The Government of South Australia

State Records of South Australia

Management of Hybrid Files

Agencies create, receive and manage records in electronic and hard copy formats. This has given rise to the existence of 'hybrid files'; which are physical and electronic records dealing with the same function, activity and transaction.

This recordkeeping advice sheet provides guidance on how to manage hybrid files from classification to disposal, outlining the key considerations for agencies at each stage. It is relevant to agencies with Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS), other recordkeeping systems, those holding electronic files on shared drives and in business systems, and those taking a 'print and file' approach to recordkeeping.

Agencies rendering hard copy records in to digital format should do so in line with State Records' Guideline: *Digitisation of official records and management of source documents* and *General Disposal Schedule 21 – Digitised Records*.

Summary
Records which have a contextual relationship need to be managed by the same records management processes throughout their lifecycle, regardless of their format, for the purposes of access, security and disposal.

Managing the electronic and hard copy elements of a hybrid file in an identical manner ensures that records are reliable and complete. This is essential to maintaining appropriate evidence of business transactions and legislative compliance.

Classification
Agencies should classify both hard copy and electronic elements of the hybrid file in the same manner, using a functional thesaurus or classification scheme. A unique identifier should be applied to both hardcopy and electronic elements of the file. This identifier should be placed on the hard copy file and should appear within the metadata or title of the electronic file folder.

Sentencing
Agencies should sentence the hard copy and electronic components of the hybrid file upon creation, and in the same manner. Agencies with EDRMS should add metadata to the electronic record to show that the file has been sentenced, and include the schedule and item number details.

Links
Agencies should establish a link between the hard copy and electronic components of the hybrid file. Within an EDRMS this will be done by creating and maintaining a relationship link between the physical and digital records. Agencies holding electronic files on shared drives and in business systems should undertake manual cross referencing. This means that the hard copy file should contain a notation which refers to its electronic counterpart, and the electronic file should contain a metadata element which refers to the hard copy.

Security and Access
Agencies should ensure that the same security classifications and access provisions are applied to electronic and hard copy components of the hybrid file. If access to the electronic component of the hybrid file is restricted to a particular group, the hard copy

element of that file should be stored in a manner that ensures access only to that same group.

When processing Freedom of Information requests, agencies should ensure that they consult both hard copy and electronic components of hybrid files.

Disposal
The management of hybrid files can become particularly complex when disposing of records. The following steps are designed to assist agencies to manage this process.

Sentencing
Agencies should review the sentencing of files once they become inactive, and resentence as appropriate.

File Closure
Close the hard copy and electronic components of the hybrid file at the same time. Make a notation on the hard copy file which indicates that the file is closed, its sentence, and state the details and location of the electronic records (consider generating a screenshot or screen image showing the electronic files). Agencies who do not have an EDRMS and who use the 'print and file' approach should now ensure that all electronic records have been printed and placed on the hard copy file.

Transfer
- Permanent records
Arrange for the transfer of hardcopy permanent records to State Records, making appropriate mention of the hybrid nature of the file/s (refer to the Collection Management Services (CMS) Team for detailed transfer requirements). Retain the electronic permanent records, adding metadata to reflect the transfer of the hardcopy permanent records to State Records.
- Temporary records
If transferring both electronic and hardcopy temporary records to an Approved Service Provider (ASP) ensure that the hybrid nature of the files is reflected in the description when producing a list of records to be transferred. Where the electronic temporary records within a hybrid file are being retained by the agency, ensure that the metadata for those records is updated to reflect the new location of the hardcopy records. Agencies are responsible for ensuring that their electronic records remain accessible and should therefore have migration strategies in place that include records transferred to ASPs.

Destruction
When the retention period has expired, arrange for the destruction of appropriate electronic and hard copy records. Submit an Intention to Destroy Records Report (ITDRR) to State Records with a list of both the electronic and hard copy records to be destroyed, indicating the format in which they are held.

Further Information
For further information refer to the following documents available on the State Records website (www.archives.sa.gov.au).

Recordkeeping Information Sheets:
- Appraisal and Disposal (2011)
- Creating Official Records (2011)
- Capturing Official Records (2011)
- Storing Official Records (2011)
- Transfer Process for Temporary Records (2011)