

MANAGING THE DIGITAL UNIVERSITY DESKTOP: A RESEARCH STUDY

Draft Survey Participation Request Letter

(to be sent out over email)

For many of us, managing the information on our computers is a monumental, never-ending, and frequently unsuccessful task. How many of us spend a good deal of time each week just looking for files, trying to remember where we have stored them and what we have named them? Email, while extremely convenient, often makes matters worse. Most of us have been provided with little direction as to how best to manage this vast sea of messages and related documents.

The UNC-CH School of Information and Library Science (SILS) and the Duke University Archives have received funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to study computer file management practices in academic units and administrative offices at UNC-CH, across the 16-campus UNC System, and at Duke University. SILS faculty member, Helen Tibbo, and Duke University Archivist, Tim Pyatt, will be directing the work on this project. Our goals are to:

- Investigate current desktop electronic records handling practices, especially related to electronic mail and associated digitally transmitted documents;
- Recommend data management “best practices” given the realities of user needs and behaviors;
- Develop reality-based learning modules and workshops for end-user desktop electronic records management.

We hope our findings and the products based on your input will cumulatively save you and your colleagues months or even years of work throughout your careers!

Please consider sharing some information concerning your email experiences and methods by responding to the brief web-based survey we will send you via email in the next week. It should not take more than 10 minutes of your time to complete. We are not interested in the content of your files, but how you consider, review, manage, and work with them. Thank you so much for your time and effort on behalf.

We will keep the survey data entirely confidential and we will not correlate any names with responses in our work. We guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you personally in any reports or publications. You may discontinue participating in this survey at any time and your participation will have no bearing whatsoever on your present or future Duke employment. Filling out the survey and sending it back to us indicates your willingness to participate in this study. Both the Duke Human Subjects IRB and the UNC-CH AA-IRB have approved this study. Questions regarding the survey should be sent to either of the co-principle investigators listed below:

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If you have questions about participating in this research project you may also contact the Institutional Research Board (IRB) chair, Linda George, at 684-3030.