

## ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Electronic documents are those records created, communicated, received and used in electronic form. They will be created, received or sent using a variety of methods, including:

- Email
- Word processing and spreadsheet applications
- Multimedia
- Database applications
- Information systems
- Imaged documents
- Web based records.

Traditionally, they have been maintained in a variety of locations, including but not limited to:

- Computer hard drives
- Directories
- External hard drives
- Magnetic tapes
- Floppy disks
- CD-ROM
- Flash drives/USB thumb drives
- DVD
- PDA
- Cloud Services

As the University increasingly conducts business electronically, awareness of the connection between record keeping and accountability becomes more important. The principles for electronic record keeping are not different from those for paper record keeping. However, electronic record keeping presents many challenges. To ensure that electronic record keeping practices comply with regulatory and accountability requirements, the University must ensure:

- Electronic mail is managed in the same manner as any other University record
- Electronic records remain accessible and useable for as long as they are required
- Electronic records are disposed of in the appropriate manner
- Electronic business processes routinely include the capture of records and the metadata necessary to document them

All electronic documents that are created in the conduct of the University's business must be managed as official records. This requires the identification, capture and preservation and disposal of copies of electronic documents in accordance with University records Retention and Disposal Schedules.

### When are Electronic Documents Official Records?

If you are unsure about whether an electronic document is an official record, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does it form part of a University transaction?
- Does it add value to or support an existing document?
- Does it show how a transaction was processed?
- Does it show how a decision was made?
- Does it document a change to policy, procedure or methodology?
- Does it fall within the functions contained in the University's records disposal schedules?
- Does it show when or where a University event happened?
- Is it a formal draft of a submission, agreement, or legal document?
- Is there a statutory requirement to keep the document?
- Is this document essential for the rapid re-establishment of business in your area?

If the answer to ANY of these questions is yes, and the document was created by your office in pursuance of its business processes (i.e. it is not a CC or attachment from another USP office) then the electronic document must be considered an official university record and must be managed either in Records Manager or as part of a departmental information management system.

**Saving email as records:** All official emails created by University staff in the course of business must be captured to Records Manager either as sent, or as a 'thread' when the communication is complete. For routine internal exchanges a thread may be filed. For transactions requiring clear evidence, particularly where there is potential for litigation, individual emails should be filed.

For further information see **Saving emails as records - Information Sheet**, available on our webpages.

The USP Records Management policy outlines the responsibilities and accountabilities for record keeping and can be viewed at [www.usp.ac.fj/records](http://www.usp.ac.fj/records)

For further information or for advice please do not hesitate to contact the Records Management office.