



The decision to scan your records involves many factors that you may not have considered. This decision tree can help you determine if you should undertake a scanning project.

The [Oregon State Archives](#) can help you make informed decisions regarding your records, making sure you remain compliant with all applicable laws and regulations.

1. Can the records be disposed of now? If the documents in question have no further operational value, they may be eligible for disposal and unnecessary to scan. Non-records can be disposed of as needed. Records that have reached the end of their scheduled retention period may be disposed of as per the Records Retention Schedule approved by the State Archivist.

2. Do you plan to dispose of all paper/film copies? Depending upon the type of records being scanned and the length of scheduled retention there may be additional requirements for any agency that wishes to maintain only digital copies of records. Contact the Records Management section of the Oregon State Archives if you plan on doing so.

3. Are the records being scanned primarily to save space? The costs of scanning, combined with the increased maintenance costs of electronic records, will often be higher than the cost of storage for paper records. If the records in question are not heavily used microfilming may be a good alternative to scanning. Microfilm takes up very little space and can be relied upon for over 100 years in the proper storage environment with minimal maintenance. The State Archives also offers secure, climate-controlled storage of state and local government microfilm via the Security Copy Depository. Information on microfilm standards and procedures and the Depository can be found at http://sos.oregon.gov/archives/Pages/security_copy_depository.aspx.

State agencies may also be able to utilize the State Records Center for storage of non-permanent paper records. Contact the Records Management section of the Oregon State Archives to discuss which options might be best for you.

4. Will the records be infrequently accessed or kept for less than 5 years? It is seldom cost-effective to embark on extensive scanning projects for records that are used very infrequently or those that are kept for only a short time. Microfilming is a better option for low-access records, and the storage costs for short-term paper records will almost always be cheaper than scanning.

5. Does the business, historic, or disaster recovery value exceed the cost to scan and manage electronically? Costs to prepare files for scanning such as removal of staples, creation of coversheets, and formatting irregularly shaped documents all affect the cost of scanning. You will want to weigh factors such as risk of loss, value of records, and costs of either scanning or maintaining in paper when making the decision to scan.

6. Is access needed rapidly, remotely, or by multiple people simultaneously? Electronic access is often the best method for fast retrieval, full text search capabilities, and cross-referenced metadata. Access can often be extended to distributed locations for “in the field” use. Collaboration is also enhanced by electronic access. Heavily used records thus are usually better candidates for scanning than those which are seldom touched.

Questions? Contact the [Oregon State Archives](http://sos.oregon.gov/archives/Pages/recordsmgmt.aspx) for guidance on making crucial decisions about your records:

Records Management Unit:
503-373-0701, option 3

For further guidance and resources visit:
<http://sos.oregon.gov/archives/Pages/recordsmgmt.aspx>