

## *For the Record...*

### SHARED DRIVE MANAGEMENT

Units across the university use shared drives as a central space for storing electronic information. Over time, if not managed, these drives can become out of control with outdated or redundant information due to lack of consistency in naming documents and folders, and lack of general oversight of the drive. There are several good reasons for undertaking a shared drive cleanup and reorganization project: efficient retrieval of information (time-saving), reducing cost, reducing duplication and encouraging sharing of information, to name a few.

This document is designed to aid units in the cleanup, reorganization and ongoing maintenance of the shared drive. It will outline the steps involved in a shared drive cleanup and reorganization project and how to ensure that the drive is managed over time for effective and efficient retrieval of information.

Please contact [Information Management & Protection](#) (IM&P) for advice and support in the cleanup and organization of shared drives.

#### **Step 1: Allocation of Responsibility**

It is recommended that each unit designate a person or persons to be responsible for monitoring a shared drive, maintaining the structure, creating new top-level folders, and, when necessary, overseeing a periodic cleanup of electronic records. It is important to note that individual staff are responsible for managing and filing the records they create. Units should develop an internal protocol that sets out records management procedures for maintaining a shared drive over time; one of the most important areas is to agree on naming conventions for folders and documents on the shared drive to ensure consistency and ease of access. **Before embarking upon a shared drive cleanup and reorganization project, the person(s) responsible should contact [IM&P](#) and also establish an oversight committee within the unit to ensure that decisions made during the project are adequately assessed and that user needs are considered.**

#### **Step 2: Inventory Folders and Sub-Folders**

Engage [IM&P](#) for a detailed report of the folders and sub-folders contained in your shared drive. This report will allow you to see important information such as the high-level folder structure, last accessed and last modified dates, security access permissions and any duplicate documents that exist on your drive. The report will allow you to more easily determine which folders and documents can be deleted or moved off your main drive (to an inactive location). This report can form the basis of an inventory of folders and sub-folders which you can use as your shared drive Folder Classification Plan.

## *For the Record...*

The inventory will help to determine the following:

- Current Folder/Sub-folder Name
- High-level Function or Records Class
- Date Last Modified
- Status (Retain/Delete)
- Access Frequency (Inactive/Active)
- Vital Record (Y/N)
- Security Access Permissions Required

Make sure to identify any documents that are not placed in a folder and ensure that upon completion of the inventory they are either deleted or moved into an appropriate folder.

### **Step 3: Clean up and plan for the reorganization of the Shared Drive**

Note that all clean-up and reorganization should be planned carefully before any changes are implemented. Treat the project as you would any other – plan, consult, plan some more and then execute. Keep the committee created within the unit to oversee the project engaged throughout and seek advice from [IM&P](#) throughout the planning and execution of the project.

One of the most important steps in cleaning up a shared drive is to delete duplicates and folders or documents that are no longer required (for more information, see [FTR-Transitory Records](#)).

Reviewing the inventory you created in Step 2, create your Folder Classification Plan. To start, identify any folders that are for personal work use (personal drives) and plan to move them to a separate “User” folder on the shared drive. Access permissions for personal drives should be restricted to the individual who owns the folder only. For more information, see [FTR-Using Network/Shared Drives to Manage Information](#).

From there, divide folders into “Active” and “Inactive” categories (using date last modified and your own individual judgement; with advice from [IM&P](#) as required). The “Active” shared drive location will contain folders and documents that you use on a regular basis and will form your primary shared drive whereas inactive folders and documents are not frequently accessed but may need to be referenced at some time in the future. Inactive folders can be stored in a separate “Inactive” folder on your shared drive.

Next, review your “Active” folders to identify which contain *Vital Records*, that is, those records that are necessary for your unit to continue to operate in the event of disruption or disaster. In reviewing and

## *For the Record...*

reorganizing your shared drive, these folders should be your main focus. When designing your new shared drive folder structure, organize all “Active” folders logically according to the functions they support. Consult the classification and retention plan provided by IM&P which organizes university information into 11 main functions to ensure that records related to the same activities are located together. As a general rule, avoid creating hierarchies more than three to four levels deep.

### **Step 4: Move/Rename Folders**

Throughout the process, consult with relevant staff for input. Prior to actually moving, renaming or deleting folders or documents, circulate the final proposed folder classification plan and access permissions for each folder among staff and get formal approval from an appropriate authority (e.g., Dean, Director). When actually moving and/or renaming folders and documents, keep the time required as compressed as possible. Assign folders and sub-folders an accurate and meaningful name that ensures the reader knows the type of content contained in them from the name.

Set aside a non-busy time for the changeover and notify all those with access to the shared drive to refrain from using it during this specific period. It is recommended that this process take no longer than one to two days. If necessary, staff can use their personal network drives during the clean-up period provided they re-file their work on the shared drive later. Once a designated time has been agreed upon and set aside, transition the folders and documents to the new structure. Communication throughout this phase of the project in particular will be crucial.

### ***Important Considerations for Security***

You will only be able to transfer folders to which you have access; take note of confidential folders on the shared drive which may become visible if moved. Ensure that access permissions for folders that contain confidential information are retained in the move. Ensure that any individuals moving documents have signed a Confidentiality Agreement.

### ***Important Considerations for Complex Shared Drives***

In some cases, a shared drive may have become too unwieldy and complicated to rename/move folders or documents within the existing shared drive. This may be especially true if a shared drive is used by a large number of people.

In such circumstances, it may be necessary to set up a new shared drive structure on the same system and copy folders and documents from the current structure over to the new one. In this case, it is essential that [Information Technology Services](#) (ITS) are involved from the outset and at all steps in the process. Have technical support staff set up space and access permissions for the new structure and

## *For the Record...*

ensure that enough storage space is allocated to hold the records to be moved. During the designated move time, copy all records that are to be maintained from the existing shared drive and place them into the appropriate folders or sub-folders in the new structure.

Once the changeover is complete, have technical support implement access for all users to the new shared drive structure. Decide on a set period of time, such as three to six months, to leave the previous shared drive in place in a 'read-only' format. Users will be able to retrieve needed records that may have been left behind in the changeover and save them in the appropriate folder in the new structure. When the designated time period has expired, give final notification to all users, and have ITS delete the previous shared drive.

### **Step 5: Staff Training**

Hold an overview or training session with staff after the changeover to make sure all users of the shared drive understand how to file within the new structure, and know who has responsibility for creating new folders and updating the shared drive Folder Classification Plan. Remember to train new staff in the proper use of the shared drive, including naming conventions, and records transfer and destruction.

### **Step 6: Ongoing Maintenance**

Once the new Folder Classification Plan is in place and the appropriate folders and documents renamed and/or moved to the new structure, records should be maintained within that new structure. If it is necessary to add a new top-level folder, make sure to update the Folder Classification Plan to accommodate the new file class. Regularly review folders and documents to determine which to retain and which to delete. Ensure that employees who leave or are separated from the unit share any work-related documents and folders they maintain on the file share with supervisors, who can determine what to retain. Consider making shared drive cleanup and maintenance a part of the unit's overall information management activities.

Remember, before embarking upon a Shared Drive clean-up contact [IM&P](#) for assistance.