



---

**DOCUMENTING GOVERNMENT**

---

**PROMOTING HISTORY**

---

**SECURING RIGHTS**

---



## **10 reasons why electronic records need special attention**

[www.statearchivists.org](http://www.statearchivists.org)

- 1.** Managing electronic records requires regular attention and care so that the records remain accessible.
- 2.** Electronic records can become unreadable very quickly. While records on paper have been read after thousands of years, digital files may be inaccessible after just a few years.
- 3.** Scanning paper records is not the end of the preservation process: it is the beginning. Careful planning for ongoing management must be involved as well.
- 4.** There are no permanent storage media. Hard drives, CDs, magnetic tape, or any other storage formats need to be tested and replaced on a regular schedule. Proactive management is required to avoid catastrophic loss of records.
- 5.** The lack of a “physical” presence can make it easy to lose track of electronic records. Special care must be taken to ensure that records remain in controlled custody and do not get lost in masses of other data.
- 6.** It can be easy to create copies of electronic records and share them with others, but this can raise concerns about the authenticity of those records. Extra security precautions are needed to ensure e-records are not altered inappropriately.
- 7.** The best time to plan for electronic records preservation is when they are created. Don’t wait until software is being replaced or a project is ending to think about how records are going to be preserved.
- 8.** No one system will solve all your e-records problems. There’ is not a magical system that will manage and preserve your e-records without policies and planning.
- 9.** Electronic records can help ensure the rights of the public through greater accessibility than ever before, but only if creators, managers, and users all recognize their importance and contribute resources to their preservation.
- 10.** While they may seem commonplace now, electronic records will form the backbone of the historical record for researchers of the future.

**Remember, archivists and records managers can help you tackle these difficult problems. Contact your state, local, or university archives for more information.**