

Electronic Records

Electronic records are those which require a machine to be read. This refers to computer-generated records, and also those stored on visual and aural media such as voicemail systems, DVDs, videotapes, cinematographic film, cassette tapes, compact discs, mini-discs and microforms such as microfiche and microfilm etc.

Thus, an electronic record is information recorded by a computer that is produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of an agency or individual activity. Examples of electronic records include: e- mail messages, word- processed documents, electronic spreadsheets, digital images and databases. Many electronic records are maintained as part of an electronic recordkeeping system, such as geographic information systems (GIS), digital image storage systems, computer aided design (CAD) systems, etc.

Storing Electronic Records

Electronic records should be stored in a repository that is:

- Backed up regularly
- Compliant with all privacy and security requirements
- Network or cloud based and allows for shared access
- Organized in such a way that records can be identified and purged appropriately
- Able to migrate content to a new system upon replacement
- Maintained through regular software updates

Benefits of electronic records

- Technologies such as e-mail, facsimile and conference calling facilitate rapid transmission of documents and information and enable quicker transaction of business.
- Electronic records are easily amended and updated.

- Electronic record formats such as geographic information systems, film and sound recordings, add vivid and interesting visual dimensions to written records.
- Electronic records use space much more efficiently than paper records. For example, a huge database may be stored on a single compact disc but if its contents were printed off or created in a paper format, it would be much more costly in terms of required storage.
- Paper formats cannot adequately capture some records, for example, a written description will not have the same impact as a film recording.
- Electronically stored records, specifically those stored on computer, are more easily accessible than those stored on paper.
- Electronic devices are modern, efficient, streamlined and attractive to users.
- Computer-generated records, for example, those stored in a database format may generally be retrieved very rapidly.