

Managing Your E-Mail

How Many E-Mails?

- According to University of California at Berkley, researchers estimated in 2000 that 31 billion e-mails are sent daily.
- By 2005 – est. 60 billion.
 - Fall 2004, VT totaled 2-3 million/day

E-Mail Defined

- **E-Mail is a document created or received on an electronic mail system, including brief notes, more formal or substantive narrative documents, its Metadata, and any attachments that may be transmitted with the message. E-Mail may or may not be a public record.**

Public Record Defined

- **“...recorded information that documents a transaction or activity by or with any... public officer... Regardless of physical form... and including any representation in computer memory, if it is produced, collected, received, or retained... in connection with the transaction of public business.”**

When Are E-Mails Records?

- Use the definition of a public record
- Ask pre-computer questions: would I have put this on letterhead or saved a written record of the content?
- Does it answer this or either of these 2 questions:
 - Document a transaction or activity initiated by me in my official capacity? (messages I originate and send)
 - Have information created as part of my official business in response to an official inquiry? (my replies)

What About E-Mail Retention?

Only Applies to Messages You Send

Retention Issues

- **Only records of origin (YOUR “send file” e-mails) require adherence to retention schedules.**
- **The content determines appropriate record retention series. There are 3 categories...**

Categories of E-Mails

- **Correspondence (GS 110-100071):** Archive/retain 3 years. Approx. 55% of your e-mails
- **Non-Records (GS 110-100072):** List servers, courtesy msgs., non-policy announcements, info-only copies. No retention required. (45%)
- **Other Records (GS 110-100073):** Dump to hard copy and retain according to the General Schedule. (less than .01%)

What about Attachments?

- Outlook stores attachments with messages.

Should I Print Out My E-Mails?

- You can't afford it! Save a tree --- But if you **MUST**:
- To be an authentic copy you need to print out all relevant parts of an e-mail
 - Message envelope (addressee, sender, date/time, etc)
 - Message text
 - Header Information (Transmission details such as date/time of sending)
- The integrity of the record relies upon these three components being maintained as a whole.

VT Electronic Records Guidelines

- VT Records Management Services has Electronic Records Guidelines in place to create awareness of e-mail issues.
- The Guidelines, available online at rms.vt.edu (under contacts), means that everyone will (hopefully) manage their e-mails efficiently.

Managing Your E-Mails

- An individual process
- Create folders to store e-mails you receive (one big hopper makes it harder to find later)
- Can sort your Sent Items if you like

Managing Your E-Mails

- Use Archive to store your messages on your computer
- Do you wish to Auto-Archive? YES
- Server space is limited, local space is MUCH cheaper
- Archiving Your Archive

Tips to Improve Your E-Mail

Subject
Signature
Formatting

E-Mail Subjects

- Subject Line – KEY to effective e-mail management
 - Clearly Express what is contained
 - Provide enough information for the e-mail to be categorized and filed

E-Mail Subjects

- Use only one subject per e-mail
- Be brief

E-Mail Signatures

- An individual preference
- Name
Title
Organization

E-Mail Formatting

- Keep it Simple!
- “HTML” is OK for basic font specification (Arial or Times only) and word emphasis (Bold or Italics).
- NEVER use “Rich Text”
- “Plain Text” is best for avoiding problems

Information Sources

- Originally presented by Jerry Palmer
Records Management, Virginia Tech
gepalmer@vt.edu

Questions?