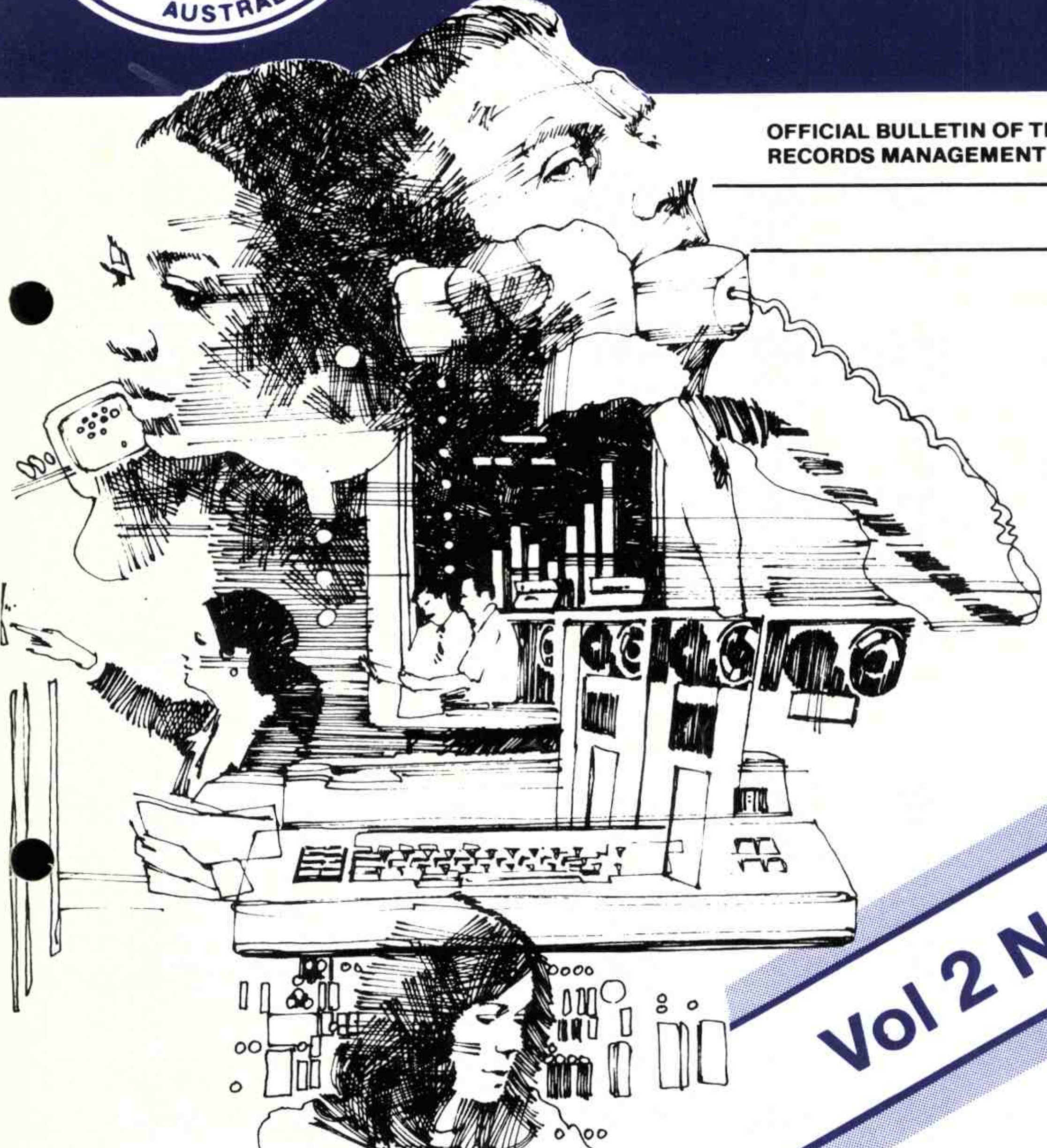
RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

R M A A

'THE informaa' Quarterly



OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE
RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

$5·00

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Vol 2 Number 2

SEPTEMBER, 1986

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INFORMAA QUARTERLY is a publication of the Records Management Association of Australia Incorporated (RMAA). Members of the Association receive the Quarterly as part of their membership entitlement.

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This September 1986 edition of **INFORMAA QUARTERLY** has been produced by the NSW Branch. The publication co-ordinators are Susanne Smith and Dale Kreibig. Comment can be made by telephoning (02) 428-5711.

Future issues will be produced by Victorian Branch (November 86) and Western Australian Branch (February 87).

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EDITORIAL

The theme for this INFORMAA Quarterly is progress - but progress with a difference.

Beginning at the beginning with an example of how records management began, we go on to show how care must be taken with progress in the purchasing of computer technology, followed by where we can make progress, via education. Public relations is another area where we, as professionals, can (and perhaps need) to make progress. Finally, an example of where we are making progress - the students of the NSW Records Management Stage I 1985/6 TAFE course have produced an excellent article on the destruction of records. The quality of this article shows that education and motivation will produce trained professionals who in their turn will assist the profession of records management to progress. To help you progress, also included are sections headed Action Notes and Reference Points.

I hope you obtain as much pleasure reading this edition of INFORMAA Quarterly as Dale and I had in producing it.

I will take this space to thank sincerely my assistant editor Dale Kreibig, without whose assistance, time, knowledge and office facilities this edition would not have been produced. I would also like to thank the authors. Without input from these special people, there would be no INFORMAA Quarterly.

Yours faithfully,

Susanne Smith, Editor (Manager, BT Australia Limited)

FROM THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT

The theme of this quarterly publication, "Progress" set me thinking about: firstly, what is progress; secondly, what does progress means to the Association; and thirdly (and more importantly) what progress is the Association making?

Edward Gibbon in the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire wrote, "all that is human must regrograde if it does not advance".

To me **progress** is a moving forward, improving, advancing, attaining and developing. This does not have to be dramatic in its proportions as sometimes it is appropriate to move slowly.

What does progress mean to the Association? Surely, it is bound up with the Association's objectives; therefore we progress by:

a. providing and encouraging the development of records management by the improvement of knowledge;
b. the promotion of uniformity of the principles and practice of records management;

c. the adoption of standards to classify the attainments and qualifications of records managers and grant professional status to members who reach the prescribed standards;
d. the provision of education in the field by lectures, discussion groups, publications and correspondence;
e. working with other information societies in an interchange of educational material and knowledge.

The Association's "Code of Ethics" resolves, in part that:

> **"I have an obligation to other members of this Association, my country, my employers, and my employees or my fellow employees, to contribute wherever possible to the promotion and improvement of the profession of records management, especially through training, study, education and research."**

What progress is the Association making? I relate the Association's progress to that of personal growth. During its formative years we were learning, making mistakes, re-thinking, making adjustments and improvements. At that time progress was learning and then putting what we had learnt into practice. As the Association has grown, become more experienced and mature we have seen a growing in confidence of our members. Out of this metamorphosis has come our professionalism. The professionalism of the Association and its members has become the cornerstone on which we are building. Those sound foundations laid by our forebears.

The Memorandum and Articles of Association are the guidelines so painstakingly set to ensure that the standards and ethics of the Association will not be eroded over the years. It is those standards that we use in our quest for excellence.

The Association is striving to update its education courses throughout Australia, but it should be appreciated that with the variances from State to State and the changes that are necessary to keep pace with technology it will take some time to accomplish. Eventually, this standardisation will provide a sound basis for the development of records management skills. We are always looking to improve the quality of our seminars and workshops. The quality of our publications continues to improve particularly the INFORMAA Quarterly which has now become an excellent publication.

Our membership has increased from a mere handful in 1969 to over 1200 and continues to increase rapidly. A new Branch is to be formed in the Northern Territory and will be formalised in September 1986. A new Chapter, the Hunter Region Chapter, had its inaugural meeting in Newcastle, NSW, on 16th June 1986. This to me is Progress, because the Association is moving forward, improving on what we had previously accomplished.

We must always strive for excellence and go on striving to better that which has already been accomplished, never resting on our laurels.

PETER A. SMITH M.R.M.A.

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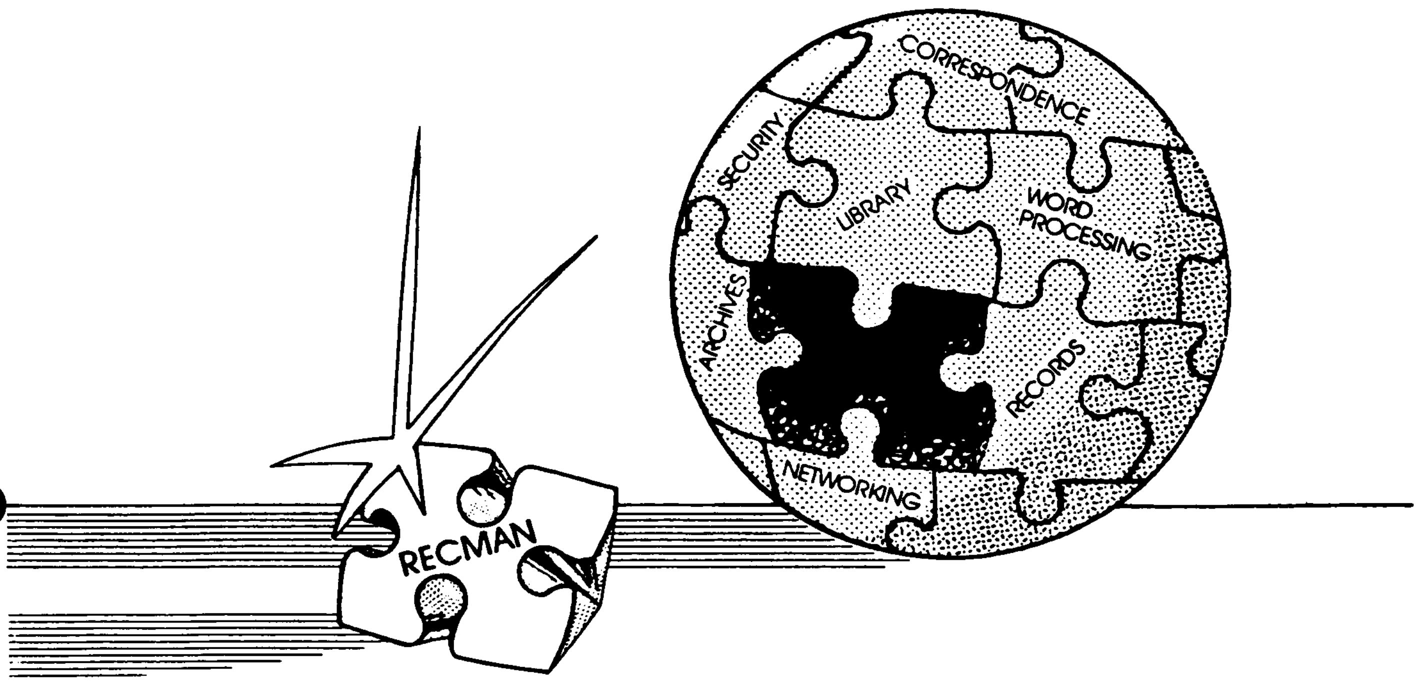

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AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Records Management is a comparatively new discipline in Australia as the inaugurators of the RMAA are nearly all actively engaged in this medium although they are mostly near retiring age or actually retired like myself. It is interesting to reflect backwards and consider those early years of "white collar workers" of 40 to 50 years ago and gradually move into the "modern 1986 to view the "Records Manager". How did we learn the techniques of records management?

The knowledge that was learned over the last half century can give a better understanding and perhaps inspiration to the modern-day records manager to explore and develop new systems and methods with the combination of electronic devices that are available in this, the computer age.

I am sure that other senior records managers could provide some grass roots stories as they slowly climbed to the top. If these stories are not obtained soon - the formation age of the management of records will disappear for ever and our pre-history of Records Management will be void.

"MAKING THE SYSTEM CONFORM"

As a Junior Clerk, I started work at 8am and finished at 6pm week-days, and from 8am to midday on Saturday. On Saturdays, the senior men would wear 'Plus-Fours' to indicate and impress that they would be playing Golf in the afternoon - a very prestigious past-time. Weekdays, one hour was allowed for lunch and 1/6d would purchase a cooked meal from the canteen, and an additional 3d would purchase a piece of apple-pie with custard. There were no breaks for morning or afternoon tea - one must drink while still working at the desk. This welcome sustenance was provided free by the benevolence of the Company.

Wages were paid by cash at 4.30pm on Friday afternoon. I proudly took my first pay-packet home to Mother - of the 12/6d she gave me back 9d for spending money.

Besides many clerical duties to learn, there was sharpening pencils for the senior clerks (no Biros in those days). I found this a very arduous task - 2 to 3 dozen pencils daily was, I considered, a terrible waste of my time. After many months, I brought a Pencil Sharpener and charged clerks 1d for 5 pencils which they gladly paid me ... until the Boss found out. The Company then paid me the balance of the money to cover the cost of the Pencil Sharpener, and the small machine was fixed in the middle of the office for all to use.

My duties in the morning were sorting and placing the previous days incoming mail and copies of outgoing letters into manilla folders. Correspondence and paperwork was filed alphabetically. All files were religiously kept for 7 years - supposedly to conform to Income Tax laws. There were four large wooden filing cabinets of six drawers each which squeaked painfully when pulled in or out. The top drawers I could only use with the use of a small stool, as did some of the typists, who regularly raided the files to obtain customers' addresses.

When I commenced work I soon learned that it was my job to file all letters before 9am and also to locate all files withing ten seconds if it was required when a customer came on the phone. The drill was ... a phone would ring and the sales staff would be greeting the customer who was making an enquiry - our staff man would quickly place his hand over the mouthpiece and shout out loudly, the name of the customer - say 'Batchelors Peas File' - at which I would jump off my stool and tear through the doorway, down the corridor to cabinet "B" - this would be an easy file to find, at the beginning of 'Ba' etc., I'd grab it and place it swiftly in front of the staff within a few seconds. But alas, it wasn't long before a file name was called and it was not in its place - feverishly searching to no avail, I had to rush back and say "its not there!". The sales staff had to politely say "I'll ring you back Sir, later".

Then I learned something strange - "If you loose any files we will give you the sack like the last Junior" I was told bluntly . I pondered on this and wondered what I was expected to do with a sack? - perhaps to put all the files in, but why? When I told my Mother that night about them wanting to give me this sack I learned the awful truth - that it meant they would terminate my services.

The next day I was determined to fight back! I started to look for the missing file by checking through the cabinets. I was quite dismayed to find that there were many files out of place, even under wrong letters. So I went boldly to the Senior Clerk and told him the facts. He came out and checked the veracity of my complaint. He was quite nice about it and said unfortunately the last Junior didn't know his alphabet very well, but he was pleased to know that I did. So, I spent several days at odd moments getting all the files in their right order, as there were no sway plates or partitions in the drawers, it was necessary to always keep the drawers nearly full then continually reposition the overflow backwards into other drawers.

One day I had a horrible surprise. Apparently the Secretary of the Company would often come out and grab his own file. This time he went to do so and it wasn't there! The cry went up ... "Get the Junior at once". I went out fearing they already had the sack ready for me - the Senior Clerk said - "Mr Forster wants his file and it is not there" - holding out the drawer at me and looking ready to tear me apart. I was amazed and said "what file do you want?" "Why you stupid boy - Mr Forsters' file of course" was shouted at me. I was delighted and said "you'll not find it in "C" cabinet, it's here filed under "F"", as I quickly opened the "F" drawer and was relieved to see "Mr Foster" written plainly on the file tab. Mr Forster grabbed the file and disappeared.

The Senior Clerk then softened and said "Oh I see you've straightened out the files - thats good, BUT Mr Forster's file <u>always</u> must be kept at the beginning of "C" cabinet because thats closest to his office and he can always find it there".

The fact that the Company Secretary's file was out of alphabetical order in the filing cabinet worried me a lot! Out cards had not arrived in those days. If a file was missing the Junior was responsible and expected to know at once who he had given it to.

The Company Secretary called staff into his office by use of a buzzer. One buzz for a Senior Clerk, two for the Junior and three for the Tea Lady when he was ready for his morning and afternoon tea. One day TWO BUZZES went and I rushed to his door and knocked twice to await "come in", and as I did so I read his awe-inspiring brass name plate on the door. There, as bold as brass it intimidated all who stook in front of it - "Charles P. Forster BA. FCAA. FSI"" - then it came to me in a flash, I would amend his file title to exactly as his name plate, including his letters of distinction.

This secret endeavour I did one lunch hour when the office was empty. I installed a bright new foolscap manilla file with neatly printed letters, then placed it back <u>correctly</u> with the "C" files. For the next two days I walked around with a fearful unreast awaiting for the first person to discover my daring deed!

Then the worst happened. The Chief Clerk who had just come out of the Company Secretary's office called out imperiously "Mr Forster's file AT ONCE!" I ran out quickly (retrival must be instantaneous) and as the door was held open for me for immediate access, I faced up and boldly proffered THE NEW FILE to the Company Secretary himself! He took it casually - like the gentleman he was - and glancing at the new cover must have felt it might be the wrong file, as his eyes quickly ran over the name on the tab.

I stood transfixed in front of him, when he read it he looked a trifle surprised and said "Who do I own this Honour?". At this I managed a smile and said quickly "Sir it has always been filed under "C" and not "F" so I've rectified it by starting it with the "C" of your christian name as shown on your door". To my amazement he laughed and said "Well it should never get filed away incorrectly now".

THAT was the beginning of my interest in records!

......

<u>THE AUTHOR</u>

JIM BORLASE settled in Australia in 1950 after serving in the Royal Navy in the Pacific during the war. He had been an Accountant and Clerk to a Local Council in England. Joining "Qantas Empire Airways" he passed through various financial sections to become the Accounting Services Officer. Part of his assignment was to manage all the financial records of Qantas. Jim recognised the great necessity for supporting the venture of the original few who floated RMAA. Later he helped Tom Lovett as Lecturer on the early courses in Records Management started at the Sydney Technical College.

BUY THE RIGHT COMPUTER SOLUTION

Author: Douglas Stevenson

In most cases, the purchase of computer equipment and software involves signing a seemingly large number of contracts and agreements. Most buyers get a feeling of comfort from such agreements because they believe that their rights and the supplier's obligations are clearly defined, and that they will be protected should anything "go wrong".

In some respects they are correct. Most contracts do outline the responsibilities of the suppliers - to provide services, to warranty hardware and software, to train user staff, to provide support, and so on.

Whether they in fact protect the buyer to the extent that is expected is open to doubt and will depend largely on the buyer's understanding of the agreement being signed and on the commercial reality with which the transaction is being approached.

It has been my experience that the contracts and agreements, in almost all circumstances, work to the supplier's favour, much to the anger and disillusionment of the buyers.

What is somewhat amazing is the fact that this situation has existed from the earliest days of computer acquisitions to the present. And even more amazing is the fact that some buyers have been "burned" on more than one occasion.

To understand how this can happen, it is first necessary to distinguish between the explicit and implicit nature of many aspects of computer purchase and support agreements.

SUPPORT AGREEMENTS

Support agreements for both hardware and software are generally available. Most users will take advantage of these in order to ensure that they get maximum benefit from their computer systems in the long term.

Hardware maintenance agreements are basically insurance policies whereby the provider of maintenance agrees to fix any hardware problems that occur whilst the system is under maintenance.

Software support is a little less straightforward. In some cases, the support services expected by the user do not match the services offered by the supplier - "support" means different things to different people.

The terms, conditions, obligations and offerings in both hardware maintenance and software support agreements are generally explicity laid down, and there is limited opportunity for misunderstanding.

> Remember the age old business rule - "let the buyer beware"

In my experience, a relatively small number of problems arise from these agreements. Further, the system has generally been installed for some time when these agreements are first invoked and therefore both users and suppliers are usually keen to make the system work. It is therefore in both parties' interests to "do their bit" to make things work and to compromise in certain circumstances.

Notwithstanding that many users do not feel that they get any "value for money" spent on support (because they do not have the need to use it in many cases), there would usually be few instances of serious problems developing from these agreements.

PURCHASE AGREEMENTS

This has traditionally been the area where clashes between users and suppliers have occurred.

The contract is the legal document representing the agreement of a user to buy a product from a supplier to meet his/her requirements - or is it an agreement by a supplier to supply a product to meet a users requirements?

Whilst these statements may appear to be the same, the fact that they are stated from different viewpoints is the root cause of the problems that may develop between a user and a supplier.

Except in very unusual circumstances, the "users requirements" that are supposedly being met, are not annexed to the contract and therefore will almost certainly not be included in any legal consideration.

Although the level of detail to which a prospective purchaser needs to investigate and evaluate available computer equipment and software will vary from situation to situation, the aim of the exercise is to identify which system best fits the buyer's requirements.

Generally, a large number of factors will enter into the consideration of "best fit" and each will be weighed up when the final decision is made. Most of these factors will be straightforward (Will the system do what is required? Is there sufficient capacity? Is support available?) but there are also emotional factors that will tend to complicate the issue.

In many cases these emotional factors are importmant but they may mean that the most appropriate system is not acquired. Some of the reasons include:

- a desire to buy from a friend or business acquaintance;

- imposition of a strict price limit; and

- hardware must be IBM.

Let us first look at the basic objective - to find a solution that will meet a user's requirements.

SOFTWARE

One of the major user-created problems is that little or no effort is made to clearly identify the exact functions that the computer system must perform. Some buyers will merely ask the suppliers to demonstrate their product, and will make an assessment as to suitability from the demonstration, which is usually controlled by the supplier anyway. If the product is demonstrated well, an order will follow.

The chances that the product bought will meet the user's needs are remote, since the user did not attempt to match systems capabilities against a defined set of needs. Further, the chance of future conflict between the user and supplier is extremely high.

Users who spend the time and effort to detail their exact requirements, place them in order of relative importance and ensure that demonstration and discussion specifically cover these requirements, will be in a good position to determine which system really is the most appropriate for their business.

HARDWARE

Similarly, hardware requirements do need to be considered in some detail and questions asked about the proposed computer's capabilities with regard to:

- processor capacity in terms of terminal response time and in processing time for large jobs;
- disk capacity;
- expansion capacity (terminals, printers, memory, disk);
- printer speed;
- upgrade to next model;
- time required to perform end of period processing (including all printing of reports) - this is traditionally the longest stage in the processing cycle;
- time required to perform full backup and restore of data files.

This is not an exhaustive list of factors to consider but answers to these sorts of questions should provide a good basis to evaluate the suitability of the hardware configuration offered.

In most instances, the supplier will ask about current volumes and also the likely growth factor that should be allowed for. Many users estimate this growth factor badly (usually underestimating future requirements) and the computer hardware may run out of capacity in a short time - much to the user's dissatisfaction.

IMPLICIT "SERVICE" AGREEMENT

Dissatisfaction with hardware and/or software results from the user's belief that the supplier offered a solution that would meet their needs. Even if the users do not specify their requirements, they believe that there is an implicit "service" agreement that a satisfactory solution will be provided.

Support means different things to different people

In many instances, they are encouraged to reach such a conclusion by the supplier's salesperson's statement and actions. In fact, most salespeople would perceive that as their basic objective without actually misleading the user.

IMPLICIT "SERVICE" WITHOUT ACTUALLY MISLEADING THE USER

Unfortunately, no such agreement exists and the user will have difficulty in pressing any claim for inadequate performance.

THE LEGAL POSITION

Like most legal documents, a purchase agreement for computer equipment or software is only enforcable by either party in terms of what is included in the agreement. Therefore, unless the specific requirements of the user are included as part of the contract, the users will not "have a leg to stand on" in the event of the failure of the system to meet their expectations.

The "warranties" section of the purchase agreement will always provide the supplier with the necessary protection against claims of non-performance. Further, the "liability" section will clearly state that the supplier accepts no liability for just about anything.

Without doubt, the contract is almost completely in favour of the supplier and, if signed without any annexures or changes, will protect the supplier against almost any claim by the user. To "stack the cards" even more in their favour, the agreement that is signed by the user is an Offer to Purchase which is then accepted by the supplier. The user is making the offer to buy (the supplier does not offer to sell) which implies that they know exactly what they are doing.

This has proved to be good protection for the suppliers and to my knowledge there have been very few cases where a disgruntled user has had any satisfaction through the legal process. Many users believe they have a strong case but are convinced by their solicitors, after reading the contract, not to proceed.

However, all is not as bad as it may sound.

THE PRACTICAL POSITION

The overwhelming majority of hardware and software suppliers are only interested in supplying solutions that will meet the user's needs and will generally do everything within their power to ensure this occurs. They do not like bad publicity about themselves or their product and usually offer extra services or support if necessary.

This obviously has a limit however, and where they believe they have done what is reasonable, the supplier will do no more. In return, a "reasonable" user will accept the compromise solution, even if they believe they are completely in the right. To do otherwise is a waste of time, effort and emotional energy.

Unfortunately, users will not be protected from the overzealous salesperson who may exaggerate, if not deliberately misrepresent, the capabilities of the product being sold and must rely on their own devices to ensure that the system acquired does meet their needs.

A further point of comfort is the attitude of the Trade Practices Commission which tends to look at the "reasonableness" of a matter rather than the exact letter of the contract. However, to have this attitude benefit the disgruntled user, there must be appropriate correspondence and documentation to support the claim.

HOW TO AVOID MOST PROBLEMS

Despite everything I have said, the user is in a strong position initially because they are buying and the supplier is selling. A careful buyer will use this to their advantage.

All parties are satisfied if the user is happy with their purchase of computer equipment and/or software. The following guidelines should help keep everyone reasonably happy:

- have a very clear idea of what it is you want from your computer system
- establish a list of requirements for the proposed system and break them into "need to have" and "nice to have" categories
- do not expect any system to meet all of your needs, but at least know what you cannot have before installation
- make a thorough search of the market before buying a system
- be firm/hard with suppliers to ensure that they respond in detail to your queries and requests
- use professional consultants if you do not have the expertise or time to do any or all

of the previous points.

Selecting a computer can be time consuming. Your time may be better spent managing your business. Consultants can generally put this often complex issue into clear perspective, and give your computer installation a very high chance of success. Unsuccessful computer installations can have a disastrous impact on a business.

- take complete responsibility for the success of your computer system. You cannot expect outsiders to make your system work; they can only help you to make it work.

  This is the single most important factor in the success of a computer system.

MICROCOMPUTERS

The buying and selling of microcomputer hardware and software should be approached in the same manner as any other computer purchase. However, there are some special factors that should be understood.

- Many of the software products available for microcomputers are purely tools which the user can manipulate to produce results.

Some buyers have been burned on more than one occasion

They are generally not sold to solve a particular problem but rather in terms of their ability to solve a whole range of problems. Spreadsheet, database, word processing and graphics packages are in this group.

- Applications packages (for accounting and specific markets) are generally sold as non-modifiable systems, targetted for the broadest market.

- As a broad generalisation, microcomputers have standard capabilities and are basically interchangeable. Depending on the user's requirements, a large number of microcomputers may perform the required task equivalently. In fact, the whole concept of IBM compatibility is testimony to this point.

- Software and hardware agreements are generally not involved and the buyer takes almost all the risk that the chosen solution does meet their requirements. It is assumed that the purchaser understands the hardware and software they are buying.

These factors work both for and against the buyer of microcomputers and by following the guidelines above, they should avoid many of the disappointments experienced by microcomputer users whose system does not really perform the functions desired.

Remember, microcomputer systems do not solve problems - they provide tools to allow people to solve problems.

CONCLUSION

Although they have been around for a long time now, computers continue to create a disproportionate number of problems for businesses. With the evolution of microcomputers, a large proportion of businesses are considering computerised systems and therefore face these problems.

I believe that, in general, the often repeated stories of computer disasters and general dissatisfaction with computers can be avoided. Computers offer enormous benefits to most businesses and, with common sense, careful planning and commitment, those benefits are attainable.

In conclusion, when buying a computer system remember the age old business rule - "let the buyer beware".

THE AUTHOR

Douglas Stevenson is with the Management Consulting Services group of KMG Hungerfords. This article appeared in the June 86 issue of "Australian Computing" (publisher McGraw-Hill), and is included in RMAA Quarterly with the author's consent. Our thanks to Mr Stevenson for making his valuable article available to RMAA members.

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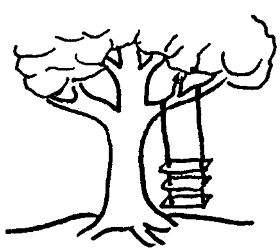
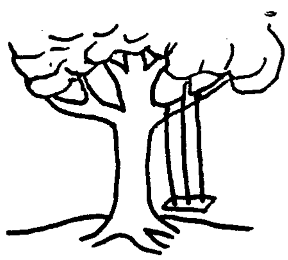
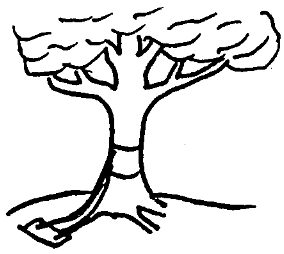


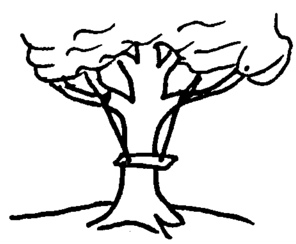
1 As management requested it



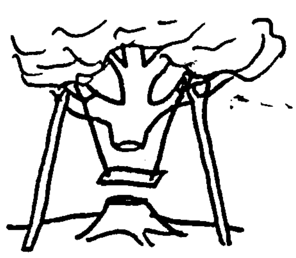
2 As the project leader defined it



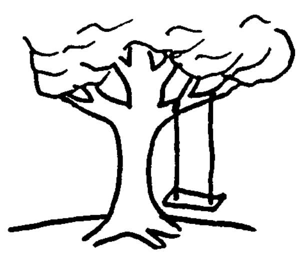
3 As systems designed it



4 As programming developed it



5 As operations installed it



6 What the user wanted.

REFERENCE POINT

Please Note: This is not an advertisment nor and endorsement of the books listed. If purchased by the reader it is at their own risk.

1. Forester, T. **THE INFORMATION REVOLUTION - The Complete Guide.** Oxford, Blackwell 1985. Prominent people in the field look at the present state and future development of information technology.

2. Westin, A.F. **THE CHANGING WORKPLACE - A Guide to Managing the People, Organisational and Regulatory Aspects of Office Technology.** London, Knowledge Industry Publications, 1985. A guide to anticipating and solving the "people" issues of office automation.

3. Kalthoff, R. J. & Lee, L.S., **PRODUCTIVITY AND RECORDS AUTOMATION.** Prentice-Hall 1981.

4. Barnett, Robert. **THE FORMS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK.** Robert Barnett & Associates, 1979, 1982.

5. **A COMMON SENSE GUIDE TO SELECTION OF A COMPUTER SYSTEM.** Six "S" Business Advisory Pty Ltd, Sydney.

6. Saunders, N. **COMPUTER AIDED MANAGEMENT - How to Make Computing Profitable.** Cambridge, Woodhead-Faulkner 1985. A guide for all levels of management, this book explains the necessity for computer use and functions and shows how to create an effective system.

★★★

ACTION NOTES

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF SEMINARS

1. **Clarify what you want to achieve.** Why did you decide to register for the seminar? Take a moment to clarify your specific goals. Clarify them by writing them down before the seminar. That will put you in the right frame of mind for getting exactly what you need out of the programme.

2. **Meet other people.** A seminar is an excellent opportunity to expand your network of contacts. Sit next to someone you don't know, even if you go with a group. Mingle during the breaks. Every participant has a specific area of expertise; find out what it is instead of chatting about the weather. Make it one of your goals to meet at least one person you intend to contact again on a business or social basis.

3. **Participate!** Ask questions! Make contributions. Consider the meeting room to be a "mental gymnasium" where it's okay to run, fall and get up again. You'll benefit much more by participating in the game than sitting on the sideline.

4. **Take notes.** Why let even one good idea get away? Taking notes will help you concentrate and organise your thoughts. Plus, they'll allow you to take a "refresher" anytime in the future. Hint 1: make notes clear as you write them. Few people ever have the luxury of rewriting their notes later, no matter how good their intentions. Hint 2: Keep your notes and look at them in six months. How do you feel about what you wrote? How many of your good intentions have come true.

5. **Relate what you learnt to yourself.** Don't setle for abstract knowledge. Have your current problems, conflicts and interests foremost in your mind. As you learn new approaches and techniques, relate them to your own situations.

6. **Find "the big idea".** Try to identify at least one "big idea" that alone will make the seminar worthwhile. The idea will be there ... it's up to you to find it.

7. **Develop an "action plan".** After the programme write down the specific things you intend to start doing differently or better. Don't put your good ideas away with your notes. And do it that evening while your ideas and enthusiasm are fresh.

8. **DON'T call the office!** There will always be a problem that "only you can handle", and in most cases - it **can** wait. In the event of a real emergency you can be paged.

9. **Relax and open your mind** and you'll leave refreshed, inspired and recharged. Forget about what's happening at the office ... unless you have unusual telepathic powers, you can't do much about it anyway.

Get all you can out of the seminar ... and ... have a good time.

EMPLOYING THE RIGHT PERSON!

One of the most important factors in office administration is the human one. People in the office are still the most element in achieving aN efficient office service, without which no organisation can operate.

To employ the right person, the interview must be properly planned, following the requirements of the job description and specification. The interview seeks to enlarge on the information given by the applicant, and assesses the probable future performance of the candidate. In order to draw from the interviewee all the information necessary to make a wise choice, try the "Seven-Point Plan".

1. PHYSICAL MAKE-UP. Is the candidate agreeable in bearing, speech and appearance? Do there appear to be any defects in health or physique that might make the candidate unsuitable for the job?

2. ATTAINMENTS. Where was the applicant educated? Were any educational qualifications acquired and if so what were they and at what levels? What relevant training and experience has the candidate had?

3. GENERAL INTELLIGENCE. What standard of general intelligence does the candidate display? To what extent does the applicant's career to date give evidence of general intelligence.

4. SPECIAL APTITUDES. What special talents does the candidate have? Is there for instance an apitude for the use of words, or for mathematics? Is there any special manual dexterity?

5. INTERESTS. What sort of non-professional interests does the applicant have? Are these activities practical, socially biased or intellectual?

6. DISPOSITION. Does the candidate give the impression of being self-reliant, self-disciplined, dependable? Does the candidate appear to be a good mixer, or argumentative?

7. CIRCUMSTANCES. What are the applicant's family circumstances? If appointed, would the applicant find the journey to the employer's premises easy and reliable? Would the vacancy, if filled by the applicant, be mutually advantageous to the candidate (from the point of view of personal and career development) and the organisation?

* *

TO SIT ON COMMITTEES

They were bright metal once, souls aflame, smelling something rotten in the state, ardent to set it right.
They began bravely, with banners, songs; they sought the dreadful summit

but were led into committees, where dead words hang in the conditioned air like ash and settle slowly on the carpet, the causes they came to serve are never on the papers, and drifts of information glaze their brains.

Soon, however, they learn the real agenda. They become adept: the pointed phrase precisely placed; the inside knowledge to parry an opponent's thrust; the twist, the swift diversion.

They savour the cerebral excitement of a hit. So the play becomes the thing, and later, when he hands the drinks around, they cannot remember why it was they joined, or what they meant to do about the King.

MARGERY HOURIHAN

GROWTH THROUGH EDUCATION

Author: Dale Kreibig, M.A.C.S., A.R.M.A.,

Records management (RM): the management of records of any form from creation through to ultimate destruction or permanent retention. Such a neat definition to cover the combination of systems, equipment and people. Yet the existence of these three elements (regardless of the level of excellence) will not guarantee efficient and economical information management.

The missing element may be complete and continuing education.

Education has to do with people knowing what is expected of them, and possessing the skills and experience to meet these expectations.

Lack of education is very costly. The cost of ignorance is hidden: hidden in the excess retrieval time; buried in the overheads; obvious only when disaster strikes. The lack of a single record can mean the difference between success or failure during litigation, and can bring an organisation to its knees.

No group can not afford to delegate RM to untrained personnel. Yet for decades management **has** asked untrained clerks to "do the filing", that is, to put papers away. And they **have** put documents away as best they can. Supervisors may believe that the job has been done well simply because piles of loose documents magically disappear.

What about retrieval?

Information is of value only if it is accessible.

Those organisations who have an untrained, yet intelligent and well motivated filing clerk may find that retrieval works well until the clerk leaves or retires, taking with them at this time the rationale for the filing system and the memory of where particular documents are stored.

DOCUMENTATION

Education will overcome many of the pitfalls, as will the existence of policies, standards and procedures.

- RM policies inform personnel of the direction in which RM will proceed, and establish authority and responsibility. Less than 5% of all organisations have any written policy to cover RM.

- Standards set minimum quality or performance levels, and contribute to cost control. Formal standards prevent decisions being based on the personal preferences and whims of the decision maker.

- Procedures ensure uniformity in many work areas and free senior staff from the need to constantly advise and instruct subordinates. Without written procedures, your RM systems will be no better than the varied verbal instructions which have been given since the organisation created or received its first record.

Organisations must make **conscious** decisions about all these aspects of their RM systems. Systems which simply grow or evolve freely over long periods according to ad-hoc and default decisions are rarely as successful as those which are based on sound analysis and structured decision making.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Users and records staff need

education and training in order that the organisation's expectations of them are known, and that they are able to perform their roles in RM.

The Users

User education should firstly establish that information is a corporate resource and not the property of individual officers, and secondly ensure that those officers know how to use the records systems.

RM groups provide a service to the rest of the organisation. Maximum benefits can be attained only when users are aware of the basic system principals and the most efficient ways to access information. An RM professional who believes that users don't need to know how records systems work is misguided.

Records Staff

Managing the organisation's information resources requires the services of individuals who are skilled, experienced, and adequately rewarded.

To qualify as a competent Records Manager, an individual needs to possess aptitude, training (both formal and on-the-job), and experience.

Formal Education

A range of vocational courses is available to those with an interest in information management. Courses are neither standardised nor are they widely available. RMAA has undertaken to survey vocational courses, introduce common syllabi and officially recognise those courses deemed to be effective.

Details of courses known to the author are shown at the end of this article. The reader is advised to assess carefully the content and duration of all courses, and to recognise the following points.

- The vocational courses mentioned **are** designed for particular audiences: for example, records managers, archivists, or librarians. Students **must** ensure that the course matches their professional objectives.

  A course in archives management or librarianship does not qualify the graduate as a records manager; nor should the graduate of a RM course claim specialised knowledge of librarianship.

  Would a RM graduate presume to run a major public library? Of course not. Similar respect for the information management specialities should be shown by archivists and librarians.

- Some vocational courses are "broad-brush", meaning that they expose the student to all aspects of the information sciences, and do not provide in-depth knowledge or practical skills in **any** area. This may lead to disappointment for both the graduate and the employer.

- Attendance at short commercial courses can provide knowledge of the **basics** of a technical area. They do not substitute for long term vocational education. Sending an unqualified person to such a course and expecting them to be an instant expert is unrealistic.

- Some courses are oriented toward particular systems or proprietary products. The bias must be checked and recognised.

Once the requirement for formal education has been satisfied, experience and on-job training must be acquired. Formal education provides agile minds with the theory of, and some practice in, RM. Attending a vocational course alone does not qualify an individual as a records manager.

Experience

Experience fills the gap between theory and practice. It places theoretical knowledge into context and develops an individual's judgement and selectivity. Experience makes the difference between a theoretically perfect records system and an accepted, workable, lasting one.

On-Job Training

Given that an individual is qualified and experienced, on-job training is also required. I do not limit the meaning of on-job training to showing-and-telling: while it certainly includes that, it also must include the development and presentation of RM policies, standards, instructions, and thorough procedures and documentation.

On-job training is often neglected in favour of coping with daily workloads, or simply because the records manager or records supervisor does not know how to (or fears the process of) providing training.

The NSW Public Service Board's "Five Step Method" is an excellent starting point in learning how to provide on-job training. The five steps are:

- PLAN the instruction

- PREPARE for presentation and for motivating the learner

- CONDUCT the session

- PRACTICE by the learner

- WORK EXPERIENCE.

These steps are clearly not the usual, ad-hoc and hasty "show and tell" method. Skill is required in providing on-job training. It is not simply a matter of telling the employee what to do and walking away.

Records Managers should provide on-job training for three basic reasons:

- To enable junior members of staff to realise their work potential.

- To satisfy organisational needs to have all work carried out in the most economical way, that is, if you do the job (because "it's just as easy to do it myself"), it costs your employer more.

- You, the Records Manager, will have more time to do **your** job.

An extract from the NSW Public Service Board publication on the subject is relevant.

"People like to:

a. know where they are going;

b. be given credit when it is due;

c. know about coming changes;

d. know that the best use is being made of their abilities.

The Supervisor therefore has a responsibility to:

1. provide staff with training and the experience necessary for equal access to future development and employment opportunities;

2. encourage staff to do the job

correctly and safely with minimum supervision and with a sense of pride in the job done;

3. identify performance difficulties and incorrect practices and decide if and how training can be used to remedy the situation.

Successful results will be more likely if supervisors have a willingness to:

- practice and improve their own skills;
- interact positively with learners who are practicing and improving skills;
- approach on-the-job instruction systematically."

RELEVANCE

Education and training must be relevant to the students needs. Irrelevant education will not be of value to the employer or the student. Moreover, when confronted with what appears to be irrelevant, the student will not be motivated, and learning (as against teaching) is not likely to occur.

For the employer to see the need is not enough. It has been my unfortunate experience to address groups who:

a) don't know why they are there;

b) have not been told of the relevance of the session to their work; and accordingly,

c) are not motivated to learn; and, worst of all,

d) fear that failure in the session may mean the loss of their employment.

There is a story in education that always comes to mind when considering relevance and motivation. It's called "The Animal School".

It has a message to those involved in both public and private education, a message I would like to draw it to the attention of educators across this country. It's quite a fantastic story. Sadly, it is also true. Educators have been laughing at it for years, but few do anything about it.

"The animals got together in the forest one day and decided to start a school. There was a rabbit, a bird, a squirrel, a fish and an eel, and they formed a Board of Education.

The rabbit insisted that running and burrowing be in the curriculum. The bird insisted that flying be in the curriculum. The fish insisted that swimming be in the curriculum. The squirrel insisted that perpendicular tree climbing be in the curriculum.

They put all these things together and wrote a Curriculum Guide. Then they insisted that **all** of the animals take **all** of the subjects.

Although the rabbit was getting an A in running, perpendicular tree climbing was a real problem for him: he kept falling over backwards. Pretty soon he suffered brain damage and couldn't run any more. He found that instead of making an A in running he was scoring a C and of course he always failed in perpendicular climbing.

The bird was really beautiful at flying, but when it came to burrowing he couldn't do so well. He kept breaking his beak and wings. Pretty soon he was scoring a C in flying as well as an F in burrowing, and he had a difficult time with perpendicular tree climbing.

The moral of the story is that the person who was valedictorian of the class was a mentally deficient eel who did everything in a half-way fashion. But the educators were all happy because everybody was taking all of the subjects and it was called a broad-based education.

We laugh at this, but that's what it is. It's what you were subjected to at school. We really are trying to make everybody the same, and one soon learns that the ability to conform governs success in the educational scene.

Conformity continues into the university. We don't say

> 'Fly! Think for yourselves!'.

We give students old knowledge and say

> 'Now this is what is essential. This is what is important. Tell me this in your assignments and examinations, and you will pass.'

Educators teach nothing but one best way; they do not say

> 'Here are the tools, now go create your own. Dream a while. Find something new'."

It is simpler and more economic to produce broad-based education than it is to recognise the individual talents, aptitudes and potentials of students.

It is cheaper to prepare broad-based education, **cheaper until** educators and employers consider the results in terms of employee de-motivation, non-performance, and most importantly the cost of not using (and I do mean using) the individual strengths of each and every member of staff.

SUMMARY

Prevention is better than cure. It is also better than treating symptoms.

Invest in a little prevention, right now.

Next year there will be even more paper. The problem will be bigger, and it will be more expensive to solve. When next you see your records staff, give a thought to the load you may have placed upon them. Is it reasonable? Do they have sufficient training and experience? Have you taken the time to provide documentation and training?

Remember it is not just their problem. It is also yours.

THE AUTHOR

Dale Kreibig, M.A.C.S, A.R.M.A., is the Managing Director and Senior Consultant of Curo Management Services Pty Limited (independent information and records management consultants); Councillor (1981-86), President (1984-6), and Education Chairman (1982-84) for the R.M.A.A N.S.W. Branch; part time teacher in records management for TAFE (1983-86); guest lecturer for the University of New South Wales (1983-86); and member of the Australian Computer Society's Professional Development Sub-Committee (1983-84).

VOCATIONAL COURSES

STATE	ORGANISATION	COURSE NAME	DURATION
ACT	Canberra CAE	Graduate Diploma Information & RM	4 yr full time (FT)
NSW	Cumberland College Health Sciences	Bachelor of Applied Science - Medical Records Administration	3 yr FT
NSW	External Studies	Medical Records Clerk (Correspondence)	1 yr average
NSW	North Sydney TAFE	Records Management Stage I	1 yr part time (PT)
NSW	TAFE	Proposed: Records Management Stage II	3 yr PT
NSW	Riverina CAE	B.A., Library & Information Science	3 yr FT, equiv PT
NSW	University of NSW	Graduate Diploma Archives Administration	1 yr FT, 2 yrs PT
NSW	University of NSW	Master of Archives Administration	
QLD	Kangaroo Point TAFE	Records Management	2 yr PT
QLD	Institute Technology	Information Management Major (as part of Bachelor courses)	3 yr FT, 6 yr PT
QLD	Technical Correspondence School	Records Management (Correspondence)	2 yr PT
SA	RM subjects only as part of other courses		
VIC	Prahran TAFE	Certificate Business Studies - Records Admin	4 yr PT
WA	RM subjects only as part of other courses		

SHORT COURSES RMAA, enquire through State Branches; Australian Institute of Management, enquire through State Branches; Techsearch Inc., South Australia

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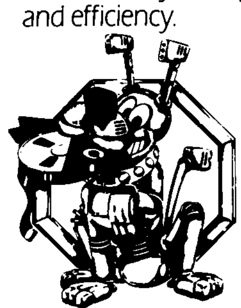

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FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTED SYLLABI OUTLINES FOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT COURSES TO BE OFFERED BY TAFE IN N.S.W.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

CERTIFICATE (1 night/wk, 2 years, total 216 hours)

The aim of this course is to provide sufficient knowledge of Records Management systems to allow the student to participate in the daily maintenance and control aspects of existing Records Management systems.

Y1/S1 INTRODUCTION TO RECORDS MANAGEMENT (FY 18x1.5)
- Information Life Cycle
- Document and File Creation
- Use of File References

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS (18x1.5)

Y1/S2 OFFICE PRACTICE & EQUIPMENT (18x1.5)

RECORDS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES (18x1.5)
- Sequencing
- Introduction to Classification & Thesauri
- Basic Indexing
- Storage Considerations
- Visit to Large Registry

Y2/S1 RECORDS INTEGRITY & PROTECTION (18x1.5)
- Use & Maintenance
- Movement Control
- Preservation Principles
- Introduction Vital Records Protection

INTRODUCTION TO SAFETY & OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH (18x1.5)

Y2/S2 RECORDS RETENTION AND CONTROL (18x1.5)
- Principles of Evaluation
- Retention Concepts
- Transfer
- Repositories - types and purposes
- Basic Tools and Controls
- Visit to Large Commercial Repository

BUSINESS ECONOMICS (18x1.5)

ADVANCED CERTIFICATE (2 nights/wk, 2 years, total 432 hours)

The aim of this course is to provide sufficient knowledge of Records Management systems to allow the student to not only participate in the daily maintenance and control aspects of existing Records Management systems, but also to be responsible for all intellectual control aspects of existing systems including basic supervisory responsibilities.

Y1 Same as Y1+Y2 of Certificate

ADVANCED CERTIFICATE (continued)

Y2/S1 RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (18x3)

Typical Systems
- Thesauri (adaptive and purpose built)
- Classification and Referencing
- Registration and Tracking
- Audits and Census

Technology (input, storage, manipulation and retrieval)
- Computers
- Word Processors
- Microforms
- Magnetic Storage
- Video and Optical Storage
- Barcoding
- Imaging and OCR
- Facsimile
- MICR

Selecting and Using Technologies

Legal, Administrative and Ethical Considerations

INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT (18x1.5)

COMPUTER WORKSHOP (18x1.5)

Y2/S2 RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CONTROLS (18x1.5)
- Forms Management
- Reproduction Control
- Reports Management
- Correspondence Control
- Policies, Procedures, Instructions
- Standards and Specifications

BUSINESS STATISTICS (18x1.5)

BUSINESS BEHAVIOUR (18x1.5)

BUSINESS LAW (18x1.5)

ASSOCIATE DIPLOMA (2 nights/wk, 4 years, total 864 hours)

The aim of this course is to provide sufficient knowledge of Records Management systems to allow the student to manage, control and administer existing Records Management systems and staff, and to design and implement new systems which satisfy short and long term organisational information needs.

Y1&2 Same as Advanced Certificate

Y3/S1 DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT OF RM SYSTEMS (18x3)
- Problem Analysis
- Problem Solving Inventories & Surveys
- Symptoms, Problems, Diagnosis and Solutions
- The Importance of Management and User Support
- Role of, and Communication with, Custodians
- Management of Change
- Staffing and Records Centre

MANAGEMENT DECISION MAKING (18x1.5)

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (18x1.5)

Y3/S2 RECORDS RETENTION, EVALUATION AND DISPOSAL (18x3)
- Retention Inventories
- Evaluation Techniques
- Legal, Administrative, Historical & Financial Values
- Researching Information Values
- Relevant Legislation
- Developing Retention Schedules
- Gaining Executive Approval
- The Role of the Retention Committee
- Communicating and Implementing the Results
- Role of the Archivist, Conservator and Public
- Protecting Secondary and Vital Records

OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT (18x1.5)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (18x1.5)

Y4/S1 RESEARCH PROJECT (FY 18x1.5)

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND CHANGE (18x3)

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT II (18x1.5)

Y4/S2 RESEARCH PROJECT (FY 18x1.5)

QUALITY ACHIEVEMENT (18x1.5)

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT (18x1.5)

OPTION (18x1.5) Suggestions:
Public Service:
- Government Policy Analysis, OR
- Management Issues Workshop

Private Enterprise:
- Marketing Fundamentals

LOOKING TO OUR IMAGE - PR & RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Roget's thesaurus presents some interesting variations on the word image, including "mental-image", "after-image", "idea", and "projection".

What is our image?

Sadly, to many people "records management" is a buzzword for "filing", used by those who would have the (low) status of their positions elevated, the size of their staff increased and, of course, their salaries raised to dizzying heights.

Somehow, between the quill pen and the computer, we have forgotten to let the world at large know what we do, the skills required, and our potential value to users.

Perhaps W.B. Yeates might sympathise, having written:

"All things uncomely and broken,
all things worn out and old
The cry of a child by the roadway, the creak of a lumbering cart,
The heavy steps of the ploughman, splashing the wintry mould,
Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my heart."

The job of improving our image falls into two distinct parts: the first part being the formal PR, mainly through publicity; and the second part being (dare I say it) culling, and if necessary a little disposal.

The publicity part is relatively easy (but definitely not simple): we must update public knowledge of our function.

The culling job is a little harder - we as a profession must clean up our own backyards. The "Filers" and the "Records Managers" co-exist now, probably with the same position title and salary level. The filers are an embarrasement to the records managers, and a liability to the profession as a whole. We must either separate the wheat from the chaff, or improve the chaff through education.

PR: the vehicle to update public knowledge of our function. How could we use it?

Fortunately, the wheels of PR have been turning for decades. We must tap into every avenue for publicity, and use it. Use it unashamedly and with gusto!

The Association must form a strong Publicity Committee, comprising members with solid commercial experience in the area - people who know how to deal with the media and public groups, and are persistent and singleminded enough to use every available opportunity to bring us into the public eye.

Some of the obvious avenues for publicity are listed below.

- Trade magazines like Modern Office, Rydges and Office News. Note I did not mention RMAA publications - we would merely be preaching to the converted.

- Any newspaper running special features on a subject even vaguely related to information management.

- Exhibitions.

- Careers nights.

- Conferences and seminars.

- Chambers of Commerce.

- The Small Business Agency.

Remember that the publicity must be directed at those who do not know who we are.

To tell the public that we are a valuable profession is not enough. We must **show** them what we can do.

You, personally, must indulge in some PR as well.

The Publicity Committee can't do it all. They **can** work on what might be called the "institutional PR". If their work is not backed up by your efforts (and for some, a large measure of self-improvement), little will be achieved.

A public relations programme will only succeed if it is based on sound personal performance by the individuals involved in records management.

Records staff must **respond** to the public and corporate need for information. Responding does not mean grudgingly yielding up something that will keep them happy.

Get closer to understanding their needs. Recognise and act on their priorities.

Serve the users. If the idea of being a servant to users doesn't sit well with you, find another profession.

While improving the service, also watch your attitude. It does show. You are judged by it. Remember the principles of non-verbal communication? No matter your words, the non-verbal will be believed in preference to what you say.

We **must** look to our image and our performance - there are others who would happily expand their information specialities to include ours. And they will. Why shouldn't they. If we neglect to fulfil our purpose in serving the information needs of our users, it is indeed time for us to step aside.

KILLER PHRASES
How to Kill Ideas and Chloroform Creative Thinking

We have never done it that way.
It won't work.
It's not part of our job.
We haven't the time.
It's not in the budget.
We've tried that before.
Not ready for it yet.
Good idea, but our system is different.
Too hard to administer.
Too early. Too late.
It's not good enough.
There are better ways than that.
What will management think?
What will the union think?
It's against policy.
Who do you think you are?
Let's not step on their toes.
Let's discuss it at some other time.
You don't understand our problem.
Why start anything now?
We're too big for that.
We're too small for that.
The new men won't understand.
The old men won't use it.
We have too many projects now.
Has anyone else tried it?
What you're really saying is .....
It's been the same for twenty years so it must be good.
What bubble-head thought that up?
I know it won't work.
Let's form a committee.
Let's be practical.
It needs more study.
Let's think it over for a while and watch developments.
That's not our problem.
Let's shelve it for the time.
We can't do everything at once.
File it please.

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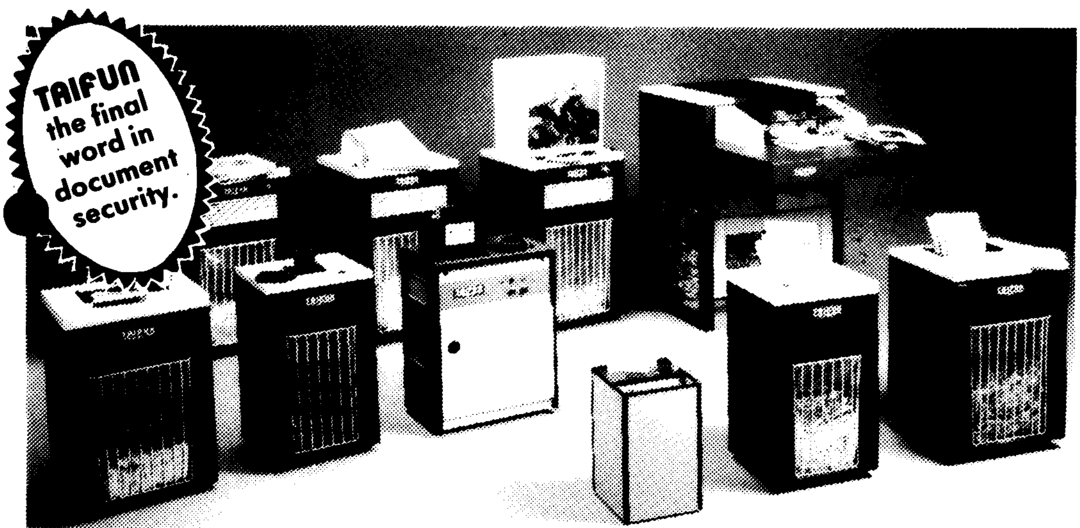

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DESTRUCTION - THE FINAL QUESTION

The Authors

S Burn, D Calderwood, P Camden, C Colton, K Dutton, P Golden, C Lipscombe, L Leonard, B McMullen, S Ott, M Spurs, and E Zoglmeyer

Foreword

The following articles were prepared as a homework assignment by students completing the "Record Management Stage I" course at North Sydney Technical College 1985/6. Each group was asked to assess one of the four methods of disposing of records: pulping, burning, shredding and dumping. We should be justly proud of the efforts of those who complete formal studies in records management, and appreciate their contributions to research.

DESTRUCTION BY PULPING

The time has come when management in all areas, government, academic and private enterprise, should be setting an example with regard to an environmental solution to dispose of vast quantities of waste paper. Some 70% of all waste is paper and money can be made from recycling (pulping) it. The emphasis has always been on waste and the resulting administrative problem one of cleaning, storage and removal.

There are basically two types of waste paper - confidential and non-confidential. No clear definition of either exists and interpretation can vary throughout an organisation.

There is little problem disposing of confidential waste since organisations pay for the service and quantities are only a fraction of the total volume. Several companies are in this business and they offer destruction under strict security together with a certificate of destruction. For example, one takes full responsibility from the time the material is collected until it is fed into the hydro-pulper for recycling. Prior to collection the paper (carbon free) must be put into boxes or bags provided and held in a secure area. However, it must be said that the organisation does not use this service and prefers to shred some confidential material and so reduce everything to paper waste.

On the other hand there is a far greater problem in disposing of nonconfidential waste. The first problem to be tackled is the orderly and regular collection and sorting of material. Suitable locations for bale frames throughout the organisation need to be determined. These have to be:

a) accessible for pick-up;
b) accessible to depositors;
c) not a fire hazard;
d) aesthetically acceptable.

The office layout may present difficulties in establishing convenient collection points, e.g., personnel may be spread over many floors, or even over many buidings.

Once the program is established, everyone must be educated to use it. It is useless if food waste and other unsuitable material is thrown into the bales, since it will **all** have to be dumped and the organisation will be charged dumping fees.

The types of waste materials and prices quoted (per metric tonne) in February 1986 were:

- $40.00 for printer's offcuts and old library books;
- $15.00 for telephone books;
- $90.00 for used computer print-out.

For pulping purposes paper must be free of carbon and putrescible material. It must be sorted into different grades to reflect the above categories for maximum returns.

The demand for paper pulp fluctuates widely and this creates difficulties for the industry on a world-wide basis similar to the oil industry. Companies cease operation, do not pay creditors or become unreliable in collecting material. Experience has shown that revenue can rarely be collected. One organisation we know of is currently is trying out its third company, the previous two having stopped collection and still owing money.

Many organisations have no retention or disposal schedule, and therefore there is no regular and documented disposal of records of any sort. This could make implementation of pulping services difficult. Nevertheless, national concern about environmental issues alone should encourage us to investigate pulping as a viable method of secure destruction, whether or not the organisation achieves a monetary gain.

DESTRUCTION BY BURNING

The Clean Air Act appears to be a major deterrent to the use of burning as a method of record destruction. Although legislation has not been passed which bans burning, those interviewed felt that it would not be long before general restrictions on burning were enforced.

Six commercial companies which specialise in the storage of records and their destruction were contacted. None had any facilities for burning records. Two of the companies would make the necessary arrangements for burning records if specifically requested to do so. The other four companies were not remotely interested. It would appear that burning is a very costly method of destruction because it is very labour intensive. Both the companies would arrange burning using the incinerator at Council tip. As well as the normal tip fees charged by the Council the owner of the records would have to pay approximately $0.40 to $0.50 a kilo for the burning procedure. A pick up fee would also be charged, ranging from $30.00 for less than half a tonne to $50.00-$60.00 per tonne. On arrival at the tip, drivers are issud a number and must line up and wait their turn. If they miss out on the first day they must return the next day and even the next until their turn was reached. We were told that a three day wait is not unusual. This waiting adds enormously to the final cost.

The New South Wales State Archives repository do not use burning for destruction. They stated it was too labour intensive for them to consider, and when they did do it they found disposing of the ash was quite a problem.

Burning can be unsatisfactory in that records which are bundled together may not burn completely. It may take several attempts for them to be totally destroyed.

To date, computer tapes, microfiche and microfilm can be burned even though they give off acrid smoke. This was very surprising in view of the Clean Air Act.

We wondered what happens to old money when it is withdrawn from circulation and rang the Reserve Bank to find out. It was suggested that a letter be written, because the person on the other end of the phone was not permited to divulge the information. On being told it was for a homework assignment, and that there were time limits imposed, the following information was given.

Old money which had been removed from circulation is stamped "cancelled", passed through a shredder two or three times and taken under supervision to a dump and buried. Old notes were once burnt, but because of the problem with pollution this is no longer done.

The Bank suggested we contact Australian Public Service Board to find out what they did with their old records. We were advised that unrestricted government records are pulped and recycled. Carbon paper records are burnt because they can't be pulped. Top secret papers (a very small part of the total holdings) are shredded several times and burnt under strict supervision. We were not able to obtain a copy of the detailed procedures, as this record is, understandably, highly confidential.

One fact which emerged was that if you want to be absolutely positive that your records have been totally destroyed, supervise their destruction, regardless of the method used.

DESTRUCTION BY SHREDDING

In a world which is turning more to recycling as a way of conserving our natural resources, the use of shredders to destroy paper will become a necessary component of every office.

The main purpose of shredding is to ensure the protection of confidential records. The ability to supervise and control the immediate destruction of confidential records would satisfy the needs of many companies.

The following points outline relevant issues in providing of shredding facilities.

Shredders may be obtained in many sizes and capacities to satisfy the individual organisation's requirements. Smaller models provide security at the office desk and allow the user to destroy documents immediately. These documents could include shorthand notes, incorrect typed letters, and drafts of contracts. Small shredders usually have a capacity of up to ten sheets of paper, and can be ideally located near secretaries and administrative personnel.

Medium size shredders are portable (allowing for inter-office movement) and can destroy large reports and continuous computer printouts. They can shred up to 20 sheets of paper at a time.

With new technology the larger (fixed position) shredders can shred almost any item made of paper. A conveyor belt and feed roller draw the material into the teeth of the shredder. They can usually shred up to 300 sheets at a time.

There are many reasons to use shredders, be they leased or purchased. The following points need be considered.

- Shredding does not cause air pollution (unlike burning).
- Shredding reduces records to illegible strips.
- Shredded paper makes perfect packaging material.
- Labour costs can be minimised by using trained junior personnel. Safety factors must be stressed to all operators.
- Some models can shred (in addition to paper) metal clips, pins, credit cards, microfilm, whole files, computer printouts, and cardboard.
- Shredding is one of the most convenient and clean ways of records destruction.
- Placement of, and access to shredders, is important. Some models are portable; other fixed models are quite suitable for installation in central records areas or offsite repositories.
- Shredders provide security by reducing documents to illegible size and form. No other persons can gain access to your records once they have been shredded.
- Shredded paper can be sold or recycled by charities.
- Shredders incorporate safety features to prevent accidents.

The only disadvantage of small of medium shredders could be the ease of access. "Too hard" files, historic papers and files, and important papers could be mistakenly destroyed by untrained staff, or deliberately destroyed by disgruntled employees or saboteurs. The security of the documents being destroyed and the security of the personnel who do the shredding, is very important.

Shredders have become a very important tool in the destruction of records.

DESTRUCTION BY DUMPING

There are quite a few different types of records that can be disposed of at a land fill. These records must not be of a vital, confidential or classified nature and the records should be made of organic material so that they will decompose within a reasonable time.

There are other types of records such as computer tapes, microfilm and microfiche which can be disposed of in the same manner. These records will not decompose as quickly as paper records but they will eventually deteriorate after a long period of time.

Security of the records prior to decomposition must be considered.

The cost of disposing of records in this manner is quite high and therefore probably impractical. The cost charged by the dump is reasonable. When other costs are included such as:

- hiring a proper sized vehicle and driver;
- engaging an additional person to help load and unload;

- renting materials handling equipment;

this disposal method can be quite expensive.

Here are some of the costs a records centre may incur.

- Rental of a 12-tonne vehicle, $28.45 per hour

- Extra helper, $16.00 per hour

- Dump charge estimated per trip $75.00

If the records centre has a few cartons of unrestricted records (like blank forms) for destruction at any given time it should look at using public waste disposal services. The records would still be taken to a dump but there should be little to no extra expense.

Very few good Records Managers would use a land fill when destroying the centre's records. There are too many problems associated with the use of a land fill for the destruction of any type of records. Some of the problems are:

- there is little to no security afforded to the records;

- the total cost is very high;

- natural resources are wasted by not recycling the paper.

We do not believe that dumping is a viable way of destroying unwanted records.

FILING

I file by subject, I file by date
I file by city, I file by state
I shun the trite and I scorn convention,
My filing system has four dimensions.
I regard "in re" at the top of a letter
As something to make it balance better.
I pay no attention to underlining
And seldom in classifying get down to the
Name of the person signing.
I have all the names of the company officials
Neatly arranged by their middle initials.
But customers' letters I have filed instead
By the colour and size of their letterheads.
Our financial report, by my own good reason,
Instead of by month, I have arranged by season.
And for anything that I consider extraneous
I have three large file drawers labeled "Miscellaneous".
They can't fire me, though I'm often late.
And I lunch from eleven 'til two.
I leave at four if I have a date
And there is nothing they can do.
Or if I forget to come to work at all,
They have got to take it smiling.
For you see, I have them backed up against the wall
For I do all the filing!.

Anon.

JULY 9th 1986 - The start of another ERA for the N.S.W BRANCH, with portfolios going to the new President, Secretary, Councillors, Delegate to the Federal Council.

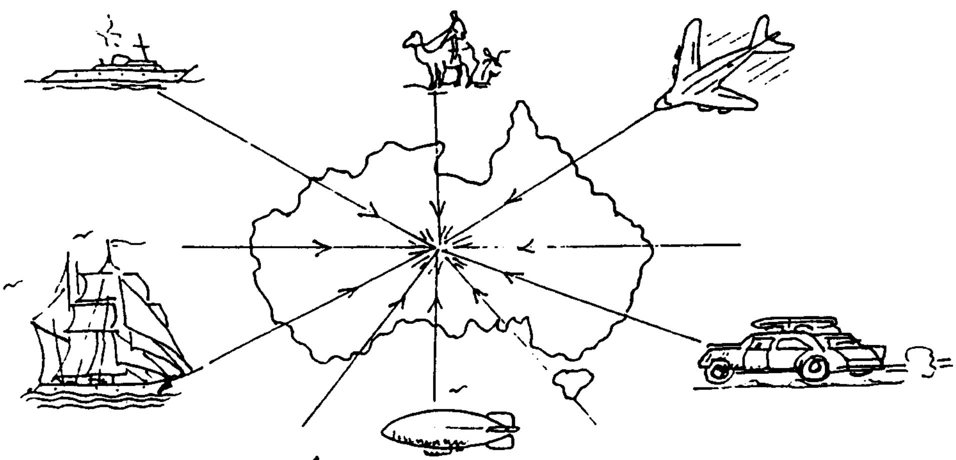
I introduce myself as the newly elected PRESIDENT, New South Wales Branch, July 1986. I came to Australia in 1974 and have been employed since then at Cockatoo Dockyard Pty Limited Cockatoo Island Sydney, as a Records Officer. My present position is Chief Records Officer in the Quality Control Department.

My first taste of records was in the 'GROCERIES' field in 1948. At Langside College, Glasgow, Scotland, I completed a three year course in book-keeping and general groceries. Stow College, Glasgow (1954) - a four year course in Secretarial, Methods in Records and Accountancy, Langside College (1956) - a two year course in Trade Union Law and Forward Management, Bible Training Institute, Glasgow (Member). Edinburgh University (Bachelor of Divinity). I have compiled an instruction manual and form manual for general groceries and ordering control, for Galbraith's Stores, Paisley, Scotland, Personnel manual, centralised/decentralised records manual, and a correspondence manual for Marbon Chemicals, Grangemouth, Scotland.

The New South Wales took on a NEW LOOK last year with closer member participation at monthly meetings. We will continue this THEME, and hope that our Branch will grow in strength. I am sure that with workshops at our meetings, half day or full day SEMINARS, we can look forward to a full year ahead. The council team of 1986-7 has a challenge ahead of them to set a more concrete Certificated Records Management Course that will be RECOGNISED BY EMPLOYERS, and encourage more people in the records field to attend such courses. I am sure that, in DENNIS COMBER of Records Management Office of N.S.W., we have an excellent person at the HELM of Education.

In togetherness, we go from strength to strength - Coolangatta, Sydney, and now ALICE SPRINGS. I am very pleased to see the participation of R.M.A.A members from all over AUSTRALIA, and look forward to seeing many of you at the 3RD NATIONAL CONVENTION; wishing the Convention Team the very best for a Successful Convention.

DOUGLAS B. SWAN B.D. A.R.M.A.
N.S.W. BRANCH PRESIDENT



FOR THE RECORD! LET'S GET IT ALL TOGETHER IN ALICE SPRINGS!

President/Director Doug Swan	Cockatoo Dock. P/L (02) 818 9255	VP/Director Peter Smith	Shortland County C. (049) 26 9176
Vice President Gerry Bloemen	Illawarra County C. (042) 29 9111	Hon. Secretary Pam Camden	Blacktown City C. (02) 621 0011
Hon. Treasurer Jennifer Foster	AEWL (02) 552 1055	Councillor Denis Comber	Records Management B.H. (02) 237 0121
Councillor John Rademaker	Coal & Allied (049) 64 8181	Councillor Peter May	Elect. Comm. of NSW (02) 268 6280
Councillor Cec Partington	OCAL Agencies P/L (02) 250 8611	Councillor Denis Rowe	Uni. of Newcastle (049) 68 5679

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Susanne,

When I started my working life some twenty years ago, the term "records management" was of no great significance to me, even though my first job was in a records office. I remember thinking that this was the bottom rung of the ladder. The recognised professionals in the office were accountants and lawyers. I couldn't wait to get out of records and into something which was more interesting and blessed with a better image.

No matter what job I followed though, it seemed you had to organise paperwork into some sort of logical system before starting the job. You had to know the file system to get the information required for your work. It occurred to me that here was a great irony, because although everyone dealt with paperwork, files, and the records system/s, no one had any (or very little) training in the principles of records management (RM).

Perhaps it wasn't so critical for organisations to place emphasis on efficient RM procedures twenty years ago. The information explosion has now compelled organisations to concentrate more resources on efficient management of paper information. Increased awareness of the costs involved in inefficiencies has moved hand in hand with the growth of the RM profession.

I use the word profession with some reticence because I rank the word profession with doctors, lawyers, architects, and accountants. My reticence exists not because I believe RM practitioners are any less worthy or that as a profession there are no individuals of any less prominence, but rather from a perceived lack of recognition for (and awareness of) records managment by the general community. The RM profession is now in a position to drastically improve its image.

The emergence of tertiary courses in RM at Australian educational institutions signals a new era in the progress of this relatively new management discipline. Those entering the profession no longer need rely on personal research and work experience to achieve excellence. After many years laying the groundwork, eminent RM practitioners have set the stage for a new wave of professionals to build on the work of those before them, and really establish the profession in the mind of other professionals and the public at large.

What is needed to really establish and consolidate our profession? Firstly a dedication towards excellence of performance. Secondly an accredited system of achievement recognised by our peers and employers. Thirdly a high standard of academic achievement. These three elements are now in place and are being actively pursued by RM professionals throughout Australia. We have only just started on this course of uplifting the status of the RM profession. The emphasis must come from within ourselves. We must be diligent in constantly striving for a higher standard of academic performance. Further development of university and technical college curricula is essential if the profession is to be universally recognised by other professions, employers and the community at large.

Yours sincerely,

John Rademaker (ARMA)
President Hunter Region Chapter

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please accept my congratulations on the high standard achieved by the various Branch Quarterlies since the welcome inception of this publication. Please, may I raise two matters.

First, this is the appropriate forum to ensure that the record of our Association's beginnings be absolutely correct. Tom Lovett in his article on the origins of the IRMF wrote about the Crest Hotel as follows: "Eddis Linton was not a seminar participant." In actual fact, I attended the last day of that '68 Seminar in my capacity of President of the Business Archives Council, NSW Branch, and gave a paper on "The Value of Business Archives." It depended on the way one interprets "participant." Certainly I was not a paying delegate, but I did attend the crucial meeting held at the end of the Seminar at which it was resolved to form the Association. This does not detract in any way from Tom's initiatives, but readers may have gained the impression that I was not involved in the original meeting.

Second, the check list of articles in the May 86 issue is an excellent initiative, but it does not mention nearly 100 articles in Modern Office written by me since 1974 as well as numerous ones by Bob Barnett, Peter Smith and Tom Lovett. Perhaps we should make it mandatory for a copy of all articles published, written by members, to be sent to the Federal Secretary both as a record of achievement and as a source of information for others. These could be listed quarterly in this publication.

Sincerely,

J. Eddis Linton,
Honorary Life Fellow

Dear Editor,

The following may be useful to your members as a very meaningful aid in simplifying computer jargon.

VDU
: A diseased sheep

DEBUG
: De ting killed wid de pressure spray

EMULATE
: A tardy bird

EXTERNAL SORT
: Mistress

CORE
: Strewth!

BALANCED MERGE
: Togetherness on a tightrope

MARKOV CHAIN
: As used to tie up Pavlov's dog

MICROFICHE
: Plankton

MONOSTABLE
: Accommodation for a horse

SYNTAX
: Royalties paid to the owner of a house of pleasure

DATA SOURCE
: Makes fiche and chips taste better

REMOTE VDU
: A diseased sheep in the Arctic

TESTING
: The longest phase of system development

I trust the above is of some assistance in achieving a better understanding of computer technologies.

Yours faithfully,
Anon.