



# Records Management Tip

Records management advice prepared for GNWT records professionals by the Records Management Unit, PWS

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**Program  
Management Series**

## Implementing the Management of Electronic Information Policy

Part 2

### **Principle # 3**

Management of electronic information must be built into business processes and support tools.

This should be undertaken during business process re-engineering exercises and when information systems are replaced or upgraded. Electronic information systems should conform to government-wide recorded information management policies, standards, and guidelines.

The Program Management series looks at various media-specific issues and special issues relating to records management.

### **Managing records as part of the business process**

Most government programs require employees to create records as part of the process of delivering a program or service. Laws, policies, procedures tell us that certain records must be created when we do certain actions. Other laws, policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines direct how we manage those records.

Principle # 3 states that we must apply records management policies, standards, and guidelines to electronic records as well as paper records. This will impact how we look after records on computers and networks.

### **Building management into business processes and tools**

From time to time, departments review their business processes and business systems. These review periods provide a chance to introduce records management requirements into the design process. Records coordinators should be involved in the review. Their role is to make sure that the retention and disposal of information is addressed.

### **Storage locations**

Employees have few options when it comes to storing their paper records: in filing cabinets in their offices, in filing areas that are centralized for their division or department, or in a GNWT records centre. In contrast, there are many places where employees can store electronic records:

- Hard drives.
- Personal drives.
- Shared network drives.
- Removable storage media, such as CD-RWs, disks, and removable drives.

Your department may have its own policies on how to use each of these storage options. If there is no policy, assume that it is in your department's best interest to have

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final documents placed on shared network drives, where they can be accessible to others. Records that contain personal information on people are an exception to this rule.

Confidential records can be saved on network directories that have restricted access. The Technology Service Centre (TSC) can help you set up these directories.

Remember that your records coordinator may need access to these directories so that he or she can manage the records.

Your department's procedures can be written to include where electronic documents should be saved. Procedures can also specify the file formats that should be used.

### **Classification of records**

The classification system used in the Administrative Records Classification System (ARCS) and Operational Records Classification Systems (ORCS) shares features with computer directory structures. Both use a hierarchy to help you locate files. On the computer, the hierarchy is made up of folders and sub-folders. In ARCS and ORCS, it is made up of primaries and secondaries. You can easily create a directory structure on the network that matches the ARCS and ORCS structure.

There are several benefits to using ARCS and ORCS as the basis for your computer directories. These benefits include,

- There is a standard way to organize and save records across the department.
- Electronic records are organized in a way that matches any paper records.
- There is a single place on the network to save information.

All employees need to be trained on how to classify their documents using ARCS and ORCS. Otherwise they will not be able to figure out where their files should be saved. Speak to your Records Coordinator for advise on how to set up a network directory using ARCS and ORCS.

### **Retention of records**

Principle # 3 implies that the same retention and disposition rules that apply to paper records also apply to electronic records. This means that master electronic records cannot be deleted except in accordance with an approved Records Disposition Authority (ARCS, ORCS, or the Transitory Records Schedule).

One person in each division, or in the department as a whole, can be given the task of reviewing electronic records and applying retention schedules. This would involve "closing off" folders from time to time. This may be done by changing security restrictions on the folder or by renaming the folder so that it is clear that it is closed. Electronic records that have reached the end of their life cycle could be deleted or transferred to the NWT Archives by the Records Coordinator in consultation with Public Works and Services. This will ensure that the requirements of the Archives Act have been met.