



Electronic Records Management: Strategies for Migrating Database Records

Purpose: Provide guidance to state and local government agencies on a basic strategy to help preserve the authenticity of records during database migrations.

Database records, especially those with long retention requirements, are likely to require migration at some point during their life in order to remain accessible and usable. Here is a basic strategy:

Before Migration:

1. **Identify the Records** – Determine which records need to be migrated to the new database and which records have met their minimum retention requirements and can be destroyed or transferred to the Archives. Perform an analysis of the specific data attributes that form the records. This should be done in consultation with IT, records management, risk management, and legal staff for the agency.
2. **Map** – Create a data map that maps the needed fields from the old database to the appropriate fields in the new database.
3. **Test** – Develop and conduct tests of the migration strategy prior to the final migration. Pay particular attention to how dates and blank/null values are handled and preserved.

After Migration:

1. **Verify** – Determine that all of the records were successfully migrated and are accessible. This may involve checking a statistically relevant sample.
2. **Destroy/Transfer** – Once the successful migration has been verified, non-archival records in the previous database can then be destroyed. If the database records are designated as “Archival”, contact the Archives for an appraisal to determine if the original database records need to be preserved and transferred to the Archives or if they can be destroyed.
3. **Document** – Retain documentation of the data mapping, testing/verification of the successful migration, and destruction of the source records. These records help demonstrate the authenticity of the migrated database records by showing how they were migrated and that they are still what they purport to be, even though they are not in their original database. These records need to be retained until the migrated database records have been destroyed/transferred to the Archives.

**Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from
Washington State Archives:**

**www.sos.wa.gov/archives
recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov**