One Page Guide on Email Practice for HASS Researchers

By applying these 3 rules, researchers who use email as communication medium in discussing and documenting their work with colleagues within / outside NTU can:

1. Optimise Outlook's search and browse features to quickly locate an email thread or a specific email
2. Maintain an email archive so that important emails are systematically stored for long term access
3. Ensure that records of past emails are available for verification and corroboration when disputes arise.

Rule 1
Subject line
Use a consistent subject title in all related emails
This enables systematic collation of records and easy reference to prior correspondence via the conversation thread in Outlook.

✔ Use a subject line that broadly summarizes the content of the email

✔ Use the same subject line consistently for subsequent correspondences.

✔ Refrain from changing the subject line, unless
   a. When starting a new topic (but make reference to previous subject at start of the email, e.g. "[Related email discussion: Subject line]")
   b. Shift of discussion (use dash to create sub-heading, e.g. SRIE project – research methodology)

Rule 2
Email content
Retain previous emails in replies to ensure easy discovery of content
This provides correspondents with the proper context of the email discussion.

✔ Do not delete the body of content which includes a trail of emails when replying. However, you may choose to do so when it becomes too lengthy – you should then append a running number after the subject line, e.g. "Subject line- 1".

✔ "Reply all" unless a recipient asks to be excluded and this should be stated in the beginning of the email content, e.g. "David Chen has been removed from the email loop"

✔ If your email includes other materials,
   a. For attachment, make a note at the beginning of the email, e.g. [Attachment-FileName.doc]
   b. For embedded images, provide a caption enclosed in square brackets with a preceding "pic-", e.g. [pic-caption]
   c. For embedding link, display the URL address.

Rule 3
Back up email
Make a copy of all emails in your mailbox to external media at regular intervals
to ensure that records of past emails are available for verification and corroboration when disputes arise.
[Rule 3 is applicable for Windows user only.]

✔ Create a backup folder in Outlook Archive.

✔ Keep your Outlook Archive folders in the D: drive of your main computer.

✔ Turn on the Show as Conversations function (under View tab).

✔ Make a copy of all emails in your Outlook Mailbox (arranged by Date (Conversations)) to the backup folder at the beginning of Jan and Jul each year.

✔ Use the date range of the backup emails as folder name for the backup folder, e.g. "Backup Inbox 2014-Jan-Jun".

✔ Copy the backup folder's .pst file located in your main computer (D: drive) to a portable hard drive.