management

Records retention and disposition schedule – a document that identifies and describes an organization's records, usually at the series level, providing instructions for their disposition

Records series – a group of related records (such as minutes of a board, payrolls, and purchase orders) that are normally used and filed as a unit and that normally have the same retention requirements

Retention – the process of keeping records for the amount of time required given their administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical value and use

Retention period – the length of time a record must be kept to meet administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical requirements

Retrieval – the process of locating material or information in storage and returning it for use

Security – the protection of records by controlling which users can access which documents and for what purpose

Subject file – a collection of documents (a file) relating to some topic

Version control – a method for monitoring the changes a document has undergone; the systematic management of different drafts or revisions of a document to ensure that the record copy of a document can always be distinguished from an earlier draft

Vital records – emergency operation records immediately necessary to begin recovery of business after a disaster, as well as rights-and-interests records necessary to protect the assets, obligations, and resources of the organization, as well as its employees and customers or citizens; records essential to protect the financial well-being of an organization, its legal rights, and the rights of its citizens and employees; records without which an organization could not carry out its business; essential records.

Weeding – the process of removing and discarding unnecessary records or documents from a file