

## Transferring Electronic Records to the California State Archives

Electronic records are bound by same legal requirements as traditional paper documents. An agency's retention schedule should reflect any electronic records produced by the agency. Electronic records should undergo the same evaluations as paper documents for retention and disposition. Electronic records bearing historical or long-term value will be "flagged" for transfer to the Archives.<sup>1</sup> At the end of their retention period, flagged records must be transferred to CSA, in accordance with CA state law:

"A record shall not be destroyed or otherwise disposed of by an agency of the state, unless it is determined by the Secretary of State that the record has no further administrative, legal, or fiscal value and the Secretary of State has determined that the record is inappropriate for preservation in the State Archives."<sup>2</sup>

Electronic records come in a variety of formats and record types and may include textual data (word processed, formatted, and unformatted (plain) text), structured data (databases, spreadsheets), email, computer-aided design (CAD) files, digital audio, digital moving images, digital still images, geospatial data, presentation files, and web records. Because of this variety, electronic records require special considerations prior to transfer.

### Preparing Electronic Records for Transfer

A successful electronic records transfer requires the coordination of records managers, IT staff, and the staff at CSA. When transferring electronic records, the following should be considered and discussed with the parties involved to ensure an effective records transfer:

- Have the records reached end of retention?
- Are record series appropriately identified?
- Have the file formats been identified?
- What is the number of records being transferred?
- What is the volume of the records? (in terabytes, gigabytes)
- Do any access restrictions apply to the records?
- What metadata is included with the records?
- Have files been vetted for encryption and, if any encrypted files exist, is there a means of decryption transmitted with the file?
- What is the method for transmission? (A secure File Transfer Protocol or portable device?)

### File Formats for Transfer

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/state-records-appraisal>

<sup>2</sup> California State Records Management Act, Government Code Sections 12270-12279 Government Code 12275(a).

Some file formats are more desirable for long-term preservation than others. For example, a Microsoft Word document is more vulnerable to obsolescence than a PDF/A file and is not ideal for ensuring long-term access. Consulting with your IT department and staff at the CSA can help establish the appropriate format for files pending transfer.

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