Creating a Record Retention Schedule

What is a Record ?

A record is a document, data, or set of data that is created or received in the course of an organization's business that meets five characteristics:

Characteristics of a Record

- Content - the text, data, metadata, symbols, numerals, images, and/or sounds that make up the record's substance;
- Structure - the physicality and internal organization of the Content;
- Fixity - the quality of the Content being stable and resisting change;
- Context - the organizational, functional, and operational circumstances surrounding a record's creation, receipt, storage, or use; and
- Evidence – the maintenance of an organization's activity(s)

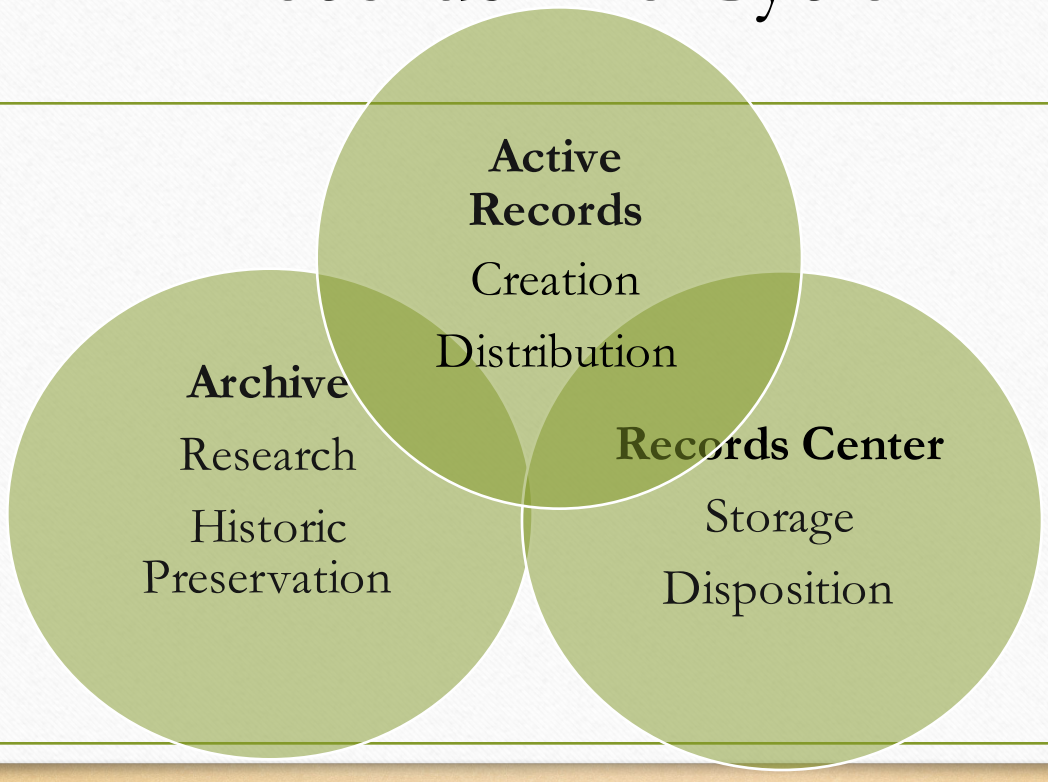
Concerns in Record Retention

- Retention Issues
- Creating a retention schedule & sample forms
- What to keep
- What to toss
- What to archive

How do you see Record Retention?

Retention may not be much fun, but it can improve your quality of life by freeing up filing space, making records-storage and record-retrieval more efficient, and minimizing litigation risks.

Records Life Cycle



Retention Issues (1 of 5)

- **Time -**
- **Permanent or indefinite**: If it is already decided that a particular set of records is to be kept indefinitely, the only other consideration for that set of records is how and where to store them.
- **Regulations:** Applicable National, State/Provincial and even Municipal regulations establish the minimum time period a set of records MUST be kept.
- **Business Use:** The business use that a record supports often determines where and for how long a record is kept.

Record Retention Issues (2 of 5)

- **Media -**
  - **Composition:** The media on which the record is stored or produced is NOT a determining factor in deciding how long a record is to be kept (i.e. electronic correspondence and paper correspondence would have the same retention time).
  - **Legal holds:** Any records that have been subpoenaed, any records for which there is knowledge of impending litigation, or any records for which there is even reasonable suspicion that there will be litigation must NOT be destroyed. After the close of litigation the records may then be re-evaluated for purposes of retention.

Retention Issues (3 of 5)

- **Storage -**
  - **Frequency of retrieval:** Frequent retrieval and refilling would call for keeping files close by or even kept in digital form online.
  - **Need for wide distribution:** Records can be distributed quickly and economically when they are kept in digital form.
  - **Retention time:** Longer retention requirements are better met by stable media less dependent on technology for readability. Retention periods longer than 10 years will require a migration strategy for digital records.

Retention Issues (4 of 5)

- **Vital records**:
- Mission critical records without which the organization could not function (about 2% to 7% of organizational records)
  - **Examples:** charters, minutes, service records, property records, insurance policies, donor lists, and accounts receivable
  - **Protection:**
    - **Redundancy:** Keeping copies of vital records in a safe off-site location.
    - **Vaulting:** Keeping vital records in a location that is safe from physical hazards such as fire, water, mold and theft.

Retention Issues (5 of 5)

- **Budget**
  - **Paper:** Costs: printing, distribution, retrieval time, and storage space Note: In some cases it may cost less to store paper in commercial storage than to microfilm it.
  - **Microfilm:** Costs: document preparation, filming, distribution, retrieval, reader/printer, climate controlled storage.
  - **Electronic:** Costs: document preparation, quality control, indexing, computer workstation & server, periodic record migration.

Path to Creating a Retention Schedule

- **Creating a statement** declaring scope and purpose of retention schedule.
- **Having the statement reviewed** and endorsed by top management.
- **Establishing the procedures** for creating the retention schedule.
- **Documenting the process** of creating the retention schedule.
- **Retaining the documentation** as an audit trail for establishing and following the retention schedule.

You need a Retention Schedule regardless of where you store your records

Procedures in Creating a Retention Schedule

- **Contact your records manager** (designate someone if necessary) to coordinate the process.
- **Inventory all current records** (including all media types) maintained in the office to which the retention schedule is to apply.
- **Create a master list** of record types and draft a preliminary retention schedule.
- **Determine retention periods** on the basis of legal, administrative, and historical value.

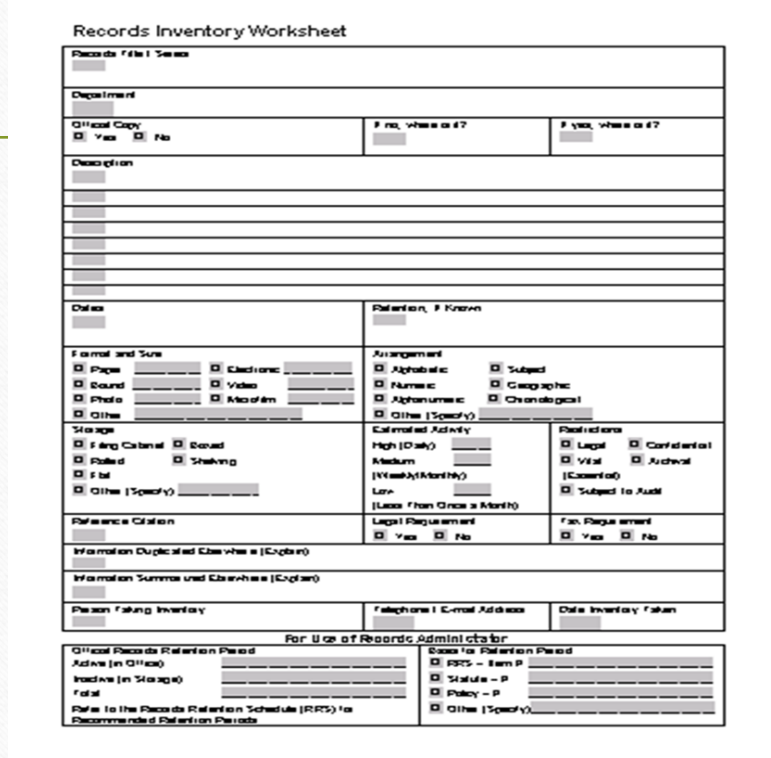
Procedures in Creating a Retention Schedule

- **Obtain approval from relevant areas** with oversight responsibility (i.e. IT, finance, or legal)
- **Publish and follow** the retention schedule
- **Review the retention schedule** at regular intervals (i.e. annually, biannually, etc.)

Sample Records Inventory Procedure

- **Inventory forms** collated and information put into a draft records retention schedule by Archives. (To be completed in 2 weeks.)
- **Draft retention schedule** reviewed and edited by department management. (To be completed in 1 week.)
- **Department management** to meet with Archives to put retention schedule into final form, pending review by Office of General Counsel. (approximately 1 hour)
- **On approval of Legal** the retention schedule becomes official until there is a further revision.

Sample Records Inventory Form



Records Inventory Worksheet

Records Title / Series		
Department		
Official Copy ☐ Yes ☐ No	If no, where is it?	If yes, where is it?
Description		
Dates	Retention, if Known	
Format and Size ☐ Paper ☐ Electronic ☐ Bound ☐ Video ☐ Photo ☐ Microfilm ☐ Other	Arrangement ☐ Alphabetic ☐ Subject ☐ Numeric ☐ Geographic ☐ Alphanumeric ☐ Chronological ☐ Other (Specify)	
Storage ☐ Filing Cabinet ☐ Boxed ☐ Rolled ☐ Shelving ☐ Flat ☐ Other (Specify)	Estimated Activity High (Daily) Medium (Weekly/Monthly) Low (Less than Once a Month)	Restrictions ☐ Legal ☐ Confidential ☐ Vital ☐ Archival (Essential) ☐ Subject to Audit
Reference Citation	Legal Requirement ☐ Yes ☐ No	Tax Requirement ☐ Yes ☐ No
Information Duplicated Elsewhere (Explain)		
Information Summarized Elsewhere (Explain)		
Person Taking Inventory	Telephone / E-mail Address	Date Inventory Taken

For Use of Records Administrator

Official Records Retention Period Active (in Office) Inactive (in Storage) Total Refer to the Records Retention Schedule (RRS) for Recommended Retention Periods	Basis for Retention Period ☐ RRS – Item # ☐ Statute – # ☐ Policy – # ☐ Other (Specify)

Records Retention Schedule

Page 1 of 2

Indicate Use of Form
- ☐ ORIGINAL SUBMISSION
- ☐ RECERTIFICATION
- ☐ REPLACEMENT PAGE
- ☐ ADDENDUM PAGE

Record Group	Department Name International Personnel Resources and Services										
Record Series ID	Records Series Title	Retention Period			Restricted	Confidential	Vital	Archival	Remain Closed	Remarks
		Current *	Records † Center/Migrate	Total						
Board and Committee Minutes	Committee Actions	L		PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B
Accounting Records	Bank Information	L		PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B
	Check Requests and Journal Vouchers	L		PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B
	Tax	7	10	17+PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B
General	Correspondence - Director	5	10	15+PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B
	Correspondence – Staff	5	10	15+PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B
	Miscellaneous	5	10	15+PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B
Personnel Records	Annual Leave	L		PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B Review
	Appointee Employment	L		PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B
	Call Documents	L		PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B
	Dependent Child Documents	L		PE	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	B

Retention Codes
- A – Until Audit Requirements Met
- AN – As needed for ongoing work – does not go to Records Center
- AP – As Produced or when distributed
- C – Photocopy or similar type of copy
- CE – Calendar Year End
- D – Discard
- FE – Fiscal Year End
- L – Useful Life in office
- M – Microfilm, microfiche – paper to be destroyed
- O – Selected original kept
- PE – Permanent
- R – As required by law (statute of limitations)
- S – Until Superseded
- Sh – Shred/Wipe
- – None, Zero, Nothing
- I – Immediately after publication or issuance

* Current records being paper records kept in the office or electronic records referenced or likely to be referenced more than once per quarter

† Paper records to be transferred to Records Center, electronic records migrated

Medium Codes
- P – Paper
- E – Electronic
- B – Paper and Electronic
- M – Microform
- A – Audio Tape
- V – Video Tape
- O – Other (Specify in Remarks)

Archival Code
Indicate With an X

Security Code
Indicate With an X

Vital Code
Indicate With an X

ASTR Records Management	Department Records Coordinator	Department Head	Office of General Counsel	Tax

Records Inventory Form

Office/Department:	**Date:**
Contact Person:	
Contact phone/e-mail:	

Record Name:		**What does Office/Dept. call record (if different):**
Description:		**Location/Office (Room #):**
Database Name: **ISS/Network** ☐ **Local Workstation** ☐ **Off Site** ☐		**Electronic Image/File Location:** **ISS/Network** ☐ **Local Workstation** ☐ **Off Line (CD/DVD)** ☐
Purpose:		
Original? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **Duplicate?** **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐		**Location of Original (If Duplicate):**
Record Format: (*See 1 below*)	**Characteristics:** (*See 2 below*)	**Record Medium:** (*See 3 below*)
Time Records needed: **In Office:** **In Records Center:**		**Reason for Recommended Retention Period:**

Historic/Archive Value?	External Audit Required?
Yes ☐ No ☐	Yes ☐ No ☐

Record Formats (1)	Record Characteristics (2)	Record Mediums (3)
11 Text	21 General	31 Paper
12 Photo	22 Vital (mission critical)	32 Electronic - image
13 Audio	23 Important (serious consequences if missing)	33 Electronic - database
14 Motion Picture	24 Confidential (for departmental use only)	34 Electronic - MS Office file
15 Forms (in house)	25 Restricted (by permission of departmental admin.)	35 CD/DVD
16 Map/Drawing	26 Closed (NEVER open to research)	36 Audio\Video Cassette
17 Spreadsheet		37 Film
18 PowerPoint		38 Microform
19 Other (Specify)		

What to do with all your documents?

What to Keep

- **Correspondence**
  - Dealing with policies, administration, personnel, projects, statistics, final travel itinerary, set of original form letters
- **Minutes**
  - Produced by your department or for which someone in your department is the chair
- **Case files**
- **Topical files**
- **Material published by your department**
  - A/V material (videos, photos, pod casts), a copy of reports or brochures

What to Toss

- **Routine requests** – catalogs, brochures, Services
- **Circular memos** from other offices
- **Correspondence** concerning travel planning
- **Non-SDA** published or duplicated material
- **Temporary financial records** – phone bills, purchase orders, monthly financial statements

What to Archive

- **Think of the Archive as the corporate memory.**
- You would want to save records:
  - portraying beginnings, changes, endings
  - dealing with cases, events, problems, projects that reveal the purpose and function of the organization
  - documenting the relationship with other denominational organizations

Archives Web Site

Seventh-day Adventist Church

astr
Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research

ASTR HOME | DIRECTORY | YEARBOOK | ONLINE ARCHIVES | STATISTICS

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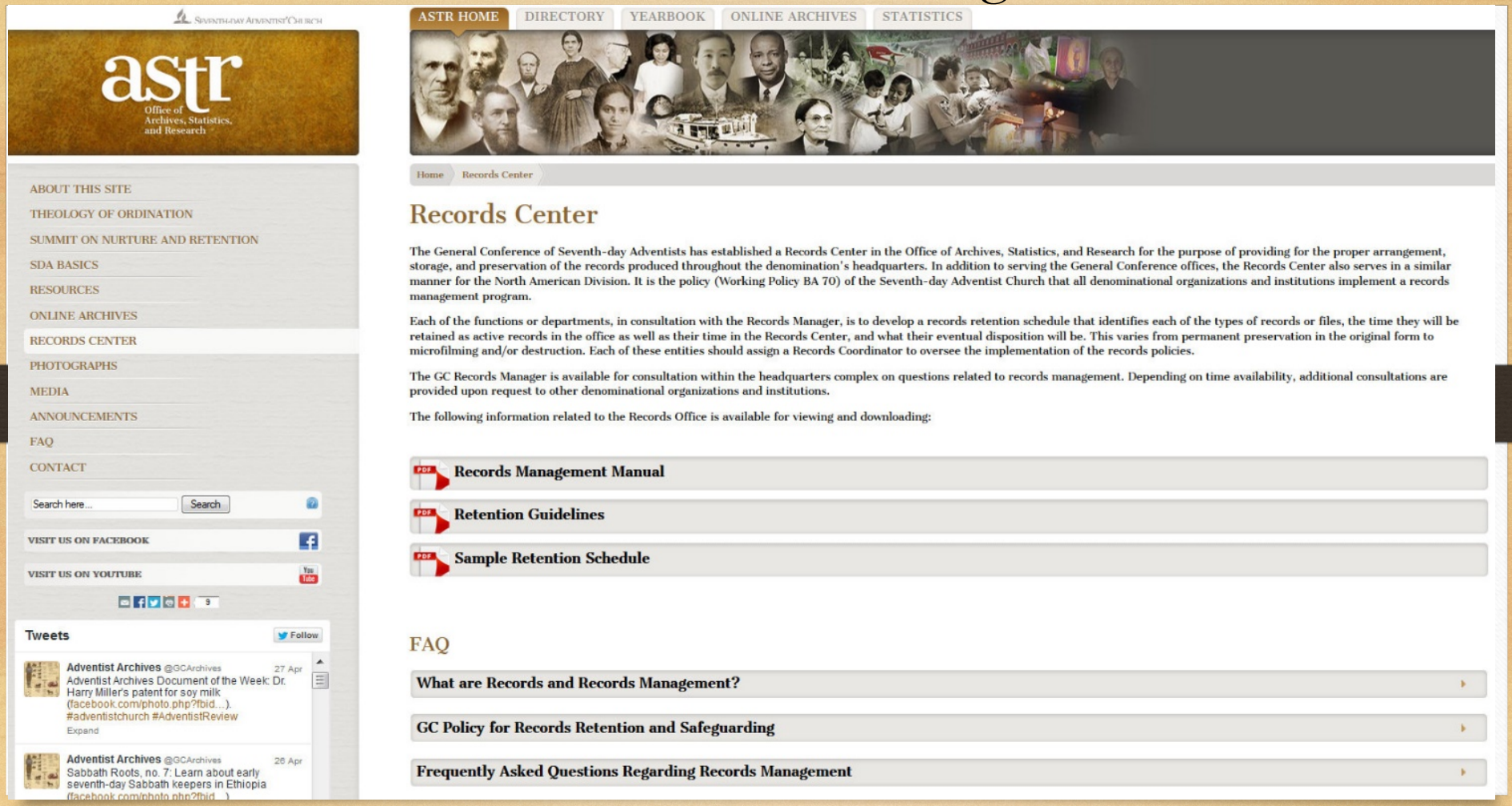
Records Center Web Page



Resources: Web Sites

General Conference

- General Conference Web site: http://www.adventist.org
- Archives Web page: http://www.adventistarchives.org/
- Records Center Web page: http://www.adventistarchives.org/records-center#.U1_ImY0U-T8
- Online Archives: http://documents.adventistarchives.org/default.aspx
- Yearbook page: http://www.adventistyearbook.org/default.aspx?
- Organizational Directory page: http://www.adventistdirectory.org/
- Statistics page: http://www.adventiststatistics.org/

Archives & Records Management

- ARMA International: http://www.arma.org
- (Association of Records Managers & Administrators)
- Society of American Archivists: http://www.archivists.org
- National Archives and Records Administration (US): http://www.archives.gov
- National Archives (Australia): http://www.naa.gov.au
- UNESCO Archives Portal:
- http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/portals-and-platforms/unesco-archives-portal/

Resources: Web Sites

Disaster Recovery

- Disaster Recovery Journal: http://www.drj.com
- Disaster Recovery World: http://www.disasterrecoveryworld.com
- Disaster Recovery Guide: http://www.disaster-recovery-guide.com
- Contingency Planning & Disaster Recovery: http://www.disasterplan.com

Electronic Records

- Long Term Preservation: http://www.interpares.org/book/index.htm
- Overview of Technical Approaches: http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub107/thibodeau.html
- Authenticity in a Digital Environment: http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub92/contents.html
- Preserving Authenticity: http://www.dlib.org/dlib/july00/eppard/07eppard.html

Make sure that your record retention system works well for your organization

Lessons Learned from a GC Record Retention Audit

- ✓ Identify and contact the director of the department to be audited before moving forth
- ✓ Let the director identify/delegate the audit process to a key individual within the department
- ✓ Meet with the designated contact and keep him/her informed of every key step in the audit
- ✓ Make everyone you meet along this process a friend; make sure you're available when they need to speak with you; and cultivate and maintain plenty of dialogue

- ✓ Establish timetables and make sure your contact(s) complies with each level
- ✓ Stagger your departments' timetables to ensure optimal use of your time and theirs
- ✓ Make your retention schedules as generic as possible
- ✓ Ensure the devised retention schedule and records management system are as transparent as possible. The measure of its success is the degree to which it is understood and followed
- ✓ Keep your retention schedule current, and optimally effective, by conducting an audit annually.