Digitisation of hardcopy records

Recordkeeping fact sheet 7

Digitisation

Digitisation is the conversion of a hardcopy record to a digital format. In accordance with the department's Digitisation Policy, records which have been appropriately scanned and stored in an authorised corporate system can become the official record. In most cases, the hardcopy source record does not need to be retained as well. However, there are a number of legal and practical considerations that must be taken into account prior to commencing a digitisation activity.

Planning for digitisation

Any business area wishing to digitise records must first familiarise themselves with the *Health & Human Services Digitisation Policy* and prepare and submit a Digitisation Plan for approval.

Digitisation Plan

Using the department's Digitisation Plan template, a Digitisation Plan must be completed and retained in order to demonstrate that the department has fulfilled Public Record Office Victoria's (PROV) requirements.

The Digitisation Plan aims to ensure that digitised records are complete and accurate copies of original records and that they will be appropriately stored for the duration of their retention period.

Each Digitisation Plan must detail the rationale, risks, resources and quality controls of the digitisation project or activity.

Please contact the central Records Management Unit for advice on completing a Digitisation Plan.

Rationale

Digitisation can be a one-off project or part of an on-going business activity. Depending on the scope and purpose, digitisation may involve significant resources. There must always be a clear business benefit to the department, for example:

- Providing more efficient access to records
- Saving space and/or reducing storage costs
- Protecting and preserving records.

Potential risks

It is essential that digitised records are accurate and reliable versions of the source records as they could be required as evidence in the future. It is essential that any risks which could impact on the integrity and preservation of digitised records are identified and addressed as part of the Digitisation Plan e.g.:

- **Storage**. Digitised records must be saved into an authorised business system, such as TRIM, to guard against loss of data.
- **Quality assurance**. Poor-quality images and incorrect/insufficient metadata must be identified through quality checks and rectified through remediation processes.
- **Destruction**. Hardcopy source records must not be destroyed before a thorough quality assurance process has been completed on the digitised versions.

Resources

Records Management can advise on resources required for a digitisation project or activity. However, it is important to first consider the availability of:

- financial resources
- suitably trained staff
- time, including a pilot phase and ongoing quality assurance checks on digitised records.

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Quality assurance

Once records have been digitised, the digital version becomes the official record, used for departmental business. It is therefore crucial that each Digitisation Plan includes robust quality controls for example:

- processes to ensure image quality
- processes to ensure accurate metadata is recorded
- procedures to be followed if a quality failure is detected.

Management of digitised records

The Digitisation Plan must also set out how the digitised records will be managed after digitisation has occurred. This includes specifying the system the records will be stored in, back up and disaster recovery processes, and how security and access will be controlled.

Compliance

Once a digitisation activity is finalised, a Certificate of Compliance must be completed and signed by the department's Chief Information Officer. This certificate is then lodged with PROV and all associated records must be made available to PROV if requested.

Related documents

- Health & Human Services Digitisation Policy
- Health & Human Services Digitisation Plan Template

Further information

For further assistance, please contact the:

Records Service Centre: 9096 8999
Email: RecordsService.Centre@dhhs.vic.gov.au

or your local Records Management unit:

Records Unit East Division: 9843 6090

Records Unit North Division: 9412 5427

Records Unit South Division: 8765 7164

Records Unit West Division: 5333 6088

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