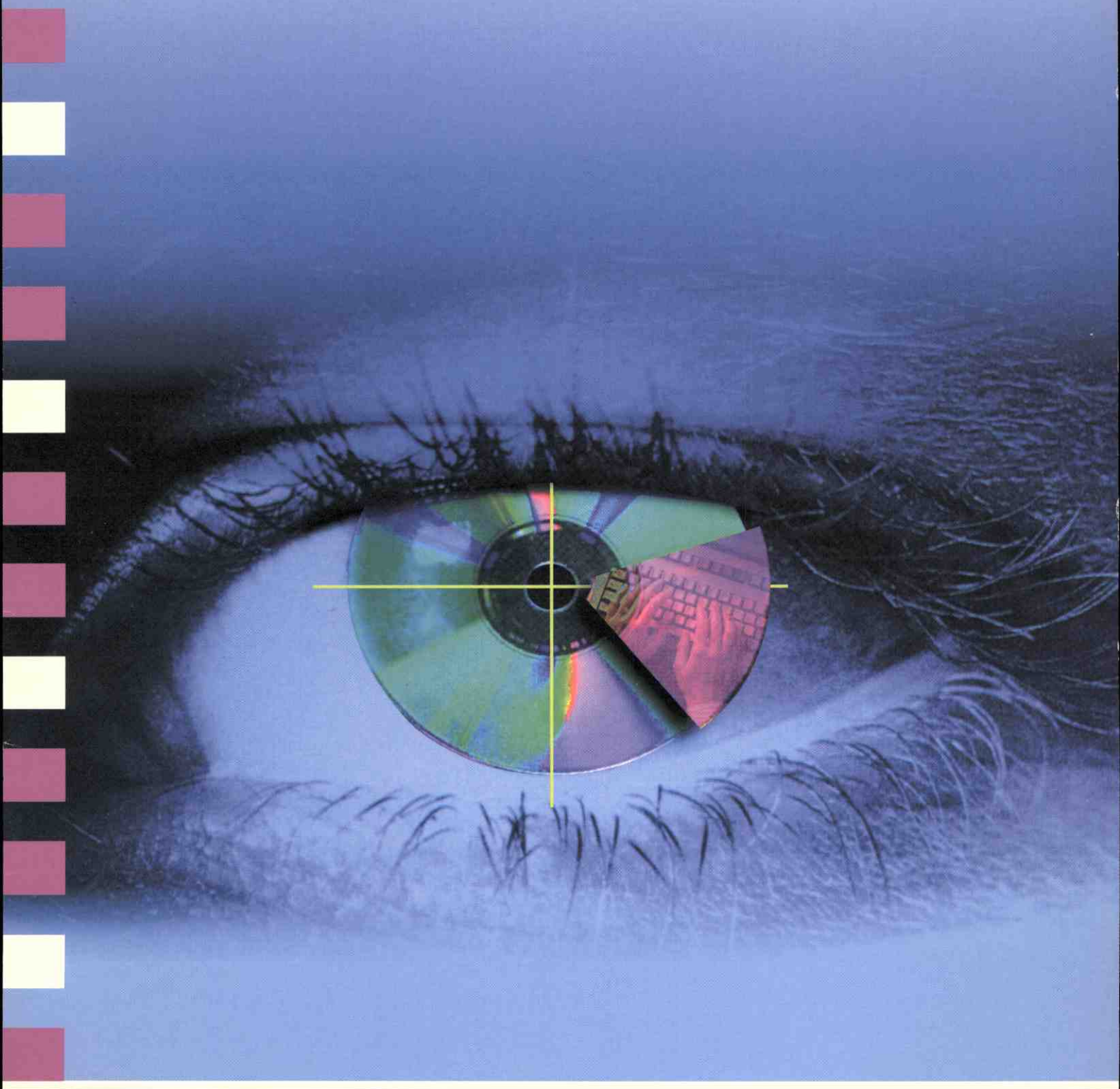
INFORMAA QUARTERLY

VOLUME TWELVE NUMBER 2 MAY 1996
OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA ISSN 0816-200X $10



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VOLUME TWELVE NUMBER 2 MAY 1996

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Submissions may be also made in electronic format on a 3 1/2 inch diskette with Wordperfect 5.1 preferred or alternatively as a standard ASCII text file from other word processing software.

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INFORMAA QUARTERLY

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Federal President's Message

Once again your Federal Directors have been busy with setting a proactive agenda for the Association. Our key business activities were discussed in detail at the bi-annual meeting of Federal Directors which was held in Canberra on 23/24 February 1996.

The meeting was very productive and resulted in a number of wide reaching decisions which capitalised on many of the projects initiated at our September 1995 meeting. A summary of the key issues we looked at were:

Finances

Alan Kavanagh tabled a comprehensive report on Association finances. At present, Federal cost projections are well within budget and look like staying that way until the end of the financial year. Overall, the financial standing of the Association is excellent and copies of our mid-year Financial Report are available from your Federal Directors.

Informaa Quarterly

The production of our national journal continues to be competently handled, and Ken Ridley and his team are to be congratulated for their efforts. The November edition involved the lowest production costs to date, and we are very close to full cost recovery with each successive edition of the I.Q.

Education Committee

Dennis Wheeler tabled a comprehensive report on Education. One of the key outcomes of his report, was the agreement by Federal Council to "Recognise the TAFE/ACTRAC Core National Records Management Modules". This is an important step in the Association becoming more involved in the recognition of professional development at an academic level.

Membership Status

A vote was taken to support the promulgation of a new set of guide-lines for upgrades in membership status. Such an initiative has been on our agenda for some time, but at last we can now provide members with a more proactive and friendlier set of guide-lines for those members wishing to upgrade their professional status.

Competency Standards

The work performed by Ray Holswich and his team has reached the point where we are seeking to appoint a project officer who will be engaged to develop National Records Competency Standards.

Strategic and Business Plan

The current strategic plan was subjected to rigorous scrutiny by Federal Directors. The examination of the plan was tackled through a Workshop session which was very ably facilitated by Dennis Wheeler. The Workshop enabled the Federal Directors to make a number of substantial changes to the existing document. Michael Hangan is presently working on the redraft and when completed, it will be circulated to all Branches for comment.

M & A's of the Association

The Federal Directors authorised Ray Holswich to progress the review of the M & A's. By way of background information, Ray has been working closely with our legal advisers "Cridlands" to develop a comprehensive set of Articles for the Association. The proposed articles are more "user friendly" and in keeping with our requirements for a more up to date set of Articles. The revision also includes provision for by-laws which will incorporate the current regulations governing the operation of the Association.

Marketing

The marketing of the Association is progressing well and our new publicity pamphlet is attracting attention from people interested in joining the Association. In addition, new application forms for joining the Association were distributed to Federal Directors to take back to their respective Branches.

Code of Ethics

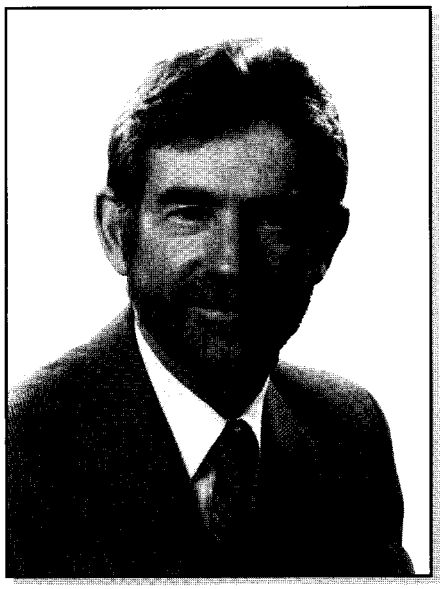
A Code of Ethics was developed and approved, after due debate, by Federal Directors. The Code will be published and members will be invited to submit their comments regarding its appropriateness etc. If adopted, it means that for the first time, the Association will be able to provide a clear set of guide-lines for professional behaviour expected by the Association.

In closing, it would be appreciated if all members could find the time to provide feedback to their respective Branches about the above issues. As you are aware, the Association fully realises its accountability to the membership and as such, it is your contributions that we rely on to help us in setting our future direction.

Denis Comber ARMA

Federal President

Editorial



I am often forced to question the efficacy of the term records **management**. Most of the key players in business and government (including politicians) understand the term filing, but to suggest, as we often do, that the whole concept of recorded information should be elevated to a higher management level is often looked upon as some kind of heresy! This is especially so when organisations refuse to accept (mainly through ignorance) that records **management** requires the commitment of scarce human and financial resources. It is reprehensible for an organisation to claim that it has it's records under control when this means merely filing papers at the end of their life cycle. And yet, as once stated by David O Stephens from ARMA in the USA, many large and successful organisations have no records management programme at all. The obvious question is do they need one and dare we suggest to employers that they should hire a professional member of the RMAA?

It is worth noting that the RMAA Federal Council recently amended its mission statement to read: "to promote and to develop records management as a vital business activity", whilst the vision was amended to read: "To be recognised as the professional body for, and the national authority on, records management". The challenges we face are many and varied and require dedication and commitment from more than a select few.

As I have suggested in the past, I believe new technology will be critical to the whole issue of the future of records management and I was interested to read in the Australian newspaper recently, the claim by Canon Australia's Integrated Solutions Division national manager (Mr Tony Poynton) for the world's first integrated document management system. Mr Poynton is quoted as saying that the system will capture, store, distribute and retrieve text, graphics, video and other computer based data across a network, irrespective of source or format. The system features a different approach to work flow, not being based on processing of paper documents and a key feature will be a facility for users to classify the nature and uses of the information they wish to store.

Other commentators have also focused on re-engineering the office environment with reduced reliance on paper work flow processes. With the reform of the various Evidence Acts around the nation, leading to greater acceptability of electronic information, I expect such examples of new technology will become very popular indeed.

Ken Ridley ARMA

National Coordinator

Informaa Quarterly

What is an Occupational Code?

On the 6th of August 1996, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will ask all Australians to complete a Census of Population and Housing.

In this Census a question will be asked of you to indicate your occupation through a number which will be used to nationally identify the size of our profession. It is therefore important that when asked to allocate a number to the Profession Box on your Census you allocate 2299-13 which indicates the Profession of Records Manager.

Unfortunately, other sub-occupations in our profession have not been included. We have however, come a long way since the last Census in 1991 and the first Edition of the Australia Standard Classification of Occupation (ASCO) in 1986 when we were only labelled as `Filing Clerks'.

The RMAA has been involved in the joint review of ASCO codes for our occupational area over the past 2 years and we consider that many benefits have been achieved from this liaison.

Neil Granland ARMA

RMAA Representative on ASCO

Excellence in Records Management Award

The Records and Information Management Liaison Group (RIMLG formerly RMLG) was established in the mid 1980's and consists of records management officers from the Western Australian public sector, local government and universities. The group's purpose is to:

- be proactive and address relevant issues
- focus and direct the activities of the RIMLG and provide a point of contact for those within and outside the RIMLG membership
- promote the status of records management as a profession
- liaise with the Public Records Office

In 1994 the RIMLG initiated the "Excellence in Records Management Award" to encourage organisations and individuals to achieve best practice in records management. The overall aim being to improve the status and quality of records and information management practices. The award is funded by the Library Board of Western Australia.

In December 1995 Dr Lynn Allen, Chief Executive officer, Library and Information Service Western Australia (LISWA), presented the 1995 "Excellence in Records Management Award" to Alan Beattie, Manager Corporate Information at the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations.

The criteria for the award focused on initiative, implementation of improved records management practices and productivity improvement. The Department of Productivity and Labour Relations demonstrated via a written submission and presentation that it had implemented a number of initiatives during the period from 1 July 1994 to 30 June 1995. These included:

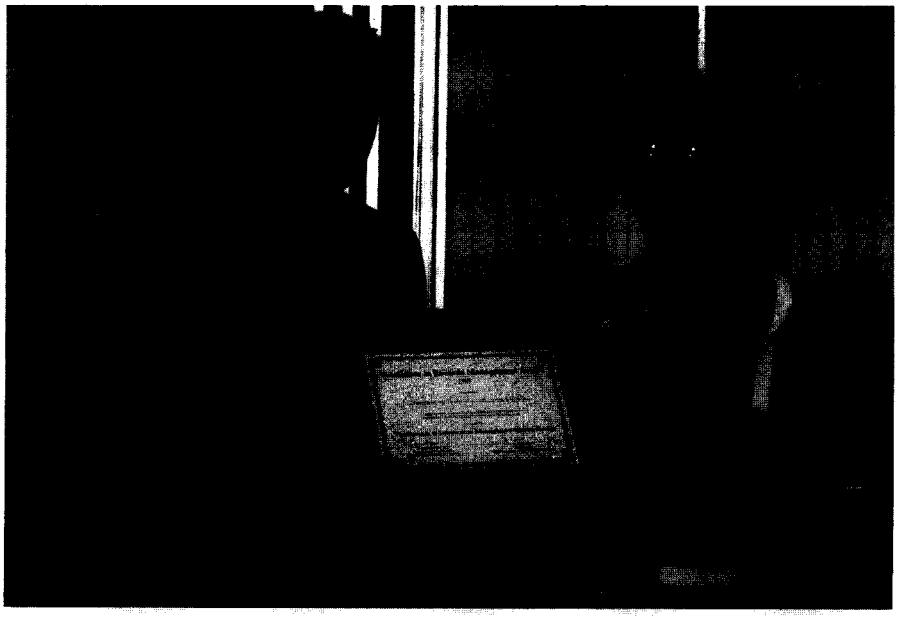
- Implementation of a windows records management system including production of user guides, quick guides and training for all staff
- Review of security for all records and implementation of new procedures including changes to physical security of the corporate information branch
- Interim guidelines for the management of electronic records
- Conducting an archive programme
- Establishment of a user group, extensive consultation and awareness raising
- Production of an internal newsletter on information management
- Development of key result areas and performance indicators

This was achieved during a period when the volume of correspondence processed by the branch doubled. The Corporate Information (Records) branch at the Department of Productivity and Labour Relations also manages Freedom of Information for the Department.

Des Pearson, the Western Australian Auditor General and a member of the selection panel made a short speech after the presentation ceremony. During this he commented:

"I was privileged to participate on the judging panel for today's award and saw in today's winner the distillation of the high level principles espoused by a range of authorities into a practical and relevant agency application.

The approach developed and implemented impressed me as an effective outcome orientated, customer



Dr Lynn Allen, CEO LISWA and Alan Beattie, Mngr Corporate Information DOPLAR.

focused one which served the particular organisation's real business needs. It had the characteristics of an effective mix of communication, consultation and marketing practiced in a proactive manner.

The consequence is that the Records Management Unit was recognised within the agency as a real contributor to its business operations. The Unit is credited with taking timely and relevant initiatives to improve the total records management function and to make it an integral part of day to day operations. A large part of this was done by building meaningful relationships and by showing 'what's in it for the customer'. The ability to do this is in my mind the true mark of a professional. I'm sure we've all experienced the more traditional and far less successful approach of imposing requirements for processes sake. It's clearly far more effective to deliver a contribution which is meaningful and appreciated than to be seen to be imposing an overhead."

The award is continuing to grow in stature and the RIMLG encourages organisations that are members to nominate for the 1996 "Excellence in Records Management Award."

Records Management Association of Australia

1996 National Convention

8-11 September 1996

National Convention Centre Canberra

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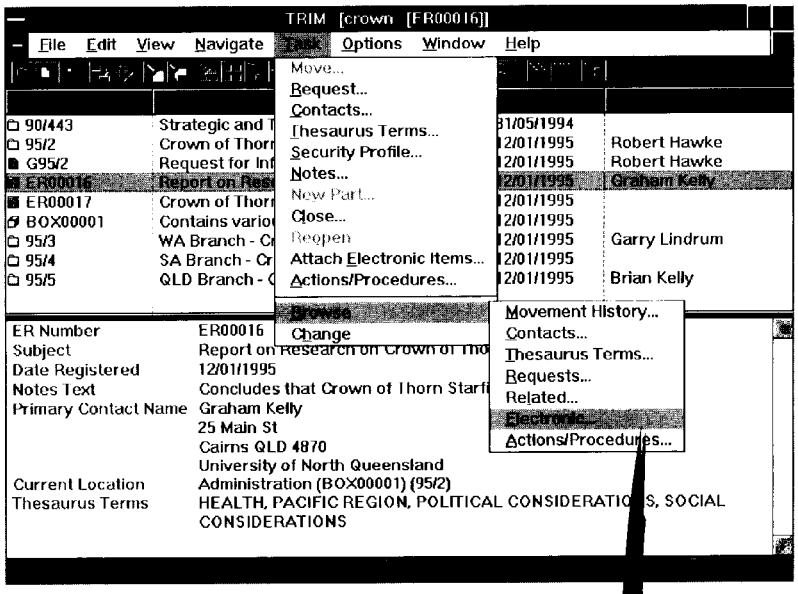

"Every organisation has a records management problem and every records management problem is different"

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Code of Ethics

Members

Records Management Association of Australia

Dear Member,

As members may be aware Federal Council has been endeavouring to rewrite the Code of Ethics in a manner which is responsive to the needs of the 90's.

The Federal Council feels that a Code of Ethics is a most important guide for the healthy development of our profession and strongly commends the resulting Code (appearing below) for your acceptance.

A revised Code was developed by a committee of Federal Council and discussed at the February 1996 Council meeting. That discussion led to a rewrite and the Code you see here was adopted by Federal Council.

As a member of the Records Management Association of Australia (RMAA) I shall:

1. Conduct myself professionally so as to comply with the generally accepted standards of behaviour, decency and good business practice.

2. Render my professional services solely for the purposes of the maintenance, control, integrity, preservation and security of records in accordance with legal, organisational and community requirements.

3. Keep the standard of my professional work as high as possible and endeavour to improve upon my skills and professional standards whenever possible.

4. Refrain from the public criticism or derogatory statements concerning the competence or conduct of a member of the Records Management or any allied profession.

5. Uphold the rules and spirit of the Memorandum Articles and By-laws and abide by decisions of duly elected Councils/Committees.

6. Seek to promote the profession and enhance the reputation of the Association.

7. Upon ceasing to be a member or being found to have transgressed the rules of the Association, and/or this Code of Ethics, voluntarily surrender and return my membership certificate.

8. Display this Code of Ethics in a prominent position in my normal workplace.

In recognition of the importance of a Code of Ethics to each member of the Association, you are individually invited to inform the Executive Secretary, in writing, of your support or rejection of this Code. Responses are requested to be submitted by 30 June 1996.

The result of the responses received will be published in the August edition of Informaa Quarterly. If accepted, then it will be seen to have been ratified by the membership and will be considered binding on the members of this Association.

Responses are to be posted to:

Executive Secretary
PO Box 260
ESK QLD 4312

Michael J Hangan ARMA

Executive Secretary

25 February 1996

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Recognition of National Records Management Modules

At the meeting of Federal Directors, 23rd and 24th February, 1996, the content of the 22 nationally accredited records management modules prepared through the Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC) (now Standards & Curriculum Committee) was officially recognised by the Records Management Association of Australia.

Recognition by our Association means that the RMAA has evaluated the national modules and assessed them to be of the quality and standard acceptable to our professional association. This smooths the way for institutions or course providers who are applying for course recognition where these modules form part of their course.

Following the acceptance by Federal Directors of the Status and Standards Committee's recommendations, those institutions in each State or Territory offering courses in records management will be invited to apply for course recognition through the RMAA. The invitation will be through State Branches and with federal oversight. The onus will be on the institutions to provide responses to a range of predetermined questions.

The responses will be assessed according to nationally established criteria. If the criteria are met then the institution will be able to indicate in its advertising material and to intending students that the particular course has been recognised by the Records Management Association of Australia.

D.G Wheeler ARMA

National Coordinator Education

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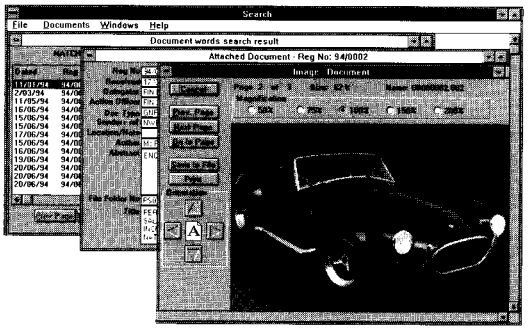

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BSI Admissibility Code on Electronic Image Records Published

The long-awaited official guidance for legal admissibility of electronically stored document images has been published by the British Standards Institution. The document, a code of practice, is the first formal British reference for records and information managers using or contemplating the storage of document images.

The new code is the result of three years' study by lawyers vendors and user groups. It is entitled the Code of Practice for Legal Admissibility of Information Stored on Electronic Document Management Systems and has been code named PD0008 by the standards authority.

The BSI and the independent Image and Document Management Association (IDMA), another of the researching groups, have held a series of seminars in London, Manchester and Edinburgh for information and records managers, technology managers, lawyers and executives, to introduce the code.

Work on the code began in 1992 when the Government's central computing agency, CCTA, called together representatives of user and vendor communities including the BSI, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Society for Computers in Law, the Computer Graphics Suppliers Association (now the Computing Suppliers' Federation); IDMA, the Public Record Office, UKAIIM, the RMS and others.

Work proceeded on twin tracks, the user groups' Legal Images Initiative and the vendors' Document Management Suppliers Group (now the Document Management Forum) studying and preparing recommendations respectively on the academic principles and system technicalities.

The Code of Practice for Legal Admissibility of Information Stored on Electronic Document Systems, catalogue number PD0008, published by the BSI at 19.50 pounds (with discounts for bulk orders) obtainable from:

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London W4 4AL
Tel: 0181 996 7000
Fax: 0181 996 7001

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[UK RMS Newsletter 23/1996]

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Graz, Austria 23-25 October 1996

The five-track 48th International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID) Congress will celebrate the end of the 100th anniversary celebrations of the FID and will be the major forum for information professionals from around the globe. It will focus on the globalization of information and the new society that is evolving as a result.

Advanced technologies, the role of the information professional, regional and cultural accommodations and the impact on a global business environment will be explored. Several pre- congress seminars will be organised on 21 and 22 October as well as the FID General Assembly meeting.

The five theme discussion tracks will be entitled:

- Innovation & Leading-edge Technologies
- Regional Perspective on Information Issues
- Role of Information Professionals
- Business & Industrial Information in a Globally-networked Society
- Impact of the Networked Information Society.

Contact:
FID 1996 Conference Secretariat
Joanneum Research, Elisabethstrasse 11
A-8010 Graz, Austria.
Tel: +43 (316) 867 334
Fax: +43 (316) 876 320
e-mail: fid@pbox.joanneum.ac.at.

[UK RMS Newsletter 23/1996]

Notice of RMAA Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 21st Annual General Meeting of the Records Management Association of Australia will be held on Tuesday, 10 September 1996. It is to commence at 12 Noon and will be held at the National Convention Centre, Canberra, Australia Capital Territory.

TO ALL MEMBERS

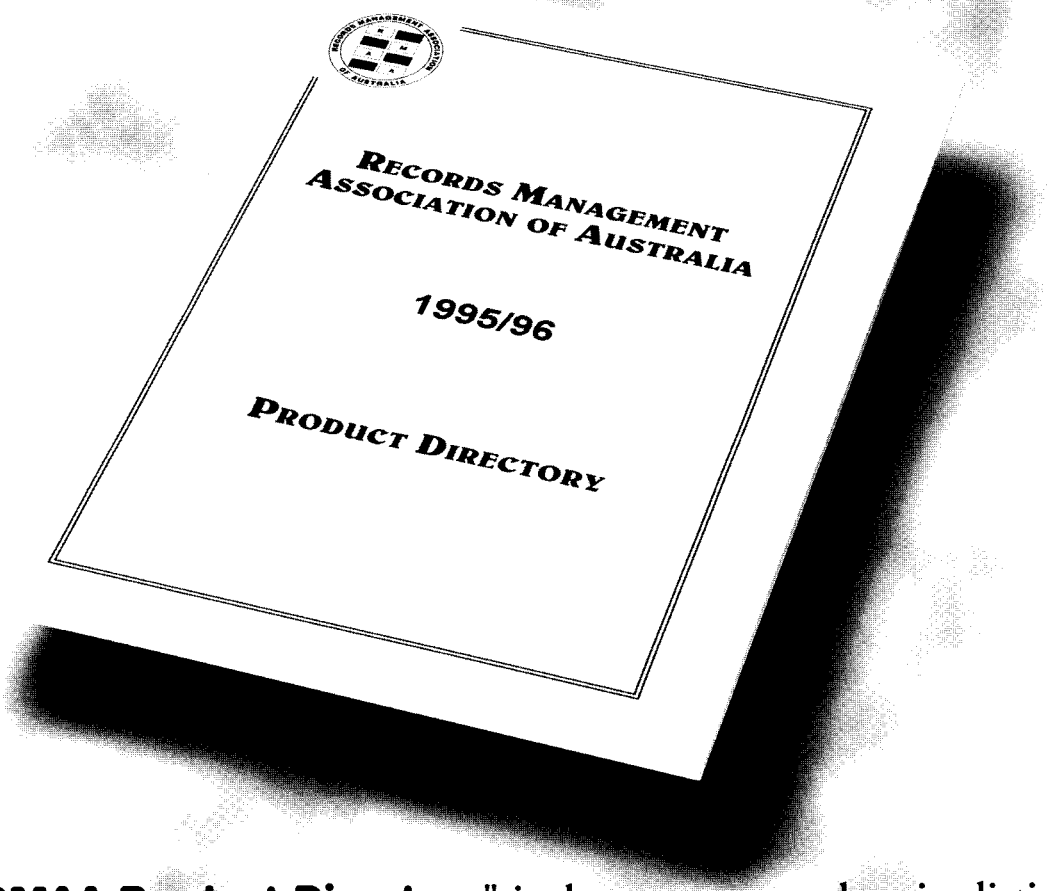
In accordance with the Articles of Association, notice is hereby given of the date and time of the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

Articles 57 states: "A member wishing to bring before an Annual General Meeting any motion of business not relating to the ordinary Annual Business of the Association, shall give notice thereof in writing to the Federal Council not less than forty-five days before the day of the meeting and no business or motion other than the business brought forward by such council shall come before the meeting unless notice thereof has been so given."

The closing date for any items of business is 26 July 1996.

Michael Hangan ARMA
Executive Secretary

Are your products in the RMAA Product Directory?



The "**RMAA Product Directory**" is the most comprehensive listing of records management products and services available in Australia

Product lists are under the headings:

- Consultants
- Bureau Service
- Computer Systems
- Conservation Services
- Destruction Services
- Disaster Recovery
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Do You Really Need a Pentium?

AUTHOR

John T. Phillips, JR., CRM

Many personal computer users are now experiencing another technology shock as the current offerings of computer vendors incorporate new computer chips that promise another "quantum leap" in processing power. The commercial trade computing press is full of news that the Intel 486 processor, considered until recently a standard for office and personal computing, is now being eclipsed by the Pentium (586) class computer chip and other presently available offerings such as the PowerPC (601 chip) of Motorola, IBM, and Apple Computer. There is little doubt that computers with these new processors are "faster" in many performance tests than the "older" 486 Intel chip architecture which attained its reputation based on price/ performance comparisons with Intel 386 class computers. However the immediate actual usefulness of this increased computing power in a standard office environment is still very debatable. There is always a professional dilemma for managers in selecting quickly advancing technology for implementation within slowly changing business requirements. One would like to stay professionally productive but still balance any alleged increased productivity gained from buying-into changing technology against the human and business costs inherent in organisational change and the acquisition of new equipment.

There are definitely automated business applications that can profit immediately from increased computer computational or information processing power. Such applications obviously include those situations where presently constrained business processes are time intensive due to the slowness of a computer system. Examples may include searching large database indexes, faster optical character recognition, or quicker computer screen refreshing when a graphical drawing is manipulated. There are also new opportunities presented by faster information processing when the increased speed of a business process allows for a particular job to be performed by different personnel or redesigned. An example might be the ability of faster processors to allow forms or documents to be compressed and transmitted on a network by the creator rather than by printing the form on paper for someone else to spend time sending it by FAX.

Most business processes do not change nearly as fast as does the variety of new technology that confronts office workers each day. Invoices must be paid, phone calls are still made by human beings, and there will always be a need to have some meetings in person. However, there are lessons to be learned in this present avalanche of new computing products that can serve to guide one through what will be a continuing cycle of changing technology well into the next century. The goal is to assure that money and time are well spent when making decisions on implementing new personal computers, optical/imaging systems, automated records management systems, or a new word processing software. "Let the buyer beware!"

Is speed really power?

How important is a fast computer and what makes a computer faster? Which is most important-the central processing unit (CPU), the amount of computer chip cache memory, the amount of on-board randomly accessible memory (RAM), the speed of the video card, the bus type of the motherboard, or the speed of the disk drive? Or must all of these interrelated components work together in a good configuration that matches the actual needs of the computer's user's application? The best answer is a "yes" to the last question. All computer components are important, and each individual component helps enhance different business or scientific applications. For this reason, computer users must be careful to place emphasis in their decision-making where they will get the most value for the dollar, *when considering their own individual business application needs.*

Faster CPUs do generally make applications faster, but not in every case. If a database is being searched for information, using a computer

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with a faster processor coupled to a slow disk drive may not perform the task any more quickly, as database retrieval is primarily a disk-intensive operation that just reads data by pulling it into memory. Calculations are performed when an index to the database is created or altered, but very little computation is needed to simply recall existing data from the disk media. What is needed may be a faster disk drive. Similarly, a faster CPU will not necessarily speed up an automated application that is graphics-intensive. Just adding a faster video card to the computer system may be a better solution, as such a video card will contain its own special fast computer chip on the card itself to optimise graphics display for very fast screen refreshes of edited pictures or drawings.

For these reasons, one should not necessarily assume that a new Pentium or PowerPC will necessarily perform all operations faster than the existing computer system or that one is even needed. Most all applications will probably run at least somewhat faster on a newer technology machine rather than an older computer. But this may be in part because the new computer system has had all of its new components optimised to be similar in performance to the increased performance of the faster processor. This means that the video card, monitor, disk drive, RAM, cache memory, and motherboard of the new machine are all faster or better than what one might expect to find in an older machine. It also means that one might save considerable expense and staff time by simply upgrading a single slow performing component of an older computer system. This assumes that one is sufficiently familiar with the exact operational performance deficit of the old system to make such a decision.

The most important question has not been asked. Are there presently some real identifiable business bottlenecks that are known to be able to benefit from a faster computer system? Or is a fascination with the new technology occurring due to an assumption that faster is always better. For computer users to be happy with the performance of their systems and managers to be happy with the performance of their "bottom-line," some serious analysis of options and technology trends should be undertaken before committing to new computing architectures and new training for systems maintenance staff.

Chips and Environments

There are some present dilemmas in the new chip architectures that are well worth noting should one decide that these faster computers are needed. These dilemmas often occur

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when any new technology is being pushed out the door to meet the demands of potential customers and present stockholders. New computers must work reliably within organisational constraints and already operational software environments, and they do not always arrive in the best of health. Some industry surveys indicate that problems with new computers are not uncommon. In a poll conducted by *PC World* magazine between October 1993 and the press time for the June 1994 issue's release, "Almost one quarter of the 45,000 people who responded to our survey experienced some kind of problem. Of this group, nearly 29 percent said the problem occurred within the first month after they purchased their PC. Further, 7 percent of all respondents reported one or more components dead on arrival."1

One current concern is reflected in the considerable industry discussion about the 5 volt chips in 60 and 66 megahertz (MHz) Pentium chips overheating, as opposed to the more stable and less power intensive 3.3 volt 486 and 90 or 100 MHz Pentium chips that are now being offered. Since most of the first 60 MHz Pentiums have been in use less than a year, it is difficult to draw precise conclusions from users' experience. However, "Intel builds the 90 MHz CPUs with a 0.6-micron process, and the chips run at 3.3 volts rather than 5 volts. The significance of the new chip is twofold. Its smaller process size delivers a CPU roughly half the size of its 60 MHZ sibling, and its 3.3 volt operation lower the chip's power consumption from 13 watts on the 60 MHz to 4 watts according to Intel."2 Less heat in electrical components generally means that they will last longer. In addition, there are already procurement regulations for many organisations to favour buying "Green PCs" that are environmentally friendly due to their limited energy consumption. These are to be preferred over systems that consume excess energy.

With the increased performance of a processor often comes a requirement for a faster performing motherboard. As the CPU is plugged into the motherboard, all information must reach the CPU and exit through the motherboard and is subject to its speed limitations. Thus enters the new Peripheral Component Interconnect (PCI) motherboard architecture that is accompanying Pentium computers. Although this design will probably become a standard for future computers, many current peripherals such as video cards or network cards may or may not take advantage of this architecture. For this reason, many Pentiums are offered with both PCI compatible of Industry Standard Architecture (ISA) type slots for cards.

In the end there is debate that one might be better off with a 486 DX4/100 based computer (a very fast 486), as this is simply a well tuned version of "tried and true" technology. This chip (3.3 volts) generates less heat than a 60 MHz Pentium (5 volts) and compares favourably in performance tests. One will get "similar performance, less heat, and better power management with a DX4 than with a Pentium..." and later upgrades to the Pentium Overdrive processor are possible.3 It seems to be true that "...the DX4 motherboards are fully optimised and generally more stable than Pentium ones."4

Another consideration for many buyers is that they may be interested in Apple's Power Macintoshes as these use the new PowerPC 601 chip (at 60, 66 and 80 MHz), the major competitor to the Pentium chip. A claim being made for the PowerPC chip is that it will operate both Macintosh and Windows programs by using special software for Windows emulation. The reality is, however, that it only runs Windows programs slowly in a limited Standard mode, which very few individuals have ever used to any extent. Even though Windows Enhanced mode operation (recommended by almost all contemporary programs) may be soon available for this chip, full Windows performance is probably out of consideration for the immediate future.5 "You won't be able to run your favourite PC applications unassisted on PowerPC systems. Chances are, though, that you will be able to support them through a program called an emulator-albeit with a performance penalty that eliminates any speed advantage."6

A final and very important consideration is that few business software or applications are presently programmed or optimised to take advantage of the strong advanced internal processing features of these chips. Such software will come over the next few years, but for the time being these processors will be used to run existing applications faster by running presently used software that was probably developed two or three years ago or more. "In the case of both the PowerPC and the Pentium processors, that strength is in certain calculation-intensive task-image editing, three-dimensional rendering, and certain spreadsheet functions-also known as floating point operations... Most everyday computing tasks, though, don't require these intensive calculations."7 The message is simply that for standard word processing, spreadsheets, and small databases, using a faster and more expensive computer does not necessarily improve a user's job performance. After all, a fast computer does not make one type faster.

It is also important to observe that this change in chip offerings occurred within a 6-month to one-year period. Technology offered for

public consumption is assumed by customers to have undergone reasonable efforts to get the bugs out. However, the computer hardware and software industries are well-known for occasionally releasing less than optimum products in a struggle to stay competitive by having products that are available for purchase. The actual reliability of newly developed hardware architectures cannot be known until there has been considerable use in present business operating environments.

Should some of the new equipment fail, it is always nice to have had the foresight to have kept some of the older machines and software on stand-by status for emergencies. Most organisations do not keep expensive modern equipment (like a Pentium) sitting around, just in case someone's computer dies. Keeping the old computer equipment around for at least a few months will allow quickly equipping a frustrated computer user with enough computing power for them still to be able to perform basic tasks if their new PC's motherboard dies unexpectedly. Don't throw those older machines away until the new ones have proven stable.

Technology Life Cycles

There are several questions that could protect new computer buyers from the bleeding edge of technology if they seek adequate answers:

1. Does the computer trade press say the vendors have gotten the bugs out?

2. Has the price come down as far as it probably will over the next few months?

3. Do my office mates already know something about this technology?

4. Is my computer maintenance organisation trained to work on the disk drives, monitor cards, or other components?

5. Is this technology becoming stable without major rapid market changes occurring and significantly new products being offered every few months?

Hopefully, the answer to all questions is "yes". For deciding on answers to questions one and two, the computer industry trade press such as those journals cited in this article, do an excellent job of ferreting out questionable products as their readership expects detailed technology analysis. Consult these sources and information on rapid price changes will also be found, as well as additional computing technology information. The answer to questions three and four determine whether or not one will be "going it alone." It is always best to have someone with experience "down the hall" with whom to consult on confusing questions

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about new equipment or software. Toll-free vendor technical support is nice, but it is best if in-house computer maintenance personnel do not learn about new technology by studying yours. Question number five lets one know if better price/performance can be had by waiting a few months to purchase the equipment so that offerings can become more standard across vendors.

There will always be concerns about defacto standards, overall performance, system maintainability, new training, and the disposition of old equipment. These issues should temper decisions rather than prevent the progress inherent in using new and more productive equipment. For personal computer users facing continual upgrades to modern and more resource demanding software, faster is usually better and the new Pentiums and PowerPCs will offer solutions to many of today's system performance challenges such as advanced graphical desktop publishing and high-use multi-user local area network servers.

Buyers needing only slightly faster machines to run present applications a little more quickly can probably do well with the 486/66 MHz machines for another year or two that vendors will be selling for less as time passes.

These computers are still very fast by any standards. Those individuals and organisations needing to plan for what they already know will be increasing computer system demands (such as multi-user networks or high end graphics) should probably go ahead and start buying Pentiums or new computers with similar performance gains. However, most office workers should not discard those 386- or 486-based systems, as they will be useful for years to come for word processing, reading electronic mail, data entry tasks, and other standard office operations.

Each year one should ask: 1) Is my computer system causing me frustration and not meeting my needs? and 2) Are there things that I need to be doing that I cannot do because of my present computer system? If the answer to both questions is "NO," then one probably DOES NOT NEED A NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM. It is good to stay abreast of technology that is available because there may be activities to perform or product enhancements to offer that could improve one's professional services. But until there are identifiable (and quantifiable) reasons to up- grade or buy a new computer system, it may be best to watch the waves for a while rather than deciding to set sail and ride them.

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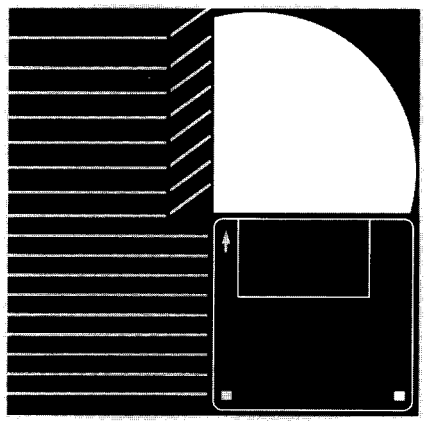

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Performance Indicators:

Their value & application in a Records Management Programme

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Introduction

Performance indicators have become an integral part of modern management. Traditional systems of accountability focused on examining how the money of an organisation was spent with annual financial statements being the main mechanism for accountability. Now, regular information, about the effectiveness and efficiency of a program enables a program manager to control resources and improve performance. Further, as an accountability tool, new measures enable senior management to devolve responsibility yet monitor and remain cognisant of the programs and activities within the organisation.

Performance Indicators (Pi's)

Performance indicators are a quick way of assessing activities and are a valuable tool in assisting records managers to:

- manage their programs as effectively and efficiently as possible;
- account for their use of organisational resources; and
- link their program and services to organisational strategies.

Measurement has no meaning unless placed within an agreed set of objectives which if within a pyramid process:

- Broad objectives are derived from the mission statement and goals of an organisation and are usually client and outcome focused.
- The goals of the organisation state what it plans to do and achieve in order to fulfil its mission.
- Programs are subsequently developed to meet the goals.
- Stated objectives identify more specifically the particular outputs or outcomes which the organisation plans to achieve in pursuing its goals.
- Performance indicators provide indications of an organisation's level of performance against its desired outputs. For instance, at a sub-program level, the accuracy of coding of correspondence for filing; the measure of which could be the percentage (%) of correctly coded correspondence.

Performance indicators are collected over a period of time and give information about an ongoing activity. Performance indicators are objective, quantitative and verifiable and are expressed as a comparison such as a percentage, index or rate.

Generally three types of performance indicators are used, namely:

- **Workload indicators** which tend to be output oriented and measure the amount of work done. For example, the number of pieces of mail opened within a specified time frame.
- **Efficiency indicators** relate outputs to the level of inputs required to produce them. This measure is usually compared with a standard of "best practice". For example, the cost (per unit) of retrieving files from an offsite repository.
- **Effectiveness indicators** provide information on the extent to which an outcome has been achieved. For example, to code and attach correspondence to files within twenty four hours of its receipt in the organisation (where twenty four hours has already been determined as a client requirement).

Performance indicators are just one of a number of different ways to evaluate activities of an organisation.

Other ways include:

- needs assessments;
- cost-benefit analyses;
- qualitative analyses; and
- program evaluation (i.e. whether to keep the function itself or increase or decrease resources.)

It is advisable to use performance indicators, as appropriate, with one or more of the other different ways as performance indicators alone do not show why something is happening and do not show cause and effect relationships. Basically the quantitative data of performance indicators gives the "big picture" whilst qualitative data help in understanding why something is happening.

When developing performance indicators it is essential not to fall into the trap of measuring what is easiest to measure. They need to be focused on the objectives of the program with which they are associated and its successful outcomes.

The measurement process associated with performance indicators should be kept as simple as possible. Nevertheless, there is some effort and time associated with measuring and compiling data. This, therefore, must be weighed against the benefits which can be derived from assessing the indicators over time. The most obvious benefits are:

- objective feedback about performance;
- assistance for the planning process through objective data;
- assistance in the management of risk;
- the establishment of benchmarks by which future performance can be evaluated; and
- relevant and focused services to clients.

When reporting it is desirable to present performance indicators both numerically and graphically. Reporting should be simple, short and succinct. It is useful to express them as well as their associated number as this adds perspective (for example 90%, or 3500, files were filed correctly).

Performance targets are associated with performance indicators and may be a range (for example 80%-85%) or a progressive set to be achieved over time (for example 60% in 3 months, 70% in the 6 months, etc.). As priorities change the targets associated with performance indicators may change but the indicators themselves should be constant to enable assessment to be made over time.

Although performance indicators are expressed as a percentage, index or rate, further information is needed in order to determine whether the actual performance has been

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satisfactory. Therefore there is a need for some form of comparison, or benchmark. Comparison can be made:

- with the program's performance over time;
- with a standard;
- with a similar program conducted by another organisation (benchmarks);
- with a target; and
- before and after a change.

There are very few, if any, standards, of which I am aware in the wider public domain relating to records management. Robek et al (1987) propose some standards for filing although acknowledge that there will be variances depending upon type of record and working conditions. At a local level though records managers can develop their own performance indicators and benchmarks and then seek out organisations with similar records, similar records management practices and working conditions and then endeavour to formulate some standards common amongst themselves.

Pi's for Records Management

Regrettably there is very little in records management literature available on the application of performance indicators in a records management environment. A seminal work on the application of performance indicators for librarianship is that of Orr (1973) who recommends that performance indicators should be:

- "relevant to the problem;
- helpful in indicating sources of difficulty and solutions to problems;
- valid - measure what they set out to measure;
- reliable - are not subject to unacceptable error;
- comparative - are able to monitor changes over time and be used as a comparison with other libraries;
- practical - must not be costly or interfere unnecessarily with librarians or users."

These factors are just as applicable to records management.

With the introduction of program management across an organisation records management generally falls at the sub-program level. As overall organisational performance measures are decomposed to local, sub-program levels the records management function becomes linked to the organisational function. During this process it is often the first time that records managers have sat, as peers and interrelated, with other managers on a common task. Consequently there are both real and psychological benefits as records management is exposed to the same management process and scrutiny as other activities in the organisation.

Records managers do not have to wait for senior managers to have structured programs and objectives in place before embarking on applying performance indicators. They can be proactive and commence developing their own providing they are mindful that the indicators developed should support the overall goals and objectives of the organisation as well as immediate needs.

Apart from being a handmaiden of program management performance indicators can assist significantly in planning and managing the changing organisational environment from which few records managers can escape. For instance:

- In a **devolving** organisation both records managers and the new manager with records responsibility need to know, not only the physical number of records which may be dispersed, but the number of person hours and processing costs per item which would also be transferred from the Records Management Section to the areas with devolved responsibilities.
- In a **downsizing** (or rightsizing) organisation, or one embarking on **enterprise bargaining**, it is necessary to substantiate the work processes undertaken by staff and to know the time taken and the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff needed to do those processes.
- Where **competitive tendering** is under consideration then it is essential to be cognisant of workloads and effectiveness criteria.
- Where **electronic mail systems** are being implemented it is necessary to quantify time and items processed per FTE in the manual, hardcopy environment in order to estimate;
  - the amount of formal documentation traffic on the new electronic systems;
  - the potential indexing workloads being passed to originators; and
  - the flow on impacts to paper based operations.

The data collection does not need to occur on a daily basis, for instance those relating to client perspective may only be collected quarterly, or semi-annually, by survey. Alternatively collection can be once a week but on different days of the week. For instance on Monday of the first week, Tuesday of the second week and so forth. This approach smoothes out any regular, set daily fluctuations. Obviously, in the report presentation it needs to be clearly identified whether the figures are an average, or totals, from collections over the monthly period.

Costing and counting need not be a complex process. Where amount of time worked on a process needs to be counted then time should be rounded off to the nearest 5 or 15 minutes - whichever is more appropriate. As a number of people

working on an activity will probably have different salary rates then an average should be struck for each category of staff and that figure used, unless a very detailed costing is required. Generally the purpose of performance indicators is to show trends, not highly precise figures.

It is essential that the data collection sheets used are clear in design, easy to use and clearly understood by the staff. Staff input to the designing of the forms and then trialing them can play a significant part in their understanding and acceptance of the process of data collection. Five stroke tallying is the easiest method of recording tallies and adding them. There should be sufficient room on each form to allow for such fill-in. Where a number of staff work on the same process each person should have his/her own data collection form for the activity. It should be easy to tally and subsequently aggregate with those of the other staff. Often, one form per day may be needed. As a result, time will be required by staff to tally their daily sheets onto a monthly one before passing on for final aggregation. [Samples of data collection forms were shown and discussed during the original presentation of this paper].

Having collected the data it is essential that it is presented in a clear and user-friendly manner. Tables and graphs are the most commonly used formats often accompanied by one or two page report identifying and discussing anomalies or trends. It is desirable that results for the past few months or year are also shown as well as the targets being aimed for.

Good use should be made of the resultant reports. They will be fed up to management but staff can gain a great deal from examining them and identifying peaks, troughs and exceptions and discussing them in group meetings.

TABLE 1

The table at the end of this article **(Table 1)** lists those indicators which I consider appropriate for records management processes. They have been developed for Australian conditions and practices where records sections, whether in private or public enterprises , usually operate with some form of computer assisted records management package. Government agencies frequently link mail opening, its distribution and dispatch with records management processes. In private enterprises that practice is not so common.

Item 1 on the table relates to the records management sub-program **as a whole** and could well fit within an overall information services program which may comprise library services, statistical services etc. Such a program could have as its objective the "cost-effective, timely and accurate management and provision of information and documentation control to meet client and legislative requirements." Items 2 to 10 relate to discrete activities performed in a records section. Items 9 and 10 could be merged into one activity count. Targets are not shown in the table as organisations must determine their own.

The prime foci of the indicators are:

- **Errors:** This is easy to count as it is simply the number of errors against the number of items processed. Where more than one error may occur per item (as in data entering) then each error should be counted.

- **Cost per client:** A decision needs to be made here whether it will be actual number of clients using the service, number of potential clients (i.e. number of employees) or number of clients registered onto the CARM.

- **Cost per item processed:** This can be calculated simply by calculating the number of hours spent on an activity, multiplying them by an agreed average hourly salary for the staff associated with the activity and then dividing the total by the number of items processed.

For example:
725 items processed. 33 hours worked. Average hourly salary $14.55.

33 x $14.55 = 480.15.

725 / 480.15 = $1.50 per item.

- **Items processed per hour:** Staff need to record the amount of time they spend on the particular activities. This is then calculated by dividing the total number of hours worked on the activity (whether by one or more staff) by the number of items processed.

For example:
736 items processed in 14 hours.

736/14 = 52.5 per hour.

- **Processing within x timeframe:** This requires close monitoring, with possibly employing time stamps on correspondence and a system of trays to keep items separated into their appropriate categories as they are processed. The data collection sheets need to be designed for easy tallying into "within time" columns and "outside of time" columns. Thereafter it is only a case of working out the tallies proportional to one another.

For example:
635 items within time and 103 items outside time. Total items 738.

635 / 738 x 100/1 = 86.0.
Therefore 86% within time.

Care needs to be taken when aggregating individual activity indicators into the sub-program to ensure duplication does not occur. For instance coding/ indexing and those to cover attaching are really part of the same process of determining the correct file for a piece of paper and filing it onto the file. Therefore the number of items

processed should only be counted once but both the times taken to code and attach those items should be counted.

Conclusion

Too often, in the course of my consultancies I have been told by conscientious librarians and records managers that they are too busy to measure. The consultancies have been predominantly with public sector agencies or mining and petroleum exploration companies. Over the last decade or so public sector agencies have been for ever restructuring and "right sizing" whilst exploration organisations, by their very nature, expand and contract. In such environments it is essential that performance measurement is an integral part of the library and records management process. Otherwise they are prone to suffer unduly in lean times and may not always remain attuned to meeting the strategic goals of the organisations which they serve. I hold very strongly to the view that "if you don't know where you are coming from you won't know where you are going to." Performance indicators play a significant role in telling us where we have been and where we are.

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[This is an abridged version of a paper delivered at the ARMA Pacific Rim Conference Auckland New Zealand in 1995 and is reproduced by permission of the Auckland chapter of ARMA.]

(Table 1 continued overleaf)

PUBLIC SECTOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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Table 1. RECORDS MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	INDICATOR TYPE
1 To ensure the records management program is cost effective, timely and accurate to meet both the satisfaction of clients and the records management responsibilities of the organisation.	*1a. Cost per client of service.	efficient
	*1b. Cost per record item processed.	efficient
	*1c. Record items processed per hour.	workload
	*1d. Ratio of budget expenditure to actual expenditure.	efficient
	*1e. Proportion of clients satisfied with service.	effective
	*1f. Proportion of records disposed of within x months of scheduled date.	effective
	*1g. Proportion of errors per items processed.	
	*1h. Cost per mail item processed.	effective
	*1i. Mail items processed per hour.	workload
2 To satisfy the information and document access needs of clients through services and training in a cost-effective, timely and accurate manner.	*2a. Proportion of clients satisfied with timeliness of service.	effective
	*2b. Proportion of clients satisfied with accuracy of service.	effective
	*2c. Cost of item per client of records issued out.	efficient
	*2d. Cost of item per client of records returned and verified.	efficient
	*2e. Cost per client trained.	efficient
	*2f. Proportion of complaints received per records issued out.	effective
	*2g. Records issued, returned and verified per hour.	workload
3 To increase the skills and knowledge of records staff.	*3a. Proportion of staff who have attended professional development training.	effective
	*3b. Cost of professional development per FTE.	efficient
4 To process records due for disposition in a cost effective, timely and accurate manner.	*4a. Proportion of records whose disposition is effected within x months of falling due.	effective
	*4b. Proportion of errors in disposition per records processed.	effective
	*4c. Cost per record disposed of (staff cost).	efficient
	*4d. Records processed for disposition per hour.	workload
5 To store inactive records in a cost effective manner and retrieve them when required.	*5a. Proportion of records returned for referral etc. within x timeframe.	effective
	*5b. Cost per item retrieved (retrieval charge).	efficient
	*5c. Cost per item stored (annual).	efficient
6 To open mail in a cost-effective, timely and accurate manner.	*6a. Items opened per hour.	workload
	*6b. Proportion of mail accurately identified for opening.	effective
	*6c. Proportion of mail opened within x time of its receipt.	effective
	*6d. Cost per item of mail opened.	efficient
7 To collect/deliver/distribute internal mail in a cost-effective, timely and accurate manner.	*7a. Proportion of mail collected and distributed within x timeframe.	effective
	*7b. Proportion of errors per items processed.	effective
	*7c. Number of items processed per hour.	workload
	*7d. Cost per item of mail distributed.	efficient

OBJECTIVE	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	INDICATOR TYPE
8 To dispatch mail in a cost-effective, timely accurate manner.	*8a. Proportion of mail dispatched within x timeframe. *8b. Proportion of errors per items processed. *8c. Cost per item of mail dispatched. *8d. Number of items processed per hour.	effective effective efficient workload
9 To administer and maintain the CARM system in a cost effective, timely and accurate manner.	*9a. Proportion of errors per items entered. *9b. Proportion of reports and backups done as scheduled. *9c. Proportion of unscheduled downtime. *9d. Cost per transaction (against running/maintenance costs).	effective effective effective efficient
10 To index correspondence in a cost effective, timely and accurate manner.	*10a. Proportion of errors per correspondence coded. *10b. Proportion of correspondence coded within x timeline. *10c. Cost per item of correspondence coded. *10d. Number of correspondence items coded per hour.	effective effective efficient workload
11 To attach correspondence to files, or register it as controlled documents, in a cost-effective, timely and accurate manner.	*11a. Proportion of errors per correspondence attached. *11b. Proportion of correspondence attached within x timeline. *11c. Cost per item of correspondence attached. *11d. Number of items attached per hour.	effective effective efficient workload

A New Records Management Thesaurus

The Records Management Office, a branch of the Archives Authority of New South Wales, announces the release of *Keyword AAA*, our new thesaurus of general administrative terms. *Keyword AAA* replaces our *General Administrative ('GADM') Thesaurus*, Australia's most popular and successful public sector records management thesaurus. *Keyword AAA*:

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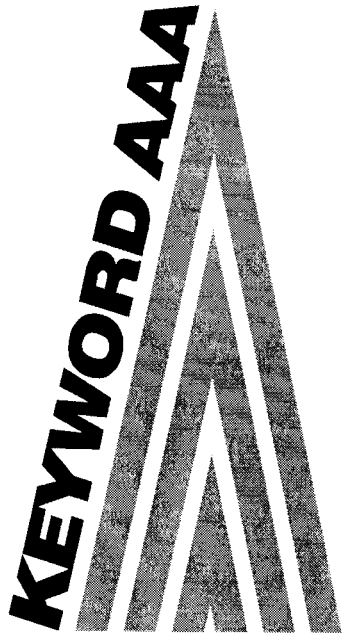


Accuracy Accessibility Accountability

The Interaction of Statute and Case Law

AUTHOR

Alex Lang

BA LLB(Hons)

Dip Info Management ARMA

Alex joined Australian Archives in 1984, working in its Victorian office until leaving in 1988 to pursue legal studies. He is currently working in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in Canberra, advising on information access and management issues.

The legal environment in which records managers work is a product of the interaction of statute (legislation) and case law (common law). This article provides three illustrations of that interaction.

Minister for Immigration v Teoh

The High Court's recent judgement in the *Minister for Immigration v Teoh* is perhaps an unlikely place to start, but it provides a useful illustration. The stripped-down facts of the case are that a Malaysian national, Mr Teoh, was convicted of importing heroin into Australia while his application for permanent residency was being considered. In light of the conviction the Department of Immigration refused his application. This decision was affirmed by the Immigration Review Panel and the Minister for Immigration. Mr Teoh appealed it to the relevant courts. By the time it got to the High Court, the relevant ground of appeal for our purposes was that the Department had not given full weight to the hardship his wife and children would suffer following his deportation.

In April 1995, a majority of the High Court held that the Department did indeed need to consider the effects on his children of deporting Mr Teoh. That obligation did not arise from any Commonwealth law, but from an international instrument entered into by Australia - the *International Convention on the Rights of Children.* This was the controversial aspect of the judgement. The previous understanding was that international instruments did not have effect domestically unless their terms were incorporated in Commonwealth legislation. But in *Teoh* the High Court held that the mere act of Australia becoming a signatory to an instrument had legal significance in Australian law, notwithstanding the absence of local legislation. As a result, in cases where there could be genuine dispute over the meaning of a statutory provision, Commonwealth officials would have been obliged to interpret the legislation in accordance with the terms of a relevant international instrument. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Commonwealth Government has responded by introducing legislation in the Parliament to nullify the effect of *Teoh.*

If *Teoh* had remained good law, would it have been a complication for information managers? Not necessarily. The number of international instruments Australia has signed that bear on our profession is limited, the primary instrument being the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966* (the *ICCPR*). Article 17 of the *ICCPR* reads:

1. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Fortunately, the privacy content of article 17 is largely accommodated by the Commonwealth's Privacy, Freedom of Information and Archives Acts, but under *Teoh* an individual could still have disputed a decision made by a Commonwealth official under one of those Acts. In coming to a decision on such a claim, a court would not only turn to the strict words of the *ICCPR*'s text, but would also give credence to its spirit. However, if *Teoh* has not already been nullified by the time you read this, it most likely soon will be and need no longer delay us. The *ICCPR* is a different matter entirely, as will be seen in the next section.

The Commonwealth Evidence Act, 1995

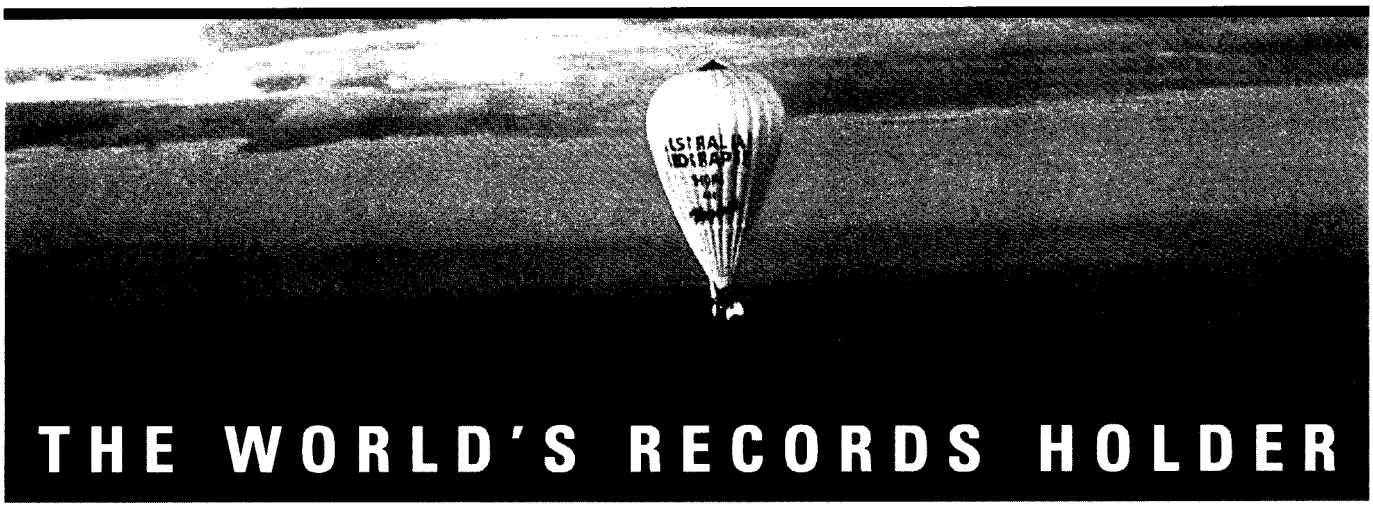
This new Evidence Act came into operation in April 1995 and should be considered required reading for every information manager in Australia. (Unless you work in New South Wales where that State's *Evidence Act 1995* is largely identical and should be substituted). The Act applies in all Federal courts and the intention is that uniform legislation will be enacted in each jurisdiction to produce a single, national law of evidence. The importance of the Evidence Act is that it prescribes what records may be led as evidence in litigation. Having records in a form acceptable to the courts can pre-empt court appearances and lessen legal costs if litigation is

unavoidable. The additional effect is that the Evidence Act serves as a central, basic reference in all legal activities.

The Act abolishes such vestiges of the original evidence rule that remained (usually as the common law best evidence rules), which required production of original documents in preference to copies. Section 48 of the Act now allows for documentary evidence to be introduced by tendering the document itself or in certain other forms, including: a copy of the actual document; printouts of data stored electronically; and extracts or summaries of business records. In regard to electronically stored data, the wording of the section encompasses word processing files, e-mail and even extracts from a database not previously assembled in that form - virtual records. (Sections 146 and 147 introduce the presumption that processes and devices capable of producing such documents will have done so properly).

Other sections of the Act provide that if the original document is no longer available then a copy, extract or summary is acceptable, or oral evidence as to the document's contents may be led. (However, although copies and the like may be tendered under the Act, in practice sometimes only the original will do. Such a situation may arise where the contents of a document are central to the case). But the Act also lays down the circumstances in which a document is to be considered 'unavailable'. These include if it cannot be found after 'reasonable inquiry and search' or if destroyed 'otherwise than in bad faith'. What is considered reasonable, and what constitutes bad faith, is not laid down in the Act and is subject to common law doctrine and precedent.

Note that the effect of section 48 is only to allow for non-original documents, or documents which were not pre-existing, to be *introduced* by a party in litigation. The weight to be given to that evidence once tendered is a separate issue. And that determination comes only after the documents have been ruled *admissible*. Generally, admissibility will turn on the relevance of the evidence to the issues before the court, but a number of objections can still be raised to prevent the admission of relevant evidence. Under section 138 of the Act the court has a discretion to exclude relevant evidence if it was improperly obtained. One of the factors taken into consideration, and this is written into the Act, is whether the impropriety offends any of the rights recognised in the *ICCPR*. Again, article 17 of the *ICCPR* is the obvious place to start.



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To remind you, sub-article 17(2) recognises a right to the protection of the law against arbitrary or unlawful interference with a person's privacy, among other things. That right should be read broadly. It encompasses interference with privacy not only in breach of the law, but also interferences not explicitly sanctioned by law. The inclusion of 'arbitrary or unlawful' raises the possibility that even a lawful interference may be condemned on the basis that there were insufficient grounds for its exercise.

Jacobsen V Rogers

In this final illustration a situation arose where two otherwise valid laws conflicted - one instituting confidentiality, and the other law requiring its breach. The central issue in *Jacobsen* arose as a result of Federal Police investigation into possible tax evasion. They obtained a warrant to enter the premises of the WA Fisheries Department, and to seize and inspect returns relating to fishing catches. Commercial fishermen in Western Australia are required by law to submit these returns to the WA Fisheries Department to assist in the management of marine resources. The same law also effectively exempts these records from being the subject of any warrant obtained under Western Australian law. Subsection 19(2) of the *Fisheries Act 1905* (WA) provides that a person having the custody of information contained in the returns shall 'notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, not be required by subpoena or otherwise to produce that information to any court'.

However, the Federal Police's warrant was obtained under a provision of a Commonwealth law - section 10 of the *Crimes Act 1914*. The validity of the warrant was disputed and the argument ended up in the High Court as to which law should take precedence. In the majority judgement delivered in *Jacobsen*, attention is directed to the general circumstances in which a State is subject to the laws of the Commonwealth. That a State can be so subject is long established and need not detain us. Of greater relevance is the discussion of the circumstances in which a Federal warrant can override confidentiality provisions of a State law. On this point, Mason CJ, Deane, Dawson, Toohey and Gaudron JJ said:

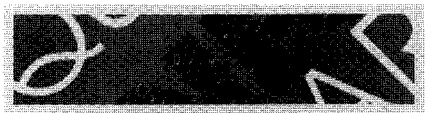
Confidential information of a business character required to be given by a statute which prohibits the disclosure of the information and protects it from production to a court would appear to present a particularly strong case for [public interest] immunity. Nevertheless, even where the private right to confidentiality is of some magnitude and its preservation is in itself in the public interest, it must be weighed against the public interest in disclosure for the purposes of the investigation and prosecution of the offences in question. (1)

There is an obvious public interest in respecting statutory confidentiality provisions, but the High Court is reminding us that public interest determinations are a balancing exercise. In this case the High Court did not engage in that exercise, sending the matter back to the Federal Court to be decided. The importance of the decision in *Jacobsen* is that the highest court in the land is prepared to disrupt statutory confidentiality provisions if the circumstances warrant, and that provides a precedent for lower courts in analogous situations. Once again, a statute may be in black and white, but it is incomplete in itself. And, unlike *Teoh*, it is highly unlikely that the Commonwealth government would want to disrupt the effect of *Jacobsen*.

Conclusion

The three examples given above should serve to illustrate the dangers in undue concentration on statute law at the expense of case law. Legislation can provide a useable framework on which to base decisions, but in many instances will be subject to the contribution of judge-made case law in its actual operation. The onus on professional records managers is to inform themselves not only of applicable legislation but also of relevant case law, and to understand how each operates on the other.

(1) (1995) 69 Australian Law Journal 131,137



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Readers are invited to submit articles for publication. They may be in the form of case studies, conference papers, book reviews, surveys or any report which may be of national interest.

Contributions should be typed & double spaced. Please include a short biography together with a black and white photograph.

Submissions may also be made in electronic format on a 3 1/2 inch diskette with Wordperfect 5.1 preferred or alternatively as a standard ASCII text file from other word processing software.

Send articles to
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Deadline for the August 1996 issue:

25th June 1996

NEW FACES

Informaa needs your help to report on the new faces that are emerging in the Records Management Industry.

In the next edition of Informaa there will be a new section that reports on new people in new positions or people with new ideas. If you or anyone you know has recently changed positions or developed a new idea for records management, Informaa would like to know about it.

All you need to do is send us a photograph and fifty words and we will consider it for printing in Informaa.

Deadline for copy and photos 11th July 1996

Please send copy and photos to:

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Branch Reports

SA BRANCH REPORT

Branch activities for 1996 commenced on the 8th of February with a demonstration of Ortex's electronic document management system at the Adelaide Institute of TAFE. These meetings continue to be very popular.

The Australian Standard for Records Management (AS4390) was the subject under discussion on the 12th March when we tried a new format for general meetings. The meeting merely had a topic and all those who attended were urged to launch straight into comments on the topic, questions about it, examination of specifics, recollection of experiences and debates on contentious points. Several new faces were present and we started a lively meeting that people are eager to repeat.

Branch Council has met monthly since January 22nd and has completed a revision of the strategic plan which council members have begun to implement. The new national promotional brochures and application forms were well received and are being put to good use.

Peter Crush ARMA

President

NSW BRANCH REPORT

The Branch has had a very good start to the year and it has been particularly active in pursuing topics which are directed at giving members a good overview of the impact of standards and newer technologies on records management. For example, we have examined the impact of the Internet as an information resource, looked at quality systems for records management and heard the wants and all the story on using optical discs for data capture. In doing so, we have focussed on using the skills and experience of a number of records management professionals to deliver presentations at members meetings and seminars.

In keeping with our proactive role within the Industry, we have invited NSW members of ALIA to attend some of our ventures. Similarly, ALIA has reciprocated by offering discounts to RMAA members who attend some of their events. This level of participation has enabled members of both associations to acquire knowledge in a broader range of information related matters than may have otherwise been possible.

Attendance at our activities has been very good and is averaging about 50 persons per event and we are very confident of increasing this average as the year progresses. Very soon we will begin planning our activities for the latter half of the year. Part of this process will focus on the promotion of the National Convention and plans are currently being made to ensure that new and existing members are reminded of this event.

Denis Comber ARMA

Branch President

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Branch Reports

VIC BRANCH REPORT

The Branch has been reviewing its approach to training and education.

The Local Government Chapter has been actively involved in providing a training program for it's members. Many calls are also received by the Branch from non-members requesting training. As a result the Branch will be surveying it's members for more information on their training needs. The results of the survey will form the basis of a training program.

State Seminar

The State Seminar will take place at the Cape Schanck resort, Cape Schanck on 6th-7th May. Registration forms will be available shortly.

A number of different approaches are being taken to producing this year's program. Feedback was solicited through the last issue of the Victorian Branch Informaa and speakers will be making presentations on a number of hot topics identified by the survey. These topics include the management of electronic information, records management futures, legal requirements for public and private sectors. Trade representatives will also be asked to make short presentations on their products. A panel discussion will wind up the seminar. Check the next issue of the Victorian Informaa for more information.

Changes

Over the past months, we have had a number of changes within Branch council.

Welcome to Candace O'Shaughnessy from Australia Post to Branch Council. Amongst other things, Candace is busy working with the Functions Committee to organise the state seminar.

John Sim has taken over the joint responsibilities of Registrar and Treasurer.

We wish to acknowledge the contribution of Judith Ellis as Federal Director. Judith has recently resigned from this position which she has held for a number of years. Judith does, however, continue in her role as Vice President.

David Moldrich joins Julie Apps as Federal Director.

Marjorie Dalvean will be resigning as Editor, Informaa. Marjorie has been the main force behind building the Branch Informaa into a highly polished, professional and sometimes controversial (but never dull) publication. Marjorie is currently being assisted by Candace O'Shaughnessy and Anne Cornish in the production of the next issue.

Publications For Sale

Papers form the 1995 national convention "Re-defining records management" are now available at a cost of $50.00.

Are you looking for:

- a list of computerised records systems?
- a directory of filing stationery and equipment?
- advice on ISO 9000 compliance?
- advice on retention periods?
- advice on file numbering systems?
- recruitment agencies for new staff?

These questions can be answered by contacting the organisations listed in RMAA Product Directory which contains a listing of suppliers throughout Australia. The directory is free to all members and is available to non-members for $10.00.

Do you need a reference tool for training new staff, or developing the skills of existing staff? The Local Government Training manual provides a basis for training in records management principles which are also applicable throughout the wider private and public sectors. Pick up your copy for $150.00.

To order a copy of any of these publications, please make your cheque payable to "RMAA Victorian Branch" and forward it with your order to:

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Branch Reports

ACT BRANCH REPORT

The ACT Branch held its first seminar for 1996 in March. Arthur Langford-Smith who was our workshops and seminars co-ordinator has taken time out from organising our normal branch seminars to concentrate on the 1996 convention. Our new co- ordinator Stephanie Ciempka felt with records management areas again wearing the bulk of staffing cutbacks and many records managers feeling more and more isolated it was time for some early informal networking. Our first seminar was therefore different to the usual format of seminars with the National Registration Authority (NRA) generously agreeing to an on-site visit. The visit enabled records managers to mix with their colleagues and informed them of how other agencies are coping with change.

Each year the ACT Branch donates a prize to the student chosen for outstanding performance in formal studies in information and records management at the University of Canberra. This year there has been joint winners and on behalf of the Branch Council I would like to congratulate Debra Adele Sullivan and Anne Domitric.

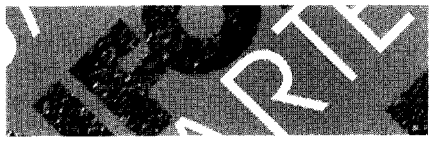
It is with regret the ACT Branch has accepted the resignation from Branch Council of Zara Struik. Zara was the Branch representative on the Federal Education Committee and on behalf of the Branch I would like to thank her for her contribution and support which has extended over several years.

Organisation for the 1996 National Convention is progressing smoothly all speakers venues and social activities have been confirmed and we are in the process of sending out the program and registration circular.

I have followed in Arthur's footsteps and have taken up the position of Secretary of the Optical Technology Special Interests Group (OSTIG). The ACT Branch looks forward to another year of close liaison with the OSTIG group and the benefits that have derived from this liaison.

Julie Lenson ARMA

ACT Branch President



OPTICON Records Tracking

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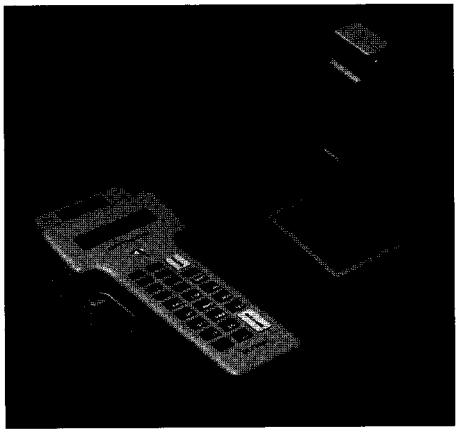

Opticon's lightweight portable data collectors, with built in bar code readers, are user friendly tools for everyone involved with records tracking. The batteries will see you through 8 hours of continuous operation.

Whether it is the palm laser scanner for non contact scanning, or the memory pen for contact scanning, Opticon portable data collectors are the ultimate tools for efficient records tracking.

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INMAGIC DB/TextWorks 1.2

Inmagic users will soon be able to reap the full benefits of Windows 95 and NT with release 1.2 of DB/TextWorks. Release 1.2 is the first 32-bit implementation of DB/TextWorks. (Versions 1.0 and 1.1 were released under Windows 3.1 and 3.11, Microsoft's 16-bit operating systems.)

The Windows 95/NT version of DB/TextWorks takes advantage of features which are available only on these platforms.

For Example:

- Long File names are supported
- The software uses preemptive multitasking, which means better shared use of the system by multiple applications running simultaneously
- The common dialogues (Open File, etc) follow the Windows 95 conventions
- True 32-bit file access yields better performance than under windows 3.X.

Loud speed is dramatically improved. To give you an idea, with DB/TextWorks 95/NT on a 150mhz Pentium Pro running NT, it takes just 27 minutes to load 60,000 records (47 megabytes of ASCI data). This translates into 102 megabytes per hour for bibliographic data. (The records contained ten fields with both word and term indexing.)

Inmagic, Inc is proud to announce that we have entered beta testing for our Internet/Intranet product, DB/Text *WebServer*. As explained in the last newsletter, DB/Text Webserver Will permit searching of DB/TextWorks databases from standard Internet browsers, such as Netscape or Microsoft Explorer. While this client/server architecture is exciting, our short explanation left many of you with more questions than answers. With that in mind, we'd like to share with you these additional details.

The primary benefits of DB/Text *WebServer* are:

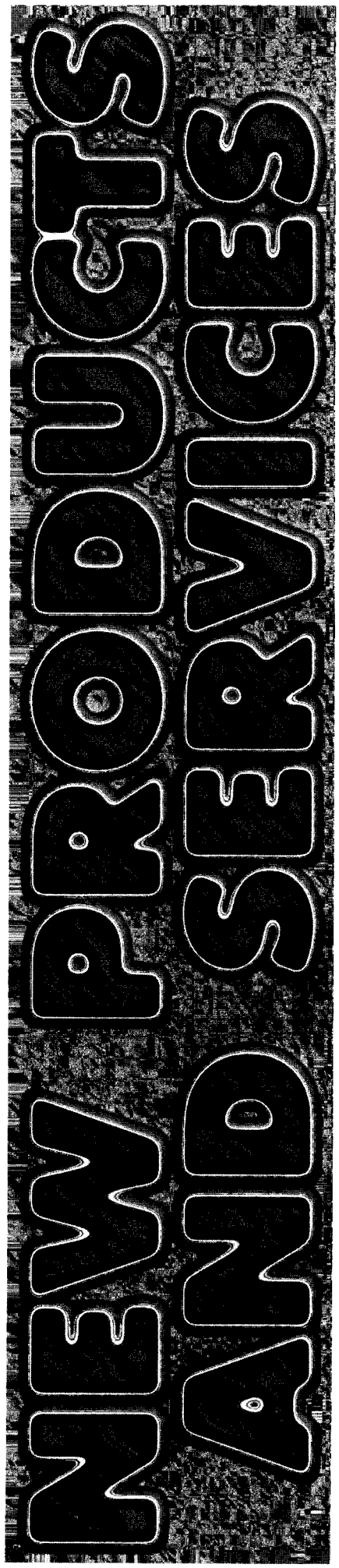
a) improved searching through large amounts of Web information (Hypertext linking is not the best way to search for information.)

b) dynamic data presentation (In HTML, the content and the format are linked very tightly; with DB/Text,the content and the format are separate, so mutable views of the same data can be easily created.)

c) robust data management capabilities for the Web publisher/WebMaster (Updating and maintaining several thousand HTML documents can be very tedious; DB/TextWorks' batch import, delete and modify can save large amounts of time.)

In addition, DB/Text *WebServer* does not require any Knowledge of HTML. Query forms can be saved to HTML from within the DB/TextWorks QBE Screen Designer and reports designed in DB/TextWorks will generate HTML on the fly when used with DB/Text *WebServer*.

DB/Text *WebServer* runs on a server running the Windows NT operating system. This server must also be running web server software (HTTP server) such as Netscape Commerce Server or Microsoft Internet Information Server. To be "web-enabled," these servers also run the TCP/IP networking protocols.



In addition, if the server is to be queried from the Internet, it must have an "IP" (information provider) address and be connected to a computer that is an Internet Domain Name Server.

Your DB/TextWorks textbase can either be on the NT server or it can be on another computer on your network that the NT server can make queries to (In layman's terms: the NT server must be able to access the directory of the drive where the DB/TextWorks textbase resides).

Once DB/Text *WebServer* is installed, you'll be able to search the database using an Internet browser and simultaneously maintain the data using DB/TextWorks.

Inside the NT server, Inmagic is using standard CGI protocols to respond to query requests.

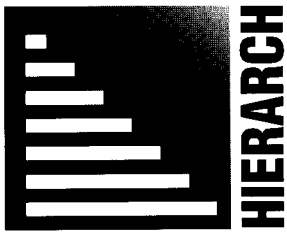
By using a CGI interface, *WebServer* will run on almost all web server software. Although other interfaces exist such as ISAPI, Inmagic has decided to use CGI in our first release to ensure compatibility across the largest number of web server (HTTP server) vendors.

In fact, the system has been designed in general to be compliant with Internet standards, allowing customers to choose their own web server and to be able to work with Mosaic clients running nearly any browser that supports HTML tables.

We expect DB/Text *WebServer* to be used for Internet publishing applications such as help desks or customer service databases, directory publishing, and more. We also expect DB/Text *WebServer* to be used extensively for Intranet applications, including company phone books, policy manuals, competitive intelligence, market research, or knowledge bases. We've also had quite a bit of interest in linking DB/Text *WebServer* to a spider to provide to provide an Intranet Navigation Server that would help company personnel find documents across the Intranet. Much the same way that Lycos and Yaboo provide this service on the Internet, Inmagic is exploring providing this capability for Intranets. But more on that and other Web related products later...

For further information:

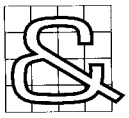
Triad Data Magic Pty Ltd
Phone: (03) 969 64866



Hierarch Browser

Now it's easy for your users to access and use your thesaurus . . .

Use Hierarch - the thesaurus manager - to create your thesaurus and ***Hierarch Browser*** to make it available, read only, to your users for easy searching. Suitable for use on all Windows networks and for publishing your thesaurus electronically on CD or diskette from as little as $10 per user . . .



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Ask for Pamela or Anthony
Canberra: Fax: (06) 251 3386 Phone: (06) 253 2561
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Metadigm Technology
Fax: (02) 437 6468 Phone: (02) 437 6474
Ask for Iucyna or Tyrone

Ring now for further information

Managing Electronic Paper

"Electronic Paper" is defined by the Managing Director of TOWER Software, Mr Brand Hoff, as those documents and records that are important to an organisation for information, legislative, corporate and evidence reasons whether they are in "electronic" or "paper format".

Recent studies in Canada have shown that on average a worker will spend between 3 to 5 hours per week searching for "electronic paper". What is the uncounted affect on your business? What if:

- the customer query cannot be answered within an acceptable time period;
- you don't know if you have all the available information on which to make a decision;
- you can't find the earlier correspondence to construct a reply;
- you don't know what has been said to the customer in previous correspondence; or
- you do not know whether a policy precedence exists.

TRIM for Windows, the Australian developed records (electronic and paper) management system can give you back three weeks of time each year per staff member through the effective management of your electronic paper records.

Apart from its popular TRIM Classic system which achieved around 350 sites in 9 years, since April 1995, the re- engineered TRIM for Windows has been installed in over 145 sites (not including corporate licenses). Indeed TOWER reports that it is currently winning over 95% of proposals and has increased its staff by 30% to cope with the demand. Selected recent sites include:

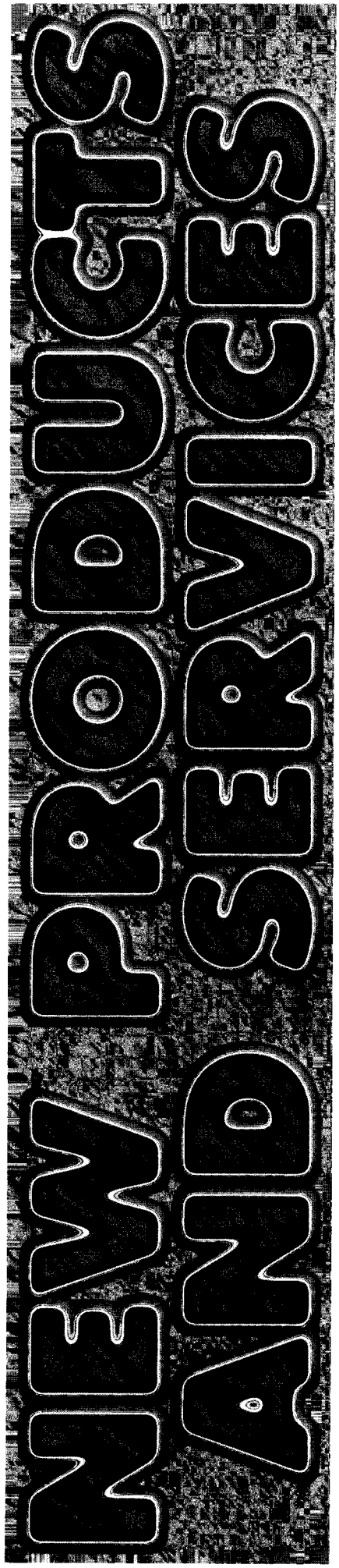
- CSIRO (Corporate License),
- Diamond Corporation, South Africa
- Mutual Insurance of Omaha, USA
- United Nations, New York
- Health Department of New Zealand
- Comalco Research Centre (Vic) and
- Defence Quality Assurance.

There are 3 versions of TRIM for Windows planned for 1996. Version 3.0.1 is now released. Two other 3 level versions will be progressively released this year. These will include more functionality for paper records (is that possible ?) and much more to assist with the electronic records and documents management problems. For example in the next release some features that will be available are:

- customizable (more than captions) data entry forms;
- more archive event triggers;
- electronic document extensions;
- queued electronic records; including
- version control.

TRIM for Windows is a giant leap forward for electronic paper records management. Make time and see for yourself and attend an introductory seminar. Please contact our toll free number for further information.

Toll Free: 008 020 149



PRODUCT INFORMATION GUIDE

Yes I would like to know more about the following products which appeared in INFORMAA Quarterly - Volume Twelve Number Two. (Please Tick)

Name: .....

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