QUICK GUIDE TO THE BEST RECORDS FORMAT

Agencies may use the following matrix to quickly assess a potential appropriate media choice for records.

Access Considerations	Paper	Microfilm	Electronic
Users need rapid access to information	Good	Poor	Excellent
Multiple users need simultaneous access	Poor	Poor	Excellent
Data must be secure from misfiling, loss, alteration and theft	Fair	Good	Excellent
Records storage space is limited	Poor	Excellent	Excellent

Retention and Preservation Considerations	Paper	Microfilm	Electronic
Information to be kept up to 10 years	Excellent	Excellent[1]	Excellent
Information to be kept more than 15 years	Excellent	Excellent	Good[2]
Information accessible within 10 years	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Information accessible after 10 years	Excellent	Excellent[3]	[4]
Information is essential to the continuity of operations and can easily be duplicated for disaster recovery	Poor	Excellent[5]	Excellent

[1] Costs for microfilming records with a retention period of less than 10 years must be carefully assessed.

[2] Agency policies, procedures and compliance with 4 AAC 59.005 (Retention & Preservation of Electronic Records) can ensure longevity of information.

[3] A schedule of checking the microfilm for degradation is advised and storage without proper temperature/humidity controls will lessen the lifespan of the microfilm.

[4] Whether electronic information is accessible after 10 years is subject to migration strategies, technology development and investment by the State therefore it can be rated from poor to excellent.

[5] For long-term records storage, the RIMS recommends a combination of electronic and either paper or microfilm.