

## Guide for Donors of Email Archives

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### Introduction

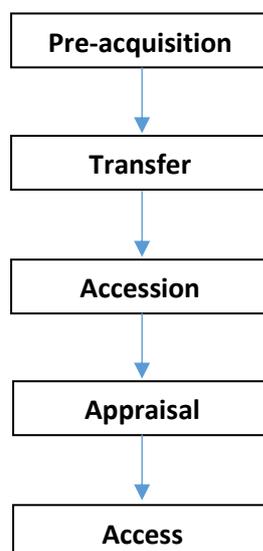
The purpose of this guidance is to provide advice to individuals and small organisations on how to manage and preserve their email accounts in preparation for their donation at the John Rylands Research Institute and Library (Rylands).

Emails and their attachments document events, relationships, transactions and working practices, just as paper correspondence has historically. The technical requirements of email accounts mean they need to be managed in ways that are different from paper records, although there are similarities in how emails are appraised and selected for permanent preservation at the Rylands.

This guidance describes the process by which email is acquired, transferred, appraised and accessed by researchers. Throughout this process, collaboration between the donor, curator (and sometimes additional copyright holders or staff at the organisation) is key. Examples relating to writers and small publishers, gleaned from the Carcanet Press Email Archive will be provided.

### What does the Rylands do with emails?

The process of transferring email collections to the Rylands includes the following stages:



## Pre-acquisition

The process of donating emails begins with a discussion, or series of discussions, between the donor and a curator at the Rylands during which the latter will gather some basic information about the donor's emails and email accounts. The curator will want to know, for example:

- how the donor has managed their email over time
- the number of email and email accounts
- what the email and attachments document contain (In a small publishing house, examples may include manuscripts, drafts, contracts, and correspondence relating to the editing, publishing, sales and promotion processes. They may include evidence of both professional and personal relationships).

These discussions will help the curator prepare the emails for their long-term preservation and consider any challenges that may arise in relation to technical requirements, cataloguing and access.

Additionally, in this phase, the donor may wish to select a portion of their email for transfer. Advice on this process can be found in the section below 'What does the donor need to do?' Additional guidance and example appraisal rubrics are available from the Rylands to support the donor in this process.

The curator will prepare a donation agreement, capturing all of the information required about the collection and relevant copyright, permissions and access restrictions, which is signed by the donor.

## Transfer

The Rylands provides technical guidance and support throughout this process.

Options for transfer include:

- Visit by digital preservation and curatorial staff to the office/home of the donor to collect the email from the donor's computer directly
- Provision of remote access to the account for the collection of email by the donor

Fixity checks will be carried out on the files to ensure that no data has been lost during the transfer process. The format of the files and the email client in use will inform the format in which the files are collected. At present, email collection files are collected and managed at the Rylands in pst and MBOX format.

## Accession

Once the emails have been transferred they will be formally accessioned. This means the emails have entered the custody of the Rylands and become part of its collection. The curator can then work on the long-term preservation and cataloguing of the donation.

## Appraisal

Appraisal is the process by which curators decide whether an email and attachment have, or are likely to have, enduring historical value.

For example: email regarding a particular piece of work or a professional relationship would be considered significant, whereas spam advertisements or a similar type of unsolicited email would not.

Appraisal of the email begins at the pre-acquisition stage, but also carried out throughout the donation process as the curator acquires greater knowledge of the collection and its context. Collaborative appraisal is encouraged, where the curator and donor work together to identify and agree upon selecting email for permanent preservation.

The curator will also conduct their own appraisal processes to remove email which do not fit with the Rylands collecting policy and email appraisal rubric.

### Data Protection & Copyright

As part of the appraisal process, the curator will review the emails for sensitivity and confidentiality. Email accounts are likely to contain personal data relating to:

- email addresses and other contact information
- medical information
- political, philosophical or philosophical views
- sexuality
- trade union membership

The Rylands has an obligation, under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation UK (GDPR UK) and the Data Protection Act 2018, to safeguard information about living individuals.

Sensitivity is a much broader subject. There is information that is perhaps of no legal concern but nevertheless may have significant consequences for individuals: their reputations, their careers, the reception of their work, and their personal and professional relationships. The donor and curator will discuss these matters throughout the donation process and agree on a way forward in terms of whether the record should be preserved, and whether access should be restricted.

Copyright of the email and attachments, as modern records, is likely to be still in place. For records including manuscripts, email and correspondence, the copyright resides with the writer/sender. The rights of intellectual property in terms of authorisation for reproduction will be followed by the Rylands.

### Access

Making records available to researchers is the ultimate aim of preserving archive collections. Given the many issues that surround access to records – privacy, sensitivity, confidentiality – donors may, understandably, have reservations about allowing researchers access to their email.

Access to emails does not mean unrestricted access. The Rylands's obligations under data protection legislation mean that certain emails must remain closed for a considerable period of time. Other restrictions can be applied to material thought to be, for whatever reason, confidential or sensitive. It

may be possible, for example, to apply a set closure period for particular correspondence, or for emails to be made available with some information redacted. Curators will discuss these options with donors.

Requests for access to the email archive will always be forwarded to the donor/copyright holder if this is what they prefer.

### What do donors need to do?

We have prepared a checklist for donors which can be used to gather information methodically about their email/email accounts in preparation for their transfer. There are a number of points for donors to consider before they commit to transferring their emails. For instance:

- How have you managed your email over time?

Example considerations: Do you currently use more than one email account? Have you previously used a different email address?

- How are the emails organised? Are they filed in different folders or are they all stored in the email account's inbox?
- Does you know which of their emails you would consider significant or valuable?

Example considerations: are there email relating to your creative process, or the publication of your work, from proposal through the publishing process to promotion and reception?

- Is there an email/folder in your account that you would prefer not to have preserved?

Example considerations: Are there email exchanged with family members? Are there email which contain your bank information? Do you use your work email account to also exchange personal/non work related email?

- Are there email/sub-folders in your account which are not significant or valuable?

Examples considerations: Are there email from mailing lists/advertisements/online shopping purchases/out of office notifications?

- Is there anyone that you should consult or inform prior to the transfer of the email collection to the Rylands?

Example considerations: are there any members of staff at the organisation who need to be informed that their email will be preserved in the archive? Are there any significant copyright holders that it would be beneficial to get permission from prior to transfer to facilitate access to the collection?

There are also some practical steps donors can take at this stage of the process:

- Organizing any messages they want to preserve into clearly marked folders
- If an entire email account is being transferred, donors need to ensure that they delete or remove any messages they do not want to preserve: this will require their deletion from 'Deleted Items' and 'Sent Items' folders
- Delete email from the junk/promotional folders in the account where applicable

- Remove any password protection that might have been applied to emails

### Checklist

To be completed by the donor:

<b>Email collection information</b>	<b>Collection Name:</b>
Number of email accounts (please provide names of email account provider, e.g. Outlook, Gmail and record of email addresses)	
Estimated number of email	
Date coverage of email	
Structure of email account(s) (for example, has the account been organised into folders?)	
Types of attachment in the collection	
<b>Donor information</b>	
Are you the copyright holder for the sent email from this account? If not, please provide details of the copyright holder	
Does the donor want to make a selection of email for transfer, or to transfer the collection in its entirety?	
Is the collection intended to be open to access, following appraisal and sensitivity review?	