Records Management In Museums - What Is It?
Why Should Museum Staff Care?

Records Management is a set of tools, activities and guidelines to ensure that the right person can find the right record or information at the right time, with the least amount of effort.

Records are documents (paper and electronic) which provide evidence of a decision, activity, transaction or event. In museums they include:

Loan files	Visitor surveys	Security logs
Visitor enquiries & complaints	Press releases	Curatorial research papers and notes
Personnel files	Events files	Building plans

So - why should you care?
Here are some good reasons to get you started:

- ✔ You'll spend less time searching for information and more time on your actual job
- ✔ You'll be able to find the information you need to work more productively with colleagues, other teams and on projects
- ✔ The records you need now won't be buried under outdated ones
- ✔ You'll be able to see more clearly how your museum works
- ✔ Your work will be more professional
- ✔ You will play a part in preserving your museum's documentary heritage

Improving your museum's records management probably means altering the way you and your colleagues save, share and organise your records, but establishing and maintaining good practice will save you more time and space in the long term.

What to do next
Think about:
What's working well? Which documents are easy to find – and why? Which parts of your network are easy to navigate?
What doesn't work? Any backlogs of paperwork? Mystery files on the shared drive? Duplicated effort because you couldn't find existing work?

Find out if there is someone in your museum with responsibility for records management, or if someone is doing work in that area. Talk to them, and other colleagues, about what needs changing (such as personal names and abbreviations in file titles) and what good practice you can build on.

Visit http://www.museuminfo-records.org.uk/toolkits/RecordsManagement.pdf for detailed guidance, interactive training and other resources to adapt and use in your museum, free of charge.