
**Information and documentation —
Trusted third party repository for
digital records**

*Information et documentation — Référentiel tiers de confiance pour
les documents d'activité électroniques*

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Foreword

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For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 11, *Archives/records management*.

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Introduction

As digital records are the inevitable by-products of various business activities in digital systems, there is an increasing need to secure the authenticity and legal admissibility of digital records during their period of retention. It is internationally agreed that "digital records shall not be denied validity or enforceability of legal recognition by reason of their format alone"¹⁾. Despite this, it is very difficult for an organization to assert that its digital records are authentic and able to act as effective evidence of business action over a long period. In many cases, legal admissibility of digital records managed by organizations' records systems is not ensured. As a result, there is a growing need for services safeguarding these characteristics for digital records by neutral third parties.

In order to protect digital records from business disputes during the period they are required for sustaining legal obligation and ongoing retention, it is essential to ensure that the authenticity, reliability and integrity of digital records endures.

Digital signatures are a well-known means to ascertain if digital records have been tampered with. However, as a digital signature only safeguards integrity within its validity time (generally one to two years or less), most digitally signed records do not ensure their integrity for longer than this validity time. It may thus be very difficult for an individual record system to prove the integrity of their digital records for the period of retention obligation, where this is longer than the validity period of the digital signature.

A possible solution is provided by a Trusted Third Party Repository (TTPR). A TTPR is defined as a third party's qualified retention service that ensure that digital records, entrusted to it by a client, remain and are asserted to be reliable and authentic, with the aim of providing reliable access to managed digital records to its clients for the period of obligation for retention. A TTPR for digital records provides trustworthy services for clients, which should be examined by interested parties (i.e. inspector, auditor, evaluator). These TTPR services are helpful to identify the evidence admissibility of clients' digital records as a source of evidence.

[Clause 4](#) provides an overview of a TTPR including rationale for the criteria and the mechanism of trustworthiness and characteristics and components of TTPR.

[Clause 5](#) specifies the services to be provided by a TTPR for the clients' digital records during the retention period. [Clause 5](#) specifies the technological requirements of hardware and software systems and [Clause 6](#) provides the operational processes requirements.

1) Article 8, Chapter 3, UNCITRAL 2007, United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communication in International Contracts.