

What is an Information Asset Register?

An Information Asset Register (IAR) is a mechanism for understanding and managing an organisation's assets and the risks to them. You should include the links between the information assets, their business requirements and technical dependencies.

Once you have defined your information assets and your organisation's usability requirements for those assets, you then need to map these to your technical dependencies. Your organisation may already have IAR or other asset list which contains some of this information, in which case you can adapt this for your purposes. If not, you can use our IAR template to create one, see our website:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/digitalcontinuity

What should an IAR look like?

Your IAR should be structured so that it is easy to see what information is affected by changes to your business requirements or your technical environment.

In addition to details of how each asset supports your business, there are a number of useful fields which can be recorded for each asset. See the next page for example fields.

Identify owners of the information asset

Each asset should have an owner who is responsible for making sure the asset is meeting its requirements (the IAO), and that risks and opportunities are monitored. The owner need not be the creator, or even the primary user of the asset, but they must have a good understanding of what the business needs from the asset, and what the asset needs to be able to fulfil those requirements.

Maintaining and updating the IAR

To sustain the usefulness of the IAR, it is vital to maintain and update it. You should define a permanent owner of the IAR itself (as opposed to information assets described within it) and a maintenance schedule.

IARs in procurement and contracts

An IAR can be useful in procurements and contracting for new ICT services. It can establish what information is covered by the service and clarify roles and responsibilities for maintaining the usability of the information assets. You can also ensure that a contractor assesses the impact of any change on the information assets.

For more information on this, please see the *Digital Continuity in ICT Services Procurement and Contract Management* guidance.

Examples of what to capture in an Information Asset Register	
Description	Brief description of what the asset is More detail on what the components of the asset are
Users	Who created the asset, or where does the asset come from? Who is the Information Asset Owner? Which department holds responsibility for the asset? Who are the stakeholders?
Date	Creation date Date closed (for closed assets) Last date asset register was reviewed/updated
Asset status	Is this asset being actively updated? Has the asset been closed?
Purpose	What part of the business does this asset support? Business risks from or to the asset
Value	What is the value to the business?

	What would be the cost of replacing the information?
Retention schedule	How long should it be kept in immediate access? What should happen to it when it no longer needs immediate access? What are the disposal requirements?
How you need to use your asset	How will you find the information? Who can access the information and how? What do you need to be able to do with the information? What do you need to be able to understand about your information? To what extent do you need to prove your information is what it claims to be?
Risk	What are the risks to the asset? What are the risks to the business from the asset (for example from its loss, corruption or inappropriate access)?