



**SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND
SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT**

Project Summary: Effective Electronic Records Management in 21st Century Government
(Part 2)

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Introduction

This research project aims to explore how employees at New Zealand public service departments identify and manage electronic records created using instant messaging, SMS messaging, video, and/or wikis. The project follows on from an earlier project investigating effective e-mail records management 21st century New Zealand government (“Part 1”).

Key Issues and Research Questions

Government agencies in New Zealand are increasingly using newly available electronic means, such as instant messaging, SMS messaging, video, and/or wikis, as communication and information transfer tools in their relationships with the general public. With that, the question comes up if, and if so to what extent, the information sent and received via these new electronic means need to be recognised as public records. In case they are public records, government agencies concerned will need to fulfil recordkeeping requirements specified in the New Zealand Public Records Act, 2005. The Act sets out three key duties for organisations:

- 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;
- no person may dispose of, or authorise the disposal of, records without prior approval from the Chief Archivist; and
- organisations are required to transfer records of archival value to Archives New Zealand at twenty-five years.

This research project aims to explore how public servants employed at New Zealand public service departments identify and manage electronic records created using instant messaging, SMS messaging, video, and/or wikis. Moreover, this project seeks to identify specifications for effective electronic records management across the New Zealand government, as well as to make recommendations to government agencies on how to overcome potential gaps between the Act and current electronic recordkeeping practices.

The research will focus on the following research questions:

1. How do public servants in New Zealand government agencies identify and manage electronic records created using instant messaging, SMS messaging, video, and/or wikis, which are of significant value and importance to their government agency?
2. To what extent and in what ways are personal electronic records management practices of public servants in line with legal requirements set out by the Public Records Act (2005)?
3. What specifications for effective electronic records management across the New Zealand government can be identified? What recommendations to New Zealand government agencies can be made in this respect?

Research Methodology

The research methods in this project includes:

1. An academic literature and policy document study will be conducted to explore national and international approaches to and arrangements for identifying and managing electronic public records created by the use of instant messaging, SMS messaging, video, and/or wikis.
2. Semi-structured interviews will be organised with key people at New Zealand government agencies where instant messaging, SMS messaging, video, and/or wikis have been used as communication and information transfer tools in dealings with the general public and with other public sector stakeholders in relation to the New Zealand Public Records Act and/or the New Zealand Official Information Act.
3. Findings from the interviews and the literature study will be used to further scope an online survey, which will be distributed to public servants employed at New Zealand agencies where these new electronic means are being used.
4. Three focus group meetings with public servants, records managers and representatives of public sector stakeholders respectively, will be organised to explore specifications for effective electronic record management across the New Zealand government.

The project will result in:

- An end-of-project 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 paper to be submitted to a peer-reviewed international journal.

This research project will commence on 1st of October, 2008 and will be completed in 12 months by 30th of September, 2009.