



KNOWLEDGE ENGINEERING

Transforming Information into Knowledge

Knowledge Engineering (KE) provides comprehensive solutions to successfully leverage intellectual capital (IC) within an organization. It incorporates enterprise content management technologies and transforms information into knowledge on demand, enabling effective decision-making and information sharing. Among other things, KE incorporates Records Management (RM) compliance requirements and best practices to manage IC. This document outlines the process for determining whether a document is a record and worthy of being retained.

Is it a Record?

To comply with RM principles, it is essential for all staff to review their paper files and identify their agencies' records. Identifying documents as records, non-record materials, or personal files is essential to proper records management. Use the checklist below and the definitions on the reverse page as a guide to help you evaluate the contents of your paper files.

1 Is it a **Personal Record**?
Examples: family or personal correspondence, calendars, schedules, informal notes, etc.

Yes

Personal Record. Keep the material as long as you have a need for it. When no longer needed, shred it or take it home.

No

Continue to next question.

2 Is it a **Stock of Publications or Processed Documents**?
Examples: catalogues, trade journals, etc.

Yes

Non-record Materials. Keep the document as long as you have a business use for it. When no longer needed, shred it or recycle it.

No

Continue to next question.

3 Is it a **Reference Copy** of a record?
Example: extra copy of a DoD Directive kept at your work station for reference

Yes

Non-record Materials. Keep the document as long as you have a business use for it. When no longer needed, shred it or recycle it.

No

Continue to next question.

4 Is it a **Working File**?
Examples: notes, calculations, drafts

Yes

- Was the material circulated or made available to employees, other than the creator, for official purposes such as approval, comment, action, recommendations, follow-up, or to communicate with agency staff about agency business; and
- Does the material contain unique information, such as substantive annotations or comments that added to a proper understanding of the agency's formulation and execution of basic policies, decisions, actions, or responsibilities?
 - No: **Non-record Materials.** Keep the document as long as you have a business use for it. When you no longer have a business use for it, shred it or recycle it.
 - Yes: **Federal Record.** Keep it and contact your Records Management Officer for guidance.

No

Continue to next question.

5 Is it a **Record Copy**?
Example: an original copy of a directive issued by the agency and signed by the agency's director

Yes

Federal Record. Keep it and contact your Records Management Officer for guidance.

No

Contact your Records Management Officer for guidance.



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Is it a Record?

Definitions for Key Terms

Personal Records: Documentary Materials* belonging to an individual that are not used to conduct agency business. Related solely to an individual's own affairs or used exclusively for that individual's convenience. Must be clearly designated as such and kept separate from the agency's records. Personal files include family photographs, personal correspondence, doctor bills, children's report card, etc. Also includes work-related personal materials, such as diaries, journals, notes, personal calendars and appointment schedules used only as reminders and personal observations on work-related topics, and not for the transaction of agency business.

Non-Record Materials: U.S. Government-owned informational materials excluded from the legal definition of records or not meeting the requirements of that definition (see below). Includes extra copies of documents kept only for convenience of reference, stocks of publications and of processed documents, and library or museum materials intended solely for reference or exhibition. Three broad categories of Non-Record Materials are as follows:

1. **Stock of Publications or Processed Documents** include catalogues, trade journals, and other publications received from other Government agencies, commercial firms, or private institutions, requiring no action and are not a part of a project on which action is taken.
2. **Reference Copies** of records and other documents preserved solely for convenience of reference are non-records.
3. **Working Files** such as rough notes, calculations, or drafts **NOT circulated or made available to employees, other than the creator, for official purposes** such as approval, comment, action, recommendations, follow-up, or to communicate with agency staff about agency business.

Federal Records: All books, paper, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the U.S. Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of the data in them (44 U.S.C. 3301) Two broad categories of Federal Records are as follows:

1. **Working Files for collaborative use that were circulated or made available to employees, other than the creator, for official purposes** such as approval, comment, action, recommendations, follow-up, or to communicate with agency staff about agency business; and they contain unique information, such as substantive annotations or comments that add to a proper understanding of the agency's formulation and execution of basic policies, decisions, actions, or responsibilities.
2. **Record copies** are the official, or file, or coordination copies created by an action office, complete with coordinations, enclosures, or related background papers that form a complete file or history of that action. To be considered agency records, the materials must have been created or received by the agency under federal law or in connection with the transaction of agency business. Multiple copies of the same document and documents containing duplicative information may each have record status depending on how they are used in conducting agency business. For example, if the document originated in another office but your agency commented or took action on it, it may be a record for your agency as well as for the originating office.

***Documentary Materials:** a collective term for records, non-record materials, and personal papers referring to all media on which information is recorded, regardless of the nature of the medium or the method or circumstance of recording.