

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.

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



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