Chapter 13

Functional Requirements – Email Management

OVERVIEW

In Chapter 4, we indicated that there were various technology options available to organizations for capturing email as a record of a business transaction. We briefly examined the characteristics of two options for capturing email:

• Direct capture of email using an email management system; and
• End-user-invoked capture of email by saving an email to a DMS.

In this chapter, we examine the functional requirements that may be appropriate when compiling a specification for managing email using either the direct capture method or save to DMS.

The objectives are as follows:

• Consider requirements for managing email that evidences a business transaction or activity.
• Consider some technology solution options.
• Review the functionality that might apply when defining requirements for capturing email as a record of a business transaction or activity.

REQUIREMENTS ANALYSIS

Given the growth in use of email as a messaging tool for business transactions, it is important for enterprises to analyze business and user requirements for managing email. There should be a strategy to determine the most feasible business and technology solution options. These options should be examined during the feasibility study (Chapter 6).
During the analysis of user requirements, enterprises may wish to examine the volume of email generated and received by the organization. They may also wish to examine the types of emails received, as these may impact the business and technology solution option outcomes. The compelling requirement is to capture emails received or generated within organizations that represent a record of a business transaction or document the business activities.

Consequently, when examining its options, an enterprise might wish to make a distinction between different email types. These are sometimes differentiated as follows:

- **Personal email**: These emails are of a private nature and do not constitute a record of business transactions or activity. The use of the enterprise email system for personal email may be discouraged by the organization, depending on the style of organizational leadership, security issues (e.g., viruses), and risk management.

- **Transient email**: These may assist an enterprise in conducting its business but do not need to be retained for recordkeeping purposes. Transient emails may include such things as agendas for meetings, staff bulletins, or marketing material.

- **Business email**: These types of emails record a business transaction or document a business activity. The disposal of these types of emails should be subject to disposal authorities that meet jurisdictional and business requirements.

It is possible to come up with other categories, such as the discursive email that discusses the content of reports, research, or policy, and the email that seeks input to content development. If these or any personal or transient email contains any record of a business transaction or activity, then they need to be classified as a business email and managed accordingly.

Email technology and formats are evolving, and there may be implications for retrieval of email. This may not be a problem for emails that are subject to relatively short disposal periods, say 3 to 5 years, but may have implications for longer-term, indeed, permanent archiving of email. Consequently, organizations should closely consider their requirements for managing email within the context of recordkeeping, and review long-term retrieval implications of these technology-based records.

The organization should also consider the implications of any emerging use of email communication within the context of supporting revised business functions or processes, including notification mechanisms for workflow, interaction with customers using the Internet including the Web, or supporting processes associated with publishing content to Web sites.

**TECHNOLOGY OPTIONS**

When considering technology solution options, there is a diverse range of opportunities for capturing email and filtering unwanted email, and collaborating using email. However, the requirement to manage email as a record of a business transaction or activity may come down to a discrete range of options:

- Print the email and store it in physical format (paper or microfilm). The printed email may need to be associated with a physical file for the application of disposal authorities. This option is time-consuming and may not be sustainable with the exponential growth in the use of email for business communications.
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