

**“Government digital information is lost daily. One of our best defenses is to leverage the shared interests of CIOs, librarians and archivists.”**

*From “Partnering for Preservation,” [Public CIO: Technology Leadership in the Public Sector] by Theresa A. Pardo and Brian Burke, April 2006*



# Overview of Digital Archives

July 2006

*Nancy Zimmelman, State Archivist &  
Chief, Archives Division  
Office of the Secretary of State*

# The State Archives

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- **Mandate:**

- The California State Archives is mandated by statute to ensure the proper management and safeguarding of public records and to facilitate citizen and government access to those records.
- This mandate encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including:
  - preserving historical records
  - ensuring access to, and security of, public records

# In the paper world, records go through a lifecycle:

## ACTIVE LIFE...



## followed by...

# INACTIVE LIFE

(governed by retention schedule)



Destroy in-house



Send to **State Archives** for permanent retention



Send to **State Records Center** for temporary retention

# Why we keep some records for a few days, and some for ten years, and some forever?

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- **Business Drivers:**

- Mandated by state statute
- Enable long range decision-making by preserving and providing access to records with enduring legal, fiscal, and historical significance
- Reduce risk to, and liability of, state government
- Reduce costs associated with storage and litigation
- Ensure government integrity and accountability
- Maintain access to mission-critical data

# Three issues

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**Some records must be destroyed at the end of their retention period**

- Keeping records too long creates liability and wastes space

**ALL records cannot be destroyed *until* the end of their retention period**

- Destroying records too early creates liability

**Certain records must be 'kept alive' forever**

- Permanent records have historical, legal, or administrative value

# Digital Records: Same Issues

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## Digital records are *records*.

Government Code sections 6252 (e) & (g)

(e) "Public records" includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics.

(g) "Writing" means any handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photographing, photocopying, transmitting by electronic mail or facsimile, and every other means of recording upon any tangible thing any form of communication or representation, including letters, words, pictures, sounds, or symbols, or combinations thereof, and any record thereby created, regardless of the manner in which the record has been stored.

# Paper vs. Digital

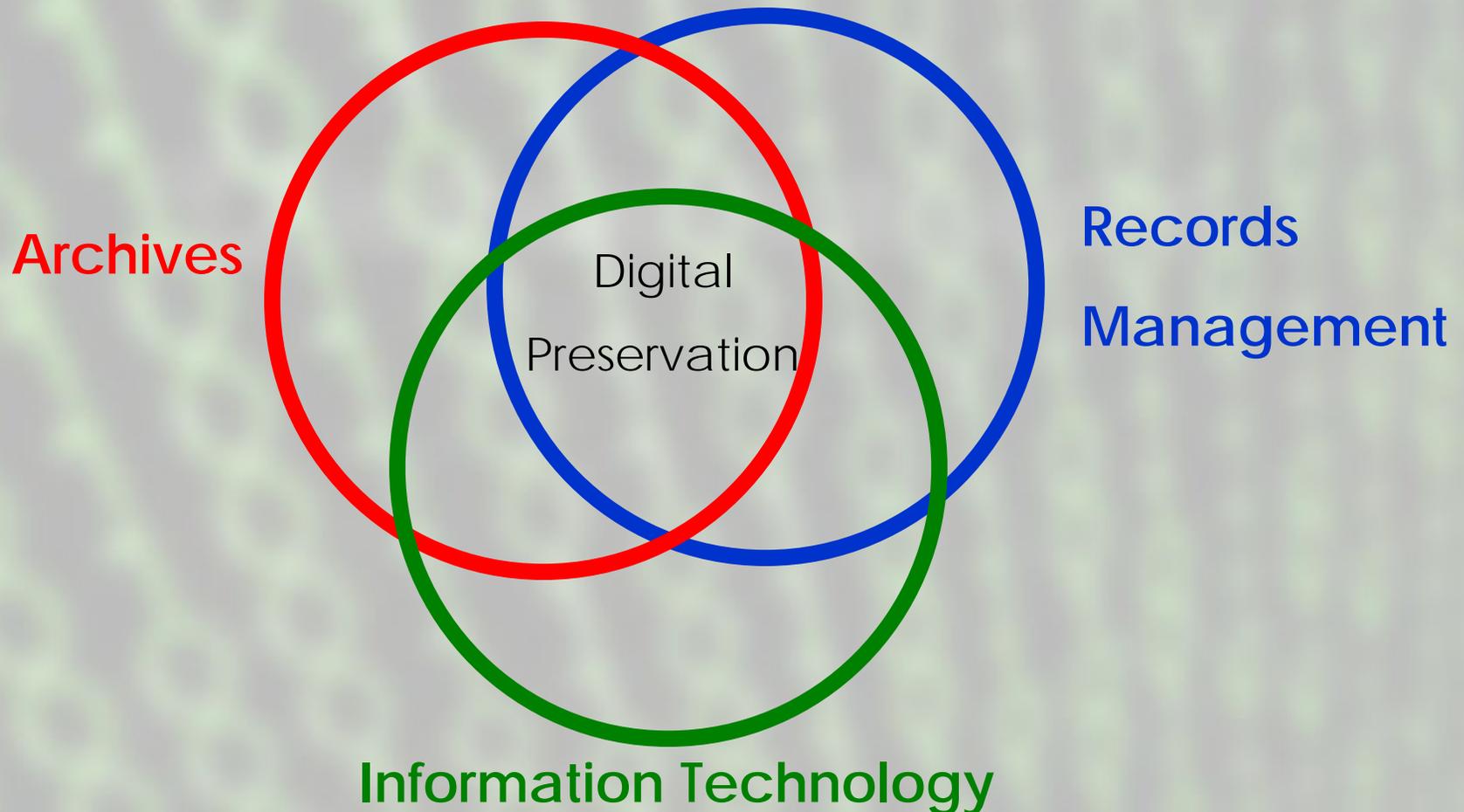
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<b>Paper records</b>	<b>Digital Records</b>
Archives staff has adequate expertise to address all issues	Archives staff dependent on others with more technical expertise (who may have less regard for Archives' mandate)
Issues may be addressed after the record is no longer active and over long periods of time, if required.	Issues must be addressed early in record lifecycle and before hardware/software obsolescence reduces options.

# How?

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Digital preservation requires new partnerships.



# What can we do?

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- Develop new partnerships linking archives, records management and information technology
- Promote Archives' statutory responsibilities to all records, regardless of format
- Implement technology infrastructure at Archives
- Implement life cycle management process/program for all state agency information
- Identify and push data towards Archives

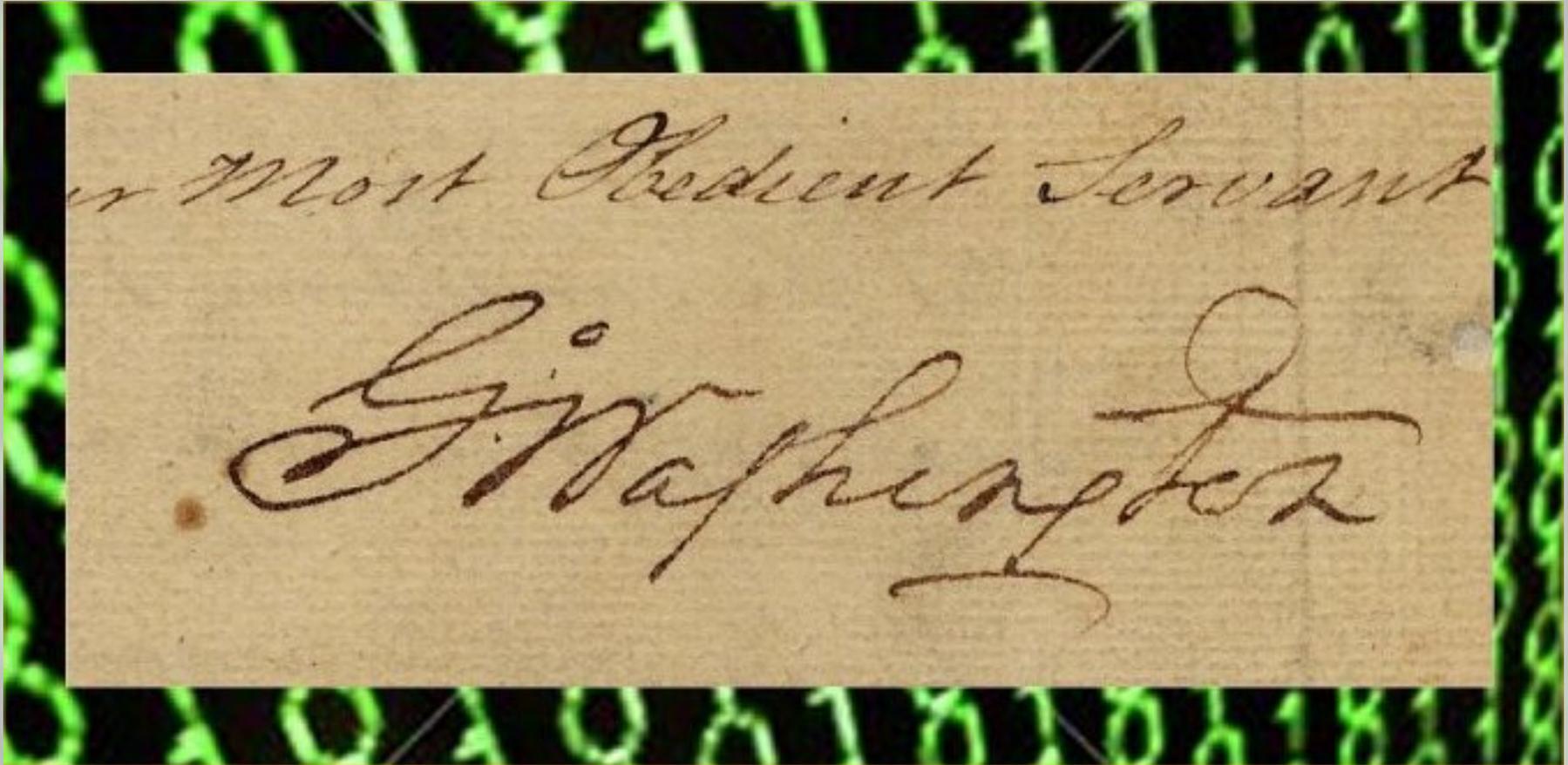
# What can we do?

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- Adopt technology standards to encourage the creation of **Archives-Ready Records**, digital objects created and maintained using open architecture standards and non-proprietary products that are more feasible to preserve over hundreds of years.

The stakes are even higher.  
What if?...

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**CALIFORNIA**

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**STATE ARCHIVES**