

## New York State Archives

# Electronic Records Inventory Instructions

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In an electronic records inventory, as with any inventory, it's important to focus on aggregates of records rather than on individual records or files. The following data structure will allow you to collect information on series or collections of records in a fashion that will give you a means to evaluate your institution's needs regarding electronic records management and archives. Below are the inventory data fields to complete for each electronic records series or collection followed by instructions for completing each field. If some fields are not applicable to the records you are inventorying, leave them blank. The instructions assume the use of a database to collect and evaluate the inventory data.

## Electronic Records Inventory Data Fields

Creator	
Series Title	
Schedule Item Number	
Dates	
Description	
Access Restrictions	
Related Information System	<i>Dropdown list of information systems</i>
Other Sources of Information about Records	
Series Size	
File Formats	
Software	
Arrangement	
Media Characteristics	
Location of Physical Media	
Visible Damage	
Hybrid	All digital Digital and analog
Passwords	None If Yes, Describe
Encryption	None If Yes, Describe
Compression	None

	If Yes, Describe
Backups	None If Yes, Describe
Appraise	Checkbox
Deaccession	Checkbox
Person Conducting Inventory	
Date of Inventory	

## Instructions for Completing Each Data Field

### **Creator**

Name of the department, unit, or entity that is responsible for receiving, creating, and managing the records in the system.

### **Series or Collection Title**

Name by which the records series is known.

### **Schedule Item Number**

The number used to manage and control the records. Each records schedule produced by the State Archives include numbers for each item in the schedule. If you are using more than one schedule, also include the schedule name (such as, ED-1 or MU-1). Leave blank if there is no such number because the records do not appear on a schedule.

### **Dates**

Beginning and ending dates of creation of records in the series. If the records are still actively used, indicate the ending date as "9999." Use "ca" for "circa," when you cannot determine exact dates.

### **Description**

A summary of the records series' purpose and contents.

#### *Example*

- Contains purchase requisitions, purchase orders, and payment verification for all purchases under \$5,000.

### **Access Restrictions**

Any 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.

*Examples*

- All student transcripts are restricted by provisions of FERPA. Access may be provided only at the student's specific request.

### **Related Information System**

The title of any information system that this series forms a part of, linked to the related information system, if possible. This datum usually applies only to records created in a home institution. This field in the database is a dropdown list that links to the relevant information system by its title. For this reason, it is best to complete the inventory of the information system before beginning the inventory of the series within it. Note that all records series will not be maintained in a greater information system. See the "Information System Inventory Instructions" for more details on information systems.

### **Other Sources of Information about Records**

Any other sources that provide information about the records' content, use, or condition. These might include accession records, deeds of gift, transfer agreements, user guides, manuals, or technical specifications.

### **Series Size**

Size of the records series in megabytes or gigabytes.

### **File Formats**

Basic characteristics of the electronic data within the series or collection, 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

### **Software**

The software program or programs 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*

- Microsoft Word
- Adobe Acrobat

**Arrangement**

The description of the manner in which the records in the series or collection are organized. For a simple series of individual files, this might simply be alphabetical by filename by default. In complicated series, the arrangement or file structure will be more complicated. Provide enough information to clarify the general arrangement of the records. You can also use this field to indicate the sequence of the records on electronic media and the arrangement of the media themselves. Arrangement can be by year, by project number, alphabetically, a combination of these, or according to some other sequence.

**Media Characteristics**

Provide the number of items for each type of media used to store records in this records series. Types of media include the following:

*Removable Media*

- External hard drives
- CDs
- DVDs
- 5¼-inch floppy disks
- 3½-inch floppy disks
- USB drives
- Other (Specify)

*Other Storage*

- Internal hard drives
- Servers in house
- Cloud storage
- Other (Specify)

**Location of Physical Media**

The physical location or locations of the electronic media in the series. Include the building and room at minimum, and row or cabinet and shelf or drawer if applicable.

### **Visible Damage**

Description of any physical damage to the media.

#### *Examples*

- The jewel cases of the DVDs are cracked and there is some slight scratching of the tops of some of the DVDs.
- The layers of about half of the CDs are separating

### **Hybrid**

Whether the records are entirely digital or they are hybrid (contain both digital and analog records).

### **Passwords**

Answer “None” if none of the files are password-protected. Answer “Yes” if any of the files are password-protected, and also provide a description of the type of password protection and a list of any known passwords. You need to know the passwords to password-protected records to ensure access to the records.

### **Encryption**

Answer “None” if none of the files are encrypted. Answer “Yes” if any of the files are encrypted, and also provide a description of the type of encryption and a list any known keys to decrypt the files. You need to know if records are encrypted and how to decrypt records to ensure access to them.

### **Compression**

Answer “None” if none of the files are compressed. Answer “Yes” if any of the files are compressed, and also provide a description of the type of compression and the means to decompress the files. You need to know about records compression, since compression can lead to data loss or accessibility issues.

### **Backups**

Frequency of the backup or backups of the series, media used for the backups, the physical location of the backups, and other backup procedures.

#### *Example*

- Series is backed up along with other records stored on the college’s internal servers: daily, with a full tape backup monthly.

**Appraise**

If the records you are inventorying need to be appraised or reappraised for their continuing value, check this box.

**Deaccession**

If the records you are inventorying are archival designated as archival that should be deaccessioned, check this box.

**Person Conducting Inventory**

Person's first and last name.

**Date of Inventory**

Date the inventory of the series was completed.