

# **William J. Clinton Presidential Library**

## **Guide to Email Collections**

### **Introduction**

The following is a guide to give researchers additional information concerning email collections at the William J. Clinton Presidential Library. Please use this guide as a reference for making requests for email created or received by White House staff during President Clinton's Administration January 20, 1993 to January 20, 2001. This guide describes the email collections made available for research under the Presidential Records Act and Freedom of Information Act. Also, this guide will give provenance to those email collections so that researchers may make an informed decision to include records from these collections in their research.

The William J. Clinton Library unclassified email collection is divided into two collections, the Automated Records Management System (ARMS) and the Tape Restoration Project (TRP). The ARMS and TRP collections are among other electronic records collections made available for research at the Clinton Presidential Library.

The ARMS and TRP systems contain an estimated 17.5 million email messages.

Email collections contain but are not limited to memorandum, scheduling information, meeting times, news publications, press releases, event announcements, staff correspondence and software dependent attachments (ex: .doc, .xls, .pdf, etc.).

### **Collection:**

#### **Automated Records Management System [Email]**

The Automated Records Management System (ARMS) is a database that contains email records of the Executive Office of the President. This system maintained unclassified Presidential email. The ARMS dataset is comprised of 6 sub-series of email records called "Buckets." The buckets include NPR, OPD, POTUS, WHO, CEA, and Default. ARMS emails are printed and arranged chronologically by creation date.

### **Collection:**

#### **Tape Restoration Project**

The Tape Restoration Project (TRP) is a database consisting of restored emails from the Automated Records Management System from July 1994 through June of 2000. The TRP is a database that contains email records of the Executive Office of the President. This system maintained unclassified Presidential email. The TRP dataset is comprised of 6 sub-series of email records called "Buckets." The buckets include NPR, OPD, POTUS, WHO, CEA, and Default. TRP emails are printed and arranged chronologically by creation date.

## **ACCESSING EMAIL**

Clinton Presidential Library Archivists search the ARMS and TRP systems in response to requests from researchers. Requests for email that have not been processed may be submitted under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

**Researchers have access to printed copies of responsive email from within the ARMS and TRP systems.** Researchers do not have direct access to the ARMS and TRP systems.

Email is printed and provided to researchers as a surrogate to the original electronic record. These surrogates must be provided to researchers because the original electronic records systems (ARMS and TRP) contain un-reviewed records that may contain information protected from public disclosure under FOIA.

Archivists review printed email for information that is restricted under FOIA. Archivists withdraw or redact restricted information before providing the researcher with the printed email surrogate. The original electronic record remains unchanged and un-redacted; and it is preserved as it was created.

## **FINDING RESPONSIVE RECORDS**

Born electronic records at the Clinton Presidential Library, such as ARMS and TRP emails are located within the Presidential Electronic Records Library (PERL). PERL provides the search function to search for responsive email within the ARMS and TRP systems.

Archivists search PERL by using keywords and operators (ex. “**AND**,” “**OR**,” “**NEAR**,” and “**NOT**”).

Archivists use information provided by the researcher to craft a search strategy. Without detailed guidance from researchers, archivists often search broadly for email responsive to the researcher’s request.

It is important for researchers requesting email to include as much information as possible including date ranges or exact dates, presidential offices, and specific staff members to narrow search results.

## **FINDING SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS**

All incoming and outgoing EOP email was electronically copied and saved to the ARMS server. As a result of the capture of all incoming and outgoing email correspondence, email messages that often cluttered the mailbox of White House employees were saved to

the ARMS system. Researchers may or may not find this email clutter useful to their research, but these emails cannot be removed from the PERL system.

Researchers are encouraged to inform archivists of the type of email that they find obstructive.

Archivists may provide researchers with a description of types of undesirable emails so that researchers might make an informed decision whether to include those records in their research.

Undesirable emails may include listservs, wire services, newspaper articles, television transcripts, press releases and press briefings. These emails are characterized by their lengthy recipient list and broad subject matter. Further, the information contained within these email messages may be made public through alternative resources.

Duplicated information may prove obstructive for the researcher. The ability to easily forward messages created duplicates of email stored in the ARMS and TRP systems. Email was also duplicated within ARMS when mail was sent between two EOP user accounts located in different “buckets.” ARMS saved all email without bias, as a result email was saved as it was sent from one EOP user account and was received by another EOP account. Further, the ability to reply to previous messages creates conversation chains of duplicated email messages.

## **TIPS FOR SEARCHING**

Since researchers do not have direct access to the ARMS and TRP systems, they are essential in providing information to narrow their request.

Archivists can isolate results by using a “Field-Based” query of the ARMS and TRP systems. Within the “Field-Based” query, archivists can search for the creator or recipient of the email. Archivists can use a “Field-Based” query to search using only the subject provided by the creator of the email.

Archivists can set date range parameters to narrow results. Archivists can isolate the day that an email was created.

If researchers identify a specific office of interest, archivists can search within specific data subsets generally dedicated to specific White House offices. The subsets are called “buckets.” The “buckets” include:

**WHO-** contains email created or received by an individual with an Executive Office of the President (EOP) White House user account not identified as CEA, NPR, or OPD.

**CEA-** contains email created or received by an individual with a Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) White House user account.

**NPR-** contains email created or received by an individual with a National Performance Review (NPR) White House user account.

**OPD-** contains email created or received by an individual with an Office of Policy Development (OPD) White House user account.

**Default-** contains email created or received by unknown or un-recognized email accounts. Email found within the Default bucket often includes email created or received by offices or individuals outside the Executive Office of the President (EOP).

**POTUS-** The POTUS bucket was designated for email created and received by the President of the United States (POTUS). Although, as it is widely known, President Clinton only sent and received a few emails during his administration, and those emails were not sent or received from the POTUS White House user account.

Researchers may request a bucket specific search of records to isolate responsive and substantive results.

## **PRINTED ARMS AND TRP RECORDS**

Printed email is arranged and placed into folders by either ARMS or TRP collections. Email is further arranged by the “bucket” where archivists located the responsive email. Email is also arranged by the search topic. Lastly, responsive email is arranged chronologically by the email’s creation date.

Folders are arranged by:

**Records Group:** Clinton Presidential Records

**Records Sub-Group:** Automated Records Management System [Email] or Tape Restoration Project [Email]

**Series:** The “bucket” (ex: OPD, WHO, CEA, NPR, Default, POTUS,)

**Sub-Series:** [Related Search Topic (ex: Blue Ribbon Schools)]

**Folder Title:** [The email creation date or creation date range (ex: 01/22/1993 – 01/01/1997)]

Also included in the folder description is the OA/ID reference number. This is an internal number used by the Clinton Library to retain the original order of Clinton Presidential Records.

Printed email responsive to requests is reviewed by archivists, and if necessary, redacted or withdrawn under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Researchers may find that email has been withdrawn or redacted for FOIA restrictions. The restriction that is most often applied to email is the FOIA restriction concerning information regarded as a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, such as social security numbers or home phone numbers. Email that is withdrawn from a collection is listed on a withdrawal sheet. Withdrawal sheets are placed in the folder marking the location of the processed email and list the FOIA restriction applied to the withdrawn email.

## **WHY IS EMAIL A SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE FOR YOUR RESEARCH?**

Email contains valuable information that may not be found within other archival collections at the William J. Clinton Presidential Library. Email correspondence, in some instances, may have been exclusively used by White House staff to exchange information.

Email may also contain context information about the creator or topic. The Washington Post used emails from the Elena Kagan collection to describe the then Supreme Court nominee's character and personality. Washington Post staff writer, Amy Goldstein used emails created by Kagan to describe her as confident, sarcastic, and at times even profane.<sup>i</sup>

## **HOW WAS EMAIL USED?**

Clinton Administration staff used email much like it is used today. The White House staff, during the Clinton Administration, used email to communicate with each other and individuals outside of the White House. White House email contains discussion of policy, events, speeches, and decisions while they are in development. Email often displays an informal, casual, or uninhibited communications style.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 1993, White House email was created “using a centralized email system running on a VAX<sup>ii</sup> minicomputer known as ‘All-In-One.’”<sup>iii</sup> The “All-In-One” system was installed by the Bush Administration in 1989, but because of rapidly developing technology it proved to be antiquated by the time President Clinton's staff entered office.<sup>iv</sup>

President Clinton formed the White House Technology Task Force in 1993 to address White House information technology, but more specifically to address communication and security as it related to new technology.<sup>v</sup>

The Clinton Administration was further motivated to address electronic communication as it related to archiving email as a result of the order from Judge Charles Richey concerning the *Armstrong V. Executive Office of the President*.<sup>vi</sup> Richey's order stated that government agencies including the EOP must manage the unique electronic record, as it contained extra information that would be lost if the record was printed.

In 1994, the EOP created the Automated Records Management System (ARMS) to electronically archive all email created or received by the President, Vice President, or the White House Staff so the that the office would better comply with the recent Armstrong ruling.

The ARMS system was created in 1994 by Information Management Consultants, Incorporated to archive email records created by the EOP.<sup>vii</sup>

The White House maintained several application servers (ex: All-In-One, Lotus Notes), one remote server, and one ARMS interface server, which transferred email records from the email system to ARMS.<sup>viii</sup>

In 1996 the Executive Office of the President (EOP) replaced the All-In-One system with Lotus Notes office software as its email application.

“A key feature of the ARMS system was the ability to perform a computerized search of the email using keyword terms to search for responsive materials.”<sup>ix</sup>

“From October 1996 through May of 1999 two malfunctions occurred in the EOP email system that prevented incoming Internet email from being properly archived in ARMS... Although malfunctions prevented certain email from being archived in ARMS, copies of these records were retained in the system backup tapes...”<sup>x</sup>

In March 2000, the EOP implemented the Tape Restoration Project (TRP) to restore the improperly archived email records.

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- <sup>i</sup> Amy Goldstein, “Kagan’s Newly Released E-mail Reveal Confident Voice in Clinton White House,” *The Washington Post*, June 19, 2010.  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/18/AR2010061805618.html> (accessed November 18, 2013).
- <sup>ii</sup> VAX is an acronym for Virtual Address Extension.
- <sup>iii</sup> Randy H. Katz, “Professor Katz Went to Washington: The Adventures of an Academic in the Halls of Power,” <http://bnrg.eecs.berkeley.edu/~randy/ToWashington/Index.html> (accessed October 7, 2013).
- <sup>iv</sup> Katz, “Katz went to Washington,” October 7, 2013.
- <sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>vi</sup> *Armstrong v. Executive Office of the President* was a case brought before the court by the National Security Archives to address NSA emails of the Reagan Administration. The court went on to address email communication by not only ruling that email communication should be included as a presidential record, but further ruling that those emails must be preserved electronically.
- <sup>vii</sup> United States General Accounting Office, “Electronic Records: Clinton Administration’s Management of Executive Office of the President’s E-Mail System” GAO Report to the Chairman, Committee on Government Reform, (April 2001) GAO-01-446, 7.
- <sup>viii</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>ix</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>x</sup> *Ibid.*