Managing Government Records in a Unified Communications Environment

Background

Over the next few years, the Government of Alberta (GoA) will implement a suite of unified communications (UC) services in all departments. UC services will support end user productivity and enhance business processes related to communication and collaboration.

What is UC?

UC is the integration of real-time communication services, such as instant messaging and video conferencing, with non-real-time communication services, such as voicemail and email.

UC is not a single product, but a set of products that provide a unified interface through which users can manage their communications across a variety of devices and media types.

UC services can be divided into six broad categories:

- **Telephony**
  - o Includes fixed, mobile and soft (Internet) telephony with options for voice and video.
- **Conferencing**
  - o Includes multiparty voice and video conferencing, and web conferencing with document sharing capabilities.
- **Messaging**
  - o Includes email, voicemail, SMS and fax.
- **Presence and Instant Messaging**
  - o Includes the ability to send text and additional information to others in real-time, and the ability to view the status of individuals and resources.
- **Clients**
  - o Unified clients enable access to multiple communication functions from a consistent interface.
- **Communications Enabled Business Processes**
  - o The ability to integrate the UC solution with other business communications applications.

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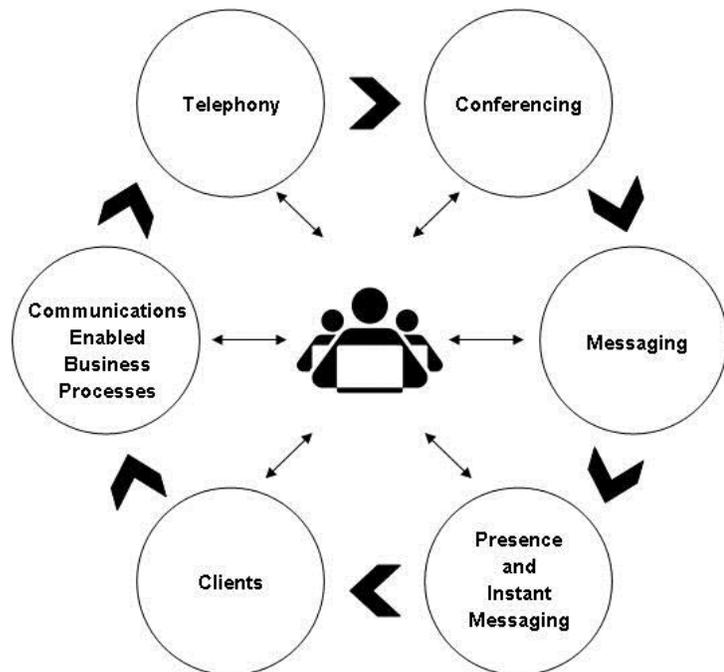
How do I manage GoA records in a UC environment?

All GoA records are subject to the requirements of the Records Management Regulation and must be managed accordingly. Records created in a UC environment will include voicemail transcribed to text, or saved as a wave file (.wav) and received in an email inbox.

Records in the GoA

Records in the GoA can be in any medium or format (including email) and provide evidence of government business.

There are two types of records:

Official records document and provide evidence of decisions and transactions. They must be retained and filed in official records systems, and managed in accordance with government policies, standards, and practices.
Examples are: policies, final reports, legal documents, meeting minutes and financial statements.

Transitory records are records in any format that are of short-term value, with no further uses beyond an immediate transaction.
Examples are: duplicates, drafts, unsolicited information, reference materials, and notices of social events.

Managing Official and Transitory Records

Official records are stored securely so that the right information is available to the right person, in the right format, at the right time. They must be retained and disposed of in accordance with an approved records retention and disposition schedule. Records retention and disposition schedules are legal documents that outline how long government records must be kept and what their final disposition will be (either destruction or archival preservation).

Transitory records may be destroyed by deleting electronic documents and discarding paper documents in confidential receptacles or locked bins.

For more information see Official and Transitory Records: A Guide for Government of Alberta Employees.

Managing Email

In addition to the records management obligations required of all GoA staff, the implementation of UC offers an excellent opportunity for staff to revisit preferred email practices. Service Alberta's Information Management Branch (IMB) has created a number of useful email management tip sheets and guides that are available on IMB's Managing government information page under the topic "Email management;" of particular interest is the Email Decision Diagram, which may aid staff in deciding whether or not to retain specific emails.

Contacts

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