



STATE RECORDS OFFICE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

INFORMATION SHEET - EMAIL RECORDS

Management of email messages that are State records should not occur in isolation from the management of other paper-based or digital records. It should form part of an information and records management strategy that encompasses all the information created or received by a State organisation as evidence of its business activities.

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 organisation. A business email may have any or all of the following attributes:

- information which is of evidential and/or historical value and is not recorded elsewhere on the public record;
- formal communications and/or a transaction between officers (for example a report or submission) or between an officer and another party; or
- documents the rationale behind organisation 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 for as long as required, giving consideration to the subject matter of the record, and may only be destroyed in accordance with an approved records disposal authority.

Ephemeral email

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

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 to be considered a State record and must be managed accordingly.**

Further information:

For further information, contact the State Records Office on (08) 9427 3365 or via email at sro@sro.wa.gov.au.