

Scanning Your Records

Some offices may wish to scan paper records in order to move to a “paperless” office, and/or to create a database to manage a large record series (ex: student or donation records).

Benefits

This kind of project may have the following benefits:

- Save wear and tear on the original.
- Easy access and sharing among co-workers.
- Easy access from remote locations.
- Save space in filing cabinets by eliminating large paper record series.

Requirements

At the same time, these projects may require the following:

- Purchasing expensive scanning equipment and servers.
- Significant human resources (to do the scanning and to manage the preservation of electronic records over the course of their required retention period).
- Technological expertise to ensure records survive, despite technological obsolescence (of hardware, software and file formats) and proprietary software.

Keeping paper and scanned version:

When a university record is scanned, there will be two records to manage. If an official decision is made to retain both versions (for example, if the office cannot guarantee long-term management of the electronic record), remember that both are subject to all the processes in place for proper record management, including adherence with university retention and disposition schedules.

Keeping only scanned version:

Offices that wish to destroy paper records after scanning them must ensure the electronic record (and its metadata) will remain readable and accessible throughout its retention period. Contact the Records Manager to develop a plan that will ensure electronic records are created and preserved in accordance with the Electronic Records as Documentary Evidence Standard (Can/CGSB-72.34-2005).

Keep in Mind

- If records have a *short* retention period, it may not be worth the cost to scan them.
- If records have a *long* retention period, it may be difficult to ensure the electronic record and its context will be preserved over the course of its life.
- If records have archival value, consult with the Archives to ensure electronic records can be permanently preserved.

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