

# Fact Sheet

## Storing University Records



We all create and receive records to support the work we do. These records might be used and disposed of relatively quickly, or they might remain active and in use for a long time. If the records have no ongoing operational value, they may be considered transitory and can be destroyed or deleted as soon as they have served their operational purpose (see the Fact Sheet on [Transitory Records](#)). For all other records, they should be governed by an authorized [records retention schedule](#) which sets out the timeframe for keeping the records before they are eligible to be destroyed or transferred to the [University Archives](#) university records such that they will retain their accessibility, integrity and readability for as long as necessary.

## How to store electronic records

Electronic records are records that require a device or technology for their transmission or processing. Most records we encounter today are digital; such records include those created using office productivity tools such as MS Word documents and Excel spreadsheets. Electronic records also include audio and video recordings. Both hardware and software concerns need to be considered when storing electronic records.

The media on which electronic records are written (tape, disks, etc.) can degrade if not stored under proper environmental

**Research Data**  
For example, the [Senate Policy on Integrity in Research](#) requires research data to be preserved for at least 5 years after the research is published and Health Canada requires clinical trials data to be kept for 15 years.

**Research Data**  
In addition, researchers may want to retain their data for their own purposes for a long period of time.

Researchers may find this fact sheet useful in deciding how best to store their data. In addition, see Queen's University Library's guide on [Research Data Management](#)

It may be tempting to copy digital records to an external hard drive, a USB drive, a laptop, or some other sort of removable media, off the Queen's network to free up space or in the belief that the records will be safer. However, it's much safer to keep the records on the university network. Not only are removable media prone to being stolen or lost, but the records on the network will be managed and migrated through software and hardware updates with the assistance of knowledgeable IT staff. If necessary, the records can be stored in a separate directory with appropriate access permissions.

Some specialized electronic records in analogue format may require assistance from technical experts. Consult the [Records Management and Privacy Office](#) for further guidance.

## How to store hardcopy records

Hardcopy records are much less vulnerable to loss over time than are electronic records because they can be read by the human eye and so they don't require the maintenance of a device or other kind of technical apparatus. Records could be placed