

# HOW TO RESTORE A SHREDDED DOCUMENT

## 1 Determine the identifying characteristics of the document.

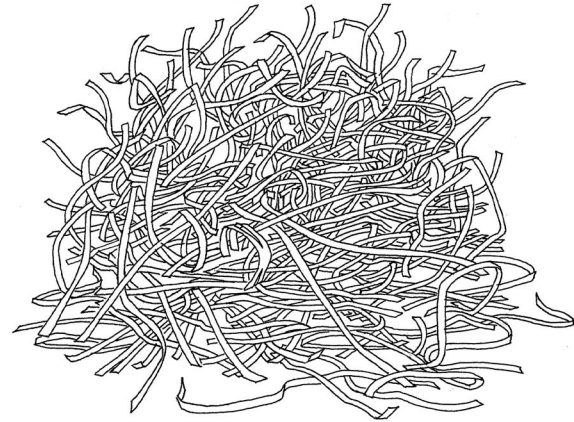
Use paper color and weight, distinctive type fonts, illustrations, and logos to establish which is the document you are trying to restore. Find an unshredded document or letter from the same sender as a model.

## 2 Sort the shreds.

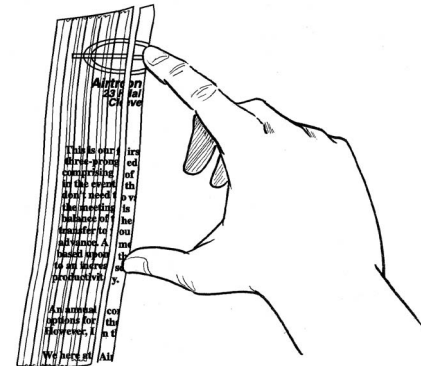
Using the identifying characteristics of the stationery, and comparing the angle of the edges of each shred, begin to organize the shred strips. Separate and discard shreds from other documents until all remaining shreds are from the target document.

## 3 Begin paste-up.

Place the first shred vertically on your paste-up board (a whiteboard works well) using clear, removable tape. Using the same orientation, place a second shred alongside the first. Compare it against one side, then the other. If it is a match, tape it down next to the original shred. If it is not, lightly tape it down an inch away, parallel to the first strip.



*Sort shreds by distinctive color, type, and design. Discard shreds not from target document.*



*Tape each shred in place to re-assemble document.*

**4 Repeat.**

Continue comparing strips. Keep the “raw” (uncompared) strips separate from the “rejected” (compared but non-matching) strips. If you run out of room, use a second paste-up board. Join matching strips as soon as the match is discovered.

**5 Copy the reconstituted document.**

When the document is re-assembled, sandwich taped strips between two sheets of clear overhead projector film or clear contact paper and photocopy.

**Be Aware**

- A three-page document will have 100 to 200 shred strips, and reassembly will take 1 to 2 hours, depending on skill level.
- Cross shredders, which shred documents in both directions, make salvage virtually impossible.

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