1994 - RMAA
Silver Jubilee Year

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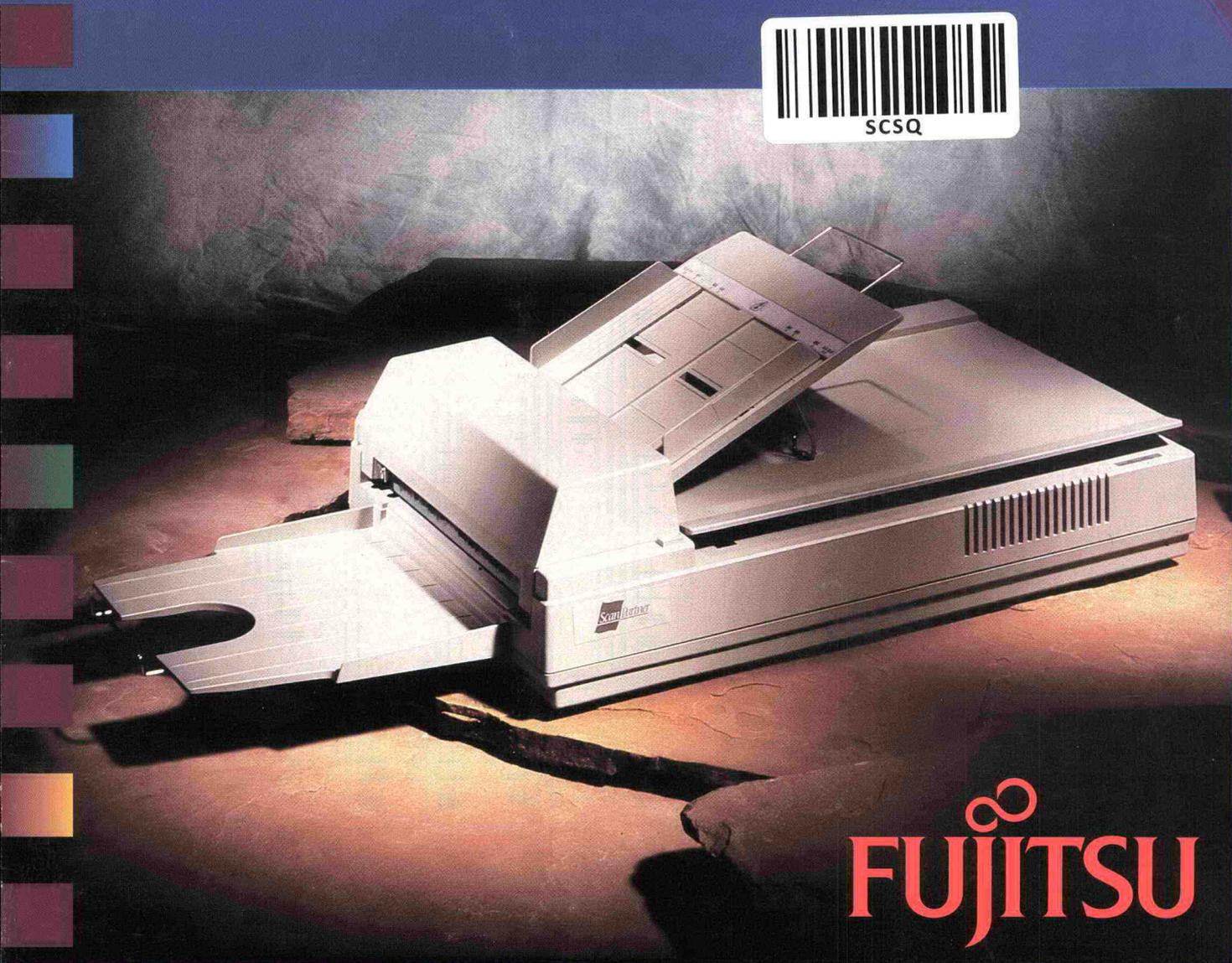
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CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions in the form of articles, case studies, letters, book reviews, are welcome. Please include brief biographical information e.g. position, place of work, previous experience and qualifications and a black and white photograph.

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

President's Message

As our Silver Jubilee Year slowly rolls on by, it has been pleasing to see that the majority of the Association's Branches have been holding events to coincide with our Silver Jubilee. The Association has agreed to conduct a national Records Manage-ment week during August '94. I suspect and hope that all Branches will use the week to promote the activities of the Association accordingly.

During June, I had the pleasure of accompanying a group of twenty Philippino delegates engaged at the NT University on a Local Govern-ment management short course dur-ing their visit to Brisbane and Sydney. Much to my surprise they had little or no knowledge of records management practices, so in an endeavour to help them as much as I could, "crash courses" were con-ducted in much of our supposed quiet time and would you believe whilst in transit from one point to another on the bus (now that's a feat all on its own), fortunately we had the bus to ourselves. What they told me of their experiences in the Philippines quickly reminded me of the stories often told by Peter Smith after he had visited the Philippines during his term of office with IRMC.
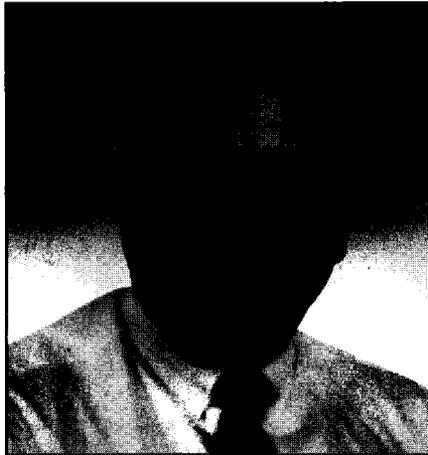
If any Branches or members of the Association have any excess RIM material and would like to donate it, I would be more than happy to ship it off to some of the delegates on your behalf.

By the time this edition of the INFORMAA Quarterly goes to print, all Branches would have held their Annual General Meetings and planned their activities for 1994/95. I wish the respective Branch Councils well for the ensuing twelve months.

Have you forgotten to register for the 11th RMAA National Convention being held during September '94? I sincerely hope not, you still have time to register remembering that the intelligence gained from the Convention will obviously be to your advantage further on in time. Help in making the hard working Organising Committee happy by joining us in Adelaide 11 - 14 September 1994. I look forward to seeing you there.

Ray Holswich ARMA
Federal President

Editorial

As we ponder what went wrong with public administration and business activities in the 1980's we should be mindful of the fact that keeping records is a fundamental construct of society as we know it today and indeed the profession of keeper of records is as old as the first societal groups dating back in history many thousands of years.

It is of great significance that a culture of reckless disregard for established records keeping practices and accountability issues emerged in Australia during the last decade culminating in the now infamous white board affair.

In this edition we present articles by Professor Leslie Marchant and David Roberts which comment on these matters in some depth. Both authors warn us against complacency

because poor records keeping and diminished accountability have become almost standard in our society. The challenge for all members is to pursue reform not only within individual workplaces but on a much wider front by active commitment to and support of the RMAA.

As I have inferred on previous occasions, if we cannot convince the government and the business community that we are failing to properly manage paper records today, and that reform is needed, then we face an overwhelming crisis with respect to the electronic records of tomorrow.

Ken Ridley ARMA
Chair Informaa Quarterly
Editorial Committee

Annual General Meeting
Records Management Association of Australia

Notice is hereby given to members that the 19th Annual General Meeting of the Records Management Association of Australia, will be held on Tuesday, 13 September 1994. It is to commence at 8.30am and will be held at the Hilton International Hotel, Adelaide South Australia.

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.

Article 57 states: A member wishing to bring before an Annual General Meeting any motion or 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.

Michael Hangan ARMA
Federal Secretary
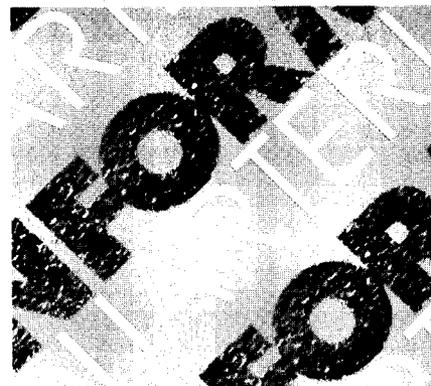
Nomination of Auditor

In accordance with section 328(3) of the corporations law, the following notice of nomination is given.

I, Christopher Fripp being a member of the Records' Management Association of Australia, hereby nominate Trevor Raymond Little of 6 Harvey Place Menai NSW for the appointment as auditor of the company at the Annual General Meeting convened for 13 September 1994. The office of auditor will then become vacant by virtue of the resignation of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu.

Chris Fripp ARMA
Federal Treasurer
Date 25/7/94

The Alteration of the Westminster System of Government and the Threat to Public Records Collections in Australia

Leslie R Marchant, Chevalier, Ordre National du Merite; BA Hons (WA); MA (SOAS Lond.); FRGS.

Professional historian and author Leslie R Marchant is triple qualified to write on this topic. He has practical knowledge of public records gained as a permanent officer in the Western Australian State Public Service before he began teaching in universities. He studied at the Library School at the National Library in Canberra where he was later employed. And in his academic career he researched into British and German government systems, both of which influenced Chinese political reformers in the Confucian period.

During the past 45 years he has worked extensively in British, European, Chinese and Australia archives. In Europe he located for the first time all of the records of the French explorers of Australia and New Zealand. He worked on and listed the captured German archives on East Asia and he located and listed valuable collections of missionary archives on China which are now being used by scholars.

The President of France recently awarded Professor Marchant a knighthood in an eminent order of French chivalry, the Ordre National du Merite, for his archival work and writings on French exploration in southern oceans.

Professor Marchant currently is Visiting Scholar at LISWA (The State Library of WA).

Over the past decade, since the early 1980s, political changes made deliberately but without public deliberation at the Australian federal and state levels, have quietly and unexpectedly produced new problems of significance for public records managers and archivists. The quality of active administrative files, the traditional system used to managing these, and the quality of the nation's archives have all been impaired with continued damage threatened.

It would be tangential to describe in this article the nature, form and purpose of the political changes which have brought about this situation and produced varieties of problems in other areas as well.[1] The main points we need to note in order to comprehend the problems are firstly, that the former professional public service which since the beginning managed public records in Australia and its states has now been replaced with a new system of public administration. And secondly, that new government administrative system serves a new sort of state which has a new structure and a new definition of public records. It is now not clear in Australia where public records begin and end, as is the case in other corporate state structures which Australia now parallels[2].

This transformed political structure and its political philosophical base together with the specific challenges it offers for records managers and archivists will be dealt with in a future article. This article is confined to the destruction of the documentary heritage of the state as a result of the quiet political revolution which has taken place; to the problem of how, in these circumstances, can public records be managed in accordance with well tried and tested traditional methods which proved their value and worth in the past; and to the problem of how this generation of records managers can leave a perfect, that is as complete as possible set of public archives for posterity, which future generations will expect us to do.

Evidence of the maiming of public records and further threats of this abounds at every level. Reports have been made that public records have not been created by government executive officers who should place on file their decisions and accounts of the administrative actions they have taken. Reports also have been made that administrative decisions and actions, when they have been recorded, have been written in an impermanent form on easily removable or changeable yellow stickers, or on whiteboards and blackboards which come with erasers. There are also widespread reports that public records have been stolen; mislaid; lost; destroyed - often deliberately by shredding - and culled which process now, in view of its prevalence, has been given its own descriptive name, "the sanitization of files".

The most pertinent point about this situation as far as those whose task it is to manage public records and archives are concerned, is that the destruction of the documentary heritage of the nation over the past decade, has been carried out primarily by highly placed public officials who seem to be unaware of the value of public records and of the need to have these correctly administered by skilled, appropriately qualified professional

public records managers whose offices in fact form the core of modern, efficiently run democratic parliamentary governments which have the confidence and respect of the people.

The extent of this destruction caused at high level has been revealed in the 1990s by investigators such as the 1992 Western Australian Royal Commissioners who were appointed to report on the WA Inc affair. These investigations have revealed that Ministers of the Crown, political advisers with access to public files and senior administrators were all involved in the destruction of files or failed to leave records of their administrative transactions.

Although the Western Australian Royal Commissioners took no public evidence from experts in the field of records management, which it was expected they would do, they made some recommendations. These are not of great value as blue prints for the future. For the Western Australian Royal Commissioners did not explore and master the political causes which gave rise both to WA Inc and to the specific sort of records problems this created. Strangely, Royal Commission officials instead themselves requested the Government to destroy some of the records of evidence the Commission held in its office. This was primarily because of a promise made by Royal Commission personnel to a witness who was hesitant to come forward unless what was said was destroyed. The legal right for the Commission to make that promise, and to subsequently have the records destroyed is doubtful. Royal Commission records belong to the Crown, not to the Royal Commissioners. Their records which are paid for from the public purse, form part of the national estate of public records. This and other relevant facts were pointed out to the Government at the time by the author[3] and others.

The records were not destroyed. They were passed into archival custody where it is hoped they will remain without interference.

At the federal level there have since then been further notable cases. A Minister of the Crown who recently resigned, publicly revealed that a whiteboard was used for departmental records keeping. Calculations were made on this together with lists of applicants for public grants. This information was apparently erased without copies being taken to form permanent records, as would have happened in the time of the traditional British style public service which was replaced in the 1980s, and which should have happened under the new style public administration. This failure to keep permanent files of government administrative records caused a long political controversy during which little of substance was produced because the facts of the case had been erased. What was said, in the absence of written evidence, was therefore mostly speculative, uninformative and inconclusive as far as the administration of funding was concerned.

The Prime Minister in his defence of the Minister of the Crown in his Cabinet who resigned, exacerbated the problem as far as public records management is concerned by publicly announcing that he did not use a whiteboard, but merely kept administrative information in his head. This admission is of more serious concern for public records managers. For it means that government departmental records are not being created in written form in the first place. And that does not auger well for the good of the documentary heritage of the nation.

More recently still it was reported in the *West Australian* on 12 April 1994, that as a result of a complaint, a case of file culling had been referred to the Public Service

Commissioner for investigation. At about the same time in the same State, it was reported that some of the records of a parliamentary committee appointed to enquire into a controversial government land grant to a Catholic university had disappeared. These reports indicate the problem is an on going one.

The basic cause of the problem, as has been indicated above, is that the former British style public service has been destroyed and replaced with a new system which provides Ministers of the Crown and the executive branch of government with more personal power than before, and lacks the checks and balances which existed in the previous system. In the old system of permanent, professional apolitical public servants who were educated in the value of records keeping as a result of long years of practice, advice would be given by these to political incumbents in high office, about records procedures and about that which is administratively and morally acceptable and that which is not, and about that which it is lawful to do. Because of this advice public records administered by the old public service, as any researcher who has studied them knows, are faithful accounts of government administrative actions which seem to be complete, as should be the case in any efficiently run government.

There is an added cause of the problem. There is an apparent weakness in the Westminster system of government. This system is based on an unwritten constitution. It relies a lot upon convention and tradition which are not listed in a written code. Although these are held to have the quality of law they do not have its sanctity. Headstrong governments which feel that old accepted traditional practises are standing in their road, can easily ignore them and cast them aside more readily than the law laid down

by parliament. And they seem to be able to do this with impunity. The case does not have to be argued either in public or in parliament. For laws do not have to be changed or new ones made. It was in this way that the traditional public service was destroyed and replaced with a new system, with ease and with little fuss[4].

What has happened in the realm of public records as a result of this political change, that is in having government executive officers fail to create or properly preserve public records, is administratively, legally and academically unwise; morally unacceptable, and uncivilised. High civilisations in the ancient, middle aged and new worlds from the Orient to the West achieved that high status primarily because of their records management abilities which formed the core of their administrative systems. The value of public records and those who managed them was recognised in those societies. Certainly records managers were never used as heroes in Shakespeare's historical plays. But Shakespeare was well aware of the value of their work. Without their chronicles he would never have been able to write his *Hamlet* and his other kingly and queenly dramas which tell us so much about the English monarchy and past happenings. In some civilisations, to demonstrate the value they place on public records, penalties were often applied to those who tampered with them or who failed to properly create them. In other civilisations, punishments were left for historians to give. For example the Chinese Manchu Emperor Yin Chen (1723 - 1736) who sanitised public records, had his name sullied for posterity by historians for depriving the nation of part of its official documentary heritage, and for denying the administrator who followed, access to the essential information needed to govern efficiently and to protect the nation[5].

Failing to create and preserve written public records is a characteristic of illiterate, not educated, advanced states. Amongst the latter, even the most despotic monarchs in the most authoritarian regimes where public accountability is absent, employed court chroniclers and scribes to record their decisions and to record the reasons for these so that they could rule sensibly according to the law and to precedents, and so that they could, by the use of recorded information, avoid making the same mistake twice. This was one way to win popularity. For people are reluctant to respect fools, especially if they are powerful ones.

One function of written records is to provide for an efficient and fair administration acceptable to the public. Public administrative records reveal to citizens in black and white how fair and efficient a government is. They also serve especially in democracies, to check politically corrupt practices and political favouritism.

Government by whim has never produced either models for government administration for or popular ones. The Roman Empire in its years of disintegration, when rule was conducted often by whim and when records keeping fell into decay has been used by historians as a negative example to show how civilisation crumble. Administrative records and their managers in that Empire were no longer valued and used in the way they had been. There developed as a result, administrative decay, corrupt political practises, seemingly favoured treatment for some citizens, hardships for others, and popular discontent.

The Eastern (Byzantine) Empire which emerged from the ruins of the Roman Empire, in contrast can be used as a model for restoring crumble states to former glory. This was done amongst other causes by

restoring, in accordance with the *Justinian Codes,* an efficient government administrative system at the core of which was a professional public records system which was given a high value together with those who managed the records.

As is indicated by that example and by more recent cases, complete, professionally managed sets of public records are essential for good, popular democratic government for four reasons.

The Need for Public Records

First, they provide government administrative officers with information needed to make sound judgements in accordance with the laws of Parliament, thus ensuring that the executive branch of government acts and is seen by the public to act efficiently in a constitutional manner acceptable to the populace, to which democratic governments are accountable.

Second, government administrative documents are State legal documents. They provide the legal basis for the State and its administration. That is why, in civilised societies, they are kept in strict legal custody. If that custody is broken, the documents lose their legal status. Modern invading forces have this in mind when they give a high priority to capturing public records offices in enemy counties, as happened in the case of Germany in 1945. With the German official records in Allied hands, the caretaker government under Admiral Doenitz after the demise of Hitler, was denied legitimacy. The Allied Governments instead used the records themselves to govern Germany until its modern recreation when a new federal records system based on a new legitimacy was established.

The advantage had non-literate societies where records are kept in peoples

heads, is that there is nothing for invading forces to target except the tribal leader or warlord who holds administrative knowledge. That explains why recently in Somalia, the Americans tried to capture the local warlord. There seems to have been no store of administrative records to capture to administer the nation.

Third, public records are used to keep Parliament and the citizens informed about the administrative performance of the government they pay for with their taxes. In British parliamentary democracies, Ministers of the Crown from the Prime Minister down, must report fully and in detail to Parliament about how they administer, unless parliament delegates in an Act of Parliament, special powers to a Minister of the Crown, to not report. Parliament made its supremacy over the executive quite clear in 1649 when the ambitious King Charles I, who claimed he and the executive branch was supreme,[6] was cut down to size by Parliament, by a parliamentary appointed axeman.

Four, administrative records are used by historians, political scientists and political commentators to assess the performance of different government administrations, to hold them up either as models to be praised and followed or as types to be condemned and avoided by those who follow. Historians are harsh on political leaders who either destroy, cull or fail to create public administrative records. They sully the names of their families for posterity.

Cause of Present Political Confrontations Affecting Public Records

Modern political controversies such as the recent extensive one at the federal level which resulted in the resignation of a Minister of the

Crown, are caused by a weakness in the "Westminster System" of parliamentary democracy.

This system is based on a three fold division of power. Parliament makes the laws. The Crown which forms the executive branch of government, administers these. The Judiciary makes judgements about the usage of the laws.

The weakness is the Minister of the Crown including the Prime Minister who form the executive branch, often use the old powers of the Royal Prerogative instead of laws of Parliament when they administer their departments.

It is easy for Prime Ministers and other Ministers of the Crown to act as monarchs and get away with this. They are not elected to their positions either by Parliament or by the citizens. They receive their commissions as Ministers of the Crown from the monarch.

Ministers therefore wear two different hats, or rather a parliamentary hat and a royal crown.

Sometimes the latter goes to their head and they assume for themselves the power of the Crown, acting as if they are monarchs independent of parliament, which is constitutionally incorrect. They always are wholly accountable to that body.

They must, if constitutional government is to function, keep complete records of their administrative actions in order to report fully to their master, that is parliament, about how they perform, and in order to account for the monies supplied to them by parliament from taxpayers funds.

This unique position of Government Ministers in the British system raises the question of who owns Crown ministerial records? This is a grey area that has never been firmly and clearly dealt with. The position is this, although some Ministers of the

Crown claim that their records are their own, they are in fact not private records, personally owned and handled as liked by individual Ministers. They are public administrative records, and are essential parts of the documentary heritage of the nation. They are paid for from the public purse. They belong to a Parliament and the Crown, and must be preserved.

Confusion exists about this, as has been demonstrated in the various recent cases where Ministers have either not created records or have had them destroyed. The confusion arises because it is easy to assume that because the confrontations about whether or not funds were correctly given, take place in Parliament, parliamentarians are making the decisions about public records. They are not. It is monarchist minded Ministers of the Crown who assume the powers of Royal Prerogative, and who are opposed to the supremacy of Parliament, who are making decisions about the records.

Rudyard Kipling warned clearly to watch out for this situation when he wrote in *The Old Issue,*

> Over all things certain,
> this is sure indeed,
> Suffer not the old king,
> for we know the breed,
> Howso' great their clamour,
> whatso'ere their claim,
> Suffer not the old king
> under any name.

The use of the Royal Prerogative by ambitious Ministers of the Crown is not the sole cause of the present controversy. Also contributing are the strong, dominating political parties which have emerged in the British system of government, aiming to win and keep power at all costs. For them, an admission that one of their chosen Ministers of the Crown is incompetent or corrupt could promise loss of public confidence

and votes. In recent cases in Canberra, especially that of the Minister who resigned, we witnessed back bench members, because of what they believe is the need to maintain political party solidarity, instead of defending Parliament and its supremacy as they should because they are members of parliament, defending instead the Crown just like the King's Party in Parliament did in the time of Charles I. For this those parliamentarians also met the parliamentary headsman, or fled abroad, choosing exile instead of the axe.

Parliamentary action is currently and urgently needed to correct this situation and ensure the permanent preservation of the documentary heritage of the nation. This incidentally would benefit all government administrators at all levels. Especially those who are politically attacked. Records of their actions would provide the ammunition needed to defend themselves.

For this to be done efficiently, experts in the field of public records management should be officially consulted by parliamentary decisions makers who value the documentary heritage of the nation. Current evidence from these sources indicate there are four possible ways to go.

1. An independent National Records Office responsible to and reporting directly to parliament as recommended by the Records Management Association, should be established immediately to establish policies and set standards to manage current records including electronic records, and to oversee the documentary heritage of the nation.

2. Public Service Regulations must be written to make it obligatory for all officers in the executive branch of government, to record in a permanent way that cannot be electronically or otherwise tampered with, each and every administrative transaction.

3. Clear definitions need to be made about what are and what

are not public records, examining especially the case of ministerial records, and legislating about the preservation of these.

4. It should be made an offence in law for any public official or other person to tamper with, cull or otherwise interfere with government administrative records.

End Notes

1. These and the implications they have for public records managers and archivists are described in the author's forthcoming book *Modern problems and issues in records management and preservation in changing British constitutional monarchies.*

2. Ibid, chapter 4 and 5 deal with the extension of records and problems of records management in Corporate State structures.

3. See Marchant, L.R. "Posterity must have all the facts to judge" the *West Australian,* 30 October 1992, page 8; the *Sunday Times,* Perth 5 May 1991 pages 9, 35 and editorial page 36.

4. For the intention to do this see the Western Australian Parliamentary Hansard 1983, passim and the report on Treasurer Dawkin's retirement in the *West Australian,* 18 December 1993 where it was reported his reforms included sweeping changes to the Public Service.

5. Yin Chen's sanitization of records affected the administration of China's relation with Tibet.

6. "Royal prerogatives and parliamentary sovereignty during the reign of Charles I" in *The Executive State,* ed by P O'Brien and M Webb. Perth 6009.

'Sports Rorts', Recordkeeping and Accountability

David Roberts BA, Dip. Inf. Mgt. (Archives Admin.)

David is the Manager of the Records Management Office, an operational arm of the Archives Authority of New South Wales. Before taking up this position in February 1993 he worked in a variety of areas in the Australian Archives for thirteen years. He writes and teaches regularly on records management and archives topics, especially in the management of electronic and other technologically-based records. He currently represents the Australian Society of Archivists Inc. on Standards Australia's 'IT/21 Committee', which is developing a national records management standard. In his current position, the relationship between records and accountability has become a particularly important concern.

This article first appeared as a somewhat long letter to the editor in the May/June 1994 issue of the *InfoRMAA Newsletter* of the NSW Branch of the RMAA and an edited version appeared in the May issue of

For The Record, the Archives Authority's newsletter for New South Wales public sector agencies.

R eaders will recall that there was a records related dimension to what became known as the 'Sports Rorts' affair which dominated federal politics from November 1993 to February this year. Ros Kelly resigned on 28 February as the Federal Minister for the Environment, Sport and Territories shortly before the tabling of a parliamentary committee report which found that she had failed to approach minimum standards of documentation and that her record-keeping was seriously inadequate in her administration of grants under the community cultural, recreation and sporting facilities program. The affair had started with a report by the Auditor-General, which found that political bias in the allocation of the grants could not be proved or disproved because Mrs Kelly's office failed to keep documentation showing the basis for selecting successful applicants.

The recordkeeping aspect of the 'Sports Rorts' affair is only one of the more recent in a long series of cases where recordkeeping and records management have contributed to a 'crisis of accountability' in Australia's government and corporate life. To place the affair in this context we might note a few examples from the public record concerning other cases:

• in the Queensland Electoral and Administrative Reform Commission's *Issues Paper No. 16: Archival Legislation,* 1991: 'It became apparent that following the last election in

December 1989, the papers documenting the activities and decision-making of the 1985 Electoral Commissioners were either destroyed or removed from the office in which they were stored... As a result of proper and accurate recording of decisions and actions of government agencies, the agencies and the public are able to see what decisions are made and to examine decision-making and policy formulation processes. At the same time, recording of government decisions ensures that as far as possible, decisions are well-reasoned and uniform and made with an appropriate regard to the relevant facts and law.'

• in the report of the *Royal Commission into the Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters,* 1992 ('WA Inc'): 'The absence of effective recordkeeping has dogged this Commission in its enquiries. Records provide the indispensable chronicle of a government's stewardship. They are the first line of defence against concealment and deception...'

• the Victorian Royal Commission into the failure of the Tricontinental merchant bank was told by a senior internal auditor that '...most if not all of the information on investment banking was being held by Johns (Tricontinental's chief executive) in his head rather than being documented in a proper way.'

• in the ICAC's *Report on Investigation into the Use of Informers,* vol. 1, January 1993, it was necessary to give a lesson in recordkeeping: 'Whenever a public official has to exercise a discretionary judgement on a matter of significance,

a short note should be made and placed on the relevant file as to the decision reached and reasons for it. That can be done at the end of the day's work, and it is really a matter of fairness to the official concerned, who may be called upon to give an account of the decision taken and why it was taken. Time and again witnesses before the Commission in this investigation were placed in the embarrassing position of not being able to give any sort of account of themselves, simply for want of short contemporaneous records...'

• in the ICAC's report, *Investigation into the Relationship Between Police and Criminals, Second Report,* April 1994: 'During the Commission's investigation there were many cases in which the Police Service could not produce all, or most of, documents generated in relation to major investigations. Efforts were made, but they failed. The Commission's investigation was thus thwarted, and accountability of the Police Service and its officers in those cases proved non-existent.... Often the Police Service did not even have complete records as to what police were involved in particular investigations...'

Nor does it appear that we have seen the last of such cases. In April this year, Austel's report into the 'Casualties of Telecom' affair found that Telecom had kept inadequate records of the subjects' reported faults.

Many of these and similar cases feature the all too familiar problems of poor records management: poorly organised files and other records, duplication, gaps, relevant documents held elsewhere, and so on. It is worth highlighting the above cases, however, because they also reflect a more fundamental problem: a failure of *recordkeeping,* that is, a failure to make and keep adequate evidence of business functions and activities in the first place. In essence, records are evidence. Poor

records management merely makes that evidence difficult to find when it is needed. Poor *recordkeeping* means that the evidence may not even exist or may not be adequate to meet organisational requirements for accountability.

What Is This Thing Called Accountability?

When we talk about accountability it is important to recognise that it represents more than scrutiny by external bodies like parliamentary committees and Royal Commissions. Accountability in the public sector has many guises. At its most basic, accountability means being able to provide an explanation or justification, and accept responsibility, for events or transactions and for one's actions in relation to these events or transactions. Ian Temby, QC, former Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, has defined accountability as that which 'reflects and reinforces a value system in relation to government and administration which is solid and good...' Jack Waterford, journalist and public sector commentator, argues that:

Accountability is about giving an answer for the way in which one has spent money, exercised power and control, mediated rights and used discretions vested by law in the public interest. It is fundamental to our system of government that those to whom such powers and responsibilities are given are required to exercise them in the public interest ... fairly, and according to law.

Under the Westminster system of government, public servants are accountable to ministers, ministers are accountable to the parliament, and parliament is accountable to the people. This seemingly straightforward formula is greatly complicated in today's public sector environment. The Australian Government's Management Advisory Board and its

Management Improvement Advisory Committee have described accountability as:

existing where there is a direct authority relationship within which one party accounts to a person or body for the performances of tasks or functions conferred, or able to be conferred, by that person or body. It is important to understand that this concept of accountability does not simply imply providing information or answering questions, but includes setting goals, providing and reporting on results and the visible consequences for getting things right or wrong, including rewards or sanctions as appropriate.

It also implies delegation of responsibility and authority, an essential element of which is that the delegator does not lose responsibility for performance and, therefore, depending on the circumstances, may be called to account.

Thus devolution, risk management, strategic management approaches and program performance measurement are all elements of public accountability today.

We should note that public sector agencies are subject to both *external* and *internal* forms of accountability. Increased external accountability manifested itself in the late 1970s and early 1980s in efforts to achieve a more open government, particularly through legislation for freedom of information and the review of administrative decisions. In the late 1980s the focus shifted to institutional accountability to Government for the carriage of programs through such means as performance measurement and audit procedures. At the same time Royal Commissions, parliamentary committees and bodies like the Independent Commission Against Corruption represent a well known form of external accountability, while a range of statutory requirements impose legislative accountability.

Internal accountability ranges from formal organisational management and reporting structures to the relationship of staff member and supervisor.

The dependence of auditors on records is one of the most obvious examples of the relationship of records and accountability. But records and recordkeeping, by providing documentary evidence of what has happened, represent an essential basis for accountability in all its guises. Thus when we talk about records and recordkeeping supporting accountability, we are using the term in its broadest range of meaning.

'Sports Rorts': what was the problem?

Bearing this in mind, what was the nature of the problem in the 'Sports Rorts' affair? Was there an *information management* failure? Clearly not. The Minister and her advisers had all the information they needed to help them make their decisions. Was there a *records management* failure? Since the process of making decisions produced little in the way of records, there is no evidence of her office encountering any problems in managing those records. Rather it was a *recordkeeping* failure, that is, a failure to document activities adequately to support the accountability requirements of a government program administering the granting of funds. Mrs Kelly and her advisers failed to keep records which would provide evidence of the basis of their decisions.

The Kelly case highlights the role played by failures in recordkeeping, as opposed to what we have traditionally regarded as records management, in the accountability crises of recent years. It also highlights the evidential character of records, which is what distinguishes records from other kinds of information in organisations.

It can be tempting to speculate about the causes of the failure of recordkeeping in so many modern organisations. We might blame it on prevailing corporate and political cultures which, short-sightedly, regard records and recordkeeping simply as 'bureaucratic red tape'. In the public sector, we might blame it on the dismantling or collapse of central records systems which, in the past, provided a framework conducive to systematic recordkeeping, and now all too often leave managers and staff with little or no system or guidance to encourage recordkeeping, let alone records management. Certainly it reflects a failure by many governments, chief executives and managers to understand the connection between recordkeeping and accountability.
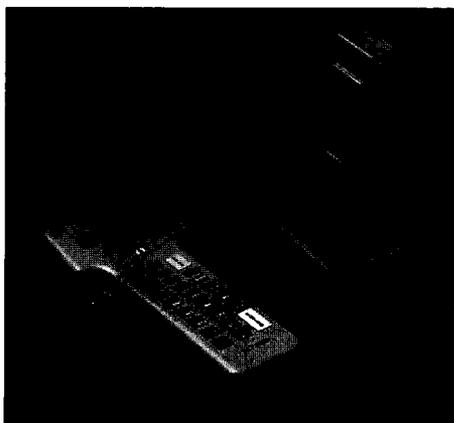
The technological environment in which organisations increasingly operate can also threaten record-keeping and, thereby, organisational accountability. For example, where decisions are reached and communicated by electronic mail, and no mechanism exists to capture messages as records, the evidence of those decisions will quickly disappear, as users tidy their electronic 'in' and 'out' trays and network administrators clear valuable disk space. Records managers and archivists, following the approaches developed by the likes of David Bearman and his colleagues, are increasingly adopting strategies for managing electronic records which seek to turn electronic information systems into electronic recordkeeping systems, that is, systems which will keep evidence, in the form of electronic records, of functions and activities carried out using those systems.

It may even be that records managers have contributed in some ways to these recordkeeping failures by emphasising the management of records as an information resource - important as that is - without acknowledging the evidential character of records and their crucial role in supporting organisational accountability.

What is to be done?

Clearly, one way of addressing the problem that is open to governments is to require minimum standards of recordkeeping by their agencies. In New South Wales, proposed new State Records legislation, intended to replace the *Archives Act, 1960,* will have among its purposes:

• to improve the quality and keeping of official records so that they may facilitate the transaction, monitoring and auditing of official business; and

• to develop and promote Government-wide standards and

codes of best practice for the management of official records in all formats - paper, film and electronic.

Among other things, the new legislation will require public offices and institutions to:

• keep full and accurate records, managed in accordance with management standards and codes of best practice developed by the State Records Authority; and to

• consult with the Authority on existing records management programs and new information systems to prevent the loss of information in records.

It is also clear that the need to support accountability through recordkeeping places new responsibilities on records managers. The 'Sports Rorts' affair and all the other cases mean that we cannot limit ourselves to *managing* the records created by our organisations. If records are to play their unique role in supporting organisational accountability, we must ensure that our organisations consciously adopt systematic recordkeeping practices which will provide the necessary evidence. We must add *recordkeeping* to the elements which make up our organisations' records management policies and programs. We must work with others in our organisations who have a stake in accountability - with executives and managers, auditors, lawyers and FOI officers - to build recordkeeping into the way our organisations work. We must design recordkeeping into work processes. We must make the required level of recordkeeping a natural and accepted part of doing any job in our organisations and provide people with the means to make and keep records without creating barriers or inefficiencies to stand in the way of doing their job. In short, we must nurture a recordkeeping culture in our organisations.

1 Reported in *The Age,* 22 January 1992, quoted in Sue McKemmish and Frank Upward, eds., *Archival Documents: Providing Accountability Through Recordkeeping,* Ancore Press, Melbourne, 1993, p.11

2 Reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 14 April 1994

3 Ian Temby, 'Accountability and the ICAC', *Australian Journal of Public Administration,* Vol. 49, No. 1, March 1990, p.1

4 Jack Waterford, 'A Bottom Line on Public Sector Accountability', *Australian Journal of Public Administration,* Vol. 50. No. 3, September 1991, p.415

5 MAB/MIAC, *Accountability in the Commonwealth Public Sector,* AGPS, Canberra, 1993, p. 13

6 These types of accountability are discussed in more detail; by Livia Iacovino in 'Accountability for the Disposal of Commonwealth Records and the Preservation of its Archival Resources', in *Archival Documents,* at pp. 55-57, and by Don Fuller and Bet Roffey in 'Improving Accountability and Decision-Making' Australian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. 52, No. 2, June 1993 at pp. 150-152

7 Explored in case studies by Marion Renehan in 'Unassailable Evidence: The Nexus Between Recordkeeping and Public Sector Accountability', in *Archival Documents,* pp. 131-144

8 Described most recently in the Australian literature in David Bearman, 'Archival Data Management to Achieve Organizational Accountability for Electronic Records', in *Archives and Manuscripts,* vol.21, no 1, May 1993, pp. 14-28

Image and Text: retrieving what we have stored

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It is a truism that there is no point in arranging for the storage of information unless it can be retrieved when it is needed and delivered speedily to the person who needs it in the form in which it is needed. There has been an unfortunate tendency to believe that automation by its very nature solves retrieval problems. It may seem like special pleading on the part of a traditionally trained librarian with a more recent foot in the records management and archives camps to claim that this is not necessarily so. However, I believe that we have enough evidence now that there are continuing problems with retrieval.

Organisational Accountability

Why do organisations collect records? The traditional answer is that the records constitute the 'corporate memory'. That answer in itself does not explain why an organisation needs a corporate memory. Increasingly organisations are being made to realise that the answer to why is divided into two, perhaps irreconcilable aspects; to satisfy internal needs and to satisfy external inquiry. We have entered the age of corporate accountability, not only in financial matters but in every aspect of organisational activity. Any organisation which has an element of public funding or has shareholders, any organisation which might have an effect on the environment, any organisation which affects the lives of individuals, any organisation which manufactures goods or offers services has at some point to account for its activities. Of course, this means all organisations. Another effect of accountability is that enquiries may delve much further into the past than records seen as of current use for internal purposes. Responsibilities for proper storage have both widened in scope and lengthened in time.

When internal needs for information are examined they fall into roughly two categories, transactional and 'informational'. Records of transactions are often the types of records which need to be kept for accountability purposes. They demand the retention not only of the record itself but also of the context in which it came into being. Divorced from such a context the information itself becomes useless. The second category, for which there is no good overall name, includes everything else, all the information which oils the wheels and keeps the show on the road from telephone directories to procedure manuals to computer manuals to trade literature to professional literature. There is no hard and fast distinction between the two categories. Procedures manuals are strictly speaking informational but contextual information about when they were introduced and amended and whose responsibility they are needs to be kept in order to ensure that they can properly be interpreted when needed for accountability purposes.

It can be seen that because of accountability, context has become even more important than it was before. This single fact has an enormous influence on how information should be stored and retrieved. Contextual information needs to be retained as long as the records are needed even into the archiving process. Contextual information often overlaps with information needed for retrieval. For example, a record of the relevant action taken on a piece of correspondence may be important for both accountability and retrieval purposes. The sad fact is that much current research in information retrieval ignores the issues of context so important to records management and archives.

Full-Text Retrieval

The majority of the world's textual information, whatever the form in which it eventually comes into our hands, is now created in electronic form. This has, inevitably, led to the widespread belief that tapping into enormous collections in electronic form and using full-text retrieval methods to retrieve desired information from them will solve all our indexing and retrieval problems. The appeal lies in the notion that no intellectual effort will be needed to organise the information, other than that applied by its originator to writing the document in the first place.

A recent major text (Meadows, 1992, p.71) expressed this shift in opinion quite clearly:

> '......every word used by the author, every combination of words and pattern of frequency of use of the words is available to the searcher or to a program operating on the searcher's behalf. These - the more complete information plus the intelligence that can be built into a computer program - make it less and less important for the searcher to rely on formal index terms."

For 'formal index terms' you can read any structured and formal information organisation and database record.

In fact, it is clear that, as the collection being searched becomes larger, retrieval capability becomes degraded, so that systems which worked well with smaller collections no longer work so well. This situation is akin to a very much earlier experience in large collections of data, that of the original large bibliographic utilities providing cataloguing data to libraries. These databases contain highly structured bibliographic information, not full text, but, because of their large size they exemplify the problems of initial searches on large bodies of data. A good example is the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) bibliographic utility. It made little effort to control the information contained in the records loaded by its members. It was believed that the continual improvement in the retrieval capabilities of software would overcome any inconsistencies in the data itself. The result was an extremely dirty database from which quality retrieval was very difficult to obtain. When the Australian library community decided to introduce a national utility (subsequently called the Australian Bibliographic network -ABN) the experience of OCLC led

it to emphasise the need for quality data and control of record content. For a while retrieval from ABN was relatively easy. Now that the database has grown to some eleven million records, retrieval is again difficult and, in some cases, impossible. New searching methods have been introduced (Supersearch) and the National Library of Australia is in the process of developing completely new software to run the database. However successful this proves to be, the now quite lengthy history of the bibliographic databases shows that development of retrieval systems runs behind the inevitable tendency of the data stored to grow.

The development of systems to retrieve from collections of full text documents has to contend with two problems not faced by traditional database systems. The first is the possibly heterogeneous nature of the documents stored and the second relates to determining what constitutes a unit of information for retrieval purposes.

There are many very successful full-text retrieval systems in operation and I am myself involved in the introduction of one at my own university. If you look at the characteristics of such systems, you frequently find that they are very limited in the type of documents which are stored, although the document database may be large in volume. Retrieval capabilities can therefore be geared to the type of material. Such limited coverage document databases imply that those undertaking a search know that the collection exists and what its characteristics are. It is very different when we are faced with an unstructured collection of heterogeneous documents. To dive in with no prior information often leads to disillusionment. If we decide that some such prior information is required, where is it to come from? Presumably from some higher level of ordered information about the

information. Who creates this and how? Are we inexorably led back to some intellectual effort of the kind traditionally undertaken by information professionals?

The second problem is concerned with the question: What is the retrievable unit of information? This question is virtually identical to a linked one: What is a document? The definition of a document has gradually widened over the years as different formats have been developed. However, even straight textual documents cause problems. The documents may be anything from a few hundred to hundreds of thousands of words in length. Some documents may be highly structured and sectioned, others not so. Retrieval refinements such as weighting and proximity may work very differently on a large collection of very short documents than on a smaller number of much larger ones.

The Return of Structure to Full-Text Retrieval

The result of these problems has been the development of mark-up languages such as SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language) and HTML (HyperText Markup Language) (Smith, 1987). The text is examined and control characters introduced. Some of these control formatting, but others describe the nature of parts of the document, such as names and other important retrieval words. The process of marking up the document is quick once the process is well understood, but it does represent a substantial investment of effort.

In 1993, I visited the University of Virginia's Electronic Text Center. This was a fascinating experience of the evolution of full-text systems, in this case of material useful to academics of the University. They saw themselves in the market for any collections of electronic text which came their

way. However, they found that much of this material was inadequately marked up and very difficult to retrieve from. They had therefore started to treat these collections by gathering at the top of each document, certain standard pieces of information about the item and marking these up accordingly. Those involved in this task quickly came to realise the problems involved in maintaining consistency in these 'headers'. They called in the Library's Cataloguing Department for advice and the cataloguers are now doing the 'headers'. Inevitably, these are beginning to look more and more like a traditional library cataloguing record. Some might see this as a return to an undesirable earlier age, but the process seems to have been inevitable and uninfluenced by those with traditional values.

Another example of the failure of retrieval from text may be found in the field of qualitative research. Such research typically collects a great deal of unstructured text, such as transcripts of interviews and documents which influence behaviour such as laws and policy documents. Australia has had some success internationally with a package called NUDIST designed to help researchers make sense of such material. (Richards, 1991). One of the basic tasks undertaken to prepare text for use by NUDIST is to mark off units of text for retrieval purposes, otherwise the system does not provide adequate retrieval and linking of data.

It can thus be seen that the experience of the real world of retrieval has led to a significant retreat from the idea of fully automated retrieval. Either the originator of a document must put some thought into its structuring for future retrieval, or some other person must subsequently undertake the task. Since the structuring of the document for

retrieval may involve different considerations from those connected with how the document is to be used immediately, this may well be a time-consuming task even for the originator of the document.

Precision and Recall

It is perhaps unfortunate that so many demonstrations of the power of full-text retrieval involve retrieval keys which are pre-programmed for success. The demonstrations I have seen have almost always involved the use of names in the widest sense of the word. That is, not only the names of places and people, but also the names of substances, living species or named events. General concepts, particularly those which deal with abstract ideas rather than concrete entities, are much more difficult to find because there is so much inconsistency between individuals on what language to use to describe such concepts. However, this problem of consistency applies even to names. It is easy to judge what has been retrieved by a search, but impossible to judge what may have been missed.

It is one of the sad facts of any retrieval system that, in some cases, what is retrieved is much less important than what is not retrieved. We may judge our search to be a great success if what is retrieved appears relevant and is not unacceptably diluted with material which is not relevant; that is, the *precision* of our search is good. However, it is possible that much that would have been even more relevant may have been left behind and we will never know anything about it; that is, the *recall* of our search is poor. It is important to determine the purpose of any search in order to determine the effect of recall problems. If all we want is a 'fact' (leaving aside any philosophical question as to whether there is such a thing as a hard fact), there will be little problem. If all

you want to know is a client's email address, the date a staff member started at your organisation or the melting point of zinc, finding the information once is enough, even if the information is findable by a number of different routes. On the other hand, if you want information about your organisation's examination of a particular problem or dealings with a particular outside body, missing relevant information becomes a serious problem. Definitions of good records management rightly stress the need for supplied information to be complete.

This is where problems arise with the inconsistent use of language. Just one obvious example will suffice for this. If an organisation with which you have dealings changes its name, those undertaking the search will need to know about the name change when undertaking the search. If they don't know, they will miss relevant information. A linkage between the two names will need to be built into the retrieval system. This is a human-centred and time-consuming activity.

Implications for Document Imaging

There is a great deal of current research and development in the improvement of character recognition software, including the recognition of handwriting. For indexing purposes it is vital that character recognition is absolutely reliable. Should we see these efforts towards greater reliability as the means to provide us with cheap and easy indexing? What are the implications of all this for current imaging systems which store unsearchable images and which provide retrieval from keys external to the image itself?

The immediate conclusion of the arguments presented here is that the unsearchable image is not necessarily

an inferior form for the storage of information. It is not true to say that the effort which may be involved in the organisation of images so that they may be retrieved would be unnecessary if the full text of the document could be searched. Full text may eventually involve us in just as much intellectual effort.

I find myself continually forced to a conclusion which most people at a conference such as this, including myself, might regret. However much of our storage and retrieval systems may improve in respect to storage formats, speed and functionality, they have done little to relieve us of the responsibilities for the proper organisation of information in our care. A linked conclusion is that these responsibilities exist, and are very similar, whatever, the format chosen for the storage of the information.

This is in some ways a comforting thought. There has been a tendency to see full-text storage of, for example, internal word processed outgoing correspondence documents and email messages as being substantively different from image storage of, for example, incoming correspondence. Integration of two such different formats has, on the whole, not been undertaken. I would prefer to see such integration as a technical problem not necessarily related to the way that documents are described for retrieval purposes. When searches are being undertaken, the format in which documents are stored should be the least worry for the searcher.

Organising Information for Retrieval

How should information be organised for effective retrieval? One obvious point to make is that all situations and organisations are different and there is no point in prescription. However, some general principles are clear. It is possible to see a very

definite trend emerging in the way information is accessed both world-wide and, in a more restricted way, within organisations. There are a myriad of collections of data, many of which work highly effectively and are created by groups of people who are efficient and competent. The problem is not so much in using them as in knowing that they exist and that the information contained within them is likely to be helpful. It is not information which is lacking but information about the information. One response to this has been to suggest that we by-pass the problem by imposing on the top of such myriad sources standard search engines which retrieve information without the searcher needing to specify which sources he or she wishes to search. In effect a large number of disparate sources are treated as one source for retrieval purposes. This leads to all the problems of retrieval from large and disparate sources which have been detailed already in this paper. In addition, there are many occasions when people need to know the source of retrieved information in order to judge its reliability and completeness.

It would seem to be far more efficient to allow searching initially on a set of descriptions of information resources, which give sufficient information to enable a reasoned judgment to be made on which are likely to be helpful. Such descriptions should give information about content of the source, the originators of the information, the format in which the data is held and how to access it. The descriptions may well exist at more than one level, so that the searcher may be led through a nested series of increasingly specific descriptions of smaller source units until an efficient search may be undertaken. It would, of course, also be important that, once a source has been identified, a user

could go direct to that source without repeating the initial searching process.

We should take care not to assume that there is therefore a clear distinction between levels at which descriptions of information reside and levels at which the information itself resides, or that the information itself resides only at the lowest level. A records management system may have descriptions of collections of documents (files), and at a lower level, descriptions of individual documents, with lying behind that the document itself, whether in image, paper or searchable full-text form. In such a system, many queries may be answerable without retrieving the actual document. The description may contain all the information desired.

The management of the information becomes a matter of deciding what to extract from documents and pull up to a higher level in the system. This involves conscious decision-making either by the originator of the information or a responsible information professional.

The top level of an organisation's information systems may describe and organise very large accumulations of data indeed. Burk and Horton (1988) describe a method for identifying the major information resources within an organisation. In their INFOMAPPER system, the traditional records management system providing access to files would have only one entry. The library would have another. The record structure they devised for describing these major accumulations of information are immensely complex, so much so that the extent to which they are actually used in practical applications is debatable. The important point is that much of the record is not describing content, but instead details such matters as ownership, access restrictions and security, how the data is created, responsible staff, contact persons and costing and

funding information. As the user works his or her way down the system, the descriptions become more content related and less management related.

All this sounds very much like a nested series of menus. However, it tries to provide much more. In most systems, when a menu choice is accessed, the user is actually taken into the source requested. There may be delays, login procedures or passwords. The searcher may well then find that they are not where they expected to be and have to exit. If it had been possible to access a collection of relevant descriptive information about the source first, this may have been unnecessary.

Ordered Sequences and Linearity

The other imperative in information organisation, which is particularly applicable to records management, is to be able to access information in an ordered sequence. This has always been part of traditional records management. We organised documents into files in fixed sequences, usually in chronological order. This enables us, for example to access a sequence of correspondence which reflects adequately the relationships and transactions between the correspondents.

In presenting information in this way, there is inevitably a suggestion that users should work their way through information in a prescribed order, that is a linear order. This is again in direct contrast with the emphasis in the literature of full-text retrieval and hypertext on non-linearity, the ability of the system to allow you to order information as you like, to follow up interesting leads as they occur and to put together a personalised version of the information on offer (Morgan, 1991). However, when we put records into the context of accountability and transactional evidence,

this ability becomes a luxury we may not be able to afford. More control of the information is needed.

Image systems developed for records management purposes have made a particular virtue of such ordering, with the advantage over paper and microform that a single document can appear in more than one sequence without physical copying. They also offer users a reasoned choice of which documents need actually to be viewed. In this respect they offer the possibility of supplying the best aspects of records management practice of the past with the best aspects of automated retrieval and delivery.

The Need for Flexibility and Consistency in the Indexing of Images

Unfortunately there has been a tendency to dwell on the technical aspects of imaging and the advantages thereby offered and to give less thought to the problem of retrieval capability. For example, David B. Black's handbook *Document capture for document imaging systems* (1992) concentrates on the input process but only gives a very limited treatment of information organisation (p.52-58). It is clear that he is concentrating on the type of records to which imaging systems have most often been applied; large series of homogenous documents which are easy to retrieve because they are almost self-indexing. The *Register 2000* project to capture Western Australian land titles is typical of this. If imaging systems are to break out into much more flexible and interesting usages, they need to offer retrieval choices which are independent of the format of the document.

I have already stated that I believe that consistent usage of applied

indexing languages such as thesauri is an important part of this, together with the identification of authoritative listings of names. Part of a current project I am working on at the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in Western Australia has demanded the identification of authorities for the names of places, minerals, species, types of vegetation and habitats, climate zones and planning zones. This has involved a great deal of work, but has been justified by their impression of poor retrieval from both records and the library system. Even the DEP's own published documents are not consistent in their use of language. Should we then enforce 'correct' usage within documents. This is probably undesirable. It is within documents that new names for new concepts are first recorded. Language is always evolving. It is better to apply consistent usage from outside, but of course this involves yet more intellectual effort.

Many years ago the famous Cranfield project concluded that the best possibilities of retrieval are found when a number of different approaches are offered (Cleverdon, Mills and Keen, 1966). No one approach is right or wrong. The early part of my paper may have seemed to be against full-text retrieval. It most certainly is not. Full-text works very well in some circumstances, particularly when you are searching for concrete and relatively uncommon retrieval keys. It is always worth trying full-text searches when electronic text is available because you may turn something extra up. Nevertheless, the holistic approach to indexing, where the indexer tries to sum up the content or intent of a complete document is very useful where full-text fails. If the complete text is not available, as when unsearchable images are produced, such holistic

or conceptual indexing is vital and can produce very efficient retrieval.

The Need for Human Intervention

The bottom line is that all this human intervention in the retrieval process is very expensive, in two respects. It takes time and care to set the system up in the first place and it demands continuing input of properly structured and indexed information. Development work is often contracted out to consultants who leave a working system but do not (or cannot) ensure that their employers understand the need for properly trained staff to maintain it.

Above all, I believe that it is the prime duty of an information retrieval system to provide a conceptual map of the information stored so that users can make reasoned choices of the path they will take. Numerous separate systems linked by brief and uninformative menus are not the answer. Neither is trying to toss everything into the one 'information soup'. Anyone who wishes to experience both these approaches only has to try using the brave new world of online worldwide information via the Internet, using tools such as Gopher, Veronica and WorldWide Web (WWW). The Internet is used by many people who love its anarchy and fear any attempt at order or control. Fortunately, within organisations, we have both the responsibility through accountability and the opportunity to produce a truly responsive records system.

We need to recognise that, although there are very real advantages in image management systems, they do not free us from the need to apply the same rigorous retrieval systems as should have been used, but seldom were, with paper records.

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Penny Wise or Pound Foolish?
- The Bigger Picture

Letter to the Editor

Why pull the plug on member-ship to the International Records Management Council (IRMC)?

It is disappointing to find that the Records Management Association of Australia has chosen to sever its ties with like associations that form the International Records Management Council. RMAA has been an affili-ate of the International Records Management Federation (IRMF), which was to become the International Records Management Council (IRMC), since the incep-tion of that organisation. RMAA has had a proud record of support for, and association with IRMC hav-ing the distinction of holding the office of the first president.

Over recent years RMAA has, to say the least, been dilatory with the pay-ment of its dues. Delaying payment for a variety of reasons by asking for explanation, confirmation and clari-fication on the direction and future of IRMC. When the information was provided - the outstanding dues were not!

Are you aware that one Dollar of your membership funds provides you with membership with the international organisation?

Now that we (RMAA) have with-drawn from the international associ-ation, we will lose recognition and credibility in the international arena.

It seems that the stance taken with IRMC, is incompatible with the objectives of the RMAA, unless we take a particularly insular and xeno-phobic view of the records world and the influences we will be sub-jected to. While the computer industry is actively seeking to pro-mulgate standards for the exchange of documentation which includes contextual rules (Lotus, Microsoft, I.B.M.), structures (SGML) and even controlled vocabulary (Wordperfect Dewey Thesaurus) we are harming the one organisation capable of pre-senting our views in the forum that will decide our future.

Perhaps we should go back a step and explain the objectives of the IRMC. The objectives of the Council shall be:

a) To promote and advance the profession of records and informa-tion management and related fields of endeavour through education, research and study.

b) To disseminate professional knowledge and techniques and information through international sharing of experience and knowledge related to records and information management and related fields.

c) To facilitate co-operation and encourage collaboration between organisations having common inter-ests in records management by such means as promoting improvements in communication, the interchange of development information, and bilateral membership.

d) To develop, improve and advance standards appropriate to the entire field of records and informa-tion management.

e) To initiate or co-ordinate the establishment and sharing to co-operative resource and referral cen-tres which will provide sources of information required in the further-ance of records management and related activities.

f) To convene, sponsor, or pro-mote International Conferences (i.e., the International Congress on Records Management) and meetings for the furtherance of Records Management knowledge, research and development, and training, in co-operation with the National Records Management Association of the countries concerned.

g) To contribute to the Programs and Projects of U.N.E.S.C.O. and other International, National, and Regional organisations.

h) To assist countries that do not have Records Management Associations in organising same, and give advice, information, and training either through Council Members or by enlisting the aid of U.N.E.S.C.O., International Council of Archivists, etc., to meet these needs.

To achieve these goals, like any non-profit organisation, there needs to be strong elements of motivation, good will, trust, and financial backing. Without the financial backing of affiliated organisations like RMAA, it is impossible to achieve any of the objectives and goals of IRMC.

Without this financial stability IRMC will not be recognised by U.N.E.S.C.O. or like organisations or attract their funding.

We, like others, see the cause of the IRMC as important. We are pre-pared to give freely of our time, pro-vide our own travel expenses to meetings and speak at seminars and conferences to foster records and information management.

However, the disappointment comes from feeling cheated from being able

to help those developing countries wishing to form their own associations, promote records and information management, advance world standards, and share our knowledge with others.

IRMC is the vehicle for Australian records professionals to gain international recognition for the innovative practices and procedures they have achieved.

We must say that we feel frustrated and annoyed when we hear remarks like "what has IRMC done for us?", "why should we support an organisation that does little for RMAA?" Surely, we should be much more positive. We would suggest that we should be offering help - technical, administrative, and financial - to support and give impetus to IRMC. The need for finances to carry out its objectives are critical and to withhold

these funds and deny us membership is inexcusable.

An argument may well be sustained that the IRMC has yet to represent us effectively. We would argue that this demands a renewed commitment rather than abandonment. We cannot complain about the lack of standing for our profession when we are not prepared to make the effort necessary to creating and maintaining those institutions vital to the creation of "standing" in the community.

The international organisation needs to have the funds to provide developing countries with the support they need to form their own associations and foster records and information management.

Australians have a name for fair play and we firmly believe that records people share that sense of fair play.

We would like you to promote that sense of fair play by lobbying your Federal Directors, the Federal Council, and your Branch Council to have RMAA reinstate its support for IRMC. We think it is important and we are sure when you have given it due consideration you will as well.

LET'S GIVE IT A GO!

Peter A Smith.
Member of the IRMC Restructure Board.
A Past President of IRMC.

Graham V Dudley.
Member of IRMC.
Past Executive Director of IRMC.

Tony Poynton.
Past Vice President for Australasia and Oceania, IRMC.

Change Our Association Name? Why?

J. Eddis Linton, B.Ec, FRMA, CRM, FAIM

J. Eddis Linton was one of the founders of the Association. He holds Fellow Status and is an Honorary Life Member. He is a member of the Institute of Certified Records Managers (USA) and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management. He is the Principal of the consulting company Keyword Information Services Pty Limited. He is the author of "Organising the Office Memory" UTS 1989 and the "Keyword Records Management Manual" Educational Holdings Pty Ltd 1991. He designed the Microsoft "Windows" package dexi Computafile and wrote its manual and tutorial, all programmed by CentreTech Computer Products.

The recent poll of members on the attitude to a name change prompts these comments. It has been proposed that we change the name of our Association to Records and Information Management Association.

The fact that this proposal has gone so far indicates that there are still some people who have not thought about the meaning of the word 'information'.

First, let us look at this very nebulous word 'information'. The situation is a bit like those who are pushing for a republic without defining its meaning precisely. What is information?

Macquarie Dictionary defines it inter alia as

"1. Knowledge communicated or received concerning some facts or circumstances; news.

2. Knowledge on various subjects, however acquired"[1]

At this point one may ask, is this not a definition of records? If so, then "information" is a synonym for "records", so it would be a good example of a tautology to place both in our name.

This is a bit superficial, so let us look at the definition used by the University of Technology, Sydney at its Kuring-Gai Campus. The definition used incorporates that of K.W. Otten:

"Individual subjective knowledge, the product of cognitive processes, may be transformed into objective knowledge or information by public expression via speech, writing and so on. This information is publicly observable, is 'in a location' (stored), it is transportable (communicated to/from) and may be altered (processed) in various ways. Additionally it may be produced (generated by) and lost or altered in the process of communication or processing"[2]

Professor Mairead Browne, quotes a statement by Karl Popper

"If all human life were wiped out, an intelligent visitor from another planet could, through these records, reconstruct the life and subjective knowledge of humans. Once human knowledge or information has been recorded it acquires a permanence and objectivity which is then accessible by others"[3] (The underlining is mine)

So far the writer has seen nothing to convince him that information and records are not synonymous terms.

Perhaps someone has been convinced that "information" has something to do with computers and

electronic storage. If anyone has any thoughts that records are confined to the paper medium then it is suggested they read the definition of a record in the association's Articles of Association which specifically includes records held in any medium at all including electronic.

It is desirable at this point, to look at the work areas of our members. It is generally accepted that our sphere of activity is the office and that we deal with records in any medium generated or received in the course of business activities.

Why Do We Store Records?

Because someone who stores them believes that somewhere, sometime in the future these records may be required by someone. The only justification for keeping records is this element of possible future need. The only time when they will be needed is for the making of a decision. Sometimes this will be by management for a strategic, or a commercial decision. It may be as simple as the seeking of a precedent, "what did we do last time?"; or even writing a history of the organisation.

In a recent article in "AIM Management" magazine in June 1994, James Harker-Mortlock writes:

"Unlike oil or other commodities, the value of information is very much in the eye of the beholder. What is of extremely high value to one person is entirely worthless to somebody else"[4]

This raises the interesting point that everything committed to paper or

keyed into a computer is not necessarily information. Stafford Beer adopts a more subjective definition which this writer accepts as being very appropriate to the office scene.

"Information is what changes us"[5]

Adopting this definition means that we store data not information, the data only becoming information when someone finds it enables him or her to make a decision.

The writer finds this a very cogent reason for NOT changing the name of the Association. The fact that this recommendation started with a firm of marketing experts does not influence me in the least. What are their qualifications for making this recommendation? After all, the American Association of Record Managers and Administrators and the USA Institute of Certified Records Managers have seen no valid reason to jump on this verbal band wagon.

It has taken us 25 years to have our Association established and recognised,

why throw away all the hard work?

Finally, consider the costs involved in a name change, new stationery, a new name for the Journal (INFORMIAA ?); all the status certificates would have to be withdrawn and re-issued; the achievement plaques for life members would have to be re-done, all the bank accounts altered; not to mention the need to obtain the consent of the Chief Secretary and the name change fees. For what? To satisfy someone's trendy ideas?

No, let us stay with our present name. It expresses precisely what we all do, manage records and use them to provide information to decision makers. Better by far to spend the money on a permanent office with a library to assist in educating our members. When we look at it quite dispassionately, we do not give the average member much for his or her fees. Certainly, we hold great conventions, at an average cost to members of $1000 per annum, plus four quarterlies, a few bulletins and a few lectures, but these do not appear much

to the average member, especially if they cannot get to the monthly meetings or afford to attend the conventions.

This is my personal viewpoint. Let the Council hear your ideas and arguments pro or con a name change.

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(3) Browne, M. (1983) "Information and Information Science - an emerging field of study" Informaa Quarterly Vol 4. No.4.

(4) Harker-Mortlock, J. "Information for Managers" Management Magazine, June 1994 P.22. Aust. Inst. of Management

(5) Beer, S. (1975) "Platform for Change" London. John Wiley & Sons. p. 320.

Honorary Life Membership Awarded *Arthur Langford-Smith* ARMA

During the latter part of 1993, Federal Council accepted the recommendation of the ACT Branch Council and awarded Honorary Life Membership to Mr Arthur Langford-Smith, ARMA, in recognition of his services to and support of the records management profession.

Presentation of the award was made by the Federal President, Mr Ray Holswich, ARMA, at a special function at Olimus Canberra Hotel, on Monday, 18 April 1994 attended by members and their guests, and industry representatives.

In his opening comments Mr Holswich said that 'one of the more pleasurable things that I have been able to do [as Federal President] is to be here this evening to make the official presentation personally, particularly to a person for whom I have absolute admiration and respect'.

Mr Holswich referred to comments made by others about Arthur, including that he was "the really nice chap from Kodak", and "the softly spoken guy from the ACT Branch". He went on to say that he would refer to Arthur as the "quiet achiever" for many good reasons, some of which he outlined.

Arthur has been involved with the Association for in excess of 20 years in the Queensland, NSW and ACT Branches. As Mr Holswich indicated, 'his departure from each State is certainly not meant to be an indication of him deserting a "sinking ship" or in this case, a "sinking state", certainly to the contrary'.

The Federal President particularly commented on Arthur's commitment to our profession and to the association which he said 'has resulted in the attraction of many renowned speakers being engaged for the Association's seminars and national conventions'.

'Arthur's professionalism, business ethics and awareness of potential conflicts of interest in his position of a supplier have meant that he has often declined to accept positions within the Association at an executive level.'

The Federal President referred especially to the Kodak Education Grant and said that the 'person's name that is synonymous with that grant is Arthur Langford-Smith'. But, as Mr Holswich pointed out, Arthur is a "quiet achiever" who prefers not to be drawn into discussion about his reasoning behind courses of action that he may take or institute and that this applied particularly to the establishment of the Kodak Education Grant.

Mr Holswich continued by saying that he could assure members and Arthur that 'only good will come from the Kodak Education Grant giving members of the Association the opportunity to write papers and continue research into the mysterious world of records and information management'.

'Arthur has given freely of his time often at very short notice to speak to students and members of the Association about the impact of new technology in our profession and the absolute need for us to maintain an awareness of ever changing work practices.

'Finally, and certainly not the least important, Arthur has been a credit to his former employer Kodak, and I am sure that the Management of that Company would have wished Arthur a very happy retirement with the utmost sincerity.'

A special tribute to Arthur was embodied in a letter from Mr Jim Shepherd, MRMA, which was read at the presentation ceremony by Federal Director, Ms Kate McCarthy, ARMA.

The ACT Branch is especially proud to have arthur as its first honorary life member. He continues to contribute to the work of the Association - amongst other responsibilities on Branch Council, Arthur is chairing the 1996 Convention Planning Committee.

11th National Convention News Update

With just 10 weeks to go to the Convention opening it is very pleasing to be able to say that some early bird bookings have rolled in and put the cheque book balance back into the black! One feature of the bookings to date is the heavy demand for places at the imaging workshop.

Mike Wilson, Managing Director of Brambles Records Management and the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Henry Ninio will welcome visitors to Adelaide at the opening cocktail party. The Hon Stephen Baker, Deputy Premier and Treasurer will officially open the Convention and Trade Exhibition on Monday morning. Astute readers of the Adelaide Advertiser and records and information management consultant members around Australia may already be aware of some proposed moves by the South Australian government in its approach to information technology.

We hope Mr Baker will be in a position to expand on the mooted whole of government IT approach in his opening address.

While the Convention/25th Anniversary Dinner has been advertised as a "black tie" job all delegates will be made more than welcome to the function on Monday night.

The Trade Exhibition is again well supported by our regular exhibitors and a significant number of Adelaide based companies. The Convention Committee is very pleased to note that once again Canon and Brambles Records Management are major sponsors. Readers may not realise the contribution that sponsorship makes to the quality of the Convention. I can assure you cash sponsorship up front makes a very significant difference to the end product. Thanks for your continued support.

Let me finish this brief update with some comment on the workshops. I have already noted the early demand for places in the imaging workshop. We are fortunate to have obtained the services of Graham Pratt of Opticom-Australia as facilitator. The education workshop will have two short presentations before breaking into work groups to continue clarifying and consolidating our position on the questions raised in Hobart. Information on the format of the Local Government workshop is still sketchy with speakers yet to be confirmed.

The Convention Committee looks forward to welcoming you to Adelaide on 11-14 September 1994. It really is just like they show you on the video. Visit Adelaide and taste the wine!

Yours in Records Management

George R Smith ARMA

Branch Reports

NEW SOUTH WALES

The following Councillors were elected:

President	Denis Comber
Vice President	Ann Hampson
	Chris Fripp
Secretary	David Lilley
Treasurer	Graham Dudley
Minute Secretary	Mary Williams
Education Chair	Mary Williams
Status Chair	Denis Comber
Special Projects	Ann Hampson
Federal Directors	Denis Comber
	Joy Siller

Congratulations to all as we look forward to another exciting year of challenge and growth. I would like to say thank you to the members of the NSW Branch for giving me their support and the opportunity to serve as Branch President for the past 3 years. It has been both rewarding and enjoyable.

Planning is well advanced for our 25th Anniversary Dinner at the National Maritime Museum to be held on Friday 5 August 1994. Over 130 people will be in attendance with special guests including Tom Lovett - who was the first State President, and first Federal President of the Records Management Association in 1969 and who was the first International President of the International Records Management Federation; and Eddis Linton who was on the Pilot committee with Tom Lovett in 1968.

I have also been privileged to write the history of the Association. The book titled RMAA - the first 25 years will be available to all members later this year.

Chris Fripp
Vice President NSW Branch

QUEENSLAND

During the last quarter the Queensland Branch has re-entered the Seminar Circuit by conducting a very successful half day seminar attended by 103 delegates.

The theme of the seminar was The Essential Skills of Records Management and included papers titled:

Records - The Heart of Management
The Tools Required
It's Not All in the File Number
Human Resources and Motivation

Copies of the seminar papers are available through the Branch Secretary.

Also through the Education and Professional Development Committee, eight members of the RMAA have been involved with QLD TAFE as a Curriculum Development Advisory Committee developing new courses to commence in 1995 based on the modules developed by the national project.

The Continuing Education Committee has been doing a great job be organising regular events. In May we had a Workshop run by ALBOX BINDERS where we were shown an Australian made alternative to the lever arch file. Also during May we held a 25th anniversary breakfast where a guest speaker spoke about Litigation and Records. In June we had a luncheon where Tony Poynton from Canon Australia gave a challenging presentation on Work Grouping.

Clive Finter MRMA
President

TASMANIA

The Branch has been concentrating its efforts on providing relevant training courses to its members. Wendy Duggan from the Records Management Office of New South Wales presented the Keyword Classification Course, which drew a large response from the members. This course was held in Launceston as well as Hobart due to the large number of registrations. Further courses are to be held including a Business Management Seminar and a Report Writing Course suitable for Records Managers and Administrators.

A membership drive has been undertaken to increase the number of RMAA members and enhance records management generally in Tasmania. A positive response has been received especially from the Local Government Area where many new applications have been received. This is also due to the great efforts of those involved in the Local Government Chapter, encouraging records managers and administrators from local government to become involved in records management.

The Student of the Year Award was again held this year with Dot Prior receiving the award for the North-West and Kerry Hutton for Southern Tasmania. Congratulations to both recipients!

Susan Hill ARMA
Secretary

Branch Reports

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The South Australian Branch of the Records Management Association awards a prize each year, for the best essay presented by candidates within the Certificate of Records Management conducted at Adelaide College of TAFE. In the final of four core records management subjects, "Records and Information Systems" students are asked to consider the future of records managers, amid the onslaught of technology, the functionality of that technology, and the changing nature of our work.

In the last issue of INFORMAA Quarterly, we printed the prize-winning essay for 1993, but omitted the context above, which is important since the article was written with academic restrictions and in response to a specific question. Helen Challen's article "Optical Imaging Technology - The Impact on Records Management Functions" begins to explore the lukewarm interface records managers have with technology, and the collaborative roles that might be played by the information professionals.

We look forward to reading other high quality contributions from students in all states. Certainly, we look forward to hearing more from Helen Challen.

Helen Francis ARMA
President

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The 1993/94 year ended on a successful note with the AGM. The Guest Speaker for the evening was the Hon Mr Peter Foss MLC, Minister for Health, Arts and Fair Trading, and his topic was "Government's Position On The Royal Commission Into The Commercial Activities Of Government And Other Matters Recommendation That An Independent Archives Authority Be Established Acting Under It's Own Legislation".

The AGM was also the venue for the presentation of the RMAA medal and the WA Branch Certificate of Excellence Award.

The WA Branch wish all Branches around Australia and their Branch Councils a happy and successful 1994/95 year and we hope to see you all at the National Convention in Adelaide in September.

Norma Easthope ARMA
Secretary

VICTORIA

Well, you could be mistaken for thinking that nothing was going on in Victoria, as it has been six months since I last reported our achievements. Rather than being idle, quite the opposite has been true of the Victorian Branch.

Since February, quite a bit has happened in this State, not the least of which was the retrenchment of three standing Branch Councillors!

On a happier note, the Local Government Chapter Victorian Branch has successfully completed the first series of workshops based on the Training Manual they produced. For those of you who are interested, you can purchase a copy of the Training Manual for the cost of $150.00, through the Secretary of the State Branch c/- GPO Box 2270U MELBOURNE 3001.

Once again we held a successful State Seminar. This years event was held at the Centre Heidelberg, and attracted over one hundred delegates. The program for this years event revolved around the dynamic period which we are all facing. Seminar papers are available from the State Secretary for the amazing low price of $25.00.

Events scheduled for July/August include the AGM to be held at the new Australian Archives Complex in East Burwood in July, and a discussion group to be run by Tony Poynton of Canon in August. In addition, planning is well underway for the 1995 Melbourne Convention.

Product Handbooks are still available from the secretary for the cost of $10.00. The next edition will be coming out in 1995.

Our Branch is heavily committed to the Association, and this is evident in the commitment of members. Federally, and in conjunction with Standards Australia, members are drafting what will end up being National Standards For Records Management. On the Local scene, the Victorian Branch congratulates our inaugural winner of the 'Outstanding achievements in Records Management' Award, Peter White. Peter has given his time tirelessly to educating not only himself, but also to passing his knowledge onto others by agreeing to lecture not one, but three units in one year. Well done Peter.

The Victorian Branch would also like to congratulate the Local Government Chapter on their outstanding achievements in the past year. We welcome the new incoming Chapter Council, hope that they can maintain the commitment set by the previous Council.

R Kaczynski MRMA
State Secretary

Branch Reports

AUST. CAPITAL TERRITORY

In April, the Federal President, Mr Ray Holswich, ARMA, attended a special function arranged to pay tribute to the work and contribution of Mr Arthur Langford-Smith, ARMA, to the Association and to present him with the Association's award of Honorary Life Membership. A more detailed account of the Federal President's address on that occasion appears elsewhere in this edition of the INFORMAA Quarterly.

During his visit to Canberra, the Federal President attended our Branch Council Meeting. Branch Councillors appreciated the opportunity to share those proceedings with Mr Holswich and to benefit from his advice and comments on several issues.

In March the ACT Branch council award winner for outstanding performance in studies in information and records management at the University of Canberra was announced. This year the award was made to Ms Barbara Cass who is studying for a Bachelor of Arts in Administration. Accompanied by Federal Director, Ms Kate McCarthy, ARMA, the Branch President presented the award at a function arranged by the University Convocation on the evening prior to the University's annual graduation ceremonies in April. The opportunity to make known the association's mission at a function such as this was much valued. Several other major awards in recognition of outstanding student performances were presented and the Chancellor of the

Pictured from left: Ray Holswich (Federal President), Arthur Langford-Smith, Elain Eccleston (ACT Branch President) and Kate McCarthy (ACT Federal Director).

University, Professor Donald Horne, gave the occasional address.

The April seminar was of particular interest and relevance - a presentation by Mr Paul Westwood, OAM, NM, LLB, FSS Dip (Doc Exam), ASFDE, on forensic investigations relating to paper records. As Mr Westwood pointed out, many investigations turn on a slip of paper. Forensic document examiners are frequently called upon to determine the bona fides of such a slip of paper. His presentation discussed some of the difficulties which arise when documents are carelessly or ignorantly handled and why original documents are so important.

In May, the Branch President gave a presentation at a function held at the Senate Club Room in Old Parliament House, Canberra to mark the opening of new premises by Brambles

Records Management, ACT. Her paper was titled, Information Highways The Do's and The Dont's. The function was attended by senior officers from government agencies and statutory authorities.

Our special thanks and appreciation go to Ms Margaret Kenna, who for the past two years has been editor of the ACT Branch Informaa Newsletter. Margaret's good efforts have kept the local membership up-to-date with our activities and provided a variety of helpful information.

**Elaine Eccleston, ARMA
President**

First Annual Reports of the Victorian and NSW Branch

VICTORIAN BRANCH REPORT 1969/70

Official Annual Report of Mike Leigh President 1969/70 Victorian Branch:

This Branch was the first Branch of RMAA to be inaugurated, in March 1969. Within three months, its membership had grown to 135 and members attending the General Meeting of June 1969 formulated the basis for a State Branch constitution.

During the next 6 months, it became increasingly clear that the activities in which the Victoria and NSW Branches were involving themselves, required proper co-ordination and that if records management was to become an important science in the business administration field a national authority would be essential.

Efforts were then directed towards the establishment of a Federal Council for the Association which would be representative of State Branches as they became inaugurated.

This would have the ultimate effect of relieving the Victoria Branch Council as well as other Councils of the following responsibilities:-

• Development of educational material
• Publication of an educational journal
• Development of internal procedures standardisation

• Promotion of new interstate Branches
• Co-ordination of study projects
• Liaison with overseas records management institutions
• Structuring of fees, membership status, etc,
• National publicity and promotion
• Negotiation with federal education authorities.

Unfortunately, Federal developments were not something in which the member, to whom we are committed, could participate. However it was emphasised during the early days that, come what may, the association would do all in its power to ensure that value for money - in tangible form - should be provided.

To this end several facilities were organised.

The Education Committee made a determined effort to stage a seminar which would cover, at least in part, all of the major fundamentals of records management.

Mr J A Rafferty, then Victoria's Minister for Labour and Industry, opened the seminar and expressed very firm opinions on the need for the Association to pursue its objectives in every possible way.

Friends from NSW and Tasmania joined in with local members in presenting a series of most successful papers and discussions.

Later in the year another full day was allotted to discussions on mail

management, equipment and the application of the computer to records management.

In addition to this, a study group investigated the general question of mail management and preliminary points of view were put to an assembly of members as a prototype of a number of similar projects in the planning stage.

The final publication on Mail Management is currently being edited before being submitted to the Federal Council for endorsement.

Other projects currently being investigated by Special Study Groups made up of members include, "Fundamental Registry Operations" and an attempt to define the ideal accountability objectives of a records officer within the head office of a large interstate corporation.

Papers have been or will be produced on all records management talks and investigations as those who have participated will be aware.

Victoria Branch has also produced an attractive brochure, presently being modified for national distribution and a membership card which is issued to members at joining and renewal times.

Victoria Branch produces its own local newsletter on a regular basis and was pleased to include no less than six educational articles during the year.

25th Anniversary Historical Supplement

A library has been started to facilitate members to accumulate data in any sphere of records management and a committee specially formed for the job are looking towards building a comprehensive source of records management literature.

Other Committees, also made up of Victoria Branch members, are pursuing the means of conducting educational courses on our subject in the state institutions and establishing a regular series of seminars and discussions during the coming months for the benefit of members.

The activity in which the State Branch has found itself involved may seem ambitious at first glance yet the interesting thing about it is the large number of problems members still need answers to. So many in fact that the Branch simply cannot get together enough committees to do the jobs outstanding. Here is a real opportunity for members to actively participate in the history-making progress of records management in Australia.

NSW BRANCH REPORT 1969/70

Official Annual Report of Tom Lovett President 1969/70 NSW Branch:

On 13 June 1969, after the successful inauguration; with an enrolment of 69 applicant members, a draft constitution, a sister Association already formed in Victoria, keen support from the American Records Management Association (ARMA), and talks already under way with Commonwealth and State educational authorities; ... one could say

the NSW Branch had received a good start in life. That was the inheritance from the NSW pilot committee and its efforts during the preceding 15 months.

Tasks ahead

Main tasks facing the NSW Branch for the first six months after its inauguration were:

a) developing the draft constitution into approved Memorandum and Articles of Association,

b) continuing the talks with education authorities and making a formal application to the NSW Department of Technical Education for the implementation of a course on records management at Sydney Technical College - this was done in September 1969, and

c) working with the Victorian Branch to form the Federal Council.

Those objectives were achieved.

In the second half of the year new objectives were added -

d) carry out informal educational activities

e) obtain wider publicity,

f) consolidate our gains, and

g) participate in Federal activities.

The NSW Governing council achieved its objectives for the 1969/1970 year. Council urged that the firm foundation provided should be built upon by an enlarged membership and its enthusiastic participation in Study Groups and other activities.

Our achievements resulted from sincere efforts by Governing Councillors and other active members. A strong start was made in providing for needs of members and the business

community. I hope you support the new Governing Council's program for the next 12 months. I would like all members to gain new members, and we trust that this "new" profession will receive recognition through the enthusiasm and attitude of its members.

Without the support and active interest in RMAA, of many people and organisations, we would have found it difficult, at times, to carry on, but records management is now becoming a topic of interest to the business community, as well it might.

Special thanks for our Branch achievements which are due to members of the Governing Council. This was naturally resulting from the nature of the essential immediate objectives to form a workable basis. Our gratitude is due to Mrs Dawn Winter, who carried the burden of secretarial duties ably and cheerfully; Keith Kent, project coordinator and vice president; Bill Rinaldi, who watched over our finances so that we ended the year with a credit balance albeit a small one; Ron Britton who arranged our venues; and Eddis Linton, who presided over our Membership Committee and all its responsibilities. My personal thanks to them and the many members who encouraged us.

25th Anniversary Historical Supplement

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Glenda Acland (ed)

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PRODUCT INFORMATION GUIDE

Yes I would like to know more about the following products which appeared in INFORMAA Quarterly - Volume Ten Number Three

- ☐ Fnt Cov **Fujitsu**
- ☐ Page 3 **GRR**
- ☐ Page 7 **Tower Software**
- ☐ Page 9 **Pickfords**
- ☐ Page 13 **Opticon**
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Why Choosing The Right Imaging Display Is Important

A document imaging system requires many high performance components - powerful PC's and file servers, networks, software, optical drives or jukeboxes, and high resolution display systems. However, the most important and expensive element of any imaging system is the knowledge of the worker using the system. Using conservative estimates, the five year cost of an imaging user is roughly $150,000 ($25,000 annual salary, $30,000 burdened cost), and is growing on an annual basis. This cost dwarfs the investment in workstation hardware, software and service over the same period (approximately $25,000), and these prices are declining. A mere 1% improvement in worker productivity yields a cost saving of $1,500. Therefore, optimising productivity and user acceptance of the system is key.

Two major determinants of productivity and user acceptance are:

Image readability - the ability to easily read a scanned document image without panning, scrolling, zooming, or magnifying; and **Display speed** - the ability to display images quickly.

The imaging system will not be as productive (or as easily accepted) if users have difficulty reading from the display, or have to wait too long for images to appear on the screen. Research and empirical evidence indicate that reading from standard VGA displays is approximately one third slower than reading from a high resolution display or paper. CRT workers also report eye strain, fatigue and muscular strain - prob-

lems exacerbated by the long periods of time imaging users spend reading from a display. Studies have shown that if the quality of the display is improved, users read faster and experience fewer physical symptoms. Additionally, recent research indicates that scale-to-gray, an image enhancement technique, provides further improvements in reading speed and up to a 22% reduction in physical complaints. These improvements can lead to a significant increase in user productivity.

To achieve the productivity potential of imaging systems, users should have displays as close as possible to the display quality of office documents. "Paper-like" grayscale and high resolution colour display subsystems designed to optimise imaging display performance are available at reasonable cost as a result of advances in CRT and semiconductor design. They are characterised by large, bright, clear, black and white or colour screens with more stable screen images than typical CRT's.

With the advent of Windows and other graphical interfaces, many users now prefer to use colour displays. However, there are still many imaging users that choose grayscale (or monochrome) rather than colour displays. One of the reasons is that grayscale displays tend to produce sharper, cleaner images. Scale-to-gray image enhancement can partially compensate for this clarity problem, which is why this technique is particularly important when colour displays are part of an imaging system.

Because readability of colour and

grayscale displays differ, an appropriate choice should be made based on applications and usage. In fact, many installations require a mix.

Grayscale monitors have long been the choice for dedicated document imaging and other visually demanding applications, because they feature higher contrast, better luminance, and have better clarity than colour displays. Grayscale displays make for the sharpest, clearest image. The reading speed of high resolution monochrome and grayscale display users approaches that of paper.

Grayscale monitors are recommended for:

• Users that spend a large part of their day reading document images; or

• Users that must view complex document images, such as those containing small type, shaded areas, handwriting or diagrams;

or

• Users viewing images of poor quality source documents, such as bills of lading, fax input, etc,

or

• Users need a two page screen area and a cost-effective alternative to large screen colour. High resolution grayscale display systems are generally 40% - 50% less costly than their colour counterparts.

Colour displays with resolution of 120 dpi and scale-to-gray image enhancement have adequate document image display quality for many applications.

Colour displays are indicated in the following situations:

• A colour interface is required for graphical user interfaces (GUIs) or mainframe applications, such as 3270 sessions;

or

• The imaging or workflow software makes use of colour to communicate status, to flag important information, or to display colour photographs or images;

or

• Users spend most of their time on colour oriented applications other than reading document images

• Users prefer colour.

Regardless of whether colour or grayscale displays are selected, there are five major display subsystem design factors that influence CRT display quality: resolution, scale-to-gray, screen size, refresh rate and brightness.

For a more comprehensive printed Guide To Evaluating Document Imaging Displays please contact Mark Love at Mitsui Computer on (02) 452 0452.

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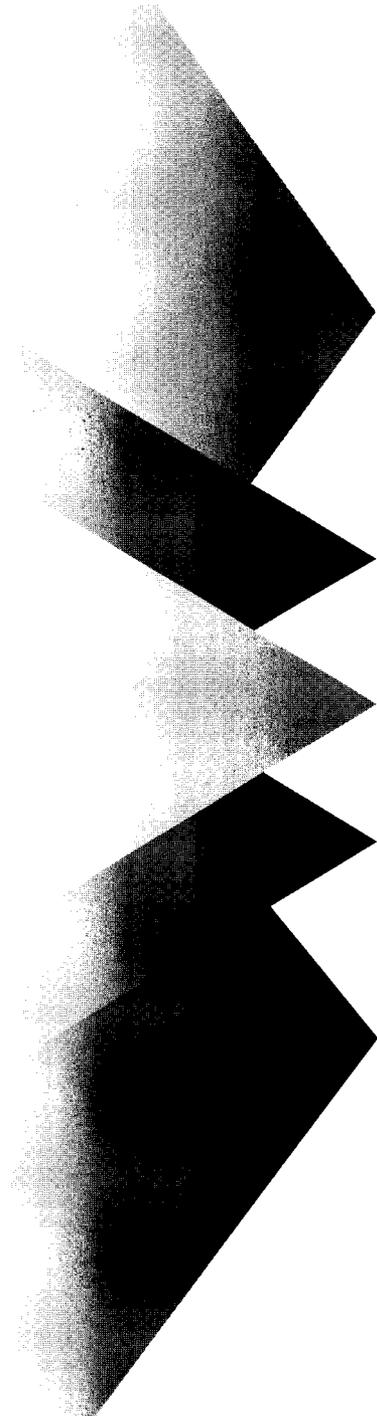
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