WHITE PAPER

THE NEED TO MANAGE EMAILS – THE NEED FOR GEM 5.0

Why?

Corporate Records and Emails

Every business has the obligation of managing its records properly. There are both common sense and legal reasons for doing so. Try destroying all of your corporate records and then surviving a tax office audit. Try destroying all of your corporate records and then trying to find out who owes you money and why. Try destroying all of your vital records and then rebuilding your business after a fire. Try destroying all of your corporate records and then winning a court case.

Apart from criminals and con men, there can't be anyone who doesn't believe in managing corporate records and who doesn't think that it is a smart, sensible and prudent thing to do.

So, what are corporate records, and what is their relation to electronic document management and emails?

The international standard, ISO 15489, defines corporate records as:

"recorded information, in any form, including data in computer systems, created or received and maintained by an organization or person in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity."

AS 4390 also defines documents as:

"structured units of recorded information, published or unpublished, in hard copy or electronic form, and managed as discreet units in information systems."

So what does all this mean? Put simply it means that every business should be managing all of its records and that these records include paper, electronic documents **and emails**.

In my experience, most organizations do a fair to middling job of managing paper records and an abysmal job of managing electronic records and emails.

Is this because electronic records and emails are less important?

Given that electronic records would include quotes, contracts, replies to complaints (all possible key elements of future litigation or disputations) and that by most estimates eighty-percent or more of business to business and business to client communications are now by email, it sounds to me as if they are very important indeed. Certainly, they are as equally important as paper records.

So, why don't most organizations manage them as well as paper?

Again, in my experience, electronic records and emails aren't managed as well as paper because organizations think that it is:

1. Too hard;
2. Too intrusive;
3. Too complex; and
4. Too costly.

What Does The Australian Government Think About The Need To Manage Emails?

Following is an extract from the same article in ComputerWorld:

The warning comes from National Archives of Australia acting Director-General Steve Stuckey following an article in Computerworld (August 28, page 8), which outlined new software that could make e-mail disappear after a set period of time.

"Commonwealth government agencies thinking about purchasing this software need to be made aware that it is illegal to delete e-mails; this is what the National Archives would tell any court where a Commonwealth public servant was being questioned about the destruction of such e-mail evidence," Stuckey said.

In a letter to Computerworld, he says: *"While it is tempting to use products that automate the destruction of our e-mail correspondence it is worth remembering that we all have business, accountability and community requirements to keep evidence of our activities."*

Stuckey said that, without evidence, federal public sector employees are open to allegations of wrongdoing and that records are required to disprove claims.

He said all records should be kept and employees should remember even personal e-mails are technically the property of the employer.

"Keeping records doesn't have to be an onerous task" with the availability of effective electronic record-keeping systems *"because it should be a normal administrative practice"*, Stuckey said.

According to the federal Archives Act of 1983, government agencies must manage their electronic records with the same care as they manage paper records.

Federal public sector employees must not dispose of electronic records except under an appropriate disposal authority issued by the National Archives of Australia.

Compliance

What if your organization is subject to local state or federal legislation? What if you are a pharmaceutical company or a mining company or have contracts with Federal agencies? Every private organization is subject to a plethora or legislative requirements some more stringent than others but all requiring you to manage all records **including emails**.

What Are Some Other Reasons, Apart From Compliance, That We Need To Manage Emails?

- In some organizations emails represent more than eighty-percent of the paperwork for all business transactions. In some cases, emails may be your only record of a business transaction.

- In some organizations employees use email to illegally distribute company confidential information such as plans, formulae, trade secrets, source code, customer lists, etc.

- In some organizations employees use email to seek new positions with competitive organizations.

- In some organizations employees use email to harass other employees or persons with threatening, racist or sexist matter.

- In some organizations employees use email to distribute pornography.

Don't you want to know what is in your email store?
Don't you want to manage your liability?

Emails and Records Retention

All organizations, whether government or private, are required by law to manage emails as corporate records. Very few organizations do so.

There are four prerequisites to correct email management:

1. A Records Management Policy and Procedures
2. A Retention Schedule
3. An Email Policy
4. A Tool to Capture, Analyze, Index, Store and Retrieve Emails

Let's look briefly at each required component.

A Records Management Policy and Procedures

We first need to understand what a record is. In its simplest form it is evidence of a business transaction. In the context of email we need a policy to determine for our organization which emails are valid corporate records and which are not.

In the light of recent court cases this is not an easy differentiation to make.

However, it behooves us to make the rules and embed those rules within a formal policy and then make that policy operational by defining and enforcing a set of procedures. If we do this we are defining our corporate email records. If we do not do this, we take a very real risk that the courts will define it for us with usually unpleasant and costly consequences.

The contents of any email store will vary greatly from organization to organization depending upon many factors; the most important of which is the email policy (see later). Eighty-percent or more may be 'junk' or eighty-percent or more may be valuable, valid corporate records. We need to build a set of unambiguous rules that clearly tell all employees which email records to retain and which to discard. For example:

Emails to Retain

- Any email to or from a customer
- Any email to or from a supplier
- Any email containing a quotation or reference to a quotation

Emails to Discard

- Personal emails between you and a family member
- Personal emails between you and a medical practitioner
- Personal emails between you and another employee

But, we have a problem already. What if a personal email between you and another employee contained expletives, racism or sexism? What if an inappropriately worded personal email later becomes the subject of 'discovery' in a civil court case?

Difficult but not impossible to handle if, in addition to our policy and procedures, we also have the other prerequisites, namely an email policy and a tool to analyze emails.

A Retention Schedule

This component is critical if you want to stay on the good side of the courts and meet the requirements of legal 'Compliance'. A retention schedule for emails simply states how long we retain certain types of emails and what we do with them when that time is up. It is not difficult to build a retention schedule; it requires a basic knowledge of your legal obligations and common sense. The overriding 'common sense' rule? Never keep anything longer than you have to.

First, define the different types of emails you handle; keep it simple. If you get to more than thirty types scrap what you have done and start again.

For example, any email that goes on an employee's HR file can be classified as an HR record. Check with you State and Federal awards to see how long you have to keep these. It can vary from seven years to seventy years.

Most commercial emails (e.g., quotes, contracts negotiations, etc) will usually only need to be kept for seven years.

At the end of an e-mail's 'active' life there are only two things you can do with it. You can destroy it or you can consign it to long term storage in the local salt mine.

If in doubt, contact a professional organization such as ARMA (www.arma.org) or RMAA (www.rmaa.com.au) and ask them to recommend a suitably qualified consultant to assist you in building your retention schedule.

Why is this so important?

If you are ever involved in a legal dispute and the court asks for discovery of documents and you have destroyed some of those documents under a formal retention schedule as part of your normal business operations, you do not have a problem. If you have destroyed documents and you do not have a formal retention schedule and process in place you may have a very big and expensive problem.

Be smart and do not take the risk.

An Email Policy

You can't criticize or discipline employees for poor or inappropriate email practices if you haven't told them what the acceptable practice is. So, draw up your code of practice, your email policy and distribute it to all employees. Make it part of each new employees orientation package. Regularly remind all employees of this policy. You can copy a sample email policy from our website at:

http://www.knowledgeonecorp.com/products/sample_email_policy.htm

A Tool to Capture, Analyze, Index, Store and Retrieve Emails

Knowledgeone Corporation has been capturing emails for many years and we have evolved several different ways to do it. There are basically two options; you either rely on the employee to capture all appropriate emails as corporate records or you do it automatically via a rules based system. Which option you choose depends upon you organization, your industry and your environment.

Option 1 – The Employee – The RecFind-Button
Knowledgeone Corporation uses two products to satisfy this need; RecFind-Corporate, its knowledge management system (managing either a SQL Server or Oracle relational data-base) and the RecFind-Button.

RecFind-Corporate provides all of the functionality to store, index, manage and retrieve emails including a retention schedule, workflow and reporting.

The RecFind-Button is a simple to use, tiny application that we embed within your email client so that emails can be captured into the RecFind-Corporate relational database from within the email client. Staff capturing emails this way do not need to know anything about RecFind and do not have to leave the email client.

For more information on RecFind-Corporate and the RecFind-Button see our web site at:

http://www.knowledgeonecorp.com/products/index.htm

Option 2 – Rules Based, Server-Centric Automatic Capture - GEM
For those organizations that want a totally automatic, rules driven, non-intrusive email management solution we created a new genre of product. GEM (Knowledgeone Corp's email management solution) runs in the 'background' silently and unobtrusively examining each email you send and receive.

In order to have as little impact as possible on your email server(s) (GEM supports multiple servers) GEM is organized into several small, asynchronous process.

The GEM Agent 'connects' to the email server and takes a copy of every email you send and receive. It was specifically designed to have a minimal impact on your server. It writes these emails to a SQL queue on another server. A second component of the GEM Agent continually analyzes this queue in an asynchronous process comparing the characteristics of emails against the 'rules' you have built and accumulates detailed statistics. Those emails deemed to be valid corporate records (according to the user defined rules) are passed on to the GEM RDBMS for the emails to be stored, indexed and for any workflows to be initiated.

Access to all stored emails is via a 'thin' browser client called RecQuery-TC. This client provides a secure search capability on all emails enterprise wide. Searches can be made against almost any aspect of the email including sender, receiver, subject, body text and the text of any attachments. The sophisticated, multi-layer security system allows you to protect or expose emails as needs be.

The GEM Rules wizard guides you through the creation of a set of rules (based on the contents of any part of the email) to determine the right 'policy' for your organization. In addition, GEM will automatically email the GEM Administrator each day at midnight with three reports:

1. Errors seen in the email system
2. Statistics for all emails seen that day
3. Any emails that 'slipped through' your Rules (so you can continually update and modify your rules).

What About SPAM – Isn't This a Big Email Problem?

Yes SPAM is a big email problem and it will become a bigger and bigger problem as time goes by unless we do something to filter out SPAM emails before they hit the employee's mailbox.

GEM includes an Anti-SPAM engine that examines all emails against a set of user defined rules (such things as known SPAM sites, known SPAM keywords etc) and a proprietary Knowledgeone Corp algorithm based on a Bayesian filtering algorithm that instantly differentiates between SPAM and a 'good' email.

The Knowledgeone Corporation Anti-SPAM processes are designed to achieve two key objectives:

1. Ensure that SPAM emails do not clutter the employees' mailboxes; and

2. Ensure that SPAM emails do not get stored as corporate records.

What Are The Challenges GEM Solves?

Speed of Processing

GEM couldn't work if it was not optimized for performance at the email server. Knowledgeone Corporation have designed the smallest, fastest agent possible using proprietary technology and multiple asynchronous processes to ensure that the GEM Agent has the minimal possible impact on the email server.

Speed of Searching

Because we are potentially dealing with millions of objects it is imperative that any searching function be seemingly instant. GEM's searches (based on any component of the email including text of the email and text of any attachments) are built using proprietary techniques and algorithms that ensure a 'flat time' response. That is, the time to find a set of objects is independent of the number of objects being searched.

For example, a search for an email with a sender of John Smith and a subject of Contract ASE234356A will take less than a second whether the GEM database contains 100 emails or 100 million emails.

Intrusiveness

Other than the Administrator who manages GEM and sets and maintains the 'Rules' there is no requirement for other employees to do anything. GEM runs totally automatically in the background and most employees would not even be aware that it is running. GEM has no negative impact on productivity. In fact GEM has a significantly positive impact on productivity because once employees know GEM is operational they naturally reduce the number of personal emails they send and receive; knowing they are being monitored.

Dishonesty or Ambivalence

In client based email capture models there is always the risk that the employee will either delete important emails or neglect to save and index them. With GEM in place it no longer matters if the employee deletes, modifies or 'forgets' to save emails because GEM already has copies of all corporate emails and protects them in an inviolate state.

Retention

Retention policies can be automatically applied to emails according to their characteristics meeting all local, state and federal requirements.

Workflow

Workflow processes can be predefined and then automatically applied to emails depending upon their characteristics.

Scalability

One copy of GEM can support multiple email servers by simply attaching a GEM Agent to each server. There is no limit on the number of GEM Agents that may be deployed. There is also no limit on the number of emails that can be stored in the GEM RDMS. GEM's proprietary search algorithms provide 'instant' retrieval of emails regardless of the size of the RDBMS. GEM's unique architecture meets the needs of the smallest and largest organizations.

Flexibility and Configurability

The customer's GEM Administrator has the ability to configure and fine tune GEM to his site's unique and particular requirements. Almost every aspect of GEM and its RDBMS can be configured by the Administrator. These options included language, security, email capture rules, retention processing, workflow processing and SPAM interception.

Exchange, GroupWise and Domino

GEM has been written in a way that means 95% of its code is non email server specific. The only email server specific component in GEM is the GEM Agent, the component that 'attaches' to each email server. Everything else is common across all popular email servers. This means that Knowledgeone Corp is able to provide a largely common source product to users of Exchange, GroupWise and Lotus Domino email servers.

Why GEM?

- It meets a current and critical need across all industry sectors and all geographic and political boundaries. There isn't a site with more than 20 employees anywhere in the world that couldn't be up and running with GEM, completely solving the email management problem, within 5 days.

- GEM is priced such that it will have no price barriers in the selling process. It is a cost effective purchase for an organization with 20 employees and one email server just as it is a cost effective solution for an organization with five hundred email servers and two hundred thousand employees.

- GEM has been specifically engineered to be easy to install, easy to maintain and easy to configure.

- The GEM client for example (used to search for and view saved emails) is a 'thin-client/browser product that requires no installation on the desktop and no desktop maintenance.

- GEM has been specifically engineered to integrate with Knowledgeone Corp's existing customer base of RecFind-Corporate users as well as any other records management or electronic document management system, (the Gateway version of GEM).

- The integration to other EDM systems is via encapsulated XML objects, the international standard for document exchange.

- GEM solves all the known 'problems' to do with capturing and managing emails effectively and it does it in a way that makes it the least intrusive, most scalable and most extensible product on the market.

- GEM requires absolutely no employee involvement (other than the GEM Administrator).

- Unlike client-centric solutions, GEM doesn't ask your employees to spend time every day capturing and indexing emails. Being a server-centric solution, GEM removes the email management load from the employee and actually improves productivity.

- GEM works with the most popular email servers on the market; Exchange, GroupWise and Domino.

- GEM has a 20 year history of constantly improving and updating its products.

- We have averaged 2 updates per year. Each GEM update will include new and improved functionality as well as the changes required to test and certify GEM against the latest database

and desktop software, protecting your investment in our product.

- Knowledgeone Corporation has over twenty years experience in document management and ten years experience in email management. We know this domain better than any other organization.

- Knowledgeone Corporation has an experienced 1-800 support organization supporting customers in the USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand. We have all the people, tools and processes (e.g., Desktopstreaming support) to support a new generation of GEM users.

Written by Frank McKenna, CEO Knowledgeone Corporation
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