



Guide To Document Management Spreadsheet

1. Introduction

- a. The Document Management Spreadsheet (the **spreadsheet**) is a tool provided by the Court that enables parties and their representatives to efficiently and cost effectively manage small to medium volumes of documents¹ at all stages of litigation, and to facilitate the conduct of electronic trials, without incurring the setup costs of an electronic database.
- b. It achieves this by encouraging parties to describe documents in a consistent, unambiguous and objective way from the time that instructions are received. The spreadsheet facilitates quick sorting, searching, and retrieval of documents, and can be adapted to assist parties in undertaking and exchanging disclosure, identifying documents for lay and expert witnesses, and in the preparation of briefs to counsel, mediator's briefs and indexes to trial bundles.
- c. As a result, parties using the spreadsheet can expect to streamline document management during proceedings, thereby reducing overall document management costs.
- d. Further, for the purposes of providing disclosure, and to assist with efficiencies in the conduct of proceedings, parties are encouraged to use the spreadsheet (which is based on UCPR Form 19) rather than the schedules in Form 19. The parties may agree on additional information to be included in the spreadsheet.
- e. The spreadsheet can be completed from standard spreadsheet software, and its hyperlink functionality is available on most desktops or laptops running Microsoft Windows². Parties are encouraged to use tools to automatically extract metadata from electronic documents to populate the spreadsheet. This minimises or avoids the need for manual entry, improves accuracy, and significantly reduces costs.
- f. Consistent use of the spreadsheet enables each party to maintain a list of all parties' disclosed documents in a single location, in a manner that is readily able to be sorted or filtered, and with the ability to open the documents through hyperlinks. The parties are free to adapt the spreadsheet for their own purposes (ie by adding columns to identify documents referred to by witnesses, for counsel, or for hearing).
- g. As the overriding objective of the spreadsheet is to encourage consistency, it is important that the parties adhere to the document management protocol they have agreed when completing the spreadsheet.

2. Document ID

- a. The Document ID (Doc ID) is the unique identifier allocated to each electronically saved document (file).
- b. The parties should have agreed on the format for the Document ID at the commencement of the proceeding, in accordance with Practice Direction 28 of 2018.

¹ If the volume of documents for a party is likely to be 1,000 to 2,000 documents, the party should consider whether an electronic database may be a more efficient tool.

² Mac or other operating systems may require some additional steps to enable this functionality.

- c. Each file in the spreadsheet must be allocated a unique Document ID in accordance with the format agreed by the parties. This number must be entered in the spreadsheet in the designated columns.
- d. The Document ID is the number used to identify each file from commencement of the proceeding, for example in pleadings, statements or affidavits, expert reports and submissions. At trial, the Document ID is used to quickly locate documents in the electronic trial bundle so that they can be displayed via the courtroom monitors. The parties must state the Document ID in full when calling for documents at trial. The Document ID should therefore be as simple as possible.
- e. The simplest format for the Document ID is to use three letters to identify the party relying on the document/file, followed by four numbers to identify the document (using leading zeros so as to ensure consistency and avoid any confusion).
- f. For example, the letters used in the Document ID could be as simple as PLA for plaintiff or DEF for defendant. Where there a number of parties, the first three letters of the party's name could be used, for example ABC Developments Pty Ltd could be identified as ABC.
- g. Document numbering does not need to be consecutive. You will likely adapt your spreadsheet over time, by adding or removing files. You may also copy and paste information into new spreadsheets to be used for different purposes during the life of a claim (for example, disclosure, briefs to counsel etc.). In this event, do not renumber the documents. This will be a wasted effort which will not afford any added utility and will lead to confusion. It is important for a file to bear the same unique Document ID throughout the life of a claim.
- h. Parties are encouraged to rename copies of the documents using their unique Document ID as the file name (retaining the file extension) to further assist with efficiency and avoid confusion.

3. Use of available metadata

- a. Parties are encouraged to populate the contents of the spreadsheet using available and corresponding metadata fields contained within electronic documents (ideally using automated means).
- b. For paper-based documents that have been scanned, manual entry of certain details may be unavoidable.

4. Document date

- a. Dates should be obtained from metadata or entered manually if necessary.
- b. The date should be recorded as DD/MM/YYYY. For example, a letter dated 5 March 2002 should be recorded in this field as follows: 05/03/2002.
- c. Where only the month and year are known, use 01/MM/YYYY. Where only the year is known, use 01/01/YYYY. This cell can be left blank for undated documents.

5. Document title

- a. The Document Title is a short description of the file, explaining its content. This should be obtained from metadata (ie the file name) or entered manually if necessary.

6. Document type

- a. This should generally be based on the electronic file type (which is often visible in a file folder view or a directory listing and can be extracted automatically).
- b. Alternatively, parties may agree to a limited number of document types and the way the document types are to be applied.
- c. For example, parties may agree that all types of deeds (for example, Deed of Guarantee and Indemnity, Deed of Trust, Deed of Agreement) will be called “Deed” in the “Document Type” field but will be further described in the “Document Title” field.
- d. The more specific the type agreed, the easier it will be to search and collate files within the spreadsheet.

7. Host Document ID

- a. Attachments to host documents should be treated as documents in their own right, described and listed separately in the spreadsheet.
- b. The host document and the attachments should be capable of being identified individually and collectively. This is achieved by entering the Document ID of the host document in the Host Document ID column for each of the attachments and for the host document.
- c. If the document does not have attachments, re-enter the Document ID in the Host Document ID column.

8. Author and recipient

- a. These details should be obtained from available metadata (if any). For example, emails will generally contain the author and recipients (either names or email addresses). Other documents may only contain the name or initials of the author, or perhaps the author’s title or organisation.
- b. Where multiple author names are to be captured, separate these by a semicolon [space]. For example: J Bloggs; Mark OReilly; Department of Health.
- c. To the extent to which manual entry is necessary, names should be recorded as they appear on the face of the document but without punctuation. For example, A.B.C. Pty. Ltd. would be described in this field as: ABC Pty Ltd.

9. Filename

- a. Each file should generally be renamed using the Document ID, and ideally using automated means.
- b. If you propose populating the spreadsheet with information extracted from the files’ metadata, you should do so before renaming the files (or a copy of the files).

10. Hyperlink

- a. Save documents – ideally renamed with their Document ID as the filename (with the appropriate file extension: pdf, jpg etc.) - in a folder called Documents and save the spreadsheet immediately above the Documents folder.
- b. The hyperlink field automatically updates when the Document ID and Filename have been entered.

- c. Hyperlinking can be manually applied, and/or the formula can be amended as desired or required.
- d. Documents/files and spreadsheets received from other parties to the proceeding should be saved retaining the folder names and structure as received (so hyperlinking filepaths do not change). Further benefits and efficiencies may be gained if you collate other parties' spreadsheets and documents into a single spreadsheet and Documents folder.
- e. Hyperlinks will generally not work if saved into a Document Management System.

11. What not to do

- a. Any cell in the spreadsheet must not contain more than 250 characters. Use abbreviations where necessary.
- b. Do not use carriage returns. All information in each row must be contained on one line.

12. Information and Training

- a. Should you require further information regarding electronic document management or would like to arrange a training session, please do not hesitate to contact the eTrials Team by email to <mailto:eTrials@courts.qld.gov.au>
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