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# Transferring Electronic Records to the State Archives

Published October 2017

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# Transferring Electronic Records to the State Archives



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## HOW TO TRANSFER ELECTRONIC RECORDS

1. See if the State Archives might collect your records by consulting records schedules
  - State agencies:
    - [General Record Schedules](#)
    - [Agency-specific RDAs](#)
    - [Records Guidelines for State Agencies](#)
  - Local government:
    - [Administration of Local Government and Court Records](#)
    - [Wisconsin Municipal Records Manual](#)
2. Complete an Electronic Records Survey and send it to the State Archives
  - Email the completed [Electronic Records Survey](#) to [govarc@wisconsinhistory.org](mailto:govarc@wisconsinhistory.org) to start a conversation about your records
  - The survey covers:
    - The contents of your files
    - Legal concerns and restrictions
    - Expectations for access
    - File formats
3. Prepare your files for transfer
  - Purge items that should not be transferred
  - Organize your records – at minimum, the top-level folders in the transfer should be labeled with an RDA number
  - Flag records that contain PII or have statutory restrictions
  - For more information, see [Preparing Electronic Records for Transfer to the State Archives](#)
4. Complete an [Electronic Records Transfer Agreement](#)
  - Transfer ID format: date\_agencycode\_transferringnumber. Date should be yyymmdd with no dashes or slashes. If transferring more than one package on a single day, indicate the number of this transfer.
5. Transfer electronic records
  - [Transfer Records to the State Archives with Exactly](#)
  - If your agency is unable to transfer records with Exactly, consult with State Archives staff for other transfer options
6. Receive confirmation of transfer for your records
7. Delete files from your drives to complete the transfer process

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What files does the State Archives accept?

The State Archives actively collects electronic records. We accept files of enduring value from state agencies and local units of government.

For a brief overview of the kinds of materials we collect, please refer to the relevant policies:

- State agencies:
  - [General Record Schedules](#)
  - [Agency-specific RDAs](#)
  - [Records Guidelines for State Agencies](#)
- Local government:
  - [Administration of Local Government and Court Records](#)
  - [Wisconsin Municipal Records Manual](#)

Complete an [Electronic Records Survey](#) and send it to the State Archives at [govarc@wisconsinhistory.org](mailto:govarc@wisconsinhistory.org). The survey covers:

- Contextual information (when and how the files were created, where they are located)
- Records schedules that apply to the files (for state records)
- File formats (especially old, proprietary, or unknown formats)
- Legal concerns and restrictions (privacy, copyright, intellectual property)
- Personally identifiable information in the files (e.g. social security and credit card numbers)
- Expectations for access

### What do I need to do with my files before transferring?

See the [Preparing Electronic Records for Transfer to the State Archives](#) for guidance. Preparation for transfer includes:

- Purging items that should not be transferred
- Organizing your records – at minimum, the top-level folders in the transfer should be labeled with an RDA number
- Flagging records that contain PII or have statutory restrictions

### What file formats does the State Archives accept?

The State Archives digital repository can support a variety of file formats, though some formats are better than others for long-term digital preservation. When you talk to electronic records staff, be prepared to discuss the formats of your files.

See [Best Practices for the Selection of Electronic File Formats](#) for more information.

### What other information or metadata does the State Archives need?

Metadata is “data about data” – it is information that describes content. Metadata can help electronic records staff understand the content of your files and the context of their creation. This will help staff process your records and make them publicly accessible. The more information, the better.

Depending on the nature of your files, the State Archives might ask for metadata concerning the creator of the files, when they were created and used, what information the files contain, and any necessary restrictions. This information will be collected through the survey or during the transfer process.

### **How do I transfer my files?**

There are a variety of ways to transfer files. Some of the common options include:

- Exactly, a file packaging and transfer software
- Records management software
- External media (e.g. hard drives, CDs/DVDs. Please let us know if you have files on older media such as floppy disks.)
- Email

Consult with electronic records staff to determine the best transfer method for your materials.

### **What will be done with my files once they are transferred?**

Files with historical significance will be processed and preserved in the digital repository. During processing, files may be renamed or reorganized to make them more easily accessible.

### **How will my files be made available to the public?**

Electronic records transferred to the State Archives will be made publicly accessible via our digital repository.

### **Can I restrict access to some of my files?**

All electronic records transferred to the State Archives are open to the public unless specifically restricted by statute, rule, or administrative code. Please discuss any concerns with State Archives staff.

### **Can I keep copies of my files after I transfer them to the State Archives?**

When you transfer your files, the State Archives becomes the official owner of those records. Because of this, all other copies of files must be deleted once the transfer is complete. This can be compared to paper records, where the official record is held only by the State Archives once custody is transferred.