

# State Records Committee

## Requirements for Digital Imaging

### A Word of Caution Before Starting a Digitization Project

Digitization is not simply scanning records and storing the files on a server. Government agencies must commit the necessary technological, financial, and staffing resources to conduct successful imaging projects from the preplanning stage until the final disposition of the image files in accordance with records retention schedules. Due to the resources involved, not all records may be good candidates for digitization. Digitizing records with short retention periods, less than four years, or those that are not frequently accessed will require more resources to image and maintain electronically than maintaining them in their original formats. Records with long retentions, more than 10 years, will require multiple migrations to new storage media and ongoing maintenance, which must be included in future budget planning.

### Digital Imaging Standards

Digitizing hard copy records can be an effective method of reducing space requirements, improving access, and protecting original records. Actions must be taken during and after the digitization process to ensure that the images remain authentic, usable, and accessible for their entire lifecycles (retention period). The steps outlined below are the minimum requirements for digital surrogates.

- 1. Scan original records in their entirety.** Digital surrogates must be exact duplicates of the original records. This must be verified by a quality control process
- 2. Scan original records at a resolution that captures all details in the originals.** Records must be scanned at resolutions that produce final images that are legible both onscreen and when printed. Computer screens can render images legible at 72 ppi; however, when printed, images scanned at 72 ppi may not be legible.

Minimum Scan Resolutions:

- Documents containing only typed text: 200 ppi
- Documents with handwritten text and Photographs: 300 ppi
- Maps and Materials with Fine Details: 600 ppi

**3. Scan color images in color.** Use either RGB or CMYK color models. Black and white images can be scanned in grayscale.

**4. Save the files as TIFF, PDF/A, or JPEG2000.** These formats are designed for long-term use. TIFF and PDF/A use lossless compression which reduces the file size without losing any data. JPEG2000 has lossless and lossy compression options; choose lossless.

**5. Verify the scans are complete, legible, and accurate and get permission before destroying the original documents.** State agencies must contact the Georgia Archives prior to destroying permanent paper originals after they have been digitized. Local government agencies must get approval from their legal department before destroying their permanent paper records after they have been scanned. Records retention schedules are on the Georgia Archives website at [https://www.georgiaarchives.org/records/retention\\_schedules](https://www.georgiaarchives.org/records/retention_schedules).

**6. Backup the file weekly at minimum and store backups separately from scans** to protect the data from loss.

**7. Check files annually to ensure that they remain accessible, usable, and authentic.**

**8. Migrate files stored on portable storage media every 5 years** to reduce the likelihood of loss due to media degradation and technological obsolescence.

#### **Further Information**

Contact the Records Management Division of the Georgia Archives at (678) 364-3782 or email [archives-records@ugs.edu](mailto:archives-records@ugs.edu) for more information.