For the Record

Maryland's Records Management Newsletter

Scanning Recommendations

Many government agencies are scanning their paper records to make use of the advantages of electronic images. Below are some tips to help ensure that your scanned images are as valuable as the original paper records:

- Use a scanning resolution of at least 300 dpi.
- We recommend producing CCITT Group IV, TIFF formatted images. Or, if necessary to capture all information, produce grayscale jpegs. For documents that are handwritten and/or have signatures or seals, grayscale is usually essential to capture all elements.
- Ensure that all images are a complete and accurate reproduction of the original. To do this, we advise that each image be checked for quality by both the person scanning the record as well as by another person.

If your agency hires a contractor to scan your records, you should keep the following factors in mind:

- The contractor must not in any way alter the records while they are in its possession.
- The agency retains ownership of any work product, and the contractor should not use the original records or the resulting digital images for any purpose.

Images of permanent records are also permanent records and a copy should be transferred to the Maryland State Archives for permanent retention.

In the case of non-permanent records, remember that you cannot destroy a paper record sooner than what is required by your agency's records retention and disposition schedule, even if you have scanned the record. If you want to destroy original paper records and retain the scanned images in their place, this practice has to be specified in your records retention and disposition schedule.

Happy New Year

from the Maryland State Archives

Photo courtesy of V. Joyce Phelps II

In the market to have your permanent records digitized?

Contact the
Maryland State Archives at
410-260-6467
to find out more about the scanning and online access services that we offer.

Questions? Suggestions? Contact Kathryn Baringer at 410-260-6467 or msa.helpdesk@maryland.gov

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