



Electronic Records Management: How Long Do Generative AI Records Need to Be Kept?

Purpose: Provide guidance to state and local government agencies on the retention of generative AI records.

Is there one retention period for generative AI records?

NO – The retention period for public records depends on the content and function of the record, not its format.

Generative AI records are retained according to an agency's business, legal, and accountability needs. Like public records in any format, there are a spectrum of retention requirements to consider.

To determine the content/function of generative AI records, ask:

1. What is the interaction about? (content)
2. Why did it take place and for what purpose? (function)

Having one retention period for all generative AI records would be like having a single retention period for all letter-sized documents. The format does not determine the retention.

Aren't generative AI records transitory?

YES & NO – Public records can be created or received in a transient format, but that doesn't mean they have transitory retention value. For example, generative AI used as a sounding board for your thoughts and ideas can be retained under the transitory ***Brainstorming and Collaborating*** DAN. Generative AI used to develop an ordinance or strategic plan can be retained under the appropriate development DAN.

Is retaining ALL generative AI Records the answer?

NO – Storing every generative AI record is not the same as managing those records. Retaining everything is a strategy for chaos.

Where can I find the appropriate retention?

The **RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES** – They outline the required retention periods and actions. The current records retention schedules for state and local government agencies are available from Washington State Archives' website.

**Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from
Washington State Archives:**

**www.sos.wa.gov/archives
recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov**