FAQs for Email Retention
(i.e. What can I delete and what can I keep)

Why should I worry about the retention of my email?
Email is a record and according to Ohio Rev. Code §149.43, a public entity such as Kent State University has a duty to retain all public records for inspection.

What is a public record?
A record is defined as
1. Any document, device, or item, regardless of physical form or characteristic;
2. That has been created or received in the course of University business; and
3. Which serves to document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities.

Basically, an email is no different than any other paper record created during the course of a day. There is no separate retention schedule for email.

Who determines if the email meets these requirements?
Each individual employee is responsible for making this determination. Employees can turn to the records retention schedules to see if find examples of records that must be kept.

What emails will have the shortest retention period?
Emails that contain information that has very short-lived value, or “transient records”, may be disposed of once it no longer is needed (usually a few hours or days). Transient records include:
• Preliminary drafts (when superseded by a final version, the draft can be discarded);
• Memoranda pertaining to scheduling an event (getting everyone’s schedules together);
• User copies (not original documents);
• Routing slips.

What are some examples of emails that are non-records that I can delete?
Several emails received throughout the course of the day do not document the University and its functions, and may be disposed of immediately. These include:
• Personal correspondence (discussions about non-University issues);
• Non-university publications;
• Listserv materials;
• Junk mail/Spam;
• Catalogs or commercial ads;
• Journals, books, or other library materials;
• Attachments that contain documents that were not created by the University, and/or for a University purpose.

If you have any questions regarding the retention of email, please call the Office of the General Counsel at x2982 or send a detailed email to: legal@kent.edu