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Overview

The Electronic Records Management subcommittee of the Operational Oversight Committee has been charged with reviewing records management issues, with a view to making recommendations regarding an approach to electronic records management and retention by University Archives. The team has been tasked to make recommendations on two IT operational issues: 1) Storage quota size for email and 2) Should email that must be retained be saved in a user’s email account or moved to non-inbox storage?

During the requirements identification phase of this effort it was determined the topic is two-fold encompassing a strategic and tactical level. At the strategic level are the dual interrelated, yet separate concepts of records retention governed by State and Federal laws and, the archiving of university confidential or personal records for University Archive purposes to meet the administrative and research needs for access to the University’s historical record. Both of these topics are discussed further in this document.

At the tactical level, there exist the practices and potential policies as they relate to the use of our existing email systems. Under this logical umbrella reside concerns with email quota limitations, automatic deletion/dispositioning of aged emails, use of multiple email systems across university owned server systems, and, the issue of connectivity to strategic records management and University Archives retention. It is currently perceived, while connectivity between the strategic and tactical levels must or should exist, anticipated practice and policy will have to be established to bring a uniform approach to the archival and retention of desired or required information.

Below depicts an operational perspective of this discussion.
Electronic Records Retention membership:

- Jim Mullins (subcommittee lead)
- Michael Smith
- Mitch Springer
- Craig Hamaker
- Doug Foster (subcommittee co-lead)
- Mary Catherine Gaisbauer

**Records Retention**

Federal and state laws, regulations of federal and state agencies, the requirements of accrediting and other external agencies, and prudent management practices govern the retention and disposal of University records. University records must be retained appropriately and disposed of in a
timely manner to meet the requirements of external regulations. University policy V.B.3 outlines the procedures and assigns authority and responsibility for the retention and disposal of university records. Records coordinators in each of the respective units are responsible for ensuring federal and state laws, etc. are followed as they relate to their individual records retention policies. A grid outlining the records and their retention schedule can be found at:


**University Archives**

Although many of the records created by the University document routine transactions, some records are critical to understanding the history, growth, identity, and accomplishments of Purdue. In recognition of the need to preserve Purdue’s historical record, President France A. Córdova signed a resolution in 2009 creating the University Archives and charging the Libraries Division of Archives and Special Collections with responsibility to steward and preserve the items that document and comprise the historical record of Purdue University. Archives are defined as permanent records, regardless of format, created or received by Purdue University in the conduct of official business, preserved because of the enduring value contained in them as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of the University.

The University Archives exists to preserve University records of permanent historical value. These records serve as a resource for Purdue administrative use as well as for scholarly research. To fulfill its mission, the University Archives collects records of enduring value created by Purdue faculty and staff and makes these materials available for use. Examples of records of enduring value include documents such as annual reports, meeting minutes, course catalogs, strategic plans, policies, and memoranda created by administrative offices, colleges, schools, and departments; correspondence and subject files of University presidents, deans, directors, and department heads; University publications, such as handbooks and directories of faculty, staff, and students, departmental publications such as newsletters, bulletins, and alumni magazines, and student publications such as yearbooks and newspapers.

Due to pressing space needs, many records on the history of Purdue have already been lost or are stored in such a manner that they are currently inaccessible and at risk. The records currently
stored by departments across campus need to be reviewed to determine the scope of materials that are in need of preservation and the resources needed for centralized archival storage. As the records created by the University increasingly exist only in digital form, there is an increased urgency to manage and preserve them to prevent loss due to rapid changes in technology that result in obsolescence of file formats, software, and media. Work on a two year project to begin assessing both print and electronic records created and stored in departments across campus will begin in 2013 as part of a temporary archivist position funded by the Dean of Libraries.

**Current Email Practices**

Today the current email quota for the Microsoft Exchange central email system is 1 Gb per user. This 1 GB limit includes inbox, deleted and sent email. Email archives, whether stored on a user’s personal hard drive or stored on central file servers, are not included in the email quota.

The current practice for maintaining individual email accounts allows for users to delete items from their inbox and those items are moved from the inbox to the deleted items folder. Email in the deleted items folder will remain in the user’s account and be counted towards the 1 GB quota until the user permanently deletes them from the deleted items folder. Once emails are deleted from the deleted items folder they are no longer counted in the user’s email quota and are permanently deleted from the user’s account. Current settings in the Exchange email system allow for items being permanently deleted from the deleted items folder to remain on the central servers for 30 days. This 30 day period is used to retrieve emails inadvertently deleted from the deleted items folder.
**Big 10 Practices**

A brief survey of Big 10 institutions about email retention policies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Email Retention Policy</th>
<th>User Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana University</td>
<td>No email retention policy</td>
<td>User responsibility as part of department records retention policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan University</td>
<td>No email retention policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>No email retention policy</td>
<td><a href="http://archives.msu.edu/records/definitions.php">http://archives.msu.edu/records/definitions.php</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern University</td>
<td>No email retention policy</td>
<td>User responsibility as part of university records retention policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>No email retention policy</td>
<td>User responsibility as part of university records retention policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Due to the vast breadth of records retention and University Archives policy issues, the team focused primarily on email retention. Our first recommendation is that the current e-mail quota for the Microsoft Exchange central email system, 1 Gb per user, is sufficient for university needs. Furthermore, individual users should be responsible for moving email that must be retained to non-inbox storage, depending on their own choices and on university policies and guidelines.

Our second recommendation is to remove the 30 day system email retention of emails deleted from a user’s deleted items folder. Most users are unaware that email is retained on the system for 30 days after it is deleted from the deleted items folder. Keeping this email on the server once a user permanently deletes it wastes storage space and exposes the university to additional discovery risks.

Our third recommendation is to form an awareness/training program that will inform the users of the central Exchange email service how to properly maintain email records. The specifics of the awareness/training program will be left to a subsequent implementation team but should include: detailed explanation of how the email system operates, guidelines for when to delete emails, how to create and store email files, and what emails should be retained for deposit with University Archives for the historical record. Additionally, users should be made aware of the specific legal requirements for electronic signatures in cases where email is being used as an official approval process.
Our fourth recommendation is for a broader review of electronic records management, retention and University Archives processes for future OOC work, in cooperation with the University Archives initiative of the Dean of Libraries during 2013-2015.