

Digital Recordkeeping Policy for the ACTPS

Purpose

This policy outlines the ACTPS's commitment to supporting open and accountable government, within a 'One ACTPS' framework, by developing and maintaining systems that support digital recordkeeping.

Application

This policy applies to all ACT government entities that are subject to the Territory Records Act 2002. Other entities not subject to the Act are encouraged to comply with the policy.

Background

The ACT government's Open Government policy begins from a default position, articulated by the Chief Minister in her policy statement of June 2011, that Government information will become available to the community. The policy anticipates that as much information as possible will be made available online, and will be opened up to new uses by the community. Additionally in the one ACTPS model, a primary requirement is the accessibility and exchange of information across Directorates. In support of this position, the Territory Records Office commissioned the Digital Recordkeeping Pathway report, which recommends the mandating of digital formats for long-term recordkeeping across the ACTPS.

The creation, management and use of ACT government records is primarily governed by the *Territory Records Act 2002* (the Act). The Act does not distinguish between different formats of records. It requires that all records that provide evidence of Territory government business are created, kept and made accessible for as long as they are required by government or the community. The main purposes of the Act are to:

- encourage open and accountable government;
- support the management and operation of Territory agencies;
- preserve Territory records for the benefit of present and future generations; and
- provide for public access to records.

To support these purposes the Director of Territory Records issues mandatory standards for records management. These standards, along with other guidelines and tools produced by the Territory Records Office, provide a solid framework within which Territory agencies can manage their records regardless of format.

To support open government initiatives in the digital age, ACT government agencies must take steps to move their recordkeeping into the digital environment through the adoption of systems that support the sharing of information across government and with the broader community, while protecting the essential evidence of ACT Government actions in the short and long term.

Policy Statement

The ACTPS adopts a 'digital first' approach to recordkeeping.

Almost all information generated or received by the ACT government today is in digital form, and should be preserved, managed and made accessible in that form. Managing records and information in digital formats is more efficient than converting them to other formats, such as paper, for preservation and storage. Digital records are also more easily shared within government and with the public, and are more easily re-used and adapted for new purposes.

Recordkeeping in the ACTPS is compliant with relevant standards, regardless of format.

In creating, managing, preserving and making accessible records in digital formats, the ACTPS will continue to comply with the *Territory Records Act 2002* and the records management standards produced under the Act. Territory records management standards are designed to ensure that the essential evidence of government business is captured and remains usable for as long as it is needed by government and the community.

The ACTPS seeks to implement whole-of-government approaches to recordkeeping

The ACTPS will pursue whole-of-government digital recordkeeping solutions that:

- fully comply with the requirements of the Territory Records Act;
- facilitate sharing and movement of records across the ACTPS;
- support appropriate public access to ACT government information through the Freedom of Information and Territory Records Act regimes, including through the future transfer to a digital archives repository; and
- represent value for money responses to whole-of-government recordkeeping needs.

Digital recordkeeping is considered in all ICT systems

When making decisions about the introduction or upgrade of any ICT system, agencies must consider the:

- business transactions that system will support;
- records that will be required to be made of those transactions; and
- ability of the system to appropriately manage, preserve and make accessible those records for as long as they are needed.

Not all business systems need to be able to keep records. Systems that do not comply with recordkeeping standards must have the capability of exporting records and their metadata to other systems that can appropriately manage them. Printing and filing records in paper files is no longer an acceptable solution to inadequate systems design, and it is important that agencies begin the process of improving their systems' recordkeeping capabilities. Agencies should take the opportunity of ICT system implementations or upgrades to build adequate recordkeeping functionality into their systems design, or to ensure that business systems that are not capable of maintaining digital records are able to export the records they create to one of the dedicated electronic document and records management systems currently in use in the ACTPS.

Related policies

Ministerial Statement on Open Government, June 2011.

One ACT Government—One ACT Public Service, February 2011.

Definitions

Agency

Any entity described in section 7 of the *Territory Records Act 2002*, including, but not limited to the Executive, the courts, the Office of the Legislative Assembly, or an administrative unit. (*Territory Records Act 2002*)

Record

Information created and kept, or received and kept, as evidence and information by a person in accordance with a legal obligation or in the course of conducting business, including information in written, electronic or any other form. (*Territory Records Act 2002*)

Recordkeeping

Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information. (AS ISO 15489)

Recordkeeping systems

Information systems which capture, maintain and provide access to records over time. (AS ISO 15489)

Records management

The managing of records of an agency to meet its operational needs and to ensure that its records are managed and preserved in accessible form to allow public access consistent with the principles of the Freedom of Information Act and for the benefit of future generations. Records management covers, but is not limited to the creation, keeping, protection, preservation, storage and disposal of, and access to records of an agency. (*Territory Records Act 2002*)

Territory Record

A record made and kept, or received and kept, by a person in the course of exercising a function under a territory law. (*Territory Records Act 2002*)

Approved by: Strategic Board

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