



March 30, 2015

The
**Archivists
Round Table**
of Metropolitan
New York,
Inc.

Statement regarding public officials using private email to conduct official business

The Board of Directors and the Advocacy Committee of the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc., expresses concern at recent news reports that public officials at different levels of government have used private email accounts to routinely communicate and conduct official business.

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Use of non-official systems to send and receive email, except in extreme circumstances (i.e. emergency situations where government systems are not available) increases the likelihood that messages which meet the legal definition of a public record are not captured or managed in accordance with existing laws and regulations. Public records, whether email messages or paper documents, not captured in official records management systems diminish the historical record, decrease government efficiency and effectiveness, and impede the public's ability to hold government officials accountable.

The Board of Directors and the Advocacy Committee urge governments to adopt records regulations that prohibit the use of non-official email systems except in extreme, emergency situations. Furthermore, the Board of Directors and the Committee urge that stricter rules regarding the use of official email accounts for official business be implemented and enforced to ensure preservation of the historic record and to foster greater transparency and accountability at all levels of government.