

Improving Electronic Records Programs in the SUNY System Information System Inventory Instructions

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Instructions for Completing Each Data Field

System Title

Name by which the electronic records system is known to those who maintain and use it. Make the title as descriptive as possible, indicating the subject, function, and, if necessary, form of the records. The purpose of the title is to provide a means to identify the electronic records system.

System Owner

New York State Archives
SUNY Plattsburgh
National Historical Publications and Records Commission

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Name of the unit or department that is responsible for receiving, creating, and managing the records in the system. The owner is the one most likely to understand the business purpose of the information system and the records series within it. The owner tends to be the one who will provide data for dates covered, system description, relationship to other records, backup procedures, and restrictions on use.

IT Support

Name of the unit or department that provides technical support for the records system. The IT support person is usually a member of an in-house information technology unit or a vendor who provides or clarifies information on file type and format, quantity and estimated growth, hardware, software, supporting files, backup procedures, and provisions for migration.

Dates

Beginning and ending dates of records in the system. The beginning date may be the date a system was implemented, records were migrated or converted from another records system (including a paper file system), or a new function or module was added to an existing system. If the records are still actively used, indicate the ending date as "9999," "ongoing," or "current."

For unstructured files (such as word-processed files in a directory structure), dates covered will be the first and last dates that a file or files were created.

Use "ca" for "circa," when you cannot determine exact dates.

Example

- The system was implemented in 1989, but information dating back to the 1930s has been manually entered; however, it is not clear whether this data entry has occurred on a systematic or as-needed basis.

Dates are important for research and retention purposes, and for understanding the relationship of the electronic records to other records.

System Description

A summary of the records system's business purpose, scope, and contents. A useful strategy for describing a system is to list the data fields in that system (especially if the system consists of a database or electronic forms). Indicate the electronic records' relationship to the department's mission or business operations.

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Examples

- Contains contents, shelf location, circulation, and disposition information for each box of inactive records currently stored, or disposed of, since 1997 at the records center. The database record for each box contains the system number, alternate ID number, originating department or office name, department or office with current legal custody, and summary contents description. When a box is charged out, the date and the name of the requester are entered.

The primary purpose of the system description is to help you identify the system in the future (based on how you describe the system now) and assess the value of the electronic records for retention and research purposes.

System Size

Size of the records system in megabytes or gigabytes. The purpose of collecting data on size is to plan storage and migration needs, after factoring in the number of electronic records you can legally destroy during a given time period.

File Formats

Basic characteristics of the electronic data within the system, including word-processed files, databases, spreadsheets, geographic information system (GIS) records, computer-aided design (CAD) records, and email.

Examples

- Word processed files in MS Word (.doc or .docx)
- Oracle database
- Excel spreadsheets
- MP3s
- PDF/As
- Motion JPEG 2000s

The purpose of documenting file type and format is to collect data to plan preservation and normalization needs. For example, you may decide, as a result of the inventory, to retain permanent files in their native format as well as in an open format that will be used for the preservation copy.

Hardware

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Equipment required to retrieve or process the electronic records system, including its capacity and age. Hardware may include mainframe computers, midrange computers, servers, and freestanding personal computers (PCs).

Example

- The database resides on a Sunfire 2400 UNIX enterprise server and the application is on an HP server.

The purpose of collecting data on hardware is to plan for hardware upgrades and data migration as needed and to ensure the electronic records are accessible for their full retention periods.

Software

Software program used to create and/or access the records. Provide any information that would be useful for understanding the nature of that software. For example, indicate whether the software is open or proprietary (and, if the latter, provide the name of the vendor that supports the software).

Examples

- The database server is running Sun Solaris 10 and the application server is running MS Windows 2003 and Internet Information Server to serve out Application Server Pages. Application software on the database server is Oracle 10G. Program name is GAIN 2000 Enterprise Edition and version is
- The system is a Microsoft Access database with a Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications interface developed by the ITS PC Applications Group.

The purpose of collecting this data is to plan for software upgrades, software migration, and data migration as needed to ensure access to the records for their full retention periods.

Media Characteristics

If applicable, the type or types of storage media involved (magnetic tapes, optical discs, or other) and the storage density of the media in terms of gigabytes. Also, use this field to note what records in the system are online (immediately available to users), nearline (quickly available through delayed processes such as those of a DVD jukebox), or offline (meaning that the data is stored on external media that must be manually added to the system to allow access).

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Example

- Online data is available on students who have attended in the last ten years, nearline data is available on a DVD jukebox for five years previous to that, and all other digital data is managed off line. Total capacity of the system is approximately 1 terabyte.

The purpose of collecting information on media is to plan for changing it to new media before the older media degrades or goes obsolete.

Relationship to Other Records

The records or series that are related to this system because data from this system is transferred to or from another system or the records in this system exist, wholly or partly, in another format (such as microfilm or paper).

Example

- Paper transfer list reports providing contents, shelf location, and disposition information on a group of boxes stored by a department or office at the same time are kept on file at the records center and provided to each department or office.
- Basic information on students who have enrolled is transferred from the student application system to the registrar's system.

The purpose of describing the relationship of electronic records to other records is to identify the official copy for retention purpose. For example, the inventory may provide data to determine whether you can periodically purge the system (because the records are not official copies) or whether you need or want to copy the electronic records to another format (such as microfilm) as a preservation measure.

System Documentation

Information that supports the creation, maintenance, or use of the electronic records or the records system itself, such as indexes, data entry manuals, and data dictionaries.

Examples

New York State Archives
SUNY Plattsburgh
National Historical Publications and Records Commission

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- There is no documentation regarding the database. Some codes used in the database are unknown to current employees. An updated list of fields would be helpful. Additional databases are also stored on the X drive of this office.

The purpose of collecting data on supporting files is to ensure consistent creation of, access to, and full use of records for at least as long as their retention periods.

Backup Procedures

Frequency of backups, media used, and other backup procedures.

Examples

- This system is backed up daily with a full system tape back up monthly. The tapes are stored approximately two miles away at Elm Park.
- Records in the software package are backed up everyday at 4:15 pm. This is a “mother to peer” backup. This same information is manually backed up on CD periodically and stored off site.
- The server is equipped with an eight-tape cartridge tape drive. Tapes 114 are for daily incremental backups, Monday through Thursday. These tapes are recycled every four weeks. The fifth tape is for a full backup every Friday which is sent to IT for offsite storage. Tape 6 is used for a full monthly backup. This tape is sent to the vendor, which downloads the data into their system. Once downloaded, the vendor identifies all images added to the system since the last download and outputs them to silver halide microfilm. The tapes are then stored in leased underground storage in Kansas.

The purpose of collecting data on backups is to ensure their continued accessibility. For example, the inventory can help you identify when you don't back up often enough or when your backups are located too close to the system itself.

System Migration

Any information relevant to the system migration, upgrades, or other maintenance needs of the records.

Examples

- The original database was created in FoxPro. It was migrated to Microsoft Access in 1998; the oldest records date from 1998. The IT department is in

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the process of migrating the database to Oracle. The migration should be completed in the spring of 2015.

- System was upgraded in 2010. The vendor has no plans for future upgrades.
- Data maintained in the DocStar system will be migrated to ImageNow in the spring of 2014.

The purpose of collecting data on migration is to ensure ongoing access to and use of records. Data about migration can help you schedule migration at a frequency that ensures access but minimizes data loss.

Access Restrictions

Any physical or technological restrictions to access, including the reasons for the limitations and the length of time they will be in effect. For example, indicate whether use of the records is limited by law, and cite the law or regulation that mandates the restriction. For example, student records are restricted by The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

The purpose for collecting data on use restrictions is to ensure appropriate security for records that are restricted and adequate access to those records that aren't.

Offices Using the System

List of all offices that use the system.

Records Series

List of records series managed by this system. Include all major records series, whether permanent or not.

Person Conducting Inventory

Person's first and last name.

Date of Inventory

Date the system inventory was completed.