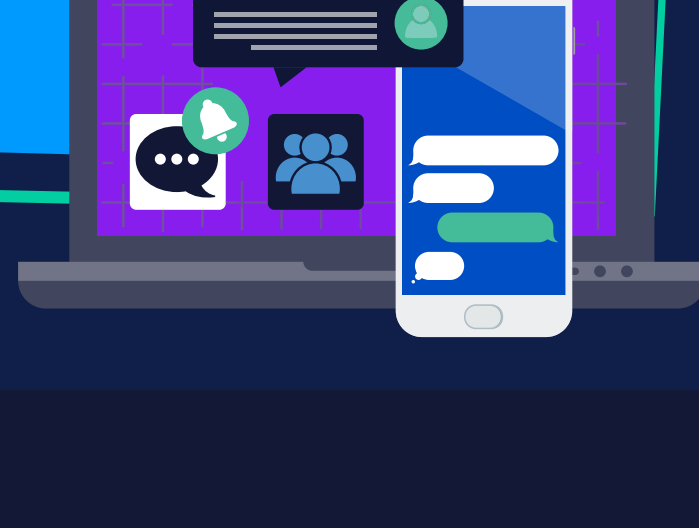




# Best Practices for Evolving Electronic Communication Management in Government



New forms of technology have become the preferred backbone of interpersonal and mass communication. When used by government employees, those messages—text and SMS, social media, IM platforms—are part of the public record, and they are subject to government retention and FOIA laws, just like email.

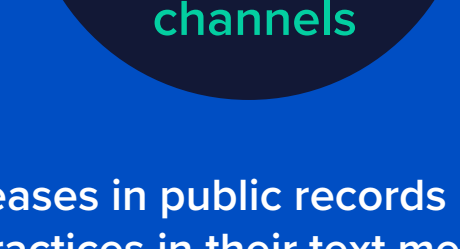
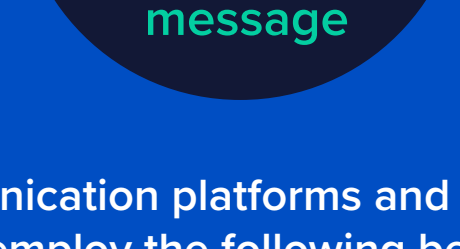
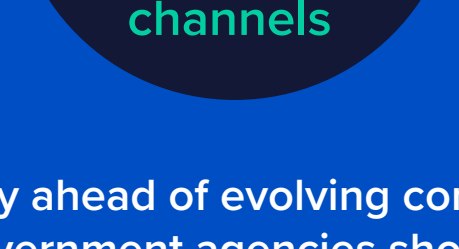
We worked with GovLoop to survey 300 government agencies on the local, state and federal levels about records management and responses to FOIA requests. We found 48% of organizations surveyed lacked confidence they could respond to a records request that included messages sent via SMS/text or IM and Collaboration. What's more, SMS and text messages, and even encrypted texting apps, are perceived as less of a risk than social media channels.

# 48%

**of organizations surveyed** lacked confidence they could respond to a records request that included messages sent via SMS/text or IM and Collaboration.

To download a copy of the complete "State of Electronic Communications in Government Research Brief" visit : <https://www.smarsh.com/guides/state-of-electronic-comms-government>

## Besides email, which types of content do you perceive as the top sources of the most compliance risk?

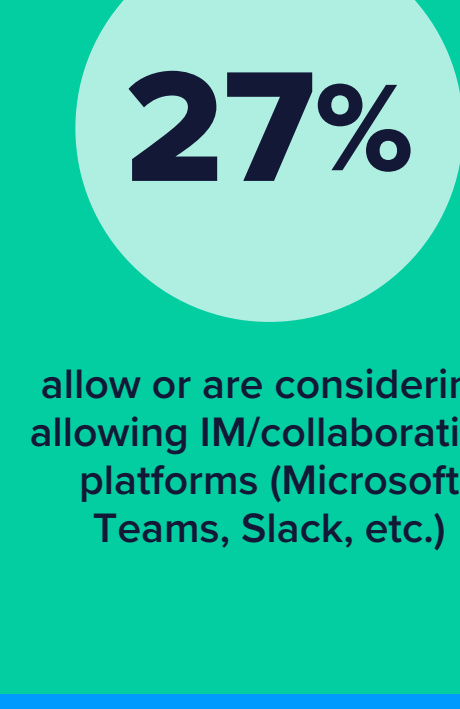


To stay ahead of evolving communication platforms and increases in public records requests, government agencies should employ the following best practices in their text message retention policies.

### 1 Enable government employees with modern communication tools

Agencies are making proactive and progressive strides to attract a new generation of government workers by permitting modern channels of communication beyond email.

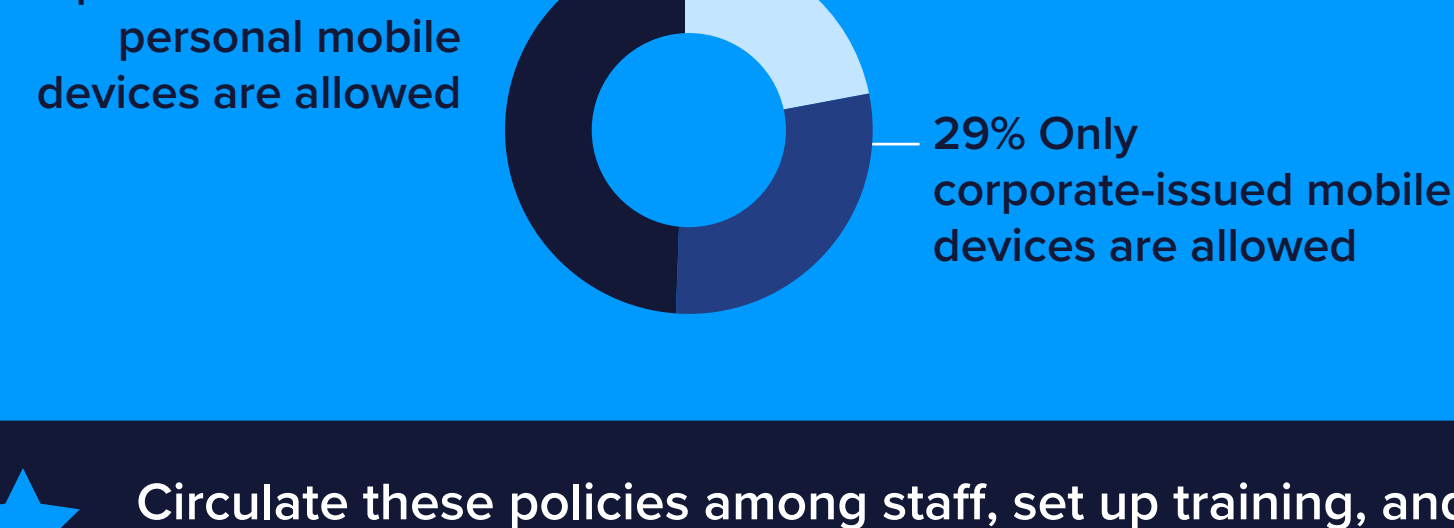
#### Modern communication apps allowed for government:



### 2 Create policies to outline approved mobile device usage and how content is captured

While modern communication sources carry immense potential for productivity and attracting a younger workforce, controls need to be put into place to allow mobile communication tools and to capture all communications sent for official business.

#### What's your organization's mobile device scenario and use policy?

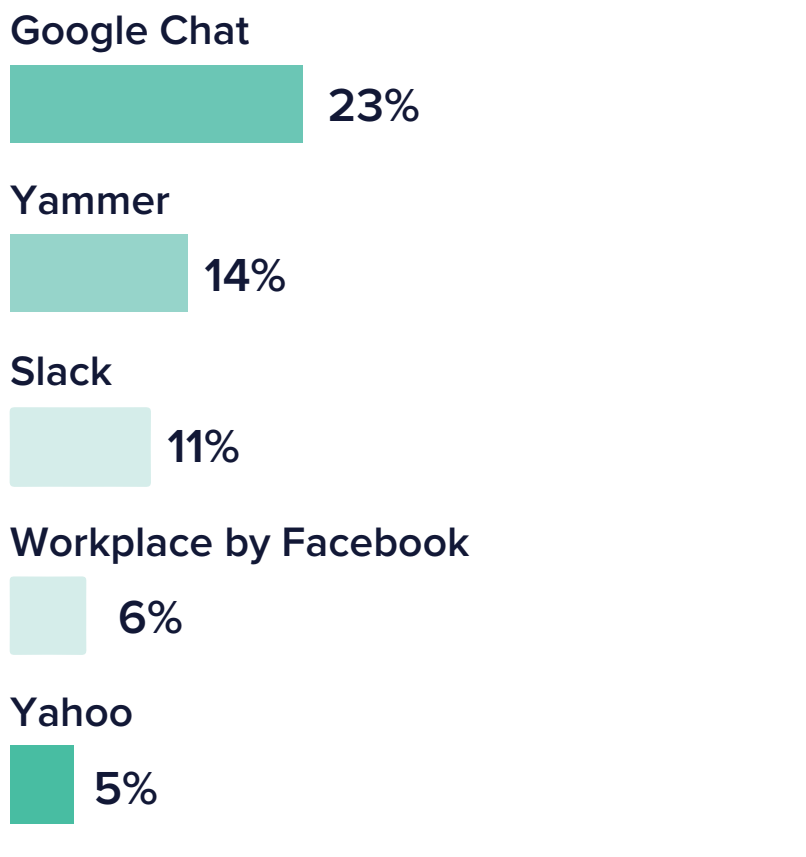


★ Circulate these policies among staff, set up training, and encourage feedback so you are aware of their concerns.

### 3 Create policies to define which applications are allowed, and which are prohibited

By outlining and informing employees how content will be captured and archived for public records management, governments have better control over the records response process.

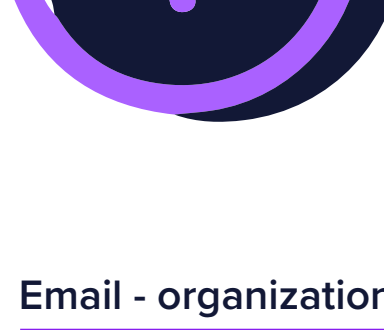
#### Top IM and collaboration platforms used in government organizations



#### The Top 3 Channels prohibited in government:

- Public instant messaging (Social media, Facebook, Messenger, etc.)
- Encrypted channels (WhatsApp, Signal, etc.)
- Other types of email (Yahoo, etc.)

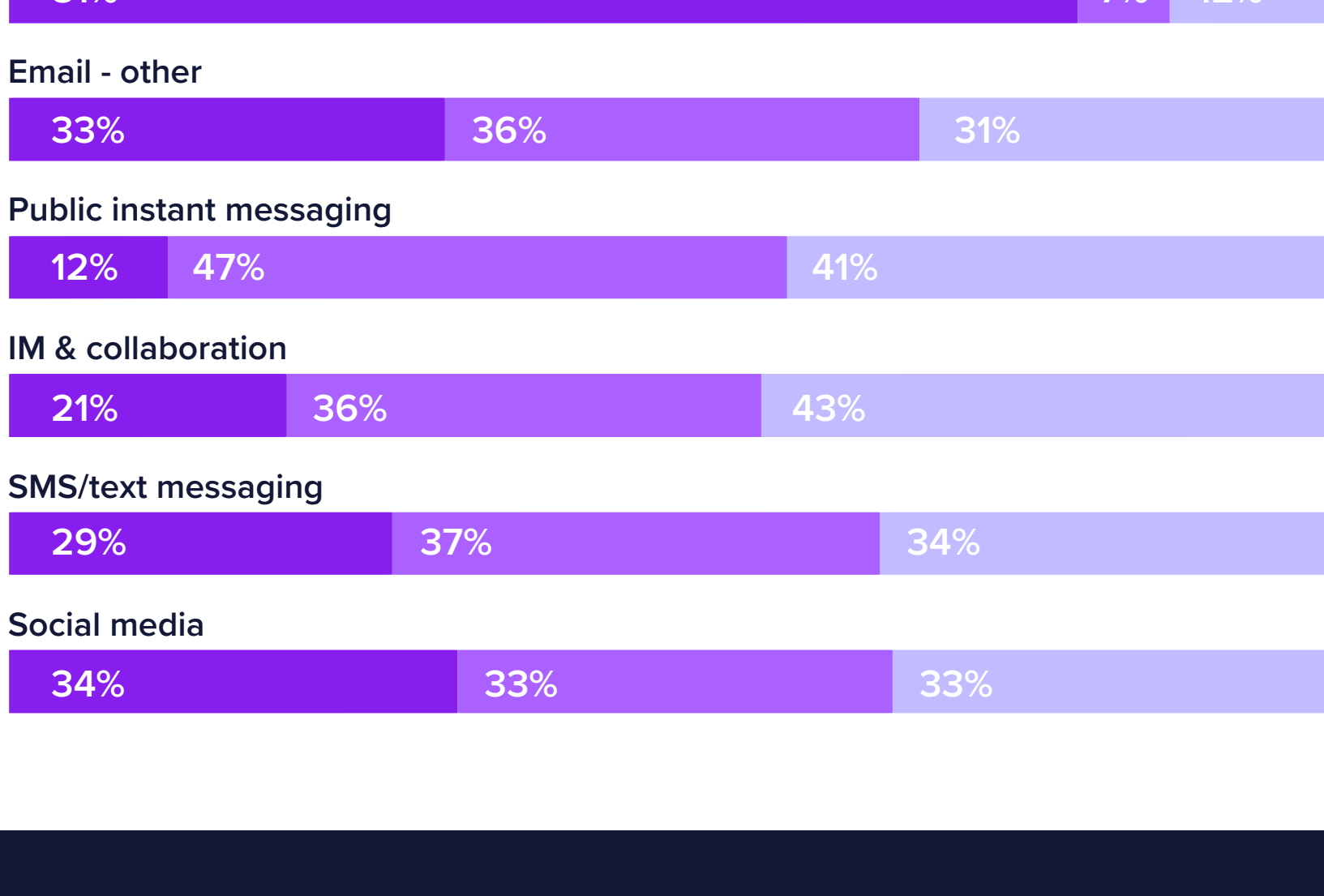
★ Clear policies and procedures should deter employees from downloading and using prohibited apps and devices, as well as deleting content; all of which can increase the risk of fines and litigation.



#### Did you know?

Does your organization capture and retain the following channels for public records requests, litigation events or internal reviews related to business conduct?

Legend: Yes (dark blue), No (medium blue), I Don't Know (light blue)



### 4 Put extra focus on managing high-risk content to ensure employee confidence in compliant record response

Governments are confident they will be able to answer requests for public records that include text messages. However, survey results show that confidence might be misplaced, with a lack of practices and techniques in place to accurately capture SMS/text communications.



governments with no plans to capture text

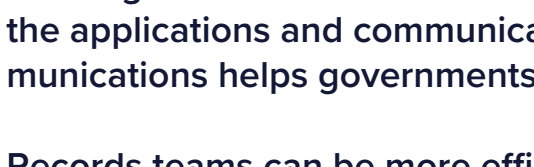
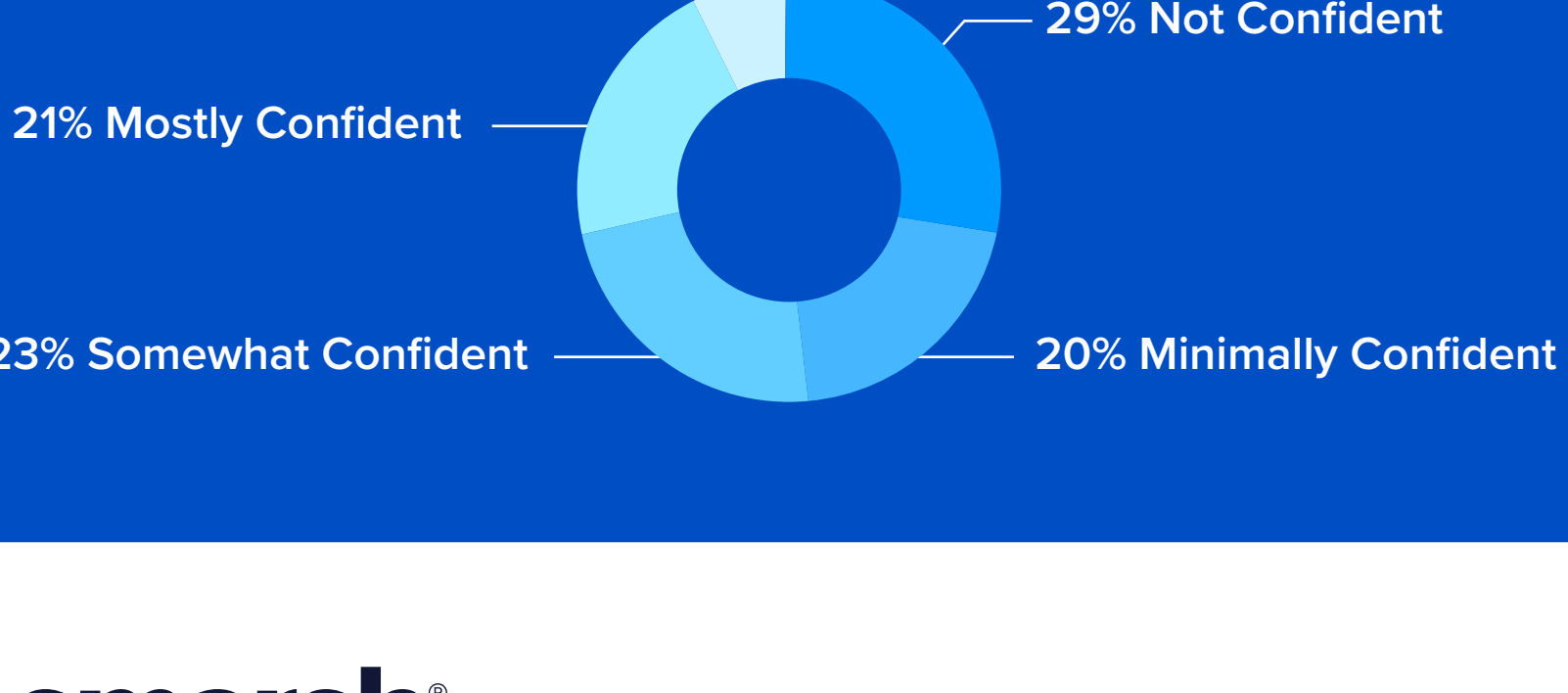


governments unsure when they would start to capture text



#### Governments must increase confidence in their ability to respond

Your organization receives a request to produce all electronic communications for management that contain a specific keyword. Are you confident that you could produce a completed response with all required message types, promptly for a litigation request?



Building a modern communication strategy for today's government workforce means enabling them with the applications and communication tools they use every day - at work. A single view of all integrated communications helps governments ensure accuracy, expediency and completeness of record retrieval.

Records search can be more efficient in their responses because they save time, they would have spent searching for different types of communications in disparate locations. Additionally, by relieving the workload of agency personnel, governments have more availability for the constituents they serve.

Smarsh solutions enable government organizations to become better aligned and more productive while meeting their FOIA and state public record laws to minimize retention, legal, and reputational risk. Smarsh captures and archives electronic communication data from upward of 80 different communication channels in native format with original context. For more information, visit [www.smarsh.com](http://www.smarsh.com).

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