

Digital records management

What is digital records management?

A public record is any information, **regardless of its format or location**, that is made or received as part of your official duties as a public sector employee. Digital records management is about handling public records made, received, and maintained in digital form as part of your work. It ensures public records are:

- made digitally and kept digital, where appropriate
- managed in digital systems
- maintained with their associated metadata throughout their lifecycle.

Digital records require active management

Digital public records rely on technology. This makes them increasingly fragile as technology continues to change. Without proactive management, such as regular migrations to current systems and formats, digital public records risk becoming inaccessible or lost before their minimum retention period is met.

Why does it matter?

A paper record can often survive through careful storage. A digital record requires ongoing care, planning and active management to remain accessible and reliable. Proactive management of digital public records isn't just good practice — it's essential for protecting and managing the records you're responsible for.

Boosts efficiency: it reduces duplication and double handling, cutting out unnecessary printing or rescanning.

Simplifies access and collaboration: digital records make it easier to work from anywhere, share information, and manage version control.

Enhances public records management: keeping public records with their metadata improves searchability, adds context, and supports audit trails.

Reduces risk: it prevents data loss, ensures records stay accessible, and helps identify issues like corruption, security risks, or viruses early.

What do I need to know?

What are the key elements of a digital public record?

Digital files are made up of different parts that aren't always visible when you're using them. Understanding these main components of a digital records can help make records management much clearer.

- **Content:** The information within the file that you view and work with.
- **Metadata:** Details that describe the file, such as who created it and when.
- **File format:** How the content and metadata are organised and stored within the file.

These elements work together to allow a file to be opened, displayed, and managed by software.

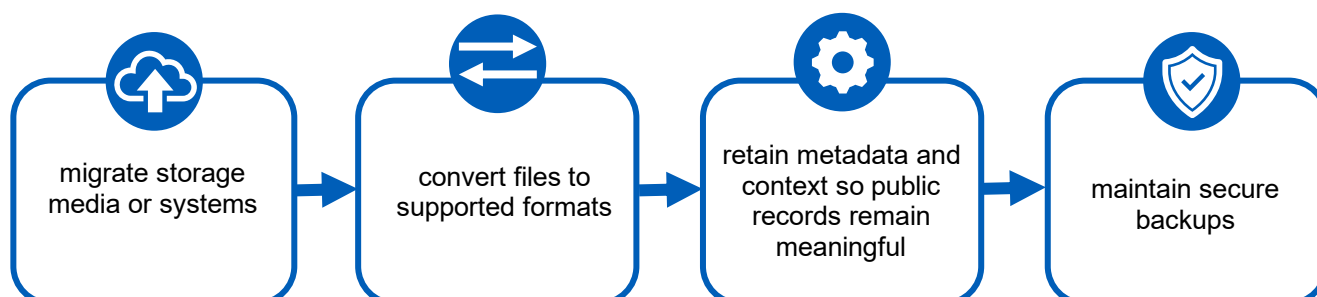
Where can I find digital records?

Digital public records are made, stored, and managed across various systems, applications, and platforms. Their longevity depends on careful planning from the moment they're made — not just when a system is being retired. Some digital public records need to stay accessible for many decades.

Designing for long-term, digital records management

What is required for digital preservation?

Preserving digital public records is essential for maintaining their value and ensuring they can be accessed and trusted in the future. To keep digital public records accessible and reliable over time, you may need to:



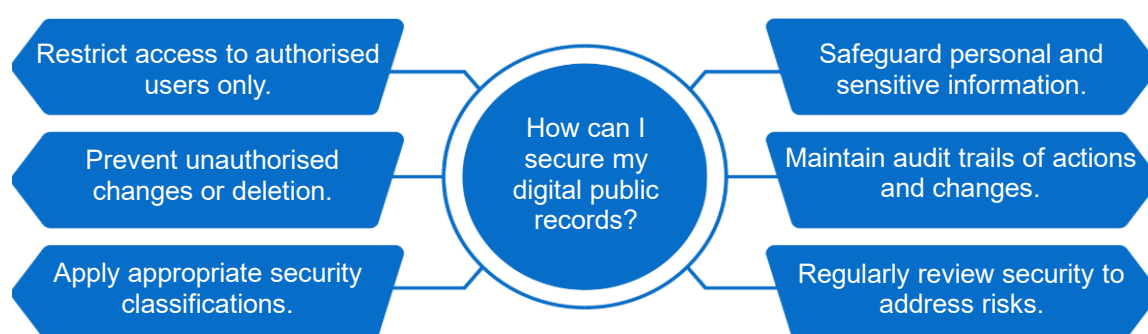
Where does good public records management begin?

Effective digital records management begins with designing the right systems and processes. When you're setting up or reviewing a system, ask yourself:

- Can records be exported or moved to a new system if needed?
- Is the metadata captured, preserved and easy to transfer?
- Can you confirm the records are authentic and haven't been tampered with?
- Are there proper access controls in place to keep the records secure?
- Can the system support retention and disposal of records when required?

Security and digital public record lifecycle

You need to keep digital public records protected, well-managed, and reliable at every stage of their lifecycle. Remember, accessible doesn't mean open to everyone — public records should be both secure and easy to use when needed.



Where do I find more information?

For guidance on digital records management, visit the [Queensland State Archives website](https://www.archives.qld.gov.au). For specific queries, please contact us at rkqueries@archives.qld.gov.au or phone us on (07) 3037 6630.