

Industry Analyst Report

The Role of Email in RIM Compliance

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Target Audience:

RIM, Information Governance, and IT Professionals

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RIMtech 

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 **harmon.ie**[®]

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Introduction

Email, or more specifically, the email messages that are communicated between users, represents a significant source of important records of business value. True RIM (Records/Information Management) compliance means that these emails are assessed for their business value/relevance, and those of value are brought under control of the recordkeeping processes of modern RIM programs. Modern software solutions used to assert RIM control over electronic records of all forms (including email) are generally referred to as EDRMS (Electronic Document & Records Management System) systems. This report is concerned solely with EDRMS solutions based on the Microsoft® SharePoint® platform, where Microsoft Outlook® Exchange® is used for email.

Microsoft does not provide an easy way to move email messages from Outlook into SharePoint so they can be managed within the EDRMS system. A market has therefore emerged of software products whereby Outlook users can work on SharePoint while staying within Outlook, by making it easy to move their emails into Outlook, and to find documents in SharePoint, all from within the Outlook interface, or from mobile devices. harmon.ie is an example of such email integration software.

In this report, we explore and quantify the RIM requirements for such email integration software products, and examine how harmon.ie contributes to RIM compliance. RIM compliance is the core foundation of an information governance program – without RIM compliance there can be no information governance. Good information governance delivers the following benefits to an organization:

- **Legal Risk** - Reduced vulnerability to legal action that can take advantage of poor recordkeeping practices. Less likelihood of spoliation sanctions due to recovered “not here” information.
- **Legal Costs** - Reduced cost of defense against e-Discovery actions, through far less information exposed to the discovery process.
- **Storage** - A significant and permanent reduction in storage costs and overhead due to the elimination of unnecessary storage.
- **Compliance** - Ability to prove compliance with various legislative and regulatory statutes regarding recordkeeping.
- **Findability** - Less overall information to sift through to find the documents you need when you need them. Version tracking makes document relevance clear.

RIM Compliance Requirements for Email

For RIM compliance, the following are four minimum requirements for recordkeeping control of email:

- **Qualification** - The proportion of all inbound and outbound emails that meet the criteria of a business record must be identified separately from those emails that do not have business/records value.
- **Declaration** - Emails that meet the criteria of a record must be declared (managed) as a record. Managed as a record means the document:
 - Has been classified against the retention schedule.
 - Has been locked down to prevent edit or deletion by users (made immutable).
- **Classification** - The percentage of all declared emails that are known to be classified against the correct retention schedule category (i.e. correctly classified) must exceed a minimum threshold required for legal defensibility. The classification accuracy rate of all records must be consistently maintained above this threshold.
- **Reduction** - Unnecessary email must be deleted. This means redundant, duplicate, outdated, transient, etc.

US DoD 5015.2-STD

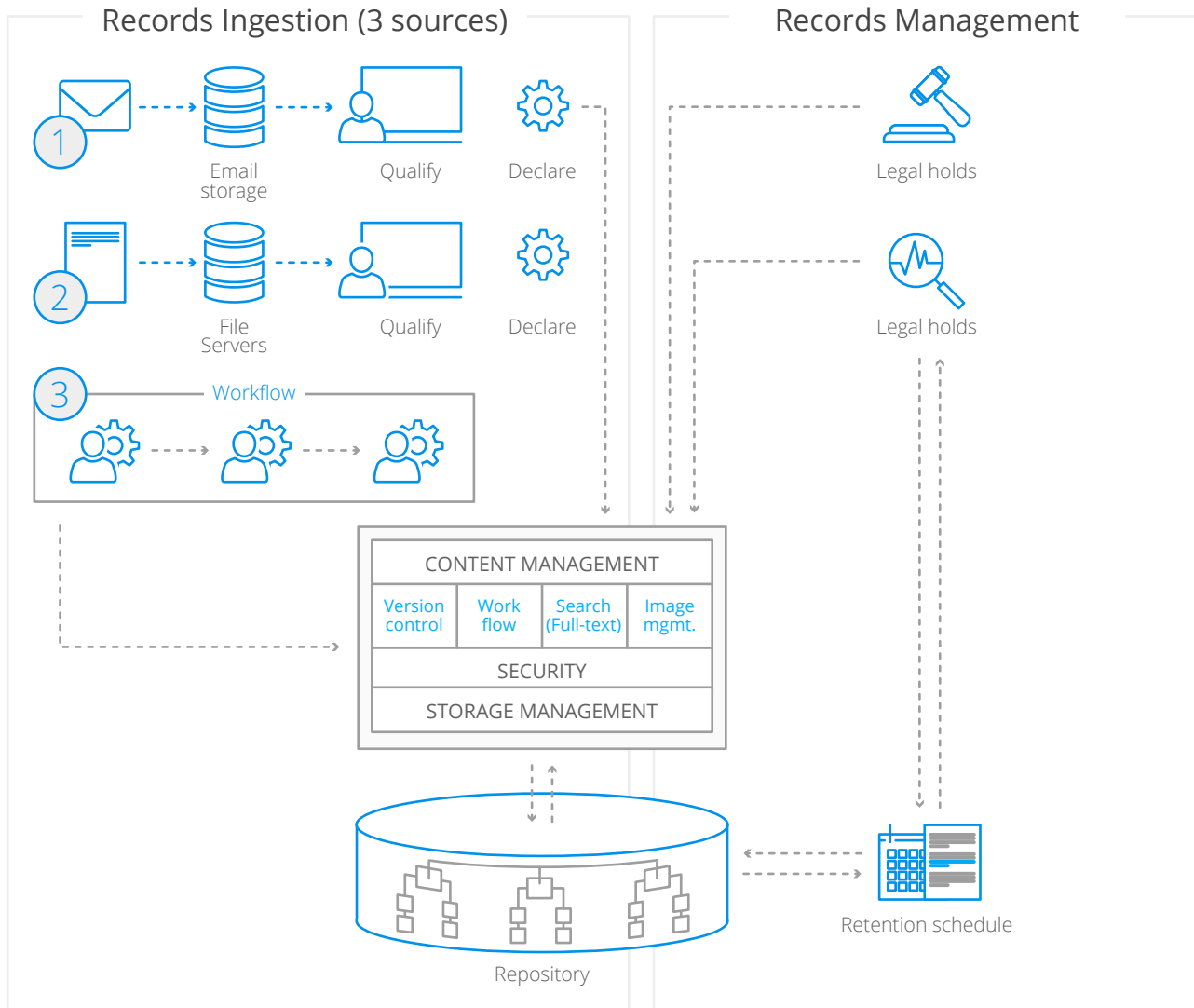
If your organization must comply with US DoD 5015.2-STD, then your email management requirements are very explicit, very strict, and must comply with section 2.2.4 of the standard "Filing Electronic Email Messages". In short, the EDRMS must have the following capabilities beyond those mentioned above:

1. Allow users to separately select the message, attachment(s) or any combination of messages and/or attachments to be filed as a record, or as separate records independent of each other.
2. So-called nicknames or abbreviated email addresses must be replaced with the sender's explicit and full email address.
3. All messages must be automatically and permanently linked to their associated attachments even if filed separately.
4. Fields from the US DMS (Defense Message System) must be automatically recorded with the message.
5. If the email is to be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration, it must be possible to store some 25+ fields of additional metadata with the email.

Compliance with 5015.2 requires that the RM Add-In software vendor build additional capabilities to meet these extra five requirements. As of the date of this report, only a single RM Add-In vendor is compliant with this standard. These extra capabilities exist entirely within the RM Add-In, i.e. they are not features provided in Microsoft Outlook or SharePoint.

How Many Emails Are Records?

Emails (email messages) and their attachments are often, although not always, important records. Which emails are records and which ones are not? According to most records definitions, any recorded information (i.e. including emails!) would be considered a record if it was created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. In a typical EDRMS system there are three “streams”, or flows, of documents that meet the criteria of records, as shown in the diagram below:



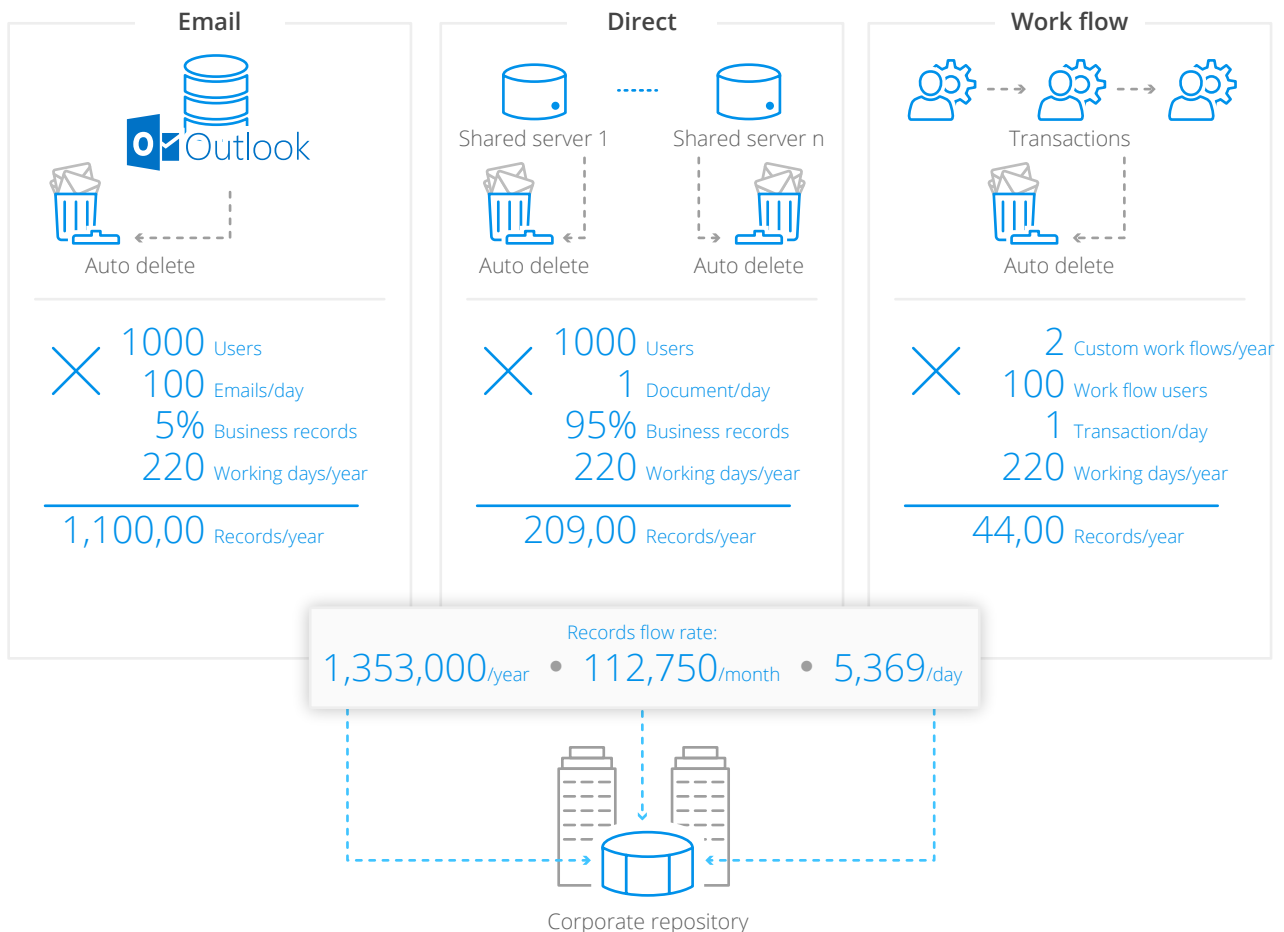
The three streams are:

- **Email** Inbound and outbound emails that meet the criteria of a business record.
- **Direct** Documents that users create. Most meet the criteria of a record.
- **Workflow** Automated workflows that generate/handle important mission-critical documents, which usually are records.

At least 5% of all email represent records that need to be appropriately managed.

Real-life measurement and sampling has shown that for every 100 inbound emails, about 5% would typically meet the criteria of a record, and therefore should (must) be managed as a record. We can reasonably infer that this percentage would be similar for outbound emails. This rate will of course vary across the organization depending on the business

function and level of responsibility, but could be much higher. In some business units (such as legal) this rate could be well above 5%. Nonetheless, if we assume a total volume of inbound plus outbound emails of 100 per day per user, we can reasonably expect that each user should declare 5 emails per day as a record. The Direct stream refers to the documents that people create on their own. We can safely assume that most often, these documents will meet the criteria of a record (perhaps 95% of the time). If we further assume that end users create just one document per day (a very conservative estimate), then we would reasonably expect about 1 document per day per user to be declared as a record in the direct stream. In a hypothetical organization of 1,000 users, we would therefore reasonably expect a total of 6 records per day from users —5 from email, and 1 from the direct stream. Six records per user per day is a good rule of thumb to use in planning and implementing any modern EDRMS system. As shown in the diagram below, we should expect 1.1 million emails to be declared as records out of a total of 1.3 million records in a typical year for our hypothetical organization of 1,000 users.



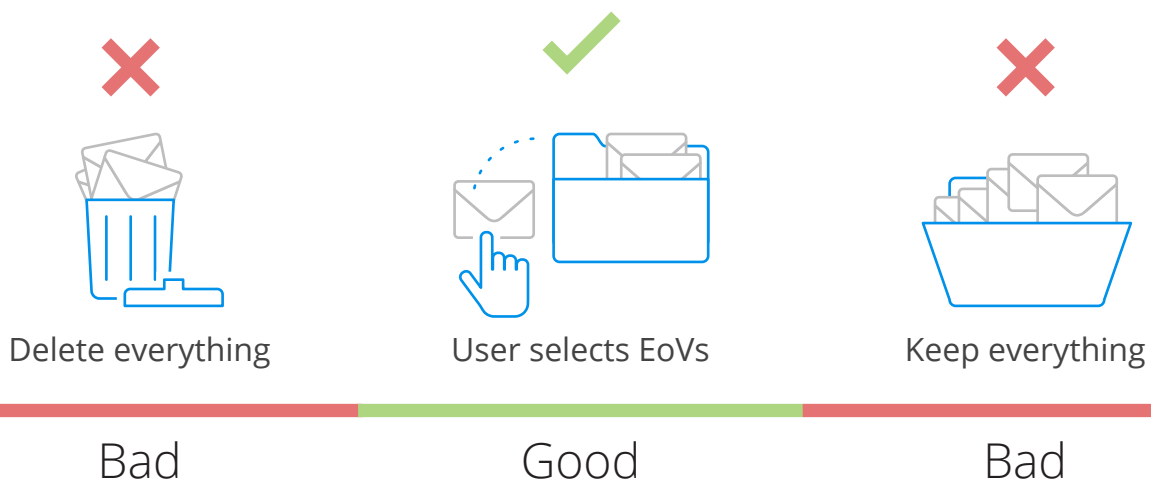
Which Emails Are Records?

In any RIM compliance setting, end users are obligated by policy to interpret their emails against the corporate records policy and determine which are records. This however is not practical:

- Users are not willing to invest the time or effort – motivation is low as there are no consequences for failure.
- The subjective nature of the definition means that users inconsistently interpret the definitions.
- Classifying the document against an often large and cumbersome retention schedule is an unacceptable level of effort.

How are users to identify those emails that are records? The short answer is – they cannot. Instead, we ask that they simply identify which emails have some value to them, what we call Emails of Value (EoVs). In any successful EDRMS implementation, email is automatically deleted after some period of time. Users will eventually lose all their emails except those they value sufficiently to save from deletion – their EoVs. Many users' selection of EoVs often correlate strongly with what they should have selected according to the definition of a record.

Instead of evaluating each email against the definition of a record, they instead simply set aside those they value, for any reason, to protect them from deletion. Deleting all emails is bad practice, as we will miss many valuable business records. Saving all emails is equally bad, as we store too much that we do not need and should not store.



In a modern EDRMS setting with email auto-deletion, records-enabled SharePoint constitutes the “safe harbor” where users can store their emails to protect them from auto-deletion. Once in SharePoint, the emails will be assigned an official retention period in accordance with the corporate retention schedule, thanks to the RM Add-In. Obviously, users need a way to easily store their records into the records-enabled SharePoint system.

Declaring Emails as Records

How does an email user declare an email to be a record? Usually, they don't – they just need to place the email into the records-enabled SharePoint. Once the email is in SharePoint, modern RM Add-in software is quite capable of handling the declaration of it automatically. Once the email is in SharePoint, whether manually or automatically declared, to be managed as a record three things have to occur to the email message:

Classified

The email is assigned to a category in the retention schedule. Categories define a specific business activity, and group together all records for that activity. The category applies a retention rule, or policy, to all documents within the category. This classification ensures the appropriate retention period is applied to the record.

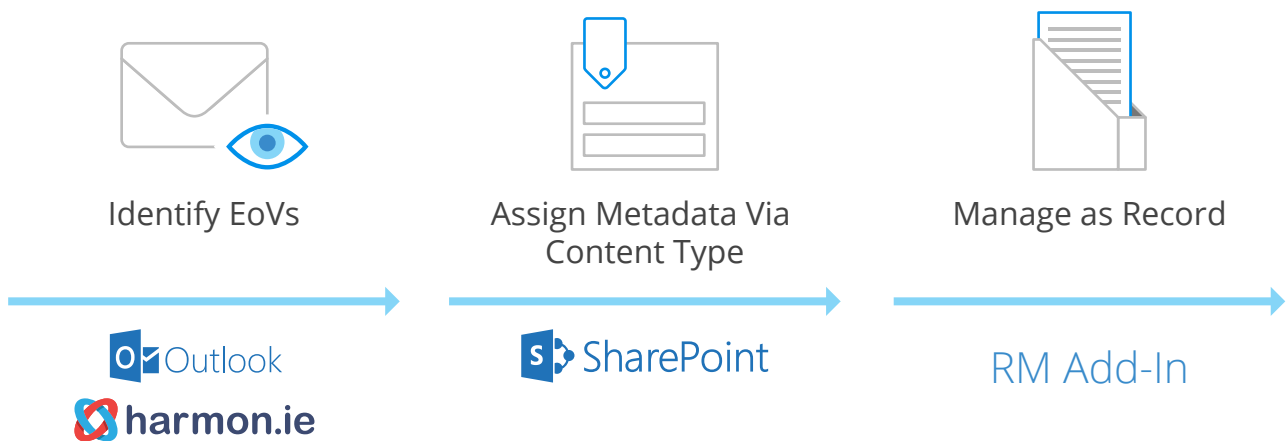
Metadata

Certain metadata fields (known as columns in SharePoint) must be assigned to the email in support of downstream recordkeeping processes. These may include such things as Case Category Identifier, True Document Date, Subject, and sometimes ancillary fields such as Approved. Metadata is necessary to record the classification of a record, and is also used to facilitate its declaration.

Immutable

The email must be “locked down” and made read-only, to protect it from accidental or nefarious deletion. Only the RIM Manager can now delete the record, and only via the legally defensible disposition process, in accordance with the retention schedule. Immutability protects the integrity of the record.

These three things will be carried out entirely within SharePoint, as shown below:



The user must somehow get the EoV into SharePoint, and that's where harmon.ie comes into play. From Outlook the user simply drags the email to the appropriate SharePoint folder in the harmon.ie sidebar presented within Outlook. The email message and any attachments are then stored in SharePoint. SharePoint now needs to assign metadata to the document. While this is a normal part of uploading any document into SharePoint, it is especially critical for a document that will be managed as a record. The RM Add-In software requires the right metadata in order to properly manage it as a record. What is the "right" metadata? This typically means most of the following fields:

- **Category ID** - Specifies the business activity (category) within the retention schedule to which this document is assigned.
- **True Document Date** - Required by non-case (administrative) records.
- **Case Identifier** - For case records, which case the record is about. For example, which contract, which employee, or which project.
- **Declaration Trigger** - Metadata fields such as Approved or Revised which are used by the RM Add-In software to decide when to declare the document as a record.

When the user drops the email into an Outlook folder linked to SharePoint, SharePoint will assign a content type, which in turn will determine the metadata to be applied to the document. How the content type is applied, and which metadata fields are required, is determined by the particular SharePoint configuration – no two EDRMS implementations are alike, as each is tuned to the particular customer's business requirements. The content type may be assigned automatically based on the SharePoint folder the user selected. Or, the user may be prompted to select an appropriate content type. A typical EDRMS implementation will usually be configured rather tightly, so that content types are preassigned to SharePoint libraries and folders, and the users will have to enter metadata fields such as the Case Identifier by selecting employee from a list of employees for example.

How is the email declared as a record? Most modern EDRMS systems use a capability called Rules-Based Recordkeeping (RBR). The RM Add-In is configured with rules that automatically act upon all documents with specified metadata values. RBR rules declare and classify those documents that meet the conditions specified in the rule. An RBR rule for instance might declare all documents where a document's Content Type = Contracting, and Contractor = Safe-Tee Security, and Approved = Yes. It would also classify it against the appropriate category in the retention schedule. Once declared, it is locked down and classified against the retention schedule. It might also be relocated to a long term storage location such as a digital archive. The RM Add-In's disposition process will later relocate the document at the appropriate time, in accordance with the retention schedule.

How harmon.ie Contributes to RIM Compliance

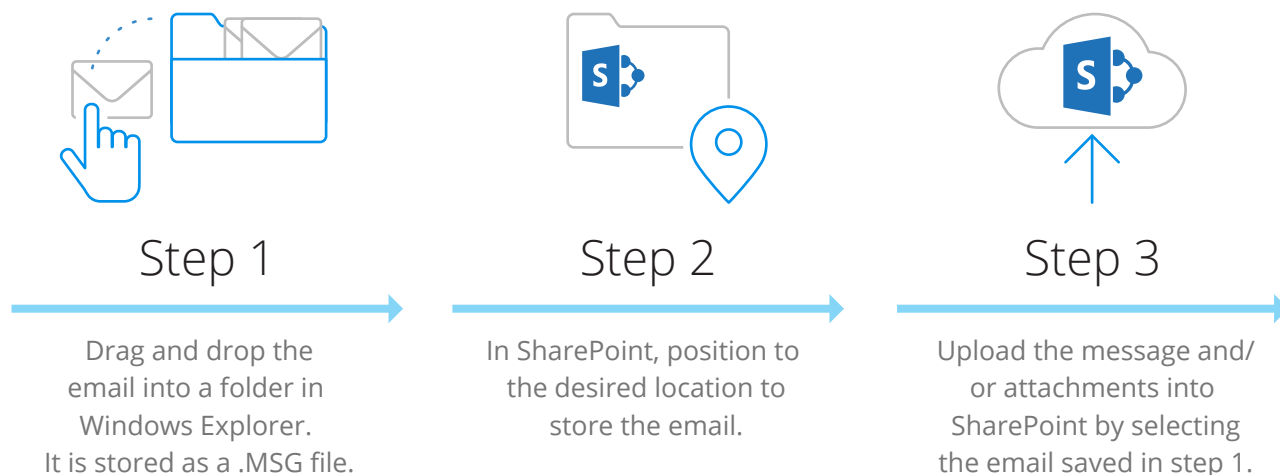
harmon.ie integrates Microsoft Outlook with Microsoft SharePoint in such a manner that Outlook email users can experience SharePoint either while within Outlook, or while operating their mobile devices (such as a smartphone or tablet). It allows the user to:

- **Store** emails and attachments into SharePoint from within Outlook on the desktop, or while using their mobile device.
- **Search** for and retrieve documents from SharePoint from within Outlook on the desktop, or while using their mobile device.

Products like harmon.ie do not directly deliver any recordkeeping capabilities on their own. When coupled with a records-enabled SharePoint implementation however, these products dramatically raise the very critical EDRMS Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of Declaration and Reduction.

Declaration

In any EDRMS, our declaration goal is 100%, i.e. to get all of the qualified records (6 per person per day) declared as records. Remember that 80% of all these targeted records are email. Without a product like harmon.ie, the user has to take the following steps to get an email into SharePoint:



This is a great deal of effort and complication just to get an email into SharePoint. And it gets more complicated when attachments are involved. With harmon.ie, the user does not need to leave Outlook at all – they can simply drag the email to a SharePoint folder displayed inside Outlook. The user can not only file messages and attachments into SharePoint, but they can also search for and retrieve documents from SharePoint, again within a window inside Outlook. This means the user’s experience can remain an Outlook experience – they need not bother to work directly with SharePoint at all.

The benefit of this cannot be overstated. This capability will significantly drive up the overall declaration rate of any EDRMS, due to:

1. Infrequent SharePoint users who do not feel comfortable with SharePoint need not be exposed to it. They can simply work within Outlook. Many management and executive users, who arguably produce some of the higher risk emails, use email almost exclusively for most of their work.
2. Less overall time investment to get a document into SharePoint.
3. harmon.ie supports mobile devices such as touchpads and smartphones. Users can move email to SharePoint no matter which device they are using, without having to defer it until they return to their desktops.

Remember that emails constitute 80% of all target records. Without users declaring email, you are likely only managing 20% of your records. And some would say that email records bear more litigation risk because of their nature. Hence, the highest volume of your records, and the greatest risk of your records, lies within email. The barriers to filing email into SharePoint are prohibitively high. harmon.ie lowers this barrier dramatically, and delivers the capability to reach your email declaration targets. RIMtech strongly recommends that all EDRMS projects adopt products such as harmon.ie, in combination with a program of automatic email deletion and a properly configured EDRMS that applies judicious use of Rules-Based Recordkeeping.

Reduction

All EDRMS Projects
require the use of a
product like harmon.ie

The only practical way to reduce the staggering growth of email is to deploy automatic deletion – an essential element of a successful EDRMS project. However, users will only allow/tolerate automatic deletion if they have an easy means of safely storing their email. “Easy” and “Safe” are the keys. Records-enabled SharePoint provides the

safe harbor. But products like harmon.ie make it easy. In an EDRMS setting with auto-deletion, users will find a way – any way – to defeat the system and store the email they value. When users have confidence in the system they are using however, and they find it easy to store their email of value, their acceptance of automatic deletion will rise, and more emails can be deleted.

With harmon.ie, an additional factor comes into play that also contributes to a reduction in duplication. Suppose a user wishes to send an email to 100 recipients, and the email has a large 10 MB attachment. The attachment can be stored in SharePoint, and the email sent with a reference to the attachment in SharePoint. Instead of 100 copies of the 10MB documents being stored in 100 different inboxes, recipients simply click on the link and view the attachment from SharePoint. All without leaving Outlook.

Conclusions

Anyone considering a modern records-enabled EDRMS solution based on SharePoint should take the following into consideration:

1. Email is likely to represent over 80% of all records eligible for RIM compliance management. This can mean a minimum of five email messages per user per day. These emails must somehow be managed as records.
2. Each email message that meets the criteria of a business record must be declared to be record, then (properly) classified against the retention schedule.
3. The process whereby an end user manually moves an email into SharePoint is prohibitively difficult. This represents a significant barrier to achieving the required declaration rates of email.
4. An email integration product such as harmon.ie can overcome end user resistance to moving email into SharePoint.
5. Judicious use of products like harmon.ie can greatly reduce records duplication.
6. Some critical metadata elements must be added to emails in order to apply applicable recordkeeping processes.
7. A properly configured modern SharePoint-based EDRMS can use automation to declare and classify most email once it has been moved into SharePoint.
8. In some settings, a substantial proportion of email is handled on mobile devices, therefore it is important that the email integration with SharePoint be available on mobile devices.

Email integration products such as harmon.ie form a very important, if not critical, component of any SharePoint-based EDRMS Solution.

About RIMtech

RIMtech is a vendor neutral consultancy specializing in electronic recordkeeping. Principal Bruce Miller, MBA, IGP is a world leading expert on electronic recordkeeping. He is an independent consultant, author, and an educator. Widely regarded as the inventor of modern electronic recordkeeping software, he created the world's first electronic recordkeeping software, authored two books on recordkeeping for Microsoft SharePoint, holds an award of distinction from IBM, and is an **Emmett Leahy Award** winner, considered the highest international recognition given to professionals in the field of information and records management. He assists organizations in the design, development, acquisition, and implementation of electronic document and records management solutions. Bruce consults on electronic recordkeeping issues such as product selection and evaluation, implementation readiness and planning, and strategy and project management, where he helps buyers plan for, acquire, and implement EDRMS solutions. He also consults with software vendors to help them attain product certification and develop recordkeeping capabilities. He publishes technical assessment reports on his website:

www.rimtechconsulting.com, and blogs on current electronic recordkeeping topics at: <http://blog.rimtech.ca>.

About harmon.ie

harmon.ie provides a suite of user experience products that empower today's distributed workforce to get work done on their own terms. We put people first, insulating them from technology complexity, enabling information workers to complete many workplace tasks directly from the friendly confines of their email client. For Microsoft customers, harmon.ie increases the adoption and return on investments for SharePoint by bringing it directly into Outlook. Thousands of enterprise customers count on harmon.ie to provide seamless information governance, collaboration, knowledge retention and email and records management using SharePoint, Office 365 and other collaboration tools. harmon.ie is a Microsoft Partner .of the Year Finalist and an IBM global partner

Feedback/Commentary

To comment on this paper, visit <http://blog.rimtech.ca> where author Bruce Miller will be discussing the .importance of email in an EDRMS system