Preservica
Active digital preservation

Why Digital Preservation matters to Records Managers

Records Management Custodians

Records Managers have traditionally filled a vital custodial role with regards to the protection of permanent records stored on paper and film. Key responsibilities relating to the authorized retention and defensible disposition of vital and long-term inactive business records include:

- Paper file and box storage in climate-controlled environments
- Vendor relationship management
- Records search and retrieval, documenting chain of custody and ensuring proper handling
- Legal hold support
- Facility moves and business reorganization support
- Audit support

- Digitization and content migration initiatives
- Microfilm and microfiche preservation and management
- Certified records destruction processes and controls
- Maintain records inventory
- Administer enterprise records retention schedule
- Advise business units and content owners on recordkeeping requirements

Gartner

"As formats change, software is retired, and hardware becomes obsolete, the data that organizations might want to keep can be lost."

How Long is Long-Term?

Enterprise information management environments are complex and dynamic. Records, information and data is distributed across large-scale email and content management systems as well as stored in specialized, proprietary applications and cloud-based systems.

A credible enterprise information governance and records management framework must include strategies and processes to protect the integrity of long-term digital records wherever they are stored. That's because digital records are fragile and impacted by changing technologies including data formats and media. Action must be taken to protect their usability, integrity, reliability and authenticity as technologies and custodians change over time.

Mind the Gap

Records Managers have long embraced and promoted the concept of lifecycle management. In the digital world, ensuring protection and integrity for government and business records over time must take into consideration the risks associated with multiple migrations, custodians, systems and budget cycles.

Based on 2017 AIIM research, it appears that confidence in ensuring the readability and usability of digital information for longer than 10 years is lagging. This highlights RIM concerns that traditional IT strategies focused on backups and archiving are just not good enough to prevent the loss of near-term organizational memory or to protect potential value trapped in long-term term digital information.

	Totally agree	Somewhat agree
Ensuring the readability of digital information in the future is an afterthought for us.	23%	41%
Digital records are at constant risk of not being findable, readable or usable when required.	40%	35%
Digital information that must be kept for 10 years or longer is inherently at risk due to changes in technology and file formats.	48%	31%

Principle 9.

An organization should consider reasonable measures to maintain the integrity and availability of long-term information assets throughout their intended useful life.

The Sedona Conference Commentary on Information Governance, Second Edition October 2018

Protecting Long-Term Records

Digital preservation is a set of managed services --- people, processes and technologies—working together to ensure long-term access to authentic, useable digital objects. This requires preserving continuity in form as well as function.

Longevity of digital information is not simply a back-up of data, because long-term digital preservation must consider format, software and hardware obsolescence, among other issues.

Call to Action

Key initiatives that provide opportunities for Records Managers to engage and educate stakeholders on recordkeeping requirements for long-term digital records include:

- Business case development for new or upgraded systems
- Legacy application decommissioning
- Developing requirements for technology procurement or refresh
- Digitization projects (paper to digital and film to digital)
- File classification and defensible disposition initiatives

- File and systems migrations, e.g., Office 365
- Vital records management
- Business reorganization, mergers, consolidations and acquisitions
- Employee onboarding and training

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