Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

RECORDS INVENTORY
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WHY DO A RECORDS INVENTORY?

- Shawnee State University is required by Ohio Law and SSU policy to maintain a Records Retention Management System.
WHAT IS A RECORD?

According to Ohio R.C. 149.43, a record is "any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic, created or received by or coming under the jurisdiction ... (of the University) ... which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office."
ARE THERE EXCEPTIONS?

Exceptions are such records *used exclusively* by the creator which *do not* document a university function. A faculty member’s notes used for class presentations are not to be listed on an inventory. However, a syllabus for that course should be inventoried in a record series “Course Syllabi,” but not necessarily by each faculty member – a departmental or college record series would be more appropriate.
Copies of original records that you keep for your convenience are not your records. If you start by saying, “this is my copy of . . .” then it isn’t your record so don’t list it on your inventory (e.g., P.O.s, R.F.P.s, Deposit Transmittals, etc.). However, if you use a Pcard, then you do have the original records and must list Pcard transactions as a record series.
WHAT IS A RECORD SERIES?

A record series is defined as a single type of record, or a set of records concerning one function or purpose. A record series could be student applications, faculty evaluation summaries, maintenance record for a copier, minutes of meetings, etc.
WHAT IS A NON-RECORD?

A non-record is any document, device or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic, created or received that **DOES NOT** serve to document the institution, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities. Non-records may include, but are not limited to:

- Personal correspondence
- Non-SSU publications
- Listserv materials
- Junk mail/spam
- Catalogs
- Journals, books, other library materials
- Faculty papers (faculty papers are the property of the faculty member, not the University)
WHAT ARE TRANSIENT TRANSITORY RECORDS?

A significant amount of documents that we handle on a daily basis have a very short retention span or no retention requirements at all. When we appropriately dispose of these records, we can more effectively expend our energies on managing those records of intermediate, long term, and indefinite retention that requires our attention.
In handling of transient/transitory documents one needs to consider how they handle their “snail mail” at work and home:

- Review the document’s content
  - If it is a non-record, then toss it into the garbage or recycle bin immediately;
  - If it is a transient/transitory record, then place it in a file or sub-file that is designated for periodic review and dispose of as soon as allowable.
Transient or transitory records have a very short-lived administrative, legal or fiscal value and should be disposed in an appropriate manner once that use has expired. Typically the retention is not a fixed period of time and is event driven; it may be as short as a few hours and could be as long as several days or weeks. Transient/transitory records may include, but are not limited to:

- Preliminary drafts (when superseded)
- Memoranda pertaining to scheduling an event
- Documents designated as superseded or as updated
- User copies (not original documents)
- Routing slips
- Voice-mail
HOW DO I DETERMINE THE RECORDS RETENTION PERIOD?

The simple answer is: you don’t!

See your section of the current Records Inventory on the Records Retention web page; (http://www.shawnee.edu/offices/records-retention/) to review the list of records already reported. The Records Commission has set the retention period for all of records already reported and will do the same for future submissions of new record series.
HOW DO I DETERMINE THE RECORDS RETENTION PERIOD? (CONT...)

- Shawnee State University utilizes the Inter-University Council of Ohio (IUC) to assist in determining retention periods.
- The IUC Retention manual may be viewed at the following web page: http://recordsmgt.ysu.edu/pdfs/RecordsRetentionManual.pdf
Email is not a record type or series, but it is a means of conveying information similar to the United States Postal Service. As such, its retention is based upon the content of the email message, not the fact that it is an email message.
WHAT IS EMAIL?

An email message is comprised of the following components:

- Textual message
- Metadata (To, From, Subject, Time, Date, System, etc.)
- Attachments

As such, each component is part of the record or non-record. If an email message meets the criteria of a record, it must be managed as such with as much effort and vigilance as one would a “traditional” record.
EMAIL MANAGEMENT

The key to effectively managing email is to get rid of the non-records and any transient/transitory records that have outlived their administrative/legal/fiscal value as quick as possible so that one is left with a small percentage of what they have sent and/or received.
Open the email and review the document’s content; this may mean thoroughly reading the document, but one should be able to judge just by a cursory look at the document, subject line, and/or the sender

- If it is a **non-record**, delete the message outright, just as one would dump snail mail non-record into the trash can or recycle bin;

- If it is a **transient/transitory record**, place it in a folder or sub-folder that is designated for periodic review and dispose as soon as allowable.

- If it is a **record**, place it in an appropriate folder by record type/series, project, retention time, or other filing schema that works to allow you to effectively manage the life cycle of the record.
Categorizing and managing email is much more straightforward when we utilize intelligent and information rich subject lines. Here are some examples of good and bad subject lines:

**Good:**
- Minutes Exec Committee 20090630
- SIS Project Meeting Tuesday 7/4 – are you available?
- Need advice regarding records management

**Bad:**
- Minutes
- Available?
- records question
EXAMPLES OF EMAIL FILING SCHEMA

Retention Time

Record Series

Project Names/Categories
ON-LINE STORAGE

On-line storage of email should be on university servers and not desktop computers. Servers are backed up regularly whereas desktops may be rarely backed up. In the event of a disaster, one needs to be able to restore their records to maintain continuity. If choosing this method, be diligent in deleting non-records immediately and transient/transitory records as soon as possible so as not to bog down the operating system.

Advantages

• Ease and timeliness of access
• Searchability
• Re-use

Disadvantages

• Unable to truly “fix” email as a record
• Manually manage the life cycle
Off-line storage is the printing, filing and storing of email messages and attachments in a paper-based filing system. One has to be deliberate in capturing both the message and its attachments.

**Advantages**
- Ability to “fix” and declare it as a record
- Ability to integrate with other paper-based records

**Disadvantages**
- Loss of functionality as an email and subsequent re-use
- Potential loss of metadata
- Not electronically searchable and retrievable
MORE QUESTIONS?

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