

## **FAQs for Email Retention**

(i.e. What can I delete and what can I keep)

### **Why should I worry about the retention of my email?**

Email is a record and according to Ohio Rev. Code §149.43, a public entity such as Kent State University has a duty to retain all public records for inspection.

### **What is a public record?**

A record is defined as

1. Any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic;
2. That has been created or received in the course of University business; and
3. Which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities.

*Basically, an email is no different than any other paper record created during the course of a day. There is no separate retention schedule for email.*

### **Who determines if the email meets these requirements?**

Each individual employee is responsible for making this determination. Employees can turn to the records retention schedules to see if find examples of records that must be kept.

### **What emails will have the shortest retention period?**

Emails that contain information that has very short-lived value, or “transient records”, may be disposed of once it no longer is needed (usually a few hours or days). Transient records include:

- Preliminary drafts (when superseded by a final version, the draft can be discarded);
- Memoranda pertaining to scheduling an event (getting everyone’s schedules together);
- User copies (not original documents);
- Routing slips.

### **What are some examples of emails that are non-records that I can delete?**

Several emails received throughout the course of the day do not document the University and its functions, and may be disposed of immediately. These include:

- Personal correspondence (discussions about non-University issues);
- Non-university publications;
- Listserv materials;
- Junk mail/Spam;
- Catalogs or commercial ads;
- Journals, books, or other library materials;
- Attachments that contain documents that were not created by the University, and/or for a University purpose.

*If you have any questions regarding the retention of email, please call the Office of the General Counsel at x2982 or send a detailed email to: [legal@kent.edu](mailto:legal@kent.edu)*