PRESERVING DOCUMENTS

Data in records should be <u>preserved</u>. One way to do this is to have hardcopy paper records (even going so far as to state on the hardcopy records that they must not have any deletions, white-outs etc). If the records are preserved in hardcopy format, efforts should be made to preserving the data by:

i)   In editable records (Word excel etc) applying 'read only' protection (but personally I find Word a bit unreliable in this regard).

ii)   Creating uneditable versions, e.g. printing and scanning the record as a "picture" file (.tif, .jpg) <u>or</u> as a .pdf file.

Writing your own pdf files
You can create uneditable records by "printing" to .pdf. The Adobe Acrobat Writer program will do this but this program is expensive. A cheaper program that does the same thing is the "CutePDF Writer" program. This program can be downloaded for free for personal use from http://www.cutepdf.com/Products/CutePDF/Writer.asp. Note that you have to download and install 2 free programs.

How to "print" your own pdf files
Once you have installed these two programs, when you press "Print" in Word/Excel etc you get the normal print dialog. Go to the top drop down menu called 'Name' and you will see CutePDF Writer among your printer/s. If you print to the CutePDF Writer, the 'Save As' box comes up. You type the filename you want (unfortunately it doesn't retain the original filename, the only downside of this program) and then choose the location where you want to save to.

Other features of pdf files
There are many uses of this program (not all described here). PDF stands for Portable Data format (or somesuch) and it has some great features. To all intents they are uneditable just like a picture file (except with the most expensive pdf writer programs), but they also have word search facilities! I use it when I do not have a printer connected to the computer I'm using; I save to a floppy and print elsewhere.

You can even preserve a signature in a record .pdf file by placing a scanned "picture (.jpg etc)" of the desired signature in the right spot in the source Word document record, then printing to pdf. If you leave the signature in Word and don't convert the to pdf, then anybody can copy the signature off the Word file. Most bosses hate this happening!! What a great format for preserving data!