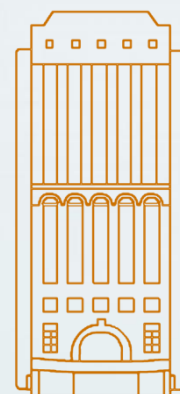


ANNUAL REPORT 2015



Government Records Service

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region



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A faint, sepia-toned map of Hong Kong serves as the background. It shows the New Territories, Kowloon, and the island of Hong Kong. The word 'HONG KONG' is printed in large, spaced-out capital letters across the bottom. Chinese characters are visible, including '香港' (Hong Kong) and '新界' (New Territories).

*Message from
Government Records Service
Director*

Message from Government Records Service Director

I am pleased to present to you the Annual Report of Government Records Service (GRS) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) for 2015, the second in this series.

2015 was a year full of accomplishments for GRS. With the Vision, Mission and Values (VMV) statement officially launched in February, GRS staff as a team embarked on their journey towards excellence in the direction as set out in the VMV.

Besides clearing the backlog of appraisal and accessions as scheduled, we acquired more archival records from different government bureaux and departments (B/Ds), public organisations and The National Archives of the United Kingdom. To arouse the awareness of the public to make good use of Hong Kong's documentary heritage, we enhanced our publicity programme, which included a new thematic exhibition "Under the Same Roof: Resettlement in the 1950s of Hong Kong" (which is open till end of November 2016) and three roving exhibitions in various venues. We also improved our website so as to promote our archival collection. At the same time, we have been making steady efforts to digitise our holdings and scan microfilms of our collection in order to further facilitate public access to these archival records.

As the central agency to administer government records, we formulate and implement policies and plans for records management and archives administration, assisting B/Ds to incorporate proper records creation and collection practices into daily work through the establishment of business rules for capturing records. Entering the digital era, we have further enhanced the functionalities of our electronic recordkeeping system (ERKS) to manage records at confidential level, proving ERKS' capability in managing classified records through electronic means and paving the way for its further implementation in the Government.

2015 was also a fruitful year in our engagement with public organisations and overseas bodies. We extended our invitation to some 70 public organisations with a view to encouraging them to adopt the records management standards and requirements of the Government and to donate records with archival values to our Public Records Office for permanent preservation. At the same time, we received overseas delegations and shared with them the records management framework in Hong Kong. To renew our acquaintance with the international archives community, we participated in the 12th General Conference and Seminar of the East Asian Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives held in Fukuoka, Japan.

The study by the Law Reform Commission on the need to introduce an archives law in Hong Kong is underway. We have been actively participating in the study and will continue to render assistance and support as necessary.

I hope through this report, you will understand more about the different aspects of the Government's records management work as well as GRS' archival collection. Happy reading!

Zachary Lo
Government Records Service Director



Who We Are

About Government Records Service

GRS plays a key role in the management of recorded information for the Government of the HKSAR. It is an office under the Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office headed by the Director of Administration.

Since its inception in 1989 (formerly known as GRS Division before reorganisation in February 2003), GRS has been responsible for preserving Government archives, formulation, administration and monitoring of Government records management policy and requirements, reviewing records management practices, provision of advice on records management and off-site records centre services. It develops a recordkeeping programme that enables B/Ds to manage information resources appropriate to their purposes.



The logo of GRS shows the bauhinia, the floral emblem of Hong Kong, on the folder icon, representing the preservation of the collective memory of our city.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

- To be the leading, most insightful and resourceful public archives in Hong Kong that excels in preserving and promoting the documentary heritage of our city in the digital era.

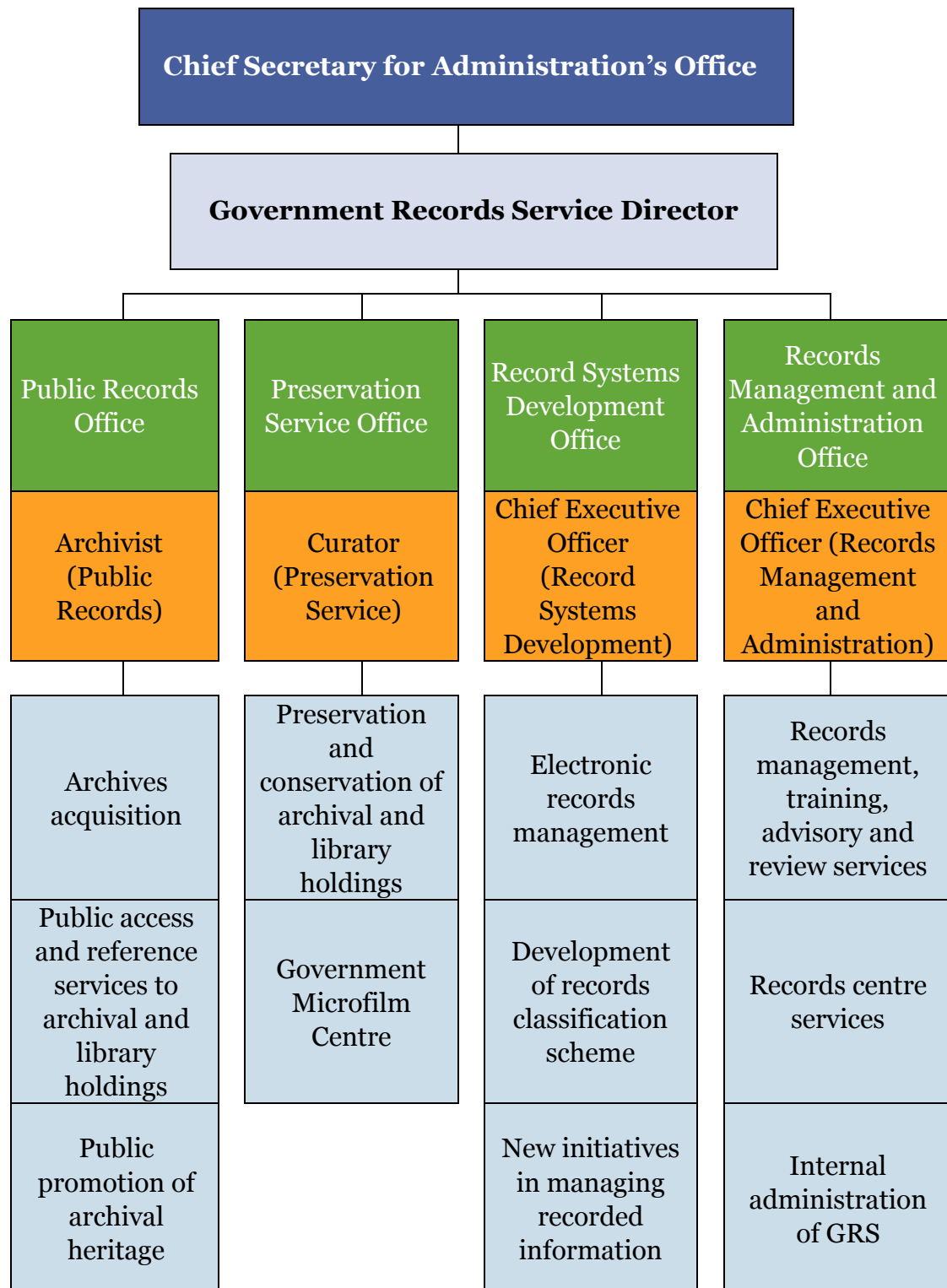
Our Mission

- To build comprehensive and diversified archival collections;
- To provide user-friendly and convenient access to the archival collections;
- To build a digital archive with modern technologies;
- To promote good records management practices among government bureaux and departments and public organisations;
- To provide advanced facilities for storage, preservation and retrieval services;
- To promote awareness, appreciation and proper use of documentary heritage in our community; and
- To foster a closer partnership with other archives.

Our Values

G reen	Go Green! Be environmentally conscious through developing and promoting electronic records management in the Government and public organisations.
R eliability	Create and preserve reliable records to support evidence-based decisions and to promote the documentary heritage of Hong Kong.
E fficiency	Be efficient in all aspects of records management.
A ccessibility	Enhance public access to our archival collections.
T ransparency	Be transparent – making our Government more open and accountable through good records management practices.

Our Organisational Structure



Government Records Service Director

The GRS Director is the head of GRS, who oversees and directs the operation of GRS. GRS consists of four offices, namely the Public Records Office (PRO), Preservation Service Office (PSO), Record Systems Development Office (RSDO) and Records Management and Administration Office (RMAO).



Public Records Office

PRO serves as the central archives for the permanent archives of the Government of the HKSAR. It acquires and provides public access to Hong Kong's archives. It offers a rich heritage resource consisting of documents, photographs, movies, posters and other records tracing the governance and evolution of Hong Kong. Archival holdings are available for viewing under the appropriate conditions for protecting the records.

PRO performs the following key archival functions:

- appraisal and accessioning;
- arrangement and description;
- public programming; and
- reference services.

PRO appraises government records to assess their archival value, selecting those that should be transferred to PRO for permanent preservation. PRO then arranges and describes those archival records, and prepares inventories, finding aids, guides and indexes to help users identify materials relevant to their research interests. To enhance accountability, PRO has implemented consistent procedures for the appraisal, transfer, arrangement and description of archival records. It provides reference services in the Hong Kong Public Records Building (HKPRB). It also provides information of its holdings through the Integrated Information Access System and other resources available on the GRS website.



PRO organises exhibitions, seminars, workshops, visits and other educational activities. PRO has also developed a webpage, as well as an Educational Resources Portal on the internet promoting the use of archival records in studying and learning for the New Senior Secondary Curriculum. PRO also organises school presentations and other public events throughout the year.

PRO also manages the Central Preservation Library for Government Publications (CPL) which contains selected government publications, reports and printed materials on Hong Kong as part of its work to preserve local documentary heritage.

Preservation Service Office

PSO provides services to support the preservation and conservation of archival materials, including photography, microfilming, bookbinding, environmental monitoring and control and treatment, repair and restoration of fragile and damaged materials.

PSO is responsible for ensuring the security and stability of the environment in which records and archives held by GRS are housed and for managing GRS' physical facilities, including storage and public areas within all the buildings used by GRS. PSO carries out repairs to facilities, monitors environmental conditions and provides assessments on the needs and options for space and facilities.



PSO also operates the Government Microfilm Centre (GMC), which is responsible for carrying out microfilming work for the Government, as well as supporting microfilm requirements for government archives.

Furthermore, PSO oversees the digitisation of archives, once selections have been made by PRO. This work also includes overseeing the outsourcing of digitisation tasks to contracting companies as appropriate and monitoring the work performed to ensure quality is kept at an appropriate level.

PSO sets up exhibits in the gallery of HKPRB for GRS' annual thematic exhibition. After PRO has selected the subject and mapped out the story line and text to be displayed, PSO chooses from a shortlist of possible exhibit items to design the layout of the exhibition, and then mounts the exhibits.

Record Systems Development Office

As stipulated in the Government's Electronic Information Management (EIM) Strategy promulgated by the Office of Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) in May 2011, B/Ds should take forward Electronic Records Management (ERM) as an integral part of the EIM initiative and adopt an ERKS to drive ERM in the Government.

RSDO is responsible for developing electronic records management standards, best practices and guidelines for government-wide implementation of ERM and ERKS, and providing support and assistance to B/Ds to develop or adopt an ERKS.

ERM refers to the application of records management principles to manage records by using electronic systems, notably an ERKS. ERKS is a computer system for records management. It is capable of collecting, organising, classifying, and controlling the creation, storage, retrieval, distribution, maintenance and use, disposal and preservation of both electronic and non-electronic records. It supports records managers, records management staff and records users to perform day-to-day records management functions in an efficient and effective manner.

RSDO plays an important role in promoting ERM across the Government and providing essential ERM training for B/Ds in taking forward ERM and ERKS.

RSDO also participates in the Government's EIM Steering Group meetings, providing advice on proper management of electronic records, developing and promoting e-government initiatives.



To enhance compliance with best practices in records management, RSDO is responsible for co-ordinating the reviewing and updating of GRS' records management publications. Besides, RSDO also provides advice to B/Ds on records management issues related to vital records management.

Records Management and Administration Office

RMAO develops a comprehensive system to manage records and oversees its effective and efficient implementation in the Government. It provides training, advisory, review and records centre services to B/Ds, as well as administration services to all GRS offices.

The Training and Consultancy Unit provides training and advisory services to B/Ds to support their effective management of government records and application of related policies, guidelines and procedures.



The functions of the Training and Consultancy Unit are to:

- plan, develop and organise regular training courses to assist different levels of personnel to perform their records management responsibilities more effectively and efficiently;
- organise records management training courses or seminars for B/Ds and public organisations on a need basis with a view to promoting good records management practices; and
- conduct studies and provide advice and recommendations on records management to B/Ds and render assistance to them in implementing the recommendations.

The Records Management Review Unit is responsible for reviewing the records management practices of B/Ds. These reviews aim to assess B/Ds' compliance with the mandatory records management requirements and adoption of good practices, and identify areas for improvement.



The Records Centre Service Unit facilitates B/Ds to dispose of their time-expired records and provides intermediate storage facilities for B/Ds' inactive records to achieve cost-effectiveness.

Specifically, the functions of the Records Centre Service Unit are to:

- authorise records retention and disposal schedules¹ for government records after consulting other offices in GRS;
- approve disposal of government records, in consultation with other offices of GRS where necessary; and
- provide centralised intermediate storage for inactive government records.

The Administration Service Unit advises and collaborates with all offices in GRS to provide effective administrative service in respect of:

- human resources management;
- financial management;
- procurement activities;
- administration of a Local Area Network; and
- accommodation and building management.



¹ **Records Retention and Disposal Schedule**, also known as records disposal schedule, is a systematic listing or description of an organisation's records, setting out the arrangements to be made for their custody, retention and final disposition. Such schedules of government B/Ds should be drawn up with the authorisation of GRS Director.

Our Staff

As at 31 December 2015, GRS had a total of 102 staff members. They are from different civil service grades, working together for the betterment of records and archives management in the Government.



Archivist Grade

- 1 Archivist
- 5 Senior Assistant Archivists
- 10 Assistant Archivists

All Archivist grade officers have obtained master degrees in history, archives and records management, library science or political science, etc. The Senior Assistant Archivists or above have also obtained a postgraduate diploma in archives and records management and received ongoing professional training in related subjects. The newly recruited Assistant Archivists are provided with in-house training and are required to pass a proficiency test involving written and practical exercises after one year's service. Upon passing the test, they are required to take a postgraduate programme on archives and records management.

Curator Grade

- 1 Curator
- 2 Assistant Curators II

Officers of the Curator grade, which is under the management of the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (DLCS), are mainly deployed on four different streams, namely Art, Conservation, History and Science. Officers deployed to GRS come from the Conservation Stream, participating in work relating to handling, identification, examination and conservation of archival and library collections and loan exhibits; environmental monitoring and control programmes in archival repositories and display venues as well as the rendering of preventive measures for the preservation of collection items.

Executive Officer Grade

- 1 Principal Executive Officer
- 2 Chief Executive Officers
- 7 Senior Executive Officers
- 5 Executive Officers I
- 5 Executive Officers II

Executive Officers are professional managers who specialise in office administration, personnel, systems and resource management. Among their great variety of duties are records management and the supervision of the operation of filing registries in B/Ds. By the depth of administration experience and breadth of knowledge gathered from postings among different B/Ds, Executive Officers form a versatile cadre in performing various duties relating to records management.

Librarian Grade

- 2 Librarians

Librarians, with their professional knowledge in library studies, are mainly responsible for library services. The Librarian grade is a grade under the management of the DLCS.

Clerical and Other Grades

- 61 staff members

They include Senior Clerical Officers, Clerical Officers, Assistant Clerical Officers, Clerical Assistants, Personal Secretary II, Senior Photographer, Photographers I, Photographers II, Photographic Technicians I and Workmen II.

Our Facilities

HKPRB at 13 Tsui Ping Road, Kwun Tong, Kowloon was opened in 1997. It is a purpose-built archival facility providing permanent and suitable environment for preservation of the archival and library holdings. In addition to the archival repositories, HKPRB also houses conservation laboratories, advanced digital imaging equipment, microfilmers and associated film processing facilities, providing preservation support to the archival and library holdings.



Archival and Library Repositories

The climatic condition of all archival and library repositories are carefully monitored by a 24-hour real-time climatic data-logging system. The air-conditioning system is adjusted according to the climatic data recorded against the set values of temperature and relative humidity. All the light sources in the repositories are ultraviolet light free so as to minimise the damage from light.

As pests are the common problem in the preservation of archival materials, an integrated pest management programme is implemented in HKPRB. All incoming records from outside HKPRB are inspected for possible signs of pest infestation.



If suspicious items are found, fumigation treatment will be conducted to eradicate the pests immediately. Pest activities within HKPRB are monitored by means of insect traps and baits.

To address the risk of fire in repositories, FM200 systems are installed which can suppress fire when released in the air, thus avoiding water damage to the archives caused by traditional sprinkler systems.



Climatic control devices



Pest control equipment



FM 200 Fire Suppression System in all repositories

Search Room



We welcome visitors to our Search Room to consult our archival records and library materials. This room is designed to provide a suitable environment for the users to conduct research into the archival collections kept by GRS. It is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

Facilities for Public service	Quantity
Seating capacity	30
Personal computer with catalogues	7
Personal computer connected to internet	1
Photocopying machine	1
Audio-visual player	2
Microfilm reader	6
Microfilm hard copy printer	2
Free WiFi connection	-

Exhibition Hall

Each year, PRO organises a thematic exhibition to introduce its valuable holdings in the Exhibition Hall of HKPRB. In December 2015, the Exhibition “Under the Same Roof: Resettlement in the 1950s of Hong Kong” was launched, together with a thematic webpage.



Lecture Room

A Lecture Room with a total capacity of 40 seats is available in HKPRB for holding records management training events or educational workshops. Every Friday, it is converted to a Video Room open to the public for viewing the thematic film show “Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s”, which comprises footage transferred from Information Services Department.



Preservation Laboratory

The Preservation Laboratory is responsible for preservation and conservation of archival materials including photography, microfilming, bookbinding, and the work to conserve and preserve fragile and damaged materials.

PSO works to retard the deterioration of the archival collections to ensure long-term accessibility. This activity is carried out by using specialised techniques to allow minimal intervention into the original material in accordance with the Ethics for Conservators. Every step is documented for future reference.



Specialist fumehood for protection of staff in cleaning items with mould growth



Digital imaging equipment



Heated spatula and weight
for removing creases

Government Microfilm Centre

GMC is an ISO 9001:2008 (Quality Management System) certified unit of PSO. In addition, GMC has adopted the standards issued by the American National Standards Institute and Association for Information and Image Management (ANSI/AIIM) for production of the highest quality microfilm records. With a sophisticated quality management system and a team of professional photographers, GMC provides customer-driven and quality microfilm services for B/Ds.



Microfilm Processor for processing and
development of films




High-speed Microfilm Scanner



Rotary Microfilmer

Records Centres

The Records Centre Service Unit of the RMAO operates two Records Centres (RCs) which offer centralised and cost-effective intermediate storage service for inactive records, saving B/Ds from using expensive office space and equipment for maintaining such records. The RCs are located in Tuen Mun with a total floor area of 16,300 square metres and has a storage capacity of 124,000 linear metres.

 <p><i>Tuen Mun Records Centre</i></p>	<p>The Records Centre Service Unit is tasked to perform the following functions/activities in relation to intermediate storage service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receive and process transfers of inactive records from B/Ds;• Store, maintain and safeguard the deposited inactive records economically and efficiently;• Provide reference and retrieval services for client B/Ds; and• Arrange disposal of records according to the approved records retention and disposal schedules.	 <p><i>YKK Records Centre</i></p>
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RCs are equipped with various facilities to provide quality storage service to B/Ds, such as a strong room, air-conditioning systems, mobile shelving systems, climatic sensors and dehumidifiers. To maintain a stable environment for storing inactive records, strict climatic control is imposed on RCs. PSO conducts analysis on the climatic data gathered from the sensors regularly. If irregularities are observed, remedial actions will be carried out promptly.

B/Ds may retrieve their inactive records from RCs when needed. Search rooms are provided for such purpose.

Facilities in Records Centres



Mobile shelving system



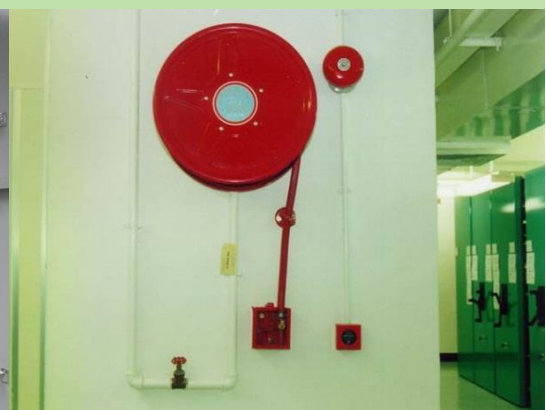
Air-conditioning system



Strong room



Iron window shield



Fire-fighting equipment



What We Do

Performance Pledges and Indicators

GRS' performance pledges and indicators for the calendar year 2015 are as follows:

	Performance Pledge / Indicator	Target	Achievement in 2015
1	To make records and library items available to users in the Search Room within two hours	90%	100%
2	To process within five working days an application for permission to use the holdings of GRS for publication or production, where the copyright of the holdings rests with the Government	95%	100%
3	To process an application for group visit from Hong Kong residents within five working days	100%	100%
4	To acquire archival records (linear metres)	500	808
5	To render reference and research services to the public:		
	• No. of visitors	4,900	5,475
	• No. of enquiries	8,500	10,612
	• No. of visits	25	42
	• Exhibition	1	1
6	To conduct departmental records management studies / reviews	2	2
7	To conduct training for departmental records managers and their assistants on records management (no. of government officers trained)	2,400	2,441
8	To publish records management manuals, handbooks and newsletters	2	2
9	To provide intermediate storage facilities for inactive government records in terms of utilisation rate	95%	94.7%
10	To microfilm records for other government B/Ds (no. of images)	2,700,000	2,792,226

Archival Records

Archival Stock

PRO has around 1,860 Hong Kong Record Series² and 196 Hong Kong Manuscript Series³ in various formats, including files (645,800 nos.), bound volume records (3,800 nos.), maps and plans (6,200 nos.), photographic materials (14,400 nos.), audio-visual materials (2,500 nos.) and microforms (699,000 nos.). They were transferred from over 100 government B/Ds, offices or agencies, public organisations, private institutions and individuals, and accessioned by PRO, adding up to about 18,830 linear metres (1,371,700 nos.).

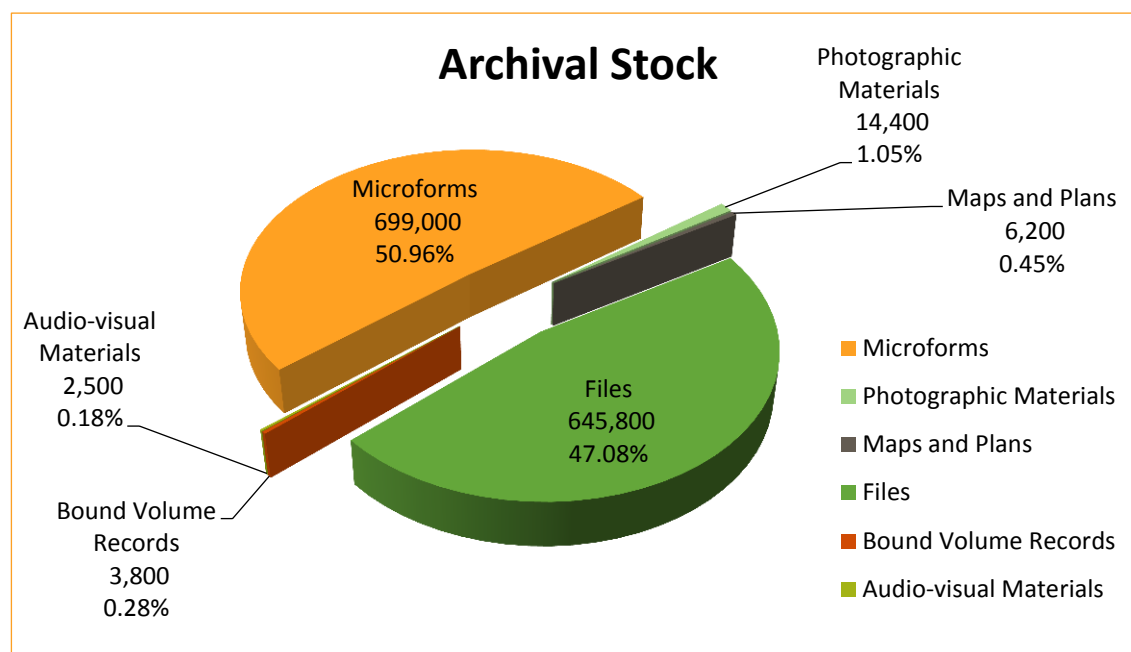
GRS holds archival materials in all media and formats, as summarised below:

- Approximately 18,530 linear metres of government archives from over 100 different government B/Ds, offices or agencies. These government archives include paper files, bound volumes, maps and plans, photographs, films, videotapes, and computer disks, dating from the 1840s to the present day; and
- Over 300 linear metres of non-government records of public organisations, private institutions and individuals associated with the history and development of Hong Kong.

² The Hong Kong Record Series comprises selected government records created or received by Government agencies in the course of their business.

³ The Hong Kong Manuscript Series comprises private records and personal papers donated to the PRO by private organisations and individuals.

The breakdown of GRS' archival stock, including non-government records, by categories is as follows:



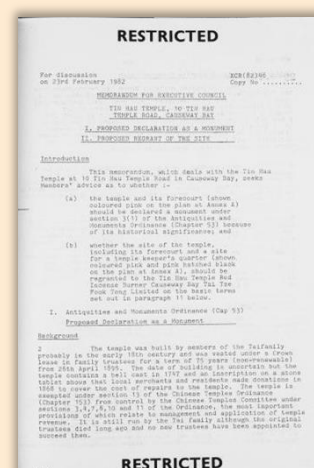
Records Appraisal and Acquisition of Archival Records

GRS appraises government records to determine which records possess archival value and should be permanently retained or otherwise could be destroyed. Since records appraisal is an important process for ascertaining the archival value of government records, GRS places much emphasis on this task. We adopt a set of appraisal guidelines based on the main appraisal theories and the experience of other jurisdictions. Following the guidelines, Archivist grade officers will study carefully the records and ascertain if the records possess archival value for permanent retention by GRS. The records with archival value are transferred to GRS when their retention periods in the government agencies expire according to the relevant records retention and disposal schedules.

In 2015, 808 linear metres of archival records (including 26 linear metres from a public organisation) were transferred to GRS for permanent retention.

Some notable series include:

- Minutes and papers of the Executive Council from the Chief Executive's Office
- Files relating to fisheries, country parks and conservation matters from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
- Files relating to administration of census and statistics services from the Census and Statistics Department
- Files relating to broadcasting management from the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
- Photographs relating to drainage services projects from the Drainage Services Department
- Files relating to school administration from the Education Bureau
- Files relating to the use of government resources, civil service, establishment and pension matters from the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau
- Files relating to hawkers management and Clean Hong Kong Campaign from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
- Files relating to the construction of the Cross Harbour Tunnel and the Airport Tunnel Road from the Highways Department
- Files relating to promotion and funding of the arts from the Home Affairs Bureau
- Files relating to district administration from the Home Affairs Department
- Files relating to planning, development and management of public housing from the Housing Department
- Files relating to Town Planning Board from the Planning Department
- Files relating to international mail service and stamp issuance from the Hong Kong Post

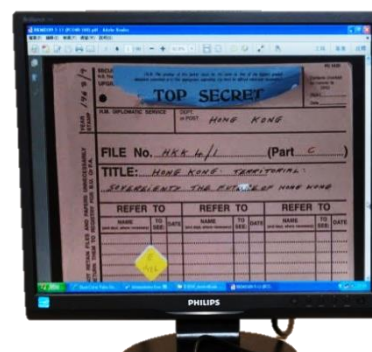


- Documentary TV programmes (e.g. Hong Kong Connection (鏗鏘集), etc.) from the Radio Television Hong Kong
- Files relating to rating, government rent and valuation matters for properties from the Rating and Valuation Department
- Files relating to Vietnamese refugees from the Security Bureau



Moreover, in 2015, GRS also procured digital copy of 43 archival records relating to Hong Kong from The National Archives of the United Kingdom. These records are mainly related to the following subjects:

- Relations between Hong Kong and China
- Future of Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Garrison
- Hong Kong's defence contribution



They have been available for public viewing since the third quarter of 2015.

Access to Records

Number of Records Open to Public Access

Access to archival records kept by GRS is managed through the Public Records (Access) Rules 1996 (see **Annex**). In general, the public are allowed access to archival records which have been in existence for not less than 30 years or the contents of which have at any time been published.

In 2015, a total of 23,102 archival records were newly opened. As a result, the number of total archival records open for public access has reached 749,968.

Among the archival records newly released in 2015, there are a wide variety of records dating from 1950s to 1980s, covering the following subject matters:

Land development policy

These records were about the Land Development Policy Committee which was chaired by the then Chief Secretary, attended by other Branch Secretaries and the Director of Lands, discussing about policies and procedures in relation to planning, land, and buildings matters, territorial development strategy, such as application of the land use for transportation, tertiary education, key infrastructure projects, port development strategy, district development with observations on job balance, job self-containment, industrial and worker mobility, survey on localised employment, etc. The records also include various reports on district development, harbour reclamations and urban growth study, Investigations Reports on North Lantau Development, rezoning the industrial land, and planning standards and guidelines.

Library Information Files

The Hong Kong Government Office in London gathered and accumulated a large quantity of information generated by news media such as newspapers, magazines and the Information Services Department in a series of library information files. These records are predominantly in the format of press cuttings, excerpts of printed materials or official announcements, parliamentary speeches or media releases. They cover a variety of social issues of local or international subjects relevant to government policy formulation and public administration, such as the Future of Hong Kong, White Paper on the British Nationality Order 1986, British National Overseas Passports, Kowloon-Canton Railway, floods in the New Territories, Vietnamese refugees, etc.

Electronic Road Pricing

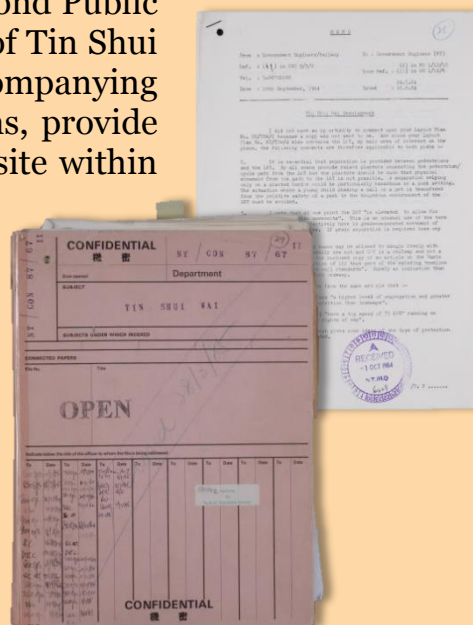
Electronic road pricing (ERP) was an electronic toll collection scheme first proposed in 1983 to manage traffic by congestion pricing, followed by the electronic road pricing pilot scheme in July 1983. The scheme was completed in mid-1985. The pilot-stage project has been demonstrated as technically viable, administratively feasible and of significant potential benefit in helping to deal with Hong Kong's heavily congested urban road network. However, public opposition against Hong Kong ERP stalled its permanent implementation. A record between 1983 and 1985 on this issue was opened recently. This record contained the consultation document on the ERP pilot scheme and discussion at the District Boards.

Public Housing

These records were about public housing, squatter areas and the housing project of Chi Lok Fa Yuen under the Private Sector Participation Scheme. The subject areas include review and consultation on housing subsidy to public housing tenants, policies on public housing allocation, rent increases for public housing, rehousing of fire victims and improvements to squatter areas.

New Town Development

These records were about the New Territories development concerning the planning of Sha Tin, Tai Po South, Tin Shui Wai and Sha Tau Kok. The subjects cover village improvement at Sha Tin, rural public housing at Sha Tau Kok and layout plans for Tin Shui Wai development, such as the Ping Shan North Edge Area, Ha Tsuen Edge Area, Kiu Tau Wai Industrial Area, Western Public Housing Estate and the second Public Housing Area located on the western edge of Tin Shui Wai. The layout plans, with the accompanying explanatory statements and landscape plans, provide details of the proposed land uses for each site within the layout area including schools and community facilities. The said records also include the operational order of Yuen Long Police Station regarding the clearance of Crown Land in the Tin Shui Wai development, various reports on population breakdown, environmental impact assessment, car parking spaces for residential and commercial developments, land formation and drainage options.



Parking Meters Policy

This record was about the proposed parking meter programme for the provision of parking spaces in various locations in Kowloon City District, such as Lion Rock Road, Nga Tsin Long Road, Hau Wong Road and Fuk Lo Tsun Road, to improve parking facilities and to prevent re-occupation of the roads concerned by illegal parking and/or illegal hawking activities. The programme included resurfacing of Lion Rock Road, installation of parking meters and clearance of illegal hawkers in the vicinity of the Kowloon City old and new markets.

Industry and economic development

These records relate to the oyster industry, the Working Group to Monitor the Property Market and the Working Group on Developments in the Economy, etc. They touch on various topics such as the oyster industry in Deep Bay and oyster contamination issues, assessment on the state of property market between 1982 and 1985, analysis of 1985 economic prospects, and economic assessment of labour legislation enacted from 1978 to 1984.

Films

This series of television programme, named Weekly Magazine (識析相關), comprised 179 different topics of 16 mm reel films which were produced by Radio Television Hong Kong from 1985 to 1986. The subjects cover:

- setting up of the District Administration Scheme
- establishment of District Boards
- environment of Kowloon Walled City
- neighbourhood cooperation scheme initiated by the Police
- death of TV Star – Miss YUNG Mei Ling
- next generation of Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong
- living environment of camps for Vietnamese refugees
- publicity of the Basic Law
- attack of District Board member – Mr. Ng Ming-yam
- Mr. Charming Contest in Hong Kong
- illegal immigrants from China
- crimes committed by new immigrants
- tutorial classes for new immigrants
- global influence of Confucianism
- discussion on setting up of red-light zone
- present and future development for property speculation in Hong Kong
- influence of pornographic publications to youngsters
- discussion on the impact of functional constituencies in election of the Legislative Council
- images and photographs of typhoons
- opening of the market in China for musical concerts of hit songs
- shoplifting
- wife abuse
- electronic road pricing system
- summer jobs
- policy for hawkers
- child adoption
- homes for the elderly
- rich tenants in public housing estates, etc.

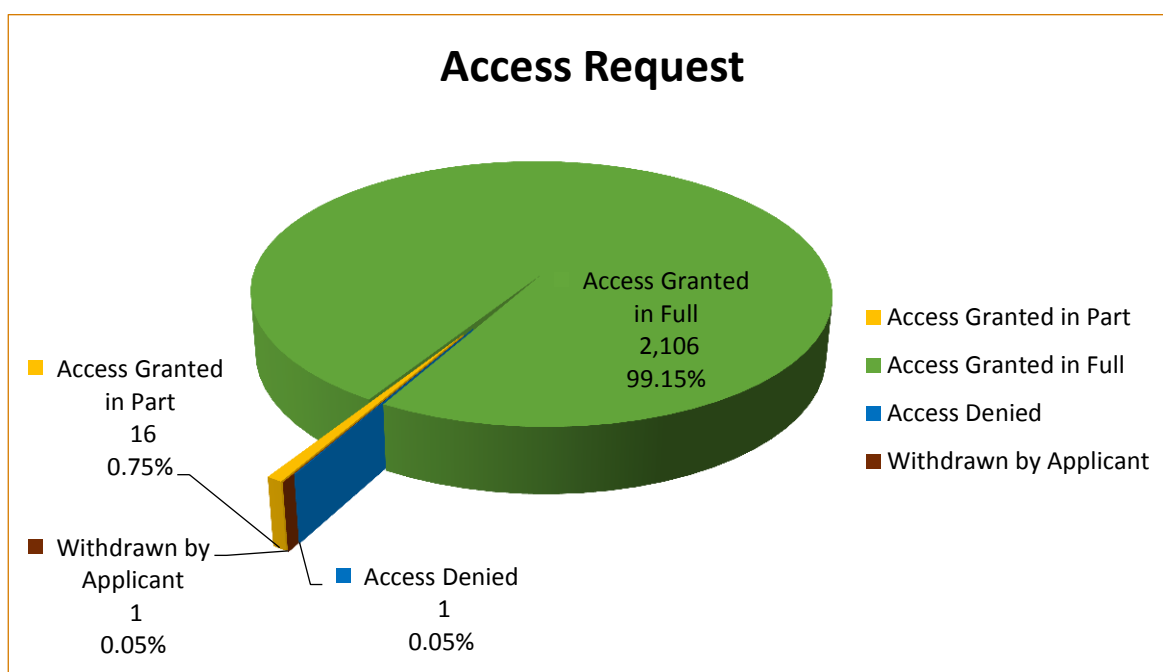
Digital copies are available for public viewing in PRO.

Access Requests

When there are requests for access to archival records which are less than 30 years old, PRO will consult the transferring B/Ds on the access status. B/Ds are encouraged to allow access to the record(s). If the B/D considers that the closed record is not suitable for public access, it is required to provide GRS with reasons with reference to Part 2 of the Code on Access to Information.

In 2015, there were 2,080 access requests for open records and 44 access requests for closed records. The results are as follows:

Nature of Request	Nos. of Request	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Denied	Withdrawn by Applicant
Open records	2,080	2,080 (100%)	0	0	0
Closed records	44	26 (59.09%)	16 (36.36%)	1 (2.27%)	1 (2.27%)
Total	2,124	2,106 (99.15%)	16 (0.75%)	1 (0.05%)	1 (0.05%)



To provide better service to the public, we have institutionalised the appeal channel on access to records by enabling the public to appeal to the Director of Administration against GRS' decision, and to lodge a complaint with The Ombudsman if they are concerned about any maladministration in the handling of their request.

Our staff provide guidance and assistance to users in identifying and inspecting the archival records from PRO's holdings. Users can search the records descriptions and some digitised holdings through the Integrated Information Access System. Access to public records at PRO is free of charge. PRO provides reproduction services on a charging basis for users to obtain a copy of the public records for the purposes of research and private study. Users may also use their own photographic device to take photographs of some of the PRO holdings.

Highlights of Collection of the Central Preservation Library for Government Publications

GRS also operates the CPL, which selects and preserves government publications and printed materials with permanent value.

CPL contains selected government publications, reports and printed materials on Hong Kong to preserve local documentary heritage. Its holdings date back to as early as the 1840s. They are held in different formats ranging from files, bound volumes, photographs, posters, maps and plans to films. They are described according to international standards in the online catalogues. Many are digitised for convenient on-line access. As at end of December 2015, CPL had preserved more than 43,000 publications.

Reference Services

PRO serves people from all walks of life with a variety of interests and needs. It provides advisory services and information/material to journalists, lawyers, teachers, students, and visitors who may be engaged in activities such as writing newspaper articles, identifying claims, researching judicial and administrative issues, tracing family and organisation history, preparing school projects and writing term papers, etc.

In 2015, PRO handled 10,612 enquiries and received 5,475 visitors. The GRS website recorded 983,781 hits.

Preservation and Conservation

Preservation Work

a) Preservation Microfilming

35mm microfilm copies are produced for public access in place of fragile originals and upon the public request. Besides, surrogate copies are produced for public access in order to preserve the fragile original materials. In the reporting year, 44,253 frames of image were microfilmed for the purpose of preservation and public access.

b) Encapsulation

Encapsulation is used to protect fragile and brittle objects from possible damage in handling and display. Selected objects are enveloped between two transparent polyester films with the use of an ultrasonic welding machine. In 2015, a total of 371 maps and plans, 18 posters, and 6 sheets of document were encapsulated to provide physical support and protection during access.

c) Rehousing/ Preservation Enclosure made

To retard the deterioration of archive and library materials caused by ultraviolet light and dust attack, holdings in repository are relocated to acid free containers. Items which do not fit into the standard folders and boxes are given tailor-made containers.

d) Assessment of the physical condition of archival records loaned out

To safeguard the condition of archival records, PSO conducts physical condition assessment for the archival records before and after they are loaned out. A total of 1,672 items of archival records were assessed in the year.

e) Integrated Pest Management Programme

As part of the pest control strategy, all incoming files and books are inspected for insect finding and the soiled items are surface-cleaned. In addition, records with pest infection or under such doubt will be transferred into the fumigation chamber for fumigation. Each fumigation cycle lasts for two weeks. In 2015, a total of 21,515 items of general and classified records were inspected. 46.76 linear metres of PRO's archives with risk of pest infestation were fumigated.

Conservation Treatment

Conservation preparation and treatment are conducted to preserve and repair the deteriorated archives and library. Most of the archival and library items undergone conservation treatment are in the form of documents.

The number of archival and library items which underwent conservation treatment in 2015 was 20,624 sheets from 1,075 items.

Digitisation of Archival Records

GRS has been making continuous efforts to digitise its holdings in order to make them more accessible by the public. Since 2001, we have planned for digitising GRS holdings based on criteria commonly adopted by overseas archives/libraries, e.g. physical condition of the items; users' demand or frequency of use; copyright restriction and personal data consideration.

In general, while digital images produced from digitisation of records allow more convenient access, digitisation itself is an expensive and resource demanding process. Taking into consideration the preservation and access needs of the archival items, GRS has adopted five guiding principles for the selection of items for digitisation.

Guiding principles for the selection of items for digitisation:

1) Building online digitised holdings

GRS is committed to preserving the archival records of HKSAR Government. GRS will digitise from its own holdings to enhance access and preserve at-risk archival records. The first priority is to digitise GRS holdings with significant value or risk.

2) Preserving archival records

GRS will provide digital surrogates for fragile archival records and ensure their accessibility over time. GRS will migrate or reformat content from at-risk media to digital formats for continued preservation and access.

3) Meeting user demand

GRS strives to satisfy the information needs of current and future users. Priority will be given to the archival records with high accessibility rate.

4) Respecting intellectual property rights

GRS will comply with all legal requirements including but not limited to those set out in the Copyright Ordinance (Cap. 528). GRS will clear copyright issues for works to be digitised if they fall within copyright protection. Priority will be given to those where the copyright protection has expired or GRS is the copyright holder.

5) Adhering to standards and best practices

GRS adheres to widely accepted international standards and best practices, ensuring that the physical condition of the archival records and the quality of digitised materials will not be compromised.

In 2015 a total number of 691,858 digital images were produced from digitising selected archival items and scanning microfilm collection in order to facilitate public access to these archival records.

Good Records Management Practices

GRS has promulgated and updated regularly a wide range of records management requirements, publications, guidelines and best practices with a view to providing clear and concrete guidance for B/Ds to perform their records management activities. A set of mandatory records management requirements covering various components of records management work was issued in April 2009 for compliance by B/Ds. Besides, additional guidelines were promulgated on specific records management topics, such as departmental records management policy and creation and collection of records, to help B/Ds improve their records management practices.

Authorisation of Destruction of Records

According to the mandatory records management requirements, B/Ds are required to designate senior officers to consider disposal of records. They are also required to obtain the prior agreement of GRS Director before destroying any government records. This is to safeguard against premature disposal of records and destruction of records having archival value. GRS will process B/Ds' records disposal requests according to the retention and disposal requirements set out in the respective records retention and disposal schedules. During the process, time-expired records having archival value will be identified and transferred to GRS for permanent retention while those without archival value will be approved for destruction. For those records disposal requests which do not meet the retention and disposal requirements, e.g. if records are not yet due for disposal, GRS will not grant approval for their pre-mature destruction. The B/Ds concerned are required to resubmit the requests to GRS when the requirements are met in full.

In 2015, GRS approved the destruction of around 61,000 linear metres of records which are without archival value. Of these records, many are of routine nature, e.g. arrival and departure cards and case files relating to immigration matters which contained personal data, computer printouts relating to tax returns, reports of tax-related systems, etc. All these records were confirmed to have no archival value and have met the relevant retention and disposal requirements, as well as those set out in the governing legislation and regulations.

Records Management Review

In the interest of continuous improvement and compliance monitoring, GRS has adopted a two-pronged approach to review the records management practices in B/Ds. This approach comprises two components, namely self-assessment by B/Ds and departmental records management reviews conducted by GRS.

The self-assessment exercises, whereby each B/D carries out an assessment on its compliance with the mandatory records management requirements and adoption of other good practices, are conducted on a regular basis and coordinated by GRS. The latest exercise commenced in late October 2015.

To complement the self-assessment by B/Ds, from the fourth quarter of 2012 onwards, GRS has started to conduct departmental records management reviews for individual B/Ds. These comprehensive and in-depth reviews cover all important aspects of records management practices of the B/Ds concerned and make recommendations for the B/Ds to improve their practices. Two such review exercises were conducted in 2015 and another two will be carried out in 2016.

Establishment of Business Rules

Records are valuable resources of the Government to support evidence-based decision making, meet operational and regulatory requirements and are essential for an open and accountable government. To help B/Ds capture complete, reliable and adequate records to serve as evidence of their business, GRS has strengthened the management of government records by promulgating a requirement for B/Ds to develop a set of business rules on records creation and collection. By establishing their business rules, B/Ds should ensure that the recorded information accurately and adequately records government functions, policies, procedures, decisions, transactions and activities.

To ensure that the initiative was fulfilled by B/Ds by the end of 2015, GRS conducted a series of workshops and seminars for government employees. With their cooperation, the work was successfully completed and over 30,000 sets of business rules were established by the end of 2015.

Support to Government B/Ds

Training and Advisory Services

GRS is responsible for advising and supporting B/Ds on issues and solutions relating to records management. Various kinds of training services are organised, including classes, topical or in-house seminars, briefings and workshops for records management personnel and general records users.

To make further improvement, GRS has reviewed its strategy in providing the training service so as to ensure its effectiveness in meeting the heightened demands in terms of the number of staff trained, variety and comprehensiveness in topics, and efficiency and responsiveness in service delivery. While refining the learning objectives of each training activity, including helping B/Ds recognise the importance of records management, equipping B/Ds with sufficient knowledge of best practices and mandatory requirements, new initiatives such as the Train-the-trainer Programme, web-based training and self-learning materials are being studied. Opinions and new ideas will also be sought from user B/Ds so as to improve the training service quality.

In general, GRS has provided the following training services to government employees:

a) Classroom Training Courses

The accumulative number of officers participated in our classroom training courses in 2015 has reached 2,441, meeting the annual training target of 2,400. This figure covered the regular courses for records managers, registry supervisors and registry staff, induction and training courses for Executive Officers, induction cum refresher course for Confidential Assistants and a special classroom training session for a newly established office. There were totally 77 such events organised.

b) Records Management Seminars and Briefings

To reach out to more B/Ds, GRS conducted records management seminars and briefings on a need basis to meet the specific requirements of individual B/Ds or to address specific topics. In 2015, seven events had been held, with a total attendance of 985. These events covered general records management topics as well as some specific issues such as the establishment of business rules.

ERM Training for B/Ds

In 2015, GRS conducted five briefings to promote ERKS. Over 290 attendees from eight B/Ds attended the briefings. GRS also conducted a briefing on key concepts of ERM and Government's ERM requirements for the University Grants Committee Secretariat to facilitate the development of its organisational EIM strategy. Over 20 officers attended the briefing.



GRS delivered four classes of records management training including ERM for 100 Executive Officer grade members who normally perform the role of records managers in B/Ds.

ERM Publications and Guidelines

To assist B/Ds to meet the challenges in implementing an ERKS, GRS has developed a series of ERKS implementation guidelines to provide guidance to B/Ds to initiate, plan and implement an ERKS. In 2015, a set of implementation guidelines entitled “Manual on Evaluation of an Electronic Recordkeeping System” was promulgated for B/Ds to evaluate and validate whether an ERKS complies with the Government's records management policy and ERM requirements, and to seek prior agreement from the GRS to dispense with the print-and-file requirement of e-mail records as appropriate.

To provide specific and practical guidelines to B/Ds to manage records in a hybrid environment consisting of paper, electronic and other forms of records, a set of guidelines entitled “Guidelines for Managing Records in a Hybrid Environment” was being prepared. It seeks to prescribe records management principles and best practices, outline the key considerations and specify practices and procedures for B/Ds to manage records in a hybrid environment.

GRS completed the review of Records Management Publication No. 1 “A Practical Guide to Records Scheduling and Disposal” and started the review of Publication No. 2 “File Management” in 2015.

Records Centre Service

As explained in the section on “Our Facilities”, the RCs of GRS provide centralised records centre services for B/Ds in order to save B/Ds from using expensive office space in storing inactive records. The two RCs operated by the Records Centre Service Unit, namely Tuen Mun Records Centre (also known as Tuen Mun Government Storage Centre) and YKK Records Centre (in YKK Commercial Building), are located in Tuen Mun. This Unit provides intermediate storage service for inactive records of B/Ds, establishes records retention and disposal schedules and processes disposal requests from B/Ds.

The total capacity of storage of the two RCs is 124,000 linear metres. In 2015, the annual average utilisation rate was 94.7% (against the annual target of 95%). The Records Centre Service Unit has achieved 100% target in retrieval requests from B/Ds, i.e. within three working days for normal requests and within one working day for urgent requests.

The Records Centre Service Unit also coordinates the destruction of records deposited in the RCs, or transfer of such records to PRO when the retention periods of the records expire as stipulated in the corresponding records retention and disposal schedules. One month prior to the expiry of the prescribed retention period, the Records Centre Service Unit will seek confirmation from the transferring B/Ds concerned that records so deposited can be disposed of as scheduled, taking into account whether all related legal or regulatory requirements have been met and whether there is no outstanding action.

As a good records management practice, it is important to establish records retention and disposal schedules to ensure systematic planning and orderly implementation of records disposal after records have been kept the right length of time to meet the purposes they are created for and in compliance with legal or statutory requirements. This also facilitates subsequent transfer of inactive records to RCs for intermediate storage, transfer of archival records to PRO for permanent retention or destruction of records no longer required operationally and possessing no archival value. In April 2009, B/Ds were required to prepare draft records retention and disposal schedules covering all their programme records, as stipulated under the mandatory requirements. GRS, upon receipt of such draft records retention and disposal schedules, will consider and discuss with the B/Ds concerned regarding the proposed retention periods and disposal actions with a view to finalising the records retention and disposal schedules. Since the promulgation of such mandatory requirements, the accumulative number of records retention and disposal schedules established reached 10,388 as at 31 December 2015.

For B/Ds' requests for agreement for destruction of records, the Records Centre Service Unit and PRO worked together to approve the destruction of around 61,000 linear metres of records in 2015. All these records had been appraised by PRO as having no archival value.

To support the Records Centre Service Unit to deliver quality services to all B/Ds in an efficient, effective and automated manner, GRS is developing a comprehensive web-based computer system, namely the Storage Allocation and Records Centre Information System (SARCIS), which is to be built with capabilities for storage allocation management, physical object management, database management and workflow management. Upon implementation of the SARCIS, the various business processes of the RCs will be streamlined and sped up. B/Ds will be able to conveniently submit requests for transfer of records to the RCs and disposal of records, as well as draft records retention and disposal schedules on-line through the SARCIS. The Records Centre Service Unit will process and approve the requests and records disposal schedules on-line. A centralised, systematic and well-managed database of the storage management activities in the RCs and the different work processes of the Records Centre Service Unit will also be established in the SARCIS. The system is expected to be rolled out in the fourth quarter of 2016.

Electronic Records Management

Implementation of ERKS in GRS

GRS launched its ERKS in May 2014 for use by its staff and a few senior officers in the Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office. The system was enhanced in September 2015 for management of records of security classification at confidential level. GRS' ERKS provides comprehensive, integrated and coherent records management functionalities to manage both electronic and non-electronic records throughout their records life cycle.

The ERKS provides a central store for staff of GRS to capture their digital documents and information and helps reduce the risk of inadvertent loss or inappropriate destruction of important information. With appropriate security settings, the records can be accessed concurrently by different officers at the same time, irrespective of their office locations. In comparison with a paper-based recordkeeping system, ERKS provides improved security and access control of records by storing records in a secure electronic environment which guards against unauthorised access, deletion and alteration, and provides audit trails for actions taken and changes made on records. With ERKS, officers do not need to print out records in hardcopy for filing. This has resulted in less paper consumption, hence promoting environmental-friendly records management practice and saving storage cost. ERKS also helps GRS officers make better decisions because accurate information is readily available through reliable and authentic records. With ERKS, all processes relating to gathering, organising, distributing, collaborating, and analysing records can be streamlined and improved. Productivity can also be enhanced by performing different tasks simultaneously rather than sequentially.

The implementation of an ERKS has enabled GRS to acquire valuable experience in developing an ERKS and organising change management activities, reviewing business processes and specific records management needs. GRS has shared its experience by conducting demonstration sessions of its ERKS to other B/Ds which have interest to implement an ERKS in their organisations.

Implementation of ERKS and ERM in other B/Ds

The EIM Steering Group convened by the Government Chief Information Officer has reviewed the implementation progress of EIM as well as the implementation plan for B/Ds to carry out initiatives relating to ERKS and ERM. Taking into account the experience of the first round of ERKS implementation, six B/Ds have been recruited in the next stage of development. These six B/Ds are the Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, the Architectural Services Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Intellectual Property Department, OGCIO and the Marine Department. Implementation of ERKS for the six B/Ds started in late 2015 and the various systems will be completed by phases from 2016 onwards.

Reaching Out

Support to Public Organisations

Many public organisations are responsible for providing essential services to the community and there is a public expectation of proper management of their records to ensure accountability and transparency.

GRS has been conducting records management seminars for public organisations annually since 2013 with a view to urging them to follow the Government's requirements and standards on records management and promoting donation of their records with archival value to GRS. In November 2015, GRS conducted the third annual seminar in a row and invited 71 public organisations to the seminar. 286 participants from 26 public organisations attended and provided positive feedback to GRS.



At the request of two public organisations, a meeting was arranged in March 2015 to share with their representatives GRS' experience of implementing an ERKS. A demonstration of GRS' ERKS was also conducted to the representatives of the two organisations.

Moreover, GRS assists public organisations to appraise and preserve records and publications with historical value. Subsequent to GRS' appraisal in 2014, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority transferred 594 volumes of the examination results of the public examinations for secondary schools from 1937 to 1992 to GRS for permanent retention in 2015. In addition, the Vocational Training Council donated one set of papers and two booklets concerning the Skills Competitions to GRS for retention.

Visits by Overseas Delegations

We welcome overseas delegations visiting GRS to exchange views on good records management practices and issues of mutual concern. In 2015, two delegations from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the Employees Provident Fund of Malaysia visited GRS. We shared with the delegations the records management framework in Hong Kong as well as our experience in the implementation of ERKS in GRS. The delegations also toured around the facilities in HKPRB.



Visit of the delegation from the Employees Provident Fund of Malaysia



Visit of the delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia



Participation in International Conference



To foster a closer partnership with other archives, GRS participates in international records management conferences and seminars as appropriate. In October 2015, the Deputy Director of Administration (1) led a small delegation with two GRS officers attending the 12th General Conference and Seminar of the East Asian Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives held in Fukuoka of Japan.

The theme was “Archives in the Digital Era: Revisited”. We presented a report on the work done by the HKSAR Government in addressing the paradigm shift brought about by the widespread use of digital information technologies. The report is accessible on GRS’ website.

Programme / Project Highlights

To support life-long learners and the education sector at all levels and to let the public know more about the PRO holdings and services, PRO organises visits, seminars, workshops, thematic film shows, exhibitions and other educational activities. A web page “Educational Resources Portal” has been developed to promote appreciation of documentary heritage and the use of archival records in studying and learning. The public programmes in 2015 included:

Onsite Exhibitions

Two onsite exhibitions, namely “Behind the Postman Uniform” (December 2014 to November 2015) and “Under the Same Roof: Resettlement in the 1950s of Hong Kong” (December 2015 to November 2016), were launched.



Behind the Postman Uniform



Under the Same Roof: Resettlement in the 1950s of Hong Kong

Roving Exhibitions



Roving exhibitions entitled “Behind the Postman Uniform” were held in Civic Education Resource Centre (July 2015), Tamar Central Government Complex (August 2015), and Hong Kong Central Library (September 2015).

Co-organised Exhibition



A historical photo exhibition “Hong Kong Over the Past 100 Years Historical Photo Exhibition” co-organised by Jao Tsung-I Academy and GRS was launched from April to October 2015. Over 55,000 visitors viewed the exhibition.

Visits and Workshops



A total of 42 group visits to PRO and educational workshops on the use of archival records were organised.

Thematic Film Shows

To promote the appreciation of archival holdings, PRO selected films transferred from the Information Services Department and edited them into a 40-minute thematic film clip, entitled “Hong Kong in the 1960s and 1970s”. About 100 sessions of the thematic film show were organised in 2015.



A Week in Hong Kong, 1967



Homes for Hong Kong, 1972



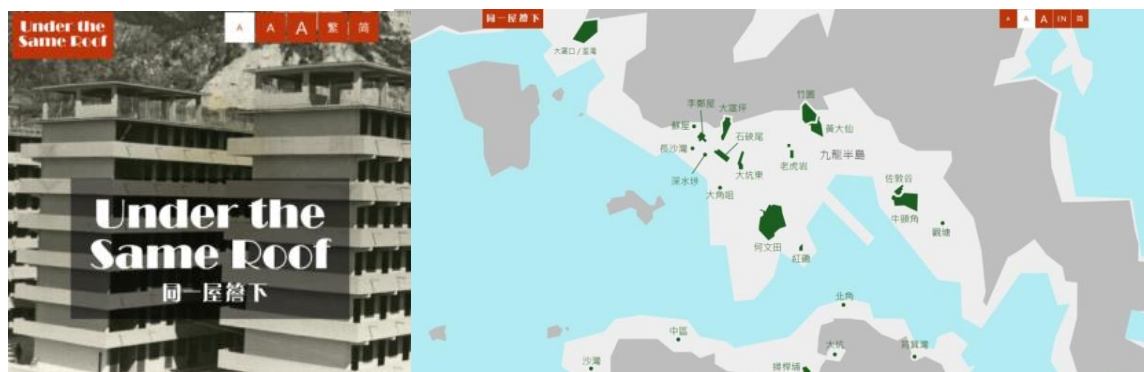
Put it in the Bin, 1972



Hong Kong Today, No.17, 1960s

Enhancement of Educational Resources Portal

To promote the use of archival records and provide convenient access to digital resources, GRS enhances the contents of the Educational Resource Portal regularly. The new thematic web pages, namely “Under the Same Roof: Resettlement in the 1950s of Hong Kong” were launched in 2015.



Thematic Webpages on GRS Website

To promote awareness and appreciation of documentary heritage in our community, GRS launched two thematic webpages, namely “History in Pictures” and “Recording Hong Kong”. The former showcases about 190 images from the 1830s to the 1990s in five chapters, including “The Establishment of Free Port”, “Birth and Early Growth of the City”, “The Japanese Occupation”, “The City Development in the Post War Period”, and “The Transitional Period and Return to China”. The latter displays about 100 selected archival records from the 1840s to the 1990s in chronological order.



Abbreviations

AIIM	Association for Information and Image Management
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
B/Ds	Government bureaux / departments
CPL	Central Preservation Library for Government Publications
DLCS	Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
EIM	Electronic Information Management
ERKS	Electronic Recordkeeping System
ERM	Electronic Records Management
ERP	Electronic Road Pricing
GMC	Government Microfilm Centre
GRS	Government Records Service
HKPRB	Hong Kong Public Records Building
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
OGCIO	Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
PRO	Public Records Office
PSO	Preservation Service Office
RC	Records Centre
RMAO	Records Management and Administration Office
RSDO	Record Systems Development Office
SARCIS	Storage Allocation and Records Centre Information System
VMV	Vision, Mission and Values

PUBLIC RECORDS (ACCESS) RULES 1996

Citation	1. These Rules may be cited as the Public Records (Access) Rules 1996.
Interpretation	<p>2. (1) In these Rules unless the context otherwise requires -</p> <p>“Government Records Service” means the Government Records Service of Hong Kong.</p> <p>“Government Records Service Director” means the officer appointed from time to time to administer the Government Records Service.</p> <p>“Closed records” means any public records which are not available for public inspection by virtue of Rules 3 and 6.</p> <p>“Government Department” means any department, office or agency or instrument of any kind of the legislative or judicial or executive Government of Hong Kong administered by a Head of Department.</p> <p>“Head of Government Department” means an officer of the Civil Establishment who is designated as a head of department or as an officer occupying a post of equivalent status, or who is so designated as the administrative head of an independent office or organization.</p> <p>“Public records” means all record materials of any kind, nature or description which have been made, received or acquired in the course of legislative, judicial or executive transactions, together with all exhibits and other material evidence which form part of or are annexed to or are otherwise related to any record, which may be transferred to or be acquired by the Public Records Office of the Government Records Service.</p> <p>“Search Room” means the room designated as such within the Government Records Service in which public records may be inspected.</p>

(2) Where any public records are bound, sewn, stapled or otherwise attached to closed records so as to form a bound volume, file or other compilation, the whole of the records contained in such bound volume, file or compilation shall be deemed to be closed records.

Records
available for
public
inspection

3. Subject to the provisions of these Rules and the laws of Hong Kong, public records

(a) which have been in existence for not less than thirty years; or

(b) the contents of which have at any time been published or otherwise wholly disclosed to the public,

shall be available for public inspection.

Application

4. Nothing in these Rules shall apply to any public records drawn up, made, received, acquired or used in the course of proceedings of any court in Hong Kong.

Rules of
conduct

5. All persons inspecting public records in the Government Records Service shall observe the rules of conduct prescribed in the Second Schedule to these Rules, and any person failing to observe such rules may be denied permission to continue his inspection.

Restriction of
access to Public
Records

6. Without prejudice to the generality of Rule 3

(a) if it appears to the Chief Secretary, upon advice to that effect by the Head of any Government Department which has deposited public records in the Public Records Office of the Government Records Service, that any such records contain information the disclosure of which would not be in the public interest, such records shall not be available in the Government Records Service for public inspection even after the expiration of the period determined under Rule 3;

(b) if it appears to the Chief Secretary, upon advice to that effect by the Head of any Government Department which has deposited records in the Public Records Office of the Government Records Service that they contain information which was obtained from members of the public under such conditions that the opening of those records to the public after the period determined under

Rule 3 would or might constitute a breach of good faith on the part of the Government or on the part of the persons who obtained the information, such records shall not be available in the Government Records Service for public inspection even after the expiration of the said period except in such circumstances and subject to such conditions, if any, as the Chief Secretary and the Government Records Service Director may approve, or, if the Chief Secretary and the Government Records Service Director think fit, after the expiration of such further period as they may approve.

7. (1) The Government Records Service Director may, in his discretion and in accordance with general instructions given to him by the Chief Secretary, permit any person to inspect closed records which are held in the Government Records Service.

Undertaking (2) Persons permitted to inspect closed records may be required to sign an undertaking in the form prescribed in the First Schedule to these Rules.

Application to inspect records 8. (1) Subject to the provisions of Rule 8(4), any person wishing to inspect public records in the Government Records Service shall apply in writing to the Government Records Services Director stating the purpose for which he requires access and the general nature of the records which he wished to inspect.

(2) Each application made under the provisions of the last preceding paragraph shall be accompanied by a reference from the institution to which the applicant is attached, or, where the applicant is not attached to any institution, from a prominent and responsible person resident in Hong Kong.

(3) Every application accompanied by the reference referred to in the last preceding paragraph shall be submitted by the Government Records Service Director to the Chief Secretary for his consideration and the decision of the Chief Secretary thereon shall be final.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding paragraphs of these Rules, the Government Records Service Director may, in his discretion and in accordance with general instructions given to him by the Chief Secretary, permit access to public records without requiring the written application or the reference referred to in paragraph (1) and (2) of this Rule.

Search room

9. Such public records as are, under the provisions of these Rules, permitted to be inspected shall be made available to the public in a search room in the Government Records Service.
10. The Public Records (Access) Rules 1994 are hereby revoked.

FIRST SCHEDULE

UNDERTAKING GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 7(2) OF PUBLIC RECORDS (ACCESS) RULES 1996

1. I agree to submit for inspection by the Chief Secretary or Head of Department or Agency, as appropriate, any work based on closed records of the Government of Hong Kong held in the Government Records Service to which I may be granted access prior to publication or otherwise making it available to the public.
2. I further agree to make any amendments to the work that may be required in respect of information obtained from the closed records, the publication of which would not be in the public interest or might constitute a breach of faith on the part of the Government or person who obtained the information.
3. It is understood that these conditions do not apply to any conclusions or analysis I may draw from or make of such records.

Signature of Application

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

SECOND SCHEDULE

RULES TO BE OBSERVED BY PERSONS GRANTED ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS

1. Personal belongings such as bags, umbrellas and other items not reasonably required during the inspection of records must be left at the entrance of the search room or in such other place as may be indicated by the officer in charge of the search room.
2. All persons must conduct themselves in an orderly and quiet manner in the search room.
3. Smoking, eating and drinking is not permitted in the search room.
4. No record is to be written on, marked, mutilated or textually or otherwise altered in any way.
5. No ink, paste or other substance which may damage records may be introduced into the search room.
6. Only pencils may be used for writing when using records in the search room.
7. Lap-top computers, typewriters dictaphones may be used for taking notes in the search room providing they do not cause any inconvenience or disturbance to others.
8. No object is to be placed upon any record produced for inspection in the search room.
9. Opened bound volumes must not be placed face downward on a desk or table and no object other than plain paper may be used as a bookmark.
10. Tracing of records is not permitted.
11. Records must be handled with care at all times.