E-mail Management Tips for Administrators

Good e-mail management helps an agency meet its legal requirements. It also allows administrators to more efficiently handle the flow of records through an agency. The guidelines listed below aim to facilitate the capture, organization and preservation of e-mail records within an agency. This document should be used in conjunction with *Quick Tips for E-mail Management,* and follows the sorting method described therein*.* This guidance corresponds with Tier 1 email management as laid out in Kris Stenson's 2/18/14 presentation *The State Records Act and Electronic Records*.

Laying a foundation:

- You need to determine what your records management requirements and capabilities are. To this end you should consult with your departmental records officer and IT manager.
- Your departmental records officer can tell you what current record series apply to your department, and what the retention requirements are for those series. E-mail messages may fall under several different series depending upon the content.
- Your IT manager can explain what your department's capabilities are in terms of content management and retention. There are many different methods for preserving e-mail, and the direction you go will depend upon the software and expertise available to you.

Training:

- All employees will require training on e-mail procedures, both at implementation and then periodically as a "refresher."
- Whether training is done in large sessions or individually by supervisors it should include distribution of the "Quick Tips for E-mail Management" document (or something similar) to employees. This serves as an easy reference for employees in the future.
- Administrators will need to inform employees which record series apply to their work area, and define which messages will fall under these series for the employees. Lower-level employees will likely have only a few series to deal with, while administrators will have more complex sorting requirements. Agencies may choose to capture entire accounts above a certain administrative level to make the process easier (Tier 2).

Implementation:

- Depending upon retention requirements you will need to decide whether e-mails will be managed within your main e-mail system or whether they will be harvested and managed as part of a wider Electronic Content Management System (ECM). Leaving the messages in the e-mail system may be easier for agencies without extensive IT infrastructure, but is very insecure. Harvesting e-mails and keeping them in a separate system protects them from tampering or accidental deletion, but requires greater resources and expertise to manage.

- Regularly scheduled disposal actions should be built into the e-mail management workflow, so that e-mail volume does not build up unnecessarily. This not only reduces IT costs, but protects your agency from legal risk in the future. Remember, no records can be disposed of before the appropriate Records Disposal Certificate has been filed with and approved by the State Records Commission. If you are unsure about required procedures be sure to contact your local records representative with any questions regarding the process.