

Identifying and Classifying Messages as Records



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June 1, 2010
Session T12



Session Agenda

- When is a message a record?
- Exercise 1 – Determining Records
- Classifying Messages
- Exercise 2 – Classifying Messages
- Autoclassification



WHEN IS A MESSAGE A RECORD?

When is an email a record?

- When defined by statute or regulation
- When it documents a business transaction
- When it supports a business decision
- When it is the only evidence of something
- When the attachment is the record
- When it's important to the organization**

Capturing email records

- May need to capture....
 - Messages themselves
 - Attachments
 - Read receipts
 - Bounced messages
- All of these could be records

Capturing other information objects

- Many also need to capture....
- Calendar items and appointments
- Task items
- Notes
- Contacts

Emails that are not captured

- Transitory messages that are not timely
- Personal messages unrelated to business
- “Me-too” messages
- Messages already captured by someone



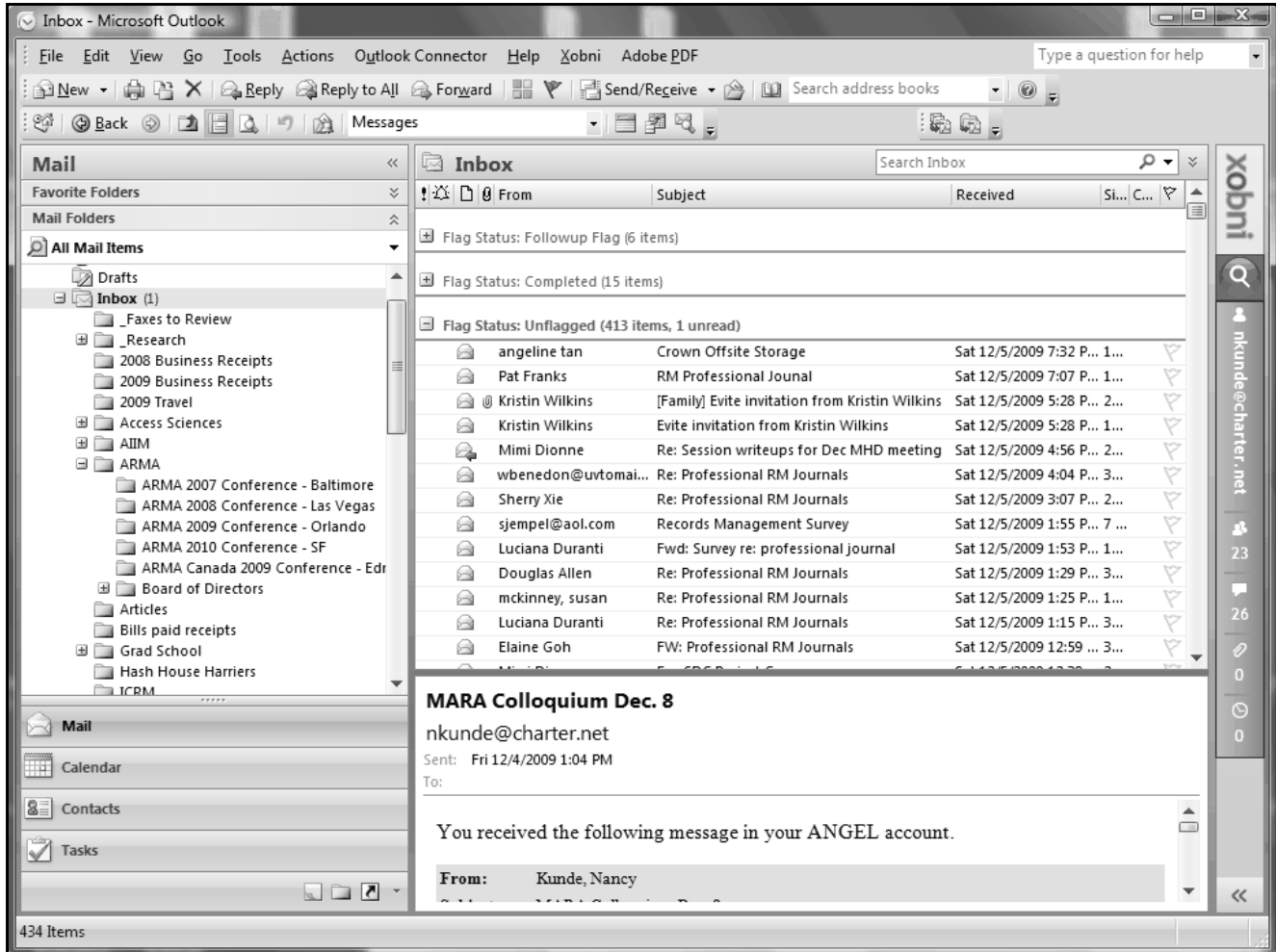
EXERCISE 1: CAPTURING RECORDS



CLASSIFYING MESSAGES

Manually into folders

- Users drag messages into folders
- Folder structure may be controlled...or not
 - Organizational taxonomy
 - Records retention schedule structure
 - Departmental file plan
 - Whatever users want to do!

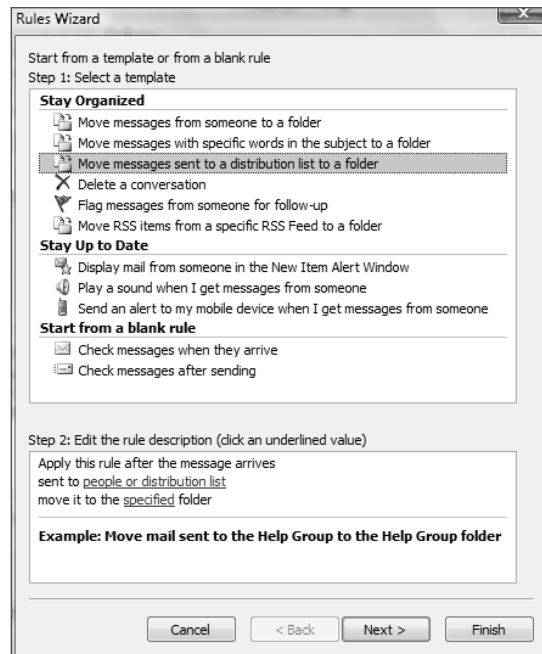


Manually into folders

- Pros:
 - Users understand what the messages are about
 - Users most likely to be the ones who need to access them again
- Cons:
 - Volume!
 - Inconsistency over time
 - Inconsistency between users

Automated, using rules

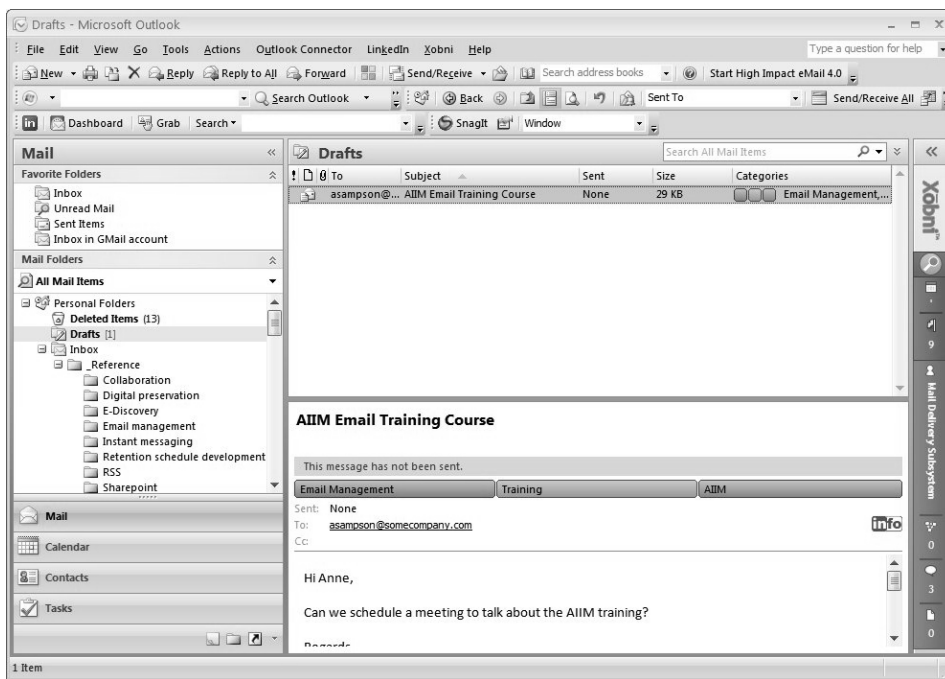
- Classification of messages that meet certain rules
- Otherwise similar to manual classification



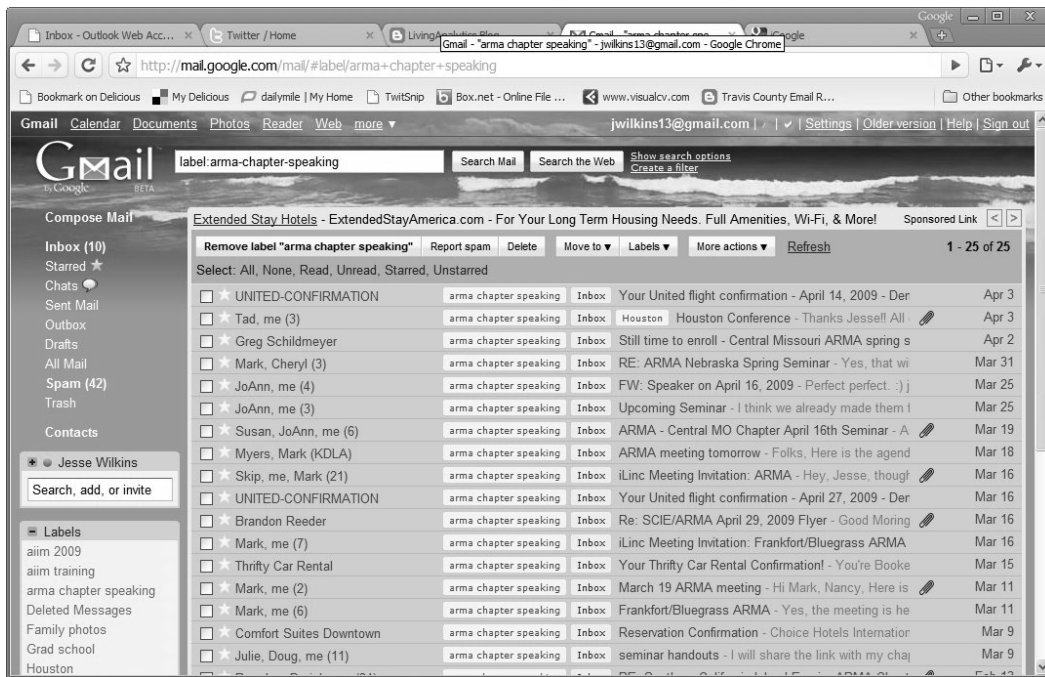
Tagging

- Newer approach to classification
- Tags are applied to the messages
 - Also called labels or categories
 - Can be applied manually or automatically
- Messages can have more than one tag
 - And can be combined with folders as well
- Tags can be searched on or used for filtering

Tagged messages in Outlook



Labeled messages in Gmail



Tagging

- Pros:
 - Message can be classified into multiple “buckets”
 - Visual cues (color)
 - Dynamic searches
- Cons:
 - Same as with manual classification into folders



EXERCISE 2: CLASSIFYING MESSAGES



AUTOCLASSIFICATION

Benefits of automatic classification

- Takes the responsibility for classification out of users' hands
- Better able to address volume email presents
- May be more consistent than users

Approaches to automatic classification

- Rules-based
 - Example: all messages from certain users
 - Rules applied at the server, not the client
- Content analysis
 - Each message
 - All messages in a folder
 - All messages for a given user

Issues with autclassification

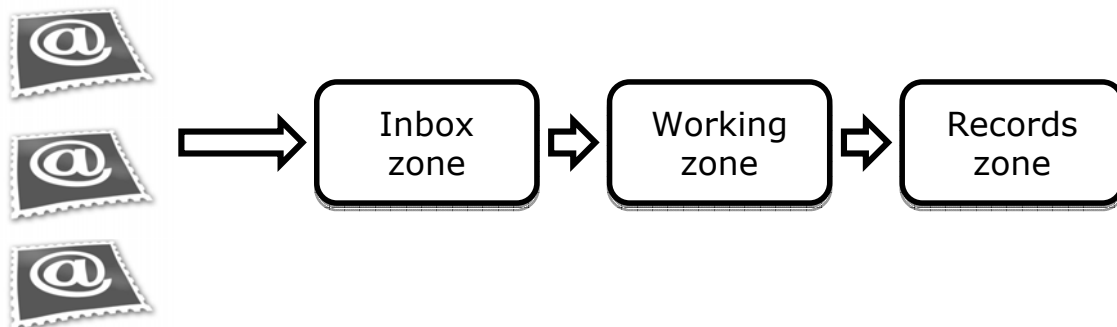
- Autclassification is not 100% accurate
- Concept analysis is difficult for computers – see e.g. spam
- Different messages may have different value depending on context
- We are not very good at using email

Considerations for autotclassification

- Recognize that it is not 100% accurate
- Some human interaction will still be required
- Consider systems that “auto-suggest”
- Train users on how to construct subject lines and messages effectively

3-zone approach to classification

- Manual approach
- Can be improved with autosuggest
- Good balance of cognitive burden, operational considerations, and recordkeeping needs



Inbox zone

- Messages that have just been received
 - And perhaps not read yet
- Transitory messages
- Personal or non-business-related messages
 - “Bacn”
- Keep these messages for short periods, e.g. 30 or 60 days
- Then auto-delete or auto-migrate

Working zone

- Messages that have been read but require more time to respond effectively
- Messages related to ongoing projects or initiatives
- Reference-type messages
- Keep these messages longer but still a defined period, e.g. 180 days or 1 year
- Then auto-delete or auto-migrate

Records zone

- Messages that rise to the level of records
- Ideally these are not stored in the messaging application or folders – they are moved into an ERM system
- Retention is defined by the content of the message and its value to the organization

Questions?



For more information

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