

# TIPS FOR EMAIL MANAGEMENT

For Information Technology Managers

## IS IT AN EMAIL RECORD?

An email record has these characteristics: **Content, Structure, Context, Fixity**, and is maintained as **Evidence** of an organization's activity(s). Records may be transient, intermediate, or permanent. For the definition of a record, see: [ORC 149.011\(G\)](#). Examples:

- **YES:** An email message informing you of a committee meeting that requires your attendance, meets all the above criteria and should be treated as a record.
- **NO:** An email message from your significant other asking you to pick up a gallon of milk on the way home has content, structure, and fixity, but it lacks context and evidence of the organization's activity and should be treated as a non-record.

## PUBLIC RECORDS CHALLENGES

- Accessibility in original format
- Maintained in a manner to preserve contextual information
- Maintained in a manner to facilitate access and retrieval

## MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES AND APPROPRIATE PRACTICES

**WHO KEEPS THE MESSAGE?** Usually the Sender and intended Recipient maintain the Record Copy. Multiple recipients (especially CCs and BCCs) should not retain the message.

### **HOW DO WE FILE EMAIL?**

- By retention time
- By record series
- By project, subject, etc.

**EMAIL USAGE TO FACILITATE MANAGEMENT:** By using descriptive subject lines, you are helping the recipient to identify and file email messages. It also helps you to file your OUT/Sent box messages that should be retained for a period of time.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Must be clearly defined to ensure compliance with Ohio ([ORC 149.43](#)) and Federal law
  - Identify Roles
  - Determine responsibilities
  - Adopt and implement procedures
- Train staff
- Monitor compliance regularly
- Preserve data integrity, confidentiality and physical security

## ENSURE THE FOLLOWING

- Up-to-date systems documentation
- Appropriate system security
- Ability to retain data and audit trails
- Rules of evidence require that the system be reliable...
  - ...to assist in litigation
  - ...to ensure admissibility in court
  - ...to demonstrate that an organization adheres to its records management policies and procedures
- System administrator has authority and capability to institute a “legal hold” process
- Record copy is identified and maintained
- Backups are regularly...
  - ...performed
  - ...consistent
  - ...coordinated with disposition
  - ...not being used as an archive

## STORAGE STRATEGIES

If we more faithfully dispose of the non-records and transient records in a timely fashion, we are left with a more manageable set of records that truly require our attention.



Further information is available at [Guidelines for Managing Email](#).

## STORAGE OPTIONS

**ON-LINE STORAGE:** the storage of email messages, along with their metadata and attachments, with the email system.

### ➤ PROS

- Maintains full functionality of the email message
- Timeliness of searchability, access, and reuse

### ➤ CONS

- Costly
- Unable to “capture” as a record
- Manually manage lifecycle
- System performance

**NEAR-LINE STORAGE:** requires the removal of the email message, along with its metadata attachments from the email system for storage within an electronic recordkeeping system.

### ➤ PROS

- Ability to “capture” the email as a record
- Automated lifecycle management
- Timeliness of searchability and access

### ➤ CONS

- Costly
- Potential loss of functionality for reuse as an “email”

**OFF-LINE STORAGE:** the storage of email messages, metadata, and attachments outside of an electronic recordkeeping environment.

### ➤ PROS

- Ability to “capture” the email as a record
- Ability to integrate one’s paper-based and electronic recordkeeping systems

### ➤ CONS

- Loss of functionality for reuse as an “email”
- Potential loss of metadata
- Loss of searchability and multiple access points
- Manually manage lifecycle