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## Email Management

The good, the bad and the ugly

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## Introduction

A mere four years ago, one of the questions in the AIIM email survey was “Which of your business interactions are likely to be carried out via email”. Today, email is pervasive across all aspects of all businesses - and is highly business-critical. For many information workers, the email client is their primary business application. They spend many hours of the office day reading, responding and collaborating via emails. Indeed, this survey shows that most also spend considerable amounts of out-of-office time checking emails and “staying in touch” with work.

Strange, then, that the email history created by these responses and interactions is so poorly maintained, and the ability of knowledge workers to search for important content within current and past emails – their own and those of their colleagues – is so poor. In a large organization, several millions of emails are handled each day. Most are of no lasting consequence, but each day there will be a significant number of important emails involving the organization in obligations, agreements, contracts, regulations and discussions, all of which might be of legal significance. In this report we will discuss how these important records are being dealt with, what policies are in place, how aware staff are of the issues, and which technologies are in use.

For the discussions within this report, an email management system may be a specialized stand-alone system, or an integration of an enterprise content management or records management system with the email client.

## Key Findings

- On average, our respondents spend more than an hour and a half per day processing their emails, with one in five spending three or more hours of their day.
- Over half have hand-held access by phones, Blackberries and PDAs. Two thirds process work-related emails out of office hours with 28% confessing to doing so “after work, on weekends and during vacations”.
- “Sheer overload” is reported as the biggest problem with email as a business tool, followed closely by “Finding and recovering past emails” and “Keeping track of actions”.
- Email archiving, legal discovery, findability and storage volumes are the biggest current concerns within organizations, with security and spam now considered less of a concern by our respondents.
- Over half of respondents are “not confident” or only “slightly confident” that emails related to documenting commitments and obligations made by staff are recorded, complete, and retrievable.
- Only 10% of organizations have completed an enterprise-wide email management initiative, with 20% currently rolling out a project. Even in larger organizations, 17% have no plans to, although the remaining 29% are planning to start sometime in the next 2 years.
- Some 45% of organizations (including the largest ones) do not have a policy on Outlook “Archive settings” so most users will likely create .pst archive files on local drives.
- Only 19% of those surveyed capture important emails to a dedicated email management system or to a general purpose ECM system. 18% print emails and file as paper, and a worrying 45% file in non-shared personal Outlook folders.
- A third of organizations have no policy to deal with legal discovery, 40% would likely have to search back-up tapes, and 23% feel they would have gaps from deleted emails. Only 16% have retention policies that would justify deleted emails.
- Overall, respondents plan to spend more on Email Management software in 2009 than 2008.

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