Electronic Records Modules

Electronic Records Committee

Congressional Papers Roundtable

Society of American Archivists

Redaction on Demand

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Redaction on Demand

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Overview and Rationale

Manually redacting sensitive information like social security numbers is a very time-consuming process. To make the best use of staff time, most redaction will only be performed if a researcher requests access to the files. The finding aid tracks which files require redaction and redaction is completed within 3 business days of a request. Items with anticipated high-use are still redacted during processing.

This entire procedure is done to the access copies only. The preservation masters are maintained in their original state and are not redacted.

Procedural Assumptions

Access copies are prepared during processing and stored separately from the preservation masters. The access copies are stored in a file directory system that the archivist can edit (i.e. can rename folders).

Access to electronic records is mediated by an archivist who will see that the files need redaction before a researcher is able to access them.

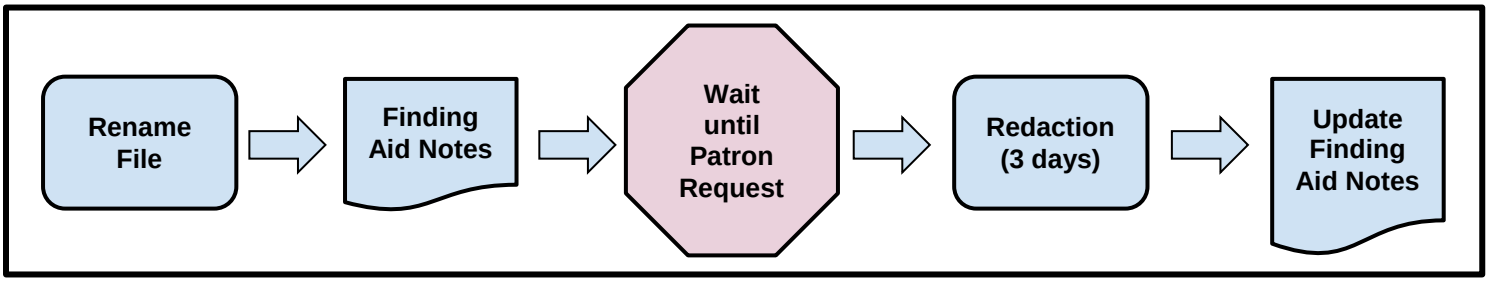
The files are in a format where the archivist has the software to delete the text to be redacted.

The archives does not have the capability of automating the redaction process.

Hardware and Software Requirements

There are no specialized hardware or software requirements.

Workflow Overview



Workflow During Initial Processing

1. Folders that contain files that need to be redacted are renamed to add "REDACTION_REQUIRED_" to the beginning of the folder title. Example:

   REDACTION_REQUIRED_rbrl-275-er-000001_Correspondence

2. In the finding aid, add this access restriction note to each folder requiring redaction:

   This folder must be reviewed for {*insert description of restricted material*} prior to research use. Please request this folder 3 business days prior to requiring access to the files to allow time for this review.

3. In the finding aid, add this access restriction note at the collection, series, and subseries level:

   Some digital files in this {*collection/series/subseries*} must be reviewed for {*insert description of restricted material*} prior to research use. These files are identified with an access note after the folder title. Please request these folders 3 business days prior to requiring access to the files to allow time for this review.

Workflow when Files are Requested

1. When a researcher requests a folder requiring redaction, the folder title and the access note in the finding aid alert the archivist that redaction is required.

2. Redact the access copy of the files within 3 business days by deleting the information that needs to be redacted. DO NOT alter the preservation copy. If the file format permits, replace the redacted text with:

   [*explanation of information* redacted] - highlight the note in light grey

3. Rename the file by adding "_REDACTED" to the end of the file title. Delete the unredacted version of the file from the access copies.

4. Make the files available to the researcher.

5. Remove the access restriction note for that folder from the finding aid and replace it with a processing note explaining what information has been redacted.

6. If that is the last folder in the subseries, series, and/or collection that required redaction, remove the access restriction notes from those levels as well.

Examples

Finding aid access restrictions note that redaction is required

Digital_Records

ER 34 GA Data [digital files], 2001

This folder must be reviewed for voter names prior to research use. Please request this folder 3 business days prior to requiring access to the files to allow time for this review.

Political [digital files], 1996-2002

View an inventory of this folder online.

This folder must be reviewed for voter names prior to research use. Please request this folder 3 business days prior to requiring access to the files to allow time for this review.

Finding aid processing information note that redaction has been performed

Digital_Records

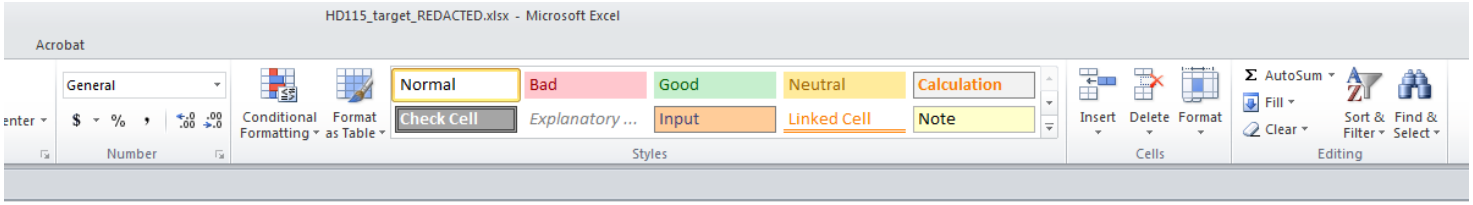
ER 3 Voter Files [electronic files], 2006

Description: Mailing lists and statistics about prospective voters.

Some files are in a format that is not currently supported by the library for research use.

Processing Information Note: Records of how individuals voted have been redacted from these files.

Redacted spreadsheet (HD155_target_REDACTED.xlsx)



BJ	BK	BL	BM	BN	BO	BP	BQ	BR	BS	BT	BU
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0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]							
0	0	[redacted]				[redacted]					
0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]							
0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]		[redacted]					
0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]					
0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]					
0	0	[redacted]									
0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]			[redacted]	[redacted]
0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]				[redacted]
0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]					
		[redacted]	[redacted]								
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0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]		[redacted]					
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0	0	[redacted]				[redacted]					
0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]			[redacted]		
0	0	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]			[redacted]		