



THE **informaa**' *Quarterly*

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE
RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA


ISSN 0816-200X

\$5.00



Vol 4 Number 3

AUGUST, 1988



**In 105 A.D., the Chinese
discovered how to make paper.
In 1984, FileNet discovered
how to eliminate it.**

**FileNet does for paper what
computers do for data.**

If your corporation still relies on a 2,000-year-old technology like paper, you can lose your competitive edge.

Paper wastes time. People must go to file cabinets and file rooms to retrieve documents. Paper gets lost, misfiled, buried in out-baskets. So your people wait. Work waits. Customers wait. And business suffers.

This is especially costly in offices where paper volume is high and files are frequently accessed — such as customer service, loan processing, correspondence handling, etc. But there is a solution: FileNet.

FileNet eliminates paper by converting it into digitized document-images.

**Optical disk-based storage and
retrieval is only the beginning.**

FileNet eliminates file cabinets by permanently storing document-images on optical disk. Millions of document-images can be stored in a FileNet system. Users at multiple workstations can retrieve any document-image almost instantly. So FileNet makes high capacity storage cost-efficient. And frequent retrieval fast and easy.

FileNet works the way people do.

FileNet communicates with mainframes, provides word processing and displays document-images — all on the same screen. Simultaneously.

WorkFlo,™ FileNet's exclusive software system, automatically integrates, manages and routes the flow of document-images. So people have more time to work. Think. And produce.

**FileNet's users report improved
customer service and productivity
increases as much as 50%.**

Paper in the modern office. It's becoming ancient history.

olivetti FileNet

For further information, fill in the coupon below and mail it to:
The Marketing Manager FileNet,
Olivetti Australia, GPO Box 3993, Sydney, NSW 2001.

Please rush me further details on FileNet —
The Document Image Management System

NAME _____

ORGANISATION _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

'THE informaa' Quarterly

Volume 4 Number 3

Publisher: Records Management
Association

EDITORIAL NOTES

Informaa Quarterly is a publication of the Records Management Association of Australia. Members of the Association receive this publication as part of their membership.

Copyright in *Informaa Quarterly* is vested in the Records Management Association of Australia Incorporated.

Copyright in articles is vested in each of the authors in respect of his or her contribution. Authors' opinions do not necessarily represent the views of the Records Management Association of Australia.

This edition of *Informaa Quarterly* has been produced by the Tasmanian Branch. Design and type setting by the Graphic Arts Section, Hydro-Electric Commission, Tasmania with a 'Macintosh SE' computer and 'LaserWriter Plus' using 'PageMaker 3.0' software.

Next Issue: November 1988 - Western Australia Branch.

Many thanks to all contributors for their articles.

Editorial Committee :

Bill Taylor
Jackie Elliot
John Behrens
Lindy Mackey
Russ Middleton
Geoff Williams

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Secrets of Success?	2
A Time To Reflect	6
A Local Government Thesaurus	9
Relations in Records: A Guide to Family History	
Records in the Australian Archives	11
The Records Manager: Change Agents or	
Victims of Change	14
Integrated Information Resources	15
Records Management in the Northern Territory	17
News - News from the Southern Outpost -	
Tasmania	18
Records and Information Workshop	18
Notes from Western Australia	19
International Records Management Council	19
International Records Management	20
Perth Conference September 1989	20

FROM THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT

Peter A. Smith

I am writing this message with a great deal of pride and enthusiasm. The reason being that it was only on 20th February 1987 that the Tasmanian Branch of the Association was formed and now we find that the Tasmanian Branch is one of the most active within the Association. The production of a *Quarterly Informaa* by them so early in their existence is indicative of their philosophy that nothing is too hard and the impossible is just another challenge.

On a different tack good things are being accomplished with our policy on education. Since I brought together the Chairpersons of Education Committees from each State, at the Melbourne convention last year, the Federal Education Chairman, Philip Taylor, has been working hard on a draft of a policy on Education for the Association.

The task is almost complete but what is important, is the acceptance of the policy as the standard of learning in our profession. The Association is fast becoming recognised as an authority in the information industry therefore we must ensure that our credibility is without question.

We should look to reject practices that are below the standards we set. Our goal should be to improve the standards of our profession and the information industry.

The setting of standards for education is a means of ensuring the quality of workmanship provided by those who work in the profession of Records and Information Management.

SECRETS OF SUCCESS ?

Introduction

Although success in life involves many factors, the four I have explained below are of prime importance. Without self-awareness we are insensitive to the way in which we behave, thus we are unable to change in ways which may be of benefit to us. However, with increased awareness of our behaviour and its effects on other people we are more able to discipline ourselves to improve these effects. Similarly, as our self discipline grows, we can more effectively motivate ourselves to set and achieve goals we regard as important. This is self-direction, the establishments of an internal guidance system enabling us to use our time efficiently to accomplish our aims.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness requires self-observation. At times it is necessary for us to stand back and deliberately watch ourselves in action. This is something that may occur spontaneously. While we are playing sport, for example, we may occasionally have that magic day on which we are doing everything right. It is almost as if we are watching from a distance 'this person' who is doing every right. Unfortunately, for most of us, these magic days are too few and far between. This 'watching from a distance' phenomenon may also occur when we are tired or sick.

So there is nothing particularly unusual about standing back and observing ourselves. When we do so deliberately, for purposes of becoming more aware of our behaviour, we will notice that there seems to exist within us a number of little 'I's. That is, when we refer to ourselves, we say things like; 'I am going to get up early tomorrow morning and go for a jog' as if there is only one 'I'. Yet, if we look closer, we find this is not the case.

As we lie in bed the next morning, one 'little I' is still thinking that getting up and going for a jog is good idea. However, another 'little I' is insisting that: 'It is far too cold to get out of bed so early'. A third 'little I' is primarily concerned with previewing the day's work: 'First thing I had better ring Barry about the Jones contract. Then I should ...' So, here there are three different 'I's' operating. To talk of a single 'I' seems somewhat unrealistic.

If we don't stand back and observe ourselves from time to time we do not become aware of the contradictions within us, of the constant push and

pull between the 'little I's' all trying to get their own way. However, once we do become more self-aware through our detached observation, we have the opportunity of choosing the particular 'little I' which is likely to be of most help to us. Perhaps we will not take that opportunity, but at least we have a choice. Without self-awareness we have none. We function as machines rather than as people, exercising virtually no control over our own behaviour.

This lack of control is apparent, too, in the way we permit our addictions to dictate how we behave. The term 'addictions' summons up thoughts of smoking, alcohol, and other drugs, but it is not to such things I refer. Consider the situation of coming down to the garage one morning and finding your car will not start. Most of us react with anger. This is not a deliberately chosen reaction. It is automatic. Our anger is caused by an addition, the belief that our car should always function perfectly and when it doesn't that is awful. Unrealistic, isn't it? Yet we continually allow our emotions to be controlled by addictions such as this.

If you would like to achieve greater control over your emotions and your behaviour, try replacing your addictions with preferences. You would prefer your car to start, but, as it is not going to do so, what alternatives do you have for getting to work on time? Once you adopt the preference approach, you clear your mind, enabling you to find solutions to your problem. However, if you remain locked into your addictions, your initial emotional reaction prevent you from doing so.

Anger is the key. This is how you identify your addictions so that, if you wish, you can do something about them. Observe yourself when you are angry. What belief is triggering off that anger? Usually it involves 'mustitis'. The car 'must' work perfectly. The business meeting 'must' go the way I want it to. My wife or husband 'must' see things the way I see them. It's all so irrational, yet most of us do it.

Not that it is easy to replace deep-established addictions with more reasonable preferences. It takes effort. Yet, if you can remove one or two addictions a year, your life will run more smoothly. It is all a matter of accepting people and things as they are, imperfect, rather than as the perfect creations you think they ought to be. It is quite unrealistic to insist on perfection and become angry when it is not achieved. Prefer perfection, but let intelligent problem-solving replace anger when it is not forthcoming.

Monitoring your anger is useful, too, from another viewpoint. When we are angry, frustrated or upset our distress levels rises. Distress, or stress, is now seen as one of the most important factors interfering with business efficiency so that anything minimising its effects is warmly welcomed. Replacing addictions with preferences is one approach that will certainly reduce distress levels. So too, will increasing your awareness of your own stress level.

This is not difficult. Your body tells you when you are being stressed beyond a desirable level. Headaches, neckaches, upset stomach, sleep disturbances, irritability, and difficulty in concentrating are all common signs, yet they are signs which we usually ignore. Such early warning signals can be welcomed as friends, for they let you know that all is not well with your life style, providing you with the opportunity to do something about it.

In my book, *The Stress Factor*, I describe many ways in which you can manage distress more successfully. However, if you do not realize that you are having problems in this area, you will not be able to make use of these. It all comes back to self-awareness, for most distress is self-inflicted. However, as we are the ones to impose distress on ourselves, this means we have the power to remove it. To exercise this power we need self-discipline.

Self-Discipline

Self-discipline involves taking responsibility for yourself and for the manner in which you think. As Epictetus put it: 'Men are disturbed not by things which happen, but their opinions of things which happen'. If the way you choose to think causes you to endure a distressful life, it seems reasonable to change the way you think. Transforming addictions into preferences is one way of doing so, but there are many others.

It is a question of the attitude you choose to adopt. Life may be seen as a series of events. You can take an event and expand it out of all proportion to its importance. Should the event be a negative one, and it often is, you inflict much unnecessary distress upon yourself. Perhaps you have mishandled an important business deal and continue to torment yourself with thoughts of 'what I should have done'. Though it is valuable to learn from past mistakes, it is definitely not valuable to expand the event so that it continues to occupy space in your present. Surely the phrase: 'If only I hadn't...' is one of the most damaging in the English language.

In fact, the best way of treating events which occasion this phrase is to shrink them. If an event can be expanded to occupy present and future space, it can also be contracted so it remains in the past. After all, things are worth what we make them worth. No

one makes us bedevil ourselves with negative thoughts of past events.

However, expanding a positive event such as the conclusion of a successful business deal, is likely to be very helpful. Thinking about success rather than about failure is the essence of self-motivation, a point to be elaborated a little later in this article.

So choice of the attitude most likely to help us function effectively is the essence of self-discipline. In *The Plus Factor*, I have pointed out how this concept might be applied to criticism. No one likes to be criticised. In fact, the anger that indicates an addiction is usually occasioned when someone dares to suggest we are less than perfect. We defend ourselves heatedly, attacking our critic vehemently. Yet, there is another more effective way of handling this situation.

Instead of behaving like a machine and instinctively fighting back, exercise your judgement as a human being. You may choose to get angry, or you may prefer to act in the following way. Accept that there may be some element of truth in the criticism and that the person involved may be attempting to help you. To find out if this is the case, respond to the criticism by saying: 'You might be right about that. Is there anything else you can suggest that could be improved?' If the critic is genuinely interested in improving things, he or she will probably accept your invitation, providing information likely to help you in some way or another. However, should the critic only be interested in making you feel bad, he or she won't know what to do next. You haven't been upset by the criticism as he or she hoped. In fact, by inviting further criticism, you've turned the tables beautifully. With this approach, you can't lose. Either you get valuable information, or you get rid of someone trying to make life difficult for you.

To make the approach work you need to listen. That, too, requires self-discipline. Most of us find it difficult to listen because we believe that what we have to say is more important than what other people have to say. Sometimes we may be right, but not as often as we think we are. As Epictetus has pointed out, we have been given two ears but only one mouth so that we may listen at least twice as much as we speak.

Observe the people who are really influential at meetings and conferences. Most of them weigh their words with care. They will usually wait, listening to what others have to say, perhaps asking the occasional question, then quietly, simply, and forcefully they will put their own viewpoint. This approach works much better than that of the constant talker who, even when he or she does come up with

a good idea is ignored because the quality material is lost in the morass of verbal garbage. Too many of us suffer from 'verbal diarrhoea', a complaint that is most counter productive if we are interested in exerting our influence over other people.

Curbing our loquaciousness takes effort. So does doing something unpleasant. When faced with such a task our normal reaction is to put it off for as long as possible. Unfortunately, though we may keep pushing it aside, thoughts about it keep returning. We know it must be done and the longer we put it off the more heavily it weights upon us, interfering with our ongoing activities.

Actually, postponing the unpleasant things we have to do is a prime source of distress in our lives, and, once again, it is self-inflicted. When we discipline ourselves to do the unpleasant task as our first activity of the day, getting it out of the way quickly, we remove this distress. Carrying the process a stage further we can then reward ourselves by doing something pleasant which we enjoy. So we transform negative feelings into positive feelings.

Taking immediate action in this way certainly makes life easier, for we are doing things in the present instead of pushing them into the future. This is the basic principle of successful living. Exist in the 'now'. Enjoy what is happening at this moment rather than allowing yourself to become preoccupied with the past or the future. By all means enjoy the past and look forward to the future, but don't allow such thinking to blind you to the opportunities of the 'here and now'.

The present is all we have. The past is gone. The future has not yet arrived. In fact, it has been commented that the nicest thing about the future is that it only comes one day at a time. When we wake in the morning we are given the gift of a new day, a fresh unspoilt life. It stretches ahead of us, allowing us, within quite considerable limits, to fashion it in the way we desire.

It takes self-discipline to live in this way. Constantly we have to drag our minds away from the backward looking phrase, 'If only I hadn't..', and the forward portent of disaster, 'What would happen if...' Yet most of the things about which we worry never actually happen, so, by living one day at a time, we remove a lot of distress and pressure from our lives. Each night leave behind today's problems and mentally visualize a successful new day tomorrow.

Self Motivation

This process of visualization lies at the head of the self-motivational process. In my book *The Fantasy Factor* I placed great stress on the power of

our imagination to shape and reshape our lives. Unfortunately, all too often, we imagine what we fear, anticipating problems, disasters and difficulties. Yet by taking more control, we can direct our imaginings towards the things which we desire; the positives rather than the negatives.

Many of the procedures I detail in the above book revolve around two elements. The first of these is 'dumping rubbish'. All of us carry around a load of 'rubbish' such as fear, self-doubt, worry, guilt and resentment. Much of this load dates from our childhoods, yet we still keep it alive to interfere with our lives. However, should we so desire, we can remove it through the exercise of our imagination.

Bob, an insurance salesman, imagines himself going through a doorway in his own mind. He closes the door behind him, shutting out the rest of the world, and finds himself in a beautiful room with an open fire-place. Near the fire-place is a small table on which lie some accounts. These have been paid and need no longer to be kept.

The heading of the accounts reflect those things Bob wishes to remove from his mind. One might be labelled 'Fear of rejection'. Bob sees himself writing 'Paid in Full' across the account, signing it, putting it on the fire, and watching it disappear in smoke up the chimney. In this way he lets unwanted 'rubbish' go out of his mind and out of his life. Often, doing this only once is sufficient to remove whatever is bothering him. On other occasions he may have to repeat the process a number of times.

The actual imaginative method used is immaterial. What is important is that you use your mind to remove obstacles interfering with our effectiveness. In other words, we all need to play the 'Inner Game' more successfully.

Tim Gallwey coined this term in his book *The Inner Game of Tennis*. He suggests that, in tennis, we play two games. One involves the score on the board, the trophy, the congratulations. This is the Outer Game. The other is the struggle against the obstacles we put up in our own minds, the obstacles which prevent us from being as successful as we are capable of being. This struggle Gallwey calls the Inner Game.

It is easy to apply this concept to life in general. The salary we receive, the promotions, the favourable publicity and the commendations represent the Outer Game. The way we handle our fears, doubts, anxieties, guilts, and other negative elements is our Inner Game. By overcoming these obstacles in our minds, by removing the limitations we place on ourselves, we can win this game and become the people we have the potential to be.

One way of doing this is to deliberately set up life's unpleasant events as exercises. When we think of difficult situations as challenges, as opportunities for growth, we change our whole attitude towards them. Instead of groaning about the distasteful task we have to do, we approach it with an energy and enthusiasm generated by our self-motivation. After we complete it, we can then meditate on our behaviour with a sense of satisfaction.

This reviewing of past actions, or 'remaking of the day', is a most effective way of increasing self-motivation. After you arrive home from work, before immersing yourself in the home environment, try to set aside about 10 minutes of private time. Settle yourself comfortably, take a few deep breaths, and, one at a time, go back over the things you've done well during the day. Run each one through in your mind a number of times, congratulating yourself. Feel good about this successful behaviour.

Then, consider the things that have not gone as you would have liked. Take each one, wipe it from your mind, and replay the situation the way you would have liked to have handled it. Do this half a dozen times. Make your day perfect.

You might like to repeat this process, as you drift off to sleep, for by so doing you are further programming your unconscious mind for success. It will also help you sleep well, with pleasant dreams. In the morning, when you awake, continue the positive input by previewing your day. Look ahead to the things you know you will be doing. Imagine each one going well, the way you would like.

Success imagery, which is what is being described above, is probably the most important aspect of self-motivation. Set up positive targets and mentally 'see' yourself achieving them.

Self-Direction

This setting of targets is also the essence of self-direction. Unless we know where we are going, we are likely to mistake activity for accomplishment. Many of us rush about, keeping very busy, but not actually producing much in the way of results. We need to identify what is important to us so we can build into every week, or every day if possible, some activity moving us in the direction of achieving our goals.

One of the quickest ways of identifying our goals is to use the Quick List Technique. This involves writing down the three things you most want at this particular moment. Don't ponder or give much thought to this. Just do it 'off the top of our head'. Put the list away, and repeat the process at the same time during each of the next five weeks. Then

take out your six lists and read them. You will be left with little doubt about what is important to you.

Reading the lists may simply confirm that the goals towards which you are striving and reflect the things you want most. On the other hand, you may find that your goals need revision because they are not motivating you to move in the direction of fulfilling your needs. If you repeat this Quick List Technique every six months you will become aware of how your needs change, and you can then modify your goals to reflect this change.

Doing this will help you become more effective. Effective individuals are the ones who do not let urgent but unimportant tasks prevent them from doing the important, but maybe less urgent, tasks which contribute to their goals. That is where writing lists and setting priorities plays such an important part.

Each day, before leaving work make a list of the things you want to accomplish the next day. Rate these in order of importance. Focus on your number one priority. Clear off your desk and put out of sight everything except material relating to this task. This means that when you come in next morning you know what you will work on. No decision is necessary. True, there will be interruptions and unanticipated demands on your time, but each time you come back to your number one priority until it is completed. Then it is crossed off the list and the number two priority assumes pride of place.

Although this procedure is well known, often it is not followed. That is a basic human problem. We seek more and more knowledge on the assumption that the additional information we gain will improve the way we behave. Yet, unless we apply this knowledge, it is useless. Usually our problem, then, is not a lack of knowledge. Rather it is that we fail to put into practice what we already know. Making lists and setting priorities falls into this category.

So, too, does practising the 80/20 Rule. If, at the end of the week, you look back over your activities, you will probably find that approximately 80% of the value was derived from about 20% of the things you did. Similarly, on any one project, most of the value will have flowed from the first 20% of effort you exerted. Many of us know this to be the case, yet we do not keep a log of how we have spent our time during the week. Such a log lets us know which of our activities are the most productive and which are merely time consuming. It shows us where to concentrate our efforts in order to maximise our efficiency. A time log is a great idea. We just need to muster the effort to put the idea into practice.

Self-direction, then, is essentially a matter of setting goals and effective time planning, whereas

self-motivation is the focussing of the imagination upon the successful attainment of these goals. Self-discipline means taking responsibility for controlling thought and attitude while self-awareness involves cultivating that sense of detachment which enables us to see our behaviour more objectively. Each element is interrelated with the others. Together they form the essence of successful living and effective business practice.

References

- Gallwey, W. T. - *The Inner Game of Tennis*, New York, Random House, 1974
 Stanton, H. E. - *The Plus Factor: A Guide to Positive Living*, Sydney: Fontana/Collins, 1979
 Stanton, H. E. - *The Stress Factor: A Guide To More Relaxed Living*, Sydney, Fontana/Collins, 1973
 Stanton, H. E. - *The Fantasy Factor: Using The Imagination To Solve Everyday Problems*, Sydney, Fontana/Collins, 1985.

A TIME TO REFLECT

M Hupalo

At a recent late night supper with several fellow Records Managers (and non-combatants), my dinner partner leaned over and whispered in my ear 'Are all Records Managers this insane or are they masochistic?'. I smiled and then replied that, 'Partial madness and/or masochism was the cornerstone of being a good Records Manager'.

By that period of the evening when coffee and liquors are served and the conversation turned to more mundane subjects - the State of the Nation, the Middle East Crisis, the weekend football - I reflected on the earlier question and thought of the first day that I entered the magical, mystical world of records management in local government.

As the candlelight flickered, my mind travelled back to 1978. I was a young impressionable man, who had recently been cast adrift from his academical security blanket. I was an ex-college student. Released upon an unsuspecting society, I was confident that my knowledge and skills were going to blaze new trails in the commercial world.

By the end of the third month of unemployment, I was prepared to accept certain truths, as well as any job that paid. Similar to others I met later in my career I, too, accidentally fell into the delusory world of local government.

After totally convincing my two interviewers that, not only was I the right man for the job, but I

was the ONLY man for the job, they relented. I was given probationary employment to commence on the 1st April, 1978, at 8.30 a.m. sharp.

The fateful day arrived on time. The sun was shining, the birds were singing and I was thirty minutes early for my day of discovery and wonderment. I was not dissuaded by finding the front doors of the Municipal headquarters prohibited to the public until 8.30 a.m. (sharp). I circled the outer perimeter and chanced upon a group of dedicated souls, awaiting to enter the Olympian structure via a secret back door. I smiled at their looks of indifference and followed these demigods up and through the bowels of the Municipal monolith.

The reception area was my only point of reference so I bid a fond farewell to my guide (who replied in a strange form of sign language) and stepped out and on to the semi dark arena known as the public reception lobby. As the receptionist had yet to arrive, I proceeded to select a suitable issue of the only magazines available - Municipal Waste Disposal Quarterly - and waited. The only light was provided by the illumination given to twenty-seven photographs of mayoral forefathers.

Two thirds of the way through a fascinating article on sullage recycling, I was informed by the now present receptionist, that I had been summoned to the Deputy Town Clerk's office. After receiving locality instructions, I knocked and entered the room. A quietly spoken man apologised for my having to wait and for forgetting my name; but he was certain that I had a bright future, the work was most rewarding, and that as a Health and Building Surveyor, my position was central to the operation of Council.

Regardless of my repeated attempts to correct his error, he moved forward, shook my hands as he informed me his door was always open to all the staff; and then proceeded to evict me out of his office.

Returning to the reception area, I explained to the young girl behind the glass enclosure that I was the new employee for the Central Records Section. I am not certain whether it was my new after-shave (\$2.99 per bottle at Franklins), my extra short hair cut or simply the words 'Records Section' that caused the change. She turned slightly pale, offered her sympathy and told me to have a seat (I would have preferred a cup of coffee instead).

After several more minutes of intimidation by the mayoral masterpieces, and the occasional looks of sadness by the receptionist, the mood was broken by the gentle calling of my name - sounded like a car exhaust exploding on a rainy night.

I immediately turned and recognised the

second interviewer. He was also the Records Manager (that instant association of information convinced me that I had a future in records management). He seemed taller than when I saw him sitting down, and far more agile. He reached me within three bounds, clamping his hand on mine. This action reminded me of shopper at an end of year David Jones Store sale. It was only later that I learnt the Records Manager was an ex-military police officer. His warm words of greeting were conveyed as we made a somewhat hasty journey to Central Records.

We passed the open office layout landlocked by the bank of outer-inner offices. Through a maze of 'temporary office expansion', and around the coffee machine, we went. Down the corridor, a right turn through the lunchroom, then past the men's toilets and the Public Relations Office. A sharp dog-leg left past the women's rest room and then beyond the mayoral reception area, finally delivered us to a corner area where the half-fallen sign, indicated the presence of the Central Records Section.

The Records Manager stopped short of the imposing door, with an adjoining half-door hatch-counter on the right. He looked around, first left, then right. Satisfied we were unobserved, he tapped the identification code at the base of the door with his left foot. The door sprang open and I was gently yet firmly pushed through and into the Central Records Section.

Here I was, the Records Manager stated, in the heart of the Beast. Oh Boy. Did this beast need a transplant. On the left side of the room were five finger rows of compactus units in various stages of use (and need of repair). Down the middle of the room were sixteen four drawer filing cabinets, back to back. (A lovely creeping ivy looked misplaced on top of the cabinets). Underneath the counter and extending to the right wall was an exceptional desk that appeared to be used for any and all purposes. Four main working desks of various distinct vintages were inserted into whatever available space was permissible on the right side of the room and back to the wall of windows. Wall space was intermittently broken with the essential office artifacts - football posters and match days, old postcards from staff, photocopies of non-usable information, proverbial office witticisms.

I was introduced to my four fellow workers before being positioned in front of an excessively large mountain of loose papers, files, publications and assorted indeterminable objects. The Records Manager happily informed me that, under the slight backlog of work, was my desk. He also added that it was my duty to clear, file and tidy the area, before I could leave to go home. I figured I should achieve that goal in about three weeks.

As I stared at the 'slight backlog' the second in charge side-stepped her way across, around and over the room towards me. She suggested that I should be both shown around and introduced to the other staff. It was further suggested that I should be delivered to the Paymaster to complete the necessary slavery forms. The Records Manager nodded his head (which we took for yes, and not the action of shaking ash from the cigarette glued to the left corner of the mouth) and we left the room quickly.

Some ninety minutes and one hundred and twenty seven unremembered names later, I was re-deposited in front of my mound of municipal administrative memorabilia. The Records Manager came across, pulled up a stool and began to explain the intrinsic workings of records management to me. His ability to read, sort papers, drink coffee, chain smoke and clarify points was nothing short of awe-inspiring. He discussed conceptual theories of colour coding, alpha classification, numeric sequential development, integrated geographical hierarchy systems, lexicon structure, technical dialogue alternatives and the importance of team work.

By the end of the day, the mound was a 'slight backlog' and my mind was considering renting its space and moving elsewhere. As I packed-up, I felt that in time I would understand the importance of records and information management; and perhaps this Records Manager was the right teacher for the tasks.

As the Records Manager headed for the door, he turned and said, not bad for your first day, college boy. But remember, the principles of good records management can be easily understood, once you reduce the variables to KISS, and tomorrow I will personally demonstrate KISS to your'. With that he smiled and left the room, while I slowly sank into the 1939 straight back wooden typist chair.

In this, our Bicentennial year, we should stop for a few minutes and reflect. In the ten years or so since I first stumbled into records management, many changes have occurred, many improvements have been achieved. We as the 2nd, 3rd, 4th generation of records managers should consider the pioneers of our profession for achieving what they did, with what they had.

What would they have done with the availability of computerisation, optic-disc technology, bar-coding, desk-top publishing and laser printers. Would we have the awareness of educational courses, national and international conferences and much more, without the efforts of these determined practitioners of an undefined art. We have come a long way with a challenging future ahead, and what will the next generation think of our efforts and methods?

For the finest quality Microfilm. Services and Supplies around Australia, AGFA recommend:

**These five
Bureau Use:**

AGFA 
COPEX
MICROFILM

Perth:
Microforms For Microfilm
469 Hay Street
East Perth
Ph: (09) 325 7888

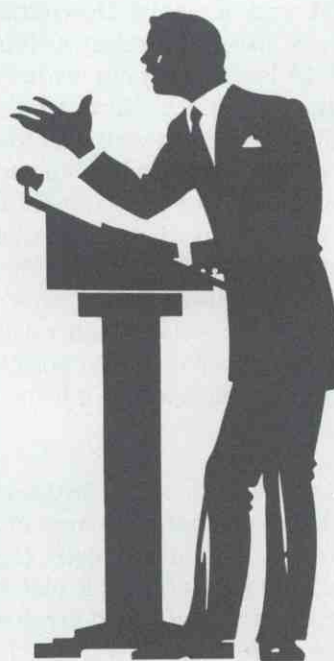
Adelaide
Adelaide Micrographics
294 South Road
Hilton
Ph: (08) 352 4028

Brisbane:
Microfilm Services
96 Warren Street
Fortitude Valley
Ph: (07) 839 1922

Sydney:
M & V Microfilm
Services Pty. Ltd.
2/14 Salisbury Road
Hornsby
Ph: (02) 477 7111

Melbourne:
Australian Microfilm
Services
230 Bank Street
South Melbourne
Ph: (03) 690 6800

AGFA 



A LOCAL GOVERNMENT THESAURUS

Lindy Mackey
Kathy Holland

In the February issue of the *Informaa* several articles proposed the use of a thesaurus to control vocabulary within the classification system. Writers advocated the use of keywords to provide an efficient and effective method when classifying documents and retrieving information.

Glenorchy City Council recently reviewed their current records management practices and decided that a keyword classification system was the most appropriate method. Previously the records system at Glenorchy had previously been classified into property files and subject files. The problems encountered with this system were:

- non specific file titling of subject files
- archiving of property files
- decimal numbering system

(i) Non Specific File Titles-

Subject files were created for each area but linkages were not established, consequently there was a large degree of duplication. New subject files were created, as file titles were unclear. This led to retrieval problems. Because of general file titling large numbers of volumes were created and vital pieces of information were hard to retrieve within a general file. In the previous filing system a file titled 'Social Welfare' contained information on grants, community groups, requests for assistance, publications, staffing etc. This file has subsequently been reclassified by the thesaurus into 30 specific subject files e.g. PUBLICATIONS - DIRECTORIES; HOUSING - DISABLED; COMMUNITY SERVICES PLANNING - HEALTH; EMPLOYMENT - INTERVIEWS - SOCIAL WORKERS; ORGANISATIONS - YOUTH; COMMITTEES - YOUNG PEOPLE; ACCOUNTING - GRANTS.

(ii) Archiving Property Files-

Local government functions are tied to property management within their own Municipalities. The property can either be commercial, residential or government owned; therefore a property based system is an appropriate system for local government records. However problems can occur. In creating one file for each property on which all information relating to this property is placed there can be problems in retrieving specific complaints, licencing, building applications, development

applications, septic tank applications etc. This creates problems when archiving property files as large amounts of information that could be designated for short-term disposal either have to be permanently kept on that file or culled (a time-consuming process).

(iii) Decimal Numbering System

The previous numbering system had been divided by decimal numbering. Problems encountered with this method included inability to add new file titles into crowded areas and artificial divisions of files that contained information spanning several discrete information areas. It was decided that sequential numbering was the most appropriate system. As files were created they were numbered and placed on the shelves. Retrieval was made easy by using the computer to locate them.

Research was undertaken both in Australia and overseas to determine whether a local government thesaurus existed that would be suitable for Australian conditions. The only suitable system appeared to be the GADM Thesaurus produced by the Records Management Office of New South Wales. This necessitated the writing of a matching component for local government. Glenorchy City Council made the decision to undertake the project and negotiated with the Records Management Office to jointly market a merged thesaurus for Local Government in Australia.

Two officers, one a librarian, were given the task of writing the local Government component. Over a period of nine months an intensive programme of research interviews and writing took place. This involved interviews with all Council staff to establish the scope of their positions, a clear identification of Councils role and responsibilities and the actual writing process. After the document was written there was a further period of review with Council staff. In order to ensure the thesaurus would meet the needs of other councils there was a review of a range of documents including Acts of Parliament, By laws, Annual Reports etc.

In creating the thesaurus it was determined that the property files should be retained but controlled by keyword. Hence the term Property is defined within the LOGOV Thesaurus and this determined what may be placed on that file. This is shown in the thesaurus as follows:

Properties

Buildings and land allotments situated within the municipality, and the physical structures upon that land, owned by persons or bodies other than Council. Use this keyword for applications to build, and all correspondence and plans relating to the

construction of, or alterations to physical structures such as houses including underground foundations, landscaping items such as trees, sheds, garages, outhouses, stables, workshops, factories, retail outlets, shops, places of public entertainment, signs, retaining walls, and any other fixed physical structures on land within the municipality other than that owned by Council, over which Council has statutory authority under the Local Government Act.

This keyword also includes all correspondence relating to the purchase or sale of land allotments.

Create one file for each property. Include in the file title the property number allocated for filing purposes and the address of the property, eg PROPERTIES - 106966 - 15 McGOUGH STREET, GLENORCHY.

Use PREMISES - For correspondence relating to the physical structures, alterations to those structures etc on properties owned by Council.

Create one file for each premise. Include in the file title the property number allocated for filing purposes and the address of the premises, eg PREMISES - 238051 - 10 Jackson Street, Glenorchy.

For correspondence relating to underground reticulation networks on properties, eg water supply, sewers, stormwater, septic tanks create a separate file for each property, under, PROPERTIES - RETICULATION - Use PREMISES - RETICULATION for reticulation on Council - owned properties.

Place correspondence relating to Council's inspection and licencing of properties, eg Food, Premises, Public Entertainment, Places, stables, etc under the subject and related descriptors, eg HEALTH SERVICES - LICENCES - FOOD PREMISES. Add address if appropriate.

- RD (Related Descriptor)
- Appeals
 - Approvals
 - Building Applications
 - Certificates of Compliance
 - Certificates of Occupancy
 - Closure Orders
 - Fences
 - Maintenance
 - Objections
 - Purchases
 - Rates Certificates
 - Section 471C Certificates
- RK (Related Keyword)
- Health Services
 - Premises
 - Reticulation
 - Signs

Therefore there may be a series of property files for the one property where appropriate, reflecting the different functions but retaining the address as the major identifier (eg) 64 Smith Street; 64 Smith Street - Reticulation. As the property file is rigorously defined within the thesaurus this means that information that previously may have been placed on property files now can be placed on subject files. The address may still be retained if required (eg) licences for food premises used to be placed on property files and now are allocated the keyword HEALTH SERVICES. This keyword is defined in the thesaurus as follows:

Health Services

The registration and licensing, within the constraints of the Local Government Act, Public Health Act and the Corporation By-laws, of activities within the Municipality such as food processing, preparation and vending, the keeping of animals, offensive trades, caravans, hawkers, etc. and the premises related to those activities where applicable. Also includes correspondence arising from the random quality surveys carried out by Council on foods such as meat etc.

File correspondence under HEALTH SERVICES - LICENSES followed if required, by the type of activity, premises or animal being licenced, eg HEALTH SERVICES - LICENCES - FOOD PREMISES - SHOP 1 NORTHGATE; HEALTH SERVICES - LICENCES - DOGS.

For food quality surveys, eg sampling and analysis use HEALTH - SERVICES - SURVEYS followed by type of food survey, if required. This keyword also includes regular immunisation programs organised by Council as a health service to the community, and the notifying of relevant authorities of notifiable diseases.

File correspondence under HEALTH SERVICES - IMMUNISATIONS. Does not include correspondence relating to the monitoring of pollution levels of the land, water and atmosphere, eg water sampling, ordering abatements of noises, air, waste pollution etc, or the organisation of waste collection and disposal, which should be filed under ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH. See ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH.

For all correspondence relating to the installation of septic tanks, eg approvals, etc, see PROPERTIES - RETICULATION.

- FT (Forbidden Terms)
- Vaccinations
- RD (Related Descriptor)
- Buskers
 - Caravans
 - Dogs
 - Food Premises

Food Vendors
Hawkers
Immunisations
Kennels
Licenses
Notices
Notifiable Diseases
Offensive Trades
Places of Assembly
Pub Ent. Places
Registrations
Skin Penetration
Stables
Surveys

Thus the file now created is HEALTH SERVICES - 64 SMITH STREET - LICENCES. This assists with the sentencing of files for disposal as areas of information are discreetly filed.

Council functions were divided into areas such as Administration, Finance, Health Services, Planning Services, Community Services and Engineering Services. Many of these areas have common functions therefore keywords needed to be created to cover these functions as well as more specific ones. (eg) BY LAWS which affect all areas; SUBDIVISIONS which cover the Planning and Engineering areas. There are 20 keywords covering local government areas and an estimated 300 descriptors. The usage of forbidden terms acts as a leader into the correct terminology making the document easy to use in titling the files and classifying information.

Thesaurus Implementation

Implementation of the Thesaurus was a major project. It needed to be done thoroughly and in conjunction with the day to day running of Records.

Whilst the local government component of the thesaurus was at the Records Management Office under review, each file which could be classified by the GADM was pulled out by the old system and perused. A sensible cut off point for each file was established, that being when the information was still valid or current, each piece of information was then reclassified to a file title by the GADM. Files were then created with those titles. The files were then entered on the computer system detailing cross references to previous file numbers.

With the thesaurus implementation we changed from a decimal file numbering system to straight sequential numbering. This enabled us to make up files in conjunction with the reconstitution of old files. We found sequential numbering to be much more efficient as it places no restrictions on when files are created or how many files are created. The decimal system had created confusion as to which subject heading should be used for new files. With the thesaurus having much tighter control over

file titling, exact file subjects are easily created.

It is important to make sure that all records staff are familiar with the terminology when searching the thesaurus to classify documents and create file titles. This can only be ensured by intensive training sessions.

New information was first classified to a file title. If that file had not already been created by the thesaurus, a check was made for previous correspondence on that subject. It was then removed and the new file created by the thesaurus title.

As files were created and entered on the computer system they were listed manually in number order on a card system. This is a backup in case the computer system goes down at any time. The information remaining on the old system files was then transferred into secondary storage, with a reference to any new files noted on the cover.

After implementation of the LOGOV Thesaurus at the Glenorchy City Council we decided to market it to local government authorities throughout Australia. Enquiries should be directed to the Records Management Office of New South Wales or Glenorchy City Council Records Manager.

RELATIONS IN RECORDS:

A GUIDE TO FAMILY HISTORY SOURCES IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARCHIVES

Reviewed by Rene Mouchet

The recently produced Australian Archives guide to genealogical sources *Relations in Records* provides the first comprehensive national guide to Commonwealth records which contain information of interest to people researching their family history.

The introduction to *Relations in Records* briefly outlines the history and functions of the Australian Archives, provides some basic information on access to Commonwealth records and explains how the Australian Archives Record Control Systems work.

The guide itself, covering records from the late nineteenth to the mid twentieth century, is divided into four main sections covering areas of reader interest: Immigration and Shipping, Defence, Population (which includes Electoral, Aboriginal, ACT,

Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea records) and Commonwealth Government employees. A brief introduction and historical background is provided for each section of the guide.

Each section of the guide is then divided into subsections covering specific areas of interest. For example, the section on Immigration and Shipping contains (amongst others) subsections on passenger lists and passenger cards, passports and related documents, mercantile marine, lighthouses and internees. Some of these subsections provide a State by State analysis of Commonwealth records of value to genealogists. Each main section has accompanying tables listing records by specific types, for example, enlistment records, certificates of discharge and electoral rolls.

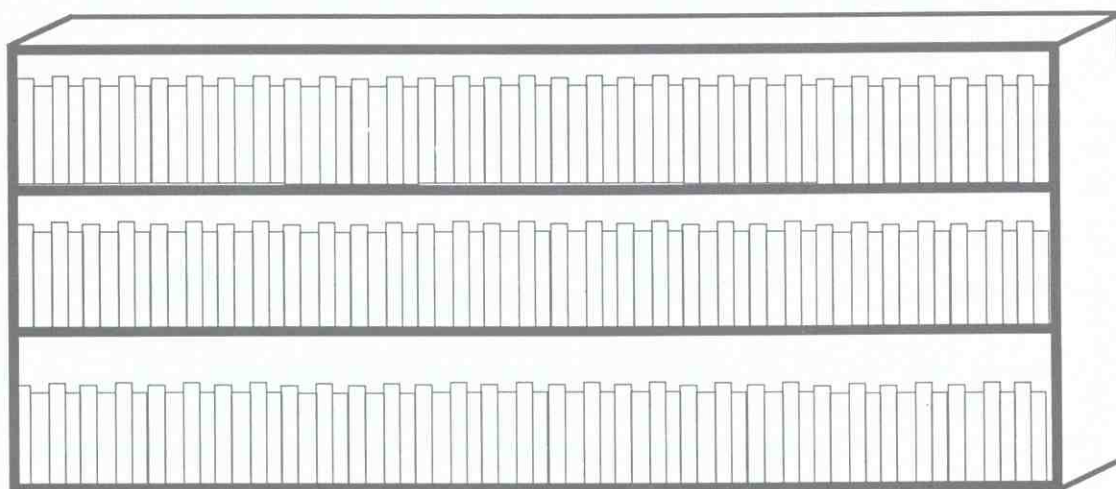
The following examples illustrate the uses to which the guide may be put by readers who believe that Commonwealth records may contain references to family members:

- (a) A genealogist might believe that a Tasmanian ancestor had briefly served as a merchant seaman on a certain ship in the 1920's but lacks written confirmation of this. Referring to the guide, the family researcher will note that the Immigration and Shipping section contains a subsection on Mercantile marine records in which it is explained that details about seamen at the time of their discharge, can be obtained from their releases on termination of service. A detailed table of mercantile marine records in the guide would enable the genealogist to identify the relevant Tasmanian series, CRS P1195, Release on termination of service 1922-72. Information Services staff would then assist the inquirer to apply for access to the records (if they are not already publicly available) and the inquirer would then be able to physically consult the volumes, locate references to the ship concerned and check for the name and termination of service details of the ancestor.
- (b) As another example, a genealogist may be aware that an ancestor once served as a lighthouse keeper on a Tasmanian lightstation. In the guide there is a subsection under Immigration and Shipping covering lighthouse records. The introductory preamble to this subsection notes that logbooks are the most useful type of records for genealogical use, as they name the lightkeepers on duty. The table covering these logbooks lists those covering Tasmanian lighthouse stations. The inquirer can again request access to logbooks (most of which are now cleared for public access) and by methodical research can attempt to locate references to the ancestor who was a lighthouse keeper. The cover of many logbooks contains the names and service times of lightkeepers on a particular lighthouse.
- (c) Finally let us take the example of a genealogist who knows a family member served in the Commonwealth Public Service in the early part of this century and would like to confirm the dates of service, the Departments served in and any promotions the ancestor may have gained. From the section of the guide on Commonwealth government employees the inquirer will note that the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette for the early part of the century contained an index. By asking to see the gazettes for this period the ancestor's name and service details can be traced. Also of value in this area is the Commonwealth Permanent Staff List which lists public servants under departments, giving names, date of birth, date of appointment and salary. It should be noted that the gazettes and lists are both published sources and do not require public access clearance.

The guide is available from the Australian Government Publishing Service and the Australian Archives Regional Offices for \$19.95.



HOW WOULD YOU FIND AN IMPORTANT FOLIO AMONGST THOUSANDS OF OTHERS?



KWOC-IT!

Kwoc-it is an Information Management tool based on industry standard indexing and cataloguing practises. It replaces those manual systems with a fully computerised Corporate Index. Information, once catalogued, is automatically indexed, utilizing the keyword out of context principle. This Index system enables the user to extract information from the system by combining subject keywords using powerful boolean expressions.

Kwoc-it is available on a wide range of systems from micro to mini computers and several operating systems. The price is a pleasant surprise, too! from only \$650*.

** not including sales tax*

For further information about your nearest Kwoc-it supplier ring or write:

Information Management Technology,
Level 3, Lachlan Tower, 17-21 Macquarie St., Parramatta, NSW, 2150.
Ph: (02) 635 5599, Fax: (02) 891 4750

A NSW GOVERNMENT-ORTEX AUSTRALIA
JOINT DEVELOPMENT

THE RECORDS MANAGER : CHANGE AGENT OR VICTIM OF CHANGES

Denis Comber, RMO of NSW

You may find that with the introduction of technology into the department that there is a corresponding increase in the information needs of users.

Certainly, if the implementation of a new system is undertaken properly i.e. training courses, user consultation, thorough planning, etc. that user expectations of the system will in due course become more demanding and sophisticated but not necessarily to the detriment of the day to day activities of the records branch.

What should be aimed for is the elevation of, and more efficient usage of, information resources. Should this not occur, then not only have you wasted a lot of corporate money, but you have also failed to capitalise on the benefits that technology can provide. Furthermore, you must ask yourself why it is that your records are poorly organised so as to defy quick and efficient retrieval.

As a manager of a records system it is your job to ensure that your system is providing the best information service possible. What is out of your control but definitely within your sphere of influence is the way in which users generate information.

By this I mean:

- (a) the quality of letter, report and submission writing;
- (b) the types of information that is placed on files i.e. hand written notes, multiple copies of documents and so on;
- (c) the tendency for individual users to include materials which are not adequately identified e.g. photographs which are not catalogued, unsigned memo's newspaper clippings.

If this practice is evident then it must be eliminated you should also ask yourself that should any records be subpoenaed would they be prejudicial to the organisation and could subsequent legal action follow.

As a manager of the records system you must become involved in eradicating from poor records practices notwithstanding that it is the responsibility of the executive to control this problem.

Presuming that you have successfully introduced your new records system your next tasks should be to:

- Examine how this system can be improved e.g. strengthening of the language control system.
- Ascertain how it can be integrated with other information generating areas.
- Examining newer formats for the control and use of your records e.g. is full text viable, fuller abstracts, optical imagery.

There are certain self-evaluative questions which records managers must ask of themselves.

Do you know enough about your records system to be able to re-define your information needs?

Are you involved in planning and implementing new systems?

Do you meet on a regular basis with other managers of information resources to discuss and plan information strategies for the Department?

What percentage of users within the organisation access your records as opposed to other information areas e.g. library?

What responses are expected and what are the performance expectations of users in respect of each area?

What is the status attached to the managers of each area and is the level of management support equal in each area or are some areas disadvantaged at the expense of others?

What have you done personally to upgrade your knowledge of modern technology and are you advising management of new ideas etc.?

Have you ever undertaken any career path planning either for yourself or for your staff?

Are you aware of any corporate objectives involving information management and have you been invited to commend on or develop some?

There is no easy solution to improving your systems but what should always guide you is the need to ensure that:-

Your system must suit the information needs of your users as well as corporate needs.

Think of the system as a living thing which must be nurtured if it is to survive.

INTEGRATED INFORMATION RESOURCES

Carol Eastley

This article describes the ANMI database, developed at Australian Newsprint Mills Ltd for the management of textual information. ANMI is an information retrieval system designed to manage an organisation's textual information as an integrated resource. It is capable of indexing many kinds of textual information, including both full-text storage and indexing of important documents, and applied indexing of library, records and personal files. The information stored includes correspondence and file records, technical reports, library catalogue, serials accessioning and distribution, scientific reprints, photographic collections and a paper samples collection. The number of records to date is approximately 20,000.

ANM is a medium sized company with several operating sites including a research division and a large technical library. All sites have access to the company's main frame computers, so by developing the database using Information Dimensions Inc BASIS product on our VAX computers, access to the information stored can be obtained from all sites. (Access to confidential information is restricted using a sophisticated security system). Although file stations may be small and quite remote the use of the integrated system results in a centralized record. It also overcomes the greater barriers which would normally separate records, library and personal files, while reducing the need for these areas to duplicate work. This is achieved without complicated administrative arrangements as each station retains responsibility for their own work.

Data Entry

The input procedure is straight forward and can be done by relatively untrained people. The screens consist of a series of boxes and prompts representing database fields. A keypad editor allows the screens to perform similar functions to a word processor such as insert, replace, delete, and scroll. Many fields are validated by the screens during entry using an on-line interactive thesaurus. This removes the onus on the user to check every entry before input, with the machine doing the checking and picking up mistakes such as typing errors. It also permits the use of abbreviations during entry, and switches the abbreviation to the preferred term. In this way synonymous terms such as ANM, ANM LTD etc, are switched to the correct entry of Australian Newsprint Mills Ltd. Other fields such as entry date, user ID, format and owner of the record are often filed automatically, while copying and 'globals' permit re-use of typed information. There is also a free-text field which can be used for notes, descriptions or even the entire text of a letter.

Data input for full-text documents is a simple procedure with the text being transferred directly from a word processor. Each word of the text is indexed, providing a rapid and thorough indexing of important documents such as research reports.

In the records area there are screens for indexing and maintaining files as well as screens for indexing of individual letters etc. Indexing of individual letters incorporates the idea of a mail book with filing details. Only one record needs to be made on receipt and is added to as the item is circulated and then filed. By recording where an item is filed it doesn't matter which file or which library shelf or classification is used, as it can always be found and if that location proves inconvenient, then it can be changed easily. Choosing where to file an item is assisted by subject searching of the files. So a lot of pressure is removed at the time of filing thus speeding up that bottleneck. Because the filecodes are thesaurus controlled it is not possible to record an item as being on a non-existent file.

Retrieval and Menus

Extensive and sophisticated indexing makes retrieval a simple process. Inquirers can perform their own searches with the aid of menus and prompts while advanced users can make full use of a sophisticated command language and utilities.

Keyword indexing which covers such things as corporate names, subjects and geographic locations uses the thesaurus during retrieval to allow searching with abbreviations and synonyms and automatic retrieval of narrower terms. For example, searches for Tasmania will also find references to Hobart. The keywords along with free and full text are all 'mapped' to the simple concept of 'subject'. So an inquirer can find all these different things by asking for the subject.

Correspondence can be found whether to or from a person or company, or by date. All the correspondence on a particular subject may be found, or even a wider list covering books, correspondence, files and photos on a certain subject. A list of correspondence on a file can be displayed and files due for archiving can be identified.

Utilities

The menus also give access to a range of pre-written utilities, many of which are labour-saving devices for the benefit of the operator.

File labels are produced using the data which has been entered for file descriptions, so there are no translation errors and the information is typed once only.

Resubmits for files, correspondence, books etc. for the current day can be found from a menu option, as well as borrowers of files and books and overdues. Correspondence requiring replies can be flagged and replies to correspondence cross referenced.

A large range of lists and reports are available.

Address labels can be produced using the information entered for suppliers and from business cards.

Circulation slips and copyright forms are automatically produced for library items.

Library orders are automatically produced, using the same information as is later used for cataloguing and indexing, thus removing the need for extra typing.

Conclusion

The main benefits of the system as I see them, are that firstly a wide range of resources are indexed together, so that an inquirer doesn't first have to address that age old question of where to start, i.e. who will have the thing they are looking for? Secondly, the design of the system allows the information to be retained in its logical working place, but to be available to the rest of the company. This is partly because the high level of computer checking and data validation means that data entry does not need to be centralized but can occur from the working place as well. And finally, the benefits to the inquirer are paralleled by the labour saving benefits to the data entry personnel.

References

Bonham J.S., Auchincloss-Marriott W.
'Information management in a scientific environment', *Chemistry in Australia*, Dec 1985 p. 435.

Auchincloss, W, *ANMI user manual*, Australian Newsprint Mills, 1986.

TRIM

the COMPLETE Records Management System

TRIM is an advanced File and Folio Management system that has been installed at over 50 sites throughout Australia. Some of the functions provided by TRIM are :

Flexible automatic or manual file numbering systems
Automatic new-part file creation
On-line keyword thesaurus
Supervisor quality assurance checking
Bar code tracking and label production
Local and Remote Sub-Registries
Archiving procedures with on-line archive schedules
Transaction logging and recovery
Name and Address file
Action tracking for folios and correspondence
Free-text precis and abstracts
Boolean Searching (AND,OR,NOT)
Title and subject word indexing
Integrated staff and location system
Folio and file amalgamation
Action cover sheets and file table of contents
Standard procedure development for folio types

For further information contact

TOWER COMPUTING SERVICES

Phone : (062) 824655 BH (062) 816053 AH Fax : (062) 815082

Unit 1, SEETEC House, 10 Gells Court, Deakin ACT 2600
 Postal Address : 14 Fuller Street, Deakin, ACT, Australia

RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Ray Holswich

Since 1981 changes in attitude towards records management practices in the Northern Territory Government have been observed. The changes however have affected systems rather than the overall ramifications of records management; 'management' being the key word.

The majority of Northern Territory government departments/authorities have elected to automate their records systems by designing data bases to meet their operational needs and using in-house systems, or by using the government main-frame application ATMS/STAIRS. The smaller departments/authorities have remained on manual information retrieval systems. The Northern Territory government has recognised the need for a more sophisticated and co-ordinated records management/text retrieval system and the government bureau NCOM has evaluated the needs and/or requirements of the public sector and have reached the contract advertising and evaluation stage.

Those departments/authorities who have professional records managers are fortunate because information relating to changes in records management practices and techniques is being released on a regular basis. Those departments/authorities who are not so fortunate are starved of information and direction. In many instances the roles of the records manager and the officer-in-charge positions are being confused, particularly when it is generally accepted that the roles are entirely different.

Inadequate senior management philosophies and attitudes towards records management are not unique to other Australian States, the Territory also suffers. Management require information at short notice regardless of the method used. In many instances the management of their corporate information systems are of no real concern, nor are the traumas experienced by records staff when they are unable to retrieve information when it is requested.

Commonwealth agencies in the Northern Territory, apart from those that operate exclusively in the Territory (eg the Northern and Central Land Councils and the Aboriginal Land Commissioner) are in the main regional offices that are small in comparison with their other state offices. Records management has been given a low priority and resourced accordingly, and has been characterised by a lack of management commitment. The records management has been neglected and records sections maintain a very basic level of service. The 'old' problem of records sections having difficulty retain-

ing quality staff in both the NTPS and CPS still exists and has been exacerbated in Darwin by the itinerant nature of the population.

Probably because of this combination of small organisations, lack of commitment and lack of resources, Commonwealth agencies have usually remained on manual record keeping systems. Only recently have some of the larger agencies adopted automated systems. These have been developed on an agency-by-agency basis and have been implemented in the agencies throughout Australia.

One of the many changes that are being implemented in Commonwealth agencies is the system of budgeting, managing and reporting by individual programs. This has led to a trend towards decentralization within agencies, and there are instances of operational areas beginning to maintain their own record-keeping systems. From the point of view of the effective records management practice this is of concern, and it is hoped that the trend will be reversed before there are any long-term deleterious effects.

The Commonwealth is experiencing a period of great and rapid change. The following developments are occurring which are likely to have an influence on records management practices:

- a period of significant restriction on staffing and financial expenditure levels is being experienced.
- the abolition of the Public Service Board and the general devolution of functions previously centrally administered in the Service to individual agencies has added to their workloads.
- charging for servicing is being introduced, with some agencies being placed completely on a commercial footing and being expected to compete with their private enterprise counterparts.

In an exercise known as the Office Structure Integration, agencies are required to re-structure their organisations, re-design jobs and multi-skill staff. One of the aims of this is to maximise the effectiveness of staffing resources (the benefits of this may be minimal in small regions which have been forced to adopt these measures previously for basic survival). The net effect of these initiatives on records management in Commonwealth agencies in the Northern Territory is difficult to predict. While staff are spread increasingly thinly across agencies functional responsibilities, especially in a small region like the Northern Territory, there is increasing pressure on regional managers to do 'more with less'. The need to maximise the efficiency of their operations may lead to a new appreciation of the value of effective and efficient records management practices and a new management commitment to it. The

Office Structure Integration exercise may provide the opportunity for an evaluation of the situation in each agency and the appropriate re-allocation of resources where needed. On the other hand, given the constraints that now exist, this may be unrealistic as agencies struggle to operate in a truly competitive and cost effective manner.

The realization that problems do exist is becoming more prevalent each day and further more these problems are being discussed more openly by Northern Territory Branch members. Quite often the discussions become 'think tank' situations and, what is even more interesting, it is being acknowledged that the great majority of the problems are management orientated.

Both archival authorities in the Territory (Northern Territory Archives Service and the Australian Archives) are continually faced with demands

for training, but, because of their high level of commitment to many other records management needs and the lack of staff resources, they are unable to adequately meet these demands. Demands for training are great because of the high turnover of staff in the records sections of both arms of government in the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory Branch of the Records Management Association of Australia supports the introduction of accredited education courses, and hopefully current discussions will lead to the introduction of records management education courses by 1990.

As indicated in this article the Northern Territory continues to experience pretty lean times as records management is concerned, and it will, in all probability, remain that way until an acceptable level of professionalism is adopted by records personnel and management alike.

NEWS

NEWS FROM THE SOUTHERN OUTPOST - TASMANIA

John Behrens
Jackie Elliot



Since our formation eighteen months ago our membership has grown to 68 which shows that there is a strong desire in this State for education in the managing of information. We have been fortunate in having a dedicated and hard-working Branch Council who have successfully addressed this need.

The response to our Education and Training Committee's activities has been overwhelming and the thirst for knowledge is manifested by this strong support.

Our efforts in answering the calls for improved information management techniques have been helped by the dedicated efforts of the Records Management Office of New South Wales, the Australian Archives and our own Education and Training Committee.

This has been greatly appreciated by Council and in particular the course participants.

The production of this our first *Informaa*

publication has been most rewarding and we are looking forward to continued involvement within our profession.

Indexing and Classification Workshop

The Council recently conducted a three day Indexing and Classification Workshop attended by thirty-one participants.

The Course Co-ordinators were Susan Wright and Denis Comber of the Records Management Office of New South Wales and sessions included the following:

- Analysis of Subject Heading and Thesaurus Structures
- Keyword Classification Principles Structures etc.
- Source Data Arrangements and Storage media
- Data Captive and Flow
- Search and Control Features of Available Software
- Participant Hands On Experience of Records Management Software and Group Projects

One of the features of the course was the active participation and involvement of all participants. Ideas were exchanged and many positive recommendations on controlling on information systems were discussed.

NEWS

NOTES FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Margaret Medcalf

Membership currently stands at 187 of whom 21 are Associates and one is a Member. Monthly Branch Council meetings and monthly general meetings continue to be held. In the main these are scheduled from 12.30 to 2 pm but an occasional late afternoon general meeting is held to cater for those who are unable to attend at lunch time. An average attendance of 20 - 30 members and

guests is registered for general meetings. The Program Committee has provided an interesting selection of speakers. The Membership Promotion Committee has been active in its endeavours to get more members.

The Education Committee has been promoting the Certificate in Records Management Course at TAFE which was commenced this year. The Membership Committee has drafted amendments to the Articles of Association, mainly to give guidance in the standardisation of criteria for promotion from Affiliate to Associate status. This will be an agenda item for Federal Council. The Conference Committee has also been very busy with plans for the 1989 Perth Conference.

INTERNATIONAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Graeme Dudley, Executive Vice President IRMC

The Records Management Association of Australia, through its delegate Mrs Helen Francis, has continued to influence the direction of the International Records Management Council, this direction being to expand the global awareness of the Records Management Association of Australia through its affiliation with the IRMC.

Mrs Francis has represented the RMAA in the Phillipines at the 1st International Records Management Congress and also the 32nd Association of Records Managers and Administrators Annual Conference in Anaheim, CA in October 1987. At IRMC board meetings Helen has represented the RMAA interests as directed by the Federal Council.

Mr. Peter Smith, the current President of the Records Management Association of Australia has held the position of Area Vice President for Australia and Oceania. Although this position on the IRMC Board has no direct link with the RMAA Peter has assisted in directing the International Records Management community's awareness of the Records Management of Australia and the work that is being achieved, especially in the area of education and the need for national associations to be formed in the Pacific region which will participate in the global transfer of records management principles.

I am proud to announce that Peter has been nominated for the position of President of the International Records Management Council for the next two years, and as President elect he will be able to support the efforts of the Western Australian Branch in their endeavours to sponsor the 2nd International Records Management Congress in association with the 6th National Records Management Conference to

be held in Perth, Western Australia in September 1989.

The highlight of the IRMC year will be the involvement of International Records Managers being invited to participate as speakers and panelists at the 11th International Congress on Archives, in Paris, France. There will be two speakers from Australia, Mr. Peter Smith and Ms Christine Shervinton. Christine is the Western Australian University Archivist and she will be delivering a paper called 'Automating Records Management'. This paper is directly related to her work at the University so it will be pertinent to the Congress.

The Records Management Association of Australia was invited to participate in the compiling of the *International Glossary of Records Management Terms*. This document has been forwarded to all Federal Councillors and Branch Secretaries for direct input by the membership at large. The responses have now been incorporated and returned to the International Records Management Council for further editing and it is hoped that a document of standard terms and definitions will be available to all Records Management Association of Australia members through IRMC in the near future.

The Records Management Association of Australia contributes as a national affiliated body the amount of \$1.00 per member as dues to the IRMC. This amount barely covers the cost of producing the quarterly IRMC Journal not to mention postage.

The International Records Management Council needs both national associations support as well as individual members and you are all invited to join and contribute to the future of the international body.

NEWS

INTERNATIONAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Peter A. Smith, Vice Pres. IRLC Australia & Oceania

It is important to look further afield than our own 'backyard' when we comment on or discuss records management.

We in Australia are lucky in some respects because we have been somewhat separated from the rest of the world until recent years. This has allowed records management in this country to, evolve much more slowly, to be unique and to be much closer to the 'cutting edge' than it is in some other countries.

Technology has an increasing impact on us and the major countries of the world, but its utilisation has had to be tempered by the dollars and cents the economy can afford to spend in the area of information and records management.

We have found that improvisation has caused us, as records managers, to adapt the theory of records management in some interesting ways thus giving us an awareness and a well rounded perspective and allowing us to stay close to the action.

Australian records management has a lot to

offer the rest of the world and our involvement is an important step towards international recognition. The International Records Management Council (IRMC) has a valuable role to play in co-ordinating the countries who have records and information associations and those interested in forming them.

The cross fertilisation of information and knowledge is important as long as technology continues to become more and more complex. If we are to cope with and use this technology it would be advantageous to set standards and have consistency throughout the world for those people who are the managers of the information. The control of information is essential if it is to remain a valuable commodity and a tool for those of us who wish to originate, maintain, use, and communicate information.

It is only by commitment on our part that we may achieve a standard of excellence which the information technology of the future will demand. It is by the endeavour to promote excellence in standards and service that those countries lacking the facilities will be able to acquire experience and education. Our support is vital in this process.

It is organisations such as the International Records Management Council that can be of assistance in setting up National Associations and a network within those countries and so strengthen the skills necessary to maintain the valuable resource, information.

PERTH CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 1989 CALL FOR PAPERS

Margaret Medcalf

The 6th Convention of the Records Management Association of Australia will be held next year in Perth in association with the 2nd Congress of the International Records Management Council. The Conference venue will be the Merlin Hotel. It will open on Monday 26th September at 9am and there will be three days of papers and discussion. Meetings of the Federal Council and IRLC are scheduled on the following three days along with workshops and visits.

Agreement has been received from Professor Ralph Sprague of the University of Hawaii to be the Keynote Speaker and from Mr Peter Emmerson, Archivist of Barclays Bank in London, to be a plenary session speaker. Sessions will be divided on the basis of one-third to be arranged by the IRLC and two-thirds RMAA. The easiest way to do this appears to be to allocate one whole day to IRLC and two days

to RMAA. It is proposed that the first RMAA day will have a general theme on technologies and the other one will be devoted to the application of professional skills.

The Committee would be grateful to hear from anyone interested in giving a paper at the Conference. Please send a synopsis of c. 200-300 words with a note of any special requirements to the program Chairman, PO Box 397, Victoria Park, WA, 6100.

As well as formal papers it has been suggested that a series of industry breakfasts be held in the hotels. These would cater for specific areas of interest, e.g. mining, banking, etc. at which a half hour (or less) talk would be given.

On one afternoon, for the last session, a panel discussion on problems is proposed. The Committee has requested that members send in any problems, real or theoretical, which would make good discussion topics.

Your support will be greatly appreciated.



Innovative Records Management

Records management is no longer restricted to cumbersome and limited Databases—now there is Parlairs.

Parlairs combines aspects of relational technology and free text retrieval technology to provide a data dictionary and free text management to a breadth and depth never before experienced in Australia.

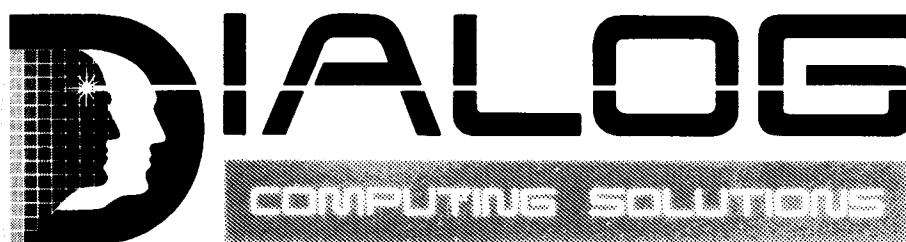
The system provides:

- searches in context
- distributed access to information
- resubmits
- selective dissemination of information
- expandable system user defined
- easy data entry
- efficient access
- document tracking
- barcode reading
- word processing interfacing

Available for two major applications, Records Management and Library Management, Parlairs is the result of combined government and corporate expertise—ensuring the widest possible versatility.

Of perhaps greatest importance is that Parlairs is a records management system designed by records managers.

Dialog—putting the human faces back into computing innovation.



Dialog Pty Ltd. Dialog House, 133 Constance Street, Fortitude Valley. (07) 852 1659
Contact Computing Personnel. Feasibility Studies. Analysis. Design. Programming & Training.
Records Management and Text Retrieval Software. Mining Software Products.



O H NO-O-O!!

Not another 'I want it NOW' request. I have no idea where that file (and 53 other 'lost' files) have gone to. This organisation wastes man years every year trying to find urgently required files.

W HAT IS THE ANSWER?

I was recently talking to someone who used a computer with a package called '**RecFind**' and didn't have any of our problems. They track file movements with portable barcode readers and know exactly where any file is at any time. '**RecFind**' has allowed them to release six staff for more productive tasks.

I don't have time to talk now. I have to find a lot of files ... quickly.

I 'M TIRED OF THE HASSLES - I'M ORDERING '**RecFind**'!!

'**RecFind**' file management system will:

- Quickly and easily find any of your files or documents;
- Release your staff for more productive tasks;
- Greatly increase the productivity of your organisation, and
- Save you tens of thousands of dollars on running costs.

CALL NOW FOR YOUR FREE INFORMATION PACKAGE. INCLUDE 'RecFind**' IN YOUR END-OF-YEAR BUDGET**

Ideal for Local, State and Federal governments, Banking, Insurance, Accountants, etc.

'**RecFind**' runs on Unisys B20 and XE series and NEC UNIX/Xenix systems.



gmb research & development pty ltd

Suite 204, 10-12 Clarke Street, P.O. Box 867, Crows Nest, NSW 2065. Phone: (02) 436 0188. Fax: (02) 437 5975