

W11 Records Media Formats: Choosing the Most Appropriate Option(s)

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Corporate records typically exist in any of three primary media formats: paper, microform, and electronic. Yet the determination of whether a particular record media format is truly suitable is often not undertaken when deciding to invest (or not) in various information technologies and/or restructured business processes. Failure to take this step may result in inefficient information workflow, failure to receive maximum payback from technology solutions, and/or unnecessary financial expenditures.

The realization that there is no one media format that is suitable for all records, in all organizations, and under all circumstances, is an important concept for records practitioners and corporate personnel in general to grasp. The concept of a 'paperless office' will not be realized; it is highly unlikely that microfilm/fiche will become totally obsolete; and although electronic records will continue to increase in volume and importance, they will never satisfy all corporate and personnel needs. Rather, various media formats complement rather than supplant one another, and workplaces will benefit from utilizing the media format that is most suitable under a particular set of circumstances.

This presentation will allow participants to:

- Understand the strengths and deficiencies of the three primary media formats as they relate to corporate functions.
- Realize that there is no one media format that is suitable for all records, in all organizations, and under all circumstances.
- Understand the high-level process to follow to determine the most appropriate media format(s).