Records Managers

Records Management > FAQs > Resources - CIO Link

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Memorandum to Agency Records Officers and Information Resource Managers: Snapshot of Agency Public Web Sites

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) will be preserving a one-time snapshot of agency public web sites as they exist on or before January 20, 2001, as an archival record in the National Archives of the United States. The web site snapshot initiative outlined in this memorandum will ensure that we are able to document at least in part agency use of the Internet at the end of the Clinton Administration. To accomplish this, we ask that agencies take the following actions:

- Take a snapshot of your agency's public web site(s) following the instructions in the attachment to this memorandum.
- Within 60 days, send the snapshot and related documentation, also described in the attachment, to NARA.

I am sending this message to Chief Information Officers also. I urge you to work with your CIO to ensure that your agency's public web sites are included in the snapshot.

This immediate action does not address the larger and long-term records management issues relating to agency web sites that you and NARA face. Agencies are using the web more and doing more of their business on the web than ever before. Web sites include different types of records that are used in different ways, and document different agency activities of varying significance. Some web content parallels traditional paper records. In fact some agencies use the web to disseminate policy information, but publicize the fact that the authentic records of policy are maintained on paper. But some web sites involve records that are important evidence; some are without precedent. Web sites cannot be treated with a "one size fits all" solution and Federal agencies need comprehensive guidance on management of these records.

We will be working with agencies on the first phase of this guidance in the next few weeks. We will meet with records officers shortly to go over what they need to see in the guidance. Several agencies have submitted records schedules for their web sites and have received dispositions for them. NARA has also provided training and briefings on records management issues relating to web records, and is happy to do so upon request.

In addition to NARA's role to help agencies with guidance in managing all of their records, including web records, we are charged with the responsibility to provide for long-term preservation and access to those records selected for archival retention. The web site snapshot initiative outlined in this memorandum will ensure that we are able to document at

least in part agency use of the Internet at the end of the Clinton Administration. As shown by the specifications for capturing and transferring this snapshot, NARA does not have the capability at this time to take or preserve all of the types of agency web records. NARA is currently working with the San Diego Supercomputer Center, InterPARES, and the international archival community in research projects addressing these issues.

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Deputy Archivist of the United States

Attachment

FAQs for this Memo

Memorandum to Chief Information Officers

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