



THE **informaa**
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OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE
RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA



vol 1 number 3

RECORDS MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

VICTORIA VIEWED

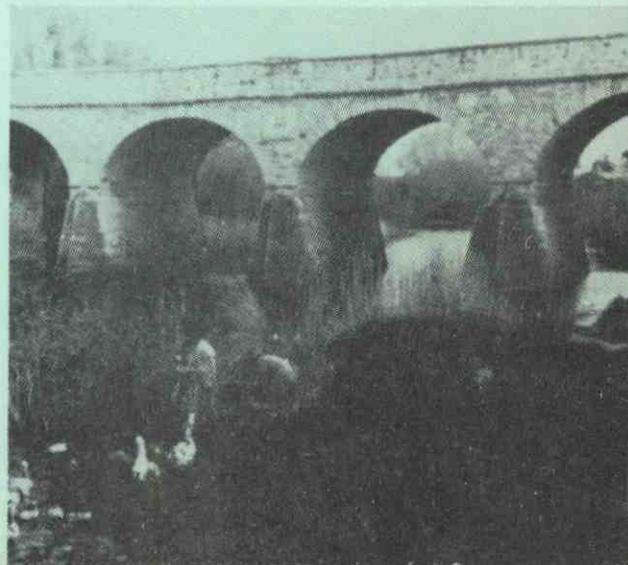
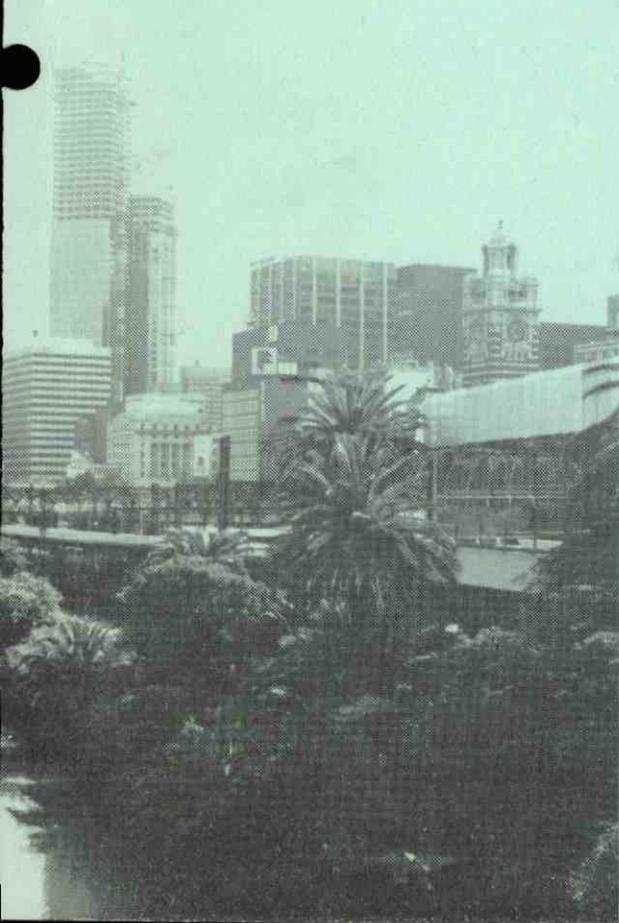
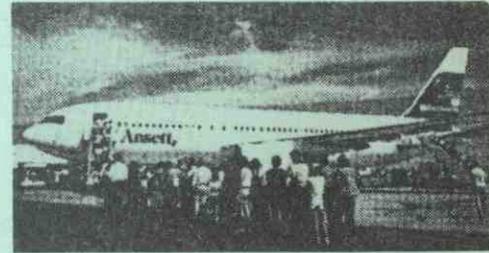


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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Victoria is this year celebrating its 150th birthday. Between 1834 and 1894 the proverbial "wisdom of age" has been superseded by the "Information Age"; wisdom seems less assured. Should we succumb to a "data decade" we may well be further distanced from wisdom and without cause for celebration.

As time-honoured information vehicles, records continue to challenge our wisdom in countering the deluge of data. Although wisdom is nobody's birthright, education is a professional obligation we are well-advised to pursue. Education supports our role in the information age; without it, records management may well find itself in the back room doing the washing up!

Returning to a positive, celebratory Victorian vein, we present this issue focused on records management education. Three perspectives of professional education are covered:

- 1) Educating students [as apprenticed or potential practitioners]
- 2) Continuing education of ourselves
- 3) Educating management [to whom we report and depend upon for recognising and supporting sound records management in the work environment]

Education of students is extremely important, but not -- as frequently assumed -- the sole focus of professional education. Through continuing our own education, we stay abreast of and introduce appropriate technology, thus shaping a favourable perception of our profession. The marketing of records management to top management maximises effective individual efforts but also helps ensure its importance is recognised and suitably qualified personnel are engaged.

How do the contents of this issue reflect this theme? First, Harry Nunn reviews the American certification approach to qualifying records management professionals. Its inclusion here implies no deference to our American counterparts, but presents one approach, the intrinsic merits and faults of which concerned professionals in Australia can objectively assess. No apologies are needed when professionals suggest infrastructures with which they have had some experience, be they home-grown or not.

Then, various Victorian educators review courses in Victoria available to students wishing to begin or continue a career in this field. The varying approaches, emphases, duration, level and qualification suggest many records or information management bases are being covered. Whether the need is for a technician, a scientific information specialist, a business office environment or a manager, Victoria has educators who continue to critically assess the status quo and relentlessly work to meet the growing educational challenge.

Practitioners can upgrade skills by attending seminars, courses or workshops -- or conferences in Brisbane or Manila if fortune smiles! However, reading remains the most likely regular avenue for keeping up to date.

As well as being useful to some as a reading guide, such a records management bibliography reminds us of one of the criteria or expectations of a profession: that its members conduct relevant research. This can include not only such surveys, but tests or reports of some method. If presented in a forum for colleagues to share, the benefits of such a considered approach are not only to the individual and that workplace, but to others getting ideas or support from it.

Further to Fay's endorsement of a quarterly Informaa in the last issue, we hope its scope will not be limited to disseminating previously published articles, but -- as much as possible -- provide THE forum for original research or company/project case studies or experiences in Australia.

Therefore we have chosen to not include here but refer those concerned with both continuing education and management education to Dr. Ritchie's paper on "Training requirements for new technologies" as given at the 1984 conference. He discusses our responsibility to

"...educate management to the opportunity that office technology provides for improving productivity and the resource base of industry and government" and

"... ensure that their own training and professional development is adequate..." (p. 112)

We have included excerpts from one of the talks given by Peter MacDonald in response to requests from affiliated groups. This mode of member participation not only prompts ourselves as speakers when preparing to reflect on or update one's own understanding of the topic; its presentation ensures the management community and our professional "relatives" keep alerted to our role.

Our president Phil Taylor and his colleague conclude the education of management with a review of the history and background of "selling" records management in the Victorian public service.

We hope you find something relevant or useful in this issue. Worthwhile professional student, continuing and management education requires membership involvement. Oral and written responses (direct or Informaa-directed "Letters to the Editor") from readers are very welcome, to be sent to the Western Australian branch (address next page).

Sue Hill
Editor

-- National Conference 1985

The 2nd national RMAA conference will be in Sydney 15-17 September. See last issue of Informaa for details or write to the Convention Committee, RMAA, P O Box 795, Crows Nest 2065 Sydney AUSTRALIA.

-- Recent Publications

1st national conference papers (Coolangatta, 1984) are available from your state branch at a cost of \$25.

Records Management Primer, vol. 1 is available from the Queensland branch at a cost of \$19.95 -- \$15.95 for members and students.

-- Next national Informaa sponsors:

August 1985
Western Australia

November 1985
South Australia

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THE INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED RECORDS MANAGERS

The Institute of Certified Records Managers (ICRM) is a non-profit certifying organisation of professional records managers and administrative officers who specialize in the field of records and information management programmes.

The concept of the Institute and certification for professional records managers was developed by the American Records Management Association in 1966. Their committees spent nearly ten years developing and testing the structure, principles and practice underlying the qualifications and examinations for professional certification of records managers.

Historical Background

The Association of Records Executives and Administrators (AREA) joined with the Association of Records Managers and Administration (ARMA) to initially finance and staff the Institute. Sponsors of the ICRM now include:

- the Association of Records Managers and Administration (ARMA)
- the National Association of State Archivists and Records Administrators (NASARA)
- the Society of American Archivists (SAA)
- the National Micrographics Association (NMA)

The Institute of Certified Records Managers was incorporated in 1975. The Institute is a separate and independent organisation from its sponsoring associations.

Organisational structure

The organisation consists of a governing body known and referred to as the Board of Regents and its members are referred to as Regents. The board consists of not less than ten nor more than fifteen Regents. The elected officers are:

- President
- Vice-President (Examination Development)
- Vice-President (Examination Administration)
- Treasurer
- Secretary

Objectives of the Institute

The objectives of the Institute are:

- to develop and administer a programme for the professional certification of records managers, including the granting of appropriate recognition
- to promote the value of certification of records managers to the various governments and private sector

- to develop and administer certification examinations in records management
- to work with educational institutions in the development and improvement of records management courses
- to define, promote and advance records management concepts
- to support the professional recognition of records managers

Examination Outline

1. MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMME ORGANISATION
 - (a) Management Principles and Techniques
 - (b) History and Philosophy of Records Management
2. RECORDS GENERATION AND CONTROL
 - (a) Correspondence Management
 - (b) Directives Management
 - (c) Forms Management
 - (d) Mail Management
 - (e) Report Management
 - (f) Reproduction Management
 - (g) Records Creation Control Programmes
3. ACTIVE RECORDS RETRIEVAL SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT
 - (a) Filing Systems
 - (b) Equipment Evaluation, Selection and Use
 - (c) Evaluation and Control of Supplies
 - (d) Confidentiality and Privacy
4. RECORDS PROTECTION AND DISPOSITION
 - (a) Records Inventory
 - (b) Inventory Analysis
 - (c) Records Scheduling
 - (d) Vital Records Programmes
 - (e) Records Centres
 - (f) Archives Management
 - (g) Security
5. TECHNOLOGY OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT
 - (a) Micrographics
 - (b) Data Processing
 - (c) Word Processing
6. CASE STUDIES/PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

The final part and examination involves problems that interrelate all elements of the first five parts.

The first five parts may be taken in any sequence. The sixth may be taken only after the candidate has passed the first five parts. (Candidates may retake any part of the examination as often as necessary, within a five-year period.)

The examinations are offered usually in mid-May and mid-November. The deadline for applications is about two months before the exam to provide time to establish the exam proctors and locations and for the ICRM Certification Coordination Committee to review candidates' credentials and qualifications. Interested applicants are advised to write to the ICRM secretary several months in advance to obtain the application form, the ICRM constitution and by-laws and examination guidance materials, including:

Outline of the CRM Examination
 CRM Bibliography of of Records
 Management Literature
 Examination Study Guide and Sample
 Questions from Previous Examinations

For applications, etc. write to:

ICRM Secretary
 Post Office Box 89
 Washington D.C.
 20044-0089
 USA

As at 1983 there were approximately 324 CRMs in the USA, 17 in Canada, 4 in Australia and one each in the Phillipines, Israel and the State of Kurait.

Organisations worldwide are recognizing the need for professionals to manage their information and records systems. New technologies are complicating the measurement of job seekers' competence and CRM is a prime position classification.

-Harry Nunn BA(Hons),CRM(USA), FRMAA

Biographical note: Harry was formerly the Chief Archivist, State Library of Victoria and Keeper of Public Records, Public Records Office on its foundation 1973-1981. He is also a foundation member of the Business Archives Council of Victoria and the Microfilm Society of Australia. He is also a foundation member of the RMAA, within which is a signatory to its Articles of Association and -- for two terms each -- a former federal president and Victorian branch president. He has been the Australian delegate to the International Records Management Federation for three terms and is currently Vice-President (Australasia and Oceania) of the International Records Management Council. Since 1981 he has been a consultant in records, information and archival management.

MELBOURNE COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION:

**Graduate Diploma in Information Management
(Archives and Records)**

Almost ten years ago Ralph Biddington, a lecturer at the then Melbourne State College, was researching the history of the State's education system. He found himself in the basement of the old Public Library building almost literally digging into the piles of documents which formed the archives of the Education Department. The situation shocked him and a visit to the Public Records Office in London convinced him of the need for professional training of archivists. Following his return to Australia he discovered the lack of any appropriate course in Victoria and became convinced that with its wide range of resources (including Departments of Business Studies, History and Librarianship) and its central location, Melbourne State College would be a suitable place to establish such a course.

When planning commenced in 1978, it was quickly realised that efficient Records Management provides the basis for all aspects of records access and members of both the Australian Society of Archivists and the Records Management Association of Australia were invited into the planning committee. By the end of 1980 the course was accredited by the State College of Victoria and ready to begin in 1981, but politics intervened. The State College system in general and Melbourne State College in particular had their funds severely slashed by the Razor Gang. There was no prospect of the College starting any new courses, least of all one which departed from its traditional role in teacher training. For two years the College battled for survival, emerging in 1983 as Melbourne College of Advanced Education. During 1984 the decision was made that despite continuing financial problems the Records and Archives course would be revived as part of a movement away from the pure Teacher's College role. The course was revised and finally accredited on February 28 this year. The first lecture was held on March 25.

The course is a Graduate Diploma. This means that normal entry requires a degree or equivalent qualification. Course regulations require that preference for selection will be given to

those who have relevant work experience and/or demonstrated involvement in the management or use of archives and/or records.

It is MCAE policy that courses should also accept a limited number of students without formal academic qualifications but with appropriate experience. For this course, the Course Committee has laid down a minimum of five years experience for such special entry students, who must also demonstrate their ability to cope with study at this level. Several such students have been admitted in the first intake this year.

As a post-graduate course its aim is to concentrate more on generalities than specifics, to compare alternative systems of organising records without necessarily always concerning itself with the details of the operation of those systems, as these can vary markedly from institution to institution. The expectation is that most students will already be working within a particular institution and they will be encouraged to make a detailed and critical examination of its organisation as part of their course. Other students will be encouraged to find a friendly "host organisation" on which to concentrate their attentions. Students have been told that any assignment which can double as part of their ordinary work will be very welcome.

The course operates in late afternoons, approximately 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. From next year, students will have the choice of taking it over two years, involving three nights per week or three years at two nights per week. Assessment involves essays and practical work with no final examination. An 80% attendance requirement is to be built into the regulations.

All subjects are compulsory. They comprise four introductory subjects, each lasting one semester.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXTS looks at organisations producing records, and

USES AND USERS OF RECORDS at people as their users.

INFORMATION PROCESSING TECHNOLOGY examines the hardware, and

INFORMATION AND RECORDS CONTROL the systems in which records exist.

There are then two major subjects

ARCHIVAL AND INFORMATION RESOURCES THEORY, and

ARCHIVES ADMINISTRATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

each lasting three semesters, which examine theory and practice respectively.

The course concludes with a SPECIAL PROJECT in which each student examines one aspect of his or her own choice in greater depth. One important part of the course is a PRACTICUM requirement during which each student must spend at least two weeks in institutions other than their own, having a look at their operation.

This is a new course, the first of its kind in Victoria and many details of its operation will only become clear as it is phased in between now and 1987. College staff and members of the two professional associations who have given so much help already are determined that it will be a success. MCAE has had much experience with similar Graduate Diploma courses for working professionals and our experience has been that one of the greatest benefits is the building of a network of contacts between students and with visiting lecturers, which is of benefit not only to themselves but to the profession as a whole.

Enquiries should be directed to:

Gordon Bate
Melbourne College of Advanced Education
757 Swanston Street
Carlton 3053 Victoria

Phone: 341-8619 (Messages: 341-8615)

-- Gordon Bate

Biographical note: Gordon Bate BSocSci, DipArch, TPIC, ALAA is executive officer of the course. Originally a teacher, he has had a varied experience of reading, librarianship and administration with the Education Department and the College. He currently divides his time between teaching in this course, librarianship courses and acting as College Archivist.

VICTORIA COLLEGE, RUSDEN CAMPUS

Applied Science Degree in Scientific
Information Services

The last two decades have seen a remarkable development in the technology of the storage and retrieval of data. Consequently there has been an explosion in the quantity of data available to the user. However the usage of these quite sophisticated systems of data storage and retrieval is often disappointing because of a number of reasons that have been highlighted in many recent conferences (1,2). They are:

- potential users are not aware of the services;
- users do not see the value of the service for their needs;
- the information is not in the correct form with respect to the level and/or the quality of the presentation of the information;

The third point has been recognized as a need for repackaged information; in other words, there is not a lack of data but a lack of data in a form which is useful to the user, i.e. information. This repackaging can be approached from two different levels:

- 1) The information presented must be at a level that is understandable to the user, whether that user be a research scientist, a small farmer or the general public. This is particularly true for scientific and technological information where the language, terminology and concepts are unfamiliar to many users.
- 2) The physical presentation of the information is an essential ingredient in the market acceptance of an information product. Acceptable presentation and packaging of a product is a concept that has completely permeated our western society and the scientific information package should not be an exception to this. A large amount of scientific 'information' is presented poorly in a dull and uninteresting format. This is unacceptable in this day and age when so many exciting media formats are available to the information provider.

It is now generally accepted that sufficient information is not getting through to the people most in need and that existing information services, no matter how sophisticated, are accessible only to a select few. The challenge to the information specialist is not to build bigger and better data storage and retrieval systems but to ensure that information is accessible to all that need it in a useful form. Thus, in the last decade there has arisen in the scientific community the need for a new professional - the scientific information specialist. A need for this type of person has always been present, but has increased dramatically over the last few years along with the increase in scientific data and the demand for useable scientific information.

These scientific information specialists should have the skills that place them between the source of the information (data) and the information user.

This specialist must have the following qualities:

- scientific literacy

As these professionals will be communicating with scientists and to other people about science, they must be familiar with the scientific method and precision and its inherent jargon. It is highly desirable that these professionals are accepted as part of the scientific community and communicate within that community as an equal. This literacy can be obtained through experience (i.e. the scientific literate layperson) or through a rigorous study of a scientific discipline;

- the skill to store and retrieve data

They must have a thorough understanding of the functions of a traditional library. It is not necessary that they are trained librarians as there are many professionals trained to maintain and service traditional library collections. It is essential that they be familiar with modern computer-based storage and retrieval systems. Most importantly, they must appreciate the structuring of data to facilitate its efficient storage and retrieval;

- media skills in information presentation

These professionals must understand the strengths and weaknesses of the various media formats so that they can make informed decisions about the presentation and packaging of an information product. An overwhelming majority of scientific and technical information is presented in the written word with some visual support;

- communication skills

Communication is essential to professionals who are literally bridging a culture gap. They must have the skills to ascertain the level of the information that would be appropriate for a particular user;

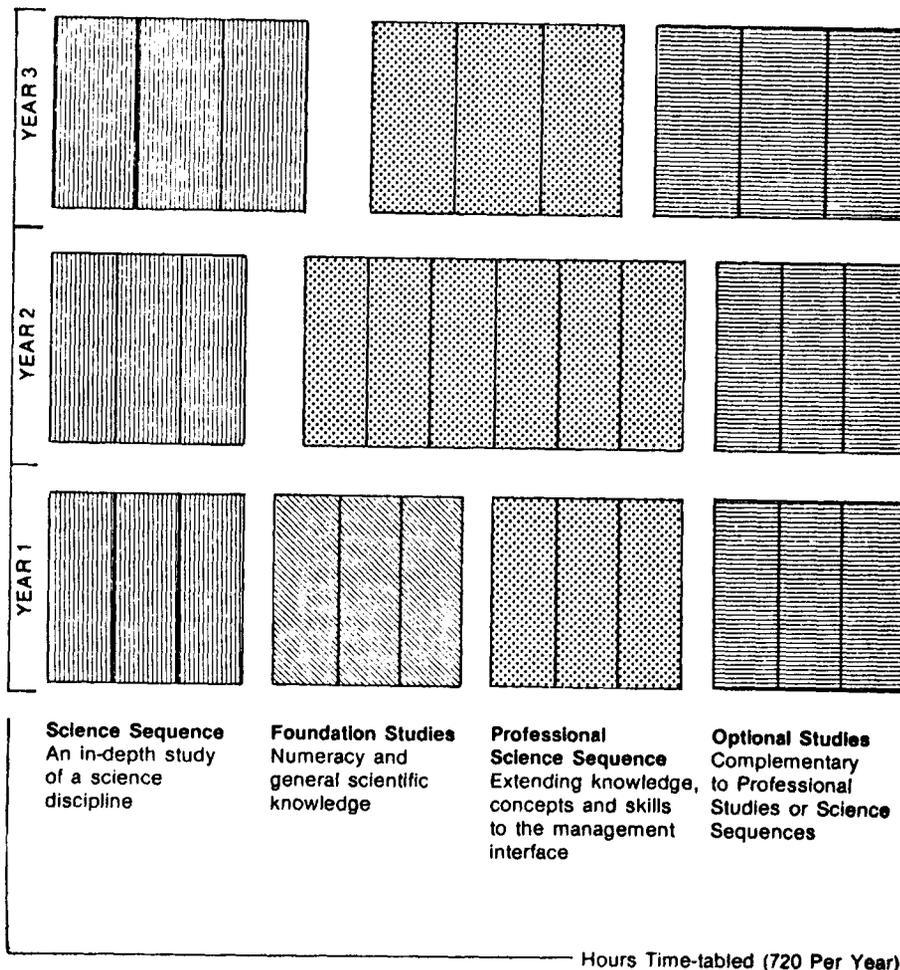
analytical and problem-solving skills

They must have the skills to identify the information flows within an organisation or community that could be used as a source of data or for information dissemination. They must be aware of legal and societal restraints on the repackaging and marketing of information.

The challenge for educational institutions is to train a graduate that has all the above qualities -- not an easy task, as the course would necessarily bring together disciplines that in the past have been poles apart and developed their own sub-cultures.

The Applied Science Faculty at Victoria College has answered this challenge through the structure of its three-year undergraduate degree in Scientific Information Services. The degree has four major components (fig. 1):

- THE FOUNDATION STUDIES
- THE SCIENCE SEQUENCE
- THE PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
- THE OPTIONAL STUDIES



THE FOUNDATION STUDIES are designed to give the student a basic competence in the foundation areas of computing, mathematics, and the biological, physical and earth sciences. These basic skills are taught by a mastery learning technique. In this method the student must obtain a credit grade to achieve the subject. However the student has a large amount of time to achieve the required proficiency and can attempt the assessment as many times as required to achieve the credit grade. In other words the level of proficiency has been raised from a pass to a credit grade, but the time limit to achieve this has been removed.

THE SCIENCE SEQUENCE provides the student with an in-depth understanding of a scientific discipline. In other words, scientific literacy is obtained through the study of a particular science. The student is required to complete a three-year major study in one of Biology, Earth Science or Numerical Science. Chemistry and Physics will be offered in 1986.

THE PROFESSIONAL STUDY draws together the scientific discipline, media, computer science, communication skills and administrative skills into a multi-disciplinary subject area. It is designed to develop skills in:

- retrieving, storing and gaining access to information;
- the presentation of information in various media formats;
- translating scientific information/data into a form appropriate for the user;
- identifying technical and human factors that affect the understanding and presentation of information;
- administrative and legal restraints related to information services

THE OPTIONAL STUDIES provide an opportunity for the student to develop the understanding and skills in other directions which they perceive as having relevance to their aspirations or their current position. The students have chosen a wide range of subject areas and these include another science, media, psychology, economics, English and Japanese.

The course will enter its second year in 1985 and will produce its first graduates in 1986. Further information concerning the course can be obtained from

Dr. Ian Dickson
 Head of Department
 Scientific Information Services
 Victoria College (Rusden Campus)
 Blackburn Road
 Clayton, Victoria 3168
 [phone (03) 542-7356]

References:

1. Yates, B.(ed.), "Marketing of information services", Proceedings NLA/UNESCO Regional Workshop, Canberra, 1983.
2. Dickson, I.E.(ed.), "Delivering information to users", Proceedings FID/CAO Eighth General Assembly and Congress, Melbourne, 1984.

-Dr. Ian Dickson

Biographical note: Dr. Ian Dickson was intimately involved in the design and implementation of the new Applied Science Degree. He holds a Doctorate in Chemistry and a Diploma of Education from Melbourne University as well as a Graduate Diploma in Data Processing from Victoria College.

FOOTSCRAY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Bachelor of Business
(Information Management and Communication)

"Information Technologies and the Office"

Introduction

Of the many varied functions performed by the business office, one primary role stands out: namely, the processing and communicating of business information, whether it be in textual, data, voice or image form. Although the primary role of the office has remained unaltered over the years, the means by which it is performed has not.

New technology is revolutionising many business offices throughout Australia. Developments in the field of microelectronics, lasers, fibre optics and a variety of other technologies are providing the potential to revolutionise the way in which many businesses can now perform their traditional information management and communication function.

It is clear that as we progress through the 1980's and into the next decade, the efficient and effective management of the business information resource will require new levels of conceptual awareness and a growing range of complimentary practical skills from those staff members who are both directly and indirectly involved in this process. Organisations that do not have adequately trained management and operational staff cannot hope to derive the full advantages that these exciting developments are likely to offer.

As a direct educational response to the rapidly changing office environment, Footscray Institute of Technology in 1984 introduced a Bachelor of Business degree program with major studies in Information Management and Communication. The aim of the new Degree is to provide graduates with the necessary knowledge and skills, not only to successfully adapt to a rapidly changing office environment, but to become directly involved in the process and direction of these changes.

Course Aims

The sound and broadly-based business education provided within the course is designed to prepare students for a range of careers associated with the information management and communication functions of an organisation. Graduates of the course will have acquired an in-depth understanding of trends in the use of a range of office technologies including word processing, data processing, electronic mail, conferencing, micrographics and reprographics systems. In this regard, there is special emphasis on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of personnel and ensuring the cost effective deployment of organisational resources as a means of managing the rapidly mushrooming business information resource.

Course Structure

The course is designed to be taken on a full-time (or part-time equivalent) basis over three years. It consists of twenty-four units, including twenty compulsory core units. It is expected that students will undertake major studies (ie a sequence of six units) in the specialist business disciplines of Office Information Systems and Electronic Data Processing or Administrative Studies. Accounting, Law, Economics and Statistics are also studied to complete the rigorous and broadly-based business education program referred to above.

Specialist Disciplines

OFFICE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

This major sequence looks at information management and communication systems within the modern business organisation. Principles and techniques applicable to the fields of word and data processing, telecommunications, reprographics and records management are studied.

With regard to the field of records management, students are introduced to the concept, role and historical significance of the records management process. This process is recognised as an integral component within the broadly-based business information system. Specific attention is paid to such areas as:

- objectives of records management systems
- characteristics and phases of the records management cycle (from creation to disposition)
- development of a records management program
- organisation and staffing of records management systems
- personnel, equipment and supplies
- the changing nature of records management systems
- automated records storage and retrieval systems

Whilst a range of aims may be cited for the study of records management systems within the course, one particular aim remains paramount, namely to provide students with techniques that will

assist in the management of information resources in general and to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of alternative methods of creation, storage, retrieval, retention, reproduction, and disposition of records in particular.

ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING

In this major sequence BASIC, COBOL and FORTRAN programming languages are studied, whilst students study common computer-based business systems. The concepts and techniques of commercially-oriented systems analysis and design are also studied.

ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES

This major sequence looks at the changing administrative needs and demands of modern business, with particular emphasis on the impact of modern technology. Additional areas of study include the theory of organisational structure and behaviour, personnel administration and social psychology.

Career Opportunities

It is expected that graduates will find employment at the Administrative Assistant and Trainee Manager level in such specialist areas as word processing, records management, reprographics and telecommunications. Information Management career-oriented opportunities include:

Information Services Manager
Word Processing Manager
Senior Administrative Assistant
Communications Analyst
Administrator, Office Systems

Course Admission

In order to be admitted to the course, applicants must have satisfactorily completed a Year 12 course of study in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education, or passed four subjects (including English) at the Tertiary Orientation Program level at a recognised institute or technical college in Victoria, or have obtained any other qualification which is regarded by the Faculty of Business as being equivalent to the requirements above. Mature age entry is available. Application for admission forms may be obtained from the Faculty of Business office, telephone (03) 688 4471.

Readers who are interested in further details about this new course are invited to contact the course convenor:

Mr Geoffrey Sandy
Senior Lecturer, Information Management
Applied Economics Department
Footscray Institute of Technology
P.O. Box 64
FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011

[Phone: (03) 688 4393]

--Geoff Sandy and Christopher Ervine

Biographical notes: Christopher Ervine is a lecturer in Information Management and Secretarial Studies at FIT. He has authored a number of teacher and student reference publications in the educational implications of office automation. He holds degrees in Economics (Monash), Education (Melbourne) and a Graduate Diploma in Secretarial Studies Education (Rusden). He is currently completing a Masters in Education at Melbourne and is a member of the Office Automation Association of Victoria and the Victorian Commercial Teachers' Association.

Geoff Sandy is a senior lecturer in Information Management and Secretarial Studies, holding a Master of Commerce and a Diploma in Education from Melbourne University. He has extensive teaching experience at secondary and tertiary levels and has been with FIT twelve years. He is member of the Office Automation Association of Australia and the Australian Institute of Political Science.

PRAHRAN TAFE COLLEGE

Certificate of Business Studies
(Records Administration)

This course has been conducted in conjunction with the RMAA (Victorian Branch) since February 1972.

It is one of the specialist courses offered by the college and is designed to provide training for supervisors, potential supervisors, senior clerical and supporting staff who have important specialist responsibility in the records administration area. The RMAA provides the lecturers and expertise in the records subjects.

The normal prerequisite for entry into the course is completion of Year 11 (Fifth Form). However, persons considered sufficiently mature and experienced to undertake the course successfully may be admitted, particularly if already employed in records administration.

The full course is normally undertaken by four years of part-time study and successful completion of 20 units entitles the student to a Certificate of Business Studies (Records Administration). A Certificate of Records Management is granted to students who complete the Records Administration subjects and Middle Level English 1A and 1B. In practice, most students only complete the compulsory units.

The RMAA recently held a one-day workshop to explore ways to improve the course. Those invited to attend were active RMAA members, present and past students and managers responsible for them, teachers and college staff, others from the information management industry and representatives from the library and micrographics associations.

It was agreed that the present course is aimed at an operational or supportive role, not necessarily to prepare students for immediate managerial roles. It is not a Diploma or Degree course, but rather a half-way mark for people to fill the operational and support roles in the registry systems of government or industry. It was suggested that the course be structured so that the graduates are "records technicians" rather than "information managers".

Some of the key suggestions from the workshop included:

Students should be able to identify a need in their organisation which may or may not be solved by a machine. The student would explain the bottleneck with flowcharts and -- if equipment is needed -- cost-justify and convince management of the need to purchase the equipment.

Office automation and data processing should be compulsory units

The four mid-management practices -- planning, organisation, staffing and leadership -- are not needed as most of these topics are available elsewhere. Most companies/departments are looking for the technical skills and would undertake their own management and supervisory training.

The ability to write a decent proposal was deemed to be most important and should be included in the English units. These units should remain to foster better writing skills, reinforced by the marking of all assignments for correct spelling and usage.

I have offered the following subject improvements and course structure for compulsory units:

Records Administration 1A (Principles)

To be a combination of the current 1A and 2A subjects.

Records Administration 1B (Access and Disposal)

To include all now taught in 1B, but expanded to include state and federal freedom of information and privacy legislation. Also to be included would be vital records programs and the rights of individuals and government agencies to access private and corporate records.

Records Administration 2A (Information Retrieval)

To become a two-semester subject including some of the current 1A and 2A but with a greater emphasis on the following processing procedures and rules:

File registration and construction
Classification and codification system
Index creation and rules
Document registration
Centralised and decentralised systems
File examination and former paper duties
Form design and control

Records Administration 2C (Reviewing Records Programs)

As now, but with more emphasis on practical exercises.

Records Administration 2D (Training and Management)

Generally remain as now, but with elements of negotiating and system selling skills.

Records Administration 3A (Processing Technologies)

A new two-semester subject to provide a basic understanding of the rapidly-developing technology which is changing the nature of organisation and therefore of record-keeping activities.

This subject would cover:

Computer and EDP technology
 Programming languages
 Hardware and software advances
 Word processing
 Communication methods and devices
 Image and micrographic systems
 Databases, databanks and storage systems

Middle Level English 1A and 1B (Business English)

Both to remain compulsory.

The compulsory units then would cover four semesters, with the elective units dropped from the Certificate requirements.

The task ahead is to finalise and write the detailed course structure and subject syllabus. Readers with views on the suggested changes are invited to put them in writing and send them to me:

--Peter W. McDonald
 Chairman, Education Committee
 % ANZ Banking Group
 6th floor
 55 Collins Street
 MELBOURNE 3000

-- Peter McDonald

Biographical note: Following twenty years of working with the Commonwealth government, Peter McDonald has been with the ANZ Bank since 1981, where he is Manager, Records Management. He is both Vice-President of the Victorian branch of the RMAA and the Chairman of its Education Committee.

CURRENT UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

Records Administration 1A (Principles)

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to understand:

- (a) the role, aims and functions of record administration,
- (b) the nature of records material and the boundaries of the records administration area,
- (c) the completion of basic procedures undertaken in records centres and associated staff organisations,
- (d) how to achieve proficiency in activities which will serve as a basis for later instruction on management techniques and enable course assignment reports to be completed and documented.

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: Internal.

Records Administration 1B (Disposal)

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to understand:

- (a) the need for the protection, retention and planned disposal of records.
- (b) the responsibilities and activities of archival authorities,
- (c) the value and use of archival records.

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: Internal.

Records Administration 2A (Manual Systems)

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to understand:

- (a) the development of manual records procedures to meet specific purposes,
- (b) the concepts of service operational principle and work flow which apply to each manual system,
- (c) the importance of sound manual procedures as a basis for efficient automated systems.

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: Internal.

Records Administration 2B
(Mechanical Systems and Machines)

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to understand:

- (a) the approach to be adopted when considering the structure of a new manual system,
- (b) the purpose of, and the procedures used in, a mechanical filing system including automated data processing and microfilming,
- (c) the features and uses of associated mechanical equipment.

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.
Assessment: Internal.

Records Administration 2C
(Reviewing Records Programs)

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to:

- (a) understand all aspects of a records management program,
- (b) develop procedures for practical records planning and control,

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.
Assessment: Internal.

Records Administration 2D
(Training and Management)

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to:

- (a) outline the supervisory responsibility of the records supervisor,
- (b) prepare programs for training of records supervisor,
- (c) prepare instructions for inclusion in the records manual.

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.
Assessment: Internal.

Middle Level English IA
(Business English)

This unit provides an introduction to communication theory, acquiring basic communication skills both written and oral, appreciation of literature, drama, films, analysis or arguments, summary writing, presentation of various types of essays, basic grammar and expression skills.

Duration: 3 hours per week for one semester.
Assessment: Internal - work completed during the semester.

Middle Level English IB
(Business English)

Business writing skills including letters, reports, summaries, public speaking, prepared talks, debates, meeting procedures, reading different types of material with specific purposes, listening skills - including note taking media study covering advertising, current affairs presentation, the functions of the various branches of the media.

Duration: 3 hours per week for one semester.
Assessment: Internal - work completed during the semester.

Data Processing IA and IB

These units are designed to enable the student to understand: Modern data processing techniques that can be used to provide information to and for management; the existing problems in the operation of business systems and methods that would aid in overcoming these problems; the means by which more advanced types of business equipment accomplish their task; data processing systems using manual, semi-automated and full-automated practices; and write programs for selected applications using an elementary programming language.

Duration: IA: 2 hours per week for one semester.
IB: 2 hours per week for one semester

Assessment: Internal - work completed during the semester.

Data Processing 2A and 2B

The general aims of these units are to enable the student to understand systems for modern data processing techniques and analyse existing systems and also prepare procedures for their implementation. Trends in data processing and appreciation of the social implications of designing systems.

Duration: 2A: 2 hours per week for one semester.
2B: 2 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: Internal - work completed during the semester.

Data Processing 3A and 3B

The general aims of these units are to enable the students to extend their knowledge of the fundamentals of data processing gained in Data Processing 1A and 1B. To obtain a better insight into the processing of data within the EDP areas. It is also designed to enable students to design program specifications from a problem description, including file and forms design. An introduction to the concepts and techniques of programming with particular reference to the use of COBOL programming language is included. Students will also become familiar with the various functions performed by the personnel in the EDP areas and be able to communicate effectively.

Duration: 3A 2 hours per week for one semester.
3B 2 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: Internal - work completed during the semester.

Introduction to Business/Service Organisations

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to gain a broad understanding of the nature of business. Assess the role of goals and objectives in determining the functions performed by a business enterprise, and the way in which these functions are assigned to a place in the organisation structure. Examine the varying organisational frameworks within which businesses organise their resources and assess the effectiveness. Appreciate the role of management in welding together the separate functions of a business into a cohesive organisation. Examine, in depth, two areas of interest, one separate from the student's present job function.

Duration: 3 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: Internal - work completed during the semester.

Industry and Society

This unit involves the study of the work ethic and the nature of work, social responsibility of employees, growth of industrial enterprises and economic growth, influence of government on industry and society, primary, secondary and tertiary industry, consumerism, pricing, trade unions, population growth, the environment.

Duration: 3 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: Internal - work completed during the semester.

Middle Management Practices A - Planning

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to - develop an appreciation of middle management practices in relation to planning, carry out the tasks of planning, forecasting, setting objectives, formulating policies and procedures, preparing programs and schedules and budgeting within a middle management context, participate in case study management decision making.

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: One two hour internal examination (50 marks) and work completed during the semester (50 marks)

Middle Management Practices B - Organisation

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to - conduct a critical analysis of a department's organisation. Design the most suitable structure to meet ongoing objectives. Provide satisfactory balance between manpower and workload. Determine the levels of responsibility of each individual within a formal organisation in respect to typical day to day decisions.

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: One two hour internal examination (50 marks) and work completed during the semester (50 marks).

Middle Management Practices C - Staffing:

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to - examine the main elements involved in the assessment of present and future manpower needs through: Recruitment, selection, training and development appraisal, retirement, retrenchment/separation, apply the relevant techniques and procedures within the staffing function.

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: One two hour internal examination (50 marks) and work completed during the semester (50 marks).

**Middle Management Practices D -
Leadership**

The general aims of this unit are to enable the student to - develop leadership skills, identify the framework within which decision making is practised, communicate effectively and to understand the problems which arise in the communication process. Use committees to solve problems effectively, motivate people within an organisational framework, be aware of various leadership styles and their application.

Duration: 2 hours per week for one semester.

Assessment: One two hour internal examination (50 marks) and work completed during the semester (50 marks).

RECORDS MANAGEMENT LITERATURE IN A LIBRARY

Bibliography is what this really is. But before you relegate it to the ranks of the unread, aren't you curious why such a dry, uninteresting thing as a bibliography is doing taking up pages in your Informaa?

It is presented to the individual member as well as to the association in order to:

- 1) Indicate what you could find in your state library
- 2) Lead you to request your library to borrow one of these for you. (Including the call number -- given in parentheses here -- is appreciated).
- 3) Suggest the most well-known or most publically-accessible books on records management in Victoria.

To reward those still reading, let's start with individual benefits:

FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

Keeping up with what is published in records management is a responsibility many records managers acknowledge but find difficult to do. Time is often the greatest obstacle. Nobody can provide more hours in the day, but bibliographies can save time in identifying and locating what is available.

Sources of bibliographies

The ARMA Quarterly has book reviews. Yes, they canvass mostly American publications but its value remain, until or unless one of our colleagues or branches provides an Australian alternative.

Universities, schools and institutes are good local sources. If the school offers no records management course, don't give up; schools which cover information management, librarianship, and office/business studies also tend to include books on records management. Course outlines generally have references to both classic and current titles, which their own libraries or bookshops tend to stock.

Getting a copy of the item

Sometimes acquiring a copy of that particular book presents further obstacles in your diligent pursuit of continuing education. I find calling on your own institution's library a handy first recourse. Investigate how your own library can help. Shall we review their capabilities?

All libraries participate in an interlibrary loan network which enable them to borrow from any other library (school, public, corporate or government department). Books which could not be lent to you as an individual can be loaned to your library for your use. What's more, you don't even have to know what other institution has that book: the librarian can determine that.

FOR THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT VOCATION/ PROFESSION/ASSOCIATION

Regional or National?

Just as this issue is the Victorian edition of our national Association's Informaa publication, the State Library of Victoria is part of a national network. Each state has a state library with collections including some records management material. How representative Victoria is will remain unknown until/unless someone undertakes to survey the other state libraries in a similar manner.

Professional and Bibliographic Visibility

In the president's message introducing the first national Informaa issue was the stated intent to "make our Association visible within the Business Community". The State Library of Victoria includes a strong business information service, used by many businesses to supplement their own internal services or resources; it is a primary resource for businesses which are about to embark on or are too small to warrant their own information professional.

A good showing in such a venue would not only keep us visible but could well have the result of making us more viable: if our presence and publications broadcast the message that there is an Association which addresses real records management issues, we can increase our membership and -- as the importance of records management registers with potential employers -- thus facilitate the creation of records management jobs. Of concern to us all, no?

Both we and our literature need to be visible. There's a real demand and supply cycle or Catch-22: you find out about an item because they had and listed it; they had and listed it because they found out about it! How they find out about records management literature so they can get it for all of us involves the supply side of the cycle.

It may not surprise you that records management books are not best-sellers. So the library needs some non-commercial way of finding out about the less obvious records management material being published or produced.

Anyone involved with the publication or production of records management material should be aware of the legal deposit act. In Victoria this means that a copy of any item published in Victoria (or by a publisher with their head office in Victoria) should be deposited in both the National and our State Library.

Authors should make use of this mechanism for publicising their work. Should you be aware of any records management publication not so deposited, you would be doing both the author and all his/her colleagues a great service by contacting the author, publisher or Legal Deposit Librarian to encourage a copy to be deposited.

The following bibliography is taken from the State Library of Victoria's microfiche catalog of holdings. This fiche format was instituted in late 1980 and therefore lists items received since then. As such, it can not be taken as a comprehensive listing, but one would expect it to be representative of current publications which have been acquired by deposit (as explained above) or purchase. (I have eliminated titles which were exclusively archives, general freedom of information coverage, the periodicals Informaa and ARMA Quarterly, and AGPS reports on inhouse printing/rationalisation proposals.)

One final word on the subject headings, given here in upper case. These items were identified by the controlled subject heading(s) by which they were cataloged. One would expect other libraries to use similar headings to these used by the State Library: **RECORDS--MANAGEMENT; BUSINESS RECORDS; and GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK**. Some have various subheadings following these main headings, as shown below.

RECORDS -- MANAGEMENT

Diamond, Susan Z. Records management: a practical guide. NY: American Management Association, 1983. (S 651.5 D54R)

Waegemann, C. Peter. Handbook of record storage and space management. Westport, Conn.: QuorumBooks, 1983. (S 651.53 W12H)

Linton, J. Eddis. Keyword filing: a manual of filing procedures. Canberra: Information Technology Council, 1980(?) (S651.53 L65K)

BUSINESS RECORDS

(One may also find book similar to these under the names of corporate bodies or types of industries, eg. **CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY -- RECORDS AND CORRESPONDENCE**. Although I have not investigated those possibilities here, the reader may well find the most valuable books under such a heading as most specific to the need.)

Australia. Dept. of Industry and Commerce. Control records, the key to improving profits: retailing. 2nd ed. Canberra: AGPS, 1982. [Managing the small business series; no. 5] (RBA 658.022 Aus (no. 5) (1982))

Kalthoff, Robert J. Productivity and records automation. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1981. (S651.502854 K12)

Kuttner, Monroe S. Managing the paperwork pipeline: achieving cost-effective paperwork and information processing. NY: Wiley, 1978. (S651.4 K96)

McCarthy, J.D. Records management in business. London: Business Archives Council, 1982. [Record aids, Business Archives Council 0263-6719; no. 1]

Newton, S.C. Office automation and records management: report of a working party. Sheffield: Society of Archivists, 1981. [Records Management Group occasional papers; 1] (SF 651.59 N480)

BUSINESS RECORDS -- COST EFFECTIVENESS -- HANDBOOKS, MANUALS, ETC.

Samaras, Thomas T. Industrial documentation handbook. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1978. (F651.5 S43)

BUSINESS RECORDS -- MANAGEMENT

Records management: proceedings at the short course in records management conducted in Sydney by the Business Archives Council of Australia (NSW branch), November 1959/ edited by David S. Macmillan. Sydney: New Century Press, 1960. [Publication no. 3 of the Business Archives Council of Australia (NSW Branch)] (S651.5 R24)

GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK

File movement and resubmit systems/ Record Management Office, NSW. Sydney: Government Printer, 1982. [Publication on Records Management; no. 3] (SF658.5 F47r)

New South Wales. Records Management Office. General records disposal schedule. Sydney: Government Printer, 1980. [Publication on records management; no. 6] (SF 351.714 G28)

New South Wales. Records Management Office. Records operations workshop. Sydney: Government Printer, 1979. [Training course in Records Management/ Records Management Office, NSW] (SF 354.94400714 N42RE)

New South Wales. Records Management Office. Records scheduling and disposal. Sydney: Government Printer, 1982. [Publication on records management; 7] (SF 351.714 R24)

Russell, E.W. The state government task force of records management. Melbourne: Records Management Association of Australia (Victorian Branch), 1980. (LT 351.714 R91)

Victoria. Task Force on Records Management. Public Service of Victoria: report of the Task Force on Records Management. Melbourne: Public Records Office, Department of Property and Services and the Public Service Board of Victoria, 1979. 5 vols. (S 354.94500714 V66R)

GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK -- NSW

New South Wales. Records Management Office. Manual of keyword classification. Sydney: Government Printer, 1978. [Publication on Records Management; no. 5] (SF 351.714 Ar2)

Glossary of records management terms/ Records Management Office, NSW. Sydney: Government Printer, 1980. [Publication on Records Management; no. 8] (SF 651.503 N42G)

GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK -- U.S. -- ADDRESSES,
ESSAYS, LECTURES

Information management in public administration: an introduction and recourse guide to government in the information age/ edited by Forest W. Horton, Donald A. Marchand. Arlington, Va.: Information Resources Press, 1982.

GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK -- VICTORIA

Freedom of Information: the legislative and administrative dilemma/ edited by James N. Varghese. Melbourne: Records Management Association of Australia (Victorian Branch), 1981. (S 342.940853 F87V)

GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK -- HANDBOOKS, MANUALS,
ETC.

Municipal Association of Victoria. Records Management for local government. Melbourne: The Association, 1983. 3 vols. (SLTF 651.50202 R25M)

GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK -- VICTORIA -- STORAGE

Victoria. Public Records Office. Guidelines for the storage of Public Records: PROS 82/4. Melbourne: The Office, 1982. (SF351.714 V66G)

--Sue Hill

Biographical note: Sue Hill is Coordinator Information Services with BHP Petroleum P/L. She draws on previous records management experience in the State Electricity Commission of Victoria and Triad Information Management P/L. She did the M.A. course in Librarianship at Monash and does guest lectures in various schools of librarianship. On the Education Committee of the Victorian branch of the RMAA, she also lectures on information processing and systems at Prahran CAE.

**SMARTER OFFICE STRONGER FIRM
MANAGING YOUR OFFICE RECORDS**

I propose to discuss three points with you today. They are:

- What is and why Records Management?
- The future trends
- Some suggestions on how to improve your records.

What is Records Management?

Records Management is the skill to effectively and efficiently manage records and information from their creation to disposal.

Records Management is the art of organising the office memory.

Records Management is the Systematic Control over the creation, handling, processing, filing, retrieval, storage and disposal of information.

Records Management is not just a matter of filing paper records at the end of a task. It is not the last step in the production chain - it is the first step in the information retrieval chain.

Effective Records Management is:

1. Retrieving Information

To be an effective part of the office memory, records must be able to be retrieved when required. The key to this is proper indexing and an appropriate classification system.

2. Forms and Reports

These must be designed and prepared in the most economical fashion. Reports not needed should not be created. Forms must be easy to read and complete. Accurate reproduction and distribution must be assured.

3. Correspondence Control

Correspondence must be produced in the most effective way possible - after the need for the correspondence has been proved.

Word processing, dictating and other techniques, mailing (internal and external) are part of the total correspondence management program within the ambit of the Records Manager.

4. Inactive Records Storage

Records not needed for current decision-making or for legal reasons should not be stored in high-cost office areas, but in records centres for which there are proper specifications and procedures. Efficient reference and retrieval systems for such centres are essential.

5. File Management

An organisation requires a standard approach to filing for ready and prompt access by all who may need records on file.

Standard systems, with minimum types of filing supplies and equipment, can mean greater economy in cost and effort.

6. Microform Information Systems

Microform can be used for current information as well as for protecting and permanently storing vital records. Both computer output microfilm (COM) and source document filing answer these needs.

7. Protecting Vital Records

Professionally-planned procedures ensure that copies of records required to ensure continued operations of a company are available should a disaster occur.

8. Records Retention Schedules

Records held longer than required are costly because storage costs are high and they hinder and clog up retrieval procedures for current information.

Disposal schedules must be developed listing all types of records in an organisation and showing how long it must be kept and in what form. The schedule also shows whether the record has legal, fiscal, administrative or historical value.

9. Historical Documents

Most organisations have documents of historical importance to them, or even to a wider audience. These documents must be selected with great discretion and stored with care.

Why Records Management?

Records are an important resource just as are equipment, buildings, supplies and customers; and they need professional management to ensure maximum gains from these valuable resources.

Do not give the task to the most junior or least attractive member of your staff. Records Management is a management responsibility.

You must ask the following questions and have answers for them.

- Have you ever wished you could find a document more easily?
- Have you wanted to retrieve information faster?
- Have you ever thought what an expertly-designed index, microfilm or COM could do for your records?
- Have you ever wanted to upgrade your company forms but have feared the cost might outweigh the benefits?
- Are you keeping useless records?
- Are you keeping records as long as the law demands?
- Has lack of information because of lost or inaccessible records caused wrong decisions, perhaps costly ones?
- Do you know who outside the business has the right to see your records, and in what circumstances?
- Could you manage your correspondence better?

The future trends or The office of the future

The paper-less office is decades away, however the paperless office should be our aim.

In the year 2000, Bank Branches, general offices and other places of office work will assuredly look different from today and will certainly have different equipment.

However, they will still:

- Process information
- Co-ordinate business activities
- Act as a centre of communications
- Maintain records

New technology will enable these four essential functions to be carried out more efficiently and at less cost.

The potential is great. But we must advance with caution because:

- We must improve what we do now before we introduce new technology. If you have a mess it is pointless to automate it. You will then merely have an automated mess, and that's much worse than a manual one.

- Also because, we already have too much paperwork and we should be careful not to introduce techniques which will increase it in an attempt to produce a paperless office.

You must clean up the mess first. You all have no doubt known the following words of wisdom 'Garbage In - Garbage Out'. You should set in motion action to change the old manila folders with loose paper inside to a uniform titled and indexed file that holds only needed information on a single subject.

You will need to establish standardised index entry or keywords for the records. As an example, I have seen the same paper (information) filed under the following words:

- Night and Day Bank
- N & D
- ATM
- Automatic Telling Machine
- Plastic Cash
- Cash dispensing machines
- Customer Activated Terminal
- Automatic Banking
- Electronic Banking and Others.

Even after computerisation there will still be a need to have some form of input controls, eg standardisation of retrieval keywords. As an example, there are seven ways to spell the name Phillips. Do we retrieve information on Russia under:

- R - Russia
- U - USSR
- S - Soviet
- W - Warsaw Pact leader?

How do you title your customer files, how do you record the names of companies you deal with?

- The registered name
- the name used in the phone book
- the name on their letterhead

Some suggestions on how to improve your records

- Do not create paper records if not needed. Always question the need. The volume of paper used is doubling every four years.
- Use well-thought-out and designed forms.
- Keep only information that is really needed - only about 7% of paper filed is ever retrieved.
- When there is no requirement to retrieve the information at a later date, do not file it; put it in the rubbish bin.

- Keep the paper (information) in retrievable form.
- Have one-subject one-file, do not have carry-all 'correspondence with', miscellaneous files. Make them subject oriented.
- Standardise the file title format used.
- Develop a standard, plain English, known to all staff for index entry keywords and file titles.
- Keep the paper (information) only as is essential for operational, legal or archival purposes.
- Have regular purges of unneeded records - 60% of paper reduction is not uncommon.
- Do not regard filing as the last step in any process, but as the first step in the retrieval chain.

You might think these statements hardly need mentioning as they are all just codified common sense, but are they? How many here have a good well-run Records Management system?

Last but not least; join the Records Management Association of Australia!

SELLING RECORDS MANAGEMENT AS A CONCEPT

If we asked managers in corporate, semi-government or government environments how important they thought the records function was, the answer almost without exception would be "vitally important". The paradox is that in spite of this widely held view, in most organisations the records management function has been the "poor relation" when it comes to the allocation of funds or the introduction of technology.

To understand a little of the emergence of the records manager, we need to study the history. As the writers' experience has been almost exclusively in the public sector, we shall examine the issues from that perspective.

Historically most Victorian government departments grew out of what was previously known as the Chief Secretary's Office. In the old order, though there were separate organisational groups responsible for various initiatives, the ultimate power lay with the Chief Secretary. It is also significant to point out that the bureaucracy was responsible for far fewer services in the forties, fifties and sixties than it subsequently was in the seventies and is in the eighties.

In manpower terms this has meant a veritable explosion in staff numbers to deliver, monitor and evaluate a vastly expanded range of services. Consistent with dramatic increases in staff numbers there has been a corresponding increase in paper-based records.

Whereas previously the information base was relatively small, and accessed by far fewer staff it is now many times larger, covering a far wider range of topics and accessed by many times more staff. As a consequence, staff have been allocated solely to managing records. However, in most cases these have been far too few and poorly trained if at all.

Until recently there has been no formal course available in records management and related disciplines at the tertiary level. Traditionally therefore, records management has been seen as an unskilled discipline requiring minimal clerical skills and little or no training. Accordingly, positions have been classified at the lower end of the clerical or administrative scale.

Of course, history has proven that effective records managers need specialist training and highly developed clerical skills. Consequently, there has been a trend to re-evaluate positions in records management, resulting in a generally higher classification profile.

Traditionally, registries have been seen for the most part by the rest of the organisation as areas with little or no career prospect, catering for those with limited intelligence and a place to hide the trouble-maker. Conversely, junior officers seen as having a future are often conditioned to actively seek relocation within the organisation, if not offered a temporary position at the same or higher levels with the enticement of ultimate promotion out of the registry.

The records management function in the public sector, like other management support services, is quick to feel the effects of staff ceilings. Understandably, the first priority in allocating resources is in the service delivery or program development areas: in other words, those areas which politically get the most exposure. The imbalance between staff numbers in line areas and records management support staff has only exacerbated the problems of the records manager. The expectation that a full registry service will be provided with minimal staff does not diminish in these circumstances.

In recognition of the profound problems existing in the records management function across the public sector, the Victorian government through the Public Service Board appointed a Records Management Task Force in 1977. The brief of the Task Force was to examine:

- I. the development of an effective records management function in departments consistent with the requirements of the Public Records Act;
- II. the introduction of personnel management practices which would ensure the departments are staffed to capably perform the records management function in the most efficient and economic manner.

In 1979 the investigation of the Task Force was completed and the results were published in a five-volume report outlining the current and future needs in records management in the state of Victoria. Following the publication of the report, an implementation committee was appointed to review and advise on the main recommendations of the report. In the time elapsed since, its main thrust has been toward the improvement of records management practices. Primarily this has been achieved by the establishment of positions at levels capable of attracting staff of sufficient calibre to implement a program of remedial action.

The 1980s thus far have seen the emergence of information management as a vitally necessary and worthwhile function in the public sector. Of course records management is an integral part of the total function. At last, information management and the records manager operating within this discipline is beginning to realise equal status with other long recognised management support functions. Arguably, the scenario described in this article applies to a greater or lesser degree in all environments where records managers work.

The giant strides taken in the Victorian Public Sector in the late 70's and 80's have begun to shorten as government turns its attention to more universal political problems. It is up to us as records management professionals working in both this and other environments to continue to build on the gains made. Some would argue that the improved image of the records manager is beginning to erode. Perhaps this is due to a perception by our masters that we have not been able, as a group, to adapt quickly enough to harness technology and use it as an effective tool in information/records management. If such a claim has even partial substance, then it makes the role of the RMAA even more vital. Through this forum it is essential that a network of informed, responsive records professionals be developed.

This development will only occur through the active participation of the widest possible cross-section of people working in the discipline. Then, and only then, will our professional organisation have a voice of equal strength to those of other long-established and recognised professional organisations.

-- Peter Walker and Philip Taylor

Biographical notes: Peter is Records Manager at the Health Commission of Victoria, currently studying for his Graduate Diploma in Management. He has worked in records management for 19 years, primarily in state and Commonwealth government departments but also for a statutory authority and a professional service organisation. Increasing involvement in EDP-based systems has led him to his current responsibility for developing a system for a regionalised Health Commission.

Philip has worked in the area of records management for 15 years in various state government departments. His present duties include responsibility for the records management and office services in a division of the Health Commission. He has extensive experience in managing records offices and a keen interest in promoting education in records management. Presently he is President of the Victoria branch of the RMAA.