



(U) ConSIDer This: Electronic Records

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(U//FOUO) When all of NSA's official records were on paper, they were simply boxed up and stored at the NSA Records Center. Now that much of our information is stored on computers, how do we store it? At this time, there is no central electronic archive for the Agency. Some records are printed out and retired to the Records Center; others are migrated to other media for eventual transfer to the NSA/CSS Archives.

(U//FOUO) NSA's Records Management experts report that though there are a few special considerations to keep in mind when dealing with electronic records, the same basic rules apply as to any other medium. First, determine if the information is truly a record. The Agency's four Records Disposition Schedules can help with this, as well as guide you in the length of time those records need to be legally maintained. With long-term or permanent electronic records, you must keep in mind that the hardware and software most likely will be outdated in a relatively short time and plans should be in place to allow future access to the information, such as migration to the new system or to other media.

(U//FOUO) Even with short-term records, be sure to identify and index records for easy retrieval. If you have the only copy of a record, you may want to have a central directory for your office, or be sure to arrange transfer of your records if you leave that organization. Delete short-term and non-records regularly to avoid burying your valuable information and wasting a great deal of time in searching and re-creating records. Also be sure to include related information (metadata) with your electronic records.

(U//FOUO) For further information on DoD-level standards for records management software applications, as well as additional background on preserving official records, please see the [Records Management FAQ](#).

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