**Electronic Records Management Definitions**

**RECORDS MANAGEMENT**– The systematic control of all organizational records during the various stages of their life cycle: from their creation or receipt, though their processing, distribution, storage and retrieval, maintenance and us, to their ultimate disposition.(Stephens)

* **Records Management** is the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

(ISO 15489)

* Records Management is the systematic control of all records from their creation or receipt, through their processing, distribution, organization, storage and retrieval to their ultimate destruction. (*ARMA*)

**RECORD** – Recorded information, regardless of medium or characteristics, made or received by an organization that is evidence of its operations and that has value requiring its retention for a specific period of time; a collection of related data fields in a computer database; the basic organizational unit of the database, consisting of a group of facts about a particular subject. (Stephens)

In a record, the following elements must be present and clearly recognizable:

* Identification of the author or individual responsible for its creation
* An act or manifestation of a decision
* A medium that makes the record stable and therefore identifiable
* Form, which is composed of the constituent elements such as date and time of creation, the text, and authentication (signature)

A **Record** is information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by

an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of

business.

**Required Record Characteristics:**

**Authenticity** - is it what it says it is?

**Reliability** - can it be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the transaction or facts?

**Integrity** - is it complete and unaltered?

**Usability** - can it be located, retrieved, presented, and interpreted?

Records are the by-product of carrying out a business activity and are retained as evidence of transactions through incorporation into a recordkeeping system.

**All records** share in common the attributes of (1**) content**, (2**) structure**, and (3) **context**.

***Content*** *–* includes the words, numbers, and sounds and images made by the creator of the record

***Structure*** – refers to the appearance and arrangement of the record’s content. It includes the meaning of a record as conveyed by the appearance of its characteristics i.e., typeface), the location of specific data fields on the document (i.e., a form), and the pointers used to link physical and logical groups of data.

***Context*** – includes the background information describing the origin of the record; that is, which organizational unit created the record, who used it, the purpose for which it was used, and how it relates to other records.

***Reliability***– refers to the ability of a record to stand for the facts it contains; that is, the trustworthiness of the record’s content. It must be trustworthy based on its mode (method by which it is communicated over time and space), form (format or media on which it is created or received), state of transmission, and the manner of its preservation.

***Authenticity***refers to the fact that a record is what is purports to be and has not been tampered with or otherwise corrupted since its creation; that is, it is proven reliable over time. The record must be genuine and determined to have been managed by specific records custodians through all phases of its life cycle. Authentication of a record is critical in the context of digital preservation because electronic records can only be preserved by copying or reproducing them. (Dollar) **(Note: These attributes must be captured at the time of creation of electronic records, and any preservation initiatives must include consideration of how they will be addressed.)**

#### INFORMATION LIFE CYCLE – The period of time from the creation or receipt of a record through its useful life to its final disposition (i.e., destruction or permanent preservation). In electronic recordkeeping environments, the transition of documents or data from active to inactive status generally coincides with migration of information from primary to secondary storage media and subsequent purging or permanent preservation as electronic archives. (Stephens)

**RECORD SERIES** – **A group of logically-related records that support a specific business or administrative operation and that are filed, indexed, and/or used together**

#### ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT – A record stored on electronic storage media that can be readily accessed or changed; the smallest unit of filing within a computer application or database; a collection of discrete computer-based information objects formatted for presentation to an end user (Stephens)

**ELECTRONIC RECORD** – A record that contains machine-readable, as opposed to human readable, information (Saffady)

**ELECTRONIC RECORD SERIES –**A group of related electronic records filed / used together as a unit and evaluated as a unit for retention purposes. It is logically related, serves a common purpose or function, and can thus be considered as a separate unit for purposes of developing an electronic records retention schedule. Sometimes electronic records series are considered synonymous with **data set** for larger collections of electronic records in an application or database. (Stephens)

#### DATA – A symbols or representations constituting the smallest unit of document filing in an electronic recordkeeping system (Stephens).

**DATA SET** – A separate, discrete body of computer data that is logically related serves a common purpose or function and thus can be considered as a separate unit for analysis. Data sets are sometimes considered to be synonymous with **electronic records series.** (Stephens).

**DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DOCUMENT AND A RECORD:**

What distinguishes a collection of information called a **document** from a collection of information called a **record**?

The distinction between a document and a record is that the latter has been set aside as evidence and protected from change or alteration. The critical factor is how “set aside” is defined. In the world of paper records “being set aside,” means entering a document into a file system where it can be retrieved. In the world of digital technologies, the same objective is achieved by transferring an electronic document from an operational environment into a recordkeeping system. The object of the system is to ensure future irretrievability of authentic electronic records – that is, electronic records that have not been altered or otherwise corrupted.

**Documents** are active, with versions/iterations.

**Records** are document, which are static