

In most organizations I have worked as a consultant in records management, one of the **priority issues**

to be solved is how to manage email. I recently read two papers on the topic of email management. The first is a great state of the art seen from the viewpoint of the preservation of e-mail as cultural heritage. (Prom, Christopher.

### ***Preserving e-mail.***

Digital Preservation Coalition Technology Watch Report 11-01 December 2011.

[DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.7207/twr11-01](http://dx.doi.org/10.7207/twr11-01)

). The second is the internal email management policy in the Archives Nationales de France.

### ***Management et de l'archivage courriels***

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). Both have inspired me to gather in this post the most important ideas on this issue.

The **exponential growth** of email usage for both external and internal communication is usually accepted without a



corporate plan to use and manage e-mail over time. In most organizations the **responsibility** on managing e-mails relies on users (senders and receivers). In this sense it is common to find that coexist in the same organization "n" ways of using and managing email, derived by the different interpretations made by final users. E-mail is also a huge consumer of server space. It is therefore common in organizations limit the size of mailboxes; forcing users to delete emails to be allowing for sending and receiving more emails. Email is also used as a way to communicate

### **electronic documents**

as attachments. This everyday practice is the source of creation of uncontrolled copies of electronic documents.

When institutions have established a specific **e-mail policy** is commonly based on the technological or data protection point of view, regardless emails can be records to be managed.

To manage emails as records organizations can define different **strategies** that can range from:

## E-mail and records management: basic ideas

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- Print **hard copies** of emails, although the authenticity and reliability of these copies is practically zero.
- Duplicate all messages transmitted to other storage outside the server without user intervention, which is basically when the organization wants to avoid risk of e-mail destruction (solutions offered in the market are called **e-mail archiving**)
- Establish a set of **shared folders** on the mail server that allow manual or automated e-mail storage in a previously established structure without taking them out of their creation environment.
- Move the emails into the **corporate records repository** via user tools or automated systems. This usually involves the conversion of e-mails to other formats like PDF or XML (almost every EDMRS include modules to facilitate this actions)

But when best practices in the management of email as records are not settled, probably is not a question for the **future**. Some voices are heard questioning the use of this technology in the organizations. In 2011 Atos Origin announced they wanted to be a company with

### **0 e-mails in three years**

, as a means to combat information overload. The news, which occurred in February, had such an impact that has been spreading through the network for a long time and very different media have echoed it, some with intros as striking as "The death of e-mail..." Web .... Athos.

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