



Louisiana State Archives – Records Management
Louisiana Secretary of State
P.O. Box 94125
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9125
recmgt@sos.la.gov

SSARC-970 (08/2024)

Electronic Records Conversion Agreement

AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION	
Agency Name:	
Address:	
Name of Executive / Agency Head:	
Executive / Agency Head Title:	
Name of Records Officer (RO):	
Records Officer Title:	
RO Phone:	RO Email:
Name of Information Technology Director (IT):	
IT Phone:	IT Email:
FOR LOUISIANA STATE ARCHIVES USE	
Application Number:	Expiration Date (Valid for 5 years):

Terms and Conditions

- 1. Authority.** In accordance with La. R.S. 44:405 and 44:415, all agencies must comply with the digitization (imaging) standards established by the Louisiana State Archives.
- 2. Purpose.** The purpose of this agreement is to establish a standard for the digitization of Louisiana's government records.



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- a. In accordance with La. R.S. 44:36 and 44:39, all agencies are required to exercise diligence and care in preserving the records in their custody. Agencies must ensure any record they convert to electronic format remains unalterable and accessible for the entirety of the record's retention period as specified in the agency's approved records retention schedule.
- b. Electronic records are more fragile than paper records. File formats, hardware, software, and storage media rapidly become obsolete. The technology agencies use today may not be available or supported in the near future. As a result, the electronic records they create or receive may not be readable by replacement technology. Agencies should carefully consider the potential risks associated with discarding the original paper record and maintaining the record only in electronic format.

3. Scope.

- a. In accordance with La. R.S. 44:39 and 44:415, any agency, as defined by La. R.S. 44:402, who intends to convert records from analog to electronic format (digitize) and destroy the original source records must agree to the terms and conditions outlined in this agreement.
- b. This agreement is valid for five years from the date the agreement is signed by both the agency and the Louisiana State Archives.
- c. This agreement only applies to records that are listed on the agency's approved retention schedule.
- d. This agreement excludes the following records, which shall not be destroyed after digitization:
 - i. Records that are required by statute, regulation, or policy to be maintained in their original, physical (analog) format;
 - ii. Records that are not listed on the agency's retention schedule;



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- iii. Records that are currently under a litigation hold, even if they were previously approved by this agreement.
- e. The standards outlined in this agreement apply regardless of who digitizes the records, whether it is the agency itself, a vendor, or any other entity acting on the agency's behalf.
- f. For the purposes of this agreement, the terms "shall" or "must" indicate a requirement and the term "should" indicates a recommendation.
- g. For the purposes of this agreement, the terms "digitized version of the document" and "electronic record" are interchangeable.

4. Electronic Records Series List Form (SSARC-972).

- a. The agency must submit the Electronic Records Series List Form (SSARC-972) with this document in order to obtain approval to convert records from analog to electronic format and dispose of the original source records.
- b. The State Archivist will review the form and indicate on the form, which records series have been approved or denied for conversion.
- c. Records that are denied may include but are not limited to:
 - i. Records that are required by law to be kept in their original format;
 - ii. Records that are required by law to be kept permanently;
 - iii. Records that possess archival value.
- d. If an agency wants to seek approval to convert additional records series after this agreement has been approved, they are required to submit an additional Electronic Record Series List Form (SSARC-972) listing the newly requested record series as an addendum.



- 5. Defensibility.** All digitization processes must be defensible. The agency must be able to demonstrate:
- a. Digitization of the documents does not expose the agency to any undue risk;
 - b. The digitized version of the document is a true and accurate copy of the original source record;
 - c. The agency can use the digitized version of the document for all the purposes the original document served;
 - d. All digitization processes are documented and usable as evidence that all relevant digitizing standards have been met;
 - e. The records remain secure throughout the digitization process, minimizing the risk of unauthorized additions, deletions, or alterations.
- 6. Enhancements.** Any enhancements utilized in the digitizing process (for example, de-skewing, sharpening, despeckling, cropping, contrast adjustment, brightening, and gamma correction) must not remove any of the original content of the record and must be documented.
- 7. Discoverability.** The agency is responsible for defining the specific metadata required to access and manage the records efficiently:
- a. The metadata must be sufficient to understand the content, context, and structure of the records.
 - b. The metadata must be sufficient to understand the relationships between the digitized records with each other and any associated records that may be maintained in their original format.
 - c. The metadata must be sufficient to identify and later retrieve the records.
 - d. The metadata should include administrative, descriptive, structural, and technical metadata elements.



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8. Quality Control. The following quality control measures must be implemented. Agencies must:

- a. Provide training for all staff who are involved in the digitization process;
- b. Account for all records in the project's scope before the digitization process, and document any missing records or gaps in coverage found in the original source records;
- c. Verify all pages / information contained in the original source records, including attachments, have been captured by visually comparing source records with their digitized versions and by referring to box lists, folder title lists, and other inventories;
- d. Verify the pages remain in their original order or are organized in the most accessible order;
- e. Verify the electronic files can be opened, viewed, are readable, and are not dimensionally distorted, do not have any information that is cropped, and do not have any content obscured by imaging artifacts;
- f. Ensure electronic files are named according to the agency's established conventions;
- g. Verify the metadata is complete and accurate;
- h. Ensure that if the agency contracts with a vendor for imaging services, the vendor complies with all applicable sections of this agreement.

9. Recommended Technical Guidelines. While deviations in practice from the recommended guidelines do not violate the terms and conditions of this agreement, agencies who do not meet the minimum standards outlined below do so at their own peril.



Record Type	Minimum Resolution	Minimum Bit Depth	Color Mode	Recommended File Formats	Acceptable Compressions
Textual Documents. Black and white	≥ 294 ppi	1 bit	Bi-tonal (black and white)	TIFF JPG2000 PDF/A & PDF/UA Portable network graphics (PNG)	Uncompressed Lossless compression
Documents with color used in text or diagrams	≥ 294 ppi	8 or 16 bit	Color	TIFF JPG2000 PDF/A & PDF/UA Portable network graphics (PNG)	Uncompressed Lossless compression
Grayscale Photographs	≥ 392 ppi	8 or 16 bit	Grayscale	TIFF JPG2000 PDF/A & PDF/UA	Uncompressed Lossless compression
Color Photographs	≥ 392 ppi	16 or 24 bit	Color	TIFF JPG2000 PDF/A & PDF/UA	Uncompressed Lossless compression
Best Practices & Other Formats	For guidance on best practices in digitizing these and other record formats, consult the Federal Digital Guidelines Initiative’s Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Cultural Heritage Materials - 3rd Edition (2023) , which is available at https://www.digitizationguidelines.gov/ .				



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10. Disposition of original source documents.

- a. The agency must retain the digitized version of the record for the remaining portion of the record's retention period that is listed in the agency's retention schedule.
- b. The agency may dispose of the original source document after the agency has received written approval from the State Archivist to destroy the records. To obtain this written approval, the agency must submit the "Request for Authority to Dispose of Records Form (SSARC-930)" to disposals@sos.la.gov. On this form, the agency will indicate they have converted the documents to digital format by selecting "Option B".
- c. Agencies must conduct quality control on the digitized images prior to submitting disposal requests to the Louisiana State Archives to ensure all records are readable and accounted for.

11. Ongoing Management. All agencies shall exercise diligence and care in preserving the records in their custody. To properly manage the digitized records, agencies must:

- a. Ensure they can locate, retrieve, access and use the digitized versions of the records for the entirety of the records' retention period;
- b. Protect the confidentiality of any digitized records that are exempt from disclosure for the entirety of the records' retention period;
- c. Store the digitized version of the records on agency servers or in the cloud, not on removable media (e.g. CDs, DVDs, USB flash drives, external hard drives, etc.), and not on individual user storage accounts and devices, if not accessible to the agency;
- d. Maintain ownership and responsibility for the records, regardless of whether the record is stored in a public, private, or community cloud; a contracted environment; or under the agency's physical control;
- e. Ensure that if the records are stored in a proprietary system, the agency has an exit strategy, which allows the agency to retain legal ownership of the records and have the



records returned to them in a usable format, should the agency or vendor terminate their contract;

- f. Upgrade or replace the technology (hardware, software, storage media) used to store, operate, access, and use the records, as needed, throughout the lifecycle of the record, in order to maintain the accessibility, usability, and integrity of the records, and migrate the records to the upgraded or new technology before the current technology is no longer functional;
- g. Convert the record to accessible formats, as needed, throughout the lifecycle of the record, to maintain the accessibility and usability of the records, and maintain the link between the records and their metadata throughout the conversion process;
- h. Ensure the cost of ongoing maintenance and sustainability of the electronic records is factored into the agency's budget, including but not limited to the cost of technology upgrades and the migration of the records from technology facing potential or impending obsolescence to new media and information systems;
- i. Protect against file corruption, and unauthorized deletions, additions, or alterations to the digitized versions by documenting the chain of custody of the records, implementing checksums and / or audit trails, and using security protocols that limit system access to appropriate users;
- j. Contact the Louisiana State Archives of any actual, impending, or threatened unlawful removal, alteration, corruption, deletion, erasure, or destruction of records in the custody of the agency;
- k. Maintain backup copies of their digitized records in separate geographic locations, over a redundant array of independent disk storage systems, and they must run periodic tests to validate that they can utilize their backups to restore their records;
- l. Develop a disaster recovery plan that includes provisions for their digitized records. The agency should test their plan regularly by holding tabletop exercises or other drills that



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simulate various disaster scenarios (fires, floods, hurricanes, etc.). For guidance on how to develop a disaster recovery plan for your records, consult the American Institute for Conservation’s Emergency Preparedness & Response Wikipage at https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Emergency_Preparedness_&_Response;

- m. Develop a cybersecurity incident response plan to minimize the impact of malware, ransomware, and other cyber incidents. The agency should test their plan regularly by holding tabletop exercises or other drills that simulate various cybersecurity incidents. For guidance on how to develop an incident response plan, consult the Louisiana Division of Administration’s Office of Technology Services’ “Incident Response Plan”, which is available for download at <https://www.doa.la.gov/doa/ots/policies-and-forms/>;
- n. Be able to dispose of the electronic records in a manner that protects any confidential or sensitive information, when the records have met their retention. For guidance on data sanitization procedures, consult the Louisiana Division of Administration’s Office of Technology Services “Data Sanitization Standard”, which is available for download at <https://www.doa.la.gov/doa/ots/policies-and-forms/>.

12. Definitions.

- a. **Agency.** Any state, parish and municipal office, department, division, board, bureau, commission, authority, or other separate unit of state, parish, or municipal government created or established by the constitution, law, resolution, proclamation, or ordinance (La. R.S. 44:402).
- b. **Analog.** Documents that are not in digital format, such as paper and photographic prints, and film.
- c. **Checksum.** A sum derived from the bits of a segment of an electronic file, against which later comparisons can be made to detect if an electronic file has been altered or corrupted during storage or transmission.



- d. **Compression.** A reduction of the “raw” image that is produced by the digitization process, resulting in a digital image that takes up less space on the drive.
- e. **Lossless Compression.** A form of compression that maintains the underlying binary code of the digital image, so that when it is opened, it can reconstruct the code and produce a perfect copy of the original.
- f. **Metadata.** Information about a record that describes the context, content, and structure of a record, and supports the management, discoverability, and preservation of the record.
 - i. **Administrative Metadata.** Information that describes how the record is managed. Includes the file name, access restrictions, use restrictions, the rights holder, and the record series title to which the record belongs.
 - ii. **Descriptive Metadata.** Information that describes the intellectual content of a record. Used for indexing and discovery of the record. Includes the title of the record, description of the content of the record, the creator of the original record, the date the record was created, the source type (the original record’s format), and the source dimensions.
 - iii. **Structural Metadata.** Information that describes how a record is related to other records.
 - iv. **Technical Metadata.** Information that describes the features of the electronic record, and the digitizing processes used to create the record. Includes file size, format name and version, image width, image height, date and time the electronic record was created, the scanner’s make and model, the scanning software’s name and version.
- g. **Migration.** The act of transferring records from one system to another while maintaining their authenticity, integrity, and usability.



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- h. **Permanent records.** Records having a retention period of the life of the State of Louisiana.
- i. **Pixels per Inch (PPI).** The number of pixels captured in a given inch. The higher the PPI of a digital image, the higher the resolution (the quality) of the image.
- j. **Records.** All documents, papers, letters, books, drawings, maps, plats, photographs, magnetic or optical media, microfilm, microphotograph, motion picture film, or other document or any other material, regardless of physical form or characteristic, generated or received under law or in connection with the transaction of official business, or preserved by an agency or political subdivision because of other informational or legal value. This term shall not be construed to include library and museum material developed or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies maintained for convenience in reference or stocks of standard publications, or processed documents (La. R.S. 44:402).
- k. **Records Series.** A group of related or similar records that may be filed together and typically are evaluated as a unit for determining retention periods.
- l. **Retention Schedule.** A set of disposition instructions prescribing how long, in what location, under what conditions, and in what form records series shall be kept (La. R.S. 44:402).
- m. **Temporary records.** Records having a retention period of less than the life of the State of Louisiana.



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13. AGENCY VERIFICATION AND AGREEMENT. By signing below, I hereby acknowledge that I have completely read and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in this document.

Signature of Agency Records Officer

Printed Name

Date

Signature of Chief Executive / Head of Agency

Printed Name

Date

Application approved by:

Signature of State Archivist

Printed Name

Date