

## **BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGEMENT OF LOTUS NOTES EMAIL RECORDS** **September 4, 2003**

**All information in a Lotus Notes email system workspace is a record.  
Following are best practices for managing those records:**

**1. GROUP MAILING LISTS - Information regarding recipients of an email which needs to be preserved.**

If group mailing lists are used, following are the best practices. All best practices include the use of enhanced Internet email addresses defined by RFC 822 standard (Request For Comments)  
<http://www.fags.org/rfcs/rfc822.html>. Example: "Joe Smith"  
<[JSmith@notes.state.ne.us](mailto:JSmith@notes.state.ne.us)>.

- A. **Grouplist Retention – system method.** A periodic snapshot of the group list should be retained.
- B. **Grouplist Retention – individual method.** If a User uses a personal group(mailing list), the User may:
  - 1. Print out the current group and save with the communication or
  - 2. Copy and paste names into the communication and save as one document.
  - 3. In either case, ensure all recipients will print (i.e. "bcc").

**2. FOLDER STRUCTURE - Email needs to be retained for a specified period of time and deleted after the retention period has been met. Folders in Lotus Notes can be designed to provide a method for managing email retention and deletion.**

Folders containing records defined as Communications (see 124-1-11) will be determined on an agency level. Each agency may create a record series to be included in their agency specific Records Retention Schedule if they choose to further define this series for their agency staff or choose series 124-1-11 as their policy.

- A. **Long-term Retention.** Folders should be created and labeled to enable the Agency to apply their Records Retention Schedules.
  - 1. Folders may be created by topics with sub-folders labeled with disposition dates underneath.
  - 2. Folders may be created with disposition dates with sub-folders labeled with topics underneath.

- B. **Medium and Short-term Retention.** Folders having disposition dates of “Dispose of at will” and “Dispose of at the sender’s/recipient’s discretion” (see *Non-record Communications* 124-1-11-1 and *Short-Term (Ephemeral) Communications* 124-1-11-2) may have the same type of folder structure applied as shown in 1. or 2. above, but the disposition date assigned (which should be no greater than the medium term retention) would be up to the agency.
- C. **Pending Retention Assignment.** Folders containing records that do not have a specific disposition date yet determined (i.e. project records which are still active (see *Project Related Communications* 124-1-11-5) would not be assigned a disposition date until the completion of the project. Upon the completion of the project a disposition date of 8 years (for State Archivist review) would be assigned.
- D. **Emails in Multiple Folders.** An email stored in a project folder can be added to any number of folders for cross referencing. For example, a document stored in a folder named “Lotus Notes Retention” may be added to another folder named “retain until 2005”. That way, the documents are located in the right project folder, but they may also be located when they are ready to be deleted.
- E. **Sending, Saving and Deleting Emails.**
  - 1. When sending emails, the “Send and File” option should be used. Do not use the “Send” option.
  - 2. Do not ‘delete’ emails from the “SENT”, “ALL DOCUMENTS” or “DISCUSSION THREADS” (R5) and “MAIL THREADS” (R6) views; however you may ‘remove’ them.

### 3. FULLY PURGING DELETED EMAIL

- A. **Enable the “Do not overwrite free space” feature.**  
(Lotus Notes has a feature that allows you to disable the overwriting of free space. If someone has access to the .NSF file it may be possible for them to read the deleted text when overwriting of free disk space is enabled.)
- B. Transaction logs and temp files are systems management tools and should be deleted when their purpose has been served.

### 4. LOTUS NOTES SYSTEM LOGS – Individuals monitor their own email for retention purposes, but “systems” also have records that need to be managed by Records Retention Schedules.

The best practice for this element must be addressed and a records series

included in the Records Retention Schedule by the agency where the system resides (host server). In the case where several agencies reside on a system log (i.e. IMS, NOL, DOC, etc.), this records series must be added to the host agency's Records Retention Schedule with input from the agencies they are hosting.

**5. E-MAIL RECORDS OF TERMINATED/TRANSFERRED EMPLOYEES**

Email of terminated employees is subject to Records Retention Schedules and measures need to be in place to insure that the Records Retention Schedule is followed. The best practice for this element is to establish an agency policy that requires a manager or supervisor to review the email of terminated/transferred employees with the responsibility to adhere to the current Records Retention Schedules. In addition, an agency should establish policies and procedures for the moving and storing of any email requiring further action and retention.

**6. LOTUS NOTES ARCHIVING – Archived email in Lotus Notes is no different than any other email and is subject to Records Retention and Disposition Schedules.**

Lotus Notes archiving is simply moving inactive email out of the active database to another database or server to free up mail server storage space. This, in itself, is a best practice. An agency should develop a policy regarding this process which takes into consideration:

- A. Maintaining the original folder structure.
- B. Compliance with the Records Retention Schedules.

**7. EMAIL USE COMPLIANCE – A simple documentation of email retention policies is not enough. Agencies must define methods to monitor and assure compliance.**

An Agency compliance policy should be developed which includes the following:

- A. Standard email categorization rules that email users must follow.
- B. Compliance with the Records Retention Schedules.
- C. Certification process by all email users (training procedures and verification).

- D. Analysis of compliance by looking for the exception, rather than the rule.
- E. Completing periodic Records Disposition reports verifying the application of agency Records Retention Schedules as a process performed in the regular course of business.

**8. BACKUP/BUSINESS RECOVERY TAPE MANAGEMENT – Email copied into back up tapes is not considered a primary copy of any email and is managed, en masse, by the systems administrators. However, the data on these tapes must be managed based on documented and established retention policies by each agency.**

Backup tapes fit the statutory requirement of the definition of a record. However, backup tapes for business recovery cannot be used for records management (i.e. Archiving or preservation). Each agency must develop their own policy, define the retention period for backup tapes and add the item and retention period to their agency Records Retention Schedule. The best practice regarding backup/business recovery tapes is to retain these tapes the *minimum* amount of time to perform the necessary business recovery objectives, then erase.

**9. MANAGING ATTACHMENTS – Documents transmitted as attachments inside email are subject to Records Retention Schedules. It is possible to remove the attachment from the email, but if it is a primary document, certain restrictions must be respected.**

Attachments to email may be detached as long as:

- A. A note is placed in the email communication as to the new location of the attachment.
- B. The attachment is stored on backed up media.

Attachments detached from the original email communication become separate records and must be retained according to the agency Records Retention Schedule. After detachment takes place, the email communication may be viewed as a separate record and classified appropriately.

**10. REMOTE OR HOME PC USAGE OF LOTUS NOTES EMAIL**

Employees using Lotus Notes email remotely should:

- A. Be registered with their agency. Registration policies should be developed by each agency for this purpose.

- B. Never leave a copy on the home or remote computer. Employees may detach records from Lotus Notes to perform work remotely; however, when the work is completed, the records detached must be returned or emailed back to Lotus Notes before sign off. All documents must be retained on agency equipment. *Do not save any records accessed through remote email on a home or remote PC.*
- C. Always log out or sign off after remote usage.
- D. Agencies should make all remote users aware of their risk of discovery by using Lotus Notes remotely.

**11. METADATA – The detailed information (in addition to name, date, time and email address) attached to each email.**

Each agency should determine if metadata needs to be retained when emails are printed. Lotus Notes does not have this capability, so third-party software would be required.