

Streamlining Legacy Record Cleanup

Government records managers often face data that is unorganized, unstructured, or mistagged, making it challenging and time-consuming for government employees to locate the information they need.

! Employees often spend **1.8 hours every day**— 9.3 hours per week, on average—searching and gathering information to perform their jobs effectively.

Imagine a digital world where finding specific records is as simple as a keyword search, rather than sifting through countless boxes of physical records. This vision becomes reality with intelligent digitization—helping governments cut costs, increase efficiency, improve data accessibility, and ultimately enhance public sector value.

There are several best practices for effectively digitizing legacy records to make them meaningful and actionable. Based on Iron Mountain's decades of experience, certain actions can have a larger impact on digitization projects than others.

Extensive Metadata Tagging

Successful digitization begins with thoughtful planning of how an agency will use their digital records, how often they may need to be accessed, and how they need to be organized. Effective and extensive upfront metadata tagging can make the difference in ensuring anyone can quickly and easily find what they need.



Understand how users will interact with data: Consult all departments for feedback on search habits, keywords, and unique needs to understand how staff will use the data.



Index with unique identifiers: Apply proper naming conventions to classify similar records and eliminate potential overwrites.



Think ahead to future needs: Have foresight in capturing information to make data significantly more valuable in the long run.



Unlock the Potential of Digitization with Iron Mountain

Digitization is more than just converting paper into digital files—it's about enhancing efficiency, achieving compliance, and seizing new modernization opportunities. Iron Mountain's expertise in digitization can help guide your agency through a seamless and future-ready transformation.

Thorough Document Preparation

Being proactive and preparing physical records before they reach the scanning equipment can avoid costly errors and reduce the amount of unnecessary rework. This allows for accelerating digitization project timelines by advancing high-priority tasks instead of revisiting the same records multiple times.



Organize records: Group similar file types together based on specific factors, including record status, unique identifiers, or destruction eligibility.



Assess condition: Evaluate and address the physical condition of documents before digitization starts - align pages in the same orientation, dis-bind bound materials, and repair torn sections.

Image Quality Based on Requirements

Higher resolution digitization produces higher quality images with finer detail, but higher resolution isn't always the right answer for digitization projects. Government agencies need a tailored approach based on factors such as document condition, type, and retention requirements.



Greyscale: Resolution of 300 DPI is usually suitable.



Older documents: Lower resolution (200 DPI) can help reduce the 'background noise' that can interfere with accurate metadata tagging.



Maps / Drawings / Photographs: Higher resolution (600+ DPI) to capture all critical information accurately.

Improved Accuracy with Automation

Technology is a powerful tool for accelerating document digitization by reducing the need for extensive manual intervention. Valuable staff resources can focus on the more complicated discrepancies, rather than combing through every record.



Format validation: Include as many rules and compliance checks as possible to validate metadata **fields**.



Data validation: Incorporate agency-specific rules to enhance validation and consider all levels of compliance.

To learn how to get started, please visit

<https://www.ironmountain.com/industries/public-sector/federal-government/legacy-records>



To learn more, contact
publicsector@ironmountain.com

Visit us online at
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