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Records Retention in the Age of Digitization

Christine Garrett
Manager, Records Management
Georgia Archives

Georgia Archives

- Part of the University System of Georgia
- Located in Morrow
- Archives for the State of Georgia



Records Management

- Assist state and local government agencies with records management
- Provide trainings
- Conduct on-site visits
- Answer email/phone questions
- Serve as staff for the State Records Committee

Records Management Defined

- Official Definition: O.C.G.A. § 50-18-91
- Informal Definition: Classifying, creating, storing, managing, preserving, providing access to, protecting, and disposing of records from (prior to) creation until final disposition.
- Creation to final disposition = Lifecycle of a record.

Why Manage Records

- Reduce cost and time
- Protect the records
- Decrease liability
- Better serve constituents
- Reputation

Records Retention Schedules

- Set the minimum retention period
- Include schedule number, name, description, and retention period
- Common vs Agency-specific



Determining Retention

- Retention is determined by evaluating the historical (research); legal (laws, statutes); fiscal (audit); and administrative value of the information in a record.
- Retention is determined by the **content** of the record not the format.
 - Example: Work/Time Schedules are retained 4 years and settlement of all claims, regardless of if they are paper time sheets, electronic forms, or inputted into an HR software system.

Updating Schedules

- Agency-specific – use revision template, go through agency RMO
- Common
 - Updated by section
 - Subject matter experts representing a variety of agencies serve on roundtable
 - Outside review
 - Internal Archives review
- Ideally updated every 3 years reviewed every year

Updating Schedule

- Schedules approved by the State Records Committee
 - April and October meetings
- Once approved, have full effect and force of the law



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Digitizing Records



Should We Digitize?

Why to Digitize

- Free up Physical Space
- Increase Staff
Access/Productivity
- Fulfill Open Records
Requests
- Disaster Planning

Why NOT to Digitize

- Ability
- Get grant money
- Obsolete records
- No project plan



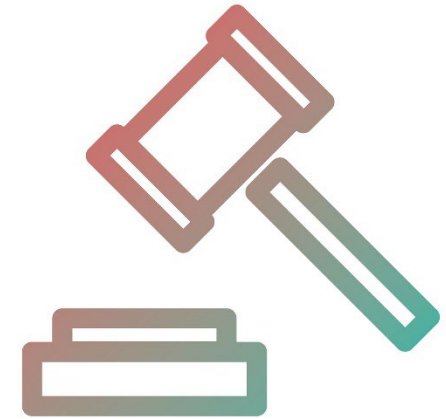
Project Plan

- Defined purpose
- Scope
- Cost up front/ ongoing
- Equipment
- Vendor or in-house (staff or temps)
- Records management system
- Retention build in



Legality

- Evidence: The Best Evidence Rule
 - § 24-10-1005. Public records
 - § 24-10-1003. Admissibility of duplicates
- Evidence: Authentication and Identification
 - § 24-9-902. Self-authentication
 - § 24-9-920. Authentication of Georgia state and county records
- Electronic Records and Signatures Act O.C.G.A. § 10-12-1 et. seq.



Legality (2)

Digital images must remain

- Authentic,
- Accessible,
- Usable

For their entire lifecycles

what's the
opposite of
authenticity?



inaccuracy, spuriousness,
unreliability, counterfeit,
forgery, fake, falsification



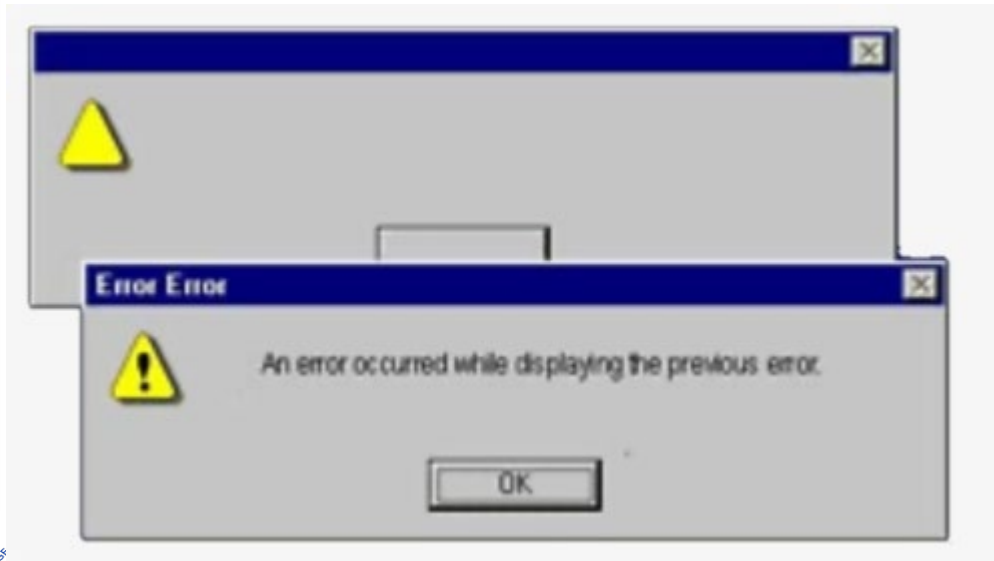


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Electronic Records

Technological Concerns

- Obsolescence
- Media Degradation



Mitigating Risk

- Practice proper electronic records management
- Restrict access, if necessary
- Annual check of files
- Migrate to new technologies
- Have up-to-date copies of records, stored elsewhere
- Backup all files and confirm backup



Backup vs Multiple Copies

- Backup
 - All files
 - Requires backup disk or program to restore.
 - Routine schedule.
- Multiple Copies
 - Select files – essential and permanent
 - Exact replica of original
 - Not stored in same location as the originals.
 - Updated when originals are altered.



File Naming Conventions

- Use meaningful names.
- Include date (YYYY_MM_DD) or (YYYYMMDD).
- Include version number (v1, v2, FINAL).
- Use alpha-numeric characters, hyphens, and underscores.
- Be consistent and concise.



Folder Management

- Name folders following the file naming conventions.
- Include destruction date in folder name.
- Identify your permanent and long-term temporary files.
- Know which files contain sensitive information.



Cloud Storage

- Retain Ownership
- Ensure you can get material out
 - Timeline if you decide to voluntarily remove material
 - Timeline if company closes/sells
- Preservation
- Record Retention
- E-Discovery
- Location of servers
- Legal/Policy Compliance
- Security



State Records Center

- Provides affordable, off-site storage of paper records
- State agencies are not to use commercial vendors for off-site vendors.
- Located in Austell.



Essential Records Webinar

- October 11 via Microsoft Teams
- Visit www.georgiaarchives.org to register
- Free





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Thank You!

Christine Garrett

christine.garrett@usg.edu

678-364-3782

- The audience is Finance professionals in state government. This would include accounting, budget, procurement, et
- Scanning
- Retention
- GBI has been seeking guidance and clarification on the 50-year retention for certain payroll records. Kelly stated she has initiated discussions with Archives asking them to revisit this requirement. It certainly appears outdated. Any updates on this issue are certainly appreciated. Will need consensus across local, state, usg

