



arts and culture

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TO HEADS OF ALL GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

**TRAINING AND GOOD PRACTICE MATERIALS ON ELECTRONIC RECORDS
MANAGEMENT**

1. I have pleasure in drawing your attention to the availability of a set of training and good practice guidance materials on managing records in the electronic environment. The materials have been produced by the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) for the benefit of the public sector world-wide. The preparation was funded by the UK Department for International Development, and the ARMA International Education Foundation has generously helped to fund the distribution. The IRMT gratefully acknowledges their support in making the materials available.
2. Copies of these materials may be downloaded from the IRMT's website at: <http://www.irmt.org/researchReports.html> and a CD containing the materials is also enclosed herewith.
3. It is internationally recognised that the move toward e-government brings new possibilities for strengthening governance and for economic and social development in terms of improving government services, supporting increased accountability and enabling governments to manage state resources more effectively. However, the discipline required to manage

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records held in digital media is not generally recognised, and there tends to be inadequate attention to the quality of documentary evidence; and records management tends not to be incorporated in e-government programmes. It is intended that the materials should provide a step toward addressing this situation and introducing records management as a critical component of electronic government.

4. While the materials were designed for use internationally, it would be important for governmental bodies in South Africa to use the guidelines within the regulatory framework specific to South Africa. The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (No 43 of 1996 as amended), which is administered by the Department of Arts and Culture through the National Archivist, regulates the management of current records of governmental bodies. The Act contains provisions specifically regarding the use of electronic records systems, viz. that the National Archivist shall determine the conditions subject to which electronic records systems in governmental bodies shall be managed [section 13(2)(a)]. To facilitate the provision of prescripts, a manual *Managing Electronic Records in Governmental Bodies: Policy, Principles and Requirements* has been produced. The essential requirements are contained in a synoptic Advisory Pamphlet (No 2): *Electronic Records and the law: What governmental bodies need to know*. These materials are accessible on the website of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa <http://www.national.archives.gov.za> under the links *Services to Governmental Bodies* and *Records Management Publications*. Hard copies may also be requested from the National Archives and Records Service. These prescripts should be used in the context of the overarching policy framework for the management of current records of governmental bodies contained in the *Records Management Policy Manual*, which is also accessible on the National Archives and Records Service's website and may be requested in hard copy.
5. This information is being brought to the attention of heads of governmental bodies, because it has been noted that the personal support and commitment of top management is a critical factor in the success of implementing electronic records systems. In practice, the materials would be used by departmental Records Managers in consultation with Chief Information Officers.
6. I trust that these prescripts and guidelines will serve to advance the sound management of public records, which is an essential foundation for good governance and governmental accountability.



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