

Show-Me More?

E-mail retention has been in the news in Missouri, with interesting parallels to North Carolina:

- The governor's staff was accused by a departing staffer of deleting e-mails.
- Questions were raised about what must be retained by law.
- The governor was the target of a lawsuit.

What's different, so far, is that Missouri has taken action to retain all government e-mails for seven years.

The cost: \$1.6 million up front, and \$500,000 a year to maintain the system.

Dan Ross, chief information officer for the state of Missouri, said the state's previous system retained e-mails for 60 days, but searches on the server were cumbersome and expensive. The new system will allow keyword searching across agencies in a matter of minutes, and at very low cost. So it's possible to type in the name of a state employee and a certain subject and retrieve each e-mail that met the criteria.

The e-mail would still have to be reviewed to see what was exempt from disclosure. Ross expects the system to be in operation in July.

The basics:

Missouri

Employees: 34,000

E-mails processed daily: approximately 1.5 million

E-mail systems in use: 2

Capital cost of system (supplied by Symantec, of Cupertino, CA): \$1.6 million

Annual operating cost: Approximately \$500,000

North Carolina

Employees: 62,000

E-mails processed daily: 1 million

E-mail systems in use, executive branch: 18