## **Testimony of Theresa Payton**

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## Before the

## House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform February 26, 2008

Good morning Chairman Waxman, Ranking Member Davis, and members of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. I am Theresa Payton and I am the current Chief Information Officer (CIO) in the Office of Administration (OA) at the Executive Office of the President (EOP). I have been in this role since May 2006. I am glad to be here today to discuss the status of the White House efforts to preserve emails. I will summarize my remarks and ask that my full statement be included in the record.

Let me begin by saying that the Executive Office of the President is committed to maintaining a thorough and reliable archiving process for Presidential and Federal records. We believe that we have such a process currently in place. Work is underway to improve that process significantly and we fully expect such improvements to be implemented before the end of this Administration. We are also committed to having a robust and reliable system to quickly recover from any disasters that may affect the EOP network. We are confident that our disaster recovery system meets industry standards and has been responsibly managed. Before I discuss the EOP archiving process and disaster recovery system and address what I believe are the Committee's concerns regarding these activities, I would like to provide some background on my office and on the EOP email systems used by this Administration.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) provides around-the-clock technological support for all EOP components. OCIO provides components with services such as production support, application development and support, intranet and office automation, email, disaster recovery services, support for Continuity of Operations (COOP), Enterprise Architecture, Information Assurance, Federal Records Management, and technology assistance to the White House Office of Records Management. As part of this support, OCIO manages the email accounts for the sensitive but unclassified network at the EOP for over 3000 customers.

I have had numerous conversations with my staff and have reviewed OCIO documents pre-dating my arrival in May 2006. The portions of my written testimony relating to matters occurring before my arrival derive principally from those sources. It appears that the current Administration used Lotus Notes as its email platform at the beginning of the first term. By 2002, the decision was made to replace Lotus Notes with Microsoft Exchange. The transition from Notes mail to Exchange mail occurred over a two year period from 2002 through 2004.

From the start of the current Administration, the EOP has had a process for archiving email sent from or received by the EOP network. This archiving process has evolved over time as new technologies emerged and industry practices evolved. When Lotus Notes was the email platform, the archiving process relied on the ARMS system. ARMS was launched in 1994. At a general level, if a customer received email from outside of the EOP network (a non-EOP account), ARMS would archive the email during a scan of the customer's email account. If a customer sent or received email inside the EOP network using Lotus Notes, a copy of the email was sent to ARMS for archiving.

During the transition from Notes email to Exchange mail, the OCIO attempted to create a system to allow ARMS to serve the same archiving function for Exchange as it had for Lotus

Notes. This project, called EIS, was eventually abandoned due to various technical and system performance reasons. ARMS was a custom-designed application, and I understand that it was discovered that it just could not be effectively integrated with Microsoft Exchange—despite the best efforts of OCIO.

In place of ARMS, the OCIO developed an archiving process that used the journaling function inherent in Microsoft Exchange. Under that process, and in very general terms, whenever email is sent or received by an EOP Exchange customer, a copy of that email is automatically created and stored on a journal to which customers should not have access.

Journaled emails are then archived on a separate server in what is referred to as a Personal Storage Table or "PST" file. This process today separates archived email by respective EOP component to facilitate preservation under the Federal Records Act or the Presidential Records Act.

We are aware that the Committee has expressed concerns about allegations that EOP emails were not properly archived between 2003 and 2005. I am aware of a chart created by OCIO staff in late 2005 to early 2006 that identifies dates and EOP components for which email counts were thought to be low or non-existent during the 2003-2005 time period. Since that time, the OCIO staff came to have reservations about the tool used to collect the data in the chart. OCIO thus hired a contractor to perform a comprehensive re-inventory of existing archived messages by component and date. This re-inventory effort is nearly complete. OCIO has also begun an analysis of potential anomalies. Once both the re-inventory and analysis are complete, we will have a separate team do a quality assurance review to confirm the accuracy of the results. This process of re-inventory, analysis, and quality assurance is complex, labor intensive, and time-consuming. At this stage, OCIO does not know if any emails were not properly preserved

in the archiving process. Once we complete our review, we will share the results with NARA. If there are any anomalies that cannot be resolved, we will work with NARA to discuss the details of a recovery effort and may seek additional help to ensure that the requirements of both the Presidential Records Act and the Federal Records Act are met during the transition of this Administration.

The EOP has continued to seek ways to improve the archiving process through new technology and updated procedures. For example, beginning in 2005, the OCIO undertook an internal review of record keeping procedures. OCIO made changes to and documented additional standard operating procedures as our internal review revealed areas where we could improve both the accuracy and performance of our archiving process.

After the transition to Microsoft Exchange, the EOP also considered implementing a hardware and software system called ECRMS (Electronic Communications Records Management System) in order to improve and expand the existing message archiving process already in place. However, in late 2006, after consulting staff in OCIO, I determined that ECRMS required additional investments and modifications if it was to fulfill the EOP's requirements for records management and archiving. While testing the process of loading email records into the ECRMS system, the team also found performance issues. For several reasons, including the need for additional modifications, the identified performance issues, and projected costs, the deployment of ECRMS was cancelled. Some of the hardware, software, and technical expertise gathered during the project were then used by OCIO for other projects.

The EOP is currently in the process of deploying Documentum<sup>TM</sup> and its platform extensions for records management, a DoD-approved system that meets NARA guidelines and will meet the EOP's requirements for records management and archiving. The Documentum<sup>TM</sup>

system is widely used in the Federal Government and we expect will be less costly to implement than other systems considered, including ECRMS. We conducted a technology pilot in late 2007 to confirm that the technology will meet EOP requirements and we believe that the deployment of the Documentum<sup>TM</sup> system will meet the EOP's records management and archiving needs for the foreseeable future and will address many, if not all, of the alleged concerns raised about the current archiving process.

In addition to the archiving process to preserve emails, the EOP has had a disaster recovery system in place since the start of the Administration to backup our network for protection in the event of a catastrophe or system failure. The EOP Network has been and continues to be regularly backed up onto disaster recovery backup tapes as part of the EOP's disaster recovery system.

From April 2001 to October 2003, in accordance with industry standards and best practices, OCIO used a "Grandfather-Father-Son" approach to backups where three generations of full disaster recovery tapes were kept offsite. Under this approach, whenever a new generation of backups was created, the oldest set of tapes was available to be recycled.

We understand concerns have been raised that the recycling of backup tapes from 2001 to 2003 may have resulted in the loss of EOP emails. Let me be clear: whether or not disaster recovery tapes were recycled would not affect whether emails were preserved by the archiving process. The archiving process and disaster recovery system are separate functions with different purposes. The disaster recovery system is not the system designed to preserve and archive email communications. The disaster recovery tapes would, however, contain email information on the EOP system at the time of a backup, in addition to a backup copy of the email archives, as well as much other information. Therefore, in the event that an email was not

preserved by the archiving process, it may, nonetheless, be available on the disaster recovery tapes.

In September or early October 2003, OA ceased its practice of recycling disaster recovery tapes. OA continues to preserve its disaster recovery tapes to the present day. Since October of 2003, the OCIO has stored its backup tapes in a secured vault that meets the storage guidelines provided by the tape manufacturer and NARA. Of course, the EOP also continues to preserve emails through its normal archiving process, as it has since the start of the Administration.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that the OCIO is committed to maintaining a thorough and reliable archiving process for Presidential and Federal email records. We fully intend to complete our analysis of the archiving process, address any and all identified anomalies, and deploy the Documentum<sup>TM</sup> system as the EOP's email archiving and records-keeping solution for the foreseeable future. We look forward to continuing our partnership with NARA to ensure the EOP's Presidential and Federal email records are properly preserved throughout this and any future Administration and transitioned to NARA as appropriate.

Thank you. I will be glad to answer your questions.