



Records Management Advice

January 2017

Email

The management of email messages should form part of a State organization's information and records management strategy that encompasses all information created or received as evidence of business activity.

Categories of Email

Business email

A business email contains information created or received by an officer, via an email server application, in the course of his/her duties and contains information which is owned by the organization. A business email may have any or all of the following attributes:

- information which is of evidential and/or historical value, which is not captured elsewhere on the public record;
- formal communications, decisions and/or a transactions between officers or between an officer and an external party; or
- documentation of the rationale behind organization policy, decisions or directives.

These emails are State records and must be captured in the official recordkeeping system to provide evidence of business activity and meet legal requirements. Business email must be retained in accordance with the subject matter of the record and may only be destroyed in accordance with an approved records disposal authority.

Ephemeral email

An ephemeral email may be used to facilitate the organization's business but has no continuing value to the organization and is generally only needed for a few hours or a few days. Examples of ephemeral email include:

- unsolicited advertising material;
- duplicate copies of circulars;
- duplicate copies of minutes; or
- internal work-related email circulated for information purposes only.

Ephemeral email can be destroyed when reference ceases as authorised in an approved records disposal authority.

Personal email

Personal email relates to a private or personal matter which is unrelated to the business of the organization. Personal email can be destroyed as soon as staff no longer require the email.

Combination email

If the email incorporates **both** personal and work-related information, **the email is considered a State record and must be managed accordingly.**

For further information, contact the State Records Office via email at sro@sro.wa.gov.au