

GOVERNMENT RECORDS SERVICE GUIDE

MANAGING WEBSITE CONTENT



When you update a government website (whether replacing a paragraph or a page), what happens to the outdated material? This guide will help you follow best practices for determining how to manage your website content.

1. Recordkeeping Responsibilities

Just like all other types of government records, website content (i.e., web pages and the documents and links posted on them) must be managed in accordance with government records management policy and standards. Website content developers/owners need to file key documentation in their office recordkeeping systems; websites are communication tools, not recordkeeping tools.

An office recordkeeping system is a shared ARCS / ORCS based filing system where records are classified, protected, retained and destroyed in accordance with approved retention schedules.

2. Classifying Website Content

Best practice is for the website content developer/owner to classify and file the content BEFORE it is posted; if you are removing content and are not sure this happened, read on. Before filing, consider:

- Does [ARCS secondary 340-30 Simple web site pages](#) apply? This classification can be used for most website content (e.g., HTML pages, online search forms, image/graphic files, PDF files) so long as the information has been documented and filed in the office recordkeeping system.
- Do you have an ORCS or other ongoing records schedule that covers the **operational records** on the website?

The content is on the website – why do I need to file a copy?

Because the website is not a recordkeeping system, only current material is provided there. However, there are plenty of reasons why you may need to refer to documentation after it's been removed from the website – including legal, fiscal, audit, and historical purposes. Will you need to be able to prove when information about a particular hearing, course offering, policy statement, or funding deadline was posted online and when it was removed? Filing documentation (copies and/or [metadata](#)) in your recordkeeping system ensures that the information will be available when needed.

3. Removed Website Content: Destroy or Save?

It's okay to delete your website/web pages if:

- They fit the description of simple website pages under [ARCS 340-30](#), and the information in them has been filed elsewhere, OR
- They are covered by an ORCS secondary that allows them to be destroyed.

GOVERNMENT RECORDS SERVICE GUIDE

MANAGING WEBSITE CONTENT

Not sure if ARCS 340-30 applies? This secondary can be used for:

- Websites/pages that are being replaced with new Web 3.0 pages,
- Websites that serve as information portals (e.g., public may submit information to a website, which is then stored elsewhere – not on the website itself), and
- Web content that will no longer be available online, but the information is documented in the office recordkeeping system (e.g., in TRIM or in LAN files organized by ARCS and ORCS).

Check with your Records Officer before destroying websites/web pages if:

- ARCS 340-30 does not seem applicable, and there is no relevant ORCS secondary, or
- ARCS 340-20 *Dormant web sites* does apply (i.e., the website covers a discontinued program or a completed project that is NOT documented in the office recordkeeping system), or
- The relevant ORCS requires the website/pages to be retained, or reviewed by the Records Officer or an archivist.

RETAIN website content if required by the applicable records schedule, i.e., it requires the records to be retained for a period of time (e.g., CY+1y), or has a final disposition of selective or full retention (SR or FR). For example, an office that administers qualifying examinations for a registered profession may need to retain examination timetables, as well as metadata indicating the dates the information was posted, as evidence of due diligence in accordance with policy.

Save the removed content into your recordkeeping system under the appropriate schedule and classification number. File it in EDRMS TRIM if your office uses this system, save it on your LAN with other electronic files (see below), or save it into whatever shared filing system your office uses.

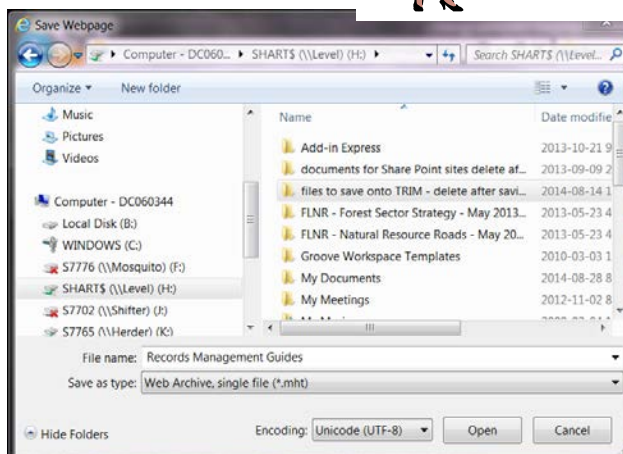
Legal requirements: Also consider whether your office has legal reasons to retain metadata documenting when information was posted and removed (e.g., health alerts, avalanche warnings).

How to Save Web Pages

This is one simple method that works. A different approach may be preferable if appropriate skills and technology are available.

1. Create an electronic folder in TRIM or on your LAN/File share.
2. Click on the **File** menu, then choose **Save As**.
3. **Save pages as web archive files, file type “.mht”** (see screen shot). If this format doesn't work, use the Microsoft snipping tool, and save as a word document (however, this method does not preserve links).

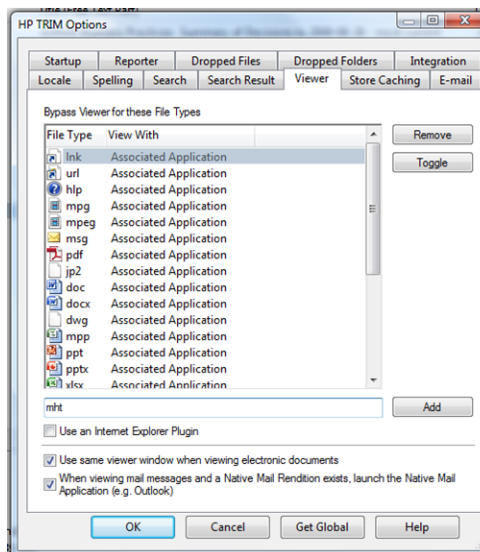
Hint: to open your web archive pages, click the file name and choose the “view” menu item.



GOVERNMENT RECORDS SERVICE GUIDE

MANAGING WEBSITE CONTENT

4. Click the “Save” button that appears; documents are automatically saved to your personal drive (often known as the “H drive”). *Hint: Take this opportunity to update the file title in accordance with naming conventions – see tips below.*
5. Next copy the web archive file into the file you opened at step 1.
Hint: TRIM users will need to add the .mht file type under TRIM options/viewer tab (see screen shot).
6. **Delete all the documents from your personal drive** after ensuring they have been accurately captured and named (best practice is to review the archived documents with reference to the website).



USING NAMING CONVENTIONS FOR WEB ARCHIVE FILES

When capturing pages as web archive files best practice is to name them consistently. This helps to ensure that each web page can be easily identified and distinguished from other pages and other versions. Include the following information in your web archive file titles:

- **Page name**, based on the title that appears on the page
- **Page owner information**, based on the ministry/agency/branch/program name or acronym (or place all pages in a single folder with the name in the folder title)
- **Date of capture** (year and month may suffice)
- **Page hierarchy**: If capturing a main page and subsidiary pages, consider indicating this in the title (e.g., “Health Match BC – main page” or “Health Match BC – Physician, Nurse, and Allied Health Recruitment”)
- **Date posted**: If there are legal requirements, provide metadata about dates files were posted (this does not need to be part of the title if it is captured elsewhere)

Additional Information

Contact your [Records Officer](#) or check out the rest of the Records Management website. For definitions of special terms that appear in bold blue font, see the [RIM Glossary](#).