

# Email as a Record?!: A Creative Workflow to Build Institutional Support at a Small Liberal Arts College

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## Abstract

Due to the modern deluge of information and the sometimes ephemeral nature of email as a container, email and other data is often sidelined as a copy of record at small liberal arts colleges who aren't subject to the same record policies of public universities. Regardless, email is a critical form of communication, as higher education institutions seek to document, preserve, and make accessible their diverse institutional histories. Although not always a record, email exposes information on what is shared and received, as well as how it was communicated.

Williams College is clear in its records policy and retention schedules that some emails, some data, and other born-digital materials are records of the college. Yet, compliance can be complicated. Jessika Drmacich, records manager and digital resources archivist at Williams College, will present a toolkit and workflows showcasing how to build institutional support for email archiving and then share a low-barrier way to collect and preserve emails.

## About the author:

*Jessika Drmacich* is Williams College's Records Manager/ Digital Resources Archivist. Based in Williamstown, Massachusetts, Jessika leads the records management program and navigates records policies specific for small liberal arts colleges. She also leads digital projects related to college records and special collections, digital preservation, and campus web archiving. Dedicated to innovative collaborative archival practices and enriching records and archives with a multitude of voices, she also is part of Williams' Native and Indigenous Working Group, Williams Committee for Diversity and Community, Williams Reads Committee, and the Claiming Williams Committee. She greatly enjoys people and this is absolutely her favorite part of her work! Jessika is also the 2023-2024 chair of the SAA Records Management Committee.

Since 2017, Jessika has been actively collecting and preserving appraised selections of Williams' email as part of the college's records policy. Building institutional support and a sustainable workflow for email archiving at Williams, Jessika is presenting at the SAA research forum in order to seek feedback that will hopefully inspire new ways to analyze and disseminate her work. She is specifically interested in ideas regarding quantitative analysis.