



Archives Advice 7

Batching of Permanent Records

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DEFINITIONS

Appraisal	The process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept to meet business needs, to maintain organisational accountability and community expectations.
Archive	A record of permanent value that forms part of the Territory Archives. ⁱ
Batching (or day batching)	The process of storing records together based on the date the record was received into the agency's custody or the date that the record was scanned into the agency's records management system.
Born digital records	Records that have originated from a digital source. ⁱⁱ
Digitisation	The process of creating digital files by scanning or otherwise converting analogue materials. ⁱⁱⁱ
Disposal	A range of processes associated with implementing authorised decisions about records retention, destruction, rearrangement, migration or transfer of custody or ownership.
Disposal schedule	A formal policy, authorised jointly by the Chief Executive of an NT Government public sector organisation, the NT Records Service, and the NT Archives Service, that defines the temporary or permanent status, retention period and consequent disposal actions authorised for classes of records.
Hybrid system	A recordkeeping system containing records in a combination of paper, electronic or other formats ^{iv} .
Permanent records	Records of permanent value which are in the custody of a public sector organisation. When permanent records are transferred into the custody of the NT Archives Service, they are considered an archive and form part of the Territory Archives (<i>see Archive and Territory Archives</i>).
Public sector organisation	An agency as defined in s.5 of the <i>Information Act</i> .
Record	Recorded information in any form (including data in a computer system) that is required to be kept by a public sector organisation as evidence of the activities or operations of the organisation, and includes part of a record and a copy of a record.
Source records	The original from which a digital copy is made.
Territory Archives	Records held on behalf of the Territory by the archives service. ^v

ABOUT THIS ADVICE

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide advice and direction to public sector organisations on the storage and transfer of permanent hard copy records that have been digitised.

This advice is not intended for born digital permanent records.

Scope

Application of this advice is mandatory for all Northern Territory Government public sector organisations, including NT Government departments or agencies, NT Government statutory bodies, NT Government business divisions, NT Government owned corporations and NT local government authorities.

Regulatory Framework

This standard complies with the provisions of the *Information Act 2002*.

Related Documents

This advice is to be read in conjunction with:

- ▶ the complete set of NT Government Archives Management Standards and Advices
- ▶ NT Government Records Management Standards
- ▶ policies and procedures of individual organisations.

Responsibility

The Northern Territory Archives Service is responsible for providing advice to enable compliance with archives standards^{vi}.

Implementation of this advice is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer of each NT Government public sector organisation.

Authority

This advice is issued in accordance with the Information Act which defines the functions of the archives service to “collect, transfer and preserve archives and permanent records”^{vii}.

Acknowledgments

The NT Archives Service acknowledges that the work of the following international, national and state archives and records authorities has had a significant influence on the development of this advice:

Archives New Zealand

Archives Office of Tasmania

National Archives of Australia

Public Record Office of Victoria

Queensland State Archives

State Records of New South Wales

State Records of South Australia

State Records Commission of Western Australia.

References

National Archives of Australia, *Glossary*,
[http://www.naa.gov.au/records-
management/publications/glossary](http://www.naa.gov.au/records-management/publications/glossary), viewed
10/10/2014

State Records of South Australia, Day
Batching of Official Records RK030

Queensland State Archives, Public Records
Brief, Day Batching of Records

POLICY STATEMENT

The NT Archives Service (NTAS) manages the transfer and preservation of permanent value or archival records to ensure that they are accessible to the responsible agency and eventually the public.

The appraisal of records to determine their value as permanent or temporary is undertaken through the development and implementation of authorised records retention and disposal schedules^{viii}, and by the NTAS for records created prior to 1 July 1978.^{ix}

Permanent value records must be managed with care by public sector organisations to ensure their preservation and accessibility for use by the responsible agency and eventual public access.^x

In order to ensure the integrity of permanent records for long term access, public sector organisations must manage their permanent records to ensure the context of the record is captured and maintained.

Documents stored in batches or day batches are not considered managed records which preserve the context and business relationships of the records.

The process of batching documents following digitisation allows for short term storage during quality assurance prior to the destruction of temporary records in accordance with the [General Disposal Schedule for Temporary Records that have been Digitised \(Disposal Schedule 2009/13\)](#)

Permanent value records which have been digitised (the source records) cannot be destroyed but must be captured into a structured file and classified using a classification scheme that facilitates disposal, security and access, and efficient searching and retrieval.^{xi} NTAS will not accept the transfer of permanent value source records that are in the batching or day batching format.

EXPLANATION

Digitisation

When digitising permanent records the source record or original record cannot be destroyed and must be retained for transfer to the NTAS once the records reach the age determined in the relevant authorised records retention and disposal schedule^{xii}. While the purpose of digitising source records is for the electronic record to become the main action record, in the case of permanent original records, the source record is to be retained and managed in the form that it was created. The digital record is only a copy.

Transfer of Permanent Value Source Records to NTAS

The process of transferring records from a public sector organisation to the NTAS involves the physical preparation of the records and the development of documentation to ensure control and description of the records for access. Eventual public access to permanent records requires records to be managed and described so that the business and context of the record is captured.

Batching of temporary source records enables the management of documents awaiting destruction following digitisation. However it is neither an effective or efficient long term management practice for permanent source records as the process does not link associated documents or manage the context and business transaction of the records.

The risks associated with batching permanent records include increased costs and difficulties in locating and retrieving original source records held in batches, for example during document discovery, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests or for cases where forensic information is required from the original.

The NTAS will not accept permanent value source records that are in the batching or day batching format. Permanent value source records must be captured into a structured file and classified using a classification scheme that facilitates disposal, security and access, and efficient searching and retrieval.^{xiii}

This approach is based on a hybrid records management system where originals are captured on a paper file which reflects the classification, file number and eventual retention period of the associated electronic file. If the record is required, it can be easily retrieved through the file number. In addition, related items will be stored together on one file, and retrieved together, rather than stored in separate boxes. This approach does require the creation of paper files, the classification of documents at the point of scanning, or immediately after, and retrieval of paper files to attach subsequent correspondence.^{xiv}

These files may be transferred to the NTAS, in accordance with the relevant authorised retention and disposal authority, and will eventually be made available to the public in accordance with the access provisions of the Information Act.^{xv}

ⁱ *Information Act 2002*, s. 4

ⁱⁱ National Archives of Australia, Glossary,
<http://www.naa.gov.au/records-management/publications/glossary.aspx>, viewed 10/10/2014

ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid*

^{iv} *ibid*

^v *Information Act*, s.4

^{vi} *Information Act*, s 131B (f)

^{vii} *Information Act*, s.131B (b)

^{viii} *Information Act*, ss.136A-136B

^{ix} [NT Archives Service, Archives Management Standard, Disposal of Government Records Created Prior to 1 July 1978, August 2007](#)

^x [NT Archives Service, Archives Management Standard, Transfer of Archives, August 2007](#), p.4

^{xi} [State Records of South Australia, Day Batching of Official Records RK030](#)

^{xii} *Information Act*, ss.141 and 145

^{xiii} [State Records of South Australia, Day Batching of Official Records RK030](#)

^{xiv} [Queensland State Archives, Public Records Brief, Day Batching of Records](#)

^{xv} *Information Act*, s.142