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Comments from the Chair

DAVID PRYDE, MRMA

RMAA Chairman of the Board

iQ / THE R·M·AA QUARTERLY

We Say NO to NAA Office Closures

Late last November, the National Archives of Australia (NAA) announced its intention to close its offices in Adelaide, Hobart and Darwin. The Christmas break delayed the mounting of an industry-wide protest, but now the voices of the RIM profession are being heard.

The National Archives of Australia has had its hands somewhat tied by reduced government funding, but this should not undermine the fact that government records underpin the rights and entitlements of all Australians.

On the world stage, government records allow citizens of the world to hold governments accountable for their actions and are thus an integral component of democracy. What will become of the democratic rights of Tasmanian, Northern Territory and South Australia researchers?

The closure of these National Archives offices will fetter the rights and privileges of hundreds of thousands of Australians, especially their right to easy access to government records. Not all the three offices' information will be online, and sometimes the original is required to give context that researchers cannot gain simply from an image.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF CUSTODIANSHIP
Good government recordkeeping promotes accountability and public confidence, but it also enhances and promotes our historical and cultural heritage. That is the custodianship that the NAA has been developing and nurturing for many years to the benefit of all Australians.

>> **"THESE CLOSURES WILL SET BACK GOVERNMENT RECORDKEEPING BY YEARS AND WILL SERIOUSLY UNDERMINE THE PUBLIC'S FAITH IN GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY"** <<

These closures will set back government recordkeeping by years and will seriously undermine the public's faith in government accountability and transparency.

It is heartening to see the Senate support the Australian Green Party's censure motion in November calling on the Australian Government to reverse the closures decision.

The RMAA will ensure that its voice is heard, to fight the good fight to retain these vital services.

David

From the CEO

KATE WALKER
FRMA MAICD AMIM, MBA, BSC (BAdm),
AdvDipBus (Rkg), DipBus (Adm)

RMAA Chief Executive Officer

iQ / THE R·M·A·A QUARTERLY

Focusing on Access

As the Chair and numerous other authors in this issue of *iQ* decry the reduction in access to NAA records that planned office closures represent, the RIM community is preparing for Information Awareness Month (IAM) in May, with its theme of 'Access Across the Generations'.

What is IAM? The purpose of Information Awareness Month is to increase awareness among the general public of the breadth of the industry and the importance of properly maintaining good records and information as it relates to everyone from global corporations through to small business and even the homemaker.

Rather than being a single event, it is an opportunity to run a series of information raising events throughout May each year whereby collaborating bodies can run events of direct interest to their members or join with other bodies to run joint events to promote cross-fertilisation of knowledge through information sharing, thereby raising awareness within the wider community.

It is commonly referred to using the acronym "I AM", as in I am an archivist, I am a librarian, I am a document manager, and so on, reflecting the diversity of roles in the information sector.

Each year, Information Awareness Month is themed to provide a common thread for all. In 2010, the 5th year that IAM has run, the theme is "Access across the Generations", recognising that each generation has its own way to search, use and keep information, but that technology and lifestyles are catalysts for change.

IAM's collaborating bodies include the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA), Australian Library & Information Association (ALIA), Institute of Information Management (IIM), Health Information Management Association of Australia (HIMAA), Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ), Archives New Zealand, Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV), National Archives of Australia (NAA), and ourselves, the Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA).

Other bodies with an interest in information management are welcome to become collaborating bodies and list events on the Information Awareness Month website calendar. There is a minimal annual administration fee towards the upkeep of the website and uploading of events on the calendar.

You may like to create a new event as a part of IAM, or you may care to move an existing event to May to bring it under the IAM umbrella. Any queries can be directed to the RMAA Marketing & Convention Officer, Kristen Keley, via email, at: kristen.keley@rmaa.com.au

RMAA IAM EVENTS

Each RMAA branch will be running local events in May. In addition, the RMAA is running an event in each branch (in some cases incorporated into the branch event) which will be a demonstration and discussion of Web 2.0 technologies such as Twitter, wikis, blogs, Facebook, My Space, Google wave and anything else that might be available by May 2010.

The theme of the demonstration is 'Catching the next wave of technology to connect the generations'. Areas for discussion could include the benefits and disadvantages of the technologies, and how to get the best out of the technologies and areas.

However, as presenters in each location will vary, there may be some differences in the technologies covered. Make sure you keep checking the IAM website regularly from April for updates and event listings.

I encourage you to get involved in IAM. It is the one time of year when the entire RIM industry combines to show our colleagues and the rest of business and government what we are about.

For more about Information Awareness Month, and details of how you can participate, visit the IAM website: www.informationawarenessmonth.com.au

Kate

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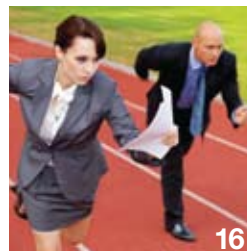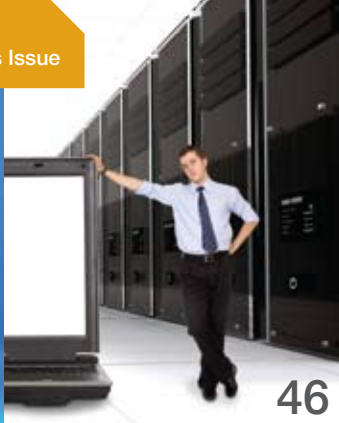
COVER STORY: A unique interview with RIM assocation chiefs in 5 countries

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

THE PROBLEM OF LABELING RECORDS

Several articles in this issue of *iQ* highlight the problem of locating records that have been wrongly, vaguely, or eccentrically labeled. A record is, after all, only as accessible as its title permits.

I regularly face the problem. For instance, recently, the picture editor for one of my publishers, in London, searching for 220 illustrations that I have nominated for my book *Legions of Rome*, due for publication later this year, could not locate a particular image of a Roman centurion. All museum images were labeled 'Roman soldiers,' because those filing the images were insufficiently knowledgeable about the Roman military to differentiate between legionaries and centurions.

After more than 30 years' study of the legions, I can spot a centurion in an instant; for one thing, they wore their swords on the left, legionaries on the right. But people labeling the images for filing often wouldn't know that, so we end up with hundreds of 'Roman soldier' images that have to be pored through.

From dusty archives to the Internet, inadequate and inconsistent file labeling is a problem that plagues users. And there is no easy solution.

OBJECTIVE RMAA ARTICLE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Don't forget that every article published in *iQ* by RMAA members and employees of corporate members of the RMAA is automatically eligible for this award.

Objective

RMAA Article of the Year
AWARD

The journal's Editor is always happy to discuss article ideas with, and receive submissions from first-time authors; simply send us an email.

NAA, OR SOONAA?

As a regular user of archives around the world, I'd like to add my voice to the chorus of complaint in this issue of *iQ* about the planned closures of NAA offices in Adelaide, Hobart and Darwin.

Can every NAA customer use a computer? Is every single NAA record available online? I don't think so. The alternative won't be just a matter of hopping in the car and driving to another city with a NAA office. In Darwin's case, foreign capitals Port Moresby and Jakarta are closer than Brisbane, which will be the nearest Australian capital with a NAA office. Meanwhile, 'overseas' researchers in Tasmania will have to take out their swimming trunks to cross Bass Strait.

We all appreciate that the NAA has been required by its political masters to cut costs. But the cost of these closures cannot be measured in dollars. If the NAA proceeds with them, it cannot continue to call itself a national organisation. It will become SOONAA – Sort Of Our National Archives of Australia. And the SOONA the message of protest registers with the archives' political masters, the better.

Stephen Dando-Collins
Editor, *iQ* Magazine
editor.iq@rmaa.com.au

WORLDWIDE NEWS

RMAA DECRIES MOOTED ARCHIVES NZ MERGER

AUCKLAND: Chair of the RMAA, David Pryde, MRMA, has hit out at renewed National Government studies to subordinate Archives NZ into another public sector agency.

The disclosure came in an internal Archives NZ memo leaked to Wellington's *Dominion Post* newspaper in November. The leaked memo, signed by Archives NZ Acting Chief Executive, Greg Goulding, warned his staff that the State Services Commission is considering merging the 'guardian of the nation's public records' into another agency, the newspaper reported. Mr Goulding told staff that the SSC review would not change the department's role, function or activities.

David Pryde reacted sharply to the disclosure. He told *iQ*: "Archives NZ is the watch dog and custodian for the records of public office and the conscience of the nation. A merger of this sort cannot be allowed to happen."

Mr Pryde, emphasising that the RMAA, the peak records & information management body in Australasia, was concerned about any discussions being held considering merging Archives NZ into another branch of government.

He said: "If Archives New Zealand becomes tethered within another ministry portfolio, all the good work of the Public Records Act 2005 may be undone as the transparency and accountability that it promised New Zealanders could be perceived to be influenced by the managing ministry."

Strong reaction to the *Dominion Post* revelations also came from the Opposition Labour Party's state services spokesman, Grant Robertson who pointed out: "It is odd that we find this out from a leak. Why was no public statement made? I don't see the need for change. If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Archives NZ had powers to insist certain information was preserved and transferred, and it could independently audit recordkeeping practices in public offices, Mr Robertson said. To ensure its independence, he said, it was important the chief executive, who was also the chief archivist. was not beholden to anyone else.

The new merger plan is close to National Party policy a decade ago before it lost power to Labour in the 1999 General Election. The Archives and Records Association of NZ (ARANZ) fought the

'subordination' moves through the law courts for two years before the change of government put an end to the matter.

Within a year of coming to office, the new Labour Government, encouraged by its history PhD Treasurer Dr Michael Cullen, established Archives NZ as a separate government agency, in opposition to then State Services Commissioner's still strong recommendations for absorbing the institution into a big national heritage agency.

ARCHIVES NZ PILOTS AGENCY AUDITS

WELLINGTON: Archives New Zealand is piloting government agency recordkeeping audits this year, the first shots in its new responsibilities under the New Zealand Public Records Act 2005.

The audit programme is the work of the Government Recordkeeping Group at Archives NZ, where, in the last quarter of 2009, Public Records Audit Programme Manager Richard Hipgrave and two senior advisers developed the audit tool as an easy-to-use, Web-based application.

Archives NZ reports that the team has developed the audit programme's methods and reporting formats ready to begin work in public offices this year with "fine tuning" pilot schemes. Full-scale operations will commence in 2011, the institution says.

ORIGIN PILOTS THE POWER OF ECM

SYDNEY: Origin Energy has put its foot in the electronic content management water by announcing a trial of an Objective solution within some of its corporate business units.

Origin Energy, an ASX Top 20 corporation, is the largest integrated energy company operating across Australia and New Zealand. With interests in gas and oil exploration and production, power generation and energy retailing.

Origin's Objective pilot will cover selected business units, but will not include its retail teams.

The announcement of the Origin contract followed shortly after the release in Australia of Objective 7.4. The Objective 7.4 content, collaboration and process management solution was launched the same week as Microsoft's new Windows 7 Operating System, and is compatible with both Vista and Windows 7.

RAINDRIP FIRST OPEN SOURCE ERMS AWARDED DOD CERTIFICATION

WASHINGTON DC: Open Source ERMS software RAINdrip has received US Department of Defense DoD 5015.2 certification, becoming the first Alfresco software to meet the exacting standard.

In Australia, local vendor Lateral Minds has built a localisation of this model that configures the software to ICA 2008 Guidelines. Already piloted in Australia, the solution was demonstrated at the RMAA's 2009 International Convention in Adelaide.

IGNORING LETTER OF THE LAW COSTLY FOR PEPSI

MADISON, WISCONSIN: A county court judge has hit the PepsiCo soft drinks giant with a US$ 1.2 billion damages judgment over a letter that was not put on file.

The court in the mid-Western state of Wisconsin was told that a PepsiCo secretary did not react properly to a letter about the pending trial. US media was filled with gleeful reports on the fizzy snafu. 'An expensive lesson on the importance of reading your mail', said the global agency Reuters.

The legal letter, requiring PepsiCo to appear in court, was received but not filed by the company's secretary, with the result that the summons to appear was ignored. 'Pepsi no-show in Court

is costly', declared the local Milwaukee *Journal Sentinel*. The *National Law Journal* blog remarked: 'What's the cost of not showing up to court?' The question should be, 'What's the cost of poor or non existent recordkeeping?'

PepsiCo, which is appealing the judgment, was quoted as acknowledging an 'internal process issue'.

COURT RULES METADATA PART OF THE PUBLIC RECORD

PHOENIX, ARIZONA: A State Supreme Court judge has reversed two contrary lower court decisions, ruling that metadata is, after all, part of the public record.

'Metadata is part of the underlying document,' ruled Justice W Scott Bales. 'It does not stand on its own. When a public officer uses a computer to make a public record, the metadata forms part of the document as much as the words on the page.'

Justice Bales was hearing the complaint of a Phoenix policeman's allegation that critical records on his work performance had been back-dated. The city had refused to release its metadata record to settle the dispute.

In reporting this case, *Wired Magazine* also noted that a similar case was being heard in the Supreme Court of Washington State.

NEW US ARCHIVIST CONFIRMED

WASHINGTON, DC: The US Senate has confirmed the appointment of New York Public Library senior manager David S. Ferriero, as Archivist of the United States, more than three months after he was nominated by President Barack Obama.

The confirmation came more than a month after a Senate committee quizzed the high-profile librarian about two overriding concerns – electronic records man-

agement and the costs associated with running the Presidential Library system.

Mr Ferriero told the committee: "The ability of the Archives to fulfil its mission in the electronic environment is just one of

David Ferriero

PHOTO: TODD EBERLE, NYPL

the many challenges on the agenda for the new Archivist.

"Of equal concern are issues of collection security, the future of the Presidential Library system, backlogs in processing, staff job satisfaction, stakeholder relationships, preservation and storage needs, to name but a few."

The new Chief Archivist was sworn in on November 3. No explanation for the committee's lethargic processes has been given, although one Washington commentator told *Informaa New Zealand*: "Sadly, it may just be that the Republicans don't get it for that position and consider it a giveaway." **iQ**

Announced NAA Office Closures Take Three States and Territories off the Records Map

Special Report 1

By **MIKE STEEMSON**, ARMA, *iQ* Contributing Editor

The balloon went up after South Australia State Library librarian Jenny Scott heard something nasty on the Adelaide grapevine and posted: "Am I missing something?" She wasn't, of course. A day later, National Archives of Australia Director-General Ross Gibbs revealed on the Web: "We are closing state offices in Adelaide, Darwin and Hobart over the next two-and-a-half years as building leases expire."

The archives cat had not stayed in the bag for long. Four days before his announcement, Mr Gibbs and his two assistant director-generals met their staff in the three centres. Within hours, the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) had mounted a detailed Web warning of "regional job cuts hit NAA" to save AU$5 million over three years and 20 jobs.

A brief pause for aghast disbelief then, even before the Director-General's confirming Web posting, the Aus-Archivist listserv lit up with dismay and plans for official protests.

"This must indeed be resisted," clarioned Sydney University Archivist Anne Picot. Northern Territory Government agency information policy advisor Barry Garside warned of hurting an "already disadvantaged group in our society". Others called "I'm with you", "We should fight this one" and "Publicity is the only way to win this campaign".

NAA Director-General Gibbs saw where the blame lay. His Web statement began: "You will now be aware that on 2 November the Australian Government, as part of its Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) statement, announced that the National Archives, along with other government agencies, are required to find significant budget savings."

But then: "In order to make savings of this order, to meet current commitments and move to being a 21st century organisation that can meet future demands, we need to make fundamental changes to the way we operate," he said.

Director-General Gibbs went on: "The decision to close these particular offices was difficult, but is, I believe, a responsible one."

Listserv contributors quickly voiced suspicion that this might be a revelation of another NAA agenda: centralisation of all the agency's operations and eventual
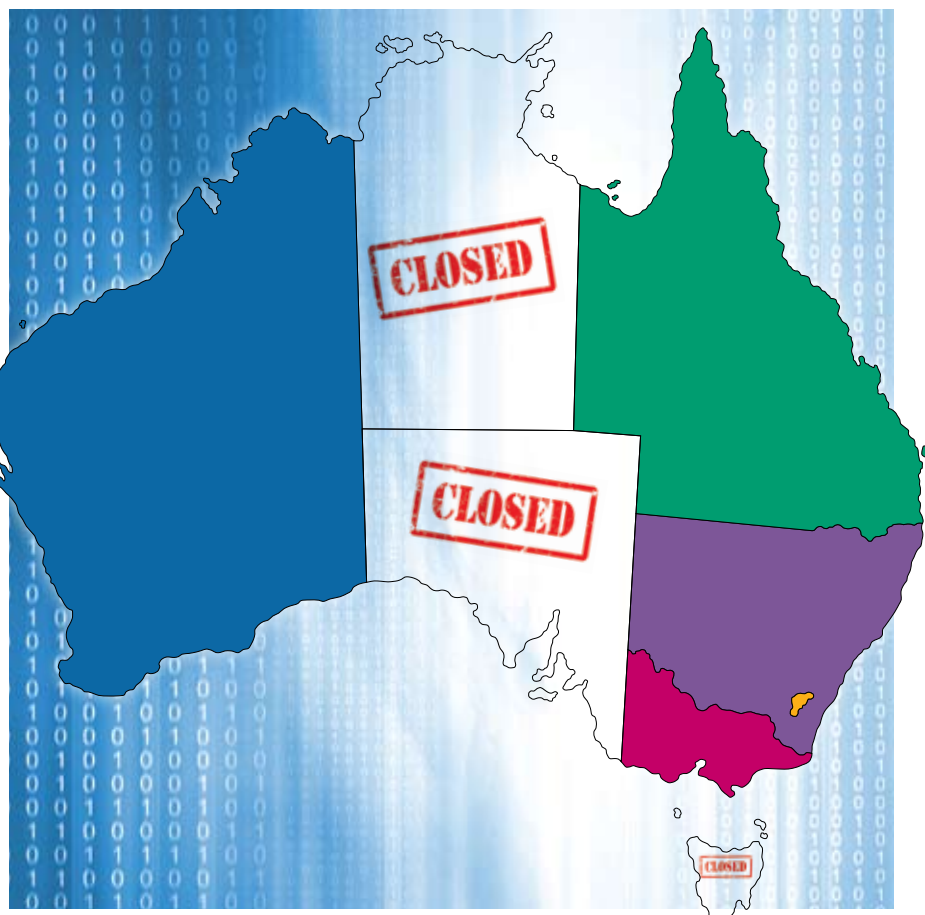
total reliance on online access. Commonwealth Bank information manager, Chris Hurley, MRMA, pin-pointed "whether these closures are being made unwillingly in response to funding cuts or in furtherance of a policy to centralise all records in Canberra".

Mr Gibbs said the Darwin office would close next September 20, Adelaide on March 30, 2011, Hobart's record store next August and its reading room on April 30 2012. The Canberra head office would also "bear budget cuts", later explained as staff losses by natural attrition.

Records would be "relocated" to Melbourne or Sydney or perhaps lodged with "sympathetic local cultural heritage institutions". The statement closed with a plea for "the support of our colleagues, professional organisations and key stakeholders to manage this change". It was a faint hope.

Archives and records professionals organised a deluge of protest emails and letters to Mr Gibbs and Federal and State politicians. They swapped texts of their angry letters to leaders like Senator Joe Ludwig, Cabinet Secretary and Special

Minister of State responsible for NAA; the Federal Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon; the Federal Minister for Regional Development, Anthony Albanese, and a clutch of local MPs.

FIGHTING WORDS

There were fighting words:

"The Federation is barely a century old and already it is planned to close archives in three states."

"It is absolutely unacceptable for the Commonwealth to pass on responsibility for a core function of the Commonwealth government to already cash-strapped States and Territories."

"The proposed closure will cause an irreparable breach of trust in this government's concern for Indigenous people."

"You may be assured that your government has not heard the last of this."

This was in stark contrast to New Zealand recordkeepers' response to publication, just days before the NAA announcement, of a leaked document disclosing NZ Government resuscitation of thwarted 1990's plans to sink Archives New Zealand into a dominant government ministry, (*see earlier Industry News item*).

Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ) President Joanna Newman has since expressed that organisation's dismay at the 'machinery of government review' involved in that projected absorption, but otherwise, reaction on the NZ Records listserv: zilch.

In Australia, the NAA announcement soon drew industry association response. RMAA CEO, Kate Walker, FRMA, posted: "The RMAA has been in contact with numerous and relevant parties and made known our feelings on the matter and we are committed to continuing this worthwhile fight." Association chairman, David Pryde, MRMA, promised a fight to "retain these vital services".

Australia Society of Archivists President, Jackie Bettington, had words with Mr Gibbs, too, and promised to work "with other associations including the RMAA so we can formulate a well considered and effective strategy". She warned: "The issues are complex, emotions high and we have time to think before we act."

The ASA's NSW Branch unanimously accepted a call to government to "uphold its promise of greater openness and accountability". Other branches

followed suit. The Professional Historians Association joined the campaign. The Adelaide City Council and its Lord Mayor, Michael Harbison, protested to the Federal Government and demanded a re-think.

The CPSU called for members' support while it examined "the legal and industrial implications of the situation at the Archives".

The Australian Green Party moved a successful motion in the Senate which called on the Government to halt the closures "to ensure all Australians have access to the archive collection in their state or territory". The motion is not binding on the Government, but it was a moral victory for those opposed to the closures.

Back at the coalfaces, information management personnel circulated a petition to Federal Parliament demanding that MPs provide funds to sustain the threatened offices and "instruct the National Archives of Australia to reverse its decision". That petition was to be presented to Parliament when it resumed on February 2.

It is proving to be another tears and sweat fight; without blood, so far. And it is an issue that will not be allowed to die. **iQ**

The Uproar and the Outcry

iQ asked leading records management practitioners and records users in the affected centres and around the nation for their responses to the announced closures. Here is what they had to say.

Aimed at an Easy Target

By **JENNY SCOTT**, Content Services Librarian, State Library of South Australia; Adelaide

South Australians were shocked and outraged at the news of the closure of the Adelaide office, but perhaps not completely surprised.

Adelaide has been made an easy target for closure by the NAA ever since 2001 when the bulk of the South Australian collection of some 30,000 metres was sent interstate, leaving only a tenth of

the records in the city's Angas Street building. The small size of this facility has also disallowed the transfer of any new records from state-based federal agencies, with local records that have been approved for transfer to the Archives going directly interstate.

Staff numbers have been reduced to the point where there is no longer an on-site State Director. Services have been eroded. Reading room hours have been cut from five days a week to three, and local contact with agency records management staff diverted to an online Agency Service Centre.

Despite NAA rhetoric as a "national organisation", when it comes to a budgetary crunch core services in the

three capitals are easier to cut than the funding for glossy publications, exhibitions, promotional events and websites, and overseas travel.

Federal departments in Adelaide that have a business need to access their many non-current records will also have to contend with increased costs and delays. And so much for helping the Forgotten Australians and Stolen Generations to find records of their families. In South Australia, they will very largely stay lost and forgotten.

Sadly, the archival sector will lose, too. It is all too likely that, in the current job market, the six displaced NAA staff will be unable to find new work within our profession.

Alternative Based on an Incorrect Assumption

By **ROB THORNTON**, Manager, Records and Archives Services, Adelaide City Council; Adelaide.

National Archives needs budget savings, but we are concerned at the loss of local access to historical State records and the consequent disadvantages imposed on local researchers, organisations and the public in obtaining information held in local archives.

Offers to replace the NAA's service are based on the assumption that every archives user has access to a computer and a broadband Internet connection. What is more, online digitised versions of documents held elsewhere are only a partial solution to the loss of local access. They are pale substitutes for direct access to original source materials.

The use of technology to provide only online reference services will exclude some users disadvantaged by the so-called "digital divide", especially older Australians doing genealogical research, indigenous people of the Stolen Generations and the child migrant Forgotten Australians attempting to trace their families.

Closure of the office denies face-to-face contact with experienced archives staff, so important where mediated access and the creation of a personalised source analysis, search strategy and search room support are needed to identify and interpret records, and to gain an understanding of their historical and administrative contexts.

The NAA office is located in Angas Street in the Adelaide CBD, close to the State Records Research Centre and the council's City Archives, each within easy walking distance of another. There is much cross referencing and user interaction.

Despite increasing use of online services there does not appear to be any dramatic decline in the number of visitors to the Adelaide archives reading rooms.

It demonstrates why the Adelaide City Council has challenged the Federal Government to stop the closures and recognise the value of community-based archives services giving South Australians access to their documentary heritage in their home state.

Heartbreaking for the Stolen Generation

By **BAIBA BERZINS**, FASA, Northern Territory Archives Service, 1987-90; freelance historian, archivist and valuer, and her husband, **DR PETER LOVEDAY,** AM, PhD, Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, Australia; Darwin.

Closure of the Darwin office would be especially heartbreaking because it holds records of particular significance to the Indigenous people of the Northern Territory.

Many were among the Stolen Generation, and the information about their parentage, their siblings and entitlements is usually held only in records in the NAA, Darwin. The office also holds critical records for land claims and compensation matters.

The NAA Darwin office staff work extremely hard to facilitate access to these records and ensure that indigenous visitors are treated with respect and understanding. Many clients have no experience of dealing with archives, many come from remote communities and have little or no skills for dealing with computers.

One of the people who worked in there in the 1980s writes: 'I was privileged to work with Indigenous people who were seeking information about families, some members of which they weren't even aware.

'This was the vanguard of the Stolen Generation juggernaut and was only made possible because the records were in the area where the people lived. It was traumatic enough, but had the people been required to research in Canberra or some other southern centre, it would have been impossible.'

> **"THE CLOSURE PLAN IS TOTALLY CONTRARY TO THE GOVERNMENT'S "CLOSING THE GAP" OBJECTIVE"**

While broadband telecommunication allegedly covers 98% of Australia, the NAA Darwin office deals with much of the other 2% where it doesn't exist for both indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

The closure plan is totally contrary to the government's "Closing the Gap" objective. It will cause an irreparable breach of trust in this government's concern for indigenous people.

Prejudiced Against Older Users

By **JOHN COOK**, 74-year-old retired head keeper of Tasmanian lighthouses, autobiographer, user of NAA Tasmanian office; Hobart.

I would be really p----d off if the Hobart NAA office in Macquarie Street closes. I'm writing my autobiography, and need to read the logs and papers of the old Australian Maritime Safety Authority light keepers. I am really cross.

I was there when the service was entirely manual. Kerosene lights. No telephones and radios in those days. I need to look up and remind myself all about what happened when we went automatic, in the late 70's and onwards.

What do they expect me to do once they close? Fly to bloody Melbourne each time I need to look something up?

I served in the Royal Australian Navy, just missing Korea, and finishing as airman mechanic in the RAN's capital ships, HMAS *Sydney* and *Melbourne*. When I spotted an advertisement for a lighthouse keeper, I thought "That'll do me". I spent the next 25 years guarding Tasmania's rugged, tempestuous shores.

Now, I want to write my own story. There are lots of good books about lighthouses, full of technical details and that. But I want to write about my life, my history.

I'm computer savvy, but I know how long it takes to access Web page documents, and I don't like doing it. It's too complicated. All those numbers. I'd rather sit down with the papers and books. I can read those and turn to other documents if they lead to something new. It's not all online.

The Hobart office is scheduled to close in 2012. Will I have finished my research by then? Have to, won't I. But there's always something else you need to follow-up on, isn't there.

A Precipitous Decision Affecting the Smallest and Poorest

By **ANNE PICOT**, Tasmania-born Archivist, University of Sydney; Sydney.

It is dismaying that this Labor Government that promised in its 2007 election policies to "reform the Commonwealth *Freedom of Information Act 1982* with the principal objects of promoting a pro-disclosure culture across the Government and building a stronger foundation for more openness in government", should now preside over budget cuts necessitating closure of National Archives of Australia offices in the nation's smallest and poorest states and territory.

It is hard to know what is more offensive, for the sake of saving less than $5 million over three years, the people of a major portion of the Commonwealth are to be deprived of access to archival records which their taxes funded, or that the proposal that the "cash-strapped" national institution is going to appeal to the charity of the far more cash-strapped state or territory archives to shoulder the burden instead.

The Director-General has called the closure decision "a responsible one". It would certainly be helpful to know where the drive to close these offices is coming from, and whether there is an underlying strategy that has now been revealed.

Any legal – never mind moral – obligations under the memoranda of understanding governing access for people of the Stolen Generations seem to have been overlooked. I wonder, too, what notice if any was given the Commonwealth agencies in each region about the relocation of their records and the future arrangements for transfers and access.

What does seem to be true is that this was a precipitous decision with very little detail worked out, including redundancy payments for staff, practical discussions of the relocation of any of the records, and actual costings of the closures. **iQ**

Malaysian Chapter the RMAA's First Step into Asia

By **DAVID PRYDE**, MRMA

Late last year, the Records Management Association of Australasia established a new chapter, in Malaysia, taking the RMAA into its third country. Here, the Association's Chair reports on the development.

Kuala Lumpur

Before I delve into the excitement surrounding the establishment of the Malaysian Chapter, I need to give the reader a little background that will set the scene and hopefully convey why this opportunity came about and how the chapter transpired.

At the present time, the world's records and information management spotlight is on Australasia, especially after significant parts of the Australian Standard AS4390.1-6 were adopted into the International Standard AS ISO15489.1-2 in 2002. Its acceptance by most of the western world, except a few countries which are still arguing about definitions and semantics, was seen as a 'watershed' for the records and information management community.

In the following years, larger and more renowned RIM communities, especially in North America and Europe began to monitor the progress of these Australians and New Zealanders. Was this a 'flash in the pan', or would the phenomenon created in their standard, follow-on to more supportive legislative direction and innovative recordkeeping?

I'm sure that anyone working in the profession since that time would agree that ISO15489 has led to a government recordkeeping 'epiphany', supported by technology. It has raised the profile of records and information management as a facilitator of transparent and accountable government, and business, and for the first time ever it has provided opportunities to engage with IT professionals in the management of electronic records.

So, what has this got to do with a Malaysian Chapter? The RMAA Board realised very quickly that although we had made a mark on the world stage, we were not involving ourselves outside our region. We were not participating in any of the recognised mainstream events such as Cohasset and ARMA to see what was happening in the RIM world. Our knowledge of these events came from what we read and the occasional keynote at our annual convention.

With this in mind, our CEO Kate Walker was asked to attend a number of these conventions to expand our international network, to forge relationships and possible alliances. With the result that she has been very successful in

promoting the RMAA and building strategic alliances across the world with 'like associations', vendors and practitioners. It is because of these foundations and Kate's hard work that our office receives regular requests (daily, weekly), for speakers at events, to run training at all levels, or to just get involved.

AN EMAIL FROM KUALA LUMPUR

It is against this backdrop that the CEO received an email from a group of highly motivated RIM professionals in Kuala Lumpur at the Records Management Institute (RMi), a company very interested in the development of government recordkeeping, especially after the National Archives of Malaysia translated ISO 15489 into Malaysian Standard M2223.

After much email discussion involving questions and explanations on both sides, a point was reached where it was impossible to progress any further without a meeting. Both the CEO and the Chair agreed to travel to Kuala Lumpur to see the situation first-hand and possibly meet with government officials to ascertain whether government recordkeeping was a high priority.

We had several meetings with the Director of Planning & Coordination at the National Archives of Malaysia, the Secretary-General of the Malaysian Government, the Secretary of the Malaysian Senate, and a Malaysian High Court official.

Discussions were cordial, but similar themes and concerns emerged as we moved between offices. Recordkeeping in Kuala Lumpur is basically okay, but in the regional areas it is not so good. When the government can't produce evidence of its decision-making process because records are lost or misplaced, it leads to claims of corruption and cover-ups.

No government can afford information accidents at any time, but the frequency of their occurrence is a major concern for the Malaysian Government. The government is very keen to establish records frameworks and apply best practice processes as per M2223, especially as it comes into an election year. All public offices have been provided with copies of the Standard. However, at this time it is not mandatory! A point we tried to bring to their attention.

We spent a great deal of time with our hosts from RMi, who were most gracious and generous in facilitating meetings, chauffeuring us to and from appointments and then giving us an education in local Malaysian cuisine. I can report that we tried everything suggested, and did not shy away from anything!

Given the obvious need for RIM development in the public sector in Malaysia, a role that our hosts from RMi have the expertise and business plan to exploit, the CEO and I both believe the RMAA can contribute to that growth while at the same time expanding the Association's membership base and thus our influence into Asia.

FIRST PROFESSIONAL MEMBERS

Before we left Kuala Lumpur, the team from RMi showed great interest in becoming professional members of the RMAA, to fulfil the governance requirements before the Malaysian Chapter could be established. After examination of documented evidence of knowledge and experience the Chapter was established with four professional members leading its Council.

Those first four professional members of the Chapter are:

- Mahendrarajah Selvarajah, ARMA (President)
- Sunderaj Perumal, ARMA
- Prabhananth Gangadaram, ARMA
- Gunalan Palaniappan, ARMA

Both Mahendrarajah and Gunalan attended the RMAA's 26th International Convention in Adelaide last September, making a great impact on delegates and exhibitors alike. At the time of writing, a number of our established ANZ members are planning trips to Kuala Lumpur to deliver training and other services as a result of the new relationships formed in Adelaide.

The future for the RMAA in Asia has only just begun. **iQ**

Mahendrajah Selvarajah, first President of the Malaysian Chapter of the RMAA

> **"RECORDKEEPING IN KUALA LUMPUR IS BASICALLY OKAY, BUT IN THE REGIONAL AREAS IT IS NOT SO GOOD"**

Updating the Review of the Statement of Knowledge

Special Report 3

By **DR SIGRID MCCAUSLAND**, and **MARIAN HOY**, MRMA

Marian Hoy

Dr Sigrid McCausland

As part of the review of the 'Statement of Knowledge for Recordkeeping Professionals' by the joint Education Steering Committee of the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) and the RMAA, two workshops were held; in Adelaide as part to the RMAA Convention and then in Brisbane as part of the Joint PARBICA-ARANZ-ASA Conference.

Thirty-five dedicated participants spent a very productive time exploring the changes in the wider information and community environment over the five years since the Statement was first drafted. The workshops also explored perspectives of different stakeholder groups that engage with recordkeeping. Workshop participants work in diverse contexts across the information sector in Australia and New Zealand and came from several professional associations.

The workshops explored different meanings of community to gain a better understanding of the recordkeeping context outside government and business and large not-for-profit organisations that have more formal recordkeeping environments. Concepts of community where records and memory play a role include communities based on faith, cultural, family or heritage ties such as indigenous or migrant groups, and clan societies.

Other meanings include groups who share a common goal, such as sporting organisations, community arts groups and social networking environments. Another interpretation of community associates with the concept of carer or custodian, such as local historical or museum groups who manage collections at a local level, involving objects, records, artifacts, physical or virtual sites.

The aim of exploring the concept of community was to gain as wide an understanding as possible of the different contexts in which records and memory are created. The workshops did not seek to define communities or their concept of recordkeeping, but to explore multiple meanings.

CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

The workshops also explored how the environment had changed with respect to three knowledge domains: records and recordkeeping systems, the broader context, and recordkeeping processes and practices. Discussion also covered changes in the electronic recordkeeping space, and the increased diversity in how records are created and managed in government, business and community spheres. This change needs to be reflected in the statement without 'dating' the statement itself. The statement, however, needs to be clear that engaging with this space is essential.

Using the '4 hats' principle, the workshops explored the perspectives of four groups that could potentially engage with the Statement of Knowledge (SoK):

• Educators and trainers;

• Students and early career professionals;

• More seasoned practitioners such as managers and supervisors; and

• Community memory keepers.

Other general issues discussed included preparation of an executive summary, a glossary, and a more interactive component to link knowledge and career pathways. There certainly needs to be a balance between adding more content to reflect a wider range of recordkeeping contexts and still keeping the document concise.

The workshops also compared the SoK to other knowledge and competency frameworks, to determine similarities and differences. These included 'The library and information sector: core knowledge, skills and attributes' by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA),[1] a review of competencies by the Australian Computer Society[2] and the 'Integrated Leadership System' by the Australian Public Service Commission.[3]

A wealth of information was gathered through the workshops, with 16 pieces of flipchart paper to analyse. With individual comments provided separately to the workshops, including some very valuable comments from students at Curtin University, the working group has considerable information to support the next stage. This will involve collating the information and identifying small chunks of work for the wider reference group to work on.

Participants found the workshops stimulating and thought-provoking, and an avenue to see different perspectives. Sigrid and Marian would like to thank everybody who has been involved in the workshops, writing up flipchart notes and submitting individual comments, as well as the organisers of the RMAA Convention and the PARBICA/ARANZ/ASA Conference, for providing rooms and facilities for the workshops. **iQ**

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ON THE RECORD

I ask you… More questions for records professionals

By **GLENN SANDERS**, MRMA

IS THE THESAURUS A DEAD ANIMAL?

Recently, Theresa Reqli of CMS Watch revisited an earlier thread on the death of the taxonomy (http://www.cmswatch.com/Trends/1737-Death-of-Taxonomies-Revisited?source=RSS). In the records world we mostly call such things thesauruses – which they are not.

The argument is that, as search software and automatic indexing and analysis software improves – and you'd better believe it – there will be less need for the expensive and inflexible tools produced by human effort. Add to this that folksonomies and the like are better able to provide the flexibility required to adapt to rapidly changing user needs, and it's easy to see why our traditional records thesauruses have no future as a general purpose tool, if they ever were such a beast.

Of course, if you use your thesaurus to do only disposal, rather than as a finding aid for end users, then you've got a different challenge. As we go increasingly electronic, the inexorable logic of the big bucket approach will mean that the traditional thesaurus is unnecessary: my next disposal schedule, in a large government organisation, may have fifteen or twenty terms – that's *terms*, not top terms. Maintaining that won't be a full time job.

I've long pondered why the records world doesn't use or understand thesauruses properly. Twenty years ago, a library user searching for *automobiles* would be told – by the software – that the preferred term was *cars*, and shown the results for a search on *cars*. What's more, the same functionality provided guidance through the maze of organisational history: earlier and later names, splits and mergers.

A thesaurus is one of a family of terms including ontology, taxonomy and classification. But if it lacks semantic guidance, it's not a thesaurus, it's a file plan, or, in specialised form, just a disposal schedule. In records, we don't even have this semantic functionality in most of our software systems.

Even thesauruses, as defined by the ISO standards, are now inadequate. Most organisations have clusters of terms which demand several equivalent synonyms. It is a distortion to say that one of these must be *the* preferred term, because

it depends, for example, if you are in the legal, technical or public domain.

A century ago, faceted classifications using index cards were common in research organisations throughout Europe, and we are only now able once again to provide that flexibility to our users, through tools such as folksonomies.

THE FUD FACTOR

A while ago I received a sales letter which suggested, basically, that I had a 'duty of care' to purchase their products. It reminded me of the FUD factor – fear, uncertainty and doubt – popularly attributed to the once-dominant IBM. You'd hear it at sales presentations when competing products were mentioned: "Well, that's not *standard* you know".

I think I'm quite capable of assessing the risks involved with my duty of care, and taking appropriate action, which may include doing nothing. I certainly don't need advice from a sales rep. How do you react to FUD? **iQ**

- Get back to me on the RMAA listserv, or at, sandersinfo@gmail.com.

About the Author
GLENN SANDERS, BA, Dip Lib (UNSW), GDDM, MBII (RMIT), MRMA, has been involved in managing information in government and the private sector, for over thirty years. As a freelance consultant, he introduced computer systems into many organisations.
Long a proponent of decentralised operations, he has also set up two large central records facilities. Recently he has been involved in selecting and implementing electronic document management systems, and managing a large hardcopy cleanup prior to a major office relocation.
Sometimes, he's been known to do a bit of sailing and bushwalking.

ON THE PROFESSIONAL EDGE in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada, and the USA

In a unique five-way interview, *iQ* talks to RIM industry leaders in five countries on three continents, to discover what gives them the professional edge and where they see opportunities for a professional edge for RIM in the future.

***iQ*: Successful sports people, actors, authors, adventurers and business moguls have various techniques for giving themselves a professional edge in their particular fields. Is there a philosophy that you have followed/borrowed to give you a professional edge in the way you do business?**

Irene Gelyk: The philosophy that I have used is the motto from when I was a 4-H Club member in my teens, 'Learn to do by doing'. I've always been one to get in there and do the job and try to do it right the first time.

I've also told myself, and team members, to never be afraid to ask questions. When in doubt, ask. I'd rather take a couple of minutes to ask a question and get clarification than to discover that the job was not done right, and then have to spend hours to fix it.

Kate Walker: My philosophy? To make a difference in people's lives and organisations through expert advice, personal empowerment, and compassion.

Paula J Smith: My philosophy in business, as in life, is simple: respect the pitch and respect the opposition. You have to respect the organisation you are working for, its environment and its culture. While I don't always agree with everything that has happened in the organisations I have worked for over the years, I still respect them.

Likewise for your colleagues. And while I wouldn't go as far as to say that IT are the 'opposition', there have been times when it has felt like it! But everyone comes to the table with their own preconceptions, their own subconscious and conscious prejudices. The important thing is to respect them as individuals and colleagues, people with their own special skill sets.

Doug Allen: The philosophy I have followed throughout my professional career has been to master the knowledge base required of the field within which I work, to understand who to call on when I have gaps in that knowledge, and then to apply that knowledge in working with fellow professionals to meet the challenges of the moment.

Matthew Stephenson: A good friend is a senior manager at Gap, and 10 years ago they launched a campaign called 'Words to live by' to develop and engage their staff. Although they're rather glib, the principles behind them have stuck with me ever since.

They are very simple principles which, if you do live by them, give you a professional edge: Everyone Counts. Every Difference Makes a Difference. Own It, Do It, Done. Less is More. Simplify. Take the Smart Risk. Do it Better Every Day. And, Do the Right Thing.

***iQ*: Do you have a professional edge hero, not necessarily in RIM, who inspires you and/or the way you approach business? And why are they your hero?**

Kate Walker: Oh, yes : Steven Paul 'Steve' Jobs, born February 24, 1955, co-founder and chief executive officer of Apple Inc. Due to his aggressive and demanding personality.

Mr Jobs has gone against the trend of enslavement to empowerment, ruling with an iron hand, attending to every little product detail, and keeping employees on a roller coaster of

KATE WALKER, FRMA is currently the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA). From her base at St Helens, Tasmania, she also owns and operates IM consulting business Relevancy Pty Ltd, which pursues workflow, document and records management solutions as well as providing training and assessment in line with the AQTF Competency Framework.

Kate is a widely recognised advisor on knowledge management, information management, records and document management, e-business, workflow & image processing, process mapping & analysis, and information enabling technology.
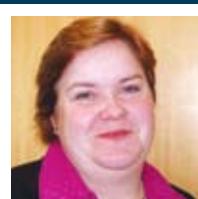
PAULA J SMITH, ARMA, is the President of the New Zealand Branch of the RMAA. She works as an Information Management Consultant with Techtronics group Limited in Wellington, New Zealand. Involved in RIM in the UK and New Zealand for over ten years, she previously worked with a central government agency, regional fire service, a large shire council and a city council, and a Crown entity.

Paula holds an MSc in Records Management from the University of Northumberland and a BSc (Hons) in Business Information Systems from the University of Wales, in the UK. She is currently a mentor to two new entrants to the RIM profession.
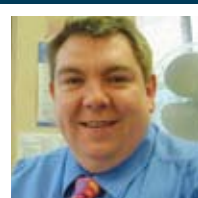
MATTHEW STEPHENSON is Chairman of the Records Management Society, (RMS) the UK's leading records management association. Previously, he was the Society's Editorial Director and Chair of its Education Group, and was a member of the Records Management Group Executive Committee of the Society of Archivists.

Matthew works as Head of Information Governance at the University of Salford, UK. His 12 years in RIM have included appointments at the London School of Economics, as Records Manager, and at The National Gallery, Imperial College, and the Science Museum. He read Biology at the University of York, and has an MA in Archives and Records Management from University College London.

praise and fear. Despite Mr Jobs' tirades, Apple employees are devoted, because, reputedly, his autocracy is balanced by his famous charisma.

Paula J Smith: I have a friend who inspires me every day, with her energy and her passion for life and work. She recently formed her own consulting firm and she inspires me with her bravery, but also her focus.

When we manage to catch up, even if it is just for a coffee, I am inspired all over again. She reminds me why I love RIM so much, and with her very infectious energy I feel like I can accomplish anything.

I also come back to my desk like a little Energizer bunny which, as my co-workers will tell you, is sometimes a scary sight!

Matthew Stephenson: Hmm, far too many to mention, ranging from TV personalities who I have never met to family members. I think what they have in common is being able to connect with people.

Irene Gelyk: Two people stand out for me. The first, my manager at a small city library. We did not see eye to eye, but through earnest discussion and listening to each other we realised that we could work together, accept our differences and make it work. We agreed to disagree.

The second was my director at a very large international accounting firm. I learned so much from her. She was strong,

opinionated, decisive, fair, supportive, compassionate, organised, honest and so many other things. She would let us get on with our jobs, but would be there if we needed her, and would defend us if needed.

What I learned the most from her was that you should never be afraid to make decisions, rightly or wrongly, and carry through.

Doug Allen: I would point to retired General Colin Powell. The story of his life is inspirational, his approach to achievement is admirable, and he consistently displays a true professional edge.

iQ: What, to your mind, is the one major thing that individual RIMs need to do to give themselves a professional edge?

Kate Walker: Create a benchmark for excellence.

Matthew Stephenson: Be an absolute expert at RIM, but be good at all the peripheral disciplines around RIM which impact on the work we do.

Doug Allen: Records and information managers need to focus on life-long learning. Our field has evolved quickly, and our ongoing educational needs will make a great difference in our future success.

Paula J Smith: We need to demonstrate our professionalism to our peers. If we want to stop being considered the filing clerks or purveyors of doom, then we must take this into our own hands.

As an industry, we must improve our communication and relationship management skills. We need to stop talking about 'compliance', 'taxonomy', 'disposal', and start talking in the language of our organisations. We abhor IT's use of jargon, used, as we perceive it, to exclude non IT folk. But aren't we just as guilty?

Irene Gelyk: Be lifelong learners. Don't be afraid to take risks. Don't be afraid to ask questions. I realise I've given three things, but I feel these are important. We need to learn and understand about technology and systems, management, people, leadership, the law, and ourselves.

iQ: What, in your experience, is a key thing that demonstrates professionalism in recordkeeping? Can you give a case in point?

Matthew Stephenson: To me, it's being able to change the way someone works for the better.

There's nothing more rewarding than going into an office of someone who has the attitude "I've been doing this job for 100 years and there's nothing you can do to teach me anything", and leave them an hour later not only working with a change you have recommended but evangelising about the difference you have made to the way they work.

Irene Gelyk: Professionalism, to me, goes beyond just recordkeeping. I think it is important to grow as person, develop skills and knowledge in many areas related and not related to RIM, study human nature and to pick out the career that sparks curiosity.

Curiosity is the driver that keeps me needing to learn more. RIM is a profession, and we all need to look at what other professionals are doing to expand their spheres of influence. How are others dealing with similar issues: globalisation, technology, career challenges, communication, project management, humanity, social injustice, the environment?

Doug Allen: The ability of records and information managers to articulate the value of RIM. The RIM who is best able to provide senior management with a persuasive case for RIM investment that emphasises return on investment, appropriate

About our interviewees

IRENE GEKYK, CRM is President of the Toronto, Canada Chapter of ARMA International. She is a Canadian Trustee of the ARMA International Education Foundation, and a member of the Records Management Society (RMS) of Great Britain. Since 2005 she has been Team Lead, Records Management for BlackBerry developer Research In Motion Limited. Prior to her 20 years in RIM, she started out as a library technician, before detouring into computer sales, support, training, marketing, and computer graphics.

A recreational rower, in 1996-97 Irene sailed from the Bahamas to New Zealand on a 42' sailboat, via the Panama Canal.

DOUGLAS ALLEN is President of the Board of Directors of ARMA International. Based in Austin, Texas, in the USA, he works as Business Development Manager with Information Outsource, for Global 360's Work Management Group.

Doug writes regularly about RIM issues, and maintains certification as a Certified Records Manager (CRM) and Certified Document Imaging Architech (CDIA+).

>> "RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGERS NEED TO FOCUS ON LIFE-LONG LEARNING. OUR FIELD HAS EVOLVED QUICKLY, AND OUR ONGOING EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WILL MAKE A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN OUR FUTURE SUCCESS" DOUG ALLEN <<

management of risk, and positive contributions to compliance will lead the most successful programme.

Kate Walker: Learn how people get motivated, like to receive information and how they make decisions. If you can't ensure that the information is in the right format, with the right person, at the right time, all contextual information is correct whilst demonstrating compliance, then recordkeeping will not be seen as a professional part of any organisation.

Paula J Smith: We don't do enough research, one of the primary requirements of any profession. It's time that we stopped waiting for the handful of researchers we do have to answer our questions for us.

It's time the profession as a whole took its destiny into its own hands, and at the very least formed the research questions that we need to answer. At times, it feels to me like we RIMs are like the electorate in New Zealand – apathetic.

iQ: If a RIM could propose, to their senior management, one key way that would give their organisation a more professional edge, what would it be?

Irene Gelyk: Senior company leadership who understand and fully support their RIM programmes are industry leaders, and they run smart, effective, secure and competitively intelligent organisations.

Without top down and visibly supported RIM programmes, your organisation might as well have a big target on the side of their buildings – especially if the company is publicly traded – that says 'We are ripe for law suites, intellectual property leaks, corporate espionage, security breaches and much more trouble'. E-discovery is becoming big business.

Say to your senior management, "Do you want your company to be the next Enron or Arthur Anderson? It doesn't take much to tip the scale these days. Do you know where your records and information are?"

Kate Walker: Explore the science of influence, and learn how to use the rules of persuasion to excellent effect, and ensure that your organisation utilises dynamic inquiry processes.

Paula J Smith: For me, it would be to create and implement a structured methodology and set of tools to enable not only the RIM professionals, but also their peers in IT – the enterprise architects, the business analysts, the procurement specialists, etc – to deliver not only what the organisation wants but also what it needs!

Matthew Stephenson: To recognise that an organisation's information is a key resource in the same way that money, people and physical resources are, and that its management should be made a priority

Doug Allen: Implement a standards-based approach in the management of records and information, beginning with ISO 15489. Of course, I would urge that such an approach be extended to the professional development of staff.

iQ: In 1987, when Eddie Shah, owner of *Today*, Britain's first full-colour daily newspaper, sold it to Rupert Murdoch, he said that newspapers would be put out of business by 2000 by electronic media and pressure from the environmental movement to cease paper pulp production. Neither of which has been the case.

We often see techniques, processes, innovations or legislation that we think will change the way we do business, or to give us a more professional edge, which, over time, prove to be disappointments or to be quickly outdated. Other advances sneak up on us. Is there one such advance that has particularly disappointed or surprised you over the last decade or two?

Doug Allen: Cloud computing. The challenges regarding retention, disposition, and information security will likely occupy a significant amount of time. Organisations that fail to include RIM considerations in the development of requirements for cloud computing or remotely hosted software-as-a-service (SAAS) applications will likely encounter significant risks in the areas of compliance and e-discovery.

Matthew Stephenson: Goodness, I was only 14 two decades ago. I am amazed by how much the Internet has changed everything. I sent my first email on Friday 15 October 1993, over 16 years ago. I can't imagine how I would cope without email or the Web.

I think (British Prime Minister) Gordon Brown is not far off in his suggestion that having broadband is a human right. Goodness knows how the Internet will change things in the next 16 years!

Kate Walker: For me, the continued lack of recognition for a profession that continues to expand in conjunction with a highly litigious compliance environment, as well as responsibility for applying good records management practices to electronic records residing in the IT department, instead of the records and information department.

Paula J Smith: The advent of EDRMS has disappointed me. It has been perceived as the panacea to all of our recordkeeping problems, yet I still find organisations that have spent a significant amount to implement a system which is fundamentally flawed.

"We will eliminate duplication" says the business case, but the organisation has no version control, has not educated its users on the recordkeeping aspects of the new system, and so the duplication actually increases as 10 versions of the same object are created and 'managed' independently!

Fundamentally, we, as a profession need to better understand these technologies. Don't be afraid to enter the dark world of IT and learn about the systems. But also understand the mindsets of those who implement these technologies, from both a vendor and client perspective.

Irene Gelyk: When I was in college back in the '70s, an instructor told us that we would go 'paperless' within twenty years. I haven't seen that happen yet.

I would say that Google and BlackBerry have revolutionised so much of what and how we do things over the past 5 years, but when you consider that even a year ago Twitter was not even on the radar and how pervasive it has become, I'm not even willing to say what is coming next.

All I know is that I must be prepared for whatever comes next and be ready to rethink, adapt, adopt and tweak my RIM programme.

iQ: **What is your tip for an advance, technological or otherwise, that is likely to give RIMs a professional edge in the future? Or, alternatively, what is the advance that you would like to see that offers that professional edge?**

Kate Walker: I have a few. Senior executive sponsorship. Best practices leveraged from the physical world. Defined policies for governing enterprise information, and pocesses defined to manage the information. Constant communication and the use of a shared vocabulary. Recognition that technology is a means, not the end. And I would urge managers to educate, educate and educate again, and to not forget to prove the business value of RIM.

Matthew Stephenson: EDRMS/ECM has not delivered what I hoped it would, and I don't necessarily blame the vendors. In public sector institutions there has not been the appetite to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on a system whose efficacy is still to be proven.

I would like to see Web 2.0 outfits like Google work together to come up with real cloud information management which is truly scalable and bulletproof.

Irene Gelyk: If you aren't managing the electronic records and information in your organisation yet, who is? The IT departments in most organisations haven't done a very good job of managing information in the past, so unless you partner with them now, it is only going to get worse.

Throwing more servers, 'clouds' and other technological solutions into the equation is only going to complicate matters. Get a handle on your organisation's records and data now. Make it a grass roots initiative within your organisation.

Paula J Smith: Perhaps the RMAA could work with universities and our existing professionals to consider job swaps, secondments, work experience placements, etc.

The variety of roles I have held across my career have helped me to better understand the organisations' context and the why's, how's and what's of recordkeeping.

Doug Allen: Advances that provide RIM professionals with a future edge include the active pursuit of RIM standards within their programmes, and the use of Core Competencies for career development. They are fundamental.

Within the scope of technology, RIM professionals need to make use of tools apt to impact their programmes. Full familiarity

>> "CHANGE AND CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE AND THAT OF OTHERS. BELIEFS DETERMINE YOUR SUCCESS, SO DEVELOP EMPOWERING BELIEFS AND DEAL WITH LIMITING BELIEFS." KATE WALKER <<

with cloud computing and its challenges, and personal use of blogs, wikis, and other social media tools allows us to speak with knowledge to peers in IT, legal, compliance, and within an organisation's business units with credibility.

iQ: What else, apart from improved educational training and qualifications, can give a RIM a professional edge?

Matthew Stephenson: We're a bit like agony aunts – we go to people with problems and solve them, and so rather than get all techie, which seems to have been the in vogue thing to do over the past few years, I think we need to go back to basics, as it were, and learn a few people skills, and to remember the simple stuff we take for granted but which makes a difference to many people.

Kate Walker: Change and control your emotional state and that of others. Beliefs determine your success, so develop empowering beliefs and deal with limiting beliefs. Become outcome focused. Create robust business relationships that create deep rapport. Use powerful language patterns to influence and persuade colleagues. Elicit critical information from the people you want to influence.

Doug Allen: Additional efforts that RIM professionals make to upgrade their written and verbal communications skills can be vital to that professional's competitive edge.

Paula J Smith: A very good manager once told me 'perception is reality'. I now better understand what he meant. This is one of our biggest problems as a profession; we are perceived as filing clerks, therefore we are filing clerks. If we want to change that perception, we have to make the change.

We need to become stronger, to be unafraid of saying 'no' to colleagues when they want to buy another 'archiving product', of being prepared to apply the brakes when IT issue an RFP for a system to make us 'compliant with legislation', but also to be flexible enough to bend in the wind.

I would also like to see us publish more, support people with opportunities to conduct research. And use our advocacy role more often.

Irene Gelyk: Become a Certified Records Manager through the Institute of Certified Records Managers (www.icrm.org). Invest in your future by becoming members of ARMA, RMAA, RMS and other related professional organisations.

Learn about the capabilities and traits of the new generation, Gen Z. Here's a quote from Babyboomercaretaker.com that I think says it all:

'For Generation Z, computer technologies and the Internet is the common place. All their communication takes place on the internet and they show very little verbal communication skills. Most of their formative years are being spent on the World Wide Web. They are used to instant action and satisfaction due to internet technology.'

Adapt. Be proactive. Try something new. Make a difference today.

iQ: What plan do you have in place for improving your own professional edge in the future?

Kate Walker: I always strive to be more successful. I focus on personal and professional development on an annual basis, constantly reviewing my situation to ensure that I have the plans to continue to develop and grow.

I focus on developing leadership, strategic, governance, communication, and training skills in a cohesive manner to share ideas, concepts, and strategies. And I try to overcome my limiting beliefs by boosting my intelligence and creativity, and by increasing my personal effectiveness and developing an onslaught of ideas.

Above all, I strive to truly understand, visualise and achieve my goals.

Paula J Smith: There are a number of things that I need to work on, some of them are specific to the RIM field where I need to improve my skills and knowledge in the archiving space, and improve my technical skills so that I can better advise on Web 2.0 tools and their application.

But there are also softer skills. It will come as a surprise to many who know me, but I am something of a control freak at times. I need to get better balance in my life, allowing others to do what they are good at, and not try to do everything myself!

Professional edge is not only about having the knowledge and skillset, it is also about being able to deliver when needed, and with interests across the board, not to mention being very purple. I need to work on that aspect of myself as well.

Matthew Stephenson: I plan to keep engaged with professional networks, which will improve my own professional edge, and to make sure that that edge keeps moving forwards.

Irene Gelyk: My plan is to Invest in myself and my profession. I recommend that colleagues learn and enhance their leadership skills by becoming active board members within their local, regional and national organisations.

We should all be doing the best we can through continuously learning, sharing, networking and adaptation. Give back to the RIM community. You can make a difference, globally, by supporting the development and distribution of RIM educational training materials for helping developing national governments introduce new strategies for managing public sector records. Visit the International Records Management trust website today to learn more, at www.irmt.org.

I think we all need to remember, as the old proverb says, that life is precious, so spend it wisely. At the end of the day it is not what we do but who we are. What do we want others to remember us for? Remember to laugh, love and live life to the fullest.

Doug Allen: My professional edge improvement plans will come after I complete my term, first as president, then as chairperson of ARMA International. While I have given some thought to pursuing additional RIM related certifications through our higher education coursework, I have not yet fully mapped out my own professional development programme.

Records and information managers are working through an exceptionally challenging and exciting time. Now that we sit 'at the table' as decisions are being made, we need to fully prepare ourselves with the knowledge we need and must be prepared to articulate specific issues that must be considered as our organisations move forward. **iQ**

WALKING THE IM TIGHTROPE:
Some simple solutions to capturing instant messages as corporate records

Instant Messaging (IM) technologies are portable, quick, and easy to use, but the fleeting nature of IM can be problematic for organisations if measures are not taken to ensure that any corporate records made or received using such technologies are captured into some form of recordkeeping system. There are many challenges, but there are some simple and practical recordkeeping solutions.

BY **ALLISON HUNTER**

Do you know who your organisation is talking to? Do you know what communication methods your organisation is using? Are you confident that the staff members of your organisation can identify a corporate record when they create or receive one? If you cannot answer these questions favourably, your organisation may have a problem.

In many instances, the problem will arise due to new technology being used for corporate communications. New technologies are incorporated into organisations' communications methods for a variety of reasons – including, to keep up with Generation Y, because it is the latest trend, and to promote the organisation as forward thinking. But these new technologies do not usually come with inbuilt records management capability.

This is an issue for organisations as the recordkeeping implications of new technologies are often not examined until something bad happens.

Story Snapshot

- Employee use of PDAs, their employers' and their own, is presenting recordkeeping problems and security and compliance risks

- Policies and practices can be established within your organisation to deal with the problems

Instant Messaging is one example of new technology that records management is only beginning to come to terms with. Existing RM practice provides the means to address challenges regarding corporate use of instant message technology.

The method outlined in this article is based on how records management first dealt with email. The same method can be

>> "USING INSTANT MESSAGING TECHNOLOGIES SUCCESSFULLY IN AN ORGANISATION IS SOMETHING OF A BALANCING ACT" <<

used when dealing with any new technology. Using existing records management practice is not the ideal solution, but will enable you to proactively address records management concerns.

Instant messaging is defined in 'PROV Advice 16' as, 'Electronic message technology that refers to the act of communicating in near real-time via a computer network, such as a local area network, a wide area network or the Internet.'

This definition includes many social networking sites that your organisation may be using, because they use a combination of communications methods, including instant messaging.

INSTANT MESSAGING TECHNOLOGIES AND CORPORATE USE

Instant messaging technologies usually sit outside records management systems and applications. Capturing instant messaging conversations as corporate records is therefore something that must occur consciously and deliberately.

Some examples of instant messaging technology being used by corporations include:

Same Time Connect (a LotusNotes application). This is currently used across Victorian Government as a shared services communication tool that enables people to talk quickly with others on the same service, regardless of what department they are in or their physical location.

Facebook. The social networking site is being used by an increasing number of organisations, including local government, to provide information updates and services to younger stakeholders.

Twitter, a microblog site, is already being used by the UK Government as a quick communications tool.

Using instant messaging technologies successfully in an organisation is something of a balancing act. Instant message conversations must be formally captured in order to make records of them. The formality is artificially inserted, and reduces the comfort element for users of instant messaging technologies.

For organisations, this makes capture of instant messaging conversations difficult and potentially very expensive. Balancing both stakeholder and records management interests requires strict focus and determination.

If using instant messaging is risky for organisations to permit, why should they bother? The answer is that, like email, instant messaging is not going to go away. Until RM software and instant messaging are compatible, other means are required for managing it.

Records management initiatives will always be behind new technology. The trick is to think about how existing records management practice can be used to your advantage. Once corporate records of instant messaging conversations have been identified they can be captured as a 'file note'. This is how verbal conversations used to be captured before voicemail.

RISK TO THE CAPTURE OF CORPORATE RECORDS

As with the capture of any records, there are three major reasons for capturing records of instant messaging conversations:
1. Risk management;
2. Legal, regulatory, policy and government requirements; and
3. Business continuity and ongoing business support, including 'sense of organisational history'.

Instant messaging technologies do not usually include the capability of creating an automatic log or record of what has occurred. Where the technology does include logging functionality, this may be expensive, difficult or time consuming to use.

As staff members will need to actively capture instant messaging conversations as corporate records using procedure and templates, user attitudes will affect the results. Instant messaging technologies promote informal use.

The need for staff members to monitor what they are saying will not come naturally, and may lead to resentment or active resistance. The frequent use of abbreviations in unstructured communications is a common method of keeping messages informal.

All staff members should be able to identify between personal, ephemeral and corporate records. Personal records contain information that has nothing to do with work. Examples include information relating to a game of football after work, or picking up the children from school. Ephemeral records relate to work, but are facilitative in nature.

Information relating to staff members' movements or that reproduce existing records are examples of ephemeral records. Corporate records contain information relating to decisions and actions of business. Directives to carry out a business action or approval of a course of action are both examples of corporate records.

One of the major obstacles regarding recordkeeping is ensuring all staff members, including contractors and volunteers, are able to identify when a corporate record has been created. This is especially important for capture of instant messaging conversations as records because user intervention is essential to preserve the communication as a record.

RISK TO THE CAPTURE OF FULL AND ACCURATE RECORDS

In cases where a corporate record is captured, there is a second risk of the record not being full or accurate.

Instant messaging technologies suffer from a lack of metadata. Even in situations where the capability for recording or logging instant messaging conversations does exist and a corporate record can be generated, the metadata associated with the record is minimal. In most cases, the metadata captured will not be sufficient to comply with regulatory requirements.

Poor metadata reduces the ability for records to be reused by the organisation, and found when searched for.

Another concern is that the messages have no context. Instant messaging conversations are not structured or even sequential. Context is easily lost as there is no connection between 'threads'. Conversations can be long, and cover multiple subjects. How should a record with multiple contexts be classified? Once the conversation is finished, the context is lost.

Corporate records need to be full and accurate to address legislative, regulatory and business needs. To be full and accurate, records need to have record content, metadata (contextual information), and management and policy information that provides the framework in which the record was created and is being used.

Instant messaging records need to be proactively captured and metadata actively associated with them in order for them to be full and accurate.

RISK TO SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF RECORDS

A third risk is that to the security and integrity of the records. Instant messaging technologies display the identity tag of those involved in conversations, but it is difficult to verify the identity of the people involved.

This is exacerbated by use of automatic 'sign-in' functionality, as this enables anyone using a particular PC to log in as the ••••:

'owner'. As most instant messaging technologies require little if any user identification verification, it is easy for people to abuse the system by pretending to be other people.

When using instant messaging technologies to create and capture records, the resulting records are difficult to secure. This is because of the ability for spy ware or viruses to be transmitted through instant messaging technologies. Other connected recordkeeping systems may also have their security compromised as a result.

To be secure, records require access controls, safe storage, and protection from undetectable deletion. To retain integrity, records must be: authentic, accurate, and created and managed using sound, repeatable processes.

RISK OF COMPLIANCE BREACH

The final risk is that of compliance breach, primarily due to use of non-organisational equipment when using instant messaging technologies.

The majority of staff members who use instant messaging when conducting business are using computer systems not owned by the organisations.

For example, people may conduct business using portable systems, such as a personal digital assistant (PDA) or Blackberry. Or staff members may work from home and use instant messaging. When using equipment that is not owned by the organisation, staff members are less likely to think about capturing records.

Uncontrolled use of portable systems raises compliance problems. Without clear policy directing appropriate practice, organisations will find it difficult to demonstrate compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

This may include non-compliance with privacy legislation if staff members are unaware of access requirements and their obligations regarding personal or private information. It may also have implications regarding the evidential value of something the organisation requires for a court case to support its position.

All corporate records and systems should be compliant with legislation, regulations, standards, business rules, and codes of conduct. Checks regarding compliance with the above should be conducted regularly on all systems used for corporate business. Compliance checks are going to be difficult to perform on equipment that is not owned by the organisation.

RECORDKEEPING SOLUTIONS

There are two basic solutions to managing records of instant messaging technologies using a records management framework.

Option One. Only permit corporate information to be communicated to stakeholders by approved methods, and ensure that the approved communication methods are capable of capturing full and accurate records

Option one is the easiest solution as it strictly forbids use of new technologies until corporate recordkeeping systems can handle them. But it does not enable your organisation to take advantage of the benefits of the new technologies, and the employees of your organisation may simply decide to ignore this rule

For example, many organisations ban the use of Face Book in their workplace because of the danger to IT systems. Does this mean that it is not used? Or are business areas using other means to access and use it?

Option Two. Use existing Recordkeeping tools and procedures to manage the new communications methods. This approach requires proactive use of strategies, policies and procedures to control use, and is reliant on clear and continued information sessions and promotion of the strategies, polices and procedures.

Option two enables organisations to take advantage of the benefits of new technologies, but uses the existing recordkeeping

tools and structures to control it. This is the way that email was handled by records managers before integration with EDRMS made capturing email easy.

For example, an organisation's existing recordkeeping strategy can include clauses linked to other key business strategies. That may mean when a new communications tool is being tested, the recordkeeping component of that tool must be addressed. Or, that the records management team must be consulted.

RESEARCH

Before beginning to address the use of instant messaging in an organisation, some background information is essential.

Questions should be asked regarding the type and frequency of instant messaging use by staff members; the message content; whether records of instant messaging conversations are kept, and if so who manages them; and who owns the equipment and systems required for instant messaging conversations?

This analysis enables organisations to understand the extent of the instant messaging problem, and therefore the kind of solution required.

A risk assessment should be conducted to determine the potential implications of instant messaging use. Mapping the impact of the organisation's legislative and regulatory requirements, and general business requirements on keeping records of instant messaging conversations, helps to contextualise the problem.

This enables the bigger picture to be fleshed out so that senior management can understand potential implications of instant messaging use, and therefore the need for active management. The results of the analysis will provide a sound basis for the development of a strategic position regarding instant messaging use in the organisation.

Understanding the risks associated with instant messaging enables the resulting strategic position to target areas of direct relevance to the organisation. Additional information regarding the frequency, content, users, and business owners enables the different strategies and systems involved to be identified so that they can be aligned.

RECORDKEEPING FRAMEWORK

You should already have a records management framework in use to manage recordkeeping across your organisation. This framework should include a records management strategy, recordkeeping policy, procedures, and templates.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Your recordkeeping strategy is a very useful high-level document that can be used to identify risks and communicate them to non records management areas of your organisation effectively. Use it to:

- Map your legislative and regulatory environment so that you understand the legal implications associated with capturing records of instant messaging conversations;

- Map the business requirements associated with capturing records of instant messaging conversations;

- Conduct a risk assessment of the recordkeeping systems that may be affected by instant messaging use and identify a mitigation strategy to address any security risks; and

- Align with other business strategies to ensure that records management considerations are incorporated across the whole of your organisation.

RECORDKEEPING POLICY

Your recordkeeping policy should support implementation of your records management Strategy. Use it to:

- Limit the permissible use of instant messaging for business purposes. Try to encourage use of other communications methods for corporate communications – ones that can be captured easily as records;
- Regulate what can and cannot be communicated using instant messaging;
- Explicitly ban the use of automatic 'sign-in';
- Ensure that the question of identity when using instant messaging is addressed. You may already have identity verification procedures that you could extend to cover instant messaging;
- Clearly identify what is considered to be a corporate record; and
- Make it a requirement to record the full message, including all relevant metadata.

RECORDKEEPING PROCEDURES

Policy in turn should be supported by clear procedures covering how to capture instant messaging communications as corporate records.

Use it to direct users to complete all metadata fields of the templates, if you are using templates, and cover requirements regarding access permissions and records, including instant messaging records.

RECORDKEEPING TEMPLATES

Have templates ready for users to capture records of instant messaging conversations. Provide templates with the minimum metadata required to assist with the appropriate capture of instant messaging communications as records.

When capturing metadata, consider what is necessary, what is practical, what is consistent, and what is required. To ensure that the context of the message is preserved, the following metadata is recommended as a minimum:

- Identifier (unique ID referring to this object).
- Name (human readable tag).
- Start date (creation date).
- Contextual link (relation with file, series).
- Change history (demonstrating integrity).
- Disposal (when and how to dispose of record).
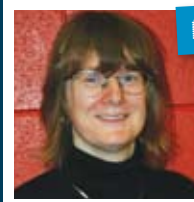
About the Author

ALLISON HUNTER is Coordinator, Standards and Policy with the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) since 2002. She has worked on the Departmental Assessment and VERS Certification programmes, developed the current Appraisal Policy, and is currently involved in the new Recordkeeping Standards programme.

A council member for the Victorian Branch of both the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) and the RMAA, Allison has a BA (Hon.) from La Trobe University and a Master of Information Management and Systems from Monash University. Her most recently published article is 'E-discovery and VERS implementation', which was published in *iRMA – Information and Records Management Annual 2008*.

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- Extent (size).
- Agent (organisation or person associated with record).

Have a style guide for permissible language when using instant messaging for work purposes that either excludes the use of jargon or acronyms, or requires that they be defined and expanded in a list of accepted terminology.

TRAINING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Regular staff updates and various forms of training are required. The following is strongly recommended for all staff members, including contractors and volunteers:

- A good understanding of basic records management practice;
- The ability to differentiate between corporate, ephemeral and personal records;
- The ability to understand their legal and business obligations regarding capture of records;

Story Snapshot

- Look beyond a single silo departmental view to create an organisation-wide view of ERM

- All records need not be stored in a single repository

- Good ERM aids both compliance and decision-making

How Enterprise Records Management Can Give You a Professional Edge

Records management is undergoing a transformation. Issues of compliance and governance, department-specific application systems and the bewildering variety of formats that modern records can take have created a nightmare for modern records managers. The emerging practice of enterprise records management (ERM) offers hope for those managers seeking to obtain an holistic view of their organisation's records.

BY **MIKE HOOPER**

The first thing that has to be understood about records management is that it is a practice. The second thing to realise is that it is a practice with important strategic implications ranging from risk mitigation through better content discovery to questions of governance and records lifecycle management.

John Brand, research director with independent IT industry analyst firm Hydrasight recently described traditional records management as being "... all about defending the organisation or defending the position or decisions that were made."

The role of records management software solutions, therefore, is to facilitate the application of records management controls to different forms of enterprise content such as paper and electronic documents, email, contracts, regulated documents, transactional content, collaborative content, communications – eg, voice or video recordings – and critical application content.

The choice of records management software must be based on its ability to support the desired practice and strategy. Any organisation that selects a software solution in the hope that it will 'automatically' solve its records management needs is likely to be sadly disappointed.

SEAMLESS CONTENT, NOT SILOS

One of the biggest challenges for records management systems has been the need to reach beyond departmental or application silos so that an enterprise view of documentation can be developed.

For example, different departments tend to save their content in different applications and servers. Sometimes, they will be on the same system; sometimes, on the same shared drives, but often not, and occasionally, critical content will even be found

›› "WITH THE BREADTH OF RECORDS UNDER MANAGEMENT, IT CAN MAKE AN ORGANISATION MORE RESPONSIVE, HELPING TO PROVIDE ANSWERS FASTER" ‹‹

on an individual's memory stick or mobile device. Trying to implement a records system for each of these silos is a huge and difficult-to-coordinate task.

In an effort to resolve this, records management principles need to be applied to all content generated within the enterprise, regardless of where it is located.

The key to this new, enterprise approach is the ability to conduct a centralised content audit. In other words, being able to go to one place to not only find all the business critical information relating to day-to-day business activities but also the context about what has happened to records throughout their life cycle.

This is central to implementing an effective and efficient records management strategy – and being able to use that information to prove that the organisation is complying with governance policies and structures.

It is important to understand that a centralised content audit does not mean that all records should exist in a single repository.

Rather, to quote John Brand again, "We've seen organisations over the last decade or so saying that 'what we need is a single repository to put everything and that will solve all our problems'.

"Now, we are starting to see organisations recognise that it's the seamless repository that counts. It really doesn't matter where it's stored and it certainly doesn't have to be in the one place. Google doesn't hold all the world's content. The question is whether access and retrieval is seamless to the end user".

ENTERPRISE RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN ACTION

So how does this seamless, enterprise records management work? Where does it fit in day-to-day business activity and what if any, are the benefits?

Consider the case where two companies are in negotiation; one is a buyer, the other the seller. To prepare, the salesperson conducts research about the target company, visiting their website and downloading information which is then stored on the seller's shared drive system.

Using tools such as file system archiving, records management rules, plans and retention schedules are applied to the content before it is stored in the records management system and archives.

As the salesperson and customer become more engaged, emails begin to pass backwards and forwards. When it's time to draft the contract, the two companies collaborate, using Microsoft Office SharePoint Server. After this, the invoice is generated in SAP. Along the way there'll also be paper associated with the order requiring scanning, barcoding and storage management.

All of these activities create records that are captured by the enterprise records management system. Most importantly, no matter what the originating program, each record is accessed through the one records management program interface.

Hopefully, at the end of it all, the goods are delivered as promised. If not, the seller may end up relying on that single program interface as they go through discovery in the lead up to a court appearance!

Applying policies and structures across the enterprise takes records management beyond its traditional defensive role. It becomes an asset, solidifying the process by which an organisation manages its information. With the breadth of records under management, it can make an organisation more responsive, helping to provide answers faster. Perhaps the biggest difference is that old-style siloed records management systems tended to be static repositories that looked backwards in time to tell you what decision was reached.

Enterprise records management practices and systems however, allow you to understand the activities and context surrounding that decision.

NOT JUST 'WHAT', BUT 'WHY'

To quote Hydrasight's research director, "Traditional document and records management may tell you 'what' decision was made, but enterprise records management, properly implemented, can also tell you 'why' a decision was made.

"This is now crucial in being able to successfully defend and/or justify an organisation's position. This is a critical capability in an increasingly litigation-driven world. When it comes to being able to go beyond meeting basic compliance requirements, and to start using business records to improve organisational performance, enterprise records management is the only logical approach".

Enterprise records management may also just provide a holistic view of organisational memory and knowledge to help inform and drive decision making next time around. **iQ**

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About the Author

MIKE HOOPER is Director of ECM Solutions with Open Text in Sydney. He joined Open Text in 1997 (Formerly PC DOCS, Hummingbird), establishing the Asian regional support and channel infrastructure, initially out of Hong Kong and later Singapore. He now manages the Back Office product portfolio for the APJ region, which includes: Livelink, eDOCS, Archive, SAP, Microsoft and Oracle products and solutions.

Prior to Open Text, Mike worked for Wang (UK) for seven years in engineering, support and commercial positions. He later worked for a UK-based systems integrator that delivered content management solutions, principally into the financial services, government and engineering sectors. He ran the company's support and services division for three years before joining PC DOCS.

Mike has a degree in Computer Science.

NOT EVERYTHING THAT COUNTS CAN BE MEASURED
The pros and cons of measuring the impact of records management

Can you measure legal compliance, higher standards of corporate governance, improved accuracy of decision-making, and preservation of the historical record? Can you prove claimed ROI for RIM? Does the future of RM depend on acting on fact, rather on faith?

BY **STEVE BAILEY**

Story Snapshot

- It is not enough to assume that the benefits of RM are self-evident
- A case must be made to senior management that a dollar spent on RM is better than a dollar spent elsewhere
- And you are the one to make that case

It would be interesting to know how many records managers would agree with Albert Einstein's famous dictum: *"Not everything that counts can be measured. Not everything that can be measured counts"*. Most, I'm sure, would rightly argue that there are far more reasons to invest in records management than will ever be reflected on an organisation's balance sheet.

After all, legal compliance, higher standards of corporate governance, improved accuracy of decision making and preservation of the historical record are all well known and worthy outcomes of a successful records management programme, but all largely defy measurement in any meaningful way.

How can you *prove* that you are now more legally compliant than you were before the improvements you have made? I suppose it might be possible to chart a decline in the number of court cases faced or an increase in those won but there could be little confidence in asserting that such a change was due to an improved intellectual control over your evidence base and was not simply a reflection of the organisation's overall exposure to litigation or the prevailing economic or legal climate.

I have also heard some practitioners argue that to have to justify arguments for records management in financial terms is somehow an admission of professional weakness at a time when we should be confidently expressing parity with core organisational services such as Human Resources. After all, they are never – or at least seldomly – asked to quantify the exact net benefit a new post will bring to the balance sheet, so why should we?

We should have the confidence in the justness of our argument and the soundness of our professional mission for the merit of our case to be self-evident; after all this is records management that we are talking about…

There may be an element of truth in all of this, but are there also risks – particularly if it is not a point of view automatically shared by other, key, stakeholders. For, despite what we might occasionally like to believe, records management does not exist and operate in a vacuum, nor is its authority and purpose in some way divinely appointed, self-evidident and beyond the question of mortals.

No. Instead, we must be alert to the fact that records management operates within the real world and as such is subject to – and even potentially vulnerable to – the same threats and forces which buffet the rest of our organisations and colour the decisions that senior managers must make.

For, although few senior managers would demur from agreeing with the statement that 'aside from our staff, information is our most valuable asset' this does not, perhaps illogically, automatically extend to a similar level of enthuasism for information *management*.

About the Author

STEVE BAILEY currently acts as senior advisor on records management issues for JISC infoNet, an advisory service for managers within the HE and FE sectors in the UK, preparing and disseminating a range of guidance material and tools to help support the development of records management.

A well known speaker and writer on RM issues, he has over 60 papers and presentations to his credit, is the author of the JISC infoNet 'Managing the Information Lifecycle and Strategy' infoKits, and the creator of the Impact Calculator: an innovative tool for assessing the impact of change management initiatives. His book, *Managing the crowd: Rethinking records management for the Web2.0 world*, was published in 2008 by Facet Publishing.

Prior to joining JISC infoNet in 2007, Steve spent five years leading JISC's own internal Records & Information Management activities and its programme of innovative records management and information governance development projects.

After completing a history degree at Reading University and a Masters with Distinction in Archives and Records Management from University College London, Steve became Assistant Records Manager for the global pharmaceutical company Pfizer Inc where he was primarily responsible for establishing a records retention schedule programme. In 1999, he moved to the University of Gloucestershire, where he established and ran an archive service as well as acting as the University's Data Protection Officer.

Steve is a former Director of the Records Management Society and member of the Education & Skills FOI Sector Group, the Ministry of Justice's Information Rights User Group, and The National Archive's s.46 Code of Practice working group. He is a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for the *Records Management Journal*.

Steve's blog on the future of RM, the UK's most popular records management blog, can be found at http://rmfuturewatch.blogspot.com/

This article was first published in the November 2009 issue of the *Bulletin*, journal of the Records Management Society of Great Britain, and is reprinted in *iQ* with permission.

The full literature review referred to in the article is available from www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/records-management. Further work packages related to this project, including a freely available 'Research Framework': a tool to enable records professionals to calculate the costs and measure the benefits of investing in records management initiatives, is available from the same URL.

• For further information please contact steve.bailey@northumbria.ac.uk or Joanne Hyslop, at Hyslop@northumbria.ac.uk

A CASE MUST BE MADE

So, a case must be made; one capable of convincing a manager that a dollar spent on records management is better than a dollar spent elsewhere, especially on front-line services or developing the core business.

This is especially so given that we are, in this respect, largely the victims of our own success. Records management is no longer – if it ever was – some relatively small-scale, cheap-to-run little curio which could be funded on a shoe-string with a basement and a set of card indexes.

Records managers now, quite rightly, have far higher ambitions. We often seek to implement change on an organisation-wide scale and exert an influence over the working lives of every member of staff.

To achieve this takes appropriate levels of funding and whilst clearly not every organisation will be willing or able to spend the $120m that BERR and its forerunner the DTI have done so far on their EDRMS project, it does at least serve to remind us that records management is now big business, and as such must be willing to accept the level of scrutiny that accompanies it.

Read through the professional literature and you would be forgiven for wondering what the problem is; for article after article happily extols the returns on investment to be had through records management in terms of 'improved productivity' and 'reduced overheads'.

But scratch below the surface, as we have been doing as part of the literature review for our current JISC-funded project, and it soon becomes apparent that there is currently little or no independent, empirical data available which demonstrates that investment in records management does indeed deliver a positive return on investment when it comes to improving organisational effectiveness. Of course this does *not* mean that it cannot or does not, simply that we currently seem unwilling or unable to prove that this is the case.

RM IS VULNERABLE

This state of affairs leaves records management vulnerable – especially during an economic downturn where 'administration' and 'bureaucracy' are always easy, politically safe targets for savings.

We records managers may baulk at the idea of being described as 'red tape', but for the uninitiated it may be a fine line we tread. Without evidence to the contrary it is all too easy to see how records management might be viewed by some as part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.

>> "SO, A CASE MUST BE MADE; ONE CAPABLE OF CONVINCING A MANAGER THAT A DOLLAR SPENT ON RECORDS MANAGEMENT IS BETTER THAN A DOLLAR SPENT ELSEWHERE…" <<

Indeed, if the recession bites hard enough management may even be forced to dismiss proposals based on the previously solid ground of aiding legal compliance if the risk of breaching the law or being discovered doing so, or the penalty to be paid if the worst happens, is not seen to outweigh the costs incurred in its prevention.

FIGHT YOUR CORNER

Records managers need to be prepared to fight their corner: to be able to not only claim, but *demonstrate* and *prove* the positive impact they can make on their organisation. To do so will not only afford a measure of protection during the lean times, but also increase the potential for expansion and growth as things improve.

Whilst failure to do so risks entrusting our professional future to a dwindling band of those managers willing to act on faith rather than fact. **iQ**

A New Solution to an Old Problem

Paper records are not dead. They are going to be with us for a long, long time, just lying there taking up space and costing a fortune for physical transfer in bulk. But an Australian innovation offers a way to reduce the burden of hard copy storage and transfer.

BY **DARBY JOHNS**

When I was the inaugural Chair of the State Records Council of South Australia, late last century, (the 20th), I became aware of the necessary and costly procedures involved in transferring office records from government agencies to the state archives.

It has taken many years to develop a new system that obviates the need for re-packaging, saves storage space and money, and takes into account the emergence of new technology and the need to meet sustainability standards.

A NEW MANILA FOLDER FILING SYSTEM

The result is a new *polymanila* folder, the same size as the old paperboard one, but with extra advantages including removable non-metallic suspension rods.

You can write on and wipe off the polypropylene surface, and the folder has a much longer life because it doesn't tear. No trees are cut down to make them, unlike manila folders, and they are fully recyclable. The suspension rods are also recyclable, and the paper fasteners have also been upgraded. Made entirely of polypropylene, they are of full archival quality.

Old records management systems had paperboard manila folders that needed to have separate, non recyclable suspension files for support in filing cabinets. Steel filing cabinets typically hold hundreds of files (that are rarely accessed) and those cabinets take up lots of office space to the detriment of good office design.

The new *polymanila* system comes complete with archive boxes that conform to National Archives of Australia (NAA) measurements and hold the folders with the added suspension rods. The effect of this complete storage system is that it allows only the files currently in use to be kept in the office. Less used files can be stored on standard archive shelving or in a compactus system.
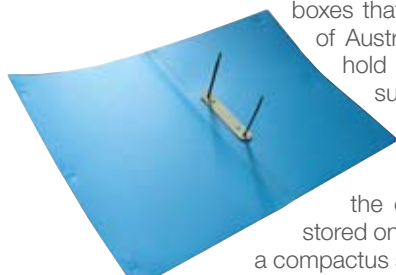
LEAN AND GREEN

Another unique aspect of this system is that all component parts have passed the NAA's Photographic Activity Test developed by the Image Permanence Institute of the US. This means that photographic items such as slides and other items can be filed in suspension in standard size archive boxes in fully archival condition, saving loads of space.

Talking of space, when are we in Australasia going to really adopt A4 in place of the old foolscap format? Files, filing cabinets, even office desk drawers are still designed to hold foolscap files. The new *polymanila* system gives the options for both A4 and foolscap, saving the space in offices and archives that the move to A4 was partly designed to allow.

Another cost benefit of this new system is that files can flow from offices to archives without the need for repackaging. Plus, the polymers that are used in these new products are produced from the waste gases of oil refineries, saving on carbon emissions. The products themselves replace non sustainable paper-based items.

A LEGACY FOR THE FUTURE

I personally don't have many years left in the RIM industry, and I would like to think that the polymanila filing system, developed in Australia by my company, will be one of my legacies to future RM practitioners. **iQ**

- For more information, you can download the book "Sustainable Office & Archive Storage Systems" and other material free at www.albox.com.au/library.asp

About the Author
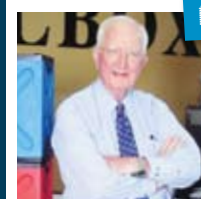
DARBY JOHNS is the Managing Director of Albox Australia Pty Ltd in Adelaide, South Australia. Previously an Australian Trade Commissioner overseas, he was the inaugural chair of the Records Council of South Australia.

Mapping of Recordkeeping Tasks and Competencies to Salaries: WHAT ARE YOU REALLY WORTH?

PART 1

A joint working group of the RMAA and the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) formed in Western Australia to develop a guide to appropriate levels of remuneration for various levels of knowledge, expertise and practice in recordkeeping sectors has morphed into a much larger project with a broader agenda and greater potential benefits.

BY **MARGARET PEMBER**, FRMA

Story Snapshot

- Initially intended to be a guide to the necessary competencies and potential salaries of the profession, a more comprehensive project has emerged.

- The end result will enable you to identify the skills, competencies and compensation that your role and career path demand.

The original intention was that this project would provide a guide to the skills, competencies and knowledge requirements across the recordkeeping profession, for both archivists and records managers, with an indication of the salaries practitioners could expect at the various levels of experience and expertise.

It was thought that such a guide would be a useful framework for practitioners wishing to develop their careers in recordkeeping. It would also provide both practitioners and employers with a guide to appropriate and fair remuneration.

The initial project morphed into a much larger one which will go on to include a mapping of the skills, competencies and knowledge to the domains identified in the *Statement of Knowledge for Recordkeeping Professionals*.[1] An updated version of the guide to recordkeeping and related courses offered in Australia and New Zealand will also be developed.

This first report, in 2 parts spread over the February and May 2010 issues of *iQ*, focuses on identification of the various skills, competencies and knowledge required at all levels of recordkeeping and the remuneration ranges offered at the various levels.

RECORDKEEPING TASKS AND COMPETENCIES

A comprehensive list of recordkeeping tasks and competencies was developed from a variety of sources which included job advertisements and position descriptions (PDs), and tools such as the *Statement of Knowledge for Recordkeeping Professionals*,[2] the ARMA Records and *Information Management Core Competencies*,[3] and *ISO 15489*.[4]

For the purposes of this exercise, recordkeeping-related tasks and competencies were divided into six main levels or bands, as this number was found to be reasonably reflective of Australian practice (see the bands in the tables on these pages).

The bands progress in the degree of difficulty and thus in the skills and knowledge required from Band 1 (entry level) through to Band 6 (senior management). The term 'band' is not intended to equate to any specific public service levels but rather a statement of grouped knowledge, tasks and competencies.

Organisations vary enormously in size, type and complexity so not all will carry out all the tasks associated with these competencies. It is also noted that in smaller agencies recordkeeping staff may be expected to carry out tasks/competencies at a higher level than usually expected at a particular salary.

As a practitioner develops and moves up the career ladder it is expected that the competencies of the previous bands have been attained, and although specific practice may have been delegated to others management responsibility remains. Thus, skills, competencies and knowledge required at previous levels are not repeated at the higher levels or bands although proficiency is still expected.

MAPPING OF TASKS AND COMPETENCIES TO SALARIES

Salaries have been extracted from a wide range of positions advertised around Australia. Positions may have been advertised as specific records management, archives or broad corporate information management positions, but all have component tasks and/or competencies as identified in the bands described in this article.

Please note that this is a very condensed version of the list of tasks and competencies that has been developed. The list indicates the more common activities expected at a particular band. The current version runs in excess of 20 pages and is still being refined.

It is also important to note that all tasks and competencies identified require established policies and procedures to maintain appropriate and consistent standards of practice and service.

BAND 1

Band 1 is the entry level to the profession and is mainly concerned with basic day-to-day operational recordkeeping tasks. Staff members are often employed without any prior experience or qualification in recordkeeping.

Some professions such as librarianship consider this level to be 'para-professional'. The broad salary range offered indicates the diverse expectations of employers with some offering a premium for experienced and qualified staff. The lower salary rate for employees under 21 is still evident in some industry sectors.

BREAKDOWN OF TASKS/ COMPETENCIES	INDICATION OF SALARY BRIEF DESCRIPTION FROM PDS
• Processing mail – includes - Sort incoming mail (post, courier, email, etc.) - Record mail statistics [according to agency requirements] - Open mail [according to agency requirements, should include date stamping] - Mail distribution [within the agency, may be to pigeon holes] - Process outgoing mail [may include statistics for charge-back, franking, etc] • Physical folder creation [includes colour-coding, labelling, bar-coding] • Physical folder maintenance [basic file repair, relabelling as required] • Attachment of records to files based on file numbers assigned • File tracking and audits [barcode audits, within records area and across the agency] • File returns [includes logging back into the system and returning to correct location] • Preparation of records for scanning • Scanning of records [may include OCR processing] • Basic retrieval requests [retrieving files from records area with file numbers provided] • Process bring-ups/file requests [retrieving files and logging out to relevant action officer] • Preparation of temporary value records for off-site secondary storage [preparation of box contents lists, logging online request to collect/deliver boxes for offsite storage, update locations in system]	$20,000-$45,000-$49,000+ **Description:** day-to-day operational records activities, works under supervision according to established policies and procedures. **Experience:** often no previous recordkeeping experience required so may learn 'on-the-job'. **Educational qualifications:** completion of relevant TAFE or tertiary qualifications (or demonstrated progress towards) usually required at higher end of salary range. **NB:** Lower end of salary scale usually applied to those less than 21 years of age.

Table 1: Mapping of Salaries to Recordkeeping Tasks and Competencies Band 1

BAND 2

Employee expectations at **Band 2** still focus largely on the operational but at a more complex level. Two or three year's recordkeeping experience is often stated as an essential criterion as is a broader knowledge and understanding of recordkeeping and the appropriate standards.

Many job advertisements also state that some educational qualification is required or that the job applicant should be working towards a qualification. At the lower end of the salary scale this tends to be a TAFE diploma; at the higher end a university degree in recordkeeping or related discipline.

BREAKDOWN OF TASKS/ COMPETENCIES	INDICATION OF SALARY BRIEF DESCRIPTION FROM PDS
• Registration of records in corporate system based on indexing provided • QA of scanned images and/ or OCR text [includes check for legibility, readability, completeness, page orientation] • Other data management tasks such as migration of data and editing • More complex retrieval requests [eg keyword file retrieval] • Basic appraisal of closed files against approved R&D schedule [application of retention codes based on class/series] • Preparation of closed files for disposal [may be off-site storage, destruction or permanent retention] • Creation of destruction authority lists [listing retention codes, record descriptions, approved schedule number and authority sign-off by responsible area] • Assist in the preparation of selected permanent value records for archival storage [demetalling, housing in archival quality enclosures and boxes, listing, etc.]	$40,000-$46,000-$55,000+ **Description:** more complex operational records activities, works under supervision according to established/approved procedures **Experience:** previous operational recordkeeping experience and knowledge essential. **Educational qualifications:** completion of relevant TAFE or tertiary qualifications (or demonstrated progress towards) required, especially at higher end of salary range.

Table 2: Mapping of Salaries to Recordkeeping Tasks and Competencies Band 2
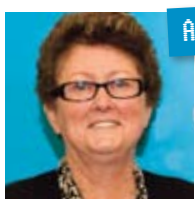
About the Author

DR MARGARET PEMBER, FRMA, has worked in the information environment in the UK and Australia of a number of years. She had been employed by the Western Australian Royal Commission, (WA Inc), has been records and archives manager for the City of Perth, Western Australia, and has been a lecturer in Information Studies at Perth's Curtin University, where she was awarded her PhD. Dr Pember has also been a guest lecturer in Singapore and Fiji.

About the Committee

The initial committee consisted of Dr Margaret Pember (chair), Dr Roberta Cowan, Jane Larke, Lisa Read White, Alan Ralph, and Pauline Joseph. Megan Whittle has since replaced Lisa Read White.

Work is still continuing on the refinement of the tasks and competencies and the allocation into bands. If you would like to comment on the project so far, please do, by contacting M Pember at: mpember@netspace.net.au

BAND 3

Although still largely operational, **Band 3** requires some basic supervisory skills such as the ability to manage a small team. In addition higher level duties are introduced such as support for projects or programmes (administration support for FOI, forms management, inventory, etc.). Again knowledge, experience and qualifications impact the salary levels offered.

BREAKDOWN OF TASKS/ COMPETENCIES	INDICATION OF SALARY BRIEF DESCRIPTION FROM PDS
• Indexing/classification of incoming items using controlled language specific to organisation • File creation on system [includes assignment of approved R&D code and indexing using controlled vocabulary] • Appraisal of more complex items against approved R&D schedule • Assign security and access control from existing security model • Basic supervision of small team [less than 4 staff] • Internal induction/training for own team • More complex retrieval requests [complex research required] • Support and maintain forms management programme • FOI administration support • RIM inventory support • RIM legal discovery and hold support • Contribute to team processes and procedures development • Help desk enquiries [1st level support, escalate other queries as required]	$48,000-$52,000-$65,000+ **Description:** more complex operational recordkeeping activities, some basic supervision. **Experience:** relevant experience with high level of proficiency and expertise in dealing with a range of complex tasks and problems with reference to established standards, practices and procedures; ability to manage small teams. **Educational qualifications:** completion of relevant tertiary qualifications (or demonstrated progress towards) usually required at higher end of salary range.

Table 3: Mapping of Salaries to Recordkeeping Tasks and Competencies Band 3

IN PART 2 OF THIS ARTICLE

Bands 4-6 will be defined in the next and final instalment of this article, which will also offer comment on salary range versus employability skills, and will pose the question: 'Are you being remunerated appropriately, or is it time for a change of employer?' **iQ**

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Developing A National Strategy for Electronic Records Management (ERM) for China: Key Features

In the last issue of *iQ*, two Chinese authors proposed a road map for the integration of electronic records management (ERM) in China. Here, based on international best practice learnt from investigations at home and abroad, two more Chinese authors discuss a national strategy for bringing about a smooth transition from decentalised to centralised ERM in their country.

BY **HUILING FENG** AND **NING ZHANG**

Electronic records management (ERM) in China is going through significant transition from decentralised to centralised custody, from individual exploration at organisational level to overall planning at national level, from segmental to seamless management. A national ERM strategy for China is required, with four key features.

A national strategy should comprise goal-setting, overall planning and systems arrangement of ERM at a national level, with strategic perspectives comprehensively dealing with problems, fundamentally and long-term as part of a national e-government and information resource management plan.

It should reflect basic attitudes and the overall design of ERM across the country, government policies, and the variety of activities showing the directions or of ERM in government.

A national strategy for electronic records would be complementary to the information management framework for archives in China. It would assist public bodies, organisations, enterprises and archival institutions to meet their obligations under the Archives Law and support implementation of e-government and e-business strategies in day-to-day operations.

Story Snapshot

- Electronic records are proving a real challenge in China, where the previous RM wisdom dictated decentralised recordkeeping
- With the nation's move toward centralised recordkeeping, there is an urgent need for a national ERM strategy

WHY DO WE PROPOSE A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ERM IN CHINA?

There are three reasons for a national strategy for ERM in China. Firstly, e-records are business assets. Just like paper records, they are important evidence of communications, decisions and actions.

Electronic records from agencies have been dramatically increasing. According to the survey done by the State Archives Administration of China (SAAC) in 2006, about 80% of central government agencies had created nearly 200 million electronic records in e-government systems (Yin, 2007).
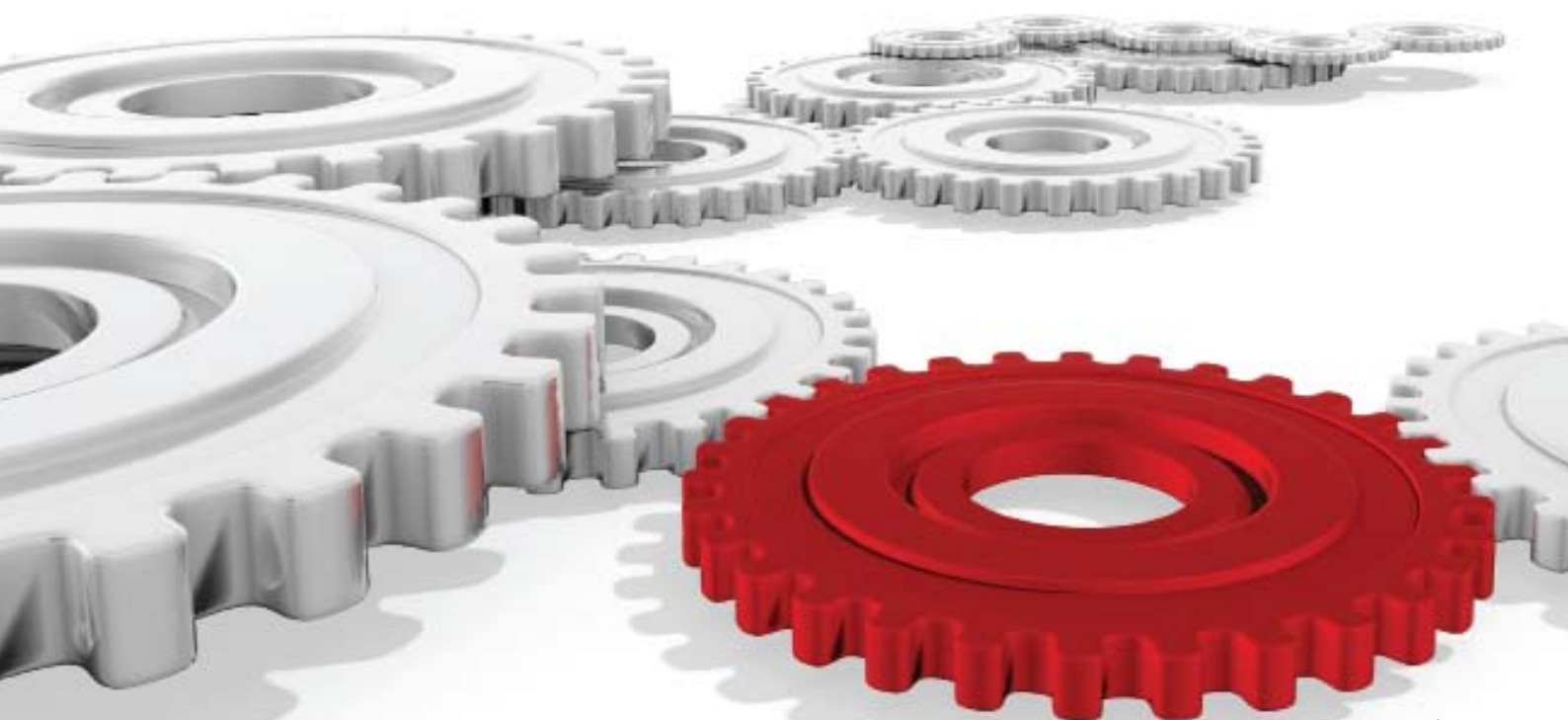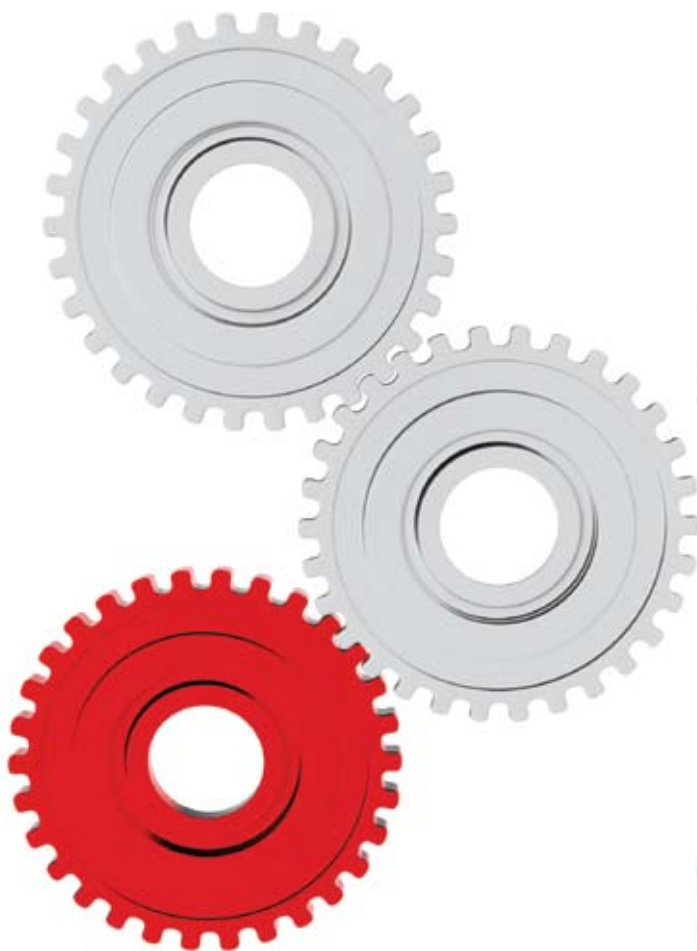
In a 2007 survey among 49 central government institutions, e-records accounted for 72.7% of all records created (Zhang, 2008). It is clear that business is moving from predominantly paper records to electronic.

Secondly, the rapid growth of electronic records and their dynamic changing features have brought challenges to traditional archives management and called for overall arrangement at the national level.

From the 1980s, e-records have been in rapid growth, and exponentially this century. However, the unique and fragile nature of e-records demands a re-evaluation of the way governmental bodies manage them. Processes and procedures for recordkeeping in the paper environment are no longer effective for e-records. A re-assessment of records management programmes is required.

The 2007 survey showed that while 18.4% of the central government agencies did not keep e-records, 79.6% of them did not keep databases, emails, multimedia records or Web pages.

Twenty-two percent of them agreed they had problems accessing e-records. Some ERM projects of local archives administrations faced many problems such as wrong positioning, functional deficiencies, and technology flaws. All these problems were due to lack of proper guidance and expertise.

Thirdly, studies (An, et al 2008; An, 2009a) of international best ERM practice in developed countries show that what we call national strategies in this paper have different features. These have pushed development of ERM in scientific and systematic ways. Such actions reflect the countries' and regions' interests in ERM.

Based on the studies done (Feng, et al, 2009), we have found that ERM needs to be promoted by legislation, policies, standards and technologies from top down, rather than bottom up. This is the reason for a national ERM strategy for China.

WHAT SHALL BE THE KEY FEATURES OF A CHINESE NATIONAL ERM STRATEGY?

To learn from international best practice and adapt to Chinese ERM processes, we recommend a Chinese national ERM strategy with four key features.

1. Nationwide Implementation

ERM is an important part of records management and should be rooted in current records and archives management systems. In China, 'archives' include both semi-current records and non-current records, while 'records' only refer to current records.

In most situations there are two national and linked archives management systems: the archives repository system under the direct leadership of State Archives Administration of China (SAAC), and a professional archival administration system led by different government departments, as explained in the November 2009 edition of *iQ*, (Liu, An 2009).

A strategy for China should be nationwide and cover all the administrative levels, regions and departments. It should identify general principles, yet achieve common goals in a shared system for different administrative levels in the various types of management systems across regional differences in economic, cultural and IT development.

2. Policy Guidance

Experience in other counties shows the effectiveness of national policy guidance. Similar guidance with proactive measures to promote ERM would be the most valuable strategy for ERM development in China. The status of China determines the adoption of policy guidance as the first priority in developing a national ERM strategy, rather than legislation, standards or IT systems.

In China, the concept of 'policy' has special meaning. It typically describes a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes for all enterprises.

At a national level, policy differs from laws and standards. Policy can be understood as political, managerial, financial, and administrative mechanisms arranged to reach explicit goals. It is a flexible and effective way to carry out a national strategic plan with high authority in China.

Because of a lack of sufficient ERM practices, now is not the right time for laws and standards. These take time. They necessarily involve complicated legislative procedures and standards development procedures, which must happen, but cannot immediately satisfy the urgent demands of ERM.

Research and development of ERM systems are still at early stages, and not able to significantly promote nationwide ERM processes.

Traditional administrative driving forces have always played an important role in China's centralised archives management system. The country's special administrative system means that procedures for developing policies are comparatively simple.

ERM is dynamically and rapidly changing without clear outcomes at present. Policy guidance from the top is the most appropriate strategy for China.

3. Integrated Development

Like blood in the body, e-records flow through the whole business system. They are kept as evidence and memory of the transactions. Thus, they have close relationships with business.

Key feature one

Key feature two

Key feature three

Integration has become a key word for ERM planning and implementation. At the macro level, ERM should be integrated into the strategic framework of e-government and e-commerce. At the micro level, the seamless integration of ERM and business activities should be realised within an organisation. Thus integrated development should be embedded in long-term management mechanisms and activities.

There is a long history in China of integrating archival work into organisations' business, but, in most cases, it comes at the end of the business process. As a result, most archival institutions receive only the record of the business's end product, rarely of the business process.

The 'Guideline for Archives Informational Work in China' issued by the SAAC in November 2002 state that filing of electronic records should be integrated with the development of the archives management.

There is increasing communication between central and local governments, between archival and information management departments. ERM and the exploitation of archival information resources have been integrated into key management projects at various levels.

They should now be integrated into the development of business of government and enterprise, though further exploration, coordination and standardisation of concepts, mechanisms, policies and methods.

4. Comprehensive Governance

Key feature four

'Governance' is different from 'control' or 'management'. It refers to the use of institutions, structures of authority and even collaboration to allocate resources and coordinate or control activity in society or the economy.

Successful governance solves the conflictions between the actors and adopts the decisions consensually. Each plays a role in decision-making and shared responsibility across government, enterprise, public institutions and non-profit organisations.

ERM is not a separated responsibility of independent functional departments. On the contrary, it needs participation and commitment by many partners.

China will need to make efforts to promote multiple players participating in ERM. Recently, an initiative to establish an across-government organisation as both a coordination authority for improving integrated records and archives service has been put on the table. The establishment of such an authority will help integrate ERM into national strategies and build connections among government departments.

Comprehensive governance depends on cooperation from several angles: the Ministry of Science and Technology could publish a policy guide to support the development of an ERM system. The Procurement Department could adopt those products satisfying the requirements on the procurement list.

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The financial administration could give financial support and the tax administration provide tax relief. The audit office could bring ERM into performance audits of government accountability.

In other words, we should take advantage of the roles of each player to play a full part for the same goals.

Before broad, high-speed promotion of ERM in China, it is tremendously important to incorporate these four essentials from the top down for coordination and collaboration with overall design and appropriate arrangement.

CONCLUSION

Comprehensive governance can be created by building ERM systems to improve records management programmes and the decentralised custody of electronic records.

Standardisation of records management processes, taking advantage of the Chinese centralised archival administrative system, would improve control of electronic records.

Though different countries may have different strategies for ERM with different features, there are similarities in this information age and there are many good examples of shared responsibilities to deal with complex ERM issues. **iQ**

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BARRIERS TO INFORMATION SEEKING IN EDRMS:
an empirical study

PART 2

Are knowledge workers able to search and retrieve information from their EDRMS? The second and final article in this series reports the results of a study of the information-seeking behaviour of 40 EDRMS users in four different organisations using three different types of EDRMS which highlights barriers to information seeking and discusses how RMs can address these barriers.

BY **PAULINE JOSEPH**, ARMA

The first article in this series set out reasons why RMs need to be aware of the information seeking behaviour of their EDRMS users. What are the necessary actions needed to address the barriers identified next from the research findings? The report continues…

Story Snapshot

- The study set out to determine whether EDRMS users are seeking information as the systems' designers intended.

- 59% of problems are attributed to the users, but care must be taken by RIMS and others when registering new information into an EDRMS.

BARRIERS TO INFORMATION SEEKING, OR, REASONS WHY SEARCHES WERE DIFFICULT

When the 40 users were asked to describe and demonstrate their last difficult search, only 27 (67.5%) reported their experiences with difficult searches. The remaining 13 (32.5%) had not encountered difficult searches or were not able to recall them.

The eight reasons why searches were difficult are summarised in Table 1, column 1, whilst column 2 states the percentage of users who cited this reason. Column 3 identified who or what caused the search difficulty; be it the user, the system, RMs or the organisational culture. Lastly, stated in column 4 are the possible solutions to overcome each of these eight search difficulties.

Twenty-two percent of respondents reported the lack of meaningful titling of documents or records registered into the EDRMS by colleagues or the Records Section as the main reasons for causing search difficulty.

In all four organisations, incoming correspondence was registered into the EDRMS by the Records Section or the Records Focal Points. Additionally, the use of abbreviations and acronyms by colleagues and users themselves when titling corporate information caused search difficulties.

Nineteen percent of users' search difficulty was related to the classification scheme. A lack of understanding or familiarity using the classification scheme for searching made these users rely
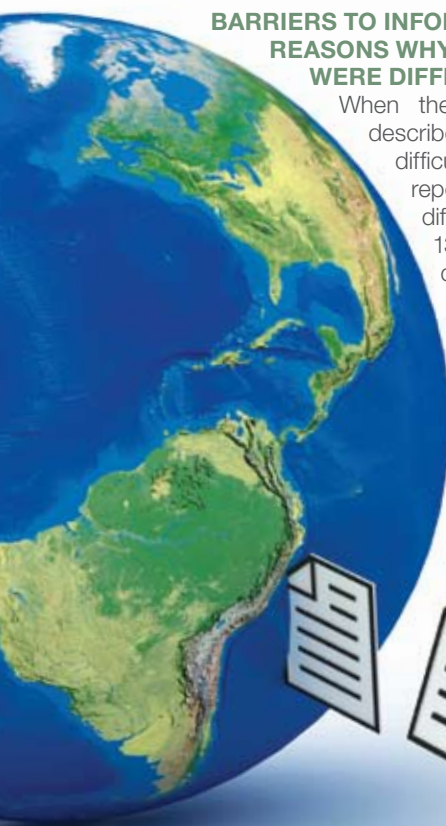
WHY SEARCH WAS DIFFICULT?	% OF TOTAL USERS	CAUSED BY	SOLUTION BY RMS
1. Lack of meaningful titling of documents and records	22	User	1. Develop document titling guidelines and promote them in training sessions. 2. Encourage business units to develop their own standard document titling conventions for their core information. 3. Influence EDRMS vendors to research and build smart technologies to meaningfully title information registered.

2. Lack of understanding or familiarity using the classification schema for searching.	19	Classification Schema	1. Simplify schemes to make them user friendly
			 2. Provide users with training on:
			   a. how classification scheme works.
			   b. the handful of keywords relevant to individual business units or users.

		System	3. Influence EDRMS vendors to research and offer functionalities for automating classification of information registered so that the EDRM system automates this difficult process consistently for users.
3. Document searched for, not registered in EDRMS	19	User	1. Market the benefits of using the EDRMS as the single corporate repository instead of network drives. 2. Change user behaviour to store information using the EDRMS
		Organisation culture	3. Seek management support to restrict or turn off access to network drives and other conflicting information repositories.
4. Lack security access to documents and records	15	System	1. Conduct periodic quality checks to update security status assigned to embargoed information
5. Incomplete or inconsistent entry of metadata fields in EDRMS by Records Section	7	Records Section	1. Establish processes for accurate metadata capture using controlled authority pick lists. 2. Provide training for RM support staff registering information, of the importance of accurate and consistent metadata capture for search and retrieval.
6. Too many search results to browse through to find documents and records Sought	7	User	1. Provide training on searching at subject levels using the classification scheme.
7. Requestor for documents and records provided inaccurate background details to search assistants	7	User	1. Awareness raising training for Record Focal Points to elicit more accurate information from the requestor, using librarian's 'reference interview techniques'
8. Not sure if documents and records was made 'FINAL' in EDRMS.	4	User	1. Emphasise at training sessions that documents finalised, as records need to be declared as records.
	100	Records Section	2. Perform periodic quality assurance checks.

Table 1: Barriers to Information Seeking in the EDRMS

on using metadata fields for searching instead. In cases where users had insufficient metadata to conduct the search, they first turned to other information sources to obtain their metadata, and then returned to the EDRMS to conduct their search.

Classification & Registration Conflicts

These extra steps could be eliminated if these users had an understanding of the classification scheme and how information was classified using the scheme.

Searching was also reported to be difficult because of differences in thinking of where corporate information on the same subject should be filed using the classification schema. This led to users searching in folders where they would file corporate information into, but not where their colleagues or the Records Section filed into. These conflicts in the selection of folders to file corporate information made searching using the scheme difficult as well.

Another 19% reported their search was difficult because they eventually realised that the information they spent their time and effort searching for was never registered in the EDRMS in the first place.

The information was not registered in the EDRMS for a number of reasons: other information repositories like network drives were also used to store corporate information in the organisation; and not everyone in the organisation diligently registered corporate information into the EDRMS.

The Problem of Multiple Information Repositories

The existence of multiple information repositories for corporate information, or the lack of communication on how network drives and EDRMS are to be used was observed to affect users' work productivity in three of the organisations.

Fifteen percent of users reported that the lack of access to the information they were searching for in the EDRMS made their search experience difficult. This is because users were not aware whilst searching that the reason for not finding the required information was owing to their lack of access and not because of their search capabilities.

Seven percent reported their searches were difficult because the metadata they used to conduct their search was either not registered or was inaccurately registered in the EDRMS. An example cited was the 'Contact' metadata field where the name of the organisation from whom the document/record was received was registered.

In the absence of registering this metadata, users' searches were incomplete, thus requiring more time and effort to search for the information using alternative metadata or search methods.

How Many is 'Too Many' Search Results?

Another seven percent of respondents reported their search was difficult because they had to browse through too many search results to find the sought information. Having to plough through more than 15 search results was perceived by these users to be difficult to find what they were seeking.

A further seven percent reported their last searches were difficult because the requestor of the information provided inaccurate background details regarding the required information. These users assisted their colleagues to search for information from the EDRMS in their roles as record focal points. Examples of inaccurate background information provided were inaccurate authors for documents, records or file numbers.

Lastly, one participant (representing four percent of users) reported searching for the letter which was signed off by the Treasurer and scanned into the EDRMS. Because colleagues did not conscientiously declare the information as a record in the EDRMS, this user had difficulty searching for the final record of this letter for accountability reasons.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS TO OVERCOME INFORMATION-SEEKING BARRIERS

It is evident from the findings in Table 1 that 59% of the search difficulties were caused by the 'user'. However, the provision of user training by records management professionals could rectify the majority of the barriers cited for search difficulties.

Additionally, the findings highlighted the need for greater effort from both users and records staff when new information is registered into the EDRMS. Both groups need to ensure relevant metadata are captured accurately and corporate information is registered so that retrieval is possible by others and not themselves in future.

## Changing the Organisational Culture

The findings highlighted that directives from senior management are required to change the organisational culture on how network drives, EDRMS and other information repositories are to be used in organisations. If EDRMS are implemented, should network drives be made available for storing corporate information?

Lastly, the need for RMs to work with different stakeholders like EDRMS vendors, senior management and knowledge workers who are the EDRMS users is emphasised to overcome search difficulties experienced by users. Further strategies RMs can pursue were reported in the previously republished article in the August 2009 issue of *iQ*[1]. **iQ**

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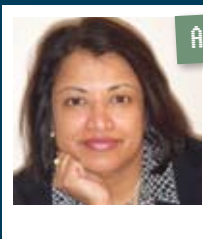
About the Author

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A Scalable Route Over the Digital Hurdle

To knock off a Mount Everest, plan footsteps, ID dangers, sign up support, and book back-up. That's what Archives New Zealand, the Kiwi national archives, has wisely done to overwhelm the immensities of storing digits.
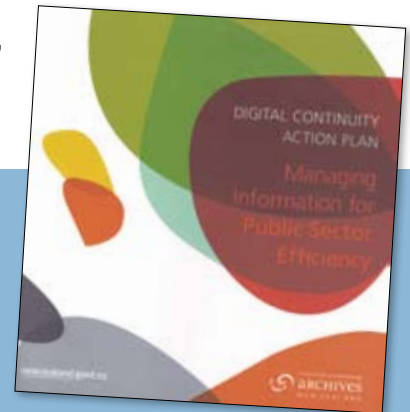
IN BRIEF

Title: Digital Continuity Action Plan: Managing Information for Public Sector Efficiency
Author: Archives New Zealand, Wellington, NZ.
Pages: 44 pp
ISBN: 978-0-477-10098

The prosaic people at Archives NZ there call it, monumentally, a "Digital Continuity Action Plan: Managing Information for Public Sector Efficiency", but what they reveal is a scalable route over the highest hurdle facing recordkeepers – keeping the e-stuff – since humanity got addicted to the ecstasies of electronic everything.

The Archives does it in a little under 12k words, in print[1] and online[2], after a long study by staff professionals and advice from big public recordkeeping forums. The research has delivered straightforward, understandable "goals and actions" listing the problems, the player partnerships, the time-scales and the outcomes for "digital continuity".

NOT JUST ABOUT PRESERVATION

The archivists gave their new overseeing Government Minister Responsible for Archives NZ, Nathan Guy, the first definition of "digital continuity" for his earnest foreword to the plan: "Digital continuity is not just about preservation. It is about ensuring that information is identified, accessible and usable for as long as it is needed."

The plan gets round to a definition on page 10, but then muddies it with phrases like "public sector digital information" and "appropriately maintained". A couple of pages later it redeems itself with a better one: "Digital continuity is a pre-requisite for undertaking effective business in the 21st Century". That's the peak of the mountain.

No need to bog down in foreword and executive summary bureau-speak, their attachment to "data landfill" and trite "creating digital information at a rate never seen before" truisms.

FINDING THE MEAT

Cut to the chase: Chapter 6, Goals and Actions. Here is the meat of ISB 978-0-477-10098-4 that will make it required reading for every NZ Government agency boss, middle manager and recordkeeper. Their Aussie *alter egos* could do worse than give it a good seeing over, too.

Chapter 6 sets out the "need-to's". My favourite: "With misunderstandings occurring within and between professional groups, the communication of clear and unambiguous messages to external audiences is even more unlikely." First time an official source has so roundly chastised information managers for maintaining piffling personal agendas.

Archives NZ's answer? "A comprehensive communication plan, taking into account existing channels and special interest groups such as the Australasian Digital Recordkeeping Initiative, National Digital Forum and Government Information Systems Managers Forum (GOVIS), etc.

Archives New Zealand is undertaking preparatory work and providing guidance in this area." Timings: 2009-10 and "then ongoing".

Government infrastructure incompatibility? The plan points up: "Efficient transmission from current information systems to long-term repository environments is much more difficult and costly when originating systems vary widely and unique tools need to be crafted on an ongoing ad hoc basis."

Solutions include projects with the National Library of NZ, Statistics NZ and Government Technology Services. Timings: up to 5 years.

FINDING THE HIGH-VALUE INFO

Hear this: "Only by taking a proactive, whole-of-public sector approach, we can be confident that all high-value public sector digital information is identified."

No, it's not rocket science, but the plan's solution includes existing deliverables and coming co-operation with the bureaucracy-managing State Services Commission, the Office of the Privacy Commission and Māori welfare agencies. Timings: current to 2011.

THE RECOMMENDATION

There's a lot more, plain and simple but needing to be identified and said out loud so that "Digital Continuity Action Plan" will join the charivari of custodial excellence and, hopefully, Christmas stocking fillers for most of us. **iQ**

Notes

1 Digital Continuity Action Plan, Archives New Zealand, 10 Mulgrave Street, PO Box 12-050, Wellington, N.Z. T: +64 (0)4 499 5595; E: rkadvice@archives.govt.nz.

2 See http://continuum.archives.govt.nz/digital-continuity-action-plan-document-web-page.html

The Reviewer

Former London newspaper-man MICHAEL STEEMSON, ARMA is the principal of the Caldeson Consultancy in Wellington New Zealand, and a member of the editorial board of *iQ*.

ACHIEVING THE RIGHT BALANCE:
Recordkeeping informatics

The concept of informatics encompasses both the technological and social aspects of information systems. The authors argue that taking an informatics approach to recordkeeping will enable records managers to successfully deal with the problems inherent in the digital environment. If this does not occur, they say, the occupation of records manager may disappear altogether. This second part of their article describes the five facets of recordkeeping informatics.

BY **GILLIAN OLIVER**, **JOANNE EVANS**, **BARBARA REED**, AND **FRANK UPWARD**

The 'traditional' records management strategies and approaches developed for the paper world are simply not up to the job of managing evidence in today's communication environments.

We propose that better – more efficient, more effective, more reliable, more sustainable management of evidence – comes from understanding and appreciating the informatics, knowing not just about managing records, but also about managing the systems and processes in which they are created, captured, managed and consumed.

We envisage five component parts or facets that will have to be taken into consideration, in order to develop a recordkeeping informatics approach applicable to the management of current records. Taken together these five parts form a kind of kaleidoscope, layering and interweaving to produce a coherent whole. But that coherent whole is not fixed and immutable, nor should it be considered as a linear series of steps.

EVALUATING AND ESTABLISHING YOUR SETTINGS

The first facet we term *Evaluating and Establishing your Settings*. This is where consideration is given to the external and internal environment of the organisation. It is essential to take into account the regulatory environments, both internal and external to an organisation.

Many features, such as legislation, will be unique to particular jurisdictions. Nevertheless, the broad areas that are relevant (freedom of information, privacy, archival legislation for example) can be identified to highlight the areas that will need to be researched.

In addition to the specific organisational environment, this facet involves exploration of the technical and social environments

facing organisations and their risk related responses. We look to explore questions such as:

- What impact is the web 2.0 world having on the traditional definitions of organisational boundaries?

- Will cloud computing and the ascendance of the Google Apps world be viable as a business environment for conducting traditionally firewalled processes?

- What impact will the changing role of individuals as participants in transactions have on the organisation and its structures?

RECORDKEEPING INFORMATICS AND BUSINESS ANALYSIS

The second facet, *Recordkeeping Informatics and Business Analysis*, focuses on the work of the organisation. Understanding of the functions and activities that are undertaken leads to the identification of the points that records are, or should be, generated.

Traditional records management approaches begin with instructions for conducting an inventory to identify the records that are created and received. This implies two points. Firstly that there are tangible, or at least known, objects that can be ferreted out. Secondly, that once identified, these objects are unlikely to change so can be managed as required.

Our position is that this, from a current recordkeeping perspective, does not reflect the reality of today's technological workspaces or workplaces. Conventional inventories may still be applicable in certain circumstances, but compiling an inventory of this type should be now considered as an historical recordkeeping task.

Current recordkeeping tasks, we contend, involve understanding and being able to analyse business processes and workflows that will provide the way to identify points where decisions are made, and therefore where records are generated. If these business and processes are fully understood, records managers will be aware of their potential change over time, and will no longer be in the position of reacting after the fact – an often untenable situation.

In order for records managers to operate successfully in this changing world there are two key requirements. Firstly, much greater interaction with information colleagues. Secondly,

Story Snapshot

- Records management faces a crisis
- RIMS should broaden their approach to meet digital challenges
- Informatics offers a new approach

information architectures that intersect in sustainable ways with the enterprise architectures.

The information management components of enterprise architectures require records managers to re-tool their products and operate at a strategic level to collaboratively define the business process definitions and recordkeeping outcomes at a conceptual level.

RECORDKEEPING INFORMATICS AND ACCESS

As a facet of recordkeeping informatics, access takes us into the increasing complexity of providing access to records that could be in a myriad of systems within the organisation or in cyberspace, and will increasingly be being produced within a diverse array of information apparatuses.

Our older mental models of the operation of access to records involving separate storage media, subject and functions indexing, and even more recent processes such as full text or Google style retrieval models will be re-cast. On the one hand this will involve unified digital models for thinking about information representation recall and dissemination and on the other will require dealing with the increasing complexity and growing diversity in terms of application models and of settings in which access regimes operate.

The Influence of Social Networking Tools

Organisations will have to increasingly make decisions about the observance of codes of conduct and ethical standards that are very different in different places, a particular problem for transnational organisations. In Western Europe for example some leading archivists like Eric Ketelaar are predicting that in ten years time social networking tools will have altered the access landscape to the extent that access will cease to privilege the organisations that create records.

Read/write codes will have been extended to the extent that the subject of records will have a growing bundle of access entitlements extending and building on the plural dimension of the records continuum during the construction of the record.[1] Other countries like China, however, are struggling to adjust to this changing environment and can be expected to operate within very different codes.[2]

Access regimes will have to take into account such codes and will need to ensure that digital information will be available for as long as it is required by a number of parties, including uses beyond immediate business processes.

This means that records will need to be representable within changing technological read/write mechanisms and will need to be recallable and capable of being disseminated in accordance with the complexities of the regulatory settings of an organisation and the business processes of which the records are a continuing part.

Flexible Frameworks

This will require flexible frameworks that continue to shift in response to evolving circumstances and continuing adjustments to access-based tracking, monitoring, training and auditing programmes. Access programmes and processes will cover the controlling and monitoring of agents, including people and information systems that systematically:

- Facilitate access to those who have legitimate reason to view records,

- Protect records from unauthorised access.

- Mediate between individual requests for access, organisational rules for access and management rights for access and any fees that might be involved in the provision of access. Such mediation can be expected to involve taking account of a diverse set of codes of ethics and practices relating to a host of issues including privacy, copyright, authorial rights, confidentiality and the presence of external authorities with access rights or dispute resolution powers.

- Disseminate records, which includes their disposition, transfer, migration conversion and any other actions relating to the infinite storage of records across distributed locations.

- Store records in accessible formats, and forensically useable form.

- Render records in appropriate ways during access including redaction within organisational rules and codes.

- Maintain the currency of the linguistic and semantic terminology used in metadata and within any vocabulary control devices.

These activities raise many security and access mechanics relating to metadatas issues such as assigning codes to business functions, individuals, and records, as well as those relating to the categorising of users, capabilities for packeting information for migration, transfer and distribution use, and the maintaining of use histories.

RECORDKEEPING INFORMATICS AND ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND RECORDKEEPING SYSTEMS (EDMRS)

The fourth part, *Recordkeeping Informatics and Electronic Document Management and Recordkeeping Systems (EDMRS)*, explores the familiar ground of the solution for digital recordkeeping currently predominating in organisations.

EDMRS have, until comparatively recently, been regarded as the *only* solution, and globally represent expenditure on a massive scale. However, there have been significant issues encountered

in implementation. These issues are identified as discussed, and strategies to address them are proposed.

A key topic considered in this part is the importance to recognising and understanding the influences of organisational culture. One way of doing this within organisations is to analyse their information culture. Values, attitudes and behaviours influencing information management in organisations reflects their information culture.

Put another way, rather than referring to organisational culture if the focus is specifically on information management, we can term this 'information culture'.

Discussion of EDMRS takes us into an exploration of the purposes of such technology and whether they are achieving their stated goals. It opens up discussion of alternative models such as open source, collaborative and content management approaches to recordkeeping in the consolidating vendor market and enables us to discuss short term realities and speculate on longer term options for the software and techniques for embedding recordkeeping understandings into organisations.

RECORDKEEPING INFORMATICS AND SERVICE ORIENTED ARCHITECTURES

The final component, *Recordkeeping Informatics and Service Oriented Architectures*, focuses on the design and implementation of recordkeeping systems in networked environments[3] with corresponding shifts in the way information technologies and systems are being conceptualised and implemented.

To better enable integration and interoperability, system developers are looking to modular or component based architectures where complex systems are assembled from well defined and standardised components. This vision is being further extended with the idea that these functional units could ultimately be dynamically assembled to carry out business processes.

IT professionals at all levels dream of such integrated, agile and adaptable systems and use the term *service orientation* to define and describe this approach.[4]

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3 For further detail, see Reed, B. (2008). Service-oriented architectures and recordkeeping. *Records Management Journal, 18*(1), 7-20.

4 Cherbakov, L., Galambos, G., Harishankar, R., Kalyana, S. and Rackham G., 'Impact of Service Orientation at the Business Level', *IBM Systems Journal*, vol. 44, no. 4, 2005, pp. 653-690.

5 Hans Hofman, 'Introductory – The Realm of Metadata', in Frank M. Bischoff, Hans Hofman and Seamus Ross (editors), *Metadata in Preservation, Selected papers from an ERPANET Seminar at the Archives School Marburg, 3-5 September 2003*, Archivschule Marburg, Marburg, 2004, pp. 11-26. (p. 15)

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It is seen as having the potential to deliver major productivity and capability improvements and, in so doing, transform the way business is done and the way that information technology is constructed, deployed and managed. The term *service oriented architecture* (SOA) refers to the framework in which service orientation is realised.

Good News for Recordkeeping

We believe that the conceptualisation of service oriented architectures and their technical development is good news for recordkeeping. Process rather than application-centric information systems offer up the potential for recordkeeping to be embedded within electronic business processes.[5]

Recordkeeping processes, constructed as utility services, could be orchestrated into business workflows, capturing evidence of business transactions as, and when, appropriate. The deployment of these recordkeeping services would then be governed by policies captured in recordkeeping business rule engines and supported by recordkeeping service and metadata registries.

In addition, with service orientation aiding the decoupling of data from applications so that it is more accessible and able to be utilised where and when it is required, configuring recordkeeping processes around the automated capture and re-use of recordkeeping metadata becomes a much more viable proposition.

This facet explores what recordkeeping may look like as a suite of services, along with what recordkeeping requirements these emerging architectures may entail.

Part of this is to identify and conceptualise new recordkeeping infrastructure or re-engineer the existing, so that it can support the evidencing of activities in such digital and networked environments in sustainable and scalable ways.

It establishes the need for what we term a "recordkeeping floor" for all activities and considers web repositories and their management. Applying the recordkeeping approach to all forms of recorded information requires multi-media storage, collaborative learning and the establishment of relationships between databases, the recordkeeping floor and evidence-based practice.

This area of informatics takes us into:

- Consideration of repositories – institutional and sectoral.
- Collaborative, cross-organisational systems and processes, and
- Consciously designed, but flexible and responsive recordkeeping conceptualised and delivered as components to be incorporated in quite new and different ways into business processes and communicative practice.

CONCLUSION

Records management faces a crisis. If we do not respond effectively to that crisis, records managers may eventually disappear.

If the focus of records management continues to be on historical recordkeeping tasks such as compiling inventories, then disappearance or extinction does not seem to be so far-fetched. According to Andrew Abbott, professions arise as a result of system disturbance, and will then establish jurisdiction over a problem.

As there are constant disturbances within society there are continually changes in demands on occupations and consequently competition for jurisdiction.[6]

About the Authors

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Barbara is the Head of the Australian Delegation to TC 46 SC11 responsible for the development of the ISO 15489 in records management and a member of IT21, Standards Australia's Committee on Records Management.

She is an expert advisor to the AGLS working party on metadata standards for resource discovery. She conducts training and professional development courses in records and archives in Australasia, and is involved with recordkeeping research projects through associations with Monash University, Melbourne, and the Centre for Digital Information Management at Mid Sweden University, Sweden.

Previous employers include Monash University's School of Information Management and Systems where she spent 5 years as a senior lecturer at teaching both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, specialising in recordkeeping and information management.

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Joanne has also been involved with recordkeeping and resource discovery metadata standards development as part of working groups within Standards Australia's IT 21/7 Committee and with the Australia Society of Archivist's Committee on Descriptive Standards.

Her current research interests at the ESRC lie in exploring ways in which recordkeeping principles are applied into scholarly practices in order to meet the challenges of the digital and networked age particularly for the humanities, arts and social sciences.

DR GILLIAN OLIVER is currently Senior Lecturer in Archives and Records Management at the School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. She is actively involved in digital preservation, having undertaken research at HATII, University of Glasgow, and developing digital archiving capability for Archives New Zealand.

Prior to this she led the development and delivery of online education for records and information management at The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. Her professional practice background spans both libraries and records management. She established and is the listowner for nzrecords, an electronic discussion forum for both records managers and archivists.

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Do policies for managing electronic records matter, and do they work?
A MALAYSIAN AND AUSTRALIAN VIEW

Research conducted in Malaysia by the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) identified related factors which need to be taken into account in the development of policies for the management of electronic records. The research may help explain the adoption by organisations of alternative, non-recordkeeping and mostly storage-based, loss protection solutions, including email archiving applications, e-litigation systems supporting e-discovery, enterprise search engines, and even 'cloud-based' storage solutions, and suggests that poor recordkeeping application implementarion or inadequate communication and training may also contribute to the acquisition of these systems.

BY **ANDREW WARLAND**, **UMI ASMA' MOKHTAR**, AND **ZAWIYAH M YUSOF**

Like many countries around the world, the federal governments of both Malaysia and Australia embarked on e-government initiatives in the past decade with the general introduction and use of computers by the populations and government agencies in both countries, and the use of the Internet to disseminate and provide access to government information. The decade was also witness to a massive increase in the volume of electronic information that was created, sent, received and stored by government agencies in both countries.

Despite this boom, recordkeeping practices in both countries did not always keep up with the need to manage electronic records. The national archives of both countries provided guidance and advice, and legislation was introduced or modified. But a lot of electronic information created and stored in network drives and email systems was left unmanaged. Many records stored in paper-based recordkeeping systems were the printed version of these original electronic documents.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS PROBLEMS

In 2004, UKM conducted a survey to establish the extent to which policies for the management of electronic records existed in the Malaysian federal government sector. The survey was distributed in the form of a questionnaire to 25 government departments in the Klang Valley and Putrajaya. This survey found that very few agencies knew how to manage electronic records effectively.

Story Snapshot

- How similar, or dissimilar, are the attitudes to and practice of ERM in Australia and the home of the RMAA's latest branch, Malaysia?

- Can Malaysian research help answer questions faced by RIMs around the world regarding ERM policies?

"… A LOT OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION CREATED AND STORED IN NETWORK DRIVES AND EMAIL SYSTEMS WAS LEFT UNMANAGED"

By 2008, the National Archives of Malaysia (NAM) claimed to have achieved a satisfactory level of compliance in managing records across all agencies. However, despite e-government being a major priority, the implementation of the e-SPARK project (including the development and availability of a whole-of-government electronic records management system), and the publication of guidance and policies for the management of electronic records, follow-up research conducted in 2008 indicated that many agencies still appeared uncertain about how to manage electronic information.

The 2008 research showed that many agencies still did not have such policies in place. More than half of the those surveyed said that they had not received, or were not aware of, the policy and as a result they could not apply it. The balance (less than half) indicated that their agency had a policy for the management of electronic records and, of these, just over half admitted to compliance with the policy.

This left a very large majority of staff working in Malaysian government agencies in 2008 either not knowing if a policy existed, or not complying with one, and so managing electronic records without regard for corporate policies or procedures.

Where a policy existed, the main reasons cited for non-compliance were 'lack of time' (44.5%), 'difficult to implement' (18.5%), and 'other reasons' (18.5%). A further 11.1% claimed that they did not know how to put the policy into practice and 7.4% said that it was a 'tedious and meticulous' task.

In order to determine the relationship between the existence of the policy and compliance with it, a Pearson Chi-Square test indicated that there was a significant relationship between the two. Clearly, being aware of a policy in the first place helps compliance.

The questionnaire also examined the need for a policy for the management of electronic records. The response was unequivocally 'yes' – well over half of the respondents surveyed indicated that they needed such policies in the form of guidelines for managing electronic records.

THE LEGACY OF PAPER-BASED PRACTICES & POLICIES

Paper-based recordkeeping practices have remained common practice in many Australian federal government agencies. As a result, many agencies now store vast volumes of largely un-managed electronic information that could and should have been assigned to recordkeeping systems.

The reasons for this situation in the Australian federal government sector do not appear to be only about the existence or otherwise of recordkeeping policies; these were often developed based on advice and guidance received from the NAA. However, as this article notes, the failure to consider a number of related factors may have contributed to the situation.

Other reasons include a degree of uncertainty across agencies about recordkeeping responsibilities and, until relatively recently, about the legal status and admissibility of an electronic document versus its paper version.

There is also the high cost of acquiring and implementing systems to manage electronic records and the less than optimal experience of many organisations that acquired those systems.

Another problem is the absence of prescriptive legislation clearly assigning responsibilities and describing required actions in enforceable standards or guidelines (such as those produced by the Australian Capital Territory's Territory Records Office, and Archives New Zealand).

And then there is the generally slow pace of change in business practices, except where this is mandated and driven by senior management.

Additionally, the recordkeeping practices in many Australian government agencies, and the systems available to end users to store records (as opposed to electronic information more broadly), were, and to a large extent still are, largely based on a physical, paper-based paradigm.

Indeed, some policies continued to state until recently that the only formally accepted version of a record was one printed and placed in a file registered in the recordkeeping system – a statement that flies in the face of discovery and freedom of information requirements such as the range of information produced as evidence for public inquiries such as the 2006 'Oil for Food programme' inquiry.

THE MAC REPORT

Problems associated with the management of records generally in the Australian federal government sector were brought to light in the August 2007 report 'Note for File', developed by the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) of the Australian Public Service Commission.

Somewhat surprisingly, the authors of the MAC report felt the need to discuss and define the meaning of 'record' in the first chapter, underlining the difficulties faced by senior management, recordkeepers, IT and most staff in many agencies when trying to understand the meaning of a record as implied by the then definition in s.3 of the Archives Act 1983.

The MAC report clarified the situation, indicating that any information, paper or electronic, that was received or created and that was not 'of value', either for the agency or for archival purposes, did not have to be corporately managed – that is, consigned to a recordkeeping system.

The report paved the way in many respects for better and more sensible recordkeeping policies, but still left a grey area in between records 'of value' and information that was not 'of value', a large amount of which was stored electronically.

While the report acknowledged that large amounts of information would remain on drives and in email systems, it provided no real solution for that problem, or for organisations wanting to ensure they could comply with e-discovery requirements.

Given the landmark 'Note for File' report in Australia and significant work carried out by the NAA following its release, and the work carried out by the NAM in Malaysia to promulgate its policies and guidelines for management electronic records, it will be interesting to compare the management of electronic records again in 2012.

MAKING A POLICY WORK – MANAGING THE PIECES

AS ISO 15489 recommends the creation and dissemination of policies and procedures for managing all types of records as

a key element in an overall recordkeeping programme. The standard recommends that policies should set the framework, provide clear directions, and define very clearly the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

Organisations should, however, develop policies specific to their own agencies, taking into account the factors described below. Common, 'one size fits all' policy models offered, for example, by White-Dollman (2004), the National Archives of Australia (2004), Jenkins (1997), Moscato (1997) and the Malaysian National Archives (2006), cannot always be applied equally to every agency.

The UKM research suggests that a series of related elements must be identified, understood and then carefully balanced according to the legislative and regulatory framework, operating environment, and business needs of each agency, to establish an effective policy for the management of all types of records.

The elements that make up the formula are:

• **The profile, behaviour and operating context of the organisation.** Why does the organisation exist? What is its purpose? How big is it? What is its core business functions, activities and transactions?

It is important to understand and keep in mind the core business as it is likely that the large majority of end users will be receiving and sending (emails) or creating and storing information in those areas. A policy that is too generic or does not focus sufficiently on the core business functions and activities of the organisation could alienate the majority of staff.

• **The technology (hardware and software) used or available across the organisation to manage records, including electronic records.** For the most part, end users will only be aware of the applications on their desktop, and they will by and large be familiar with email, office productivity software, the Internet, and the use of network drives for storage.

Any additional applications will generally be some form of line of business application (eg, financial or personnel management system, database, or specialised application for the activity being performed).

Accordingly, adding a recordkeeping system to this mix is asking end users to do something additional to what they do already. They are most likely to use such an additional system if there is a requirement to do so for legal or other compliance or auditing reasons, and so a policy might need only advise that the system must be used.

They are less likely to use an additional system if the need to do so is not obvious.

• **The legislative and regulatory framework.** The policy must also take into account any legislative and regulatory compliance requirements for the organisation's industry sector.

For example, legislation or regulations might define that certain types of records must be created or kept, and for how long,

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and, sometimes, in what form. Broader legislation (for example, the Evidence Act or Electronic Transactions Act) might provide the legal basis and framework for retaining only the original electronic version.

A policy that fails to pay sufficient attention to the legislative and regulatory framework in which the business operates may result in information being inappropriately managed.

• **Effective internal partnerships particularly between records and IT professionals**, but also between records, legal, policy areas and senior management – and, of course, staff and other stakeholders wherever possible. All of these areas need to consult, collaborate, and agree on the policy framework and its content for a policy to work.

The most effective policies for managing electronic records are those that are have the full support or buy-in of all business areas.

• **Awareness, responsibility, and readiness.** These factors are in many respects an alternative way of describing change management. A user base that is not prepared for a change is less likely to adopt or adhere to a new policy if they have not been involved, consulted, or informed in advance.

• **Training and support.** Closely related to the previous point, but at a slightly different angle is the need to train the user base and maintain support as they conform to the policy requirements.

The research supports the view that common or generic recordkeeping policies do not work. Every organisational recordkeeping policy needs to take into account and balance each of the elements described above to achieve the desired outcome.

Good policies are not the panacea – these can be quite ineffective if users do not like or understand how to use technology acquired to manage electronic records. A recordkeeping system acquired to manage electronic records could be a waste of money if it does not meet legal and regulatory compliance requirements for the industry sector.

A good working relationship must exist between IT and recordkeeping professionals, or at the very least IT staff need to be more aware of the organisation's recordkeeping requirements. Users also need to receive effective training to understand how the policy should be applied. **iQ**

• This article is a condensed version of a longer article, 'The importance of effective policies for the management of electronic records – the Malaysian and Australian experience', co-authored by the above authors and based on research conducted in Malaysian Federal Government agencies in 2004 and again in 2008, and a comparison of the outcomes with the situation in the Australian Federal Government.

About the Author

ANDREW WARLAND is a Sydney-based RM consultant who currently works in local government. He has spent close to 30 years in information management; the first 19 years with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He later worked in private enterprise, where his clients included major Federal Government agencies and multinational corporations in Australia and New Zealand.

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Assessing the Significance of Significance 2.0

This book seeks to provide an overarching methodology for assessing and reporting significance as a part of collections management for archives, galleries, libraries, and museums.

IN BRIEF

Title: Significance 2.0:
A Guide to assessing the significance of collections
Authors: Russell, Roslyn and Kylie Winkworth
Publishers: Collections Council of Australia Ltd, Rundle Mall, SA.
Cost: $29.95 RRP; 71 pp

Acknowledging that each of the four main collecting domains has their own methodologies and processes, *Significance 2.0* seeks to provide a common ground for engaging with the concept of significance.

STRUCTURE

Divided into seven parts, *Significance 2.0* describes the assessment process, principles, criteria and applications using specific examples from each of the four domains.

Significance is described as 'the values and meanings that items and collections have for people and communities'. Significance, the authors say, should be used as a means to explain how and why something is important, and to whom it is important.

Parts 1 and 2 introduce the concept of significance. Here, the stories of Ned Kelly and the thylacine are used as case studies to illustrate how significance can be used to provide connections between collections.

Significance is promoted as a methodology which collecting agencies can use to make good collection management decisions, engage with the community, and make sound advocacy arguments.

Part 3 provides an overview of the Significance concept and process. This section introduces the concept of significance assessment, outlining the assessment process, primary and comparative criteria, and the statement of significance.

A series of frequently asked questions about significance as a methodology provide a range of potential ways in which significance assessment can help collecting agencies with their work. The questions are also used to explain the limitations and difficulties with determining significance.

Part 3 concludes with a section about the importance of provenance, illustrating through a series of small case studies how different collecting domains use provenance when determining significance.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The assessment process is covered in part 4, which is divided into three assessment types: single item, collection, and cross-collection projects. Each assessment type is supported by a case study illustrating how each step of the assessment process works.

Although the number of steps differs according to the type of assessment being conducted, each addresses the five main steps in the assessment process.

These are: 'analysing the item or collection'; 'researching its history, provenance and context'; 'comparison with similar items'; 'understanding its values by reference to the criteria'; and 'summarising its meaning and values in a statement of significance'.

Part 4 concludes with short case studies illustrating the role of context in determining significance.

THE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The main element of the Significance assessment process is the Statement of Significance, which is described in part 5. The Statement of Significance provides a summary of the assessment process and findings regarding an item, collection or cross-collection project.

It addresses the questions of why and how is it significant, and to whom, and addresses the primary and comparative assessment criteria.

The primary criteria are: historic significance, artistic or aesthetic significance, scientific or research significance, and social or spiritual significance. The comparative criteria are: provenance, rarity or representativeness, condition or completeness, and interpretive capacity.

Each criterion is supported by a series of questions to illustrate what kinds of things people should consider when assessing against them. Part 5 includes nine principles for good practice with determining significance.

Parts 6 and 7 cover a number of case studies that illustrate the multiple and various applications for using significance assessment, including establishing national and international significance.

The book includes a glossary of terms, and bibliography.

Significance 2.0 is supported by online tools available at http://significance.collectionscouncil.com.au.

## THE BOOK'S VALUE IN AN ARCHIVAL CONTEXT

The assessment process and criteria may well provide additional tools for archival authorities and other bodies to use in order to mount an argument for identifying records that should be retained permanently for future generations.

The links between existing records management or archival theory and practice and Significance methodology will need to be established by interested parties.

But the book provides enough information about the general assessment process for the possibility of it being used in an archival context to be considered.

Determining significance is a highly contentious and often very grey area. The Collections Council of Australia is to be congratulated for its work in this area. **iQ**

The Reviewer
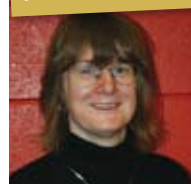
Allison Hunter is Coordinator, Standards and Policy, with the Public Record Office Victoria, (PROV), in Melbourne.

Snapshot:

The people who help make us tick:

Andrew Gipp, ARMA
Victoria Branch President

Andrew Gipp, ARMA
Victoria Branch President

Born in East Gippsland, throughout his childhood Andrew had a much-travelled upbringing – Orbost, Ballarat, Geelong, Melbourne, Mildura, and places in between. After leaving secondary college in 1994, he studied engineering in computers at the University of Ballarat.

He then diverted into retail management for Coles Myer, finding himself many years after that completing a Diploma in Business Management (recordkeeping) through Swinburne University, in cooperation with the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).

In the records management field, Andrew has undertaken work in various government agencies, including PROV, Department of Human Services, Port of Melbourne Corporation, Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, and the City of Yarra.

Today, Andrew holds a management position with Corrections Victoria, overseeing the development of a new retention and disposal authority for Prisons and Community Correctional Services.

TRUE CONFESSIONS

iQ asked Andrew some personal questions:

A little known fact about you?
I hate spiders, regardless of the size. So much so that, if a spider was in my car, I have been known to bomb the inside with spray and then use my walking feet for a week before gaining the nerve to open the door to see if it is dead.

Marital status/children?
I have been married for 5 years now, to my lovely wife Michelle. We have been together for 10 years, and recently we had out first son, Hunter – now aged three months.

How did you get started in the RIM industry?
I moved to Melbourne after meeting my now wife, and was living with a person whose mother worked at the PROV. One thing led to another and before I knew it, I was a casual Issues Officer.

Word that best describes you?
Ambitious.

The thing you like best about your job?
Learning all aspects of an organisation and being able to assist that organisation to capture that corporate memory for the future.

The thing you least like about your job?
Internal politics.

The most important lesson you've learned?
Work comes a distant second to my family and friends.

Your motto for life?
Life is too short; just do it!

The award/honor you're most proud of?
I would have to say my professional membership of the RMAA at this part of my life means the most to me.

The book that has influenced you most?
Roots: The Saga of an American Family.

Your favourite movie/s?
Cry Freedom, The Power of One, Shawshank Redemption, To Kill a Mockingbird, The Godfather, and The Sixth Sense.

Your favourite singing artist/s?
Nirvana.

Your favourite restaurant, or favourite dining experience?
Fedoulla's Cuccina, Little Collins Place. Or, the Spaghetti Tree, Bourke Street. Both are located in Melbourne's CBD.

Your favourite holiday spot?
I like to travel to new locations all the time, so as long as I am with my family, the spot is irrelevant.

Your favourite way to spend free time?
Gaming, but of late just laying down with my son and talking to him.

The vehicle you drive?
Holden Commodore & Viva Wagon

The vehicle you would like to drive?
Brand new 1976 LX SLR 5000 Torana

The luckiest moment in your life?
The day I married my wife, which I must say now comes in equal with the day my son was born.

Your business philosophy?
You can never be too ambitious.

Your personal measurement of success?
I am content in life, and the love inside my home and to my family is a representation of my personal success.

Your ambitions for the RMAA in Victoria?
To increase RMAA's presence in the private sector, and to continue to deliver activities that benefit our members.

Your prediction for RM over the next few years?
What I would like to see happen in the RM field is to spend more time on dealing with the issue of user resistance and gaining the strong support from executive teams. You can have the best policy, guidelines and strategies in place, but without the support and acceptance of users, the limitation on success will always be there.

How would you like to be remembered by family, friends & colleagues?
A generous and thoughtful person.

Your secret dream or ambition?
Immortality. If not, perhaps becoming mayor of my municipality. iQ

Walking the IM Tightrope…

- An awareness of their responsibilities and the policy/procedures for capturing records of instant messaging relating to business;

- An awareness of their requirements regarding information security and confidentiality; and

- An understanding of why metadata is important.

It is vital that all staff members are regularly reminded of their records management obligations. Management support is an essential part of this process.

CONCLUSION

A solid recordkeeping framework provides the basis for capturing corporate records regardless of their formatting or how they came to be. This includes corporate records created using instant messaging technologies such as Same-Time Connect, Face Book, or Twitter.

Implementing a records management framework enables records managers to proactively tackle potential records management risks from using new technologies by setting up an environment where the risks to records management are known, corporate records are identified and captured, and different business areas talk to each other.

Although this article focuses on instant messaging technology, the same method can be applied to any new technology that your organisation implements. This method may not be ideal, but it will enable you to balance records management and user needs until something more effective comes along. iQ

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Achieving the Right Balance…

In the mid-1990s, Van House and Sutton[7] noted correctly that library and information science was engaged in competition for jurisdiction with other information professions due to, firstly, changes in computing and telecommunications technologies, and secondly due to the increasing strategic importance of information.

Since that time, the rate of change has intensified resulting in a complexity of the information environment that is difficult to comprehend, let alone manage. There is most definitely competition for jurisdiction over what was once regarded as the province of records management.

Engaging in the holistic approach offered by recordkeeping informatics as outlined above will ensure that recordkeeping priorities are addressed, and the knowledge and skills of related practitioners are brought to bear in a collaborative, rather than competitive approach. Informatics can be seen as the only viable front end to archiving processes; this is an opportunity for records managers to establish themselves as an integral and indispensible component in recordkeeping. iQ

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