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Information Quality Guidelines

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Information Quality Guidelines

NARA provides information to the public about archival records programs and services, NARA organization and management activities of the Federal Government through the Office of Information Management. Our mission is to ensure ready access to the essential information that documents the rights of American citizens, the actions of Federal officials, and the national experience. Our information products are developed by governments, historians, journalists, professional researchers, educators, and the general public. NARA information products are:

- discover the documentation of the rights of American citizens, the actions of Federal officials and agencies, and the national experience;
- learn about programs and services provided by NARA;
- determine NARA's organization, achievements, activities, and products; and
- find information on Federal agency rules, regulations, rules, and notices.

Quality standards will be established and met at levels appropriate to the nature and timeliness of the information to be disseminated. The quality standards that NARA adopts in a particular case will be determined by the category of information being disseminated.

We develop the information that we disseminate from reliable sources using generally accepted methods for data collection, archival processing, and editorial preparation. We thoroughly review information before we disseminate it. The guidelines describe procedures that we use to ensure the quality of our information products, including their utility and integrity.

Influential Information

Under OMB's guidelines, "influential scientific, financial, or information" means that the agency can reasonably determine dissemination of the information will have or does have a substantial impact on important public policies or important decisions.

There is an added level of scrutiny afforded to influential information to include the need to ensure that it is reproducible.

While the information in NARA's archival holdings, records, the Office of the Federal Register's legal publications--which from these guidelines--could be influential, NARA does not disseminate influential information in our own information products.

Information Utility

Utility involves the usefulness of the information to its intended audience. Utility is achieved by staying informed of information needs, developing new information products, and revising and updating information products when appropriate.

Through internal analyses of information requirements, the committees, and outreach activities, NARA keeps abreast of current information needs.

Based on internal product reviews, consultation with users, and response to changing needs and emphases, we enhance existing information products, introduce new products, and develop others. When new information products are proposed, they are reviewed and evaluated by qualified staff. We regularly revise information products to ensure that they remain relevant to current information needs.

Where appropriate, we provide contact information on each product to allow you to submit feedback and questions. In addition, we have an online [Contact NARA form](#) accessible from the bottom of the NARA web site. We also provide NA Form 14045 "How to Contact NARA Services?" in our facilities nationwide. All of these methods allow you to submit input that helps us to improve information products.

Our information products are disseminated in the format or medium that will make the information most useful and accessible for you. We also ensure compliance with the President's June 1, 1998 Memorandum on Plain Language in Government Writing and the NARA Style Guide to ensure that they will be useful to you.

Information Objectivity

Objectivity involves a focus on ensuring accurate, reliable, and unbiased information. Objectivity is achieved:

- as a matter of presentation, by ensuring that information is presented in an accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased manner; and
- as a matter of substance, by using reliable sources, analytical and editorial techniques, and by having qualified staff review information.

prepare information products that are carefully reviewed.

- *Use of reliable sources*

Much of the information that we disseminate describes archival records of the Federal Government. We describe archival records, give context to them, and identify their location in NARA's facilities. Our staff conduct ongoing reviews of these information products and the archival records that they refer to in order to ensure their accuracy and completeness.

We base other information about our program organization, and management on data produced by the responsible NARA unit. Information that we disseminate about a program, service, or product is derived from the data produced by the NARA unit with administrative responsibility for that program, service, or product.

NARA management and administrative data are reported in the Performance Measurement Reporting System (PMRS). The PMRS measures our programs in delivering goods and services to our customers. The PMRS is the official source for statistical information about our programs reported by different NARA units, and only the data originally entered into the system change. Our Quality Management regularly checks the data for quality. The Office of the Inspector General on a routine basis audits the data and processes. Staff producing information products based on this data are knowledgeable about the strengths and limitations of this data and maintain a working relationship with the staff who create, update, and submit the data.

- *Preparation of information products*

We base the information contained in NARA information products on data derived from reliable sources. Our staff are knowledgeable about the data sources that we use and we apply sound archival, analytical, or statistical methods when needed, depending on the data being analyzed.

We prepare information about archival records using standard techniques for description of the different types of archival materials. Archival description is used to describe the organization, content, context, and location of archival materials. We make an effort not to introduce subjectivity into our descriptions of archival records and we leave analysis of the records to the researcher.

Qualified staff review our information products to ensure that the information and any analysis are valid, complete, unbiased, objective, and relevant. Subject matter experts outside of the originating unit may also review our information products that are considered to be particularly complex, to provide additional perspective and ensure accuracy.

We identify the data sources that were used to produce our information products, where appropriate.

- *Editorial review for accuracy and clarity of inf publications*

We edit and proofread our information produ release to ensure clarity and coherence of th We edit text to ensure that the product is eas grammatically correct, thoughts flow logically information is worded concisely and clearly. \ and charts to ensure that they clearly and ac illustrate and support points made in the text, short but descriptive titles. Appropriate NARA and approve changes made to a product duri process.

- *Policy for correcting errors*

If we detect an error before information is dis correct the error or include a correction notice If information has already been disseminated include a notice of the correction with subsequ of the information. The NARA unit that origin information product on the web site tracks an correction to it. When appropriate, we post cc on our web site as well as posting the correct

Information Integrity

Integrity refers to the security of information from unauthor revision to ensure that information is not compromised thro or falsification.

To ensure the integrity of our information, we are impleme that have been identified as representing sound security pr required by the Government Information Security Act (Pub Title X, Subtitle G), with the goal of providing coverage to a components of information security.

NARA is subject to statutory requirements to protect the in we gather and maintain. These requirements are containe following documents:

- [Privacy Act of 1974](#);
- [Computer Security Act of 1987](#);
- Office of Management and Budget Circulars [A-123](#), [130](#);
- Government Information Security Reform Act; and
- [Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act \(FMFIA\)](#) o

Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 requires age

the development of new collections of information from the the extension of ongoing collections.

Agencies must submit proposals for such collections to OMB approves or rejects the proposal for the collection of information public. Agencies are required to demonstrate the practical proposed collection of information in their PRA submission information collections designed to gather information that plans to disseminate.

NARA will demonstrate in our Paperwork Reduction Act clearance packages that each draft information collection will result in that will be collected, maintained, and used in a way consistent OMB and NARA information quality guidelines.