

Guidelines for the Management of Electronic Information

The State Archives' Role in Preserving Electronic Records

The State Archives is responsible for the care, maintenance and reference use of state records with enduring value, regardless of media. The State Archives relies on agency use of the systems approach to insure that all component parts of an information system are analyzed described and scheduled.

The fragile nature of electronic media makes it imperative that archival considerations be incorporated into the design of the information system during its development stage. Archivists are available to aid in the identification of historical information.

Does the State Archives accept electronic records for transfer?

Yes, The State Archives will accept electronic records identified as having historical value. Decisions need to be made, in consultation with State Archives staff, as to whether to transfer:

- a single master
- periodic summary files
- certain data elements.

When should electronic records which have been designated as having historical value be transferred to the Archives for preservation?

The timing of the actual physical transfer of electronic records should be determined through the records scheduling process. Archives personnel need to be involved early in the process to insure that archival requirements are met. Special preservation measures are often required to preserve electronic records.

What requirements should electronic records meet for physical transfer to the State Archives?

Electronic records may require conversion to a medium and format suitable to insure long term access and readability. All appropriate system documentation must accompany the transfer of electronic records. A computer database without minimum documentation is useless because the contents cannot be read or interpreted.

What if the electronic records contain confidential information?

The State Archives exists, in part, to acquire, preserve and make available for use non-current public records of historical importance regardless of record media. A small percentage of those historical records may contain information which is confidential under Idaho state statute.

When records, regardless of media, contain confidential information the State Archives may establish policies and procedures that allow legitimate research. These policies will be established in consultation with the creating state agency.