

Correspondence as a Documentary Form and its Persistent Representation

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Introduction

- Diplomatics is a mind-set, an approach, a perspective, a systematic way of thinking about archival documents.
 - Luciana Duranti (“Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science (Part V),” *Archivaria* 32, 1991, p. 21)



Introduction

- A systematic way of thinking about correspondence as a documentary form, and especially,
- Its persistent representation features that have been carried over for more than two centuries in the history of recordkeeping and archives in the United States




Correspondence: Persistent Representation Features

- Correspondence as a documentary form normally pertains to an individual, organization or place; covers at a certain period of time; relates to one subject or a few subjects; applies to a particular use purpose, and results in a series of mutual communications (outgoing or incoming)



Correspondence: Persistent Representation Features

- **Name**
 - to and from individual/organization
- **Date**
 - at a certain period of time
- **Subject**
 - about one or more topics
- **Purpose**
 - for a particular use purpose



Traditional Correspondence



Traditional Correspondence & Its Organization

- Little evidence shows how American people organized their correspondence before the 19th century.
- In the early 19th century, outgoing letters were hand copied onto the blank pages of a bound copy book and organized chronologically by **date**.



Pigeon-Hole Systems

- Methods gradually evolved to help people organize their incoming correspondence in the second half of the 19th century.
- **Incoming** letters were first folded and put in the **pigeon-holes** above a desk or in a cabinet.

OfficeMuseum.com

OfficeMuseum.com





Flat Filing Systems

- **Flat filing systems** were developed to replace pigeonhole desks by the last quarter of the 19th century.
- **Letter boxes** and **horizontal cabinet files** were used to organize incoming letters alphabetically by name of sender, with tab dividers.



Vertical Filing Systems

- **Vertical filing systems** became a widespread practice after the turn of the 20th century
- Capable of bringing **incoming** and **outgoing** correspondences together
- Along with related documents that are used for a certain **purpose** or about a particular **subject**

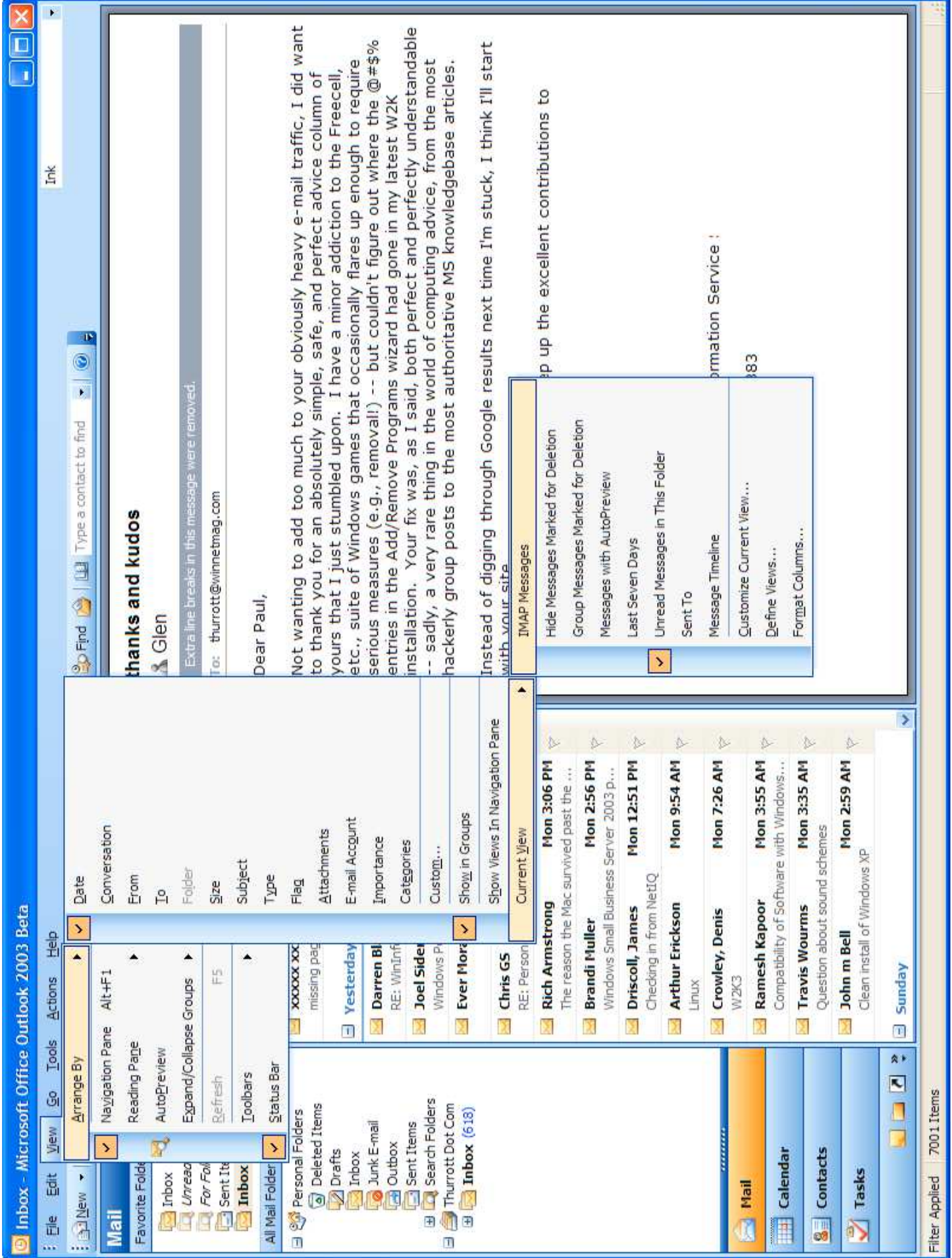


Electronic Mail



Email Organization

- The design of email systems highlights the organizational features of correspondence.
- From/to: sender/recipient
- Date/time
- Subject
- Mailbox/personal folder



thanks and kudos

Glen

Extra line breaks in this message were removed.

To: thurrott@winnetmag.com

Dear Paul,

Not wanting to add too much to your obviously heavy e-mail traffic, I did want to thank you for an absolutely simple, safe, and perfect advice column of yours that I just stumbled upon. I have a minor addiction to the Freecell, etc., suite of Windows games that occasionally flares up enough to require serious measures (e.g., removal!) -- but couldn't figure out where the @#%\$ entries in the Add/Remove Programs wizard had gone in my latest W2K installation. Your fix was, as I said, both perfect and perfectly understandable -- sadly, a very rare thing in the world of computing advice, from the most hackneyed group posts to the most authoritative MS knowledgebase articles.

Instead of digging through Google results next time I'm stuck, I think I'll start with your site

...up the excellent contributions to

...ormation Service :

...83

Navigation Pane

- Conversation
- From
- To
- Folder
- Size
- Subject
- Type
- Flag
- Attachments
- E-mail Account
- Importance
- Categories
- Custom...
- Show in Groups

Show Views In Navigation Pane

Current View

Current View	Mon 3:06 PM	Mon 2:56 PM	Mon 12:51 PM	Mon 9:54 AM	Mon 7:26 AM	Mon 3:55 AM	Mon 3:35 AM	Mon 2:59 AM	
Rich Armstrong	The reason the Mac survived past the ...	Brandt Muller	Windows Small Business Server 2003 p...	Driscoll, James	Checking in from NetIQ	Arthur Erickson	Linux	Crowley, Denis	W2K3
Chris G5	RE: Person					Ramesh Kapoor	Compatibility of Software with Windows...	Travis Wourms	Question about sound schemes
						John m Bell	Clean install of Windows XP		
									Sunday

Mail

Favorite Folders

- Inbox
- Unread For Fol
- Sent It
- Inbox

All Mail Folder

Personal Folders

- Deleted Items
- Drafts
- Inbox
- Junk E-mail
- Outbox
- Sent Items
- Search Folders
- Thurrott Dot Com
- Inbox (618)

Navigation Pane

- Arrange By
- Navigation Pane Alt+F1
- Reading Page
- AutoPreview
- Expand/Collapse Groups
- Refresh F5
- Toolbars
- Status Bar

Mail

Calendar

Contacts

Tasks

Filter Applied 7001 Items



Email Organization

- The effectiveness of an email system in organizing and managing email messages depends on how these features are being utilized and the level of control on their creation and management.
- There are four levels of control: automatic, mandatory, recommended, and optional.



Levels of Control

- **Date/Time – Automatic**
 - System-generated
 - system-supplied time stamps
 - Can be sorted chronologically
 - Most controlled feature



Levels of Control

- **Name/Email Address – Mandatory**
 - Must supply in order to send messages
 - All email messages associated with sender names or recipient names (or other identifiers)
 - Can be sorted alphabetically
 - Effectiveness of sorting depends on system design (e.g., names in natural or inverted order)



Levels of Control

- **Subject – Recommended**

- Useful information to facilitate exchange of messages
- Can be missing if not provided
- System will remind users if forgotten
- Narrative text in natural order

- **Use Purpose – Optional**

- Mailbox creation entirely up to users
- Least controlled feature



New Organizational Features

- Outlook/Hotmail
- Traditional folder tree
 - Top down, hierarchical, everything-has-a-place approach
- Drag and drop to file folders
- Chron subdivisions (yesterday, week days, last week, two weeks ago, three weeks ago, earlier this month, last month)
- Subject threads (from, to)



New Organizational Features

- Gmail
- Depart from the traditional folder tree
- Using labels/tags
- One message can be assigned multiple labels (i.e., in separate “folders”) without having to copy the message.
 - In a traditional folder tree, you’ll have to choose only one folder or duplicate the message.



Email Preservation



Email Preservation

Capturing email
in a standard-based,
system-neutral format that preserves
its significant properties

- Chris Prom, *Preserving Email*, 2011



Digital Preservation Testbed

- From Digital Volatility to Digital Permanence: Preserving Email. The Hague: Dutch National Archives. 2003.
- Strictly speaking, an email message consists of two components
 - A message header: contains information about the message, like sender, addressee, subject, date and many other things.
 - The message body: including any attachments, can contain data in any conceivable form.



Essential Header Elements

- Almost all the information about the immediate context of email messages is in the message headers. Testbed has identified the following minimum set of authenticity requirements for the context of an email:
 - The email address, the organisation, and the full name of the sender
 - The email address, the organisation, and the full names of all recipients



Essential Header Elements

- For outgoing messages, the date and time the message was sent
- For incoming messages, the date and time the message was received, as well as the date and time this message was sent
- The subject of the message
- The security and/or confidentiality settings
- The file name and the file format of any attachments (all messages)



MUSE: A Tool for Working with Email Archives

- A research tool from Stanford Computer Science for browsing and visualizing large email archives
- A new technique for processing email archives in special collections using MUSE (Memories USing Email)
- Hangal, Sudheendra, et al. “Processing Email Archives in Special Collections.” 2012


Overview

Muse Login Overview Browse messa... Edit Muse Lexi... Attachments Cards Input referenc... Robert Creeley...

localhost:9099/muse/Overview

Muse

FOLDERS | SETTINGS | HELP | LOGOUT



EMAIL ARCHIVE OF ROBERT CREELEY

JULY 22, 1994 TO JUNE 24, 2006

40,028 EMAILS	4,002 PEOPLE	25 GROUPS	ALIASES
14,764 outgoing	17,012 names	with 4485 people	91 names
25,264 incoming	23,157 email addresses	covering 23,115 messages	34 email addresses
Attachments			

[Continue](#)

ARCHIVIST TOOLS DEVELOPER INFORMATION

Muse v0.8.2. [Send feedback](#). Or [report an error](#). [Like](#) 3

Muse

FOLDERS | SETTINGS | HELP | LOGOUT

Sentiments by time

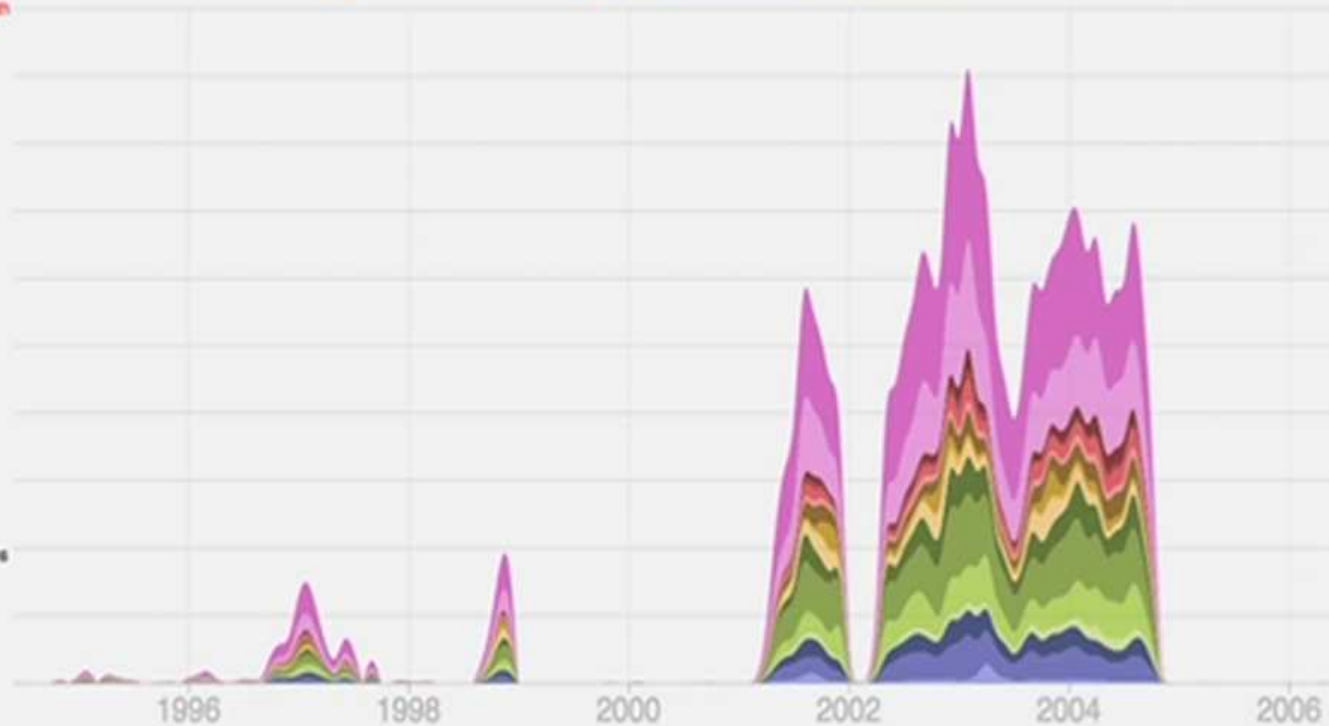
Everyone

search

[Edit lexicon](#)

2211 messages/month

- Positive
- Negative
- anger
- expletives
- emergency
- racism
- health
- vacations
- love
- festivals
- religion
- family
- life event
- confidential
- memories
- superlative
- congratulations



Click anywhere on the graph above to view messages.

creeley

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Cards" with several tabs open. The address bar shows "localhost:9099/muse/cards". The main content area displays a grid of cards for three groups: UUP Alana, Lach Maria, and LFA. Each card shows a month and year, the number of messages, and a list of associated locations and names. A sidebar on the left lists various group colors and identifiers.

Group colors (define)	UUP Alana	Lach Maria	LFA	
caprio16	AUGUST 2001 694 MESSAGES	SEPTEMBER 2001 996 MESSAGES	OCTOBER 2001 911 MESSAGES	NOVEMBER 2001 807 MESSAGES
bjackson	NYC	Kent State	Afghanistan	Amherst Street
messenger	Maine	Robert Creeley	Orono	Mr. Clinton
myers13	Bob	Amherst Street	Waldoboro	Afghanistan
bjackson+97	Allen	Hannah	Boston	Manhattan
bjackson+76	Jack Magazine	London	Bob	Bob
jzante+396	Philadelphia	Afghanistan	Amherst Street	New York
forthgone+41	Waldoboro	bin laden	Portland	Maine
jandry+43	Robert Creeley	Bill Wadsworth	Maine	Billy
el500005+144	David Cast	Sweden	Hambone	Iraq
bjackson+420	Wanda Null	Catalonia	Taliban	Raymond Foye
el500005+44	Danny	Barcelona	Robert Creeley	MSN
el500005+41	London UK	Stockholm	Marty	NYU
bjackson+1273	Wanda	Spain	Pakistan	Eastlake
el500005+13	Adrienne	USA	Kabul	CIA
mjk+169	Cornell	&r.	Corman	Michael Olson
chrisadlab+271	Woodstock	Bob	Buffalo	Buffalo
jzante+1	Kenneth	New York	New York	Robert Creeley
alrowlin+85	MSN	Bush	America	Charles
bernardi+338	Malcolm	France	MSN	America
wanda.interport+181	Myung	Malcolm	Bush	Pinsky
jdhollis+32				
bernardi+644				
brook_row+70				



NARA “Capstone” Approach

- NARA Bulletin 2013-02: Guidance on a New Approach to Managing Email Records
- “Capstone” Approach
 - A more simplified and automated approach to managing email, as opposed to using either print and file systems or records management applications that require staff to file email records individually



NARA “Capstone” Approach

- Identify those officials whose email is likely to contain permanently valuable email and manage their accounts
- Categorize and schedule email based on the work and/or position of the email account owner
- Required metadata elements include the date of the email and the names and email addresses of all senders and recipients.
- Agencies may wish to retain and preserve additional metadata for legal and business purposes.



Conclusion

- Persistent features of correspondence have played an important role in the organization, retrieval, management, and preservation of correspondence
- Each of these features was explored and utilized at a different stage in the history of American recordkeeping in the 19th century.



Conclusion

- Electronic mail systems developed in the last quarter of the 20th century manage to incorporate all persistent features into an integrated model of correspondence recordkeeping.
- However, the level of control applied to each feature has resulted in differences in effectiveness of email organization and management.



Conclusion

- The level of control with different features has also left its impact on email preservation and representation.
- Automatically captured feature
 - the date of the email
- Mandatorily enforced feature
 - the names and email addresses of all senders and recipients

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