

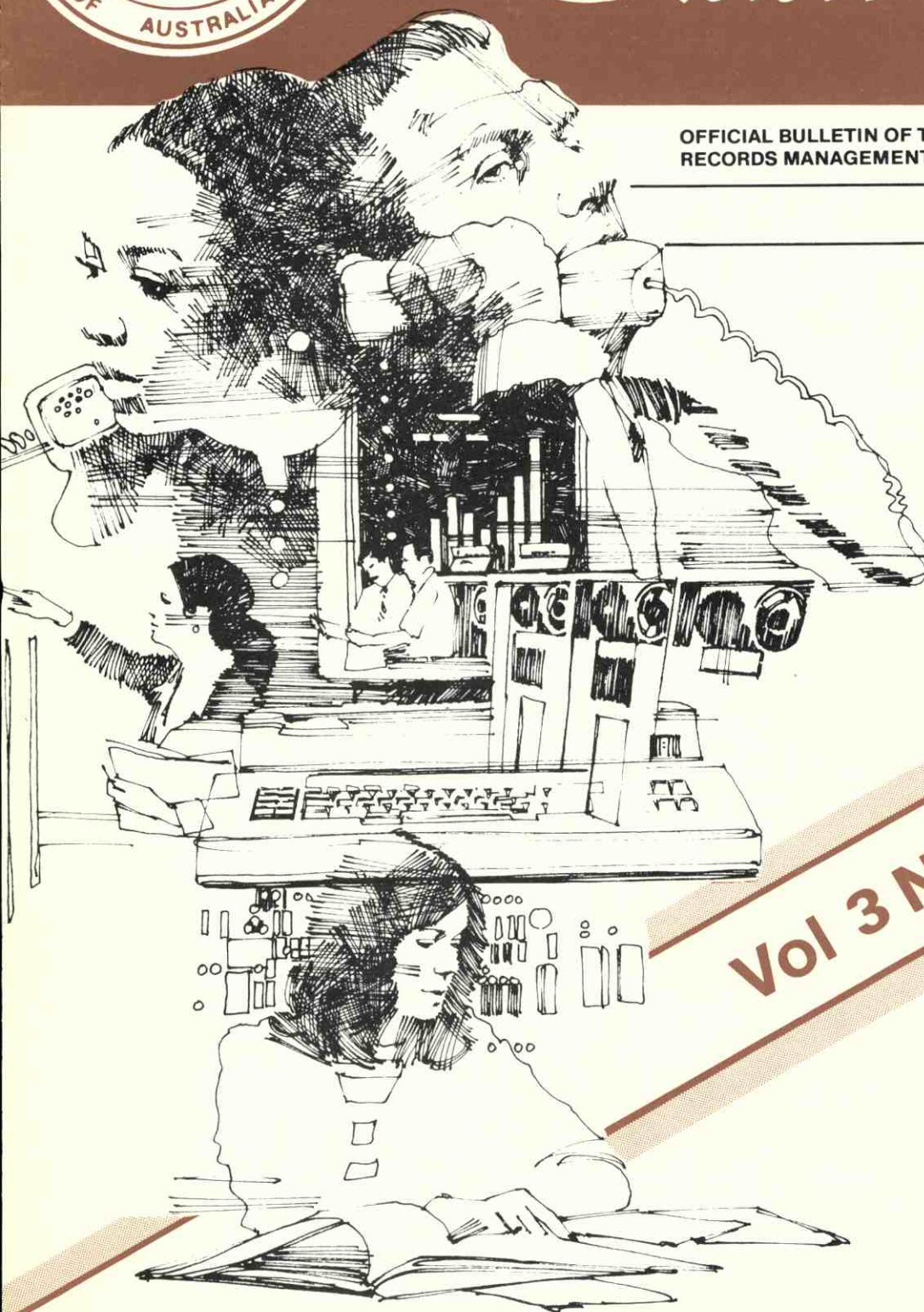


RECORDS

THE *informaa*' Quarterly

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE
RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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Vol 3 Number 3

SEPTEMBER, 1987

A WORD FROM THE BRANCH PRESIDENT

This is my second stint as the ACT Branch President, the first one being in the formative stages of the Branch.

There is certainly a difference between now and the early days. Then, with just a few people, the need was to generate sufficient interest to keep the whole thing going and at the same time define and steer a course for the emerging Branch.

Now the Branch has matured and it's activities are well supported by members, Council meetings are well attended; membership is steadily increasing and so on.

However, records management has become a complex business and correspondingly so have the needs and demands of our members. We are now required to give guidance and information on issues such as:

- rapid changes in the application of technology to records information management
- the changing role of the records management function in the organisation from a passive role to an active role
- the emerging issues surrounding the use of information.

This, I believe is a new phase in our development which has to be handled in a professional way. This perhaps presents us with a greater challenge than when we were struggling to set up a viable Branch.

I am sure that the Association looks forward to meeting and overcoming this challenge.

THOMAS KAUFHOLD ARMA - President ACT Branch

EDITORIAL NOTES

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Future issues: November 1987 - Queensland Branch

EDITORIAL

The consistent high quality of the Quarterly is helping us all. It makes it easier to attract advertisers and to obtain interesting articles. In this issue we have assembled a mix of articles which I believe reflects the ever widening range of interests of our increased membership.

We take this opportunity to thank those who so willingly took the time to prepare an article, and to our advertisers we trust your messages are well received.

Ross Thompson & John Hough - Editors

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FROM THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT

Recently I have had occasion to take stock of "things" around me in my working environment.

Like most of us, I tend to treat star gazing as a luxury and put it aside for a more appropriate time in the future, but, I suppose it was the future that prompted my train of thought in the first place.

Two milestones in my working life have caused me to, firstly reflect on the past, and secondly plan for some dramatic changes in the future. Let me explain; earlier this year I completed thirty five years of service with my organisation which obviously has caused me to reflect on the changes in the work place and the technological change that has spanned those thirty five years. The friendships formed, happy times as well as the sad times come flooding back.

The other is the physical move, later this year, to a new Administrative Building now under construction with all its trauma, its new ideas in office plan and layout, storage facilities and again technology.


All this has reinforced my concept of "change"; that it is inevitable, that it can be subtle, that it can be extremely obvious and traumatic, that it is ongoing and will have a tremendous impact on the organisation and the behaviour of its people.

To put this analogy into perspective with the R.M.A.A. got me to thinking of our humble beginnings in 1969, our faltering over the years, our peaks and lows and to be more positive, our achievements.

Technology in the fields of records and information management since 1969, to say the least, has been dramatic. The changes in information technology and the demands placed on it by management has far surpassed our wildest dreams. We have outgrown the "chrysalis" of the filing clerk and changed dramatically into the professional Records Manager of today.

This Association must remain flexible, aware of and concerned about changes within our profession if we wish to administer to and be associated with the future.

PETER A. SMITH MRMA - FEDERAL PRESIDENT



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COMPUTERISED RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (N.C.D.C.)

by

Alex Rae, A.R.M.A., Records Manager N.C.D.C.

I have been asked to produce this paper to let the world (of R.M.A.A.) know why and how NCDC selected QCOMs Records Management System (RMS) and The Corporate Retriever (TCR) for their text retrieval system.

I suppose it all started in 1975 when I retired from the Army after some 33 years service and applied for and, somewhat to my surprise, obtained the position of Classifier/2IC NCDC Registry (Clerk Class 4 - \$8406 - 9237 per annum). Thus started my introduction to an adult civilian working life. My lady supervisor introduced me firstly to the only other male member of the staff, a retired RAAF Squadron Leader, whom I saluted smartly and called "Sir", to the fifteen or so lady members, and finally to the tens of thousands of index cards which were to be my tools of trade in discovering what files were available on the variety of subjects covered by the Commission's functions which were (and still are) "To undertake and carry out the planning, development and construction of the City of Canberra as the National Capital of the Commonwealth". The biggest problems with this system were firstly, it had become far too large and most unwieldy to use; secondly, different people had different ideas under which headings to index material; and thirdly, it was basically only available to one person at a time in any particular subject area, and then of course it was only available within the Registry. As you may imagine tempers became a little frayed at times.

Our first step into the world of automation was taken in 1976 and was towards microfiche, and with the assistance of the Commission's then ADP Section (later Computing Services Branch) we produced by dint of a lot of hard work by all concerned, a Key Word Out of Context (KWOC) index. A little later this was converted to Key Word In Context (KWIC). (For anyone contemplating going down this path we found KWIC by the far the superior of the two). One of the great advantages both these systems had over our previous system was that in addition to an alphabetic index we also had a numeric index from which could be obtained the title of a file rather than having to plough through large volumes of File Registers. Some twenty-five copies of the index were produced and distributed throughout the Commission and after a very short period of time the number of queries concerning file titles and file numbers received in the Registry dropped dramatically. I did at the time also introduce a system of registering all incoming correspondence on microfiche but for various reasons this was not my most successful experiment and was dropped fairly quickly.

All the information contained in the index was held on the CSIRONET computer system and each fortnight an updated batch of punchcards was forwarded to them to produce our updated microfiche cards.

So much for the index. In retrospect I sometimes wonder how on earth we managed, but each step seemed like magic at the time to my strictly non-technical mind.

The other cards which had helped surround me in the early days, and were still there to worry me, were the thousands of file location cards representing every part of every file the Commission had ever opened. These held the same problems as had the index cards in the amount of space they took, their growth rate, their inaccessability and the ever present horror of lost cards. The first step towards alleviating our problems was to transfer the cards from their sunken desks to a "rota-disc" system. This was a help as far as space was concerned but the major part of our problem still remained. What to do next?

In September 1980 it was back to the computer whiz kids where I requested inter-alia "would you please investigate the availability of a piece (or pieces) of electronic equipment to replace the present system". Lots of promises, lots of reminders and lots of being told 'there were higher priorities than mine' later came the magic day when the Manager, Computing Services told me that CSIRONET was going out of our type of business, and asked me the question I had been asking him for the previous four years "what are we going to do about a computerised system?". "What indeed", I replied.

Coincidentally, it was at about this time I first heard of the great all singing, all dancing system then operating at the Brisbane City Council (BCC). It was also the time of the first R.M.A.A. Convention at Coolangatta, so killing two birds with one stone I spent two half days at BCC en route to the Gold Coast. Murray Stuart ARMA, the BCC Records Manager and Jim Shepherd their Chief Clerk (who had much to do with the original setting up of the system) and their staff were all very helpful in demonstrating RMS (as it was then) to me and were all most enthusiastic about its use as a Records Management tool. From there it was not far down the track to approaching QCOM and obtaining a demonstration package for evaluation. I was more than happy that RMS could do all that we required of it and lots more as well. At this stage I was about to put forward a submission that we purchase RMS as I felt if I kept examining myriad further systems I would end up retiring in 1989 with a comprehensive knowledge of many different systems but still surrounded by twice as many cards as I had started with. However, we then hit a snag when our Librarian informed us that the firm which had supplied her library system also had a Records Management System in the field and that she had arranged for their representative to visit me. We then of course had to do an evaluation of their system before producing a Functional Specification showing in detail (we thought!) the requirements of both mandatory and desirable features. This specification was passed to both suppliers and they were invited to tender a price for a system.

Both tenders met all the mandatory standards and claimed to be able to fulfill the desirable features. Both, in different manners of quotation, came up with about the same price (about \$40,000 on the road), with the nod finally going to QCOM for various reasons.

Firstly RMS appeared to be more "user friendly" (to use computerese); secondly, it would require less input from the Commission's already hard stretched computer personnel; and thirdly, it was an Australian product, produced and serviced by its developers and finally and perhaps most important of all it was a tried, proven and respected system.

That was how and why the decision was made, but unfortunately the implementation of the decision has not been either as smooth or as quick as we (and the QCOM) would have hoped, for a variety of reasons. Just about the time the tender was let QCOM was heavily involved in upgrading changes in both hardware and software with BCC. As a result of this we agreed to hold off for a while to obtain the full benefits of any enhancements which might result from the new system. This caused considerable delay, and in retrospect may not have been a good decision on our (my) part. However, we did eventually get the RMS part of the package up and running despite a few hiccups along the way. We are delighted with the end result, although the problems we met during installation while generally minor in themselves were collectively a bloody nuisance and, for obvious reasons, left some registry personnel rather cynical about the mysteries of modern science and my total belief in magic.

While all this was going on, CSIRONET was going off, and our Computing Service people put together for us a very simple and successful "on line" index which we are still using while we are ironing out what we hope are the last few bugs in TCR. These further delays have resulted in the inconvenience of having to maintain two systems for some considerable time during a period of shortage of trained registry staff. We have thoroughly trialled TCR and reported to QCOM the interface problems we have come across. They have assured us they are dealing with them as expeditiously as possible and we hope that by the time you read this we will be fully operational with RMSII. If the TCR package is received as enthusiastically by Commission officers as has RMS, I will be well satisfied.

To sum up, I am confident that we made the right decision to install RMSII. It may or may not be the best system in the world but it certainly does all we require of it and more. Had we not made the decisions when we did, we would probably still be looking - and probably being quoted a much higher price and then being told the money was not available anyway.

The delays have been frustrating but I will not try to apportion the blame. It may have been our fault for not being specific enough in our requirements. Perhaps QCOM should have given us a higher priority and used more of their resources on our problems. Perhaps when they didn't we should have pushed them harder. Who knows?

Finally I would point out that throughout this exercise the liaison between QCOM and NCDC has been of the highest order and most amicable, and I have certainly learnt a lot from it all.

If any of you would like to see RMS/TCR in action in Canberra you are most welcome. We are at 220 Northbourne Avenue, Braddon (Tele:[062] 468 295). For the information of inter-state members this is only a few hundred yards North of the venue of our 1988 Bi-Centennial R.M.A.A. Conference. Knock three times and ask for Alex!

QCOM's Software Products Manager, my very good friend Pat Wood to make use of the right of reply.

REPLY BY PAT WOOD - QCOM

In response to Alex Rae's very fair account of his experiences I find it appropriate to look at our own experience with major Records Management Systems in the Australian market place.

As many of you know, we developed our first 'RMS' system with Brisbane City Council many years ago now, and it served them well until its replacement early this year.

There we were, in the early 80's, with a 'state of the art' records management system, and the staff and skills necessary to support it. Our attempts to market the system failed dismally. The little comfort we can draw from that is that no-one else was selling any either; except for the odd one or two.

Many of us will remember the problems:-

- . *Other system applications took priority*
- . *Lack of perception that Records Management was a vital function*
- . *Low profile of Records Managers*

and no doubt you could add endlessly to this list.

Due to the inactivity with RMS, and our other interests in Office Automation, we went on to research and develop our free text retrieval system, The Corporate Retriever (TCR). It has always been our view that the ability to retrieve information from free text is far superior to Keyword retrieval, which in itself demands language control and problems associated with it.

1986 should be hailed as the year Records Management came of age in a computing sense. Suddenly things have changed. Almost all Council and Government tenders began to contain a Records Management and Text Retrieval component.

Without wishing to appear patronizing, all I can comment is that you Record Managers would seem to have finally broken down the barriers that had earlier adversely affected the recognition your function deserves.

We were suddenly caught up in this resurrection of interest and commitment to install 'state of the art' Records Management Systems.

Brisbane City Council commissioned QCOM to upgrade their RMS system. This was a significantly large and complex exercise.

- a) Bearing in mind their current system was then six years old, new functionality and technology had to be introduced into the product.
- b) The Corporate Retriever had to be fully integrated into the new RMS to create one cohesive product.
- c) Finally, and the most complex aspect of all, we were required to port the resultant product to the Sperry mainframe, providing a true transaction driven system to comply with the operating system of a large mainframe.

The NCDC, in the guise of Alex Rae, made their commitment to computerization whilst all this work was going on and quite naturally wanted the features and improvements they could see in the BCC System. From a product development viewpoint we were also keen that the systems should not be dissimilar.

NCDC's system had to be ported to Hewlett Packard equipment, the environment being quite unlike the Council's Unisys mainframe.

Between the two entities, BCC & NCDC, our resources did quite understandably, get stretched somewhat.

The resultant product, RMS II runs very effectively at the Council; serving some 300 terminal users. The database is in excess of 400 megabytes and response times are excellent. The integration of TCR has proved a major benefit to their users. The final few interaction problems experience by the NCDC will have been eliminated by the time you are reading this article.

In support of my comments concerning the renewed commitment to records management systems; I can report that we are just completing the exercise all over again, on behalf of Melbourne City Council.

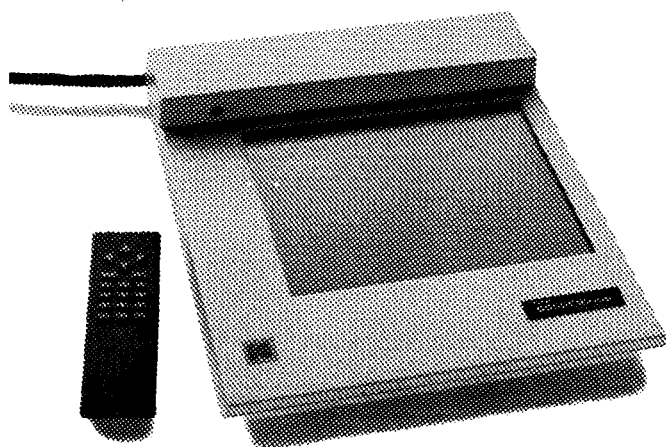
Almost an identical task to the NCDC except that the target computer is PRIME equipment; the system has been enhanced with bar code facilities. The exercise has proceeded exactly, if not better than planned as their Records Manager, Bill Williams would confirm. Their system, being the latest release contains all the features currently available in RMS II.

I draw some comfort from Alex's recounting of his experiences. As, I am sure he would be the first to admit, over a year ago he was totally naive about Computer Systems. He has experienced the installation of a functionally significant system and yet still retains his sense of humour. This surely indicates the excellent relationship between our organisations.

Above all, he confirms he made the right decision. That says everything and I rest my case.

P.F. WOOD
DIVISIONAL MANAGER
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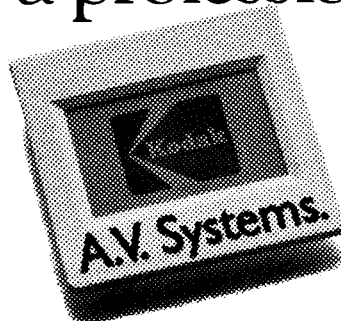
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VOICE MAIL

*by Terry Tolhurst,
Department of Primary Industries and Energy.*

We are all familiar with the term 'mail' as it applies to the Australia Post mailman collecting, sorting and distributing our mail throughout not only Australia but all over the world.

Voice mail is not an extension of that service nor is it a replacement for it. Voice mail is a new and exciting product that is being marketed by several companies here in Australia right now.

The big difference between voice mail and ordinary mail is that voice mail captures the spoken word and transmits it to the user according to the users requirements. It can also be used to provide information from the user to clients or other interested parties. Voice mail is driven by a computer and is available twenty four hours per day and is not subject to stop work meetings, strikes or the like. It can most be likened to office automation.

All that is needed to use voice mail anywhere in the world is a phone and a voice mail system. Usually, the voice mail system would be linked with private automatic branch exchange (PABX) - that is the telephone switchboard. In some cities, bureau services have been established and users can rent a mail box on those systems.

Voice mail systems come in many different sizes. There are some which run on personal computers which are ideal for small organisations requiring say only twenty mail boxes up to very large systems which will cater for thousands of mail boxes. These larger systems can be networked together around Australia and can also be networked with similar systems overseas.

All the commands used for voice mail are tone generated, therefore it is most desirable to have a phone that can be switched to transmit tone signals, however, it is not essential, as relatively cheap tone generators can be purchased to carry out that function.

APPLICATIONS

Let's just examine some of the ways that voice mail can affect our daily lives.

How many times have you tried to call someone who is not there? You leave a message, then when our call is returned, you are not there. Sometimes this can go on for several calls. It is called 'telephone tag' in America.

If you are not at your desk or if you are unable to answer the phone, voice mail can intercept your incoming calls, greet your callers with a recorded message in your voice and allow your caller to leave a message in our mail box for delivery to you according to your delivery schedule.

This delivery schedule, designed by the user, tells the computer what times of the day or night during the week or at weekends when you will be available to receive messages at work, at home or at a temporary phone address. Further, you can specify whether you will receive only urgent messages, all messages or no messages at all.

When another voice mail user leaves a message for you, that user has a far greater range of options to draw on. For example, the caller could select a future time delivery for the message of up to one year in advance. (This option varies from supplier to supplier). This feature is of particular importance when a fellow user is away on leave. You can simply call up his/her mail box and leave the mail for future delivery on their return to the office.

If the called party is away on business then he/she will probably call back into the system from wherever they are and "read" any mail in their voice mail system that they carry tone generators with them at all times so that they can access their mail box from any phone.

Another feature of voice mail is its ability to provide a remote dictation unit. This way, the user can dictate correspondence from a remote locality at any time of the day or night to the dictation mail box and the typist or word processor at the office can transcribe it the next day so that the finished article is awaiting the user upon return to the office.

Unlike other electronic mail systems, voice mail is interactive and the user can specify that messages according to a certain type can be delivered to different telephone numbers and delivered under security of password. In this way, you can be sure that people get the messages that are intended for them.

In a technical or service environment, calls can be lodged for technicians and these will be outcalled to their paging systems or to a known telephone address. The advent of the cellular telephone system has also had an impact on the use of voice mail. One user I know of can actually use his voice mail box from the car, the park, or anywhere else he goes with his cellular phone over his shoulder.

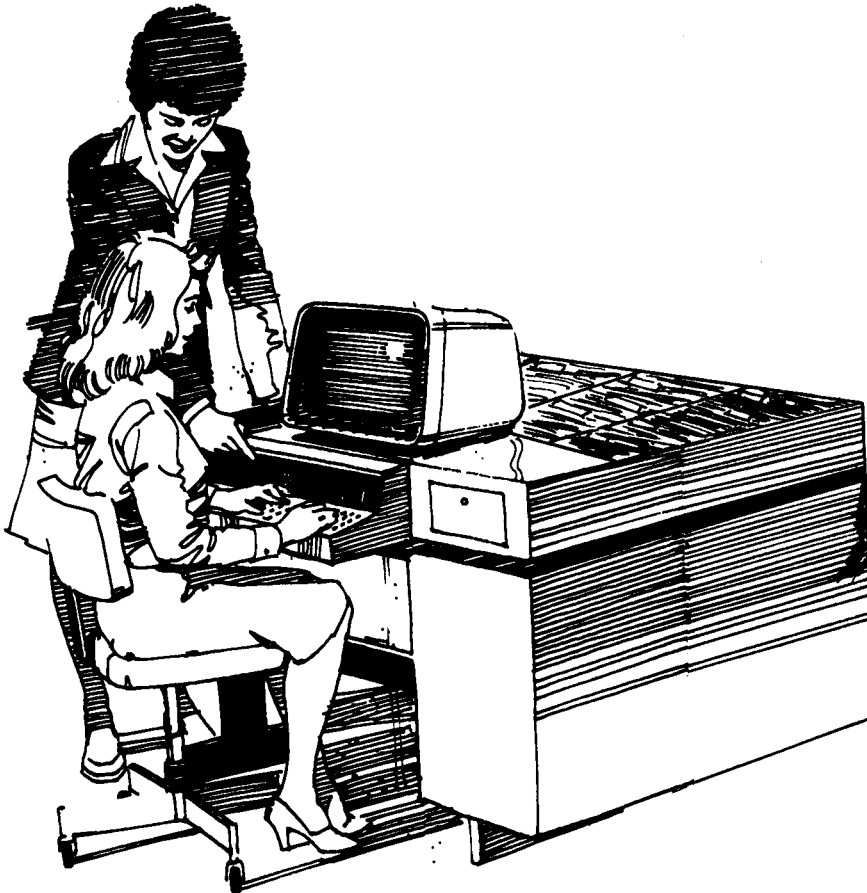
Voice mail can save money for an organisation also. How many times have you phoned someone where the first minute is taken up with salutations, footy results or the weather? With voice mail, because the dialogue is not simultaneous, this type of unnecessary chit chat is eliminated. This is particularly important if the exchange of information is over STD or ISD phone lines.

Furthermore, messages can be distributed in accordance to pre-determined mailing lists. These lists could copy the message to every mail box on the system. In a large organisation, this feature could save considerable costs in paper usage and memorandum preparation time, to advise staff of administrative changes.

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COST SAVING

It has also been established that up to 33% of phone calls have a one way information flow. Therefore, the informant can leave that information and hang up on a fraction of the time required to have a two way conversation.

Time zone charges are another important cost saving feature, because with voice mail, the message can be recorded and marked for future delivery when the cheaper STD rates apply. In a network situation in a large organisation, this would be of paramount importance.

SECURITY

Security of messages is a feature that has been well catered for. In most systems, the user needs a personal identification number (PIN) to access their mail box to send or receive messages. Depending on the system supplier, this PIN could be up to fifteen digits in length. If the PIN is lost or forgotten then the system administrator can recover the mail box but all the mail is automatically lost - forever.

Another aspect of security is the confirmation of delivery of messages. If this option is selected at the time of recording, then the sender will be advised when the recipient has read the message or if it was not delivered.

INFORMATION SERVICES

Banks have also realised the potential of voice mail. Instead of having staff answering phone calls all day, every day giving out current interest rates, recording names and addresses for new cheque books etc, they can now have a voice mail system which will provide a series of "menus" for the customer to select from to satisfy their needs. A typical voice mail dialogue for a bank would go something like this:

Hello, welcome to the XYZ Bank's voice mail system.

If you want -

a new cheque book, press 1

a new deposit book, press 2

the current account balance, press 3

the current account interest rate, press 4

help from operator, press 5

As can be seen from above there is considerable scope for reduction of human resource allocation if all requests are queued and transcribed at the end of the day.

USING VOICE MAIL

At all times, voice mail has a friendly voice which prompts the user through the various stages of messaging. There are controls for by-passing these prompts once a user has become proficient. There are also controls that allow the user to speed up or slow down the rate of speech. Recently, I had a very fast speaker leave a message for me and as a trial I decided to increase the speed of delivery. It is a little like playing a 45 rpm record on 78 except that the speech is not distorted as it is on a record.

WHO SHOULD USE VOICE MAIL?

The possibilities for use of voice mail are limitless. Salespeople, business executives, public servants, doctors, lawyers, police, restaurateurs, politicians, are just a few examples of potential users. Who knows, perhaps Telecom may one day provide voice mail as a service to its subscribers through its telephone exchange network - for a fee of course.

I understand that voice mail is the largest growing industry in the United States of America. Statistics show that up to 2,000 people per day across the USA are being connected to voice mail. Now I'm not one to suggest that just because it is a success in America that we should immediately jump to attention. However, I believe that it will be one of Australia's biggest growth industries during the next 5-10 years.

SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME AND MONEY ON UNSUCCESSFUL PHONE CALLS?

CONSIDER THIS

- 60% of all calls received by executives are considered to be interruptions — and less important than the work in progress.
- 70% of all calls placed fail to reach the desired person
- 55% of all business calls only require a one-way information flow.
- Only 20% of telephone messages contain enough information for an informed response.
- Only 24% of telephone messages require an immediate answer.

THE ANSWER? —

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R.M.A.A. IMPACT

One may be asking by now just what this product has to do with records management. Well, I believe it clearly demonstrates how vulnerable we are to electronic systems. Here we have a system that is user administered and once the mail is read it can be destroyed without trace. This is a serious problem with electronic storage media which needs to be addressed by this Association.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding my remarks about electronic storage I believe that voice mail is state of the art and I am pleased that my present employment provides me with the opportunity to explore this type of system.

It is about four months since I was first exposed to voice mail and I will always remember the company representative who demonstrated it that day because they really introduced me to a new and exciting concept.

Since those early days, many others suppliers have offered their wares and all have their good points. It would be unethical for me as a public servant to mention any company names or any particular products - thus the very broad statements above and any of my reference to any particular feature should be read as general statements.

To any reader of this article who may be interested in further evaluating a voice mail product, may I suggest that many systems are offered with many different features. Examine carefully the requirements of our organisation then go shopping.

NSW BRANCH REPORT

The NSW Branch AGM was held 8/7/87. Denis Comber was elected Branch President, and Peter Smith and Pam Camden were elected as Delegates to Federal Council.

The NSW Branch Council had 11 Councillors, and meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, prior to the members' meeting. Membership of the NSW Branch continues to grow, and we have gained 11 new members in this financial year.

The Hunter Region Chapter, Local Government Chapter, and Keyword Chapter are continuing to hold meetings of interest to their members.

The Association is holding a one day Seminar in March 1988, with the Keynote Address being given by Barry Jones M.P.

The Education Committee is working towards a Certificate course in Records Management. It is hoped that this will commence in 1988.

The NSW Branch is actively working to encourage members to apply for Status upgrade.

P Camden - Branch Secretary

1987 DIRECTORS MEETING

The 27th meeting of Federal Directors was held in Melbourne in conjunction with the 4th National Convention.

During the meeting, it was agreed by Council that a precis of the minutes of the meeting be included in the next Quarterly Informaa.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Federal President	Peter Smith
Vice President	Phil Taylor
Hon Secretary	Terry Tolhurst
Hon Treasurer	Jim Shepherd
Public Officer	Ross Thompson
Chairman Status & Standards Committee	Peter Smith
Chairman Accreditation Committee	Graham Dudley
Chairman Education & New Technology Committee	Phil Taylor

OBJECTIVES

Each Branch submitted through one of its Directors its objectives for the 1987/1988 year. Full details of your Branch's objectives are available from your Branch Executive.

The Association's objective was stated as a philosophy :

"The philosophy of the RMAA is to strive to attain the highest standards of professional development, through an ethical approach to accreditation of education, the sharing of information throughout the membership and other professional bodies and the advancement of the Records Management Profession."

In support of this philosophy, a timetable for all administrative and financial matters within the Association was adopted.

ASSOCIATION FINANCES

The Federal Treasurer tabled his report for the year ended 30 June 1987 which was also tabled at the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 8 September 1987. Copies, if required, are available from one of the Federal Directors in your State or Territory.

The accounts for payments, Auditors fees, Federal Council forecast, and other housekeeping matters were also discussed.

Fee structure for the 1988/89 FINANCIAL YEAR was set at :

Corporate	\$110	plus \$40 for additional nominees
Affiliate	\$ 40	
Associate	\$ 50	
Member	\$ 60	
Fellow	\$ 80	
Student (full-time)	\$ 20	

Branch levies were left at the current rate of 40% of membership fees, excluding joining fees. It was noted however, that an increase in membership was desirable to ensure that in future years, this percentage remains at 40%.

Last year we agreed to fully support IRMC for the next three years, therefore it was agreed that the RMAA delegate to IRMC should attend the IRMC meetings at the expense of the Association and that funding where necessary would be from the special project fund.

There has been concern in some areas of the Association regarding the use of funds raised from the National Conventions. It was noted in Council that in the Articles of Association for this organisation, the power for control of funds is vested in the Federal Council and whilst Branches have responsibility for keeping proper books of account, the Federal Council has ultimate power in this matter (Article 92). However, Branches are encouraged to submit proposals to Federal Council for financing special projects from this fund.

As part of general housekeeping, a timetable for Branches to observe was also adopted.

MEMBERSHIP

Federal Council would like to encourage members to apply for upgrade to the next level of membership. The issue of certificates, the length of time taken for the Federal Status and Standards Committee to examine applications and the fee for issue of certificates were also discussed and appropriate action taken.

Also discussed was the issue of voting rights for members without status and Council was very grateful for the working paper prepared by Margaret Medcalf of the Western Australian Branch. The matter has been referred back to Margaret with some additional guidelines and Council decisions.

The question of an additional Director from the State or Territory providing the Federal President was also addressed, but remains unchanged as the Federal President already has a casting vote if the need arises.

The responsibility for recognition of meritorious service to the Association is in the hands of each Branch Council for action as appropriate.

The rules of the NSW Keyword Chapter were ratified.

Life Membership was granted to Margaret Mainland of the South Australian Branch for her untiring efforts in establishing the South Australian Branch. Congratulations Margaret!

It was decided to embark on a National Advertising campaign to promote the Association and to co-ordinate annual National Advertisers for the Quarterly Informaa.

Quarterly Informaa publishing dates, numbers and Branches responsible for publication have been arranged through to May 1990. All Branches are involved and need editorial assistance from members. If you can help please advise your Branch Executive. A standardised cover has also been adopted through to the end of 1989.

EDUCATION

A meeting of Education Chairpersons from each Branch who were in Melbourne was held on Saturday 5.9.87 to discuss the future of RMAA accredited education throughout Australia. A full report will be available shortly.

ADMINISTRATION

The 28th meeting of Directors and the thirteenth Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held in Canberra in September 1988 to coincide with the 5th National Convention.

The question of teleconferencing for special meetings of Directors was addressed and is being investigated.

INTERNATIONAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (IRMC)

Helen Francis, one of the South Australian Federal Directors is the RMAA delegate to IRMC.

One of our members is producing a Bibliography of Records Management Terms for IRMC which will be sold world-wide through member organisations.

IRMC has been accepted as a graded delegate to UNESCO.

Kodak USA has given a grant of \$5,000 to carry out research on micrographics.

Any RMAA member travelling overseas should contact the IRMC Vice-President (VP) in the area being visited. The name of the relevant VP can be obtained from one of your Federal Directors.

Membership fees for member associations such as RMAA have now been set at \$US1.00 per member.

New Zealand had a large contingent at the 4th National Convention and it is hoped that in the near future, NZ will form their own Records Management Association.

Northern Territory Branch has lost one of their foundation members to Hong Kong for five years and during his time over there, he will be fostering the formation of Records Management Associations in that part of the world. This is in keeping with the stated policy of our Federal President who is keen to establish and assist SE Asian countries wherever possible.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

The report of the 3rd National Convention in Alice Springs was tabled and showed a trading surplus of nearly \$11,000. Congratulations to the South Australian Branch and Convention Committee were noted.

There were approximately 500 delegates registered for the 4th National Convention in Melbourne, which was a huge success. A detailed report will be published at a later date.

The Council recorded a vote of thanks to the Victorian Branch, the Convention Committee, sponsors, exhibitors, speakers and the delegates who all combined to make this the great success that it was.

The 5th National Convention will be held in Canberra in September 1988.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Two Branches are combining their resources to produce a standard for Records Management for submission to the Standards Association of Australia.

It was agreed that Records Management Consultants who are members, should declare their professional interests when handling consultancies and when negotiating on behalf of the Association.

An Association scarf for members of RMAA will be produced by the Queensland Branch, in "navy" and "biscuit" and will soon be available through each Branch.

A suggestion was considered regarding the inclusion of the word "Information" in the name of our Association. This was discussed at length and will be examined by all Branches during the next few months. Contributions from members in the form of "letters to the editor" will also be appreciated.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing is meant as a brief outline of the matters discussed at the recent Federal Council meeting. Federal Directors in each Branch will be reporting further on the meeting at the next Branch Council meeting.

T. M. TOLHURST
Federal Secretary
13 September 1987

HISTORICAL OFFICERS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Or: "You can't get the documents Min!"

J D WALKER

"James Walker has been Departmental Historical Officer with the Department of Aviation since January 1983. He spent much of his early public service career in records management. He is currently Convenor of the Public History Group."

Surprised? Shouldn't it be historians and archives management? Well, yes and no! Historians do have archival problems, and many of them do work mainly in archive collections, but they do, or they should, interface with Records Managers. This short article, or collection of random thoughts, is written from the viewpoint of a public historian (ie one working for a public authority), but some of it also applies to historians outside. Unfortunately it also raises more questions than it answers.

There are four general areas of interaction between Public Historians and Records Managers. Firstly, of course, there are the historian's own working files. Secondly, there are the current subject files. Thirdly there are the files in archives, and lastly the record of files no longer in existence. (For files read files and any other form of records).

Let us look at an example. It has, let us say, been decided to issue a booklet on a particular historical subject: civil aviation in World War II. A new file is requested, and this forms the working file of the Historical Officer. Then appropriate subject files are requested. Some come straight from Registry, others are brought in from archives. A list of no longer existing files is requested. In this particular instance there are none. Information is extracted from the subject files, and these are returned to Registry. In the working file, and in a number of temporary folders, a new booklet takes shape. It is all fairly straightforward. Or is it?

Firstly the working file; is it readily identifiable? Historical working files should be in their own series. They should be distinct from the subject files, and be the record of the research and writing of the particular project. Care needs to be taken by both historical and records staff that subject papers do not end up on working files, nor working papers on the subject files. When spelt out this seems obvious, but it is not always adhered to in practice. It may be appropriate for suitable marked COPIES of more important documents to be placed on the working file, but this should be rare. All Records Managers are aware of the tendency to overload files with unnecessary copies of documents. Subject files should be unchanged after historical use, being in the same condition after as before. Any changes, such as additional or missing folios will reduce their value as sources, as well as being bad file management. The working file should be restricted to the actual project itself. Too many source documents on it make it hard to handle, and reduce its value in charting the course of the project. In most instances, copies of documents are only needed temporarily, and should be kept in a temporary folder which should stay with the working file while the project is underway, and should be destroyed when the need for them is finished. All this requires file discipline on the part of both historians and Records Managers.

As regards subject files (and other records) it should be pointed out that most historical officers must rely heavily on records staff for identification and access. This is partly owing to the time factor. Few historical units have enough people to handle their workload. It is also due to the fact that few historical officers have any records training or experience. They must therefore rely on the professional competence and enthusiasm of the Records Managers, and, to a certain extent, on those officers' historical interest and knowledge. Should historical officers be allowed open access in registries? I believe this depends on what records training and experience the officer has received. Should historical officers be given some records training? I believe the answer must be YES! At the very least, the historical officer should be shown over the main registry of the department or authority, but consideration should also be given to allowing the officer to attend inhouse records courses. Should records management people be given some historical training? Again I say YES! An understanding of the history of their

organisation and its predecessors is surely fundamental for their efficient performance of records duties. Indexing and classifying officers would also be more effective if they had an understanding of historical methods.

This is all very well, but, unfortunately, the experience of this historical officer, at least, is that not all records officers are professional in their approach. This is a factor R.M.A.A. is trying to correct, but in the meantime it is one historical officers have to allow for.

What each historical unit really needs is a position which, as a major part of its duties will search for source material. The occupant of such a position would need to be an experienced records officer. Perhaps records staff should be rotated through such a position and then returning to the records unit. This would also help meet the need for historical training for records staff.

An area of growing concern to historians is that of electronic records. Problems are already arising over records on tapes and cassettes, such as oral history interviews. These problems are likely to grow worse with machine readable records. A document is a document is a document whatever its format, right? Wrong! The standard integrity and value checks used on written or printed documents cannot be used on machine stored documents. Many of the problems are common to other users and archivists and Records Managers are aware of them so I will not go into too much detail. I must emphasise, however, that the older machine readable records become, the greater the problems will grow. There is some reason to believe that the problems will grow geometrically rather than arithmetically as large organisations move over to the so-called paperless office. The substitution of telephone calls for notes and minutes has already shown the problems.

Another problem is administrative. Should requests by outside historians for access to a department's records be referred to the department's historical unit, assuming there is one? I would be interested in records people's reactions to this one. From the historical unit's point of view, knowledge of such a request would be useful, and could save embarrassment. I am convinced that each department should have a firm

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		Perth	353 3255		

policy, one way or the other, on this one. I suspect that usually it is left up to the individual officer initially handling the request, and that it is unsafe to assume the referral will, or will not, take place. Should requests for access be vetted by the historical unit (always remembering FOI)? How many departments, authorities, etc, demand a copy of the resulting work?: Would the Records Managers care to comment?

I believe it is time for closer links between public historians and Records Managers. The need for a link between public historians and archivists has long been seen, not least because in some organisations the archivists are carrying out historical duties, and a few archivists belong to the Public History Group. The need for historical officer/Records Manager liaison has not been as patently obvious, and progress seems slow. In Aviation, co-operation between the Records Manager, Ross Thompson, and myself has been growing closer, but this has not been because of encouragement from above, and is in spite of belonging to different branches. For example, until Ross brought the matter up, it had not occurred to senior officers that the Department's Historical Officer might be interested in the problems of machine readable records.

Further, I suspect that in many departments and authorities, historical duties are, by default, being loaded onto records staff. I, and the Public Records Group, would be interested in hearing from records personnel who are in this position. We are in the process of creating a contact register which could be of use to such staff, as indeed could our newsletter.

There is a growing interest in history among Australians and this includes an interest in official/public history. This will increase the demands not only on archives staff, and on historical officers in departments/authorities where they exist, but also on Records Managers in the private sector. I will be interested in Records Managers' comments.

DRAFTING A DISPOSAL AUTHORITY

by

Thomas Kaufhold and Darryl Seto,

Records Management Unit, Department of Social Security

The Records Manager must attempt the heuristic tasks of determining the value of the many physical objects in an organisation on which someone, somehow, has left a message. A record is defined in the Commonwealth's Archives Act 1983, as an object which has been kept because it contains information (somewhat truncated - see section 3(1) of this Act). Looking at this from a management perspective, records are the information resource of an organisation. This resource, like any other, should be properly managed. A disposal program is an important feature of records management in an organisation and at the heart of a disposal program is the disposal authority. This paper will discuss the issues confronting the Records Manager who has the responsibility of drafting a disposal authority for an organisation.

In the past few years the Records Management Unit in the Department of Social Security has reviewed its procedures for developing disposal authorities to cover the records specific to the Department. The first leg of the Unit's review was to devise some general procedures. This was to be part of the task of covering all the Department's Central Office records. The procedures were indeed general, that is, applicable anywhere to any type of record. The second leg was to review a particular type of record as these have special problems for this Department. These records are the ADP output from the Department's many ADP systems for administering and paying the various Commonwealth income security payments. The next leg to be undertaken shortly is another special category of records, namely, the internal ADP records. These are also called electronic or machine readable records and would include computer databases and programs.

Regardless of any legal requirements, such as those imposed on Commonwealth departments and authorities by the Archives Act, a disposal program for any organisation is required to efficiently and effectively manage the organisation's records. Setting out the disposal policy or standards for any organisation is an essential step in implementing an efficient disposal program. Such a program should relieve some of the pressure on the organisation's records retrieval system, save on storage costs, and protect the confidentiality of the information. Conforming with Australian Archives' practice of issuing records disposal schedules is, therefore, a well established and satisfactory records management practice.

Archival Values

Records are kept for a variety of reasons. It is usually the case that records are created for an immediate administrative action. If there is no other value for that record, then the record may be destroyed as soon as the action is completed. The person responsible for the action could also be responsible for the disposal of the record. On the other hand

there may be other uses for the record, that is, other than its immediate administrative use. In these cases the record has to be kept to meet these other requirements. Administering records with more than one value is more difficult, as employees usually specialise in only one activity.

In order to research the value of the records in an organisation, it is useful to identify broad categories of values. The records may then be assessed against each of these categories. Examples of records with different historical values include policy or precedent records; records where legislation dictates for how long they are to be retained; records detailing legal rights or obligations; records needed for audit; and records which might be useful for future research.

It is a simple issue for the Records Manager to draft a disposal authority which complies with a court order or a statute. The Records Manager has no choice. A more difficult question is balancing the costs of keeping records against the value of the organisation of any future research using those records, or the storage costs against the organisation's social responsibilities to protect the society's heritage.

Usually the costs of office accommodation is significantly higher than for an off-site warehouse. Those records which have no further use to anyone should be immediately destroyed. As mentioned previously some records may have to be kept for some period of time. These can be stored away from the office so they do not clutter-up the area. This will improve the working environment and minimise storage costs. All this activity is to be controlled by a disposal authority which will indicate the action to be taken for each and every record.

Disposal Classes

Drafting a disposal authority is partly a classification exercise. The Records Manager must first sort through the morass of material hiding in the organisation. Groups of records do not come with labels. Some order has to be given and each bundle is to be properly titled. A set of records in this context is called a disposal class. A disposal class may be defined as a description of a collection of records.

Some rationale is needed to sort the organisation's records into disposal classes. This, however, is not the end of the story. A disposal action is to be listed for each class and both the class description and the action to be taken has to be understood and implemented. Someone will be required to read the disposal classes in order to classify individual records as being a member of the group described by a particular class. This person (or someone else) will be required to carry out the action for individual records as prescribed by the disposal action for the class. These people may not be familiar with the role and duties of the original area which used the records. They may not even be from the same organisation. The first and foremost rule for drafting a disposal class is that the correct disposal action must be able to be resolved from each and every record in the class.

The disposal action required for individual records may affect the way the organisation's records are to be sorted into disposal classes. As an example, assume that a Commonwealth statute requires that a group of

records be kept for a considerable period and assume that there are similar records not affected by this legislation. In this case these records might be distinguished and ascribed a separate disposal class and separate disposal action. If it were not for the piece of legislation all these records could have been dealt with more easily with one disposal class and one disposal action.

As noted earlier, the justification for a disposal program is the financial savings from reducing storage costs and allowing for more efficient information retrieval, and the protection of confidential information. The destruction of confidential information may be justified regardless of questions of costs or efficiency. In all other instances, the costs of running the disposal program is an important consideration. A disposal program requires some effort. Although records should not be kept on hand beyond their useful life, there is some cost in sorting records. Subtle distinctions between disposal classes and between disposal actions demand a more detailed examination of the records. There is an immediate cost in labour and a potential cost if unacceptable errors are made. Accordingly, this is another consideration for the Records Manager who must draft disposal classes which balance any conflict between sorting costs and storage costs.

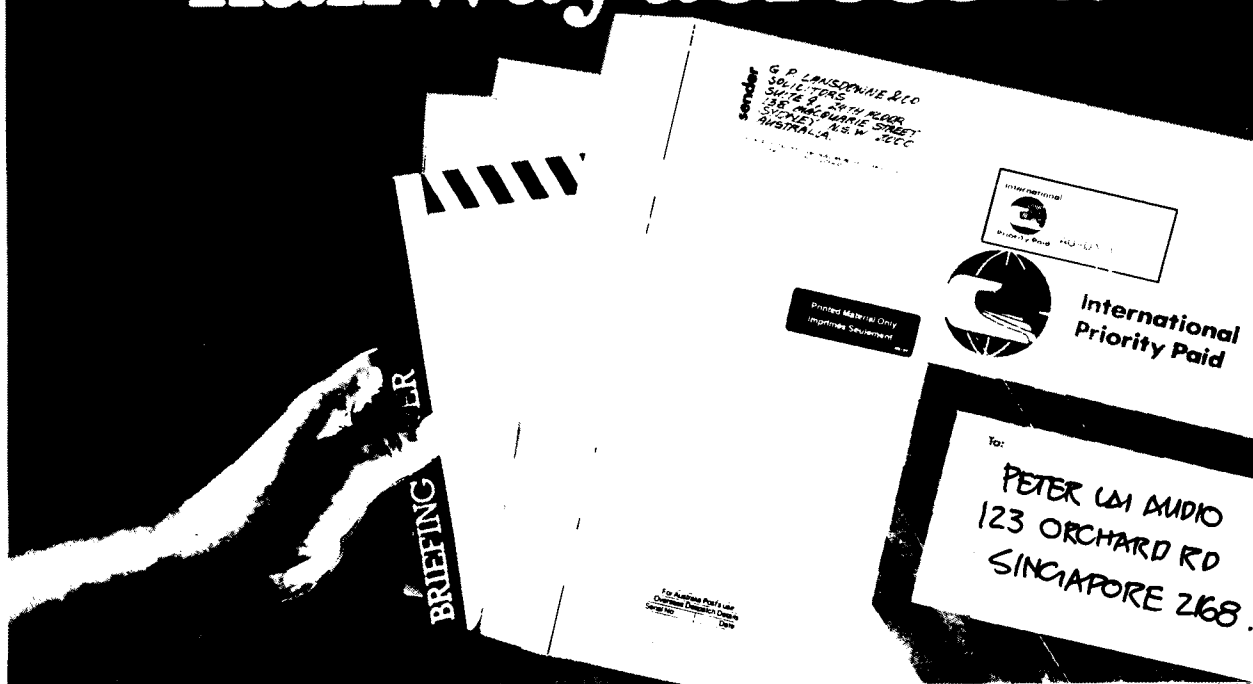
No doubt there will be many possible approaches to the difficulties of devising an acceptable disposal authority. In the Records Management Unit's general procedures it is stated that disposal classes must reflect the records themselves (so that they may be classified) and the action to be taken must be obvious to anyone reading a record. This rule was immediately broken by the Unit when considering ADP outputs. Procedures in the Department were introduced so that the correct disposal action to be taken for any output is now to appear on the output. This is, of course, consistent with the more general rule that the correct disposal action must be able to be resolved from the records.

The approach for ADP outputs was taken because of the need for an efficient disposal program. The cornerstone of a disposal program is a reliable disposal authority. An authority listing ADP output by form number and title (and example of what is sometimes called a "simple series") was not reliable as updating the authority lagged well behind changes to the output. The procedures introduced in the Department mean that the various systems development and maintenance personnel classify the records. This factor was relied on when the disposal classes were written. Specific form number or titles were not included. General headings were used to describe types of output, notwithstanding the fact that it would be difficult for anyone looking at any particular output to correctly classify that output.

Methodology

The procedures developed by the Records Management Unit are quite simple. The first step is to identify discrete areas within the organisation and to review the records of one area at a time. A little research is made of the functions and duties of the area being surveyed. Some samples of the records are examined in more detail. The information obtained is then brought together to draft the disposal authority. Worksheets have been designed to assist the task of collecting and recording the requisite information.

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The objective of the first stage in these procedures is to identify preliminary record categories. This is achieved by an analysis of all the activities of an area from reviewing any background material about the area and from interviewing employees in the area. The record categories identified in this way will mimic the way the area operates. The breakup of the area's activities should have evolved for reasons other than facilitating this particular exercise but some start is required. The Records Manager usually begins with no idea about the records that have to be evaluated. Talking to the responsible area gives a useful background to the material being maintained. More importantly, this preliminary classification provides the foundation for the next stage.

In these procedures the sampling process is not random. The final product does not rely on luck. Instead, samples are taken for each category that had been identified in the first stage. The responsible area can even indicate the number to be sampled. Where the activity in question is complex, or where there are many possible outcomes, more record samples will be required. The Unit's review of the output from the DP income security systems is an example where the opposite occurred. When the Unit reviewed the ADP output many people in the Department of Social Security and in Australian Archives participated throughout this review yet the project officers sighted only one sample of each output from only one of the ADP systems.

The third stage is to come up with headings suitable for inclusion as a disposal class. From the very first step classification of the records has occurred.. The samples taken will verify the suitability of the descriptions which were given by the operational area, and which were used so far in this exercise. Remember the rule for drafting a disposal class, namely, the correct disposal action must be able to be resolved from each and every record in the class. When some of the records do not easily fit the description given by the operational area, or when either amalgamations or further refinements of classes are warranted, then the descriptions have to be changed. A suitable text has to be written for each group so that all records are covered.

The last stage is to assess the archival value of the records. A disposal action for each classification is to be established and once again the people from the area have to be involved. Any changes which were made in the descriptions of record classes may be cleared at this time. The issues here are broader than just the operational questions and other people may have to be consulted.

The number of records sampled will be quite large and a detailed examination of the archival value of each sample will be prohibitive. This is not necessary. In this final step the records are considered as preliminary classes. A disposal action can be set according to the archival value of the group. In some cases the appropriate disposal action will be obvious, for example, if there are statutory provisions, or if the organisation already has set standards for certain types of records regardless of the subject matter. An example of this last point could be the organisation's standard to keep indefinitely any policy documents.

The disposal authority, that is, the disposal classes and each disposal action, may now be finalised remembering, of course, that the information from the final step can still affect the way the records are to be grouped. The Records Manager then starts on the next area.

Worksheets

Standard worksheets are useful to assist the tasks of collecting and recording the requisite information.

In the first stage there is a worksheet to assist with the initial interview with the area. After the functions of the area have been identified questions may be asked on each activity. That is, a worksheet is completed for each subdivision of the functions of the area. This worksheet asks for each activity if there are files on this subject recording policies, procedures, cases, or projects; or other types of documents, such as reports, publications, ADP output, index cards or registers.

A card is used as the second worksheet to record details of these samples examined during the second stage. This format assists the exercise of grouping records. There is room to give a precis of the record. Nevertheless, if the sample fits the description given by the operational area, the only detail required is a tick.

The final worksheet is to ascertain the archival value of groups of records. This worksheet asks of the records of each class document policy or precedent issues; if any legislation prescribes how long the records are to be kept or when they are to be destroyed; if the records prove or substantiate legal rights or obligations; if there are audit requirements for the records; or if the records might be useful for future research.

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL - THE FAST WAY

Recently in Canberra, Senator John Button launched a new Records Management Software product, CARMS (Computer Aided Records Management System), to a gathering of Senior Government Officials and representatives of private enterprise.

Introducing the Senator, Mr Peter Fields, Chairman of the Canberra Development Board, said "CARMS is one of the products included in the Ortex submission in 1983, which the Board considered worthy of practical support under the Industry Incentive Scheme."



In his address Senator Button referred to the role of large international hardware manufacturers in this country and added "We cannot ignore the significant role of small innovative Australian Companies." "CARMS is a product that as well as providing activity and revenue (for Ortex) is designed to increase the efficiency of the organisations that use it. It is a very important tool for industry."

He mentioned the export potential for Australian products and said "In the case of indigenous firms, the Government is strongly committed to the development of viable and internationally competitive activities. These firms have a number of special problems relating to their size and international experience. We will be concentrating on existing mechanisms to provide an adequate skilled base to increase access to international markets and to further develop our technological expertise. On top of that, there are mechanisms such as offsets designed to improve the interaction between these two kinds of companies and to encourage mutually beneficial ventures resulting from that interaction. Achieving this end, companies such as Ortex provide the base activity and enterprise from which growth can be achieved."

"Ortex has placed a very high priority on Research and Development and is involved in a range of systems and hardware development projects." Referring to Mr Bob Trewin, Executive Director of Ortex, he said "I would like to express appreciation of the work of Bob Trewin through ACEMA, has made great contribution to the development of the Information Industry statement which I hope to make in the very near future and which will be set out in detail the policy approaches I have referred to today."

In officially launching CARMS, he described it as "Seeing it as a symbol of something very important that is happening in the software industry in Australia."

In his reply, Bob Trewin, made reference to the lack of formal Records Management training in this country and the high turnover of people involved in the industry. This presents special problems in devising a system to automate Records Management as it requires something easily learnt by many people, a lot of which have no real computer experience. He said "We had to develop a system that did not require continual retraining. It couldn't introduce new concepts from Records Management practices established over the years. Organisations are not about to change their structure just to cope with a new piece of technology."

CARMS has been under development for 4 years with a lot of input from the NSW and Federal Government Records Management experts. It was Beta tested for 18 months in one such department and substantially modified as a result of that testing. Describing today's finished product, Bob Trewin said "We have now a product that is cost effective and meets industry requirement. It requires minimal training and minimal changes to the environment."

"Its success is highlighted by the awarding of NSW and Queensland Government Period contracts and commitment by the Indonesian Government to get full training in Records Management and implement CARMS throughout Indonesian Government. As well, through an agreement with Datafile, we have access to their distribution network throughout Canada, USA and Europe."

"We are releasing new Records Management products in the very near future, and we are attracting senior R. M. people for consultancy. We are involved with Technical Colleges in NSW to develop training courses, something that has been lacking for many years."

"In the last few weeks we have sold 40 licences and have commitment for the sale of \$3.5 million in Australia alone in Software, over the next 2 years. We estimate the Indonesian market to be about \$5 million and the North American and European to be too big to put a figure on."

Ortex Australia are opening offices in Sydney and Brisbane in August and are planning to expand to other capital cities later this year. Could we be looking at another Elders IXL of the Computer Industry?

For further information about this article, contact Michael Carpena, Marketing Manager, Ortex Australia Pty Ltd, Unit 3, Centre Court, 1 Pirie Street, Fyshwick, 2609. Ph: (062) 80 5283.

KEEPING ARCHIVES

*Pederson, Ann, Editor in Chief,
Sydney: Australian Society of Archivists Incorporated, 1987
ISBN 0 95955659 1.*

For centuries archives have kept the permanent records of governments, businesses, organisations, churches, schools, hospitals, families and individuals. While all countries have national and state repositories for archives, there remains a large quantity of important archival material outside these institutions.

For the people charged with the responsibility of preserving and making these important records available for research, finding information on archival principles and practices has often been difficult. It is this problem that Keeping Archives now solves.

Keeping Archives is the first comprehensive work in the English language which represents a consensus of opinion among experienced archivists working in a variety of settings. Editor-in-Chief Ann Pederson, an internationally known archivist who now teaches archives administration and records management in the graduate School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales, has directed a writing and editing team drawn from archives serving the interests of banking, genealogy, manuscripts, research, secondary and tertiary education, museum administration, local, state and federal government, and business. The work of each author has, in addition, been examined by a Board of Editors to ensure consistency and viability for all contexts of archival operations.

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Michael Piggot. Author Conservation Senior Curator, Written Records, Australian War Memorial

Barbara Reed. Author Acquisition and Appraisal Archival and Records Management Consultant, Barbara Reed and Associates Pty Ltd

David Roberts. Author Using Computers and Micrographics Archivist, Machine Readable Records, Australian Archives, New South Wales Regional Office

Tim Robinson. Editorial board and Co-author Accessioning and Arrangement and Description College Archivist, Sydney College of Advanced Education

Anne-Marie Schwirtlich. Author Introducing Archives and The Archival Profession and Co-author Getting Organised - the Basics Assistant Director, Personal Archives and Special Projects, Australian Archives, ACT Regional Office

Clive Smith. Author the Glossary Senior Archivist, Westpac Banking Corporation

YOUR ASSOCIATION

*by Terry Tolhurst ARMA
Federal Secretary*

INTRODUCTION

I have agonised over just how to start this article because I know that the Quarterly Informaa distribution list includes members of very long standing with a profound understanding of the legal documents that bind this Association together as well as the new recruits who are together as well as the very new recruits who are starving for more information.

In deference to all members, I will endeavour to keep my ramblings to simple statements that hopefully will not leave me open to too much criticism or the article up to too much debate.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is in three basic forms

- . Honorary membership is bestowed on members by Federal Council to recognise the personal effort expended in furthering the aims and objectives of the Association
- . Individual membership is open to all people who have an interest in the affairs of the Association
- . Corporate membership is open to organisations (companies, federal, state or local government departments etc) and entitles the registration of three employees as corporate nominees.

Further to the above types of membership, the Association also provides for recognition of members individual personal achievements in the field of records management. This recognition is in the form of Status. Members advance in Status upon application and approval to Associate, Member and Fellow.

Branch Council's Status and Standard (S & S) Committee approve advancement to Associate level, while application for Member and Fellow, if recommended by the Branch S & S Committee, are forwarded to the Federal Council for evaluation by the Federal S & S Committee.

All members who have been advanced in Status are entitled to use letters after their name

Associate	ARMA
Member	MRMA
Fellow	FRMA

THE COMPANY

The Association is registered in The Australian Capital Territory as a Company in accordance with the Companies Ordinance 1962.

The Association (Company) is made up of Federal Council and Branch Councils in each State and the two mainland territories with the Federal Council providing the co-ordinating role to ensure consistency throughout the country. Federal Council is in fact the Board of Directors of the Company.

The Federal Council (Board of Directors) meets at least annually and comprises two members of each Branch Council duly elected each year to fulfil such office. Your Branch Secretary will be happy to provide details, upon request.

FEDERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

These meetings must be held at least once per year to satisfy the requirements of the Companies Act. Usually, the meetings are convened to coincide with the Annual Convention (past three years) and before that, Branches organised a seminar of some kind to help defray the cost of air fares and accommodation.

The following is a brief summary of the proceedings of the twenty fifth meeting of Directors in Alice Springs, September 1986.

- . Election of office bearers
- . Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting
- . Branch objectives
 - each Branch is expected to provide a summary of its proposed activities and objectives for the ensuing twelve months
- . Association finances
 - approval to pay accounts in hand and ratification of accounts paid during the preceeding twelve months
 - the fee structure for the financial year after the one in which the meeting occurs is set

Membership

- approval for two Associates to be advanced to Member
- Life Membership was granted to Messrs Brewster and Partington
- proposal for an award of excellence for the development and implementation of a successful records management program
- discussion also took place on the granting of voting rights to all members of the Association : a motion was put and lost along these lines
- discussion on the guidelines for status advancement
- M Metalf (WA) be requested to produce a set of guidelines for consideration at the next Federal Council Meeting
- Queensland Branch given approval to sponsor an award for the best paper prepared on a given topic
- Federal Secretary to investigate suitable plaques for presentation to life members

Publicity

- Branches are to distribute Informaa's to all other Branches
- roster for preparation and distribution of Quarterly Informaa was set for the next twelve months
- purchase price of \$5.00 per issue set for Quarterly Informaa : but still to be distributed free to all members
- set advertising fees for Quarterly Informaa
- numbering for Quarterly Informaa was agreed : volume/number/year with four issues per volume
- registration for postage for Quarterly Informaas a periodical to be followed up
- WA Branch to arrange issue of an ISSN Number of Quarterly Informaa
- members to bring to the attention of the Federal Secretary any instances where magazines carry outdated information about the Association (eg Modern Office and others)
- NSW Branch produced a new publicity brochure : copies were available to all other branches

Education

- all courses currently presented in all States and Territories were discussed
- approval given to convene a meeting of all Education Committee Chairpersons

Administration

- continuing review of the procedure manual
- Branch minutes and Informaas to be sent to all Directors
- 26th and 27th meetings of Federal Directors would be held in Melbourne in September 1987
- AGM to be held on Tuesday 8 September 1987
- a micro computer to be acquired for the use of the Federal Secretary
- discussion took place on the possibility of a paid National Secretariat

IRMC

- agreed to retain membership of IRMC for the next twelve months and that H. Francis be the R.M.A.A. delegate

. **National Conventions**

- discussions took place on the Sydney Convention (2nd), the Alice Springs Convention (3rd), and the Melbourne Convention (4th)
- the 5th and 6th National Conventions were also discussed but by agreement cannot be announced until the convention immediately before

. **General Business**

- it was generally agreed that R.M.A.A. supports the abolition of foolscap
- NSW Branch to make contact with the Australian Information Management Association
- agreed that if R.M.A.A. produced a list of consultants, a disclaimer be incorporated in the document
- agreed that R.M.A.A. should be represented on the Australian Libraries and Information Council
- agreement in principle to explore with other information societies the question of records held on computers
- R.M.A.A. supports the concept of Forum of information Societies
- Federal Council supports the provision of information etc to developing countries
- notice was taken that the Victorian Branch was involved with a review of the State Public Records Office.

CONCLUSION

All Federal Council meetings follow the same basic agenda but obviously some of the direction changes with personalities and standards.

I have been a member of Federal Council for the past six years and I must say that I have found that Federal Council meetings are a source of constant and lively debate.

It has been my pleasure to work with all the other Federal Councillors during that time but particularly I have really enjoyed their friendship and loyalty.

Whilst there are sixteen Federal Director positions, there are over 1000 members who are eligible for election to those position, I would encourage all members to actively participate in all Branch and Federal activities and to seek election whenever and wherever possible.

Members need to have achieved at least Associate Status before being eligible to accept a position on Branch Council.

Hand over your records management headaches

Upgrading records management is a major task facing many Australian organisations.

How you go about it is important.

If your secretary designs your new records management system you'll get a system that suits your secretary. If your computer boffin does it, the system will suit the boffin.

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Use an internal staff member to design a new records management system only when you can score six "Yes" answers to these questions:

1. *Is s/he capable of analysing the organisation's needs?* Y/N []
2. *Up with the latest methods and technology?* Y/N []
3. *Successfully completed similar assignments and can visualise the outcome?* Y/N []
4. *Does s/he know where to start, how to control the project and see the assignment through to an expeditious and successful conclusion?* Y/N []
5. *Is s/he an effective, detached and apolitical change agent?* Y/N []
6. *And can you afford to release him/her from normal duties without loss for as long as it takes to carry out the study and implement the system?* Y/N []

If you cannot answer "Yes" to all six questions you need professional advice. Find out the pitfalls. Understand why 70 percent of all new records management systems fail. Why traditional Australian records management methods are less than 40 percent effective. And learn what knowledge and experience is available to you if you hand over your records management assignment to a professional records management consultant. Find out what are the proven systems for your type of organisation. And the steps to follow to carry through your assignment to a successful conclusion. What level of consulting input would best fit your organisation's needs. The costs and the benefits.

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REVIEW

Kathleen P Wagoner and Mary M Ruprecht, Office Automation: A Management Approach, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1984.

by

Denise Druitt, Canberra College of Advanced Education

It is refreshing to read a book on office automation which highlights the role of records management in an organisation, and which clearly illustrates the relationship between records management and other office functions. This book gives records managers and records management students an overview of the issues which need to be considered when automating different functions in the information process. It is also presented in a clear, compact, and easy-to-read style.

The book is especially of use to records managers, and is equally applicable to managers in administrative and office service areas. It takes an integrated approach to automation, and clearly depicts the merging of records management, administrative and office service areas. An overview of available technologies and their specific applications is also given.

Traditional records management, up-to-date records management tools, and decisions which need to be made when automating a records management area are covered, including:

- . paper-based, electronic and image forms of storage and retrieval;
- . qualitative and quantitative qualities of records; and
- . system design considerations.

The importance of planning, and how to prepare for technological change is stressed. If you don't know where to start or where to go next it not only gives you the steps, but also how to achieve them, including:

- . the transition from a traditional to an automated office;
- . the options for implementing automation;
- . the points at which records management controls are needed; and
- . the specific tasks to automate.

It outlines the steps to take before and after implementing office automation, such as:

- . determining the qualitative and quantitative benefits of automation;
- . producing a detailed costing;
- . selecting suitable hardware and software; and
- . presenting the initial study results to management.

Human issues are an important aspect of the success of automation, and areas covered are:

- . job descriptions;
- . career options;
- . the effects of automation on employees;
- . management and leadership techniques;
- . skills needed for particular tasks; and
- . the selection of personnel for specific tasks.

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 - Interface to Optical Disk.
 - Completely menu driven.
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- SIMPLY stated, CIMS enables you to easily set-up and create databases for any type of business or application. CIMS is capable of accessing any piece of information from millions in record time!

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Management issues, organisational structural changes, office layout, and changes to procedures are also covered.

Other books I have read on office automation and records management do not illustrate the merging of the various functions in the information process. They also do not provide the wide coverage of human, management and organisational issues which need to be considered when introducing technology.

A major drawback with the book is that it looks at records management primarily in terms of storage and retrieval, and other records management functions are considered as part of the information cycle. However, it does cover all of the possible areas that the records manager may be responsible for. I would also like to have seen more detail on the automation of specific records management functions and on records management techniques and procedures.

You will find this a valuable and useful source of reference.

Cost: \$70.10

ISBN: 0-471-09061

THE OPTICAL DISK

Don Southwell

*Manager Government Systems Development
KODAK AUSTRALASIA PTY LTD*

The optical laser disk - known to most people in its most common form as the audio compact disk - may transform the way information is stored, processed, and conveyed. In fact, some experts say the new technology may "democratize" the Information Age's growing overflow of data - making the public library and the on-line data base obsolete.

"A data base on a CD-ROM or an optical disk increases access (to information) dramatically. For some people, that kind of access may become economical for the first time," said Scott McCready, technology consultant for the Yankee Group in Boston.

Les Cowan, editor of the Rothchild Consultants' Optical Memory newsletter in San Francisco, agreed: "People will be able to use large data bases on PCs without having to use expensive on-line data bases." He envisioned even more dramatic uses of the new technology, as well. "You could have digital mapping where a pilot could take a little box and hit a few buttons and call up maps of the universe. A computer could put together his entire flight plan (at the touch of a button)," he said.

The sky may be the limit for the capacity of optical disks, but the biggest market is on solid ground. "By 1990, you're going to see mixed-media storage capability on personal computers: magnetic disk, optical disk, and magnetic tape as a backup," McCready said.

"For the PC user, it will offer the capability to have all your software on it - you won't have to keep reloading software all the time."

Laser technology is already used to produce compact audio disks for listening to everything from Bach to the Bangles. The disks themselves look like miniature long-playing stereo albums, shimmering with a rainbow of color.

Somewhere over that rainbow may lie a new world of information management. Consider:

- One compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) can hold the equivalent of 1500 floppy disks - enough storage to contain the entire Encyclopedia Britannica and then some.
- Last Autumn Kodak introduced a 14" optical disk more powerful than anything now on the market. It has the capacity to hold enough pages to fill 110 four-drawer file cabinets or make a stack of paper as tall as the Eiffel Tower. It would take 7,000 floppy disks to handle as much information.
- The optical disk is tough as nails. David Miller, in a new book, CD-ROM: the New Papyrus, writes: "I suspect you could even use it to play Frisbee with your dog."

There are some drawbacks: optical disks are slower than magnetic disks. And magnetic disk technology is a moving target to those who are hunting for a share of its market. New developments will continue to widen the storage capacity of magnetic media, Cowan said.

And an even thornier problem: while the optical disk may be a bottomless well of information, new buckets will be needed for dipping into it. Software must be developed to organise and retrieve the information stored on the disks, he said.

There are three types of optical disks

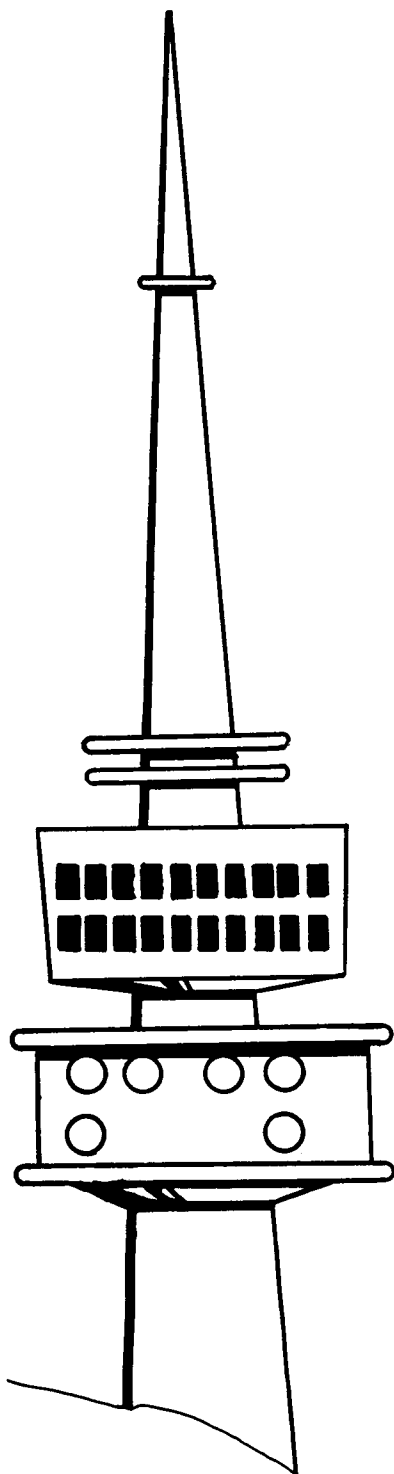
CD-ROM: The biggest seller, familiar to most people as the audio compact disk.

WORM: The acronym means write once/read many (times). It involves virtually the same technology as the CD-ROM, but in this case the user loads information onto the blank disk once and reads it as many times as needed. The new Kodak 14" WORM has monumental storage capacity.

Hybrid CD: On these disks you will be able to read write, and rewrite. Kodak previewed a 3.5" erasable disk at last year's Comdex Show.

Finally there's a Catch-22: each advance in information management technology itself creates more information than the newly invented technology can effectively manage, Cowan said. Our very effort to reach the limits of information itself creates more information - and continually extends the limits to just beyond our reach.

Yet the market for optical disk technology is expected to mushroom into the next decade. High Technology magazine estimates it will grow from \$375 million in 1986 to \$1140 million by 1990. Photonics magazine predicts compound annual sales growth of 280 percent through 1990. In other words the optical disk will have an increasing impact in the field of records management.



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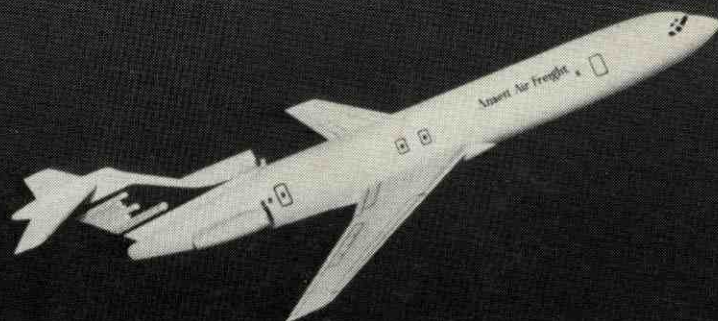
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