

# E-mail Records Management in 21<sup>st</sup> Century New Zealand Government



## **Agenda for presentation:**

- Background to research (10 mins)
- Summary of online survey results and discussion (20 mins)
- Discussion (20 mins)

## **Presentation on Survey Results**

The survey process

Summary of our findings, including:

1. Respondent profiles
2. The ways that respondents store and manage messages
3. The information and training that respondents receive
4. What respondents know about the IM policies at their organisations

# The Online Survey



- Available to government employees working at Public Service departments
- We received 562 responses
- No responses from 7 departments

The purpose of the online survey was to investigate how public servants at New Zealand central government departments manage business-related e-mail messages of significant value.

We limited the scope of the research to government employees working at New Zealand Public Service departments. Online survey participation was anonymous, but respondents did have the opportunity to name their primary employer.

The survey consisted of twenty-seven questions, and took most people about 10 minutes to complete. It was available between mid February 2008 and early May 2008.

We received 562 responses. 46 of these were rejected as less than 80 percent of the survey questions were completed. Consequently, 516 responses (92 percent of the total received responses) were used in the analysis of the survey findings. From a total population of 42,015 central government employees we had a 1.3% response rate.

No responses were received from 7 of the departments. On the other hand, 3 departments, which employ about 8% of total Public Service Department employees accounted for about 47% percent of all responses.

**89% of respondents said  
that e-mail was critical  
in their work**

**86% of respondents sent  
less than  
50 e-mails in an average  
day**

The first section of the survey results summarises our findings to build up a profile of the respondents and the technical environment that they operate within.

- 51% of respondents were female
- 41% of respondents were employed as analysts or advisors, 27% as managers, 20% as administrative employees, and 12% in other occupations.
- We received responses from participants across a range of ages, including 9% who were 25 or under, and 11% were over 56.
- 19% of respondents had used e-mail at work for more than 15 years. On the other hand, 9% had used e-mail for less than 2 years at work.
- 62% of respondents used Microsoft Outlook
- 74% of respondents used a single e-mail account at their workplace, almost 10% had delegated access to other e-mail accounts and a further 10% had access to shared e-mail accounts to support business processes.
- 62% used an EDRMS to manage business e-mails.
- 89% of respondents said that e-mail is critical in their work**

The second set of research findings relate to questions we asked respondents on they send and receive from their work e-mail accounts.

We found that:

- 86% of respondents sent fewer than 50 e-mails in an average day
- 71% of respondents received fewer than 50 e-mails in an average day.

We also found that managers tended to receive more e-mails than respondents in other occupations – 39% of managers received more than 50 e-mails and 7% received more than 100 e-mails daily.

For the majority of respondents, spam messages amounted to less than one percent of all incoming e-mails. For 67% of respondents, spam messages amounted to 1% or less of all incoming e-mails. And, for 92% of all respondents, spam amounted to less than 10% of all incoming e-mails.

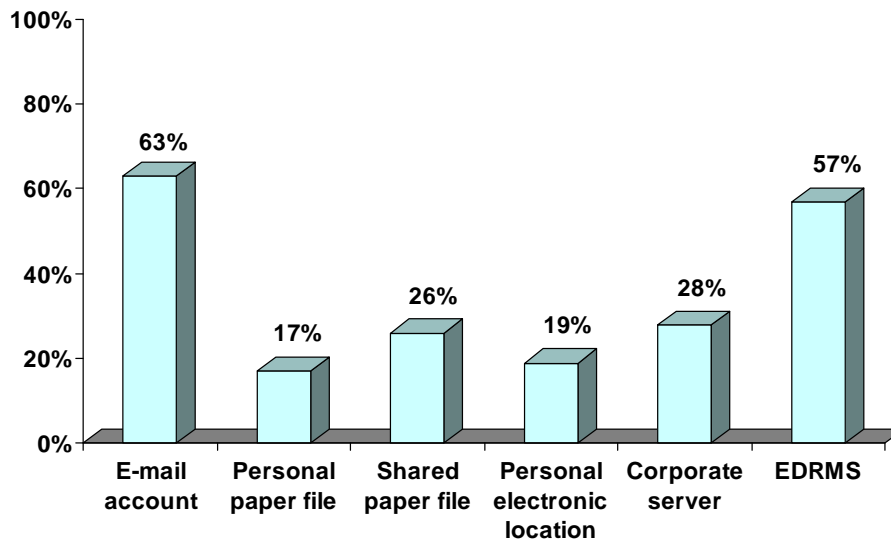
## **38% of respondents spent more than 1 hour a day handling e-mails**

We found that 38% of all respondents spent more than 1 hour a day reading, organising, deleting messages (excluding time spent taking care of issues in the actual messages).

There was little difference between the time that male and female respondents spent handling e-mails and the age of respondents did not seem to impact the time spent handling messages. However, role did seem to have an impact:

- 13% of managers spent between 2 and 3 hours handling e-mails daily, compared with 4 percent of analysts or advisors.

# Keeping business e-mails

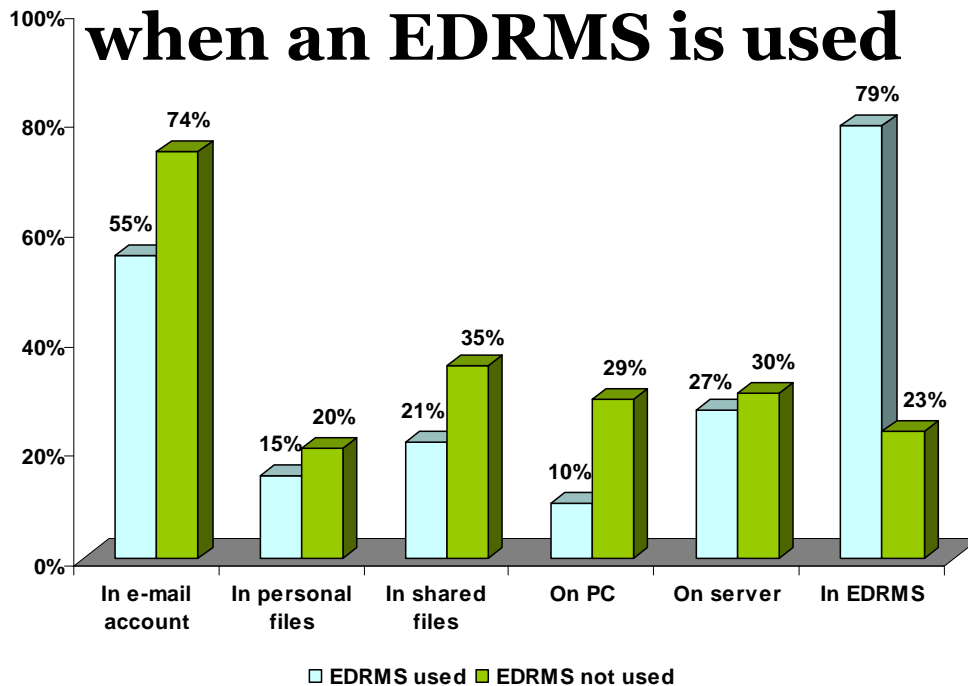


This section of the survey results focused on trying to identify how respondents managed e-mail messages. We asked survey participants to indicate on a scale of 1 to 7 across these retention methods, how they keep business e-mails.

- 63% of respondents retained important business-related e-mails in their e-mail account
- 17% filed printed copies of e-mails in personal files
- 26% filed printed copies of e-mails in shared files
- 19% saved business e-mails to personal folders on work PCs or laptops
- 28% saved business e-mails to a corporate server
- 57% of respondents saved business-related e-mails to their department's EDRMS (62% of respondents said an EDRMS was available at their workplace to manage e-mails).

In addition, 31% kept e-mails in a .pst file (62% of respondents indicated that they use Microsoft Outlook at their organisation)

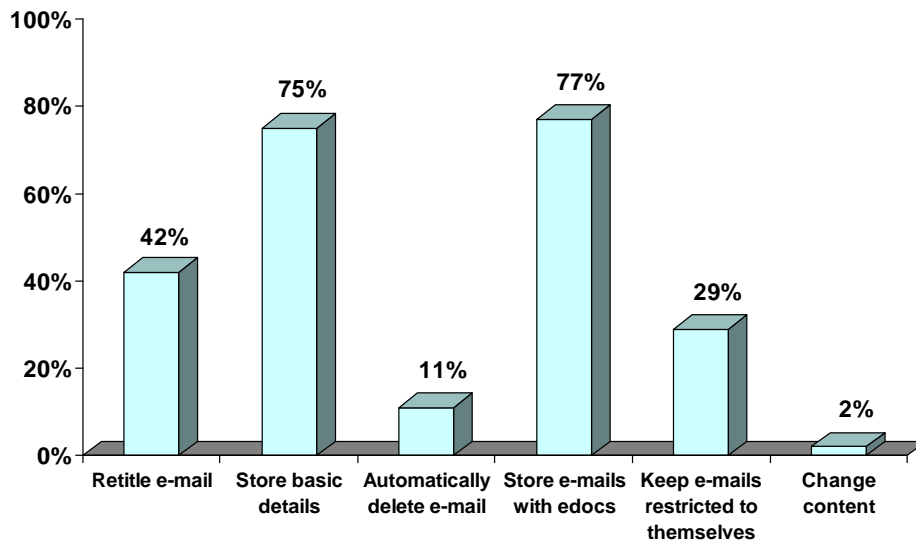
## Keeping business e-mails, when an EDRMS is used



We also compared how respondents retain business e-mails with the findings on whether respondents used an EDRMS to manage e-mails (which was a question asked earlier in the survey). And we found that respondents continued to use methods to retain business e-mails that kept the information inaccessible to the rest of the organisation, even when an EDRMS was available.

- 55% of respondents who indicated they used an EDRMS to manage e-mails also indicated that they kept e-mails in their work e-mail account.
- 27% of respondents who indicated they used an EDRMS to manage e-mails also indicated that they kept e-mails on a corporate server (like a shared drive).
- In addition, 15 percent of respondents indicated they used an EDRMS to manage e-mails also indicated that they printed e-mails and then filed them in their own personal paper files.

# Managing business e-mails

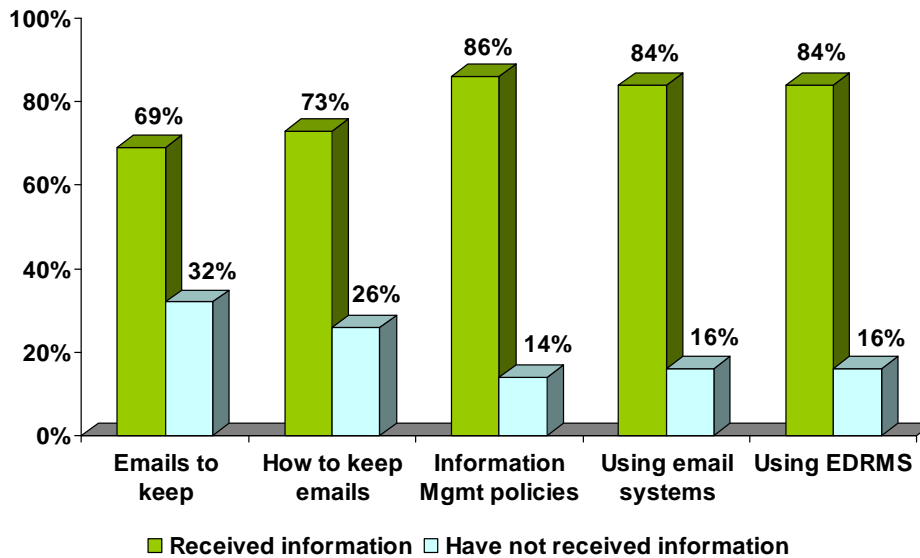


The purpose of this section of the survey was to understand the behaviours used by respondents to manage e-mail messages. These behaviours were identified from a range of resources, but in particular publications issued by Archives New Zealand.

- 75% of respondents made sure that basic details about senders, recipients and time were stored with the e-mail. And 85% of respondents stored attachments with related e-mails
- 11% of respondents deleted e-mails of significant value automatically, without opening them and 2% of respondents changed the content of business-related e-mails
- 29% of respondents kept business-related e-mails restricted to themselves

There was little difference between the time that male and female respondents spent handling e-mails and the age and occupations of respondents did not seem to impact the time spent handling messages

# Information on how to manage e-mails



To explore the knowledge that respondents had on managing business e-mails we asked them to indicate the type of information their organisation had provided them with and when they had received that information.

- 32% of respondents had not received information on which e-mails to keep and what not to keep
- 26% of respondents had not received information on how to keep e-mails.
- 86% of respondents had received information on the organisations IM Policy, including 57% who had received this information in the last 12 months.
- 84% of respondents had received information on how to use the e-mail system. We also found that 25% of respondents who had been using e-mail for less than 1 year at work had not received any information on how to use the e-mail system.
- 84% of respondents information on how to use the EDRMS, including 58% of respondents had received this information in the last 12 months

**85% of respondents  
who used an EDRMS  
had received information on  
how to keep business e-mails**

We compared the information that respondents had received from their organisation on e-mail management with the findings on whether respondents used an EDRMS to manage e-mails. And we found that respondents who used an EDRMS to manage business e-mails were more likely to have received information by their organisations on how to manage e-mails.

- 97 percent of respondents who used an EDRMS had received information on how to use the system
- 85% of respondents who used an EDRMS had received information on how to keep e-mails compared with 55% of respondents not using an EDRMS
- 77% of respondents who used an EDRMS had received information on which e-mails to keep, compared with 55% of respondents who did not use an EDRMS

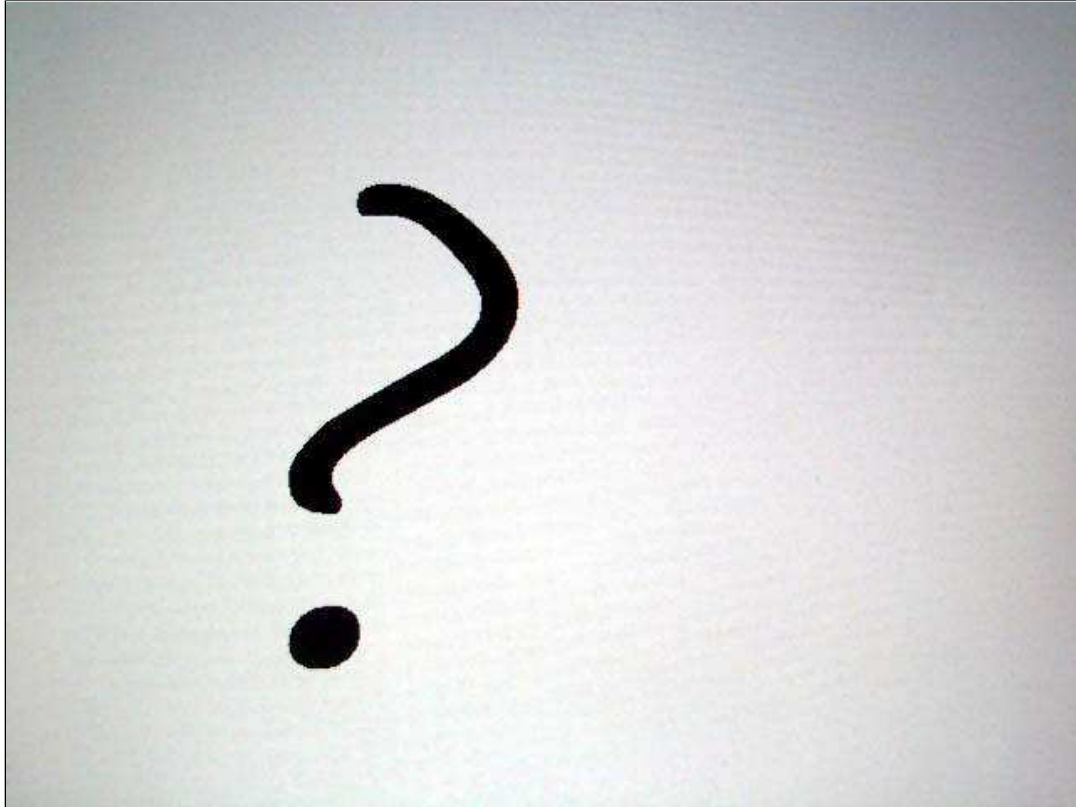
**29% did not know if their organisation had a policy on how to manage business e-mails**



We asked respondents whether they knew whether their organisation had a policy that advised them on how to manage business e-mails. 29% were unaware of such a policy. In addition, 14% stated that while they thought a policy existed, they couldn't find it.

These findings show that respondents' lack of knowledge of their organisation's e-mail management policy is quite significant; 43 percent of respondents were unaware of their organisation's policy, were unable to locate the policy, or were unable to provide a summary of their policy.





Do you find e-mail critical in your work? Why?

Are the results we found reflective of the numbers of e-mails that you send and receive?

Do our findings reflect the time you & your colleagues spend handling e-mails? Do you think this is a reasonable amount of time?

Do you recognise the e-mail management behaviours - personally and in your respective work environments? Do you think this situation needs to change? If so, what remedies can you advise to deal with these issues (what would work in your view)?

What remedies can you advise to deal with these issues (what would work in your view)?

What information on e-mail management have you received from your organisation? Have you received the right amount of information/training on this topic? (not enough – too much?) Is there any other information/training that you would benefit from receiving?

What do you know about your organisation's e-mail recordkeeping policy? Do you think this is reflective of the rest of the organisation (or do you know more/less than others around you?) Do you need to be armed with information on the e-mail recordkeeping policy to manage e-mails? Why?