

## TIPS FOR SCHEDULING ELECTRONIC DATABASES \*\*

Update your skills. Take NARA's Managing Electronic Records course.

Before conducting the system inventory, read pages III-8 and III-13 of NARA's *Disposition of Federal Records Handbook*.

When conducting the system inventory, show information technology (IT) staff and program staff an example of a model electronic records schedule.

Check out the system user manual for a description of the system, its purpose, and its relationship to the office function. Ensure that the manual contains the most current information relating to the system. Include a statement covering the purpose of the system and what program it supports.

Identify the system components (inputs, master file, outputs, and system documentation) and write clear records descriptions and disposition instructions for each. Avoid jargon.

Schedule system documentation such as user guides, codebooks, record layouts and any other documentation needed to interpret the data in the system.

Include references to superseded items on previous schedules.

\*\*[This pamphlet does not address all types of electronic systems such as word processing applications, email, images, etc.]

Have IT, program, and other pertinent offices review the schedule before formally submitting it to NARA.

Do a "buddy check" by having a colleague read your draft schedule to see if it is clear and complete.

Consult your NARA liaison.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Below is a list of offices and documents that may contain descriptions and other information relating to electronic systems in your agency.

To start your inventory talk to people working in these offices.

- Program offices
- Privacy Act/FOIA Office
- Public Information Office
- Policy and Organization offices

Consult these other sources:

- IRM or IT office's technology plan
- Agency web site and web sites of affiliated organizations
- Previous records schedules
- Review the General Records Schedules for administrative databases already covered, such as General Records Schedule 2, item 1, Individual Employee Pay Record



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National Archives and Records Administration  
Office of Records Services - Washington, DC  
Life Cycle Management Division

## ELECTRONIC DATABASE SCHEDULE CHECKLIST

Include the following on all electronic database schedules:

- Common name of system.
- Agency program or unit supported by the system.
- Function/purpose of the system (The reasons for and the requirements met by the system).

Provide disposition instructions for each of the following:

- Data inputs (include all records in all media formats from which the system receives data).
- Informational content of the master file (the main subject matter, date coverage, time span, geographic coverage, and other major characteristics of the system).
- Data outputs (printouts, tables, charts, reports, screens of information, electronic files used for other purposes).
- Systems documentation (documentation needed to read and understand the data).

## EXAMPLE OF A DATABASE SCHEDULE

Agency: Office of Economic Concerns (OEC)\*

Name of system: Grant Profile Information System (GPIS)

Unit: Office of Grant Operations provides executive direction and guidance to regional OEC offices responsible for compiling grant profile information under Section 402 (c)(11) of the Grants in Government Act.

Purpose of System: Supports OEC regional offices function of complying with legal requirements for awarding federal grants. System compiles financial and organizational information about each grant recipient.

1. **Inputs:** Electronic and paper (3F 123) inputs consisting of budget data, organizational profiles, including principal offices, board compositions, and private/nonprofit status.

Disposition: Temporary. Delete or destroy after input and verification of data into master file or when no longer needed to support the reconstruction of master file, whichever is later.

2. **Master file:** Budget data, organizational profiles, and data on public and private involvement in the project. System contains records created from 1995 to present. One database record is created for each grant recipient. The primary key is the grant number.

\*[ This is a fictitious agency]

Disposition: Temporary. Delete record 6 years after close out or termination of grant.

3. **Outputs:** Grant profile summary reports. (supersedes N1-575-98-1, item 15).

a. Electronic copy:

Disposition: Temporary. Delete after recordkeeping copy is produced or no longer needed for operational purposes, whichever is later.

b. Recordkeeping copy (paper).

Disposition: Temporary. Cut off at end of calendar year. Retire to records storage facility 2 years after cutoff. Destroy 6 years after cutoff

### 4. System Documentation

a. Codebooks, record layout, and other system documentation.

Disposition: Temporary. Cut off when system is replaced. Transfer to records storage facility 1 year after cutoff. Destroy 6 years after cutoff.

b. Word processing and email copies of records covered by item 4a. of this schedule.

Disposition: Temporary. Delete when recordkeeping copy is produced.