

# Digitizing Government Information Standard

Effective: April 14, 2020

## 1. PURPOSE

Provide a common standard for digitizing government information.

## 2. DESCRIPTION

This standard:

- Provides practice and technical requirements that must be followed when converting physical government information into digital form to create authentic, defensible digital records.
- Sets the minimum technical digitization requirements for long-term preservation of government information, including records scheduled for transfer to the Digital Archives.
- Sets practice requirements for a defensible digitization process.
- Allows for the disposal of source records following digitization, where appropriate.
- Must be used if the digitized copies will be filed as official file copies in an appropriate recordkeeping system.
- Supports related records and information policy and practice.

## 3. APPLICATION

- Government information requiring digitization for ongoing business purposes, where the digital image will be maintained and depended on as an authentic and reliable copy of the source record.
- Does not apply to transitory government information (e.g. digitized convenience copies or access copies).
- Does not apply to digitization projects or processes already completed or begun under an existing information schedule; going forward, government bodies are encouraged to review their processes periodically to align with this standard.

## 4. AUTHORITY

[Core Policy, Chapter 12](#)  
[Information Management Act](#)

## 5. REQUIREMENTS

### 5.1 Practice Requirements

1.	<p><b>Defensibility</b></p> <p>All digitization processes must be defensible. This means it must be possible to demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the digitized government information retains its integrity and can be depended on as a true and accurate version of the source record (i.e. the original physical record);</li> <li>• digitization processes are documented and usable as evidence that all relevant requirements can be or have been met;</li> <li>• documentation about the digitization process is retained for the life of the records digitized; and</li> <li>• digitization does not expose government to any undue risk.</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Suitability Assessment</b></p> <p>Government information to be digitized must be assessed to identify whether any special physical preparation procedures are required to protect its integrity, or if it is physically suitable for digitization.</p>
3.	<p><b>Enhancements</b></p> <p>To ensure digitized copies are accurate, any enhancements (e.g. de-skewing, sharpening, or de-speckling) must not remove any of the original content and must be documented.</p>
4.	<p><b>Metadata</b></p> <p>Metadata must be added during the digitization process. Digitized records must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• core metadata as defined in the Core Metadata Standard [<i>a LINK to the Core Metadata Standard will be provided here when that is available</i>]; and</li> <li>• metadata that documents digitization processes and context (e.g. the date of digitization).</li> </ul> <p>For specifications, see the <a href="#">Digitizing Government Information Guide</a>.</p>
5.	<p><b>Quality Assurance</b></p> <p>Quality assurance measures must be established and documented for all digitization activities.</p> <p>Quality assurance measures must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing appropriate training for all staff who create, manage or work with digitized government information;</li> <li>• ensuring that scanning equipment is fully functional;</li> <li>• verifying completeness, quality and accuracy of images and metadata;</li> <li>• handling and resolving errors, including any necessary re-digitization, within a set time period; and</li> <li>• regular review of quality assurance procedures to ensure they continue to meet business requirements.</li> </ul>

6.	<p><b>Final Disposition of Source Records</b></p> <p>If there are no legal requirements to maintain the original source records, applications to destroy source records can be authorized in accordance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this standard; and</li> <li>• relevant information schedules, including the <a href="#">Redundant Source Records Schedule</a> (206175).</li> </ul> <p>If source records are retained after being digitized, the original order and context must be maintained, and digital versions must be linked to source records.</p>
7.	<p><b>Ongoing Management</b></p> <p>An appropriate system or process must be in place to ensure the integrity and ongoing management of the digitized government information. Government bodies must ensure they can locate, retrieve, access and use the digitized information for as long as it is retained in accordance with relevant <a href="#">information schedules</a>.</p>

## 5.2 Technical Requirements

Use a digital file format that can be sustained over time, based on current Canadian best practice (e.g. [National Heritage Digitization Strategy – Digital Preservation File Format Recommendations](#)).

Document Type	Minimum Resolution	Minimum Bit Depth	Recommended File Formats	Compression
<b>Text only, black and white</b>	300ppi	1 bit (bi-tonal)	TIFF PDF/A containing lossless images	Lossless compression
<b>Documents with colour used in text or diagrams</b>	300ppi <i>For optimal results where warranted, 600ppi is recommended</i>	8 bit colour	TIFF PDF/A containing lossless images	Lossless compression
<b>Documents with watermarks, grey shading, grey graphics</b>	300ppi <i>For optimal results where warranted, 600ppi is recommended</i>	8 bit greyscale	TIFF PDF/A containing lossless images	Lossless compression
<b>Black and white photographs</b>	Sufficient to provide >3000 pixels across long dimensions	8 bit greyscale	TIFF PDF/A containing lossless images	Lossless compression
<b>Black and white negatives</b>	Sufficient to provide >3000 pixels across long dimensions	8 bit greyscale or 24 bit colour	TIFF PDF/A containing lossless images	Lossless compression
<b>Colour negatives and transparencies</b>	Sufficient to provide >3000 pixels across long dimensions	24 bit colour	TIFF PDF/A containing lossless images	Lossless compression

Document Type	Minimum Resolution	Minimum Bit Depth	Recommended File Formats	Compression
<b>Colour photographs</b>	Sufficient to provide >3000 pixels across long dimensions	24 bit colour	TIFF PDF/A containing lossless images	Lossless compression
<b>Maps</b>	Sufficient to provide 6000 to 8000 pixels across the long dimension, depending on size of original	24 or 48 bit colour 8 or 16 bit greyscale	TIFF	Lossless compression
<b>Microforms</b>	Minimum 300ppi For optimal results where warranted, 600ppi is recommended	8 bit greyscale	TIFF PDF/A containing lossless images	Lossless compression
<b>Analogue Audio and Video Digitization</b>	Use a digital resolution that equals or exceeds the original.	As appropriate	Start by considering: - BWF for audio; - MXF or MOV for video; for current details on the variety and complexity of changing formats, see the <a href="#">Digitizing Government Information Guide</a> .	Lossless compression

## 6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

[Digitizing Government Information Guide](#)

## 7. DEFINITIONS

“Digital archives”, “digitize”, “dispose”, “government body”, “government information”, “information schedule”, and “transfer” have the same meaning as in the *Information Management Act*.

“Transitory” has the same meaning as in the Transitory Records Information Schedule (102901).

## 8. CONTACT

For questions or comments regarding this standard, please contact:

Government Records Service  
Corporate Information and Records Management Office  
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Ministry of Citizens’ Services  
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**9. REVISION HISTORY**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1.0	2020-04-14	Approved by CRO and GCIO