VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Project Summary for a Study of Effective Electronic Records Management in 21st Century Government

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Introduction

The 'Effective Electronic Records Management in 21st Century Government' project is being undertaken as part of the Chair in E-Government's research programme, which intends to produce research and analysis of relevance to government agencies and the IT industry.

This research project will investigate how public servants across the New Zealand government handle emails of significant organisational value. The project also seeks to identify specifications for effective electronic record management across the New Zealand government, and to make recommendations to government agencies on how to improve email management practices that support compliance with the Public Records Act.

Key Issues and Questions

Government agencies in New Zealand are becoming increasingly dependent on email as a formal communication and information transfer tool; however, they also need to fulfil recordkeeping requirements specified in the New Zealand Public Records Act, 2005. The Act sets out three key duties for organisations: firstly, that all agencies are required to create and maintain full and accurate records of their activities and these records must be maintained in a recordkeeping system so they are accessible over time; secondly, that no person may dispose of, or authorise the disposal of, records without prior approval from the Chief Archivist; and thirdly, organisations are required to transfer records of archival value to Archives New Zealand at twenty-five years.

This research project will explore any potential gaps between the legal requirements and electronic records management practice across the New Zealand government. Moreover, the project aims to explore implications of the research findings for the New Zealand government, resulting in the identification of specifications for effective electronic record management across the New Zealand government and in the formation of recommendations to government agencies on how to improve email management practices that support compliance with the Public Records Act.

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The research will focus on the following research questions:

1. How do knowledge workers across the New Zealand government identify and manage email records of significant value and importance to their government agency?

2. To what extent and in what ways are personal electronic record management practices of knowledge workers in line with legal requirements set out by the Public Records Act (2005)?

3. What specifications for effective electronic record management across the New Zealand government can be identified? What recommendations to New Zealand government agencies can be made in this respect?

Key Details

As part of this research, an online survey has been developed, which will be sent to a representative sample of government employees working for Central Government departments and agencies. As the project seeks to identify specifications for effective electronic records management across the New Zealand government further research will include two focus group meetings with government employees and senior managers respectively.

The project will result in:

▪ a workshop or seminar for presentation and discussion of key findings aimed at key departmental officials,

▪ a written report setting out research findings, and

▪ an academic journal article.