

Guidelines for Managing Web Site Content: Section 6.0

Records Management for Web-based Records

6.4 Selection of Storage Media

Depending on retention requirements, agencies need to decide whether to capture and maintain web-based records on an offline or online storage medium. The size and complexity of the records is one of the determinants of the choice of storage media. Snapshots of sites and activity logs, for example, are likely to consume large amounts of storage space.

A second determinant is the desired speed of access. There is usually some delay in accessing records stored offline. Options for offline storage include optical disk or magnetic tape. In contrast, online storage provides instantaneous access in the form of a hard drive. However, instantaneous access is more expensive to maintain, especially if the agency is storing large quantities of data.

Below is a brief description of four widely used storage media.

CD-ROM (compact disk read only memory)

Optical disk technology is capable of storing large amounts of data that can be read but not altered. CD-ROMs all conform to size and format standards and are well suited for color, large software applications, graphics, sound and video. CD-ROM technology adheres to ISO 9660 that covers both the physical layout of the disk and the format of the recorded information.

CD-R (compact disk recordable)

Based on WORM (write once read many) technology, a CD-R can store large amounts of data. CD-R technology also adheres to ISO 9660. CD-R drives have been improved to enable multi-session recording (that is, data can be added over time). Standard error checking techniques should be used to assess the quality of the blank discs being used for storage.

Magnetic tape

A magnetically coated strip of plastic on which data can be encoded, magnetic tape provides relatively inexpensive and large storage capacities. Because tapes do not allow random access to data, access time is slower on tape than on disks. Tapes are available in a range of sizes and formats.

Magnetic hard disk

A hard disk (as opposed to floppy disk) is a magnetic disk that can store large quantities of data. However, hard disk storage is more expensive than other storage media.

[Section 7: Web-based Publications](#)

[Go to Table of Contents](#)

