



## Managing Electronic Records: Checksums

### **I have the software. Now what do I do?**

Typically you'll want to run whatever program you choose the first time just to get a baseline output for your records and then every time you run it after that you will be validating that nothing has changed. How often you validate your files is up to you and what you feel is best for your organization (once a month, bi-annually, etc.) but the sooner you know that something has changed, the easier it is to correct. If, for whatever reason, the checksums *don't* match when you run a validation check, then something has changed at the bit-level of the file(s). If this happens, there is no way to just go into the changed file(s) and correct the error. You would need to restore from backup to a previous version that was unaffected (this is another reason why backing up your data is essential for long-term preservation of electronic records).