

Digitization Standard

FOIP and Information Management, Enterprise Information Management

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Standard Statement

This standard describes the process that departments must implement when the goal of a digitization project is to create electronic records whose authenticity and reliability (as defined by the Records Management Program Standard) are demonstrable.

Authority

- [Alberta Evidence Act](#)
- [Electronic Transactions Act](#)
- [Government Organization Act](#)
- [Records Management Regulation](#)

Scope

This standard applies to all departments defined under section 14 of Schedule 11 of the *Government Organization Act* and agencies, boards, and commissions as defined in schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation.

Agencies, boards, and commissions that are not contained within schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation are encouraged to align with this standard.

Departments requiring an exception must follow the Cybersecurity Services exception process. Please contact your [Sector Information Security Officer \(SISO\)](#) to discuss the exceptions process; if your department is not part of a sector, please contact [Service Alberta, Enterprise Information Management](#).

Standard Description

This standard aligns with the [Canadian General Standards Board \(CGSB\) 72.34-2017, Electronic records as documentary evidence standard](#) established by the Government of Canada.

This standard applies to all digitization projects, regardless of scope and scale, including (but not limited to):

- formal digitization (e.g., large-scale digitization);
- informal digitization (e.g., work convenience digitization); and
- archival digitization (e.g., digitization for long-term preservation by an archival institution).

This standard details the minimum requirements for the Government of Alberta—department processes and policies should be reviewed for compliance. Business areas can develop enhanced digitization processes if required (e.g., technical requirements for archival digitization established by the Provincial Archives of Alberta), based on this standard.

NOTE: The *Electronic Transactions Act* establishes legal recognition for electronic records in the Government of Alberta; however, unique requirements may exist for specific business areas/departments. Business areas/departments must review relevant legislation and policy instruments prior to initiating a digitization project; a legal opinion regarding the validity of electronic records may be necessary.

Standard Specification

This standard is specified by:

- Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) 72.34-2017, Electronic records as documentary evidence.

Digitization Process

The digitization process detailed in this standard is intended to create electronic records with provable authenticity, reliability, integrity, and/or usability.

For more detail on the digitization process, please refer to the [Digitization Guideline](#).

At a minimum, a digitization project must include:

- an analysis to determine the business need, scope, and feasibility of a digitization project;
 - It is recommended that only official records are subject to digitization
- a planning phase in which the appropriate documentation is developed, authorized, and captured in a digitization procedures manual;
 - Minimum quality assurance controls for the preparation, digitization, storage, delivery, and/or transfer of analogue, source, and electronic records must be established.
 - Any digitization project involving analogue records with the final disposition of “Archives” requires consultation with the Provincial Archives of Alberta.
- preparation of analogue records to ensure their suitability for digitization;
- the use of analogue records to create electronic records (e.g., scanning, imaging, etc.);
 - Electronic records must be created in a format that supports all applicable business, legal, operational, and/or archival requirements.
 - Indexing information and metadata must be applied to the electronic records.
 - For information regarding metadata requirements, please see the [Metadata – Core Content Standard](#).
- procedures for the storage, delivery, and/or transfer of analogue, source, and electronic records; and
- appropriate disposition of source records in compliance with:
 - the requirements outlined in [Alberta Records Management Committee Circular 2009-01 – Disposition of Imaged Source Records](#); and
 - an approved records retention and disposition schedule.

In a digitization project, quality assurance and quality control apply to both the process and the product; quality assurance involves the measures aimed at preventing defects, while quality control involves the measures aimed at identifying and correcting defects. Quality assurance and control must:

- be conducted at every phase of a digitization project (preparation, digitization, transportation, and/or storage) to reduce the risk of electronic records lacking authenticity, reliability, integrity, and/or usability;
- apply to both analogue and electronic records to determine if their quality meets minimum requirements and standards established by the business area; and
- be verified by qualified personnel.
 - Qualified personnel are to be determined by the business area.
 - Qualified personnel may include (but are not limited to):
 - the manager(s) responsible for a digitization project;
 - a technical expert;

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- an appointed staff member familiar with a specific digitization project; and/or
- a third-party vendor.

Quality assurance and control minimums, processes, and sign-offs must be captured in a Digitization Procedures Manual (DPM).

NOTE: All decisions and actions relating to a digitization project must be documented and verified in a digitization procedures manual.

Definitions

NOTE: These definitions are from Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) 72.34-2017, Electronic Records as Documentary Evidence.

Analogue Record: Record written on physical material, such as paper, parchment, stone, clay, film or certain types of magnetic audio- and videotape.

Digitization: The process of rendering analogue recorded information in electronic (digital) form.

Electronic Record: An analogue or digital record that is carried by an electrical conductor and requires the use of electronic equipment to be intelligible by a person.

Quality Assurance (QA): Procedures for monitoring and assessing the records system, aiming to maintain a desired level of quality.

Source Record: Analogue record from which an electronic (digital) copy is made.

Compliance

Consequences of non-compliance with this standard could result in the loss of information, damage to Government of Alberta's reputation, exposure of Albertans to harm and/or incurrence of unnecessary costs. Depending on the severity of non-compliance:

- either informal or formal requests and/or follow-ups may be made by Enterprise Information Management, Corporate Internal Audit Services, Corporate Information Security Office, Office of the Information Privacy Commissioner, and/or Public Service Commission, and
- legislated disciplinary action (i.e., *Public Service Act*) may be taken.

References and Supporting Resources

- [Alberta Records Management Committee Circular 2009-01 – Disposition of Imaged Source Records](#)
- [Digitization Guideline](#)
- [Metadata – Core Content Standard](#)
- [Records Management Program Standard](#)