

Records and Information Management Policy and Procedures Manual



**Approved by General Secretary
November 4, 2024**

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RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Records and Information Management Vision Statement

The United Church of Canada (“United Church”) recognizes that records are a valuable asset. The efficient management of United Church records is necessary to support its core functions, to comply with legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to effective overall management.

The United Church of Canada is committed to ensuring the effective and responsible management of its records and record-keeping systems throughout the organization. This is achieved through the Records and Information Management Program.

2. Defined Terms

Terms throughout this document will direct to Appendix 1: Glossary.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the Records and Information Management Policy is to establish an organization-wide Records and Information Management Program designed to safeguard records of the United Church’s operational activities and transactions to ensure preservation of records of legal, administrative, theological, financial and historical or research value. The Records and Information Management Program shall consist of this Policy and Procedures Manual, the Classification and Records Retention Schedule (CRS) and the people, committees and systems that are designated and defined in the Procedures Manual.

4. Scope

The Policy requires that the Records and Information Management Program be applied consistently across General Council work units and regional council offices by all employees, including oversight of records created by communities of faith. The Policy applies to the creation, receipt, use, handling, maintenance, storage and disposition of all records.

Records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or in electronic form. **Any record created or obtained in the course of an employee’s daily duties belongs to the United Church.**

5. The United Church of Canada Records

“Records” are documents, data or other recorded information, created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by the United Church, of its legal obligations or transactions. This policy covers records that have been created on all media and formats including but not limited to paper, electronic documents, data, email, social media, photographs, film, audio, and video. Records may be in physical storage, on external drives, keys, laptops or in the cloud.

6. The United Church of Canada’s Classification and Records Retention Schedule

The United Church of Canada’s Classification and Records Retention Schedule (**CRS**) is the key tool for the units and regional councils of the United Church to manage its records effectively. It establishes standardized retention rules for records and controls how these records are to be disposed of once they reach the end of their active life. It determines when the active life of a record ends and when it may be transferred to an inactive storage area and establishes the time and method of disposing of the record.

All of the United Church’s records must be retained according to the retention periods set out in the CRS.

All United Church of Canada employees are responsible for managing the records they create, receive or control and must adhere to records management policies and standards. United Church of Canada employees are responsible for ensuring that they have read and adhere to the current manual.

The United Church’s records shall not be removed from its control or destroyed except under the authority and according to the terms of the CRS.

The CRS is Attachment 1 to the Policy & Procedures Manual.

7. Suspension of Records Retention Schedule

Suspension of the Classification and Records Retention Schedule may at times be required due to anticipated or pending legal or regulatory proceedings, investigations, or audits. There may also be other limited circumstances where records are required to be maintained to evidence events and actions in excess of the periods set out in the Classification and Records Retention Schedule.

All employees share the responsibility of advising their Managers and the General Council Archives Records and Information Lead promptly if they become aware of any circumstance that would necessitate the suspension of the CRS in order to preserve records.

See section on [Legal and Tax Holds](#) in the Procedures Manual for more information.

8. Administration of the Records and Information Management Program

General Secretary

The General Secretary has ultimate authority regarding all decisions relating to Records and Information Management and Records Retention. They are responsible for approval of updates to the Records Management Policy and Procedures Manual, and Records Retention Schedule.

However, the General Secretary has designated the Records Management Team to make recommendations related to the development, control and review of records management practices, policies including procedures and guidelines and roles for records management functions. The Records Management Team is made up of the General Council Archives Manager, General Council Records and Information Lead, General Council Archivist, the General Council Digital Archives Systems Lead, and a representative Archivist from the Regional Council Archives. The General Council Archives Manager will represent the Records Management Team by seeking guidance from and reporting to appropriate authorities, such as the General Secretary, Executive Minister, Shared Services and the Information Management and Technology Steering Committee (IMTSC).

Archivists and Records Managers: Records and Information Lead, General Council Archivist, General Council Digital Archivist, and/or Regional Council Archivists

The General Council Archives Manager or their designate is responsible for the ongoing administration of the Records and Information Management Program. The Records and Information Lead will coordinate the program with all units, coordinate all initiatives to manage ongoing recordkeeping activities and coordinate records management training in conjunction with Human Resources. The Archives Manager and/or Records and Information Lead will report to the IMTSC on the ongoing effectiveness of the Records and Information Management Program. The Records and Information Lead, General Council Archivist, General Council Digital Archivist and/or Regional Council Archivists will monitor employee compliance with records management policy and procedures and will maintain the CRS.

Executive Ministers/Officers

Executive Ministers/Officers have responsibility for the management of records generated by their units' and regional council activities. Their duty is to ensure that the records created, received and controlled within their area of responsibility and the procedures they adopt are managed in a way which meets the goals of the Records and Information Management Program.

Administrative Assistants/Disposition Approvers

Administrative Assistants (or equivalent) and Disposition Approvers in each unit/regional council will be responsible for ensuring that the unit/regional council records are managed according to the CRS with support from their Executive Ministers and the Records and Information Lead. Administrative Assistants and Disposition Approvers will ensure that all unit policy, procedures and guidelines are observed in an orderly fashion.

Administrative Assistants or Disposition Approvers will be provided with relevant records management training to support their duties with ongoing records management tasks. Administrative Assistants will coordinate transfer of paper documents to onsite or offsite storage and retrieval and/or destruction of paper documents as required. Disposition Approvers will ensure electronic records are disposed of or transferred when their assigned disposition date is met.

This Policy will be disseminated to all The United Church of Canada employees and provided to all new employees as part of their on-boarding process.

Adherence to this Policy is mandatory.

9. Monitoring and Auditing of Records and Information Management Program

The Records Management Team will be responsible for coordinating operational audits of the Records and Information Management Program to assess its ongoing performance and success.

Review Process

If any employee becomes aware of legal or regulatory requirements which alter current retention requirements or if operational requirements mandate changes to this Policy or the CRS, or if new categories of records are defined, the background information and request should be forwarded to the Records and Information Lead for review by the Records Management Team.

The United Church of Canada's Classification and Records Retention Schedule will be reviewed in its entirety every three years. On an ongoing basis, suggested additions or changes will be brought to the Records Management Team to be reviewed and approved during committee meetings. Substantive changes will require final approval from the Executive Minister, while editorial changes can be implemented immediately upon approval.

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES MANUAL

1. Purpose of the Manual

Records are important information assets and a resource of great value to the United Church of Canada and should be managed effectively and efficiently. However, filing and saving *all records* does not constitute effective records management.

The purpose of the Records and Information Management Procedures Manual is to help employees understand the records and information management principles applicable to the information they create and receive and to help employees manage their information in a secure and efficient manner.

The Records and Information Management Procedures Manual sets out the basic requirements necessary to preserve records needed to protect the rights and interests of the United Church. Employees are required to use the tools provided including this Records and Information Management Procedures Manual and the Classification and Records Retention Schedule (CRS).

Capturing authentic and reliable records and maintaining them for as long as they are required is fundamental to good record keeping. This Manual provides general guidelines for the day-to-day records management practices that should be followed by all employees. All employees are responsible for applying the recordkeeping and disposal instructions from the CRS to their records.

2. Overview of Records and Information Management

2.1 What is a Records and Information Management Program?

A Records and Information Management Program (RIM Program) is a planned, coordinated set of policies, procedures, people, systems and activities that are required to manage records.

The goal of the United Church's RIM Program is to ensure that:

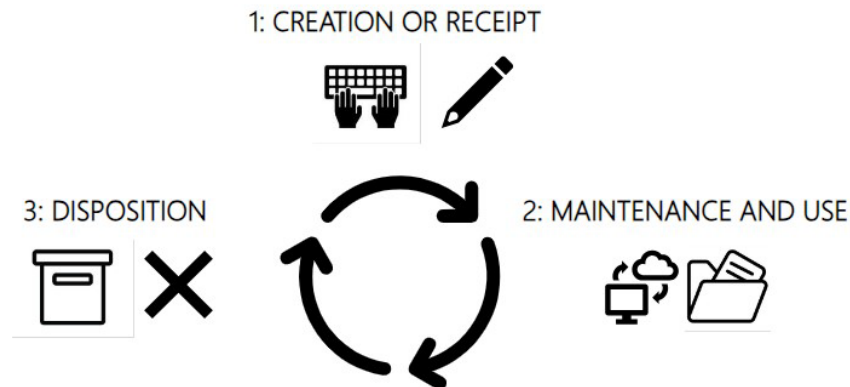
- records are available when needed
- records can be accessed
- records can be interpreted
- records can be trusted
- records can be maintained and preserved through time
- records are secure
- records are retained and disposed of appropriately
- employees are trained and aware of their responsibilities

2.2 What is Records and Information Management?

Records and Information Management (RIM) is the process by which an organization identifies and manages all records throughout their life cycle, i.e., from creation all the way through to their final disposition.

The “life cycle” of a record consists of its creation, maintenance, use and disposition. Upon creation, records will be used as evidence or as reference to an event. At this stage they are considered active (referenced/used frequently). The record’s active phase may end when it becomes superseded or obsolete (SO), such as an outdated policy or working files that have been incorporated into a final report. In other cases, the record’s active phase is determined by its usefulness. When a record becomes inactive, it will be stored locally or offsite for its retention period as defined in the CRS. At that point a decision is made on its final disposition – destroy the record or transfer it to the Archives. Retention periods and disposition outcomes depend on legal and/or regulatory requirements and whether a record has permanent or archival value. Records Managers use the life cycle to track records and determine their current use, and the CRS acts as an authoritative document for retention and disposition decisions.

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A RECORD



Records move through active, then inactive life stages then are destroyed or transferred to the archives depending on legal/regulatory requirements.

Employees of the United Church are responsible for records throughout their life cycle.

2.3 What is the purpose of Records and Information Management?

Records constitute the United Church's 'memory' and provide both a valuable resource for operational continuity and a legal record of operational decisions. The RIM Program optimizes the accessibility of records while simultaneously applying systems and controls to ensure that they are effectively and efficiently stored or disposed of, as and when required.

2.4 What are the benefits of Records and Information Management?

Records and Information Management will result in several positive benefits for units and regional councils, including:

- controlling the creation and growth of records
- reducing operating costs
- safeguarding vital information and preserving the organization's memory by employing training, tools and systems to create and maintain records
- mitigating risk by ensuring legal and regulatory compliance
- increasing efficiency and productivity by employing standard workflows, making it easier to retrieve records efficiently and ensure records are reliable
- protecting the environment by reducing energy costs associated with physical and electronic storage

3. Roles and Responsibilities

In support of the Records and Information Management Program, specific responsibilities are assigned as follows:

- General Secretary
- Records Management Team
- Information Technology Management Steering Committee/IT Department
- Archivists/Records and Information Lead
- Administrative Assistants (or equivalent)
- Executive Ministers/Officers and Senior Managers
- United Church of Canada employees

3.1 General Secretary

Information within The United Church of Canada is a key asset. Information is the most difficult and expensive asset to replace if it is lost. The Lead Executive with responsibility for records management is the **General Secretary or their designate** who will ensure that the Records and Information Management Program is adequately resourced. The General Secretary has the responsibility of:

- ensuring that resources and systems are provided to manage information appropriately
- acting as the ultimate authority for all decisions relating to records management and retention
- approving all Records and Information Management Policies and Procedures and other related guidelines as appropriate.

3.2 Records Management Team

The General Secretary has designated the Records Management Team to make recommendations related to the development, control and review of records management practices, policies including procedures and guidelines and roles for records management functions.

The Records Management Team is made up of General Council Archives Manager, General Council Records and Information Lead, General Council Archivist, General Council Digital Archives Systems Lead and a representative archivist from the Regional Council Archives.

3.3 Information Management & Technology Steering Committee and IT Department

In order to implement the RIM Program and manage the CRS on an ongoing basis, the Information Management & Technology Steering Committee (IMTSC) will review significant

changes and consult on any issues or enhancements to the RIM Program as proposed by the Records Management Team. IMTSC and IT Department responsibilities include:

- providing feedback and approval on the technology, tools, and other resources employed by the RIM Program
- providing the IT support necessary to effectively carry out the RIM Program through day-to-day maintenance of the electronic systems that fulfill the function of records repositories (i.e., SharePoint/Dynamics, Teams, OneDrive).
- working in conjunction with the General Council Records and Information Lead or Regional Council Archivists to ensure that records are properly managed, protected and appropriately preserved for as long as they are required for operational, legal and long-term preservation purposes.

3.4 Archivists/Records and Information Lead

General Council Archives Manager or designate as Records and Information Lead

The General Council Archives Manager or designate as Records and Information Lead is responsible for the overall maintenance of the United Church Records and Information Management Program. In this regard, in consultation with and guidance of the Executive Secretary, Executive Minister -Shared Services, the IMTSC and Records Management Team, the Records and Information Lead will:

- coordinate the administration and control of all The United Church of Canada records and administer records and information management policies and procedures
- maintain the Classification and Records Retention Schedule, seek approval of amendments and disseminate as appropriate
- consult appropriate authorities, liaise with Regional Council Archivists and staff to support RIM at the regional council level

In tandem with Regional Council Archivists (or any other designated staff), the Records and Information Lead will:

- develop and deliver the United Church's records management training program in conjunction with Human Resources, ensuring employees are informed of current records management and retention policies and practices
- serve as liaison to unit Administrative Assistants (or equivalent) on records management and retention policies and practices
- provide notice of disposition of records according to records management policies
- monitor and document transfers, destruction and disposition of records
- coordinate records retention compliance audits, notify units of non-compliance and institute corrective steps to bring units into compliance

- At the General Council Office: work with the General Council Archivist to facilitate inactive physical storage by monitoring the space, maintaining and inventory, arranging for destruction or transfers to archives and arrange controlled access to the records

Regional Council Archivists

Regional councils who hold archives independently or in cooperation with other regional councils should maintain records in a consistent and standardized way across the United Church. Regional councils who operate out of third-party agreements will endeavour to do the same as they are able to within the provisions of their agreements.

Regional Council Archivists will monitor, apply and support the Records and Information Management Program within their respective regional council as directed by the Executive Minister. They may have the responsibility of active/inactive records within a regional council office. Application of the program includes setting up a SharePoint library which can connect to RecordPoint and the Regional Council Archives.

3.5 Administrative Assistants or equivalent

Administrative Assistants (or equivalent) are responsible for overseeing the units' or regional council's official records and ensuring their recordkeeping and records management responsibilities are met. They are responsible for monitoring compliance by unit staff with records and information management requirements.

In consultation with the Executive Minister/Officer, Administrative Assistants (or other designated employees) will:

- notify the Records and Information Lead of new or discontinued record series or data sources
- ensure that the Records and Information Lead is advised of any issues, problems or new requirements associated with the management of their records or any changes required to the Classification and Records Retention Schedule
- ensure all Records Management Policies, Unit Manuals and other related Records Management resource materials are updated as necessary
- receive records management training, as required
- where applicable: box and inventory physical records designated for transfer to off-site storage, review records for destruction and, as necessary, prepare records destruction authorization forms and obtain approval for the disposition of such records from management.

3.6 Executive Ministers/Officers and Senior Managers

Effective records and information management is the responsibility of every manager. Executive Ministers/Officers and Senior Managers are responsible for:

- overseeing the effective implementation of the Records and Information Management Program within their respective unit or regional council
- ensuring all employees are made aware of their record keeping and records management responsibilities and obligations as outlined in the Records and Information Management Procedures Manual
- ensuring training for new employees or refresher training for current employees on both the RIM Policy and Procedures and any of the systems and tools used for records creation has been completed

3.7 United Church of Canada Employees

United Church of Canada employees are responsible for:

- ensuring operational activities are properly documented by creating and maintaining full, accurate and reliable records
- ensuring that documents are captured, stored and managed consistently across the organization by creating and maintaining records within the systems maintained by the IT Unit (SharePoint, OneDrive, Teams)
- keeping up to date with applicable training for all systems and tools employed for recordkeeping and creation
- reporting any issues relating to recordkeeping to their Executive Minister or the Records and Information Lead

4. Types of Records

4.1 What is a Record?

Records are the various documents generated and received, which record the decision-making processes, advice and or/direction of United Church's activities. Records must have value in order to be maintained and preserved as evidence of its administration, operations, policies, procedures and decisions¹.

Records can exist in any media format, including but not limited to: hardcopy documents, drawings (graphic), photographs, film, video tapes, digital information recorded on CD-ROM, email, voice recordings, instant messages.

Records generated during an employee's employment belong to The United Church of Canada and, therefore, all records created by employees must be treated in accordance with the Records and Information Management Program.

¹ According to ISO15489, the international standard for Information and Documentation Records Management, the definition of records is "information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business".

4.2 Examples of Records

Examples of a record include but are not limited to:

- all documents identified in the Classification and Records Retention Schedule
- documents that record final decisions or advice
- documents that reflect the operations of the United Church (e.g., monthly reports, meeting minutes)
- documents that initiate, authorize or complete a transaction
- drafts where retention is necessary as evidence of the approval or the significant evolution of decisions contained in the document
- copies containing significant annotations and amendments to original records

Records can be designated as official or transitory.

4.3 Official Records

Official Records are records which are created, received, or accumulated in the course of official operations of The United Church of Canada. Official records support the memory of each unit or regional council and The United Church of Canada as a whole and serve as a historic record of United Church's activities.

Employees should consider the following criteria when determining whether a record is official:

- if you are the originator of the record or your unit is responsible for the functions the records support, you will create an Official Record
- if there are multiple copies of a document available, the ["office of primary responsibility" \(OPR\)](#) is responsible for retaining the official record. The OPR is generally the originating office, or the unit that performs the function which produces the document. If you are not the OPR and hold a copy of the document available, this means that the document you hold has already been captured as an official record and your copy is an unofficial or a "convenience" copy. You can dispose of this copy once it has served its purpose (i.e., for reference).
- if you determine that only part of your record is a duplicate, you should create a new Official Record of the entire content of the record.
- if your record provides additional evidence to support an official record, then they are official also, and should be deemed to be an Official Record.

It is important to remember that you cannot have two versions of a record, if you think you have two versions, each version is deemed to be a separate record. To avoid this, use proper [version control](#).

4.4 Stewardship of Official Records

The proper management of Official Records is the responsibility of the owner or creator of the records.

Noting that in many units and regional councils, work is multi-faceted and shared by many individuals, you can seek assistance from your Executive Ministers/Officers or the Records Coordinator if you are unsure as to your responsibilities with respect to specific records.

4.5 Format of the Official Record

Decisions on the format of an official record (whether it is paper, electronic or both) must center around record authenticity and the legal requirements of a particular document (i.e., whether a wet signature is required). In an ideal situation, only one record of a particular matter should exist if the Records and Information Management program is run effectively.

Please see more information on record authenticity in section 6.3: Record Authenticity.

4.6 Transitory Records

Transitory records are records that are not required to meet legal, fiscal or operational needs. A transitory record is required for a limited period of time for the completion of a routine action, or for the preparation of an official record. Transitory records are not incorporated into the CRS or filing systems and may be discarded at any time.

4.7 How to deal with Transitory Records

Transitory records should not be saved into the Records Management System (SharePoint). Outlook and OneDrive are considered transitory workspaces, and most records created there are considered transitory. If records are official, they must be transferred into an official SharePoint site.

Transitory records have a very short-lived administrative, legal or fiscal value and should be disposed in an appropriate manner immediately after their operational use has expired or the task or activity to which they relate is completed.

If electronic and paper versions of a transitory record exist, then both should be destroyed when the task or activity to which they related is completed. Transitory records containing United Church of Canada information should be shredded.

All employees are responsible for destroying transitory records, including transitory emails.

Executive Ministers/Officers and the Records and Information Lead are responsible for providing assistance to employees in the identification and retention of transitory records.

4.8 Examples of Transitory Records

Transitory records may include, but are not limited to:

- drafts, rough notes, data entry forms or other temporary working documents which do not have any value in the documentation of the evolution of the organization's policies or decisions
- secondary, duplicate or courtesy copies (including database reports), material retained solely for convenient reference
- duplicate copies of broadly distributed material used to communicate policies and practices for internal administration (e.g., manuals, directives, bulletins and guidelines)
- duplicate copies of project or committee materials including minutes, agendas and reports sent to various committee members and staff

The reference or convenience copies should be destroyed or deleted as soon as the tasks or activities for which they serve as a reference or resource are completed. Working papers should be destroyed or deleted when the final document is completed and has been moved into SharePoint or marked as final using metadata.

4.9 Non-Records

"Non-records" are documents created or received that **do not serve** to document the functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of The United Church of Canada. They are considered [ROT: Redundant, Obsolete and Trivial](#).

Like transitory records, non-records are not incorporated into the CRS as they do not fall within the scope of Official Records. Non-records are not required to be retained.

4.10 How to deal with non-records

Non-records should not be saved into records repositories.

Non-records should either be disposed of in the garbage or recycle bin immediately if they are of no use. If they are personal files kept at The United Church of Canada offices, they must be maintained apart from United Church of Canada official records.

All United Church of Canada employees are responsible for destroying non-records immediately if they have no bearing on The United Church of Canada activities or functions.

SharePoint sites should be kept clear of ROT. Electronic ROT will usually be found in Outlook, OneDrive and Teams sites, which should be reviewed and cleaned on a regular basis.

4.11 Examples of Non-Records

Non-records may include, but are not limited to:

- convenience copies (the originals/authoritative records are stored elsewhere)
- personal correspondence, photos, documents and resources including privately purchased books and publications
- newsletters, magazines, trade journals or reports from outside agencies or organizations
- blank forms
- personal diaries or journals, blogs not prepared for carrying out United Church operations (approved blogs published by the United Church will be captured via web-archiving)
- presentations or papers of a professional nature not representing the opinion or policy of the United Church
- unsolicited advertising materials such as brochures, flyers, posters, menus, price lists, invitations, sales letters
- catalogues, such as those for office supplies, equipment or literature (should be destroyed when they are superseded)
- miscellaneous notices or memos such as all-staff emails, messages on upcoming special or social events, memos on routine administration details not related to program functions (e.g., “please book the board room for our meeting tomorrow”) and personal messages (e.g., “let’s meet for lunch”); these notices or memos should be destroyed as soon as the activity, task or event to which they relate is complete

Keeping transitory or non- records longer than necessary results in the following records management problems:

- offices and computer systems are unnecessarily cluttered
- records management costs are increased
- retrieval of non-transitory records is made more difficult
- a considerable amount of time is wasted searching for records

4.12 Vital Records

Vital Records are records that are essential for preserving, continuing or reconstructing the operations of the organization and protecting the rights of the organization, its employees, and its stakeholders. Records identified as Vital Records are usually tagged for priority recovery from backup and potential replication in order to protect the organization in the event of any physical disruption to the business environment.

A list of Vital Records created and maintained by the United Church can be found on the United Church of Canada Archives website www.unitedchurcharchives.ca

5. Classification and Records Retention Schedule

5.1 What is Records Retention?

Records retention refers to the length of time records are kept until they are disposed of through either destruction (shredding), deletion (delete or wiping of electronic data and related metadata and indexes) or transfer to permanent off-site storage (i.e., the Archives).

The Classification and Records Retention Schedule (CRS) helps control the growth of records by providing an approved timeline for the disposal of records at appropriate periods. It also helps minimize the risks and liabilities that can be associated with document retention.

5.2 Overview of the United Church of Canada Classification and Records Retention Schedule

The CRS is the key tool for The United Church units and regional councils to manage their records effectively. It establishes standardized retention rules for records based on legislation, regulatory and operational requirements, and controls how these records are to be disposed of once they reach the end of their active life. It determines when the active life of a record ends and when it may be transferred to an inactive storage area and establishes the time and method of disposing of the record.

The full CRS, details on the structure and how to use the schedules can be found on the Archives section on [Narthex](#), or on the [United Church of Canada Archives website](#).

5.3 Making Changes to the Classification and Records Retention Schedule

Most likely, changes to some level of the Classification and Records Retention Schedule will need to occur regularly due to unit reorganization or regulatory requirements. In order to maintain systematic control over the United Church of Canada's records and to ensure that accessibility and usability of records is not compromised, it is necessary to place restrictions on who is able to amend the CRS.

If a new Primary category or Secondary category is required to be added, or if other substantive changes need to be made to the CRS, the Administrative Assistant or other designated staff person should contact the Records and Information Lead and inform them of the necessary change. The Records and Information Lead, in consultation with the Records Management Team, will then review and approve the proposed amendment, incorporate the changes and advise that the changes have been incorporated.

The Records and Information Lead and Archives Manager regularly meet with units and regional councils to discuss records and recordkeeping, which helps keep the CRS up-to-date and accurate.

6. Managing Electronic Records

6.1 Tools for Creating, Using and Managing Electronic Records

The United Church of Canada employs the following applications for managing electronic records: SharePoint, OneDrive, Teams and Records365.

SharePoint is a cloud-based system used to capture and maintain its official records. When documents become records, they are saved as final versions (considered “read only”) and should be stored in your unit, regional council or committees’ designated SharePoint site.

Teams is a cloud-based hub for teamwork that allows you to create content, chat and collaborate with selected teams comprised of United Church staff and third parties. It is the best place to collaborate on and facilitate projects through its many tools.

OneDrive is a cloud-based application used to create, edit, store and manage your personal files. Each employee of the United Church has a personal OneDrive account for their individual work. Examples of records created in OneDrive are non-collaborative files, early draft documents not ready for team viewing or documents/folders you need to share outside of your working groups or the United Church.

Records365 is a records management service (owned by Recordpoint) that connects to SharePoint sites and some Teams sites and is maintained by the Records and Information Lead. It is used to apply the Classification and Records Retention Schedule by storing and administering the disposition of records. Disposition Approvers within each unit are trained on Records365 to help facilitate the final disposition of records once they have reached their disposition date.

Note: if a record is created outside of a designated SharePoint or Teams site, it is not captured in Records365 and thus not kept as an official record. It is an employees’ responsibility to ensure records are captured properly.



6.2 Records Creation: Version Control, Naming Conventions and Metadata

To create and manage reliable records, employees should employ version control, naming conventions and use metadata.

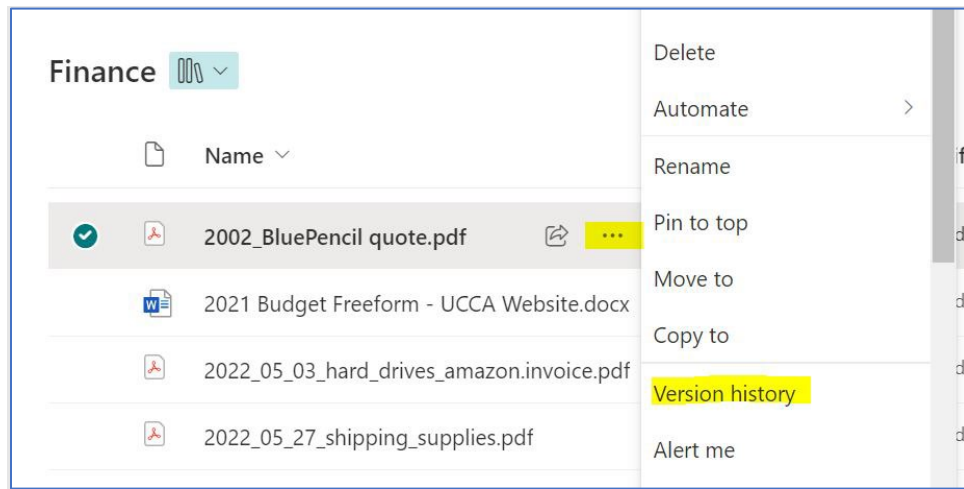
Version Control

Version control allows users to develop and manage successive drafts of their work in a controlled manner.

To avoid storing multiple versions of a document, employees should:

- use SharePoint's automatic version history to be able to audit version/editing history, and restore older versions (see diagram below)
- circulate documents by sending a link to the document via email, chat, or by adjusting permission controls on the document itself

- delete versions of documents that are non-records.
- add comments when reviewing a version of a document rather than creating multiple versions (comments are searchable and provide context for the version)



You may also ask the Records Information Lead to view the audit history of a record in Records365 as it maintains an audit history of every document via a binary that is taken of the last version of a record.

Naming Conventions

Basic naming conventions will ensure records are easily retrieved and standardized. Ultimately, the best practice to follow is to work with your team to make decisions about how you will all consistently name files.

Folder and file names should be unique, relevant, and concise.

Create a title that is relevant to the record and not overly generic. All file names must also be unique within a folder or library, so you may need to add the date to distinguish it from another document.

Instead of this	Do this
Report	2021 General Council Annual Report
Minutes	Justice Committee October Minutes
Jenna's proposal	2022 Digitization Strategy

The title should be simple and easy to understand. There is no need to include too much detail.

All acronyms should be listed on a master and accessible list. Any acronyms not maintained on the list should be spelled out.

Instead of this	Do this
David's Recommendations on the Climate Committee's Actions Jan 4, 2020.	2022 Climate Committee Recommendations
Communication Comparison of Budget and Actuals with Proposal for Q3 2021	20210701 Communication Budget

There is no need to include version numbers, specific dates or unique formatting such as no spacing. Special characters cannot be used in the file name: " * : < > / \ | . Some characters are not allowed in file titles, others make it difficult for searching.

Instead of this	Do this
Accessibility Charter Version 3	Accessibility Charter
Dulux Contract 14032021	2021 Dulux Contract
AmandaDavisPersonalLeaveRequest	Amanda Davis Personal Leave Request
Contract*22 "Nigel Wright"	Nigel Wright Contract

A folder name should not be repeated in the file name. In SharePoint, folders should be limited to a maximum of two nested levels to improve findability and ensure consistency.

Example:



Finance Committee 2012

✓ Meeting Minutes October 13, 2012

✗ Finance Committee Meeting Minutes 2012/10

Descriptive adjectives should follow the main function of the file, so that like objects are sorted together.

Example:

✓ Meeting Minutes Quarter 1

✓ Meeting Minutes Quarter 2

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Metadata

Metadata is simply 'data about data'. In SharePoint/Teams/OneDrive, **metadata is used to help identify, classify and organize records**. Metadata can be seen in columns – a column for name, modified by, last modified date, and document type, as well as in information about the documents themselves. Some metadata is applied automatically when a document is created, or a record added. This ensures that documents have the necessary standardized properties to be identified as records by SharePoint and Records365. Additionally, your unit or regional council may decide to add metadata depending on how users want records organized.

Two types of metadata used by the UCC within SharePoint are ContentTypeName and uccDocumentType. The ContentTypeName is applied by an administrator to the site in its entirety, and will reflect the unit that the SharePoint site is used by, e.g., Communications or Legal. uccDocumentType is selected by the user from a defined set of terms, and indicates what type of record each item is, e.g., Working Document, Agenda, Proposal.

Site administrators and users should consult the Records and Information Lead should any questions arise about their unit's use of SharePoint metadata. They can discuss strategies to make the use of metadata most effective and accurate to their unit's work, while also being practical.

6.3 Records Authenticity

The United Church of Canada may be required to produce records as evidence in legal proceedings. To support the admissibility and weight of records as documentary evidence, the United Church needs to ensure that these records can be proven or presumed to be reliable, accurate, and trustworthy. The [Electronic Records as Documentary Evidence Standard](#) (Canadian General Standards Board/Standards Council of Canada) details what is required for a record to be admissible, and the Records and Information Management Program has been designed with this in mind. Admissible records may be original paper records, electronic records, microfilmed, digitized or imaged records, "relied upon printouts" or documents created through [electronic data interchange](#). In order to ensure all of the qualities of an admissible record are met, the United Church uses many tools, including:

- Docusign
- record audits in SharePoint and Records365
- security/privacy measures for electronic and physical records which safeguard the integrity of the United Church's electronic records system
 - work-issued computers/devices, control over cloud-based services, VPN
 - secured/monitored/inventoried space for physical records

- standard procedures for document creation, maintenance, use and disposition including protection from accidental or unauthorized alteration and from deletion while the record still has value
- policies and strategies
 - United Church of Canada Information Management and Technology Policy
 - United Church of Canada's Digitization Strategy for Active Records

7. Email Records

7.1 What is an "email" record?

An email message consists of any document created, transmitted, or received on an email, including message text and any attachments, such as word-processed documents, spreadsheets, and graphics that may be transmitted with a message, or with an envelope containing no message.

7.2 When are email documents records?

Email documents are records when they are created or received in the transaction of the United Church of Canada business and are otherwise records in accordance with the Records Management Policy and this Manual.

7.3 Email Capstone Approach

The [Capstone](#) approach, developed by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in the US, is a simplified and automated approach to managing email.² This approach allows an organization to capture emails based on the position or role of an employee. Position- or role-based email accounts which are likely to be creating and receiving emails containing business decisions or otherwise consisting of a permanent nature will be targeted.

The United Church of Canada General Council accounts that are to be captured include:

- General Secretary (in full)
- Moderator (in full)
- Executive Ministers/Officers (partial)
- General Council Executive and Sub-Executive
- Office of Vocation
- Other unit-wide role-based emails, e.g., pensions@united-church.ca

² For more information on the Capstone approach as developed by NARA, see Bulletin 2013-02: <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2013/2013-02.html>.

Full capture includes the account inbox and any inbox folders. Partial capture includes any decision-making emails that were designated as such by the Executive Ministers/Officers.

Other employees not included as Capstone accounts must save any email which falls under the category of an Official Record by saving and transferring the email and relevant attachments to a SharePoint/Teams site.

7.4 Email Management Tools and Technology

The United Church of Canada uses a number of tools to effectively manage and preserve email records.

Records Management Tools

- Exchange
 - Mailboxes can be set to read-only prior to capture or have a litigation hold placed if required. This allows mailboxes to be searched and not altered while discovery or export is occurring.
- Colligo
 - Allows users to save email messages and attachments to SharePoint sites and extract metadata.
- Records365
 - Connectors to Exchange or Sharepoint will capture messages, attachments and metadata, preserving binary copies even if users delete messages from mailboxes or O365 locations.

7.5 Staff Component

All members play an active role in the management of email records.

Administrative Assistants, Executive Ministers/Officers

Administrative staff will be expected to understand their responsibilities with regard to the email management policy. This includes undergoing email management training and following best practices in email usage and recordkeeping in order to streamline the transfer process.

Executive Ministers/Officers will be expected to work with the Digital Archivist and Records and Information Lead before leaving their position to help best prepare their account for processing and preservation.

Records and Information Lead

Responsible for training and answering questions about email management and the Capstone approach.

Archivists

Responsible for the processing of emails as well as the identification of private and restricted information and making the material available.

Digital Archives Systems Lead

Responsible for developing transfer workflow to archives and training staff on different archival systems.

7.6 Deletion of Email and Voice Messages

Except as set out above, all other email and voicemail records are to be permanently removed and retired from the United Church of Canada's computer equipment ninety (90) days after they are generated or received. This Policy applies to all email that is generated and sent by United Church of Canada employees or received by United Church of Canada employees, regardless of whether they are located on servers or back-up systems, desktop computers, laptop computers, handheld devices, external messaging services or other units, or printed in paper form.

7.7 When are email documents non-records?

A 'non-record' email is an email which does not constitute an Official Record. Email documents are non-records when they provide no evidence of The United Church's functions and activities or if it constitutes duplicate information already documented in existing records.

Examples of non-record or transitory emails:

- messages that have only temporary value or information in a form used for casual communication, e.g., confirmation of a meeting date/place, a 'thank you' for doing something
- draft versions where any additional information has already been incorporated into subsequent versions, and where retention is not necessary as evidence of approval or the evolution of a document
- an email that does not contain any material relevant to the operations of the United Church, e.g., unsolicited advertisement from an outside agency
- mass emails

- any email on which the recipient was copied or bcc'd because the originator or the direct recipients will be responsible for the retention of the original email
- although the attachment itself may constitute an official record, it is not considered part of a record email. The creator of the attachment is the person responsible for ensuring it is appropriately retained
- duplicate copies of records used for information or convenience only
- messages related to personal matters
- instruction memos or bulletins where the recipient is not the action office
- requests for documents or copies of documents
- simple requests for information or clarification that do not impact policy or business decision.

Email non-record messages or attachments that are not records should be deleted promptly. If non-record copies are useful for reference or convenience, you should keep a copy for the duration of its use and then dispose of it when no longer required. Conversations through email can usually take place on Teams.

8. Paper Records

8.1 Creation and Organization

Paper records are to be filed in folders and organized in a way that reflects a record series or group as identified by the Classification and Records Retention Schedule (CRS). For example, a record series may be:

- Accounts Payable (by Name, Year)
- Employee Files

8.2 Storage and Transfer

Active Records

Active records are those records or files held in the working office areas and actively used. Files should be grouped according to the categories in the CRS and may be subdivided by Year, Name, Location, Project Title to suit the business requirements. Active records are those records which are referenced on a regular basis, that is, more than 3-5 times per year.

Inactive Records

Inactive records are those no longer referenced on a regular basis. Inactive storage could include a file room which is remote from the business unit work area, or in space managed by the Archives.

Inactive Records - General Council Office

Any records that are transferred to inactive storage should be coordinated by the unit with the General Council Archivist. General Council Staff must use the Transfer Form available on Narthex. Staff should contact the Archives to receive a unique transfer number prior to moving any boxes.

Files are to be stored in standard file boxes, and labelled with the following information:

- Disposal Date
- Temporary Box Number
- Transfer Number (assigned by Archives)

A copy of the transfer form should be held in the unit, in the box, and sent to the General Council Archivist.

After the retention period has expired records can move from the inactive storage area to the Archives to be integrated into the Archives collections if designated in the disposal section of the CRS. Records that become part of the Archives may be held in whole or may be subject to Archival Review and Selection through an access and appraisal process.

Files are to be stored in standard file boxes, and labelled with the following information:

- Disposal Date
- Temporary Box Number
- Transfer Number (assigned by Archives)

Inactive Records - Regional Council Offices

Boxes stored in inactive storage should be clearly marked with disposal/transfer date, a temporary box number and should contain information on the files and records creators. Please contact your Regional Council Archivist for guidance on inactive storage and transferring records to the Archives.

9. Disposal of Records

Records shall be disposed of in accordance with the United Church of Canada's Classification and Records Retention Schedule (CRS). United Church of Canada employees must comply with the recordkeeping requirements specified under the CRS. Destruction of records must be carried out under controlled, confidential conditions by shredding or permanent disposition. Documentation of the destruction of records should be maintained permanently.

9.1 Disposal of Paper Records

General Council Office

At the General Council Office, units shall prepare a Records Destruction and Authorization form. The Destruction and Authorization form is located on Narthex. Forms must be submitted to the applicable Executive Minister/Officer for approval. Once approved, units shall contact the General Council Archivist to receive a unique destruction number, and transfer records to the storage facility where destruction will be carried out in a timely manner. Copies of all approved forms should be sent to the General Council Archivist.

Regional Council Offices

Records should be destroyed (shredded) when they have met their disposition date. What is destroyed and when should be documented. Regional Council Archivists can provide guidance on proper records destruction.

9.2 Disposal of Electronic Records

- the only method for deleting electronic records is as part of the formal CRS disposition process
- United Church employees cannot delete an electronic record once it is in (Records365), as the system will follow a process to notify users when retention dates are met, allow for authorization of deletion, automate deletion and create an audit trail which documents this electronic process
- Disposition Approvers will be selected from each unit to be responsible for providing approvals

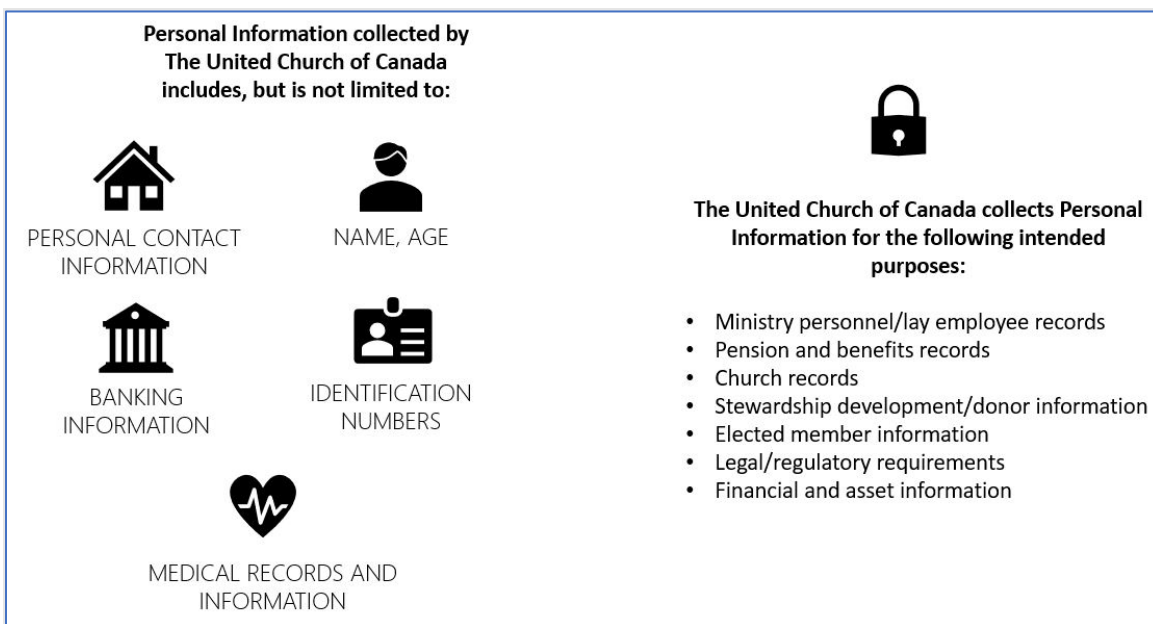
Records deleted from SharePoint through Records365 will retain a destruction certificate which includes author, title, date, record series, and an audit trail detailing the disposition and authorization for disposition.

10. Privacy and Personal Information

All staff and volunteers of The United Church of Canada have a responsibility to protect the security of personal information. Privacy legislation at the federal, provincial and territorial levels establishes rules for the collection, use and disclosure of “personal information” and governs:

- the way The United Church of Canada collects, uses, discloses and protects personal information
- the right of individuals to access personal information about themselves

Personal information is information which can directly or indirectly identify an individual. The diagram below outlines types of personal information collected by the United Church, and for which intended purposes:



To protect personal information, staff should do the following:

- only collect personal information when it is required and only keep it for as long as it is needed
- follow the Records and Information Management Policy and Procedures to ensure records are collected, maintained, used and disposed of properly
- use only United Church's systems for the creation and storage of records (SharePoint/Teams/OneDrive) to ensure they have the protection and safeguards employed by the IT Department's tools and resources.

For more information, see The United Church of Canada's Personal Information Policy, Hybrid Workplace Policy, and Devices Policy, and Cybersecurity Policy (forthcoming as of 2024) in the United Church of Canada Policy Manual.

11. Redacting Records

Redaction is the process of removing sensitive information from a record, thereby producing another record. Redaction must always be carried out on a copy of the document that is to be shared. The original record itself must never be changed.

When redacting, these procedures must be followed:

- apply changes to a *copy* of the original only

- retain a copy of the redacted version
- retain the original record as a record
- the metadata of a record should also be checked for sensitive information
- redaction should be undertaken by staff familiar with the context of the record

The fact that a record is a 'redaction' of another should be recorded in its metadata and in the metadata of the original record. The redaction must be done safely - that is, it must never be possible to find the redacted information.

Adobe Acrobat has a simple tool to redact PDFs.

12. Legal and Tax Holds

This Policy and the related records retention schedules may be suspended in whole or part at any time if circumstances arise – such as litigation, government investigations, or audits – which legally require the retention of records that might otherwise properly be subject to disposal.

In the event that suspension of the Records Retention Policy or all or part of the CRS is required, the Legal Unit will immediately notify relevant employees concerning the nature and scope of the suspension through a LEGAL HOLD NOTICE. Once a suspension of the Policy has been initiated, any affected records management practices shall not be reinstated without express authorization from the Legal Unit. Only the General Counsel may lift a LEGAL HOLD once it has been put in place. Only the Chief Financial Officer may lift a TAX HOLD once it has been put in place. Generally, records that are subject to a hold will be segregated from other records and access to those records may be restricted or controlled as determined by the Legal Unit.

Any employee that becomes aware of actual or potential litigation, regulatory proceedings or investigation, audits or other circumstances that could warrant suspension of this Policy should immediately contact the Legal Unit.

13. Creating Records Offsite

United Church employees are prohibited from saving work-related documents outside of the United Church network system. **No records should be stored on personal or third-party devices/services (USB keys, Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.)**

In the event that working off-line and outside the system is warranted, employees should ensure that the information held on any IT-issued and authorized portable temporary device (USB key/laptop) is transferred and saved into the network system as soon as practicable once they return to the office. Once transferred, the information held in the network system is considered the official document. The information on the portable device is then deemed to be a 'convenience' or transitory copy and should be deleted. Following this is fundamental to ensuring records are controlled and secured against change and to allow for retention decisions to be applied in accordance with the CRS.

14. Security

All Records are categorized as to their broad security and access requirements. Employees should determine permission levels based on the following classifications:

- **Public** – generally available to the public in paper or electronic form
- **Internal** – generally available to employees and officers of the United Church of Canada
- **Confidential** – information containing personal information
- **Secure** – information of a strategic or legally privileged nature where access is limited to only those identified individuals

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT TERMS

Active Records

Records in frequent use, regardless of their date of creation, required for current business relating to the administration or function of The United Church of Canada. Such records are usually maintained in office space and adjacent equipment.

Capture (of records)

The process of determining that a record should be made and kept. This includes both records created and received by the organization. It involves deciding which documents are captured, which in turn implies decisions about who may have access to those documents and generally how long they are to be retained.

Classification

The process of identifying the category or function and the records they generate and grouping them, if applicable, into files to facilitate description, control, links and determination of disposition and access status.

Inactive

This is the period of time that the records are required to be kept in a designated storage facility.

Non-records

Non-records include documents that do not impact The United Church of Canada operations or decision-making process. These records are not included within the scope of official records and are not required to be retained and do not appear on records retention schedules.

Official record

An official record is the original or official copy that provides information or evidence of the organization's transactions, decisions, procedures or policies. A significant, vital, or important record of continuing value to be protected, managed and retained according to the United Church of Canada retention and disposition guidelines and schedule. In law, an official record has the legally recognized and judicially enforceable quality of establishing some fact.

Records

"Records" are documents, data or other recorded information, in all media and forms, created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization, of its legal obligations or transacted business.

Records Management

Records management is the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes

for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

Records and Information Management Program

A records and information management program is the program conducted on an organization-wide basis for the management of records, recordkeeping activities and recordkeeping systems.

Records Retention Schedule

A list of record categories to determine what records groupings you have, how long you need to keep them to meet operational and regulatory requirements, who (which unit) needs to keep them.

Reference copy

A duplicate of the official record and is maintained for ease of reference and as such is designated a 'non-record'. They should be destroyed when a matter is closed.

Redundant, Obsolete, Transitory (ROT)

ROT is a term used to refer to non-records or information that legally can and should be destroyed. ROT can easily accumulate over time, in paper and electronic form and can represent serious legal, privacy and security risk to The United Church of Canada.

Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR)

The unit that is responsible for maintaining an original record or an official copy of a particular record in United Church of Canada. The OPR is defined in the retention schedule; all other "copies" are considered non-record or transitory material and may be destroyed once they are no longer required.

Structured Information

Information which has a defined format and is used with a data base or automated processing system, includes relational data bases, ACCESS databases, Dynamics 365, and other data with extensive formatting and metadata (index data).

Total Retention

The period of time required by statute or recommended according to standard business practices, for which the record is required to be kept.

Transitory Record

Any data or information required for only a limited time to ensure the completion of a routine action or the preparation of a subsequent record. These records are not usually included within the scope of official records and are not required to be retained and do not appear on records retention schedules.

Unstructured Information

Content that has been created and saved as a separate document, outside of a specific functional processing system, and which stands on its own, as a readable, actionable piece of information (e.g. a spreadsheet, a word processing document or an email document).

Vital Records

Vital Records are records that are essential for preserving, continuing or reconstructing the operations of the organization and protecting the rights of the organization, its employees, and its stakeholders.

Personal Information

Personal Information includes any factual or subjective information, recorded or not, about an identifiable individual. The protection of personal information is subject to federal, provincial and territorial privacy legislation.

Disposition

Disposition is the action taken after records become inactive under the approved Records Classification and Retention Schedule. Disposition can include documented destruction (deletion or shredding), or transfers to the Archives.

Capstone

Capstone is a recommended approach to email records management that offers agencies the option of using a more simplified approach to managing email. The United Church of Canada has developed its own capstone approach to email, based on an approach developed by the National Archives and Records Administration (U.S.).

