

## Digital Media

### Key Issues to Consider

Now that you are familiar with some of the basic concepts and options of digital storage media, you can use the questions below to discuss how those concepts relate to your agency.

Pay special attention to the questions posed by the legal framework, including the required records retention periods. Examine your current and future records series. Some records series may require large storage capacities, may need to be retained for a long time, or may be frequently accessed by the public, other agencies, or other groups. Prioritizing your needs in light of the legal requirements will help you narrow your discussion and focus your research.

The point is to determine the best option for your agency that meets your legal and operational needs, not merely to automatically upgrade technology. For example, if you are currently using magnetic tape, you may discover that magnetic tape remains your best choice.

### Discussion Questions

- What types of records do we need to store (e.g., graphics, text, database text)? What file formats? How large are our record files?
- Which performance issues are most important in our situation?
- How long do we need to retain the records?
- How often will we need to access the records?
- Will all records or specific records series be frequently accessed by the public or other groups?
- How well do our current media meet our needs? What costs would be incurred for supplies, equipment, and training that would be required if we were to switch to or add a new storage medium?
- Are any of the media we are considering expected to become obsolete in the near future? Will the medium, as well as the necessary hardware and software, still be available from a number of suppliers for as long as we need? Has the developer defined a migration path for improved versions of the medium?