

Avoiding the Looming Black Hole: Managing Electronic Records for Now and the Future

Managing Electronic Records 

**Avoiding the Looming
Black Hole:
Managing Electronic
Records for Now
and the Future** 

*Presented by
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Managing Electronic Records - XXXXXXXX 

Overview

Many employees of the National Park Service (NPS) are unfamiliar with records management, particularly electronic records management.

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Course Objectives 

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- State the importance of managing electronic records
- Understand principles of maintaining electronic records, including records disposition
- Understand rules of records disposition for continued access
- Understand principles of managing electronic records

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Why is it Important to Manage Electronic Records? 

- We need electronic records to do our work properly
- Laws which apply to records in other formats apply to electronic records
- The NPS expects employees to have basic computer skills

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More Reasons to Manage Electronic Records

- Federal Rules of Civil Procedure have requirements
- Electronic records are an increasingly significant portion of our daily work

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Important Ideas to Remember

- NPS does not have an electronic recordkeeping system 
- All DOI bureaus are to print out textual electronic records and then file and manage them in paper form

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Maintaining Electronic Records for Efficient and Effective Use 

Principles which govern the management of electronic records in a personal as well as a shared environment.

Electronic records must be:

- actively managed
- organized in a useable filing system
- named in a logical and consistent manner

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What Does "Active Management" Mean? 

- YOU must be the manager of your electronic records – not other staff or some software
- Managing your records should be part of your regular work, not a unique or extra activity

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Basic Actions

We recommend that you take some actions to ensure efficient records management.

Print and file electronic mail messages and word-processing documents

Delete them from your database

Save documents others may need on your official shared drive

Periodically back up the work from your desktop onto a portable storage media

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Organizing Electronic Records

Basic rules for organizing electronic records:

- Electronic records must be stored in a consistent, logical organization scheme
- Scheme should be simple and progress from general to specific



These ideas apply to your personal workspace and to records on a shared network drive.

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Managing Your Personal Workspace

- Your personal workspace is for reference copies of documents and working materials
- Copies of documents/data that will be needed for later use should be transferred to and stored on your *shared* network drive
- Organization is based principally on individual needs



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Organizing Your Personal Workspace

- Create directories and folders that reflect the work you do
- Directories can be established for projects, programmatic areas, and so on
- Folders are created to organize documents within the directories
- Directories and folders should be flexible to allow for additions and deletions

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Managing Electronic Mail



- Determine if the message and its attachments meet the definition of a Federal record
- If the message and attachments are records, print and file them
- Delete the electronic version unless you need it for reference purposes
- Delete the message and its attachments as soon as they have served their purposes

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Managing Your E-Mail Messages



- Save attachments that you need in your personal workspace
- Set up archives for messages that you need to maintain for reference or future use

Don't be afraid to delete messages! Fewer messages means faster functions.

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Organizing Shared Drives

- Establish a directory structure that reflects the work of the organization
- Establish directories for major functions and sub-directories for subsidiary functions and activities
- Directory structure and names should be controlled at the office level
- Structure should be simple and flexible

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General Guidelines for Naming Documents and Files

- Documents and files in an individual's personal workspace are usually named by the user, but the names should not be idiosyncratic
- Documents and files in shared drives need to adhere to standards developed, supported, and documented by the organization
- All documents need to be named such that they are accessible to all users

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Developing Names

General guidelines for developing names:

- Names need to be unique, brief, and descriptive
- Use only letters and numbers – no characters
- Use an underscore (_) to separate words
- Use dates to denote versions (rather than numbering them)
- Use a controlled vocabulary for terms
- Different types of documents and files need different structures for their names

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Examples of File & Document Names

- TELClass_ElectronicRecords_6-2007.ppt
- ImageMetadata_DraftMay11-2006.kge.doc
- CACO_GroundWater_Rpt_2005_USGS.doc
- CATO4755.JPG
- GenShermanTree_seki_warner_20060120_05.tif
- Trails_PETE.mdb

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Records Disposition



This is the final stage in the life cycle of records.

- Done when records are no longer needed for current agency business
- Includes destruction or deletion of records and transfer to a storage facility
- Needs to be done for electronic records too!

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Records Schedules

- The NPS Records Management Schedule provides directions for what to do with NPS records
- General Records Schedule 20 (Electronic Records) covers NPS records too
- *Records may not be destroyed or transferred without an item in one of these schedules!*

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The Value of Records

Two Types of Records

 Temporary Records: destroyed after a specified period of time	 Permanent Records: maintained forever-- needed to manage resources, document work
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NPS records are designated as temporary or permanent in the Records Management Schedule

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Transferring Records

When records are no more in constant use, they are inactive records.

- Inactive records may be transferred to an off-site storage facility
- They may go to a Federal Records Center (FRC), a park archives or to the custody of the National Archives
- The National Archives now also will pre- accession permanent electronic records

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Transferring Records to a FRC

- A new option for electronic records!
- Done for both temporary and permanent records
- Records are still NPS records and are available when needed
- The FRC manages records per NPS instructions
- Transfers are made with the **SF135** (Records Transmittal and Receipt)

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RECORDS TRANSMITTAL AND RECEIPT

Complete and send original and one copy of this form to the appropriate Federal Records Center for approval prior to shipment of records. See specific instructions on reverse. **PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES**

1. TO: Washington National Records Center
4224 Randolph Road
Suitland, MD 21286

2. AGENCY TRANSFER ACTION: TRANSFER AGENCY OFFICIAL, signature and title: **Michael A. Gomez** DATE: **1-18-07**

3. AGENCY CONTACT: **Michael A. Gomez, Metropolitan Records Office**
WASHINGTON COUNTY RECORDS OFFICE, 18000
Agency Name, Address, Telephone Number, Title, Fax and telephone cell
4224 Randolph Road, Suitland, MD 21286

4. RECORDS CENTER RECEIPT: RECORDS RECEIVED BY: signature and title: _____ DATE: _____

5. RECORDS DATA

NO.	FY	NUMBER	VOLUME	AGENCY	SERIES	SERIES DESCRIPTION	DISPOSAL AUTHORITY	DISPOSAL DATE	LOCATION	COMPLETED BY RECORDS OFFICE			
										NO.	DATE	BY	INITIALS
79	05	0004	2			Calk Estate Dam and Rubber Lake Environmental Assessment Files, 1985-2005	N	18B17 15,785	Park				

Standard Form 135 (Rev. 7-80) Form
Prescribed by NARS

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Transferring Records to the National Archives

- Records that are permanently valuable are transferred to the National Archives
- Those records become the property of the National Archives but are accessible for NPS staff and others to use
- Transfers are made with the **SF258** (Agreement to Transfer Records to the National Archives of the United States)

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SF-258 Agreement to Transfer Records to the National Archives of the United States



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AGREEMENT TO TRANSFER RECORDS TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE UNITED STATES		<small>1. INTERIM CONTROL NO. (NARA Use Only)</small>	
TERMS OF The records described below and on the attached _____ pages are deposited in the National Archives of the United States in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2107. The transferring agency certifies that any restrictions on the use of these records are in conformance with the requirements of 5 U.S.C. 552. In accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2108, custody of these records becomes the responsibility of the Archivist of the United States at the time of transfer of the records. It is agreed that these records will be administered in accordance with the provisions of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 21, 36 CFR (41), 36 CFR Part 1256, and such other rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Archivist of the United States (The Archivist). Unless specified and justified below, no restrictions of the use of these records will be imposed other than the general and specific:		AGREEMENT restrictions on the use of these records will be imposed other than the general and specific restrictions on the use of records in the National Archives of the United States that have been published in 36 CFR Part 1256 or in the Guide to the National Archives of the United States. The Archivist may destroy, donate, or otherwise dispose of any containers, duplicate copies, unused forms, blank stationery, nonarchival printed or processed material, or other non-record material in any manner authorized by law or regulation. Without further consent, the Archivist may destroy deteriorating or damaged documents after they have copied in a form that retains all of the information in the original document. The Archivist will use the General Records Schedule and any applicable records disposition schedule (SF 115) of the transferring agency to dispose of nonarchival materials contained in this deposit.	
2A. AGENCY APPROVAL Signature _____ Date _____		3A. NARA APPROVAL Signature _____ Date _____	
2B. NAME, TITLE, MAILING ADDRESS Michael Grimes National Park Service Department of the Interior 1849 C Street, NW (24005) Washington, D.C. 20240-0001		3B. NAME, TITLE, MAILING ADDRESS Michael Carlson National Archives & Records Administration Director, Electronic & Special Media Records Services Division 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001 8601 Adelphi Rd. College Park, MD 20740 8601 Adelphi Rd. College Park, MD 20740	

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Managing Electronic Records for Long-Term Access and Use

We must:

- Continue to actively manage data (including backing up and migrating data)
- Use quality media to store records
- Store data in a limited number of formats
- Create and store documentation with the data
- Take good physical care of the records

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Continuing to Actively Manage Data

- Back up data on a regular basis
- Can be done fully, incrementally or differentially (only modified files)
- You must back up the work on your desktop!
- Data stored in networks are typically backed up on a schedule
- Must protect the backed up files too!

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Migration

- A necessary activity
- Involves moving data from one format and/ or storage media to another format or storage media
- Usually done to ensure compatibility with software and media
- Media deterioration also will require periodic migration
- Like backups, migration can be done fully, incrementally or differentially

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Media for Storing Data for the Long-Term

- Using removable media (rather than a hard drive or a network) will help safeguard data
- Magnetic tapes that meet the standards set forth in 36 CFR 1228.270(1), either reel to reel tapes or cartridges, are acceptable
- Compact Discs (CDs) and DVDs are inexpensive options for desktop use
- CDs and DVDs, if handled appropriately, might last up to 5 years. Magnetic tape could give up to 10 years of reliable service

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File Formats for Long-Term Access and Use

- *Migration will, in part, address this issue*
- The formats accepted by the National Archives for permanent records work well for the long-term storage of data
- Other formats that may work for long-term preservation include Rich Text Format (RTF), Portable Document Format (PDF) and PDF/A and eXtensible Markup Language (XML)

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The Importance of Documentation (Metadata)

- Metadata describes the attributes of electronic data
- Future users of the data need this information to use it effectively!
- Documentation includes a description of the system, technical characteristics of the data, record layout, field names and sizes, data form and other such information

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Physical Care of Electronic Media

- All electronic media is fragile and will be damaged by light, heat or humidity
- Keep equipment and media clean
- Thorough guidance for the care of electronic media can be found in *Conserve-O-Gram* Number 19/19 and 19/20 (September, 1996)
- Long-term care of electronic media is really an *archival* issue

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Final Thoughts on Managing Electronic Records in the NPS

- The importance of what the NPS does demands that we take excellent care of our electronic records
- The business of caring for these records needs to be part of our other business processes
- Everyone is responsible for doing records management
- If you are unsure of what to do, ask for help!



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Summary

Be sure you know:

- That electronic records can be Federal records
- What active management means
- The steps to managing electronic records for continued access
- Appropriate ways to organize and manage your personal and shared space

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Summary, cont.

- The importance of naming conventions
- How to transfer records
- The appropriate steps to storage and care of electronic records

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Closing and Course Credit

Take the on-line evaluation at
www.nps.gov/training/tel

- Click on the DOI Learn tab
- Go to the link under Class Evaluations for ***Avoiding the Looming Black Hole***

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Course Credit, cont.

Please complete the evaluation within 2 weeks of the course, by August 7, 2008
