

Transferring Archival Records: Preparing Digital Records for Archival Transfer

Purpose: Provide guidance to state and local government agencies on how to plan and prepare electronic Archival records for transfer to Washington State Archives.

FIRST: Verify that digital records do have an Archival designation or any exceptions are approved by the Archives and eligible for transfer. Contact recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov with any questions of eligibility.

NOTE: *Please do NOT send the Archives CD's or DVD's. If you have data or information stored on a CD or DVD, download the files to a location on a drive and then prepare for transfer.*

Start preparing files for transfer:

- Please perform some housekeeping on files and “sweep out the garage” and clean out any junk, duplicates and redundancies in the files prior to transfer.
- Emails: “Cookies in the Break Room!” or “Go favorite sports team!” and other emails social announcements are not Archival and should not be included in a transfer. Spare future researchers from reading grocery and “honey do” lists and limit the transfer of emails to those that reflect the business of government.
- Run emails through a virus scan as part of preparation for transfer.
- Just like paper files, electronic files need to be organized in a meaningful way so that future researchers can readily find information. Files should have consistent metadata to aid in searching. Avoid sending over multiple versions of the same thing.
- If you are transferring photographs have some identifiable metadata attached like date, event and identify people and places featured in photo. No office party photos or selfies!
- Images and audio files require a separate indexing spreadsheet for those images and audio files that are supported and accessed through the public website. Files currently supported:
 1. Minutes, Ordinances and Resolutions
 2. Audio recordings of public meetings

For indexing assistance and to prepare video files, contact:
recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov

Once files have been prepared for transfer, complete a Digital Transfer Inventory Sheet and submit to:

digitaltransfers@sos.wa.gov

Once the Digital Transfer Inventory Sheet is submitted, an acknowledgement will be sent with further instructions to facilitate the actual transfer. By properly preparing digital records prior to transfer, agencies will greatly assist the efforts of the Archives to preserve and make accessible public records for generations to come.

**Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from
Washington State Archives:**

**www.sos.wa.gov/archives
recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov**