

Even if Bush used e-mail, it might get lost in the problem-plagued White House computer system.

"I don't want you reading my personal stuff," the president explained to newspaper editors three years ago on why he doesn't send electronic messages.

On Capitol Hill and in federal court, a congressional committee and two private groups are pushing for information on how the White House has handled its e-mail for the past six years and whether officials there complied with records-retention laws.

The picture emerging from testimony and court filings is one of disregard for fundamental principles that well-run private companies adhere to routinely. By one estimate, over 1,000 days of e-mail are missing from various White House offices.

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