



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES
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AUTHENTICITY OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS:
A REPORT PREPARED FOR UNESCO

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES
COMMITTEE ON ARCHIVAL LEGAL MATTERS

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Authenticity of Electronic Records (ICA Study 13-1)

To enable wider access to the current thinking and recommendations for future studies and projects concerning electronic records of the International Council on Archives (ICA), it has been decided to make this report available as an ICA Study. The report is the work of the ICA Committee on Archival Legal Matters.

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AUTHENTICITY OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS (ICA STUDY 13-1)

*Report prepared for UNESCO
by the International Council on Archives Committee on Archival Legal Matters*

November 2002

1. Introduction

Archivists must ensure continuing access to the content and functionality of authentic electronic records, recognizing that they cannot be preserved in their original physical format.

Recommendation of the XIVth International Congress on Archives,
Seville, Spain, September 2000.

The International Council on Archives (ICA) at the XIVth International Congress in Seville, Spain emphasized that archivists must ensure continuing access to the content and functionality of authentic electronic records, and called upon National Archivists to provide the leadership to ensure the preservation and accessibility to authentic records to secure the rights of citizens in public information. UNESCO, likewise, has initiated several international conventions and recommendations regarding the preservation and accessibility to authentic records. Examples of UNESCO's interest in this area include the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the Memory of the World program, a program specifically aimed at preservation of and access to documentary heritage. Clearly, standard setting to preserve authentic electronic records in the field of culture and information is an important and universally valued task of UNESCO that is central to its mission.

Plainly, long term storage of authentic electronic information is a strong interest of both ICA and UNESCO. With this interest in mind, ICA and UNESCO have entered into an agreement for ICA to study the issue. ICA is to report to UNESCO and "formulate recommendations for further studies and concrete projects in this matter with a view to establishing legal and technical procedures for ensuring the legal evidence of electronic documents in (the) case of migration of these materials---and in (the) case of transfer to archival institutions."¹

In order to prepare the report, ICA established a working group within the Committee on Archival Legal Matters (CLM), with Claes Gränström as Chair. Other members of the working group are Gary M. Peterson, Maria Pia Rinaldi Mariani, Udo Schäfer and Josef Zwicker. Additionally, Torbjorn Hornfeldt, Archives of Sweden, was added to the group as IT specialist. The working group also consulted with the ICA committee on Electronic Records in the preparation of this report. The working group first met in Rome, Italy on 4 to 7 August 2001. Gränström, Peterson and Zwicker also met in Geneva Switzerland on 23 and 24 January 2002.

The focus of this report is to identify the issues that archivists and records keepers must keep in mind to ensure the authenticity of electronic records. First, authenticity will be explained. No one country's law will be used—the discussion will be general. Next, technology's impact on authenticity will be illustrated and national laws and other studies dealing with authenticity of electronic records will be examined. Finally some recommendations for future action will be discussed.

¹ Contract 403.003.1, dated 29 March 2001.

2. Authentication

AUTHENTICATION—The determination that a document or a reproduction of a document is what it purports to be.

Peter Walne, ed. *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*,
2nd edition. Munich: KG Saur, 1988

Authentication is a rule of evidence that determines whether an item introduced into evidence in a legal proceeding is authentic. In the evidence example, authentication means that the item is what the party seeking to introduce it claims it is. The easiest way to authenticate a document is to have a witness state that it is what it is claimed to be. This rule of evidence was developed for paper and did not consider electronic records. Today's question is, "What is an authentic electronic record?"

Recent events in the field of records management have addressed the issue of authenticity of an electronic record. On 15 September 2001, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) published ISO 15489-1, *Information and documentation—Records Management*. The standard was developed so "...that appropriate attention and protection is given to all records, and that the evidence and information they contain can be retrieved more efficiently and effectively, using standard practices and procedures."² The Standard in clause 7.2.2 defines authenticity:

"An authentic record is one that can be proven

- a) to be what it purports to be,
- b) to have been created or sent by the person purported to have created or sent it, and
- c) to have been created or sent at the time purported.

To ensure the authenticity of records, organizations should implement and document policies and procedures which control the creation, receipt, transmission, maintenance and disposition of records to ensure that records creators are authorized and identified and that records are protected against unauthorized addition, deletion, alteration, use and concealment."

The Standard in Part 2: *Guidelines*, recognizes the need to maintain electronic systems to protect authenticity. Clause 5.3 of ISO/TR 15489-2 states:

"Records managers need to be aware of the potential for legal challenge when documents are presented in evidence to a court of law. If the integrity or authenticity of a record is called into doubt in court by suggestions of tampering, incompetence, improper system functionality or malfunction, the evidential weight or value put on the document by the court may be lost or, at least, reduced, to the detriment of the case.

The records managers need to have readily available evidence to demonstrate and prove the organization's compliance with legislation, policies and procedures throughout the life of the system. It should also be possible to show that the system was operation as intended in accordance with the organization's normal business practices. This evidence would be available from records of the monitoring and auditing of system processes."

These new ISO standards clearly have an impact on archives and if authentic records are to be created and preserved as archival electronic records, archives must participate in the system creation, even before records are created. This is especially important because continued access to electronic records not available in another form has become the norm. Also, electronic records are at risk because of technical obsolescence as newer formats replace older ones. The new technology presents new challenges to the archivist to preserve authentic electronic records.

² International Organization for Standards. *ISO 15489-1 and ISO 15289-2, Information and Documentation—Records Management*. Geneva: International Organization for Standards, 15 September, 2001. Part 1. p. vi.

3. New Technology's Impact on Authenticity

The first and most fundamental reason for creating archives is to prove legal rights. Secondly, archives serve as instruments for the administration of an organization. Finally, archives are cultural heritage and they are one of the preconditions for social and political accountability. All these purposes can be served only with authentic documents, that is with documents that are reliable not only at the moment when they are created but remain reliable for a long time to come. That means that those documents must be preserved from destruction and from alteration. If electronic archives are compared to "conventional" archives a range of special problems with keeping authentic electronic documents becomes obvious.

"Conventional" documents, once created in an orderly way, are rather static and stable objects (physically and chemically), they are "things", entities perceptible by the senses. Only relatively few people are involved in the process of creating, transmitting, retaining and producing "conventional" documents. They are processed in a more or less closed circle as far as both professional qualifications and work routines are concerned.

The difference with electronic records is striking. Electronically produced documents actually are not objects at all but rather, by their nature, products that have to be processed each time they are used. There is no transfer, no reading without a re-creation of the information. Electronically recorded information is volatile and many persons with different skills are needed to implement electronic systems. Processing electronic documents therefore is technically much more complicated than processing "conventional" ones.

In short, in an electronic environment there are more weak points threatening authenticity than there are for "conventional" documents and more complex measures are necessary to preserve authenticity in an electronic environment. Migrating the electronic information from one media to another is an example of the more complex preservation problems. This more complex processing of documents endangers their authenticity and requires that more be done to protect it.

Today we live in a digital world. The daily use of the computer is expanding geometrically and the daily use is just as rapidly shrinking the world. We have experienced a change from a five hundred year tradition of the printed word to the new tradition of an electronic one. This rapid change puts pressures on such traditional legal values as authenticity. Nations and archivists need to adjust to these pressures.

4. National Legislation and Authenticity

3. *Archivists should protect the authenticity of documents during archival processing, preservation and use. Archivists should ensure that the archival value of records, including electronic or multimedia records is not impaired in the archival work of appraisal, arrangement and description, and of conservation and use.*

Code of Ethics, adopted by the ICA General Assembly
in its XIIIth session in Beijing, 6 September 1996.

As a result of the Code of Ethics stressing the authenticity of electronic records, the ICA Committee on Archival Legal Matters, in 1997, established a working group to study the legal issues surrounding creating authentic, reliable and valid records in the electronic environment. The working group prepared a draft report for discussion at the August 2000, ICA Congress in Seville, Spain, and is now preparing a final report that will be presented to the Vienna Congress in 2004. Because the legal framework and the record keeping culture and circumstances of countries vary widely, the working group decided to first conduct a survey of the members of the committee on the authenticity of electronic records in their respective countries. It was the intention of the working group to use the

answers to the survey questions to prepare internationally useful and appropriate guidelines for creating and managing authentic records in an electronic environment.

The survey questions had a number of purposes. The first purpose was to investigate the extent to which the terms or concepts of authenticity, validity and reliability are used in the profession in referring to electronic records. The second purpose was to ascertain whether archival and/or other legislation defines those terms. The final purpose of the survey was to discover what countries are doing to address the authenticity of electronic records and what issues or problems are being encountered in the process.

In January of 1999 the members of the Committee on Archival Legal Matters were asked to respond to five questions pertaining to the authenticity of electronic records. The questions were:

1. Do archives in your country use the terms “authenticity,” “reliability” or “validity” in relation to records/electronic records? If yes, please provide definitions.
2. Does archival legislation in your country define “authenticity,” “reliability” or “validity” in relation to records/electronic records? If yes, please provide definitions and the citation of the legislation.
3. Does any other legislation (for example, electronic commerce legislation, digital signature act, etc.) in your country define “authenticity,” “reliability” or “validity” in relation to records/electronic records? If yes, please provide definitions and the citation of the legislation.
4. What are archives in your country doing/planning to do to ensure that electronic records are reliable and authentic?
5. Do archives in your country identify any issues/problems in succeeding? If yes, please tell us what they are.

Members were asked to update the survey in 2001. In all, thirteen countries responded (Andorra, Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States). It must be noted that the authenticity of electronic records is a fast changing area and the survey merely represents a snapshot of the situation at the time of the answers and is most certainly out of date upon receipt of the answers. Also, since the survey was only of the members of Committee on Archival Legal Matters, it is not statistically reliable. The committee, however, believes from the members experience that the answers are reflective of the profession generally.

The first question was “Do archives in your country use the terms ‘authenticity,’ ‘reliability’ or ‘validity’ in relation to records/electronic records? If yes, please provide definitions.” Six countries responded in the affirmative and seven in the negative. With less than half of the respondents answering “yes,” it is apparent that there is no uniformity across the profession in the usage of these concepts as they relate to electronic records. The fact that these concepts as they relate to electronic records are not widely accepted may be a result of the fact that the issues on the authenticity of electronic records are in flux. It was clear from the responses that there is agreement on the definition of “authenticity” and “reliability,” and that the term “validity” is not used or is used synonymously with either “authenticity” or “reliability.” Based on the survey, it is generally accepted that “authenticity” means that a document is what it purports to be and that “reliability” means that a document is trustworthy.

The second question was “Does archival legislation in your country define ‘authenticity,’ ‘reliability’ or ‘validity’ in relation to records/electronic records? If yes, please provide definitions and the citation of the legislation.” Sadly, the answer was a uniform “no.” One of the reasons for this negative answer may be that archival legislation predates the concerns about electronic records. Given the silence of

archival legislation on the matter of authenticity, reliability and validity, the next question was “Does any other legislation (for example, electronic commerce legislation, digital signature act, etc.) in your country define ‘authenticity,’ ‘reliability’ or ‘validity’ in relation to records/electronic records? If yes, please provide definitions and the citation of the legislation.” Seven countries answered affirmatively and six answered in the negative. From the answers it appears that authenticity has been addressed in laws relating to evidence, electronic signature and e-commerce.

From the answers to these two questions, it is clear that a patchwork of national laws may touch on the creation and maintenance of authentic electronic records. Where laws do address electronic records they do not provide a coherent records keeping regime in the electronic environment and these gaps in national legislation must be filled.

The draft report from Seville, based upon the answers to the first three questions, came to the following conclusion:

In the absence of legislative imperatives to create authentic, reliable and valid records the pressure on archives and archivists is increased. Firstly, they need to assess whether archival and records keeping legislation requires revision—always a protracted process. Secondly, they need to be vigilant about whether other legislation in their jurisdiction is pronouncing on record keeping matters and they need to assess whether such legislation is adequate. Thirdly, in the absence of any or adequate legislation, they must identify and employ other tactics to ensure that adequate electronic records are created. This can be achieved through the development of international or national standards or organizational policy. The issues of concern are that such documents may not have the force of legislation and assessing or auditing compliance is a much more difficult task.

The fourth question was “What are archives in your country doing/planning to ensure that electronic records are reliable and authentic?” Of the thirteen countries answering, ten stated that they were doing or planning something to ensure that electronic records are reliable and authentic. Among the activities reported are issuing regulations, providing guidance and training, preparation of standards for electronic documents, and influencing legislation. It appears that all approaches to authenticity regarding electronic records start with records creation unlike paper records where some archives only deal with authenticity upon receipt of the records.

The final question was “Do archives in your country identify and issues/problems in succeeding? If yes, please tell us what they are.” As the question relates to authenticity, the responses pointed to problems in developing and implementing records creation and records keeping standards, electronic signatures, and migration. It is best summed up by Australia’s answer that the authenticity of good electronic record keeping requires ensuring that electronic business process routinely involve the capture of the records necessary to document them; designing electronic systems that will capture authentic records; ensuring that the integrity of electronic records is securely maintained; ensuring that electronic records created and captured now will remain accessible and useable for as long as they are needed; and building a culture of record keeping among managers and workers. Finally almost all responses mentioned allocating existing resources wisely, obtaining additional resources and developing partnerships so that others collaborate in achieving the archivists’ aims.

5. Ongoing Projects and Legislation

There are many studies going on all over the world investigating how to keep electronic records in a way that will guarantee their authenticity. Most of these studies are being done by archives or library experts. Because e-commerce has become such an active business tool, commercial enterprises and governments are now focusing on the authenticity of electronic records and electronic signatures and laws and regulations are being proposed and approved to govern authenticity.

On the international level, an example of new laws is the Directive of the European Union on electronic signatures, adopted on 30 November 1999.³ This Directive has now been implemented in all of the member states of the Union. Paradoxically, the Directive makes no provisions for long-term preservation in the archival sense. The United Nations General Assembly has approved the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Commerce which contains provisions on electronic signatures.⁴ In the pharmaceutical industry, the US Food and Drug Administration has issued a regulation on electronic records and electronic signatures that is forcing the industry to deal with the issues of authenticity. For instance, the regulation requires that records created electronically must be kept electronically. Again, the archival implications of the regulation have been ignored.

Issues surrounding preserving authentic electronic records are not new, just recent. There has been a great deal of research done on the subject in the past ten years. This report makes no attempt to analyze the research. A few of these projects are reviewed to show the great interest that the digital era has prompted in authenticity. These are merely examples that have been chosen out of the many projects underway.

1. **University of British Columbia.** The Preservation of the Integrity of Electronic Records Project at the University of British Columbia defined authenticity as a record's reliability over time. It linked authenticity to the record's status, mode and form of transmission and the manner of its preservation and custody. The Project developed a series of templates identifying the characteristics of an electronic record that is authentic. The InterPARES Project is also at the University as an ongoing study on the permanent preservation of authentic records created in electronic systems.
2. **University of Pittsburgh.** The Functional Requirements for Evidence in Record keeping Project at the University of Pittsburgh identified authentic records as those which an authorized records creator must have originated. The Project identified functional requirements for creating authentic records. Interestingly the Project found that electronic records should not be transferred into archival custody as the act of transferring across custodial boundaries wrenches them from their record keeping context.
3. **Digital Preservation Testbed.** The Digital Preservation Testbed is a three year research project initiated by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The project started in October 2000. The project goal is to establish the best strategy for the long term preservation of digital objects.
4. **Model Requirements for the Management of Electronic Records (MoReq).** The Mo Req Specification is a model specification of requirements for electronic records management systems (ERMS). It was designed to be applicable throughout Europe. The model specification was commissioned by the IDA Program of the European Commission and was prepared by Cornwell Affiliates plc.
5. **Monash University.** The Record keeping Metadata Project of the Records Continuum Research Group at Monash University views records as agents of action and active participants in the business process. The Project aims to "...specify and codify record keeping metadata in ways that enable it to be fully understood and deployed both within and beyond the records and archives profession." The project identified authentication of records as one of the purposes of metadata.
6. **Cedars Project.** The Cedars Project was established by the Consortium of University Research Libraries. The Project studied "...the issues surrounding digital preservation and the responsibilities that research libraries would have to assume to ensure continued accessibility to

³ Directive 1999/93. See <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/1>.

⁴ General Assembly Resolution 51/162 of 16 December 1996. See www.uncitral.org.

digital materials.” The project defines authenticity of a document “that it is the same as that which a user expected based on a prior reference.”

Given all the legislative and research going on, there is not enough cooperation or links between the legislator and the researcher. This means that the legislator cannot benefit from the results of these projects.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The collective memory of the peoples of the world is of fundamental importance to preserve. Documentary heritage in the form of records or documents (archives) is an essential part of this memory and is also becoming vital when discussing indispensable human rights such as freedom of opinion and expression, where the right to seek, receive and impart information is included. The establishment of freedom of information laws around the world is evidence of the importance of these records.

Preservation and access to electronic records in electronic form is an important and difficult issue. There is unquestioned preservation of records such as cuneiform clay tablets, Latin medieval parchment letters, or 19th century paper correspondence. These are kept in the original. In the future records will be only in electronic form and will have no automatic longevity by themselves as the records mentioned above. The reasons to provide preservation and access remain unchanged, but the conditions to do so have changed dramatically. Archival institutions have a distinctive mission—to give guidance on these problems to the creators of electronic records, to receive transfers of the electronic records, and to preserve and give access to authentic records for now and the centuries to come.

Archivists are thus responsible for the identification and preservation of authentic digital heritage. To accomplish this responsibility requires that the preservation of authentic electronic records be given the highest priority by archivists. Responsible archivists must make themselves aware of the problems in their country surrounding electronic records and make contact with international organizations to get resources to resolve the problems. It is obvious that in order to accomplish this, archivists must cooperate with other professions and archival institutions and must receive the necessary resources to carry out these new tasks.

As has been discussed above, there is a great deal of research into the authenticity of electronic records underway. It would be a wasteful redundancy to embark on yet another study on how to preserve authentic electronic records. What is needed now is an evaluation of the research completed and a transfer of the knowledge from the researcher to the archivist. Much of the research is going on at local, national and super-national levels and must be harmonized to prevent serious inconsistent treatment of electronic records to ensure their authenticity. This harmonization must be done while, at the same time, keeping in mind the different national legal traditions and cultures. It must be realized, however, that a loss of authentic electronic records is a cultural loss and a loss of the digital heritage of nations. UNESCO is in a unique position--as a part of the Memory of the World Program--to prevent this loss and to take a number of actions to preserve the digital heritage of nations.

1. Archivists and archival institutions, in both the public and private sectors, are still in the paper age and are concerned with preserving authentic paper records. Their understanding of the need to preserve authentic digital records must be improved. UNESCO should promote programs that educate and raise the awareness of archivists on the issue of preserving authentic electronic records. All types of training and archival education should be pursued.
2. The CLM, as noted above, has completed a survey of its member on the status of the authenticity of electronic records in the committee member's country. While the information from this study is

- informative, it is not necessarily reflective on the archives of the world. UNESCO should conduct a similar survey of the world on the status of the authenticity of electronic records.
3. In preparing this report it had become obvious that there is not common agreement among archival professionals on the meaning of the terminology. Careless use of terminology leads to confusion. UNESCO ought to promote an agreement on terminology.
 4. There have been so many studies on how to preserve authentic electronic records that some summing up and conclusions are necessary in order to move forward with preserving authentic electronic records. Guidelines on preserving authentic electronic records would be very useful to archivists and UNESCO should back the development of the guidelines.
 5. UNESCO should take an initiative to make governments aware of the special archival problems in preserving electronic records in authentic form. UNESCO should convene a conference of high ranking representatives from world governments and introduce the problem of preserving digital cultural heritage in an authentic manner.
 6. Recognition of the need for adequate resources and organization to preserve digital cultural heritage is paramount. UNESCO should develop the criteria and models for such an organization.

Finally, the goal of archivists must be "...to preserve (digital) records in an intellectual sense (as we can understand them), as they were when they played a role in the business process (authenticity), over time (in a usable way and despite changing technology)."⁵ The recommendations above will strongly support this goal.

⁵ Ufficio Centrale Per I Beni Archivistici. *How Do You Know It's the Real Thing? Authentic Documents in the Electronic Age: Proceedings of the International Symposium, Vancouver, February 19, 2000*. Rome: Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 2001. p. 163.

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Glossary

appraisal

A basic records management/archival function of determining the value and thus the DISPOSITION of RECORDS based upon their current administrative, legal, and fiscal use; their EVIDENTIAL and INFORMATIONAL VALUE; their ARRANGEMENT and condition; and their relationship to other records

archives

1) The DOCUMENTS created or received and accumulated by a person or organization in the course of the conduct of affairs, and preserved because of their continuing value

2) The building or part of a building in which ARCHIVES(1) are preserved and made available for consultation; also referred to as an archival repository

3) The agency or program responsible for selecting, acquiring, preserving, and making available ARCHIVES(1); also referred to as an archival agency, archival institution, or archival program

authentication

The act of verifying that a DOCUMENT or a REPRODUCTION of a DOCUMENT is what it purports to be

See also: **certification**

business process re-engineering

(also business process redesign) (abbrev.: BPR) *noun* [mass noun] the process of restructuring a company's organization and methods, especially so as to exploit the capabilities of computers.

case papers/files

FILES relating to a specific action, event, person, place, project, or other subject. Case files are sometimes referred to as project files or dossiers. In UK usage, particular instance papers; in Canadian usage, transactional files

certification

The act of attesting the official character of a DOCUMENT or of a COPY thereof

context

noun the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed: *the proposals need to be considered in the context of new European directives.* the parts of something written or spoken that immediately precede and follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning. -PHRASES: **in context** considered together with the surrounding words or circumstances: *the complex meaning of irony is only graspable in context.* **out of context** without the surrounding words or circumstances and so not fully understandable: *the article portrayed her as domineering by dropping quotes from her out of context.* -DERIVATIVES **contextual** *adjective* **contextually** *adverb*. -ORIGIN late Middle English (denoting the construction of a text): from Latin *contextus*, from *con-* 'together' + *texere* 'to weave'.

deletion *noun* **1** [mass noun] the action or process of deleting something: *deletion of a file*. **2** Genetics: the loss or absence of a section from a nucleic acid molecule or chromosome.

disposal

The actions taken with regard to NONCURRENT RECORDS following their APPRAISAL and the expiration of their retention periods as provided for by legislation, regulation, or administrative procedure. Actions include TRANSFER to an ARCHIVES(3) or DESTRUCTION. In the United States, DISPOSAL is also known as disposition

destruction

The DISPOSAL of DOCUMENTS of no further value by methods as incineration, maceration, pulping or shredding

document

- 1) Recorded information regardless of MEDIUM or characteristics
- 2) A single ITEM

document management system

An organized means of creating, indexing, searching, and accessing DOCUMENTS or INFORMATION

dossier

See: **case file**

evidence

noun [mass noun] the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid: *the study finds little evidence of overt discrimination*. Law: information given personally, drawn from a document, or in the form of material objects, tending or used to establish facts in a legal investigation or admissible as testimony in a law court: *without evidence, they can't bring a charge*. signs; indications: *there was no obvious evidence of a break-in*. *verb* [with obj.] (usu. be evidenced) be or show evidence of: *that it has been populated from prehistoric times is evidenced by the remains of Neolithic buildings*. -PHRASES: give evidence Law: give information and answer questions formally and in person in a law court or at an inquiry. in evidence noticeable; conspicuous: *his dramatic flair is still very much in evidence*. turn King's (or Queen's or US state's) evidence Law: (of a criminal) give information in court against one's partners in order to receive a less severe punishment oneself. -ORIGIN Middle English: via Old French from Latin *evidentia*, from *evident-* 'obvious to the eye or mind' (see **evident**).

1. Internal evidence *noun* [mass noun] evidence derived from the contents of the thing discussed.
2. Hearsay evidence *noun* [mass noun] Law: evidence given by a witness based on information received from others rather than personal knowledge.
3. Negative evidence *noun* [mass noun] evidence for a theory provided by the non-occurrence or absence of something.
4. Primary evidence *noun* [mass noun] Law: evidence, such as the original of a document, that by its nature does not suggest that better evidence is available. first-hand historical evidence about an event rather than that based on other sources.
5. Secondary evidence *noun* [mass noun] Law: something, in particular documentation, which confirms the existence of unavailable primary evidence.
6. State's evidence *noun* [mass noun] US Law: evidence for the prosecution given by a participant in or accomplice to the crime being tried.

7. Queen's evidence noun [mass noun] English Law: evidence for the prosecution given by a participant in or accomplice to the crime being tried: what happens if they turn Queen's evidence?
8. King's evidence noun in the reign of a king, the term for Queen's evidence.

evidential value

The worth of DOCUMENTS/ARCHIVES for illuminating the nature and work of their creator by providing evidence of the creator's origins, FUNCTIONS, and activities. Evidential value is distinct from informational value

See also: administrative value, fiscal value, informational value, legal value, intrinsic value

file

1) An organized unit (folder, volume, etc) of DOCUMENTS grouped together either for current use by the creator or in the process of archival ARRANGEMENT, because they relate to the same subject, activity, or transaction. A FILE is usually the basic unit within a record SERIES

2) A series of FILES(1)

3) In DATA PROCESSING, two or more RECORDS(2) of identical layout treated as a unit. The unit is larger than a RECORD(2) but smaller than a data system, and is also known as a data set or file set

genuine

adjective truly what something is said to be; authentic: *each book is bound in genuine leather.* (of a person, emotion, or action) sincere: *she had no doubts as to whether Tom was genuine | a genuine attempt to delegate authority.* -DERIVATIVES *genuinely adverb genuineness noun.* -ORIGIN late 16th cent. (in the sense "natural or proper"): from Latin *genuinus*, from *genu* 'knee' (with reference to the Roman custom of a father acknowledging paternity of a newborn child by placing it on his knee); later associated with *genus* 'birth, race, stock'.

integrity

noun [mass noun] 1 the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness: a gentleman of complete integrity. 2 the state of being whole and undivided: upholding territorial integrity and national sovereignty. the condition of being unified, unimpaired, or sound in construction: the structural integrity of the novel. internal consistency or lack of corruption in electronic data: [as modifier] integrity checking. -ORIGIN late Middle English (in sense 2): from French *intégrité* or Latin *integritas*, from *integer* 'intact' (see **integer**). Compare with **entirety**, **integral**, and **integrate**.

metadata

DATA describing DATA and data systems; that is, the structure of DATA BASES, their characteristics, location, and usage

migrate

verb [no obj.] (of an animal, typically a bird or fish) move from one region or habitat to another, especially regularly according to the seasons: *as autumn arrives, the birds migrate south.* (of a person) move from one area or country to settle in another, especially in search of work: *rural populations have migrated to urban areas.* move from one specific part of something to another: *cells which can form pigment migrate beneath the skin.* Computing: change or cause to change from using one system to another. [with obj.] Computing: transfer (programs or hardware) from one system to another. -DERIVATIVES *migration noun migrational*

adjective migrator *noun* migratory *adjective*. -ORIGIN early 17th cent. (in the general sense "move from one place to another"): from Latin *migrat-* 'moved, shifted', from the verb *migrare*.

record

- 1) A DOCUMENT created or received and maintained by an agency, organization, or individual in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business
- 2) In DATA PROCESSING, a grouping of inter-related data elements forming the basic unit of a FILE(3)

reliable

adjective consistently good in quality or performance; able to be trusted: *a reliable source of information*. *noun* (usu. reliables) a person or thing with such trustworthy qualities: *the supporting cast includes old reliables like Mitchell*. -DERIVATIVES *reliability noun* *reliableness noun* *reliably adverb*.

retention period

The length of time, usually based upon an estimate of the frequency of use for current and future business, that RECORDS should be retained in offices or RECORDS CENTRES before they are transferred to an ARCHIVES(3) or otherwise disposed of

signature, digital

signature, electronic

signature

noun **1** a person's name written in a distinctive way as a form of identification in authorizing a cheque or document or concluding a letter. [mass noun] the action of signing a document: *the licence was sent to the customer for signature*. a distinctive pattern, product, or characteristic by which someone or something can be identified: *the chef produced the pâtâtée that was his signature* | [as modifier] *his signature dish*. **2** Music: short for key signature or time signature. **3** Printing: a letter or figure printed at the foot of one or more pages of each sheet of a book as a guide in binding. a printed sheet after being folded to form a group of pages. **4** N. Amer. the part of a medical prescription that gives instructions about the use of the medicine or drug prescribed. -ORIGIN mid 16th cent. (as a Scots legal term, denoting a document presented by a writer to the Signet): from medieval Latin *signatura* 'sign manual' (in late Latin denoting a marking on sheep), from Latin *signare* 'to sign, mark'.

text

noun **1** a book or other written or printed work, regarded in terms of its content rather than its physical form: *a text which explores pain and grief*. a piece of written or printed material regarded as conveying the authentic or primary form of a particular work: *in some passages it is difficult to establish the original text* | *the text of the lecture was available to guests on the night*. [mass noun] written or printed words, typically forming a connected piece of work: *stylistic features of journalistic text*. [mass noun] Computing: data in written form, especially when stored, processed, or displayed in a word processor. [in sing.] the main body of a book or other piece of writing, as distinct from other material such as notes, appendices, and illustrations: *the pictures are clear and relate well to the text*. a script or libretto. a written work chosen or set as a subject of study: *too much concentration on set texts can turn pupils against reading*. a textbook. a passage from the Bible or other religious work, especially when used as the subject of a sermon. a subject or theme for a discussion or

exposition: *he took as his text the fact that Australia is paradise.* **2** (also text-hand) [mass noun] fine, large handwriting, used especially for manuscripts. //

transfer

1) The act involved in a change of physical CUSTODY of RECORDS/ARCHIVES with or without change of legal title

2) RECORDS/ARCHIVES so transferred

valid

adjective actually supporting the intended point or claim; acceptable as cogent: *a valid criticism.* legally binding due to having been executed in compliance with the law: *a valid contract.* legally acceptable: *the visas are valid for thirty days.* -DERIVATIVES

validity noun

validly adverb. -ORIGIN late 16th cent.: from French *valide* or Latin *validus* 'strong', from *valere* 'be strong'.

legal value

The worth of RECORDS/ARCHIVES for the conduct of current or future legal business and/or as legal evidence thereof