



Setting Up or Cleaning Up Shared Drives

DEFINITIONS

What are Shared Drives?

Shared drives are typically used to store and share content such as word-processing documents, scanned and photographic images, audio, video, spreadsheets, presentations, and databases.

What is ROT?

(Redundant, Obsolete, and Trivial Files) Could include instances of: files with the same content, but multiple file types, personal files that are not business related, etc.

What is a File Name Policy?

A set of rules or consensus among employees that help dictate file names. A good file naming policy will fail to serve its purpose if the employees using it do not understand what the files represent.

What are Unstructured Records?

Records that lack an identifiable structure. For example, the contents of email along with various audio, image, and video files may be unstructured.

*The 8 Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Principles®

1. **Accountability**
2. **Transparency**
3. **Integrity**
4. **Protection**
5. **Compliance**
6. **Availability**
7. **Retention**
8. **Disposition**

Best Practices for Management of University Records

OVERVIEW: This planning document is a broad overview for use when a department is considering managing their shared drive(s). Public records are essential for the conduct of government business and should be carefully managed according to [Wisconsin Administrative Rule 12](#) for Electronic Records.

Questions to ask before managing records in shared drives:

- ✓ Why remediate (clean up) your shared drives?
- ✓ What records should be stored in which folders?
- ✓ Do we have a file naming policy? Does it cover various type of documents in various environments? Is it extensible into the future?
- ✓ What information (metadata) is important to capture in the file name itself?
- ✓ Who can create new files, and are the files secure?

Inherent risks of shared drives:

Using a shared drive to manage records has inherent risks. Departments that use a shared drive to store records need to understand these risks if effective management is to occur.

Consider the following:

- ✓ It can be difficult to create audit trails to indicate who has modified or deleted records and therefore difficult to demonstrate the authenticity, integrity and trustworthiness of uncontrolled records in shared drives.
- ✓ Records stored in shared drives can be easily altered or deleted by anyone who has access to the drive.
- ✓ It can be difficult to be sure of the status of information, for example, whether it is a draft, final or Authorized Version.
- ✓ If appropriate metadata (i.e. contextual information about the records) is missing, there is no link or chain of custody between documents and their business context.
- ✓ Poorly managed shared drives may contain large volumes of uncontrolled information. This becomes difficult to manage and makes it inefficient to access and re-use information.

Many of these risks can be mitigated or eliminated through effective records management. The following page consists of a basic guideline for managing records at a base level. This guideline consists of cleaning up ROT (Redundant, Obsolete, and Trivial Files), correcting errors in folder structure, and assessing whether further changes need to occur.

Job Aid

Clean Up:

Why clean up your shared drives?

- If done correctly, cleaning up your shared drives could: decrease server costs, provide for a more efficient process to retrieve information, encourage information sharing and reduce redundancies.

I have decided to clean up our department or unit shared network drive. What Next?

- Make sure the right people are involved. Depending on department and/or unit, it might be important to contact (IT, Legal, HR, etc.) before making changes. If you are unsure who should be involved, feel free to contact the University Records Officer at recmgmt@library.wisc.edu.
- Clear out the easy ROT (Redundant, Obsolete, and Trivial Files) first. This would include files relating to non-business functions such as: personal content, wedding and vacation photos, music libraries, etc.
- Other files that can be easily disposed of include temp files and redundant files. Examples of redundant files would include multiple copies of Mark's conference speech in Word and PDF, and various drafts of the speech. It is likely that only one copy of the final version is necessary to maintain.
- At this point, it may be necessary to make a second pass looking for easy ROT to clean up.

File naming:

Why is cleaning up file names important?

- A file name is the main way to identify a record. The file name provides context which can include: date of creation, name of creator, description of content, intended audience, group associated with the record, department name, etc.

I have decided to clean up the file names in our department or unit shared drives. What next?

- Consult your file naming policy. If your organization and/or unit does not have a file naming policy, it may be necessary to establish one. Feel free to contact the University Records Officer at recmgmt@library.wisc.edu for more questions related to establishing a file naming structure.
- Using the file naming policy, determine what context needs to be given to understand files that do not cooperate with the file naming policy

Further Clean Up:

- If your department and/or unit is interested in more information about managing your shared drives, please contact Peg Eusch, CRM University Records Officer. Contact information can be found at the bottom of each page.