Managing Legacy Information

Legacy Information is Information that we inherit from a system, department or individual during the course of our work. It can be in the form of cupboards or rooms full of files, or electronic information which has been migrated from one system to another. Often, staff have inherited these collections from their predecessor and in many cases may have little knowledge of their contents and importance.

Whose responsibility is it to manage legacy information?

Managing legacy information is the responsibility of the business area or position occupant that is holding it. Although the current department may not have existed when the information was originally created it is has inherited that area's responsibilities and therefore its information. For more information see Curtin's recordkeeping policy.

What action can I take?

Hard Copy information
Legacy information in hard copy that your department no longer requires for its current business would need to be processed to determine whether it is due for destruction or should be transferred into central storage with Records & Information Management.

This process involves identifying what information is of high value to the University (see Keeping the Right Information). At Curtin we use a disposal authority to then issue this information with a 'sentence' that specifies the minimum amount of time the information needs to be kept before it can be approved by the University Archivist for destruction. Once sentenced, items not yet due for destruction would need to be transferred to Records & Information Management's custody.

If you have never sentenced information before you will need to attend the face to face workshops conducted by Records & Information Management and also be trained in using the inactive records transfer system.

Electronic Information
All Information regardless of format (ie including electronic documents and email, data in legacy systems or on removable media such as CD's, floppy discs, magnetic tape or storage devices such as thumbdrives), must similarly be assessed by sentencing. Information that is due for destruction must also be approved by the University Archivist prior to its deletion.

Removable media
Information stored on removable media has a limited life expectancy. This relates both to the life expectancy of the storage medium and the ability of software to read information created using an earlier version or different software.

Area's have a responsibility to ensure that this information is transferred to the appropriate folder within the shared network drive, where it is backed up and can be migrated to ensure that the full functionality and integrity of the information is preserved, along with any relevant metadata.

Making Information Matter!

What can I do to minimise legacy information in the future?

Moving office or locating to a new building provides a good opportunity to identify information that is no longer actively required. Timely processing of these records means less legacy information to manage in the future and enables staff to more easily manage their current high value information.

Staff leaving the University have a responsibility to certify that all University records and folders, regardless of format, (ie including electronic documents and email), have been identified and added to the area's recordkeeping system and/or transferred and reassigned to another staff member. The departing staff member and their manager must complete and sign the Staff Exiting Checklist which is to be returned to Staff Services. This requires that the following checklist has been completed by staff and their supervisors. For more information see Managing Information when Leaving the University.

Need assistance?

Please see the following related procedures:

Managers' Toolkit

Managing Information when Leaving the University

Using Shared Drives to Manage Information

For more information please visit our website at *rim.curtin.edu.au*

If you need assistance, please contact us by email at *rim@curtin.edu.au*

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