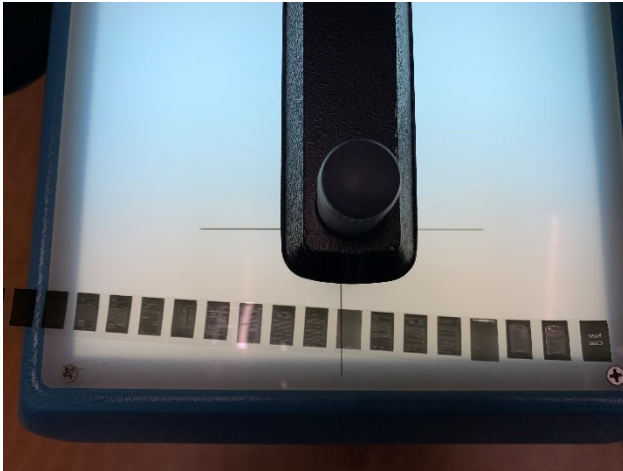




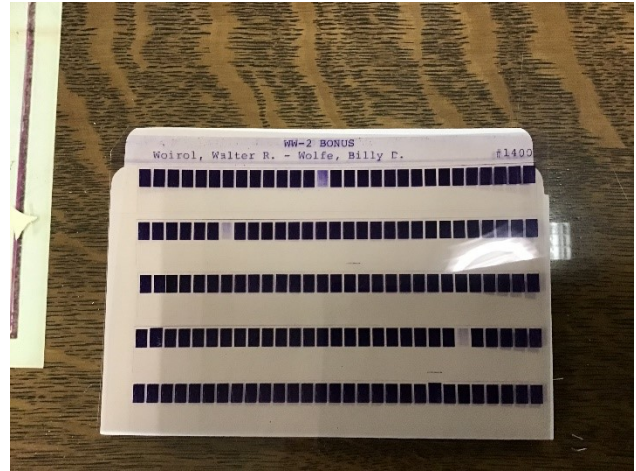
## Microfilming Records: What's the Difference Between Microfilm and Microfiche?

**Purpose:** Provide guidance to state and local government agencies on the difference between microfilm and microfiche.



### What is microfilm?

Microfilm is a strip of photographic film with small photographs of records arranged in a single stream of images.



### What is microfiche?

Microfiche is a small, flat piece of transparent photographic film with small photographs of records arranged in a grid.

### Microfilm vs. Microfiche.

- Both take up less space than traditional paper formats such as documents, newspapers, and ledgers.
- Microfilm can hold thousands of images while microfiche can only hold dozens of images
- Microfilm is organized by reel while microfiche is organized by card.
- Microfilm is easier to index and organize.
- Microfilm can be preserved up to 500 years with proper handling and storage.
- Microfilm can be tested for quality.
- Microfiche cannot be treated for redox (blemishing), which can damage/destroy images.
- Microfiche is more difficult, in terms of time and cost, to digitize than microfilm.

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

**[www.sos.wa.gov/archives](http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives)  
[recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov](mailto:recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov)**