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## UW-MADISON ELECTRONIC RECORDS AND INFORMATION POLICY PRINCIPLES

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The University of Wisconsin-Madison recognizes the impact of changing information technology upon its informational resources. These changes have a profound effect upon its corporate memory, and the continued success of its mission. The University Archives and Records Management Service (ARMS) strives to maintain and preserve the University's cultural heritage and meet the institution's records obligations. The University needs to provide increased support to ARMS for the continuing accomplishment of those objectives. ARMS has worked with the University community to meet those objectives in the past and will work to insure the successful completion of them in the future.

In the years ahead, many of the traditional items in an academic archive will be available only in electronic or digital formats. The maintenance and preservation of electronic archives is a shared responsibility requiring the commitment of the information creator, information technology staff, campus administration, and the archives. This statement of policy principles addresses the continued mission of the University Archives and Records Management Service and the new resources that will be needed and changed campus responsibilities. It provides the basis for the development of an electronic archives records management program for the University.

1. The basic mission of the University Archives and Records Management Service is reaffirmed. To ignore the mission is to abandon the preservation of the UW's collective memory and presents legal, audit, and administrative risks to the institution.
2. Information is a valuable institutional resource. It must be managed with the same care and level of detail as are applied to other key resources in an organization. The ultimate goal is to preserve access to the information contained in the electronic systems.
3. University records and information, regardless of form and format, are subject to state and federal records laws as well as University policies.
4. The retention of electronic records is based upon appraisal and analysis of the informational content and context of the records. ARMS conducts records appraisal and works with University departments to determine the retention value of their records and information.
5. The determination of 'record status' is based NOT upon the storage media used, but upon the records-keeping requirements of the office creating the maintaining the information, to the intent to create a record, and the need to provide evidence to support and document University transactions and decision making.
6. The management of records and information in varying forms and formats requires a team approach. Without the active cooperation of the records creator, information technology staffs, legal and audit services, ARMS, and others, sound records practices will not be implemented and the University's corporate memory will not be protected.
7. The management of electronic information resources is complex. There is not likely to be a single solution to the problem of information retention and disposition that is suitable in all situations. Strategies will need to be developed that address a wide variety of technology situations and capabilities; from the individual employee who creates University records in a personal computer environment, to the complexity of hybrid information systems.
8. Each University department must be responsible for migrating or refreshing electronic resources that are scheduled to meet University records-keeping needs or for long term or permanent preservation. University departments must also be responsible for documenting how their information systems work. Without adequate documentation, continued access to the information will be in jeopardy.

9. Although preservation of electronic records may be distributed over the campus rather than physically in the Archives, there will be increased need to provide intellectual control and access to a rich and complicated body of electronic University records. While distributed maintenance and preservation is likely to be the model, ARMS will doubtless be called upon to maintain certain records of institution-wide importance as well as orphaned records. ARMS will need additional resources to administer these institutional assets.
10. Long-term access to and preservation of University records stored in varying electronic media will require the commitment of University staff and resources. Deans, directors, and department chairs will need to provide sufficient support so that it will be seen as a priority, and sufficient work time will be committed to it. The benefits of implementing sound records and information management practices are significant and substantial. They include: reduction of storage costs, reduction in staff time needed for the retrieval of records, ensures legal acceptability of their electronic records, and ensures economies in the migration of records to successive generations of technology and services.
11. The University Archives and Records Management Service must be given sufficient administrative and financial support to carry out its mission in this complex electronic environment. ARMS will need to expand its consulting, partnering, and training roles to meet the demands of new systems, while continuing to do its traditional work.
12. ARMS will need to develop partnering efforts with the General Library System, the Division of Information Technology, Administrative Legal Services, Internal Audit, and other offices to develop and maintain new policies and procedures that will insure the long-term viability of institutional informational resources. For example, such standard items as catalogs and timetables, long determined to be permanent institutional resources, must be maintained to meet the academic needs of past and present students, and to serve the needs of future generations.

These basic principles need to be communicated to the University community, most especially to those groups charged with information systems development and long-term information technology planning. The University Archives and Records Management Service will serve as a resource for those groups and will develop appropriate policy statements, guidelines, and procedures on various aspects of electronic records management.

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