

On screen: The National Archives logo, an eagle with one wing outstretched, with the words, “Word of the Week: Record.”

Narrator: Our word of the week is record.

On screen: A series of vintage documents and photographs appear, one fading into another. The items include a picture of Earth from space, a map from the 1800s, a treaty with seals on it, and a printed document written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucy Stone.

Narrator: Records tell the story of our government. Correspondence, maps, contracts, treaties, information systems, databases, photographs, reports, and files all document the policies and the work of the Federal government so future generations will be able to review and interpret the actions taken and decisions made. Records also tell the story of our world.

On screen: More records appear, including a Weather Bureau Climatological Record, a photograph of the prairie, and a photograph of a busy 1970s city with many road signs along a major roadway.

Narrator: Through weather reports, environmental data, comments from the public on new regulations, technical studies, research reports, and snapshots in time, records can help us recognize where we’ve been, and help us see where we’re going.

On screen: Photographs fade in and out. The photographs show immigrants posed in front of a building, men in line at a soup kitchen, soldiers carrying a wounded man through a swamp, and women standing in line to register to vote, followed by a close-up of a sign in a 1970s gas station reading, “Sorry, No Gas Today.”

Narrator: Records tell the story of our times – of events and actions at home and abroad. From eyewitness accounts and military reports to patents for new technology, economic data, and landmark court cases, records help us to identify, explore, and understand the events we see in our news reports and in our history books.

On screen: A montage of photographs of people, including a man holding a newborn, a young African-American woman, an old man in a flannel shirt and baseball cap, several children standing together, a farm worker, a car hop at a drive-in restaurant, soldiers, and Native American construction workers.

Most of all, records tell **our** story – the stories of people, families, communities, and groups. Records at the National Archives document the lives of our ancestors, families, and friends. They help us understand the lives of public figures and the person next door. There are millions of stories waiting to be told. We must ensure that our records – our stories – survive for generations to come. We can do that by identifying and managing the records that support our work.

On screen: A quote which reads, “. . .all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine-readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics. . .”

Narrator: In the U.S. Federal government, the United States Code defines what constitutes a record for Federal agencies. Government records are stored in thousands of formats, from printed documents to scanned images to sound and video recordings, computer systems, e-mail messages, and data warehouses. The content of the material, together with the way it's used, helps us to identify something as a record.

On screen: Three archivists examine some large, round, flexible discs similar to music records. One of them places a disc on a turntable. Other pictures appear with a young woman at a 1970s computer and a modern laptop showing a Web page as a press conference goes on in the background.

Narrator: As we identify and manage our records, we need to be careful to recognize all the different possible formats we maintain so that all the records can be captured. We also need to plan our management strategies so those formats can be preserved and accessed through the entire lifetime of the records.

On screen: A quote which reads, “. . .made or received by an agency of the U. S. Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business. . .”

Narrator: Records are created and captured to document the work of the U.S. Federal government, including its structure, history, policies, decisions, and communications. Records are essential to government accountability and transparency.

On screen: A 1940s vintage photograph of a woman in military uniform. She is sitting at a portable typewriter and holds a telephone receiver to her ear.

Narrator: The technology we use to create records has changed over time, but our need to document, retrieve, and understand information is greater than ever.

On screen: A quote which reads, “. . .preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of the data in them.”

Narrator: Records are captured and preserved to document how the government was structured, how it worked, what actions were taken, what money was spent, and what decisions were made. All records in the Federal government have a specific life span, and that retention time is determined by the value and usefulness of the information within the records. Some records are kept for a short period of time to support day-to-day operations, and some are kept forever to record our nation's history.

On screen: Several photographs, framed like snap shots, appear and then fade away as the narrator speaks. The photographs show an older Asian couple, a young African American family celebrating the return of a soldier, a woman speaking with a young girl, an early airplane, and a scene with Eisenhower speaking with some troops.

Narrator: Records must be captured and preserved - but those stories can be fragile. According to a recent survey by the National Archives, over half of the Federal agencies surveyed were not transferring permanently-valuable, historic records to the National Archives when their records schedules required it, and seventy-five percent were not transferring historic electronic records. If the records aren't captured and preserved, our records - our history - our story - could simply fade away.

On screen: Several photographs showing two people looking at blueprints, a hand writing on a computer tablet with a stylus, a person entering data into a spreadsheet, and three women examining paper documents.

Narrator: The answer is in your hands. When you manage Federal records, you help to ensure that your work, our history can be preserved. Take a few moments to find your agency's basic records management policies, procedures, and training. Work with your agency's Records Officer and information management team to identify records and retain them for right amount of time. Be sure to include the paper and electronic documents, systems, and other information sources that support your work.

On screen: A photo montage showing a woman working at a laptop computer, a man reading a computer tablet, another man using a laptop, a 1960s or 1970s era computer room, and an early computer processing room where standing employees feed punch cards into machines.

Narrator: Together, we can ensure that we have the information we need to get our work done effectively and efficiently today, and the information future generations will need to support the work of the government and tell the story of our country and our times.

On screen: The National Archives logo appears with the words, "For more information about the U. S. National Archives and Federal records, visit www.archives.gov."

Narrator: For more information about Federal records management, a list of agency Records Officers, and information about available records management training, visit us online at archives.gov.

On screen: A black background with the National Archives National Records Management Training Program logo.