



Government Website & Social Media Archiving for Open Records

Buyer's Guide & Vendor Assessment Checklist

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Why Government Agencies Choose Pagefreezer

The Case for Digital Archiving in Government Agencies

The need for clear communication at all levels of government has never been greater. Agencies are under increasing pressure to ensure transparency, trust, and professionalism in how they communicate with the public.

At the same time, recordkeeping—one of the foundations of transparency and accountability—has become significantly more complex. Web modernization initiatives, cloud migrations, and the rapid adoption of social media and other online platforms have created a dynamic recordkeeping environment that demands a new approach—and new technology.

Digital communication channels like websites and social media profiles allow public-sector organizations to engage the public more quickly and directly than ever before. But every website update, post, comment, edit, and deletion is considered a public record and [subject to open records requirements](#).

When websites change frequently and social media posts are edited, deleted, or go viral, [manual recordkeeping processes can fall short](#). These gaps can leave agencies vulnerable to non-compliance, incomplete records, and public scrutiny.

The right website and social media archiving solution can offer substantial benefits to your agency:

- Improving daily workflow and [reducing manual work](#)
- Reducing the inherent risk associated with online channels
- Boosting government transparency and public engagement
- Saving your organization time, money, and resources
- Ensuring that historical data is accessible and searchable

How to Choose the Right Digital Archiving Vendor

When it comes to finding the [best archiving tool for your government agency](#), the process of narrowing down your options can feel risky and overwhelming. How do you know which is best?

Choosing the right archiving vendor is a compliance decision, a transparency decision, and a long-term risk management decision.

To help, we've created a practical checklist of questions and evaluation criteria for government agencies archiving websites, social media, and other online data.

This checklist is based on vendor evaluation insights gathered from thousands of public-sector organizations. Use it to compare archiving vendors, identify gaps in your current approach, and ensure any solution you select can support open records compliance as your digital footprint continues to grow.

Government Website & Social Media Archiving Vendor Checklist

1. Will it satisfy FOIA & Open Records Requirements?

Not all archiving tools are built to meet the legal and evidentiary standards required for [FOIA](#) and [state open records laws](#). When evaluating a vendor, it's critical to understand whether the solution can support timely, accurate, and defensible responses to [records requests](#).

Use the questions below to assess FOIA and open records readiness:

- Does the solution capture all public-facing digital records, including websites, social media posts, comments, direct messages, and edits or deletions?
- Are records preserved in their original, native format, rather than screenshots or static exports?
- Can archived records be exported in native format?
- Does the archive retain complete [metadata](#), including timestamps and contextual information needed to show when and how content appeared?
- Are records tamper-proof? How do they ensure record integrity?
- Can records be located, reviewed, and retrieved quickly to meet statutory response timelines?
- Does the solution support export in commonly accepted formats (e.g., PDF, CSV, [WARC](#), or eDiscovery-compatible formats)?
- Can archived records be exported in native format?
- Does the vendor offer a [public-facing portal](#) or other tools to proactively disclose records and reduce the volume of FOIA and open records requests?
- Can the vendor demonstrate a track record of supporting government agencies in responding to FOIA and open records requests?

2. How User-Friendly Is the Archiving Solution?

Implementing an archiving solution can be counterproductive if the user experience is clunky and frustrating.

When comparing solutions, consider the following qualities:

- Is the user interface modern and intuitive?
- Does it offer records for social media, website content, and other data sources in a native format that looks exactly like those of the live online platforms?
- Does it require extensive training or watching demo videos to accomplish basic tasks within the platform?
- Does it offer a user-friendly public portal that allows the public to gather their own records directly from the archive?
- Does it rely on manual processes like screenshots?
- Does it require IT assistance to locate or export records?
- Can non-technical staff access and export records easily?

Remember: The solution should be easy for non-technical staff to use.

3. Which Platforms Can You Archive?

Your agency likely has multiple accounts on multiple platforms that require monitoring and engagement. When evaluating archiving tools, consider the following:

- Does the solution support popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?
- Does it offer real-time archiving through API integration with relevant platforms? (Avoid solutions that simply crawl social media pages.)
- How do they stay up to date with API updates and platform changes and ensure continuous record capture?
- Can it archive other online data sources, such as website content, mobile text messages, WhatsApp, and team collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Workplace from Meta?
- Can the solution capture social media content retrospectively from the beginning of the account?

Remember: The vendor should keep up with all platform updates, now and in the future to ensure your records are complete.

4. Can You Monitor Social Media Accounts and Collaboration Tools?

Most organizations have established policies that define acceptable language and communication within the workplace. However, enforcing these policies effectively on social media and enterprise collaboration platforms presents a unique challenge.

With this in mind, any archiving solution should be able to facilitate platform monitoring, and ideally, even offer built-in tools that can help identify and flag inappropriate language or behavior. Consider the following requirements when evaluating vendors:

- Is there visibility into conversations on social media and collaboration platforms?
- Can you monitor employee and public interactions?
- Are there tools to flag or identify inappropriate or policy-violating content?
- Are edited or deleted posts and comments documented and archived as well?

Remember: Archiving should support compliance, risk management, and moderation—not just storage.

5. How Secure is Your Data?

It's vital to know that your archived data is safe and secure. The last thing you want is a compromised account that leads to the authenticity and reliability of your records being brought into question.

Consider the following questions related to data security:

- Is the vendor or product [FedRAMP® Authorized?](#)
- Do both the vendor itself and its data centers prioritize data security? How?
- Is the vendor [SOC 2 compliant and does it have ISO 27001 certification?](#)
- Can a vendor prove compliance with modern security standards? (Ask for the vendor's CAIQ, your IT team will love you for this.)
- Is the vendor in compliance with privacy regulations like the GDPR and CCPA?

Remember: Archived records must be tamper-proof and secure.

6. Does the Vendor Offer Comprehensive Support?

When it comes to user experience, having comprehensive and reliable support from your vendor will give you much needed peace of mind.

- Is the vendor equipped to address inquiries, technical challenges, or other needs that arise?
- Does their customer support demonstrate a high level of reliability and responsiveness?
- What are their CSAT scores?
- How much effort does it take to seek assistance from experts who can help?
- Do representatives have experience and expertise in government recordkeeping?
- Will representatives prioritize concerns and act with a sense of urgency?
 - What are their average response & resolution times for issues?
- Does the vendor regularly work with public-sector customers?

Remember: Support quality matters—especially during audits, requests, or litigation.

7. What's the Onboarding Process Like?

Before finalizing your decision, inquire about the vendor's onboarding process. A well-structured and efficient onboarding experience is key to ensuring a smooth transition and successful implementation.

When evaluating vendors, consider the following aspects:

- Is there a clear onboarding timeline and roadmap?
- How long does it take to set up the archiving?
- What are the technical requirements for the implementation?
- Who from your organization must be involved for the vendor to set up the archive?
- What is involved in setup, configuration, and implementation?
- How much downtime is required?
- How quickly will your archives be up and running?
- Is onboarding personalized for government agency needs?

- What training methods are provided during onboarding?
- What level of support is available beyond onboarding?
- How often will the vendor check-in?

Remember: Implementation should be fast, guided, and low-effort for your team.

8. What's the Pricing Model?

The pricing models employed by vendors can vary significantly.

Opting for a vendor that bases pricing on the number of records created may result in increasing costs as your online activity and engagement grows. **As such, it is important to ask potential vendors:**

- Is pricing based on the number of accounts or the number of records?
- Do they have GSA pricing?
- Is pricing clear? Are there hidden fees or penalties?
- What happens if your social media post goes viral? Will you be charged more?
- Will invoicing be consistent every month or will charges change?
- Does pricing support long-term budgeting?

Remember: Costs should be transparent and predictable year over year.

A well-chosen archiving vendor should reduce risk, simplify compliance, and support transparency—not create more work for your team. Using this checklist will help ensure you're evaluating vendors on what actually matters: accuracy, defensibility, usability, and long-term reliability.

Whether you're replacing an existing solution or implementing archiving for the first time, taking the time to ask the right questions now can prevent costly gaps and compliance challenges later.

Why Government Agencies Choose Pagefreezer

Pagefreezer helps government organizations archive [websites](#), [social media](#), and online communications automatically—so records are accurate, secure, and ready when they're needed.

With Pagefreezer, government agencies can:

- Automatically archive websites and social media in native, tamper-proof format
- Capture edits, deletions, metadata, timestamps, and digital signatures
- Ensure compliance with open records and FOIA requirements
- Reduce staff time spent responding to public records requests
- Provide self-service public access through a customizable records portal

Pagefreezer is trusted by government agencies of all sizes, including major federal, state, and local organizations, to support transparency and long-term records integrity. Pagefreezer's website archiving solution is also [FedRAMP® authorized](#), meaning it meets the US government's strictest standards for cloud security and continuous monitoring.

Want to see how Pagefreezer can help you meet government open records requirements?

Let us show you how we are helping hundreds of government agencies simplify open records compliance, build trust, and get peace of mind.

Email:

sales@pagefreezer.com

Phone:

+1.888.916.3999 (North America)

+44 (0)20 3314 7921 (U.K.)

+31 (0)76-5324275 (Europe)

pagefreezer.com