

Pre-Accessioning

A STRATEGY FOR PRESERVING PERMANENT ELECTRONIC RECORDS

WHAT IS PRE-ACCESSIONING?

- Pre-accessioning is the process by which agencies transfer to NARA a copy of permanently valuable electronic records while retaining legal custody and control over access to the records.
- NARA archivally processes and preserves these records and maintains physical custody until the time at which records are scheduled to transfer into NARA's legal custody.
- Agencies will keep their duplicate copy of the records and retain responsibility for responding to discovery efforts, Freedom of Information Act requests, or reference inquiries until legal custody of the records is transferred to NARA.

HOW DOES PRE-ACCESSIONING BENEFIT MY AGENCY?

- An agency benefits from free, off-site security copies and long-term preservation of electronic records scheduled as permanently valuable.
- An agency protects its dissemination program while turning long-term preservation over to NARA.
- An agency maintains access control over highly sensitive records while ensuring their long-term preservation.

WHY IS PRE-ACCESSIONING IMPORTANT?

- Pre-accessioning enables NARA to ensure the long-term preservation of electronic records scheduled as permanently valuable.
- Pre-accessioning allows NARA to process electronic records early in the life cycle before potential loss of access and intellectual control due to technological and program change.

HOW DO AGENCIES TRANSFER RECORDS FOR PREACCESSIONING?

- Contact NARA for consultation. Records should be identified as eligible for pre-accessioning on an approved records schedule.
- Complete a Transfer Request in the Electronic Records Archive (ERA) indicating the date at which the records are eligible for the transfer of legal custody.
- Submit the Transfer Request in ERA and send the records to the Electronic Records Division.
- NARA will process the records and ingest them into ERA after processing
- NARA will accept physical custody on the Transfer Request.

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HOW WILL THE LEGAL CUSTODY BE TRANSFERRED TO NARA?

- At the time of the date indicated on the Transfer Request, NARA will contact the agency to ensure that legal custody can be transferred.
- If the agency has no objections, NARA will sign Block 16 and accept legal custody of the records. Only at this time will NARA assume responsibility for providing reference services for the electronic records.

For more information on pre-accessioning, visit our website at: www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2009/2009-03.html

For more information on transferring electronic records, visit our web site at: www.archives.gov/research/electronic-records/info-for-archivists.html

Contact the Electronic Records Division

Etransfers@nara.gov

301-837-3420