

DIGITIZATION SCAN/SHRED CHECKLIST



BEFORE YOU START

Many organizations know they have too much paper—but they are unsure

- What should be scanned?
- What should be retained in paper form?
- What can legally be destroyed?
- What should be archived?
- What should be digitized first?

One of the most common and costly mistakes organizations make is attempting to digitize every record they own. A successful records modernization initiative starts with understanding the business value, retention requirements, accessibility needs, and long-term purpose of each record series.

Use this checklist to evaluate your records and determine whether they should be digitized, archived, and securely destroyed. Place a check mark in the box for every “Yes” answer.

1. RECORDS INVENTORY

Before making any digitization decisions, establish a clear understanding of what records exist and where they are located.

- ☐ Have you completed a records inventory?
- ☐ Do you know where all records are stored?
- ☐ Have you identified off-site storage locations?
- ☐ Have you estimated the total number of boxes, drawers, or file cabinets?
- ☐ Have departments identified and classified their own records?
- ☐ Have duplicate collections been identified?
- ☐ Have historical or permanent records been separated from routine records?

Score: ___ / 7

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2. BUSINESS VALUE ASSESSMENT

Records with high business value are typically strong candidates for digitization. For each record series, evaluate the value it provides to your organization.

- ☐ Is this record accessed frequently?
- ☐ Does staff spend significant time retrieving it?
- ☐ Is it shared across multiple departments?
- ☐ Does it support day-to-day operations?
- ☐ Would remote access improve productivity?
- ☐ Would digitization improve service delivery?
- ☐ Is locating the information mission critical?

Score: ___ / 7

3. LEGAL & RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

Before scanning, storing, or destroying records, verify all legal and regulatory obligations. Never destroy records before confirming retention requirements and legal obligations.

- ☐ Does a records retention schedule exist?
- ☐ Has the retention period expired?
- ☐ Is the record currently involved in litigation?
- ☐ Is the record subject to an audit?
- ☐ Is the record designated as permanent?
- ☐ Are there statutory preservation requirements?
- ☐ Have all required approvals been obtained before destruction?

Score: ___ / 7

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4. PHYSICAL CONDITION EVALUATION

Assess whether physical deterioration presents a risk to information preservation. Fragile or deteriorating records should often be prioritized for digitization.

- ☐ Is the paper deteriorating?
- ☐ Are documents faded or difficult to read?
- ☐ Are oversized records involved?
- ☐ Are photographs, maps, or special media included?
- ☐ Have records been exposed to moisture, mold, or environmental damage?
- ☐ Are documents fragile or difficult to handle?
- ☐ Is information at risk of permanent loss?

Score: __ / 7

5. OPERATIONAL IMPACT

Evaluate how records affect efficiency, response times, and service delivery. Frequently accessed records often deliver the fastest return on investment when digitized.

- ☐ Does staff retrieve these records weekly?
- ☐ Does locating records create delays?
- ☐ Do multiple employees require access at the same time?
- ☐ Are duplicate paper copies maintained?
- ☐ Are records frequently copied, mailed, or transported?
- ☐ Does storage consume valuable office space?
- ☐ Would digitization reduce administrative effort?

Score: __ / 7

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6. SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

Consider the risks associated with maintaining records in paper form. Digitization can improve security, audit readiness, and records governance.

- ☐ Does the record contain confidential information?
- ☐ Is access currently controlled and documented?
- ☐ Can paper copies easily be misplaced?
- ☐ Is secure destruction required at end of life?
- ☐ Would digital audit trails improve accountability?
- ☐ Would role-based access improve security?
- ☐ Would centralized management reduce compliance risk?

Score: __ / 7

SCAN, STORE, OR SHRED?

Use the matrix below to guide your decision.

Question	Scan	Store	Shred
Frequently accessed?	✓		
Permanent record?	✓	✓	
Retention period expired?			✓*
Historical value?	✓	✓	
Required for legal hold?		✓	
Duplicate copy?			✓*

*Only after verifying applicable retention requirements and obtaining all required approvals.

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PROJECT READINESS SCORE

Add your section scores.

0-14 Checks: You're just getting started. Focus on completing a records inventory and validating retention requirements.

15-28 Checks: You're preparing for digitization. Develop a prioritization strategy and identify high-value record series.

29-42 Checks: You're ready to begin planning a digitization initiative. Define project scope, metadata standards, implementation phases, and governance requirements.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Organizations that achieve the greatest success with digitization projects typically

- ✓ Inventory records before scanning
- ✓ Prioritize high-value documents
- ✓ Establish metadata and indexing standards
- ✓ Apply retention and disposition policies
- ✓ Integrate digitized records into ECM platforms and business processes
- ✓ Develop a long-term information governance strategy

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

If your assessment indicates that your agency is ready for a digitization initiative, 3SG Plus can help you

- Conduct a records modernization assessment
- Develop a phased digitization roadmap
- Prioritize records for conversion
- Establish metadata and indexing standards
- Integrate digitized records with OnBase and other business systems
- Build a sustainable records management and information governance program

Schedule a Records Modernization Assessment to identify quick wins, reduce paper-related costs, and create a path toward a more efficient digital future.

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