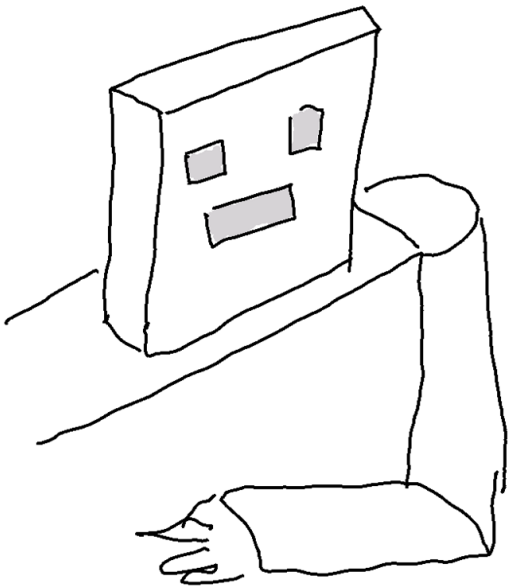
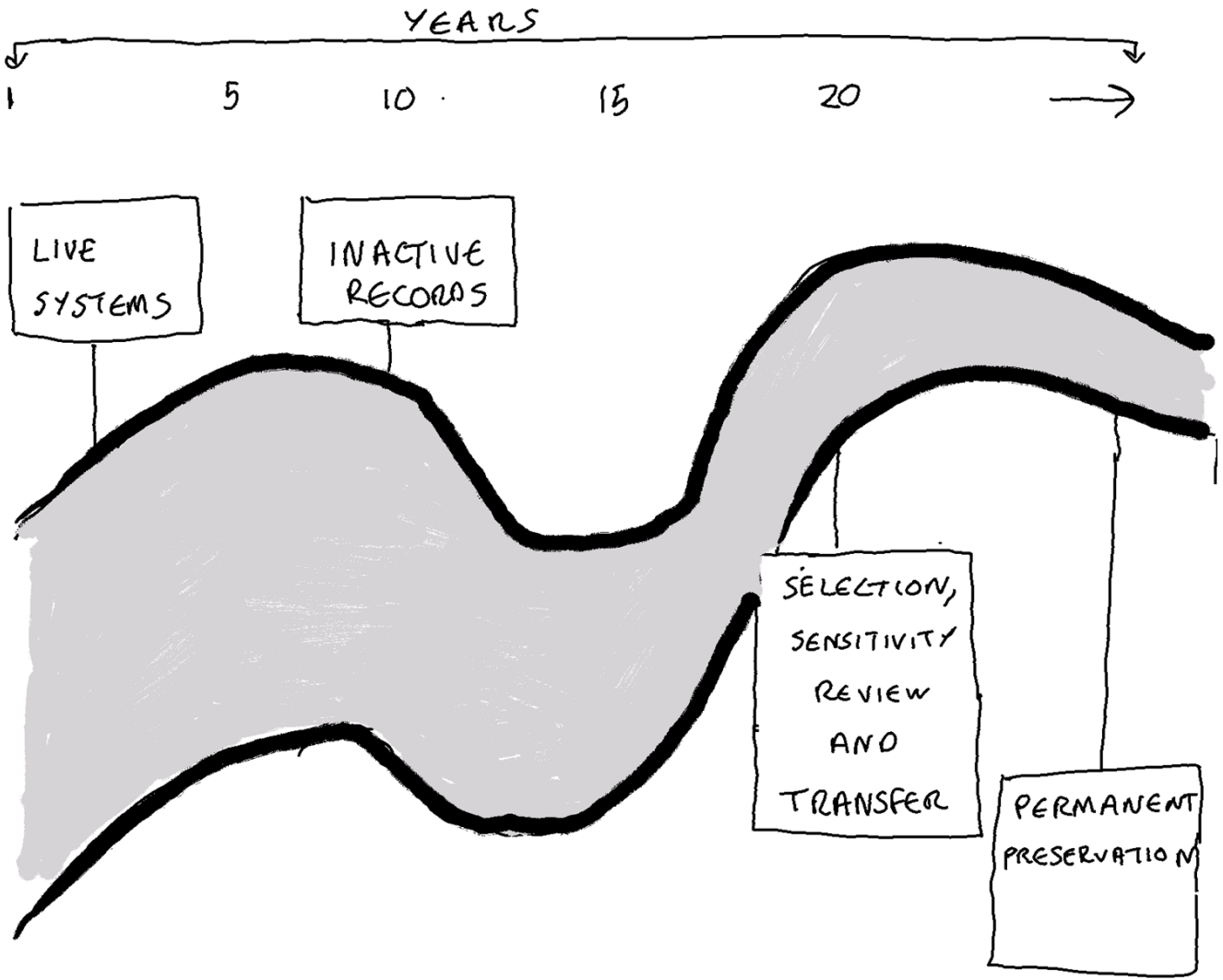
AI AND THE MANAGEMENT OF EMAIL ACCOUNTS OVER TIME

JAMES LAPPIN
@jamesLappin




YEARS
1
5
10
15
20
LIVE SYSTEMS
INACTIVE RECORDS
SELECTION, SENSITIVITY REVIEW AND TRANSFER
PERMANENT PRESERVATION

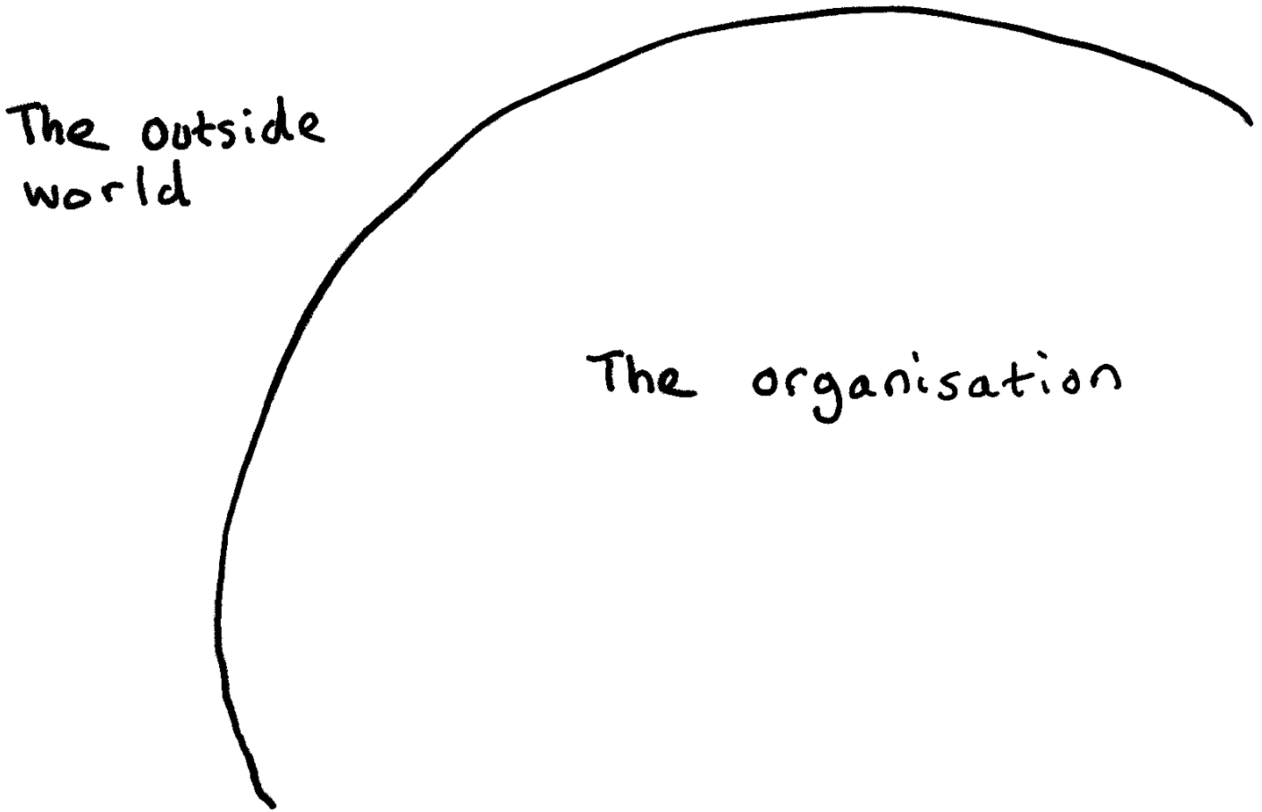
1. The impact of email on recordkeeping

2. What is the best way for correspondence to be organised?

3. Key strategic choices in applying AI to email

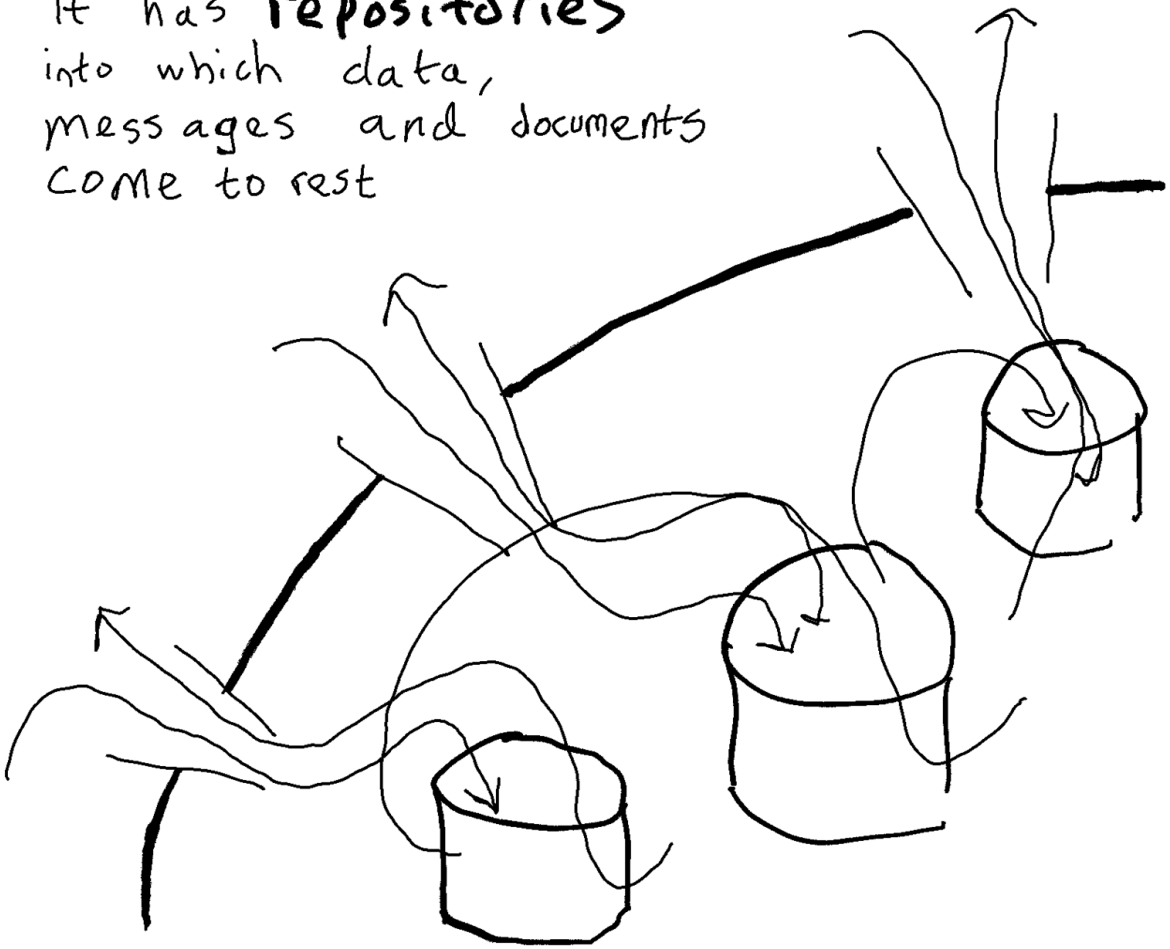
The impact of email on recordkeeping

An organisation
is a **record system**...

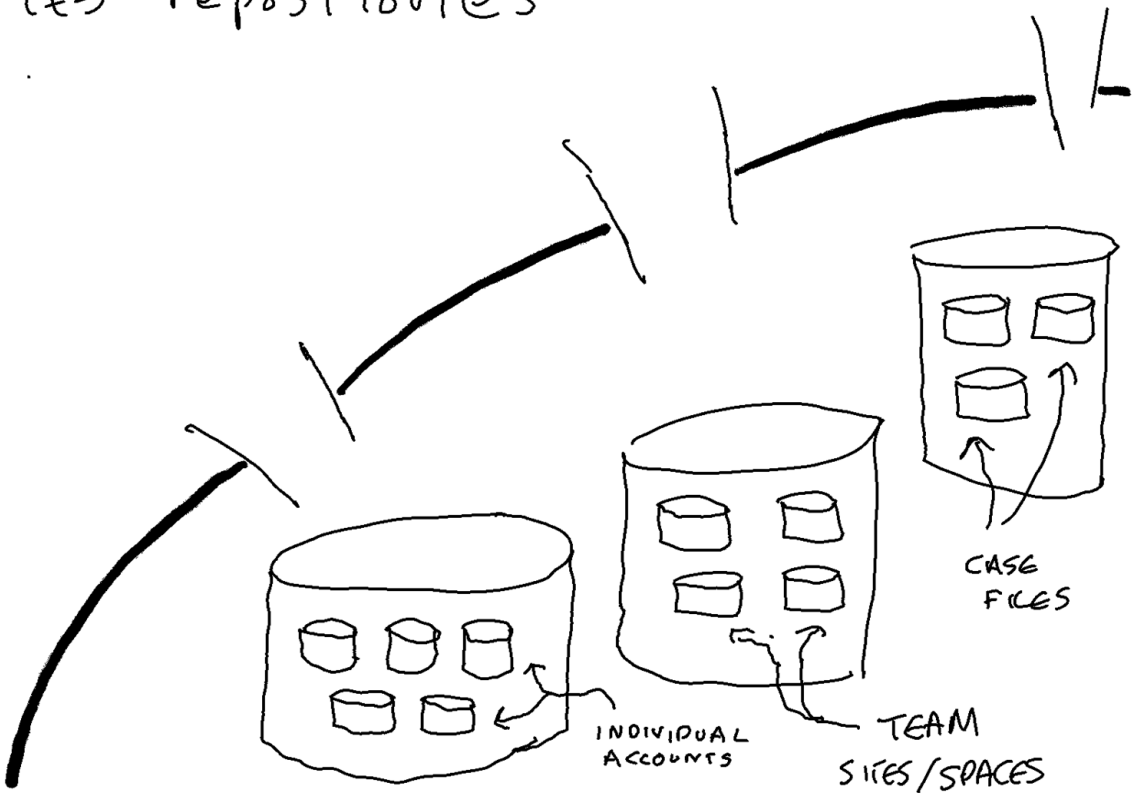


It has **communication channels** through which information can flow into, out of and around the organisation

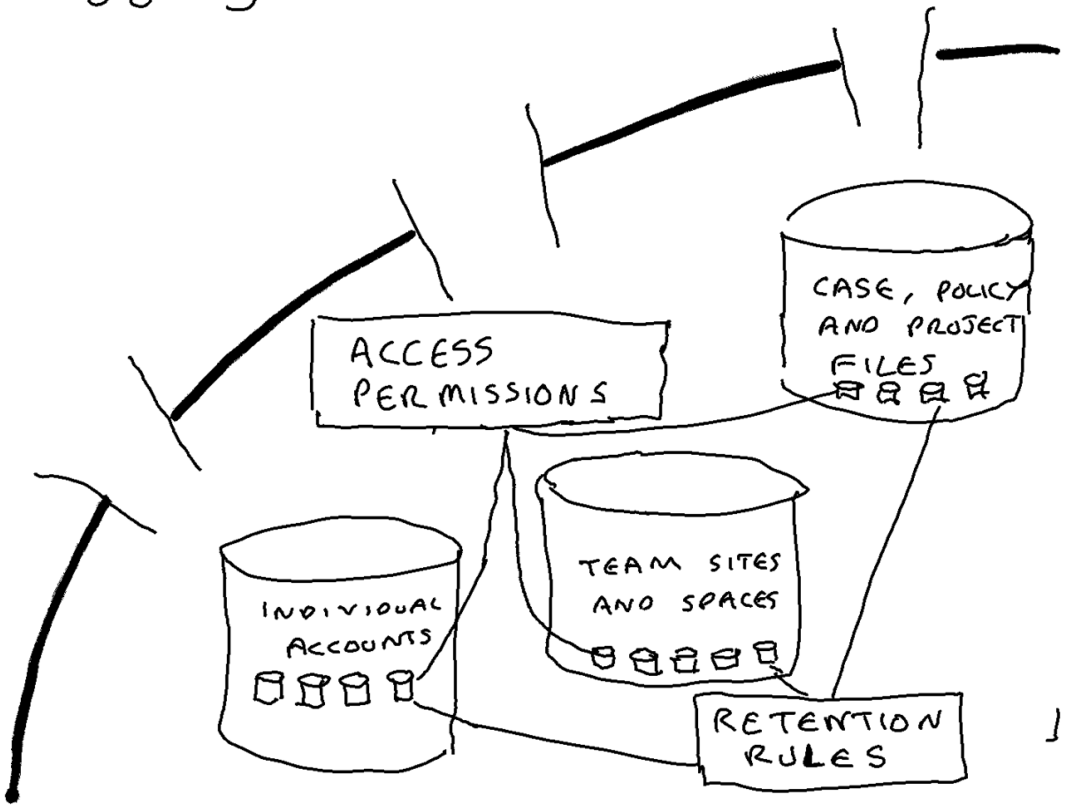
It has **repositories**
into which data,
messages and documents
come to rest



It has **aggregations** of content within its repositories

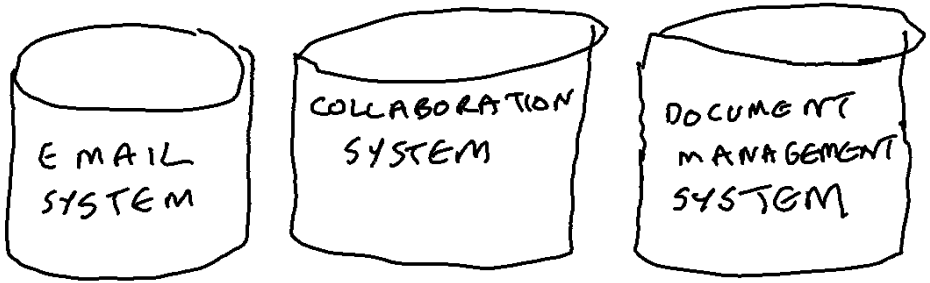


It applies **access permissions** and **retention rules** to those aggregations



What is the best way for correspondence to be organised?

Any digital corporate-wide, multi-purpose system **must aggregate content** ....



.... because it cannot permit users to see all content within the system and therefore **must apply access permissions** to content

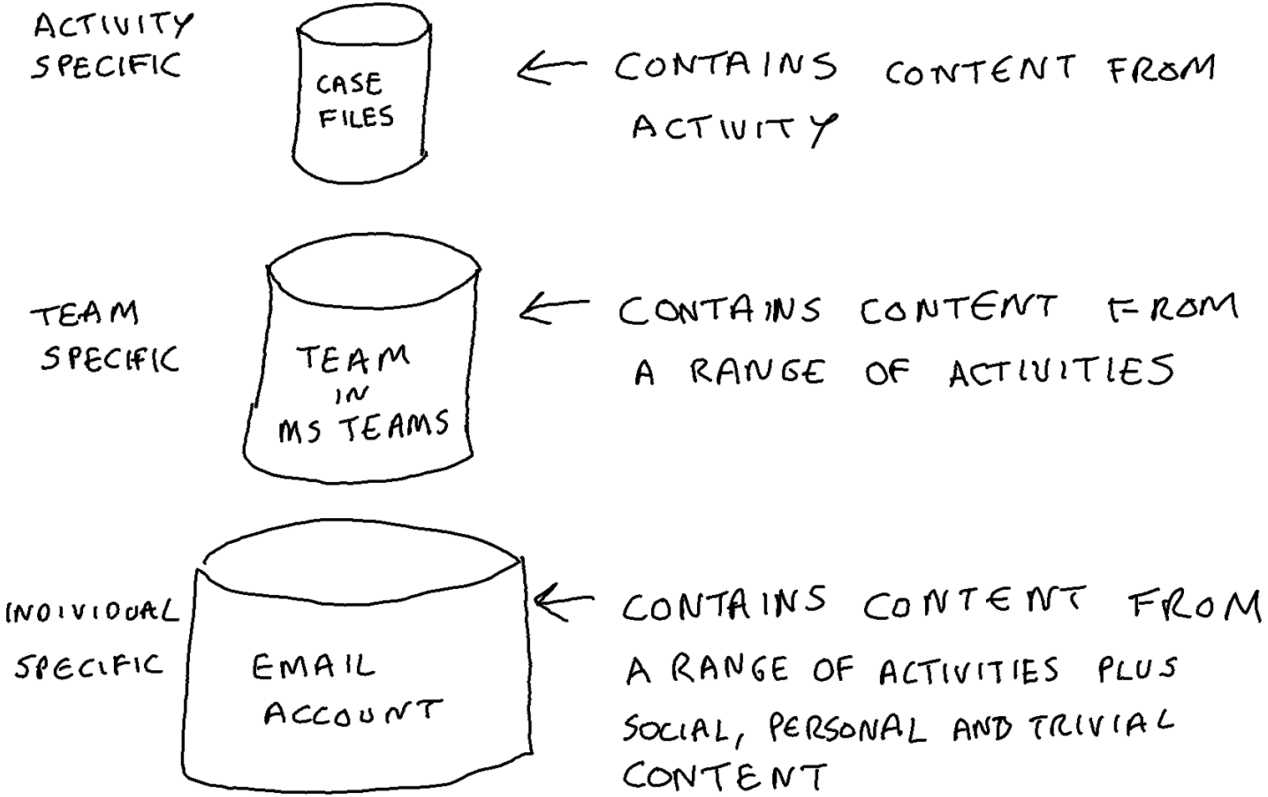
There are many ways of ordering content:

- A → Z
- Chronological
- by file size
- by creator name
- by title

but there are only three ways of aggregating content:

- by individual
- by team
- by activity

Some aggregations are more **precise** than others:



Records management theory tells us that:

the most precise way of applying records retention rules involves **aggregating records by business activity**

But it also tells us that:

the original order of records should be respected *even if it is sub-optimal*

Key strategic choices in applying AI to email in live email systems

- Who is in the best position to train algorithmic models on live email systems?
- Should we aim to re-organise email? Or to remediate email accounts?
- Who is in the best position to act as the human-in-the-loop to monitor and correct algorithmic models?

Who is in the best position to train algorithmic models to run on live email systems?

Training algorithmic models in-house to run on live email systems would involve giving those doing the training access to live email accounts.

Running algorithmic models trained elsewhere is likely to be perceived as less risky from an information security perspective.

The providers of email systems (Microsoft, Google etc.) are in the best position to train algorithmic models on live email accounts.

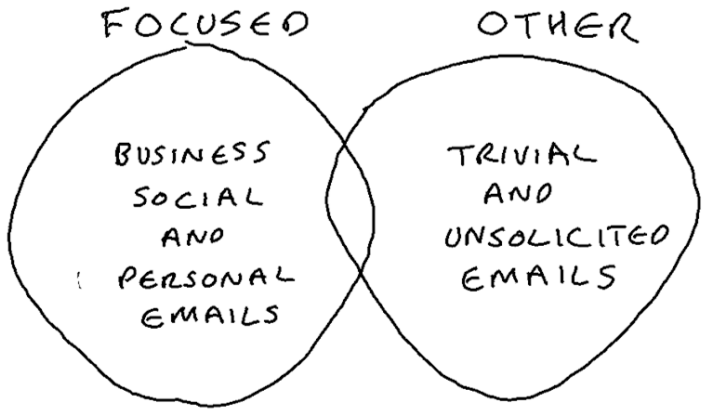
Microsoft and Google tend to avoid running any AI that directly changes the access or retention rules on the content within tenancies.

There aim is to deploy AI that enables end users to make more productive use of the content that they already have access to.

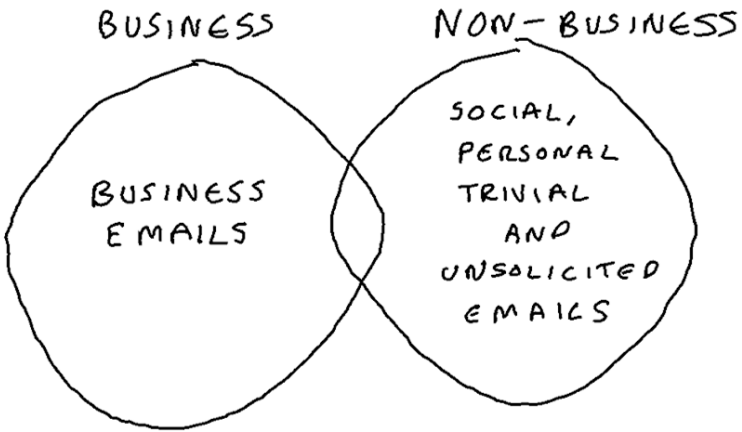
Focused inbox aims to separate emails an end user is unlikely to be interested in from emails that they are likely to be interested in.

Copilot is an AI model that aims to generate content on behalf of end-users on the basis of information already available to them in their email account, chat accounts and other parts of the tenancy.

THE DISTINCTION MADE BY MICROSOFT'S **FOCUSED INBOX**



THE MOST USEFUL DISTINCTION FOR RECORD KEEPING



Most of the content Copilot will use to help an end-user is sitting in their individual accounts (email, Chat, OneDrive) in M365.

When the end-user leaves employment their successor will not have access to this content. Nor will their successor’s Copilot.

This will lead to a drop-off in Copilot’s effectiveness until the successor-in post has built up sufficient content in their individual accounts.

Should we aim to re-organise email? Or to remediate email accounts to make them more managable?

Predictability is a measure of the extent to which . . .

. . . an action officer can look forward in time and predict how their records will be managed

. . . a researcher can look backwards in time and understand what has happened to those records since their creation and capture

Any use of AI that ignored the original aggregation of email into email accounts, and attempted to create corporate-wide aggregations of correspondence arising from particular activities, would reduce the predictability of the organisation’s recordkeeping.

Using AI to remediating email accounts, rather than to re-organise email correspondence, offers a simpler and lower risk task for AI, and better preserves the original order in which correspondence was created, received and read.

Who is in the best position to act as the human-in-the-loop to monitor and retrain algorithmic models?

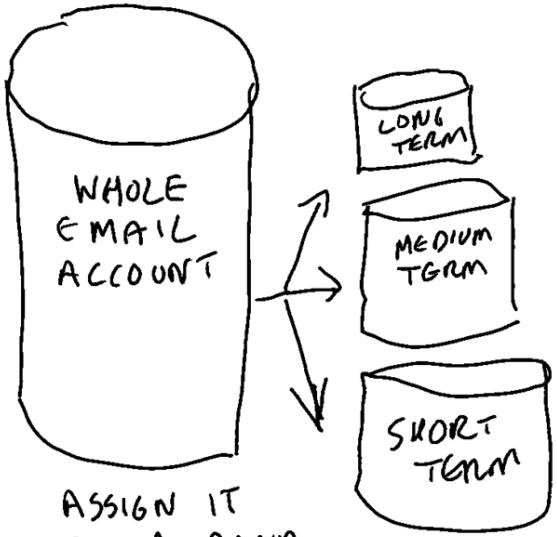
The use of algorithmic models to change access and retention rules on records is a high risk usage of AI.

High risk uses of AI tend to need a human-in-the-loop.

End-users are in the best position to act as human-in-the-loop for AI running on live email accounts.

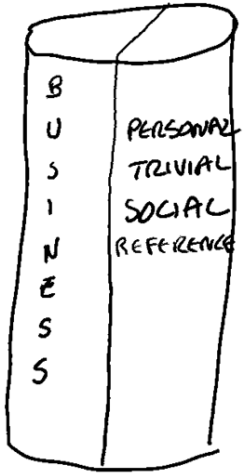
INCREMENTAL APPROACH TO APPLYING AI TO EMAIL ACCOUNTS

① SET DEFAULT



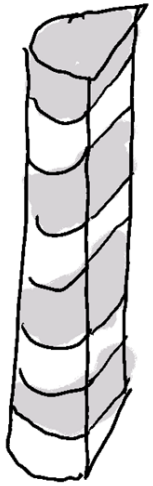
ASSIGN IT TO A BAND BASED ON THE ROLE OF THE ACCOUNT HOLDER

② FILTER



FILTER OUT EMAIL THAT DO NOT ARISE FROM THEIR ROLE

③ CLUSTER



CLUSTER MESSAGES FROM DISTINCT AREAS OF WORK