PERSONAL DIGITAL ARCHIVING SERIES

Archiving Email

Archiving email can be a challenge. Most email either resides within a program on your computer or in a server on the Internet, depending on which email system you use. Either way you have to find where your email resides, download it -- if you can -- and make a backup copy.

Email resides either:
1. **locally** on your computer, where you open a program to access it, or
2. **remotely** on your email host's website, where you open a brower and navigate to a web site to access it or configure an email *client*
    to accesses it

> NOTE: An email *client* is a program for managing email.

Locally: email software installed on your computer
If you have an email program installed on your computer, your email resides somewhere on the computer within the program's folder of files. Some of these desktop email programs offer you a menu option to archive or save a copy of your email. The function is the same in all email programs (saving a copy of your email) but the *terminology* or *process* may differ from program to program.

A typical process would be to select the email folder or directory you want to save, then select the menu options "File > Save As" or "File > Archive" or "File > Export or some similar wording. You may be asked about what format you want to save your email in. "Text" or ".txt" is ideal. Some programs may only allow you to save your emails in their proprietary format and view the archived emails from within the program.

> NOTE: Text files (.txt) are simple common computer files that contain very little formatting and are readable on all computers systems. If you are given a "save as" choice between "text file" or a different format option, always select "text." All word-processing programs, text editors and browsers can open and display text files. The text files will lose any fancy formatting the original emails may have had but the words will still display.

Some desktop email programs do not have these menu options. Instead you have to locate the email files within the program folder or directory. For help finding your email, go to a search engine and search for a phrase like, "Where does (email program name) store my email files?".

Some desktop email programs store email in a database but it is not necessary to run the email program in order to see your emails. A **text**-reading program can open and display the emails.

Remote: email services accessed with a browser
Web-based email services store email on remote servers. Only a few of the large, popular web-based services will enable you to download your email from their servers. Some will permit you to download your email if you pay for their premium service; if you are using their free service they may not allow downloading.

To find out if it is possible to download, save or archive your email, search online for keywords and phrases such as "archive email" and "(your email service name)" or "download email" and "(your email service name)."

You may be able to map a desktop email client to your online account, then download your email. Your search engine results from the previous paragraph will tell you if you can or cannot do it. If you don't already have an email client, search online for "email client."

Once you find and install an email client, you can map it to your online service. If you cannot find help within the client on how to configure your email account, you may need to search online for help.

> NOTE: File attachments are separate from the emails to which they are attached. Attachments will not be available from within the archived email message files. You must download the attachments from and save them separately.

This process would require you to configure your email client or browser to use POP, IMAP and/or SMPTE protocols; these systems for exchanging messages between computer systems.