

Checklist: Selecting Records for Digitisation

Agencies that have large stores of legacy paper files may be looking at achieving business efficiencies by digitising. This checklist asks some basic questions to determine whether digitisation (back-scanning) will be beneficial and/or feasible for the agency. It will assist you to develop a sound business case.

Question	Digitise?
High activity – are the documents frequently accessed and requested by multiple users?	✓
High volume – do the savings in physical storage and consolidation outweigh the costs of digitisation?	✓
At risk - are the records physically deteriorating? Will they become inaccessible before the retention period expires?	✓
Access and use - will digitisation significantly enhance access or increase use of the information by a specific group (staff, customers, general public)?	✓
Return on investment (ROI) - will business objectives or service delivery targets be supported by digitisation?	✓
Is there is a mix of Permanent and Temporary records which cannot easily be separated? Only Permanent records can be transferred to TAHO, so they must be separately digitised. See <i>Guideline 8 - Digitisation and Disposal of Source Records</i> .	✗
Are the records covered under a current approved retention and disposal schedule? If not, don't digitise. NOTE: Any records dated prior to 1960 will need to be treated as unscheduled records, and must not be destroyed without approval from the State Archivist.	✗
Do they have value as historical artefacts? These records cannot be disposed of using the <i>Disposal Schedule for Source Records (DA 2159)</i> . See Attachment 1 at the end of this checklist for examples.	✗
Has the retention period expired? Are the records being maintained "just in case" (i.e. there is no defined legal or business requirement)?	✗
The records are rarely accessed and the remaining retention period is short (e.g. less than 3 years)?	✗
Is the purpose to create a "just-in-case backup" for documents that are about to be transferred to a new custodian? See <i>Guideline 3 - Management of records during government administrative change</i> .	✗
In-house - do you have adequately skilled staff and the appropriate equipment to undertake digitisation? NOTE: Digitisation costs may be hard to justify for one-off projects.	?

Outsourcing - have you developed evaluation criteria to ensure that vendors will meet security, digital continuity, accessibility and compliance requirements?
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Permanent records

Digitisation of Permanent records will need to meet the requirements outlined in *Guideline 8 - Digitisation and Disposal of Source Records* if you are intending to dispose of the originals and maintain the digitised version as the official record.

Recommended Reading

Guideline 8 - Digitisation and Disposal of Source records

Advice 21 - Plan before you scan

NSW State Records, Managing digitisation programs and projects (2014)¹

Further Advice

For more detailed advice, please contact:

Government Information Strategy Unit
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office
91 Murray Street
HOBART TASMANIA 7000
Telephone: 03 6165 5581
Email: gisu@education.tas.gov.au

Acknowledgements

Department of Finance & Services, NSW, *NSW Transition Guidelines: Managing legacy data and information v.1.0* (November 2013)²

Information Security Classification

This document has been security classified using the Tasmanian Government Information Security classification standard as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the Tasmanian Government Information Security Policy.

Document Development History

Build Status

Version	Date	Author	Reason	Sections
1.0	28-04-2015	Samara McIlroy	Initial Release	All

Amendments in this Release

Section Title	Section Number	Amendment Summary
		This is the first release of this document.

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State Archivist

¹ <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/advice/digitisation>

² <http://finance.nsw.gov.au/ict/sites/default/files/Transition%20guidelines%20FINAL%2014NOV2013.pdf>

Attachment I

Identifying records that have value as artefacts

Some source records may need to be retained due to their historical value. These records cannot be destroyed under the *Disposal Schedule for Source Records (DA 2159)* because they have value as artefacts. Examples of these types of records include:

- Records with a physical element attesting to their authenticity or evidential value e.g. corporate seal
- Significant (non-routine) contracts and agreements containing all signatures
- Bound Committee minutes and agendas
- Original works of art
- Records of international, national or cultural significance (pertaining to large infrastructure projects for example)
- Original proclamations, charters, testimonials and intergovernmental treaties and agreements
- Records of extreme personal significance e.g. an adoption file with hand written letters from a person's biological parents
- Records with aesthetic qualities e.g. a beautiful hand written ledger from the turn of the century, even though it only contains petty cash records
- Records of historical significance, which may benefit from being retained in their original format e.g. for museum display purposes.

Keeping an original record or source document due to its value as an artefact is a subjective decision best undertaken on a case by case basis.

Further advice can be sought from TAHO on the value of records as artefacts. It is likely that records with these characteristics will be encountered during some back-scanning projects, in which case permission must be sought from TAHO before the source records can be destroyed.