

- ☞ If construction information is limited, you can open the file(s) in PDF software and look at the file properties.

#### Use of PDF special features

*If the PDFs were converted from a desktop software format, identify special features used. For example:*

- External links
  - Comments and annotations
  - Attachments
  - Form data
  - Security settings
  - Embedded fonts
- ☞ Some agencies use creation standards for PDFs. Such standards specify and/or prohibit use of PDF special features.
  - ☞ If such information is not readily available, you can determine the features used by opening the files in a PDF reader and checking the file properties. Software is also available to analyze multiple PDFs in batch.

#### What if technical information is sparse?

Obtain representative samples of the records, finding aids and/or other documentation and work with your NARA appraiser to determine if NARA can process them and provide future access.

#### How do I get more information from NARA about electronic records?

##### Transfer instructions for records appraised as permanent

For transfer instructions (e.g., acceptable formats, file construction parameters, metadata requirements, and transfer documentation), visit the NARA web site at: [www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/transfer-to-nara.html](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/transfer-to-nara.html)

##### Toolkit for managing electronic records

For a collection of guidance resources (“tools”) developed by NARA and other organizations, visit <http://toolkit.archives.gov> on the NARA web site.

#### NARA contacts

- In the Washington, DC, area, the Life Cycle Management Division can provide assistance. See *List of NARA Contacts for Your Agency* at [www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/appraisal/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/appraisal/index.html)
- In NARA’s regional offices, the Records Management Staff can provide assistance. A complete list of NARA’s regional facilities can be found at [www.archives.gov/facilities/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/facilities/index.html)

*This brochure is directed solely to Federal agencies to assist them in meeting their records management responsibilities under 44 U.S.C. Chapter 31.*



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

## *Tips for Scheduling Potentially Permanent Records in Portable Document Format (PDF)*



## Why does NARA need technical information to appraise potentially permanent electronic records?

NARA evaluates technical information as part of the scheduling process to determine if the records can be transferred to NARA in accordance with applicable transfer instructions, and to determine if any technical considerations might impede NARA's ability to process and provide future access to the records.

## How does NARA request technical information from agencies?

NARA appraisal staff (appraisers) provide agency records officers with questionnaires of technical questions about each potentially permanent electronic records format.

## Who can provide this technical information?

Agency staff members who can answer technical questions about records collections and/or systems typically include:

- Business process manager(s)
- Systems/software developers
- Systems/network/database administrators
- Process specialists and/or systems operators who create documents
- CIO staff members
- Network specialists
- Security specialists and/or privacy act specialists
- For web-based records, web program staff who maintain the agency internet and intranet
- Contractors
- Program staff

☞ Initiate a data gathering meeting with identified information sources, your NARA appraiser, and other technical experts (e.g., NARA stakeholders).

## What kind of information is needed to appraise electronic records?

NARA evaluates the following types of technical information, when applicable, to appraise potentially permanent electronic records. When the records are appraised as part of a system, NARA needs to review technical information about the system. Additionally, technical information specific to PDF records is identified later in this brochure.

### Basic descriptive information

- The name of the system, if applicable
- Names and versions of the software, hardware, and operating systems
- System architecture description, if applicable
- Total size of the records collection or system (megabytes, terabytes, etc.) and the growth rate (e.g., annually)
- Name and version of the records management application used, if applicable

### Technical documentation

- Operational guidelines, work instructions, workflow manuals, process maps, or other documentation of business processes affecting the records
  - Systems documentation, if applicable (e.g., user manuals, database schemas, data dictionary, design documents, requirements specifications)
  - Documentation of historical or planned system upgrades, data migrations, and other changes to the system or records
  - Documentation of quality control inspections performed on the records
- ☞ Contact the records owner and/or the IT staff who maintains the system, as applicable, to request basic descriptive information and technical documentation.

### File format information

- File format(s) and version(s)
  - Software/hardware used to create the record, including version
  - File format conversion/migration procedures, if applicable
- ☞ Contact the records owner and/or creator to gather file format information.

### Finding aids

- Finding aids, metadata, indexing and retrieval systems
- Search technologies used by the agency

### Protection mechanisms

- Computerized mechanisms used to safeguard the records against unauthorized access, alteration, or deletion such as passwords, digital signatures, and/or encryption
- ☞ For information on finding aids and security protections contact the records owner and/or IT staff who manages and controls access to the records.

## What additional information is needed for records in PDF?

### PDF construction information

#### *Are the PDF records:*

- Images scanned from paper,
- Converted to PDF from scanned image formats (e.g., TIFF),
- Converted from an electronic desktop format (e.g., MS Word), or
- A mix of scanned images and electronically converted files?

If the records include scanned images, you will need to complete NARA's technical questionnaire for scanned textual images. Also, for scanned images, you will need to determine if processes used to embed OCR'd text can alter the original bitmapped image.

☞ Contact the creator/recipient of the PDFs to determine how the PDFs were constructed, including, for some scanned images, how OCR'd text is captured and embedded in the file.