Information compliance is everyone's responsibility.

But for us it's a job.

Records Management Services – We're not just paper.

We are compliance.

Call Records Management Services for assistance if you have records issues or questions.
543.0573 or urc@u.washington.edu

Files, Files, Everywhere - And how am I supposed to manage them?

How Retention Schedules can simplify your work life

Why care about a filing system?

- Uniform practices
- Simplified filing
- Faster retrieval
- Easier training of new personnel
- Expandability and flexibility
- Standard procedures for disposing of obsolete records
- Better service to clients/public
- Protection of vital records
- Compliance with legal and audit retention requirements

How do you know if your filing system is good?

- Makes filing less difficult, tedious and unattractive
- Offers quick and easy filing and retrieval of information with a minimum of wasted time and effort (ie: 30 second search time)
- Provides clear simple file categories
- Is expandable and flexible enough to meet everyone’s needs
- Ensures integrity and continuity of recordkeeping, despite changes in office personnel
- Has uniform practices
- Allows for the easy identification and purging of inactive records

Important Things to remember

- Paper and electronic records are one and the same and should be managed as such.
- All records have a **finite** retention period within the office –
  - If a record has archival value, it should be transferred to the UW Archives.
  - There are consequences if a record is kept beyond its retention period.
  - Records are either active or inactive within the office.

How does the General Schedule help with Filing?

- It lists the cut-offs and retention periods for the records.
  - Cut-off indicates when record changes from active to inactive status within the office.
    - Common cut-offs – Academic Year, Calendar Year, End of Biennium, etc.
    - When this transition occurs, records are now eligible for storage, either within office or at the Records Center.
    - Retrieval rate will dictate where the records should be stored.
  - The retention tells you how long the records must be kept and allows you to determine whether on-site storage space can meet your needs.
  - Lists advised destruction method of records – shred, recycle, transfer to UW Archives

So what do I do next?

- Determine the extent of your paper and electronic filing problem.

1. Do you know what your records are?

2. Can you find the records?
    1. Do you file your word documents in electronic folders ?

3. Can you identify the active versus inactive records?

4. Are the file drawers too full?

Some solutions to solving –
Do you know what your records are?

- Identify your job functions.
- Do a file inventory, identifying the function of the documents you manage and create, identifying if they are official or other copies
  - Don't look at the records at the document level if they are part of a larger existing folder, such as a personnel folder or a budget file.
- Once the function has been identified, this will direct you to the relevant section on the General Schedule.
  - Then identify the records series. Description should describe the records you maintain.
  - If your folder contains more than one record series, you should strongly consider filing them in separate folders.

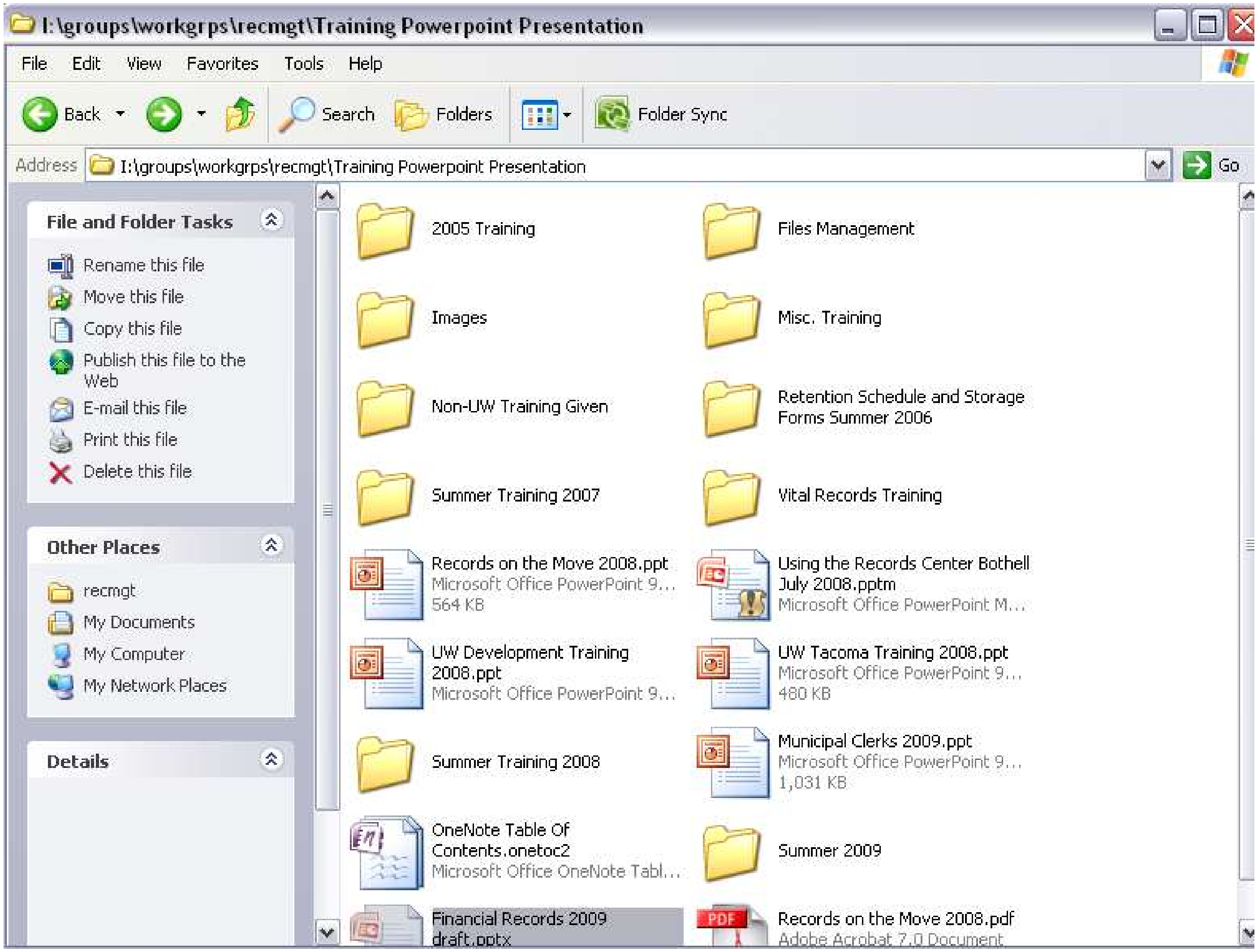
Some solutions to solving – Can you find the records?

- Rethink the organizational structure of the files - separate records into the functions as found on the General Schedule.
  - The General Schedule will remain consistent regardless of any changes in your office.
  - If a series is listed separately on the retention schedule, it might be advisable to file the documents separately.
    - For example,
      - Personnel folders – 3 year after Term of employment
      - Performance Evaluations – 3 years after Completion of Review
      - Time Sheets – 6 years after End of Month/Calendar Year

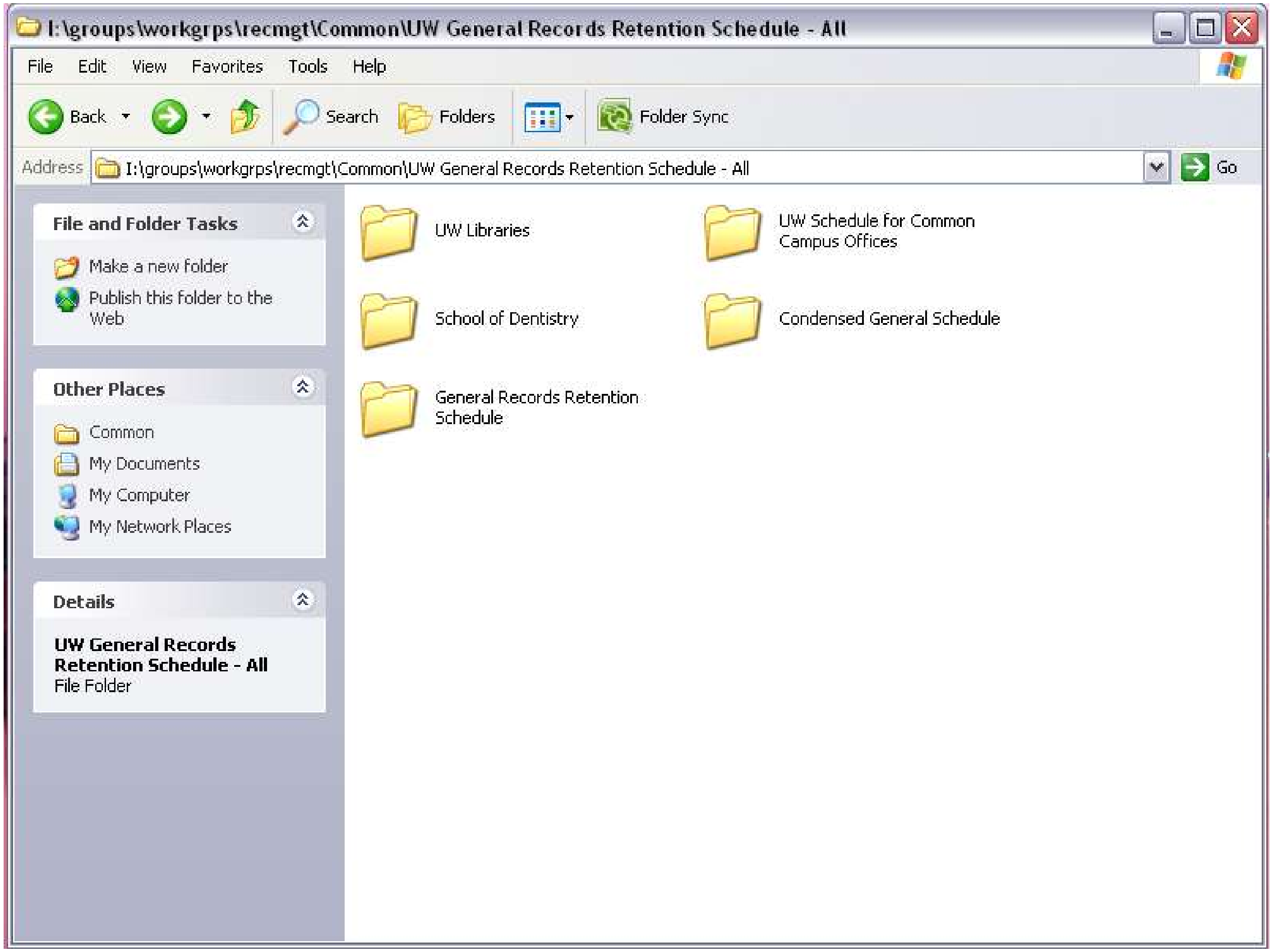
Some solutions to solving – Can you find the records? Cont.

- Label the electronic folder or drawer with the General Schedule series title – this will prove helpful later – move the relevant files into this folder or drawer.
- Develop a consistent filing naming structure – especially important with electronic documents.
- Create a finding aid to help transition to a new system.

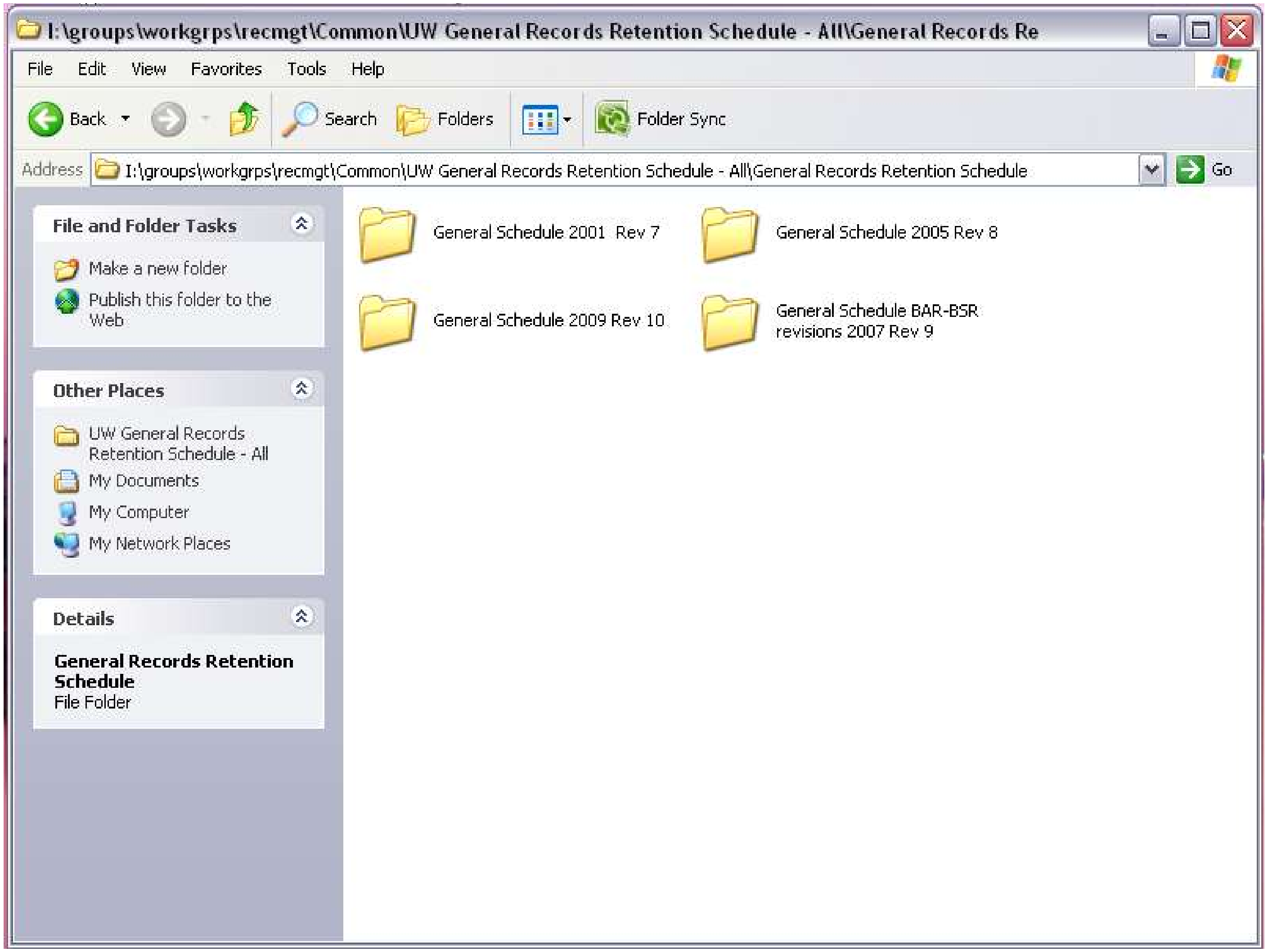
An okay example from our office

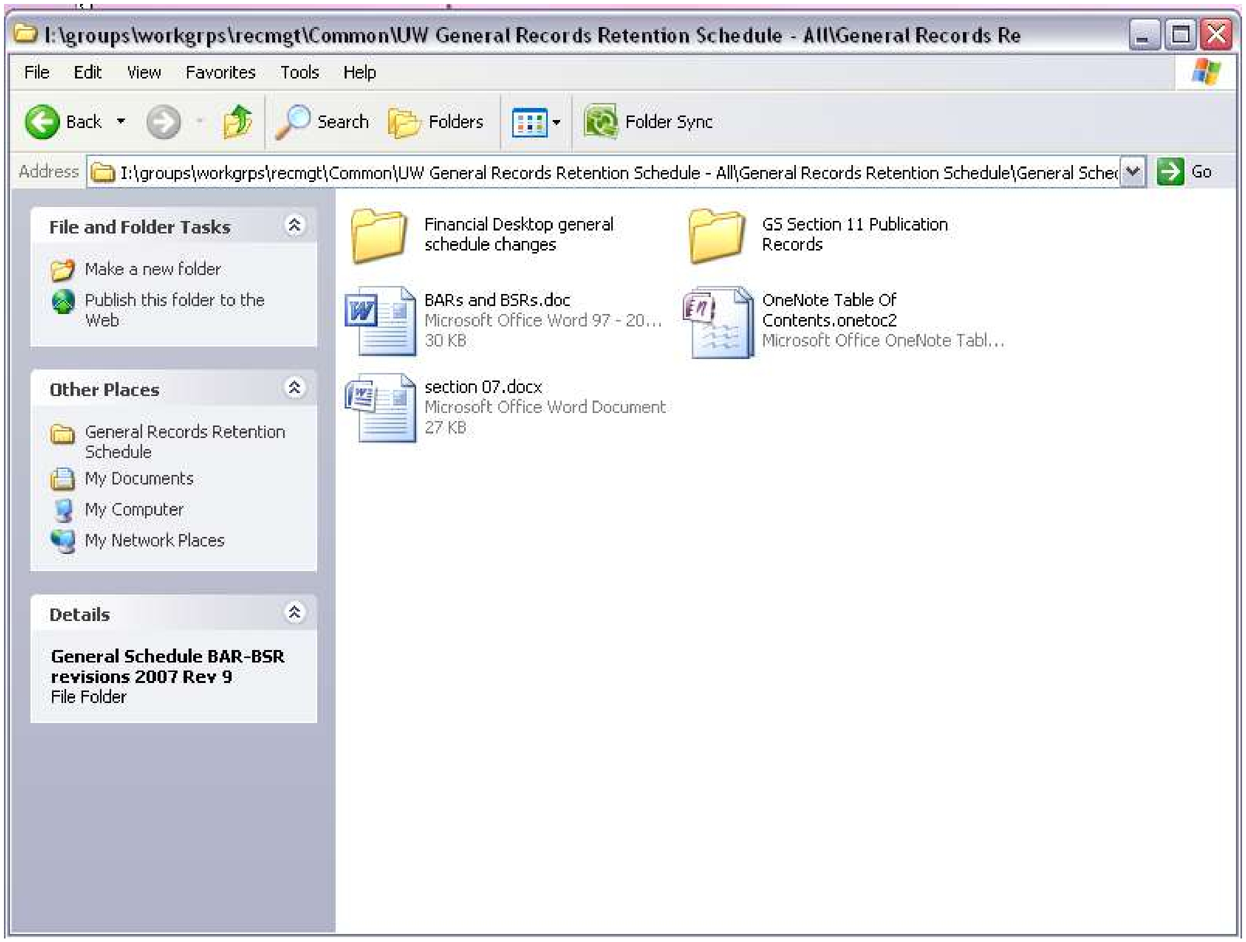


AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE FROM OUR OFFICE



An excellent example from our office




I:\groups\workgrps\recmgt\Common\UW General Records Retention Schedule - All\General Records Re
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
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File and Folder Tasks
Make a new folder
Publish this folder to the Web
Other Places
General Records Retention Schedule
My Documents
My Computer
My Network Places
Details
General Schedule BAR-BSR revisions 2007 Rev 9
File Folder
Financial Desktop general schedule changes
GS Section 11 Publication Records
BARs and BSRs.doc
Microsoft Office Word 97 - 20...
30 KB
OneNote Table Of Contents.onetoc2
Microsoft Office OneNote Tabl...
section 07.docx
Microsoft Office Word Document
27 KB

Some solutions to –
Can you identify the active versus inactive records?

- File the inactive records in a different file folder (electronic/paper), drawer, or off-site.
- Include the date the file became inactive either on the file or create a new subfolder just for the inactive records.

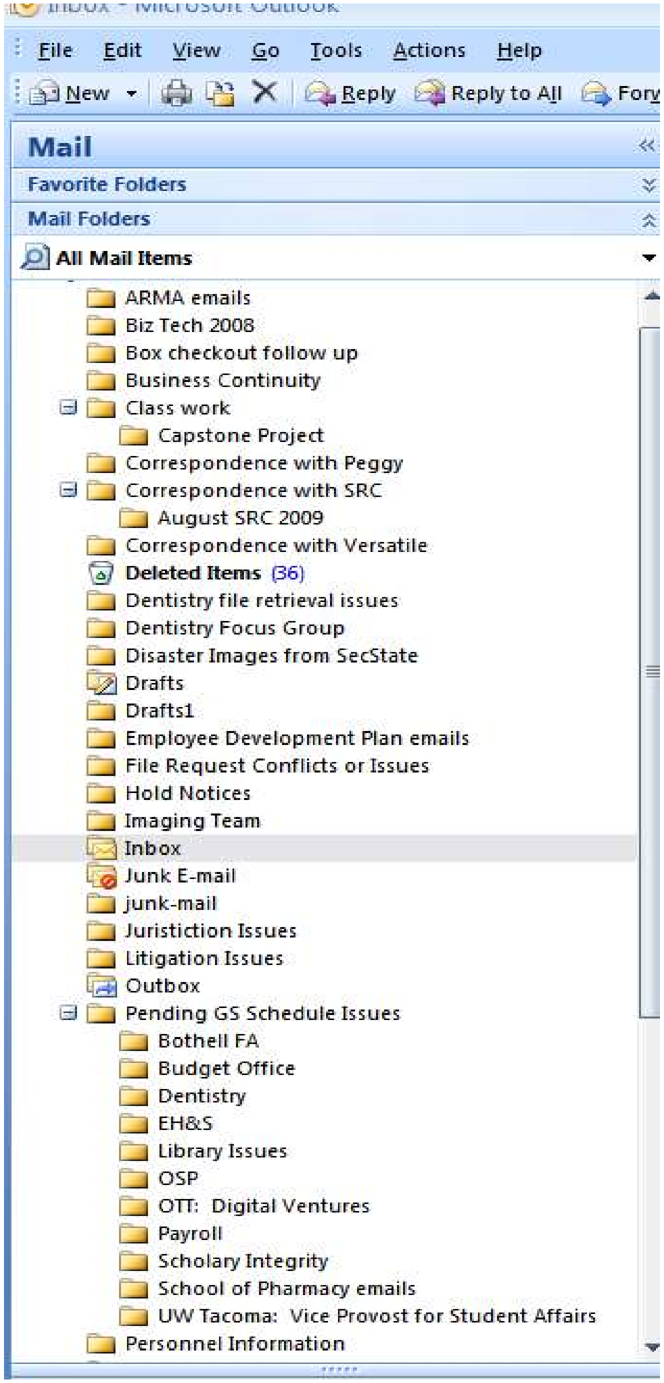
Some solutions to –
Are the file drawers or email folders too full?

- Chances are you will find records that are past their retention or find inactive records that need to be moved to off-site storage.

- Find the record series on a Retention Schedule and verify the retention period. Determine whether records need to be sent to inactive off-site storage, destroyed or transferred to the University Archives.

But does all that apply to email?

- Yes, email is merely the form of communication, not the communication itself.
- Your inbox is no different than a file drawer.
  - Create folders for the various types of email content
    - Include the General Schedule series title
    - Include date of the content
  - All email has a retention period based upon the content.
  - Yes, this content is covered by the General Schedule. See section 4 to identify email that has no retention period.



289 items in Inbox, some from 2008, mostly from March – July 2009

693 in Sent items