INFORMAA
QUARTERLY

SCSQ

M.S.S.
Records
Management
Services

TERMINAL DIGIT FILING
PREPRINTED NUMERIC COLOUR CODE

Unistat
Pty Limited

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ELECTRONIC
SYSTEM

CONVENTION
ROUND-UP
KODAK GRANT
LEGAL RISKS OF
INADEQUATE RM

PERSONAL LIBRARY SOFTWARE

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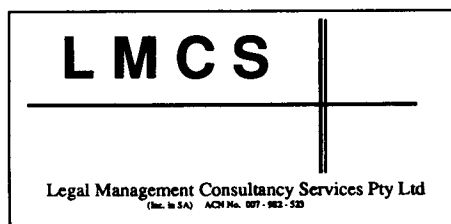
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EDITORIAL NOTES

INFORMAA

CONTENTS   NOVEMBER 1992

Contributors' opinions do not necessarily represent the views of the Records Management Association of Australia.

The next edition of INFORMAA QUARTERLY will be in February 1993.

TIME TO PULL TOGETHER

In opening, I would like to extend a hearty congratulations to Chairperson Fiona Meyer and her Committee, and Eleanor Loveridge (Conference Action) for their efforts in organising the 9th RMAA National Convention in Sydney in September 1992. I'm sure delegates were rewarded both intellectually and socially. It was pleasing to see the large number of trade exhibitors present also. Well done, New South Wales.

The most important event prior to the Convention was the 36th/37th Meeting of Federal Directors. We met for three days, not just to exchange pleasantries, but to discuss matters pertinent to the future directions of the Records Management Association of Australia, details of which were outlined in my recent letter to all members of the Association. I don't think it necessary to repeat them in detail.

Federal Directors were very much aware that we as an Association involving all the States and Territories were in fact pulling against one another and going off in all sorts of directions. As a result of that awareness, the future directions of the Association were addressed on a truly "national" basis. I have to say that while there was some disagreement from time to time, it led to sound, healthy and worthwhile discussion, and eventually agreement and co-operation were achieved which augers well for the future of the Association.

I have asked all Federal Directors to give their respective Branch Councils detailed reports associated with the matters discussed during the Federal Council meetings. I am also confident that all Branches will filter that information to members through their Branch newsheets. Members who are perhaps more eager to ascertain more information might like to give one of your Federal Directors a telephone call, and they will be more than

happy to brief you accordingly.

Apart from the initiatives associated with the National Marketing Strategy and the INFORMAA Quarterly: Federal Council has undertaken to:

● Develop a national accounting and membership package.
● Rationalise membership fee increases in line with CPI figures.
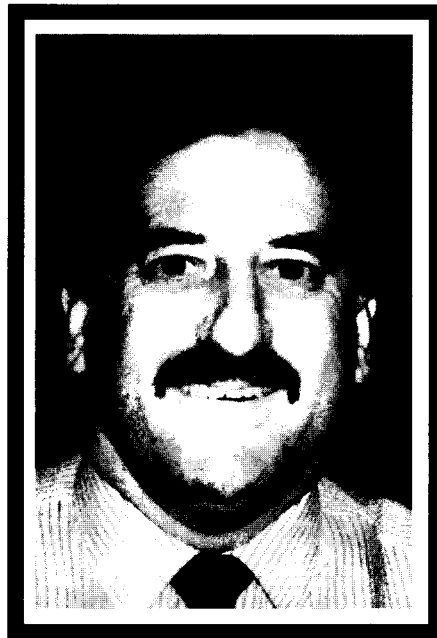
● Introduce a national Disposal Schedule applicable to Association records..
● Introduce a Conflict of Interest policy as an Association Regulation.
● Introduce a national RMAA brochure for circulation to prospective members.
● Form a national Editorial Committee for the INFORMAA Quarterly.
● Introduce a national Product Handbook.
● Introduce a national Education Award (Kodak Award). A trust Fund has already been established for this purpose.

● Develop guidelines for National Conventions.
● Develop options for providing a national Secretariat.

National working parties have been put into place to facilitate the above. Obviously there are other in-house administrative actions to be taken care of and the majority of those will be completed by Federal Council in conjunction with the respective Branch Councils.

Finally, as the festive season for 1992 draws nearer, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the members of Federal Council to wish all members and their families a very happy and safe Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

RAY HOLSWICH ARMA
Federal President

Federal Executive and Federal Council for 1992/93

Federal President:	Ray Holswich ARMA	NT
Federal Vice President:	Ross Thompson ARMA	ACT
Federal Secretary:	Chris Fripp ARMA	NSW
Federal Treasurer:	Jim Shepherd MRMA	QLD
Federal Public Officer:	Kate McCarthy ARMA	ACT
Federal Councillors:	Michael Hangan ARMA	QLD
	Judy Watts ARMA	NT
	Pam Camden MRMA	NSW
	Tina Howard ARMA	TAS
	Dennis Wheeler ARMA	TAS
	Rosemary Kaczynski ARMA	VIC
	David Moldrich MRMA	VIC
	Helen Francis ARMA	SA
	George Smith ARMA	SA
	Neil Granland ARMA	WA
	Ken Ridley ARMA	WA

Chairs of Federal Committees
Status and Standards: Bob Barnett MRMA ACT
Education and Accreditation: Dennis Wheeler ARMA TAS
New Technology: David Moldrich MRMA VIC

LACK OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dear Editors,

I am a supporter of the new format for INFORMAA Quarterly, given its scope, believing that consistency of production provides the Association with the opportunity to present a more professional image to the readers at large. However, I have a comment to make of the new format and a second comment to make specifically of the August issue and a feature included in the issue.

Firstly, I believe that it is important that readers are provided with biographical details of the authors of features included in INFORMAA Quarterly. Provision of such information may have placed a different light on the comments made by Frank McKenna in his letter to the editor regarding Karen Horsfall's feature from the May issue. He may have been more appreciative of her perspective on the issues of records management software (it's possible!). It is important to all readers to determine the reference point of the authors of the feature articles. How is one to determine whether the article is authoritative if one has no idea of the academic standing or experience of the author? I realise there are those who may quip that academic qualifications do not ensure that the author is authoritative. However, presentation of such information allows the reader to be the judge. As a member of several professional associations in Australia and overseas, I have not yet encountered one which does not present, at minimum, a few biographical sentences about the authors of the articles published. I believe the RMAA should take this suggestion to heart immediately.

And now to the August issue.

I am somewhat aggravated by the lack of acknowledgement attached to the feature authored by myself. The article, entitled "A Look At Turnkey RM Packages", was, as specified prior to my acknowledgements and references, presented to the British Records Management Society in September 1991. The paper was then presented for publication in the INFORMAA Quarterly in November 1991. It has taken nearly 12 months for the article to appear and was only "discovered" by Media Focus after I had written to them in July 1992 (the December 1991 issue contained no feature articles and it was only after the May issue I realised the paper may

never be published). My discussions with personnel at Media Focus were very positive. They provided me with an opportunity to up-date the paper prior to going to print. Unfortunately, I was not in a position to take up the offer and requested that the paper be published with an acknowledgement that it had been with the editors since November 1991. I am very aware that significant changes have occurred with several of the packages referred to in the paper over the past 12 months and did not wish to be seen to be dated in my presentation. Had I known that the requested acknowledgement would take the form of a two liner buried in the article I would not have agreed to its publication. Whilst I am not of the opinion that the article is likely to have any significant repercussions over the records management industry I am concerned that suppliers, with whom I have contact, do not get the impression that my considerations of their packages are based upon versions over 12 months old.

Many thanks for the opportunity to voice our views and opinions in the form of a quarterly journal. Without it how could we find out what others are doing? I would just like to know who they are and with what authority they voice their opinions.

SHIRLEY R COWCHER

B.App.Sci(Lib & Info Studies), Grad.Dip.Comp.,AALIA,AACS,ARMA

BACK-UP CLAIMS

Dear Editors,

I refer to an article which appeared in the August 1992 number of your journal — 'RM and Imaging — Towards the paperless office', by Frank McKenna.

On page 17 is an illustration which represents bar charts to show the costs claimed to be associated with filling and maintaining four-drawer filing cabinets. These charts claim that, for example, it costs over $75,000 to 'fill' three four-drawer filing cabinets, and over $50,000 per year to 'maintain' them.

These are startling figures. Regrettably they are not examined or supported in the article, in any detail. All we read is a quotation from a U.S. article, which we are invited to accept at face value, and a claim by Mr McKenna that his company's experience in Australia leads him to believe the

claims are generally accurate.

In the context of an article the main thrust of which is to promote the cost advantages of technology over paper systems, it is not acceptable for a professional journal to slide over issues like this. Not to insist that contributors are rigorous in explaining and providing actual evidence for their claims, is to run the risk that the INFORMAA Quarterly will come to be perceived as no more than an advertising platform for purveyors of information technology and services.

I am sure that many readers, including myself, would welcome a further article by Mr McKenna, assessing in detail how the costs referred to in the bar charts have been derived. Insights into the methodology and the dollar figures used to represent the cost components, would be particularly useful.

MARK HS STEVENS

Archives Services Officer

Council of the City of Sydney

1992 CONVENTION A SUCCESS

The 1992 RMAA National Convention, held at the Sydney Hilton September 8-11 attracted over 280 delegates, and was considered an outstanding success.

Canon, Unistat and MSS Records Management pictured on our cover, were among 31 companies displaying stands at the Trade Exhibition, held in conjunction with the conference.

Canon, the major sponsor of the conference, demonstrated the Friday optical disk filing system. Friday features limitless interchangeable MOD disk capacity at the image storage rate of about 12,000 A4 pages per disk and can call up any page of any filed document almost instantly.

Demonstrating the system was Joe Mizzi, Canon's National Support Representative (cover left) and Brendan Lee, Senior Information Analyst, Department of Defence.

Also on show was Canon's recently released MP-60 reader-printer, featuring fast printing speed, and automatic exposure control to ensure documents are not printed too light or dark, and mask printing to print only part of a document. It has a zoom lens which can print part of a document larger than the original.

Unistat displayed its lateral filing systems. Rodger Thomas, Unistat Sales Representative was on hand to answer questions and demonstrate the modular package that makes it easy to switch from drawer-type filing to lateral filing.

The modular approach enables the system to be expanded according to business needs and all accessories are available from those stationery suppliers who distribute the package.

Lateral filing systems use colour-coded file folders which can be complemented by alphabetical, numerical and alpha-numerical colour coding labels, depending on the size or complexity of the filing task.

MSS Records Management Services exhibited its unique Fileaway system. Stuart Brown, Security Consultant with MSS is pictured (at right on the cover) demonstrating for Greg Hart from the Australian Mint the strong, efficient and flexible Fileaway Records Storage Box.

The Fileaway Box is rigid even when loaded to capacity. It holds 50 per cent more than a lever-arch file for a fraction of the cost.

Additional interior walls provide strength and easily convert to accommodate hanging files for greater versatility.
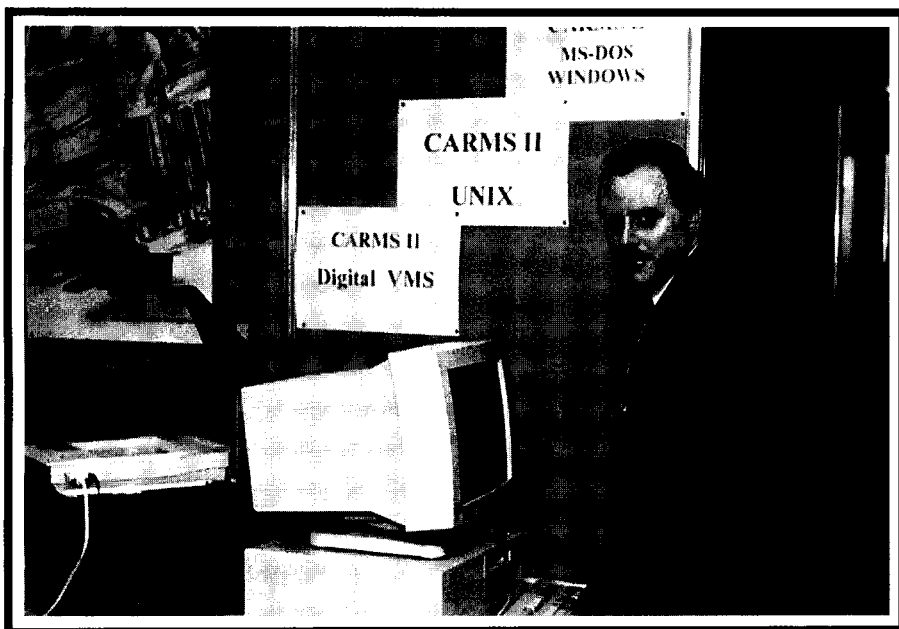
Peter Burgess, Government Sales Representative, Ortex International Pty Ltd demonstrates CARMS II

Tony Hartnell ASC Chairman, (at right) and Glenn Sanders, Product Manager Contec Data Systems

NEW ASC LIBRARY SYSTEM

The Australian Securities Commission (ASC) has launched its new library system which will provide an automated library service to ASC offices throughout Australia.

The size and locations of its offices have made card systems inappropriate for the ASC. The system provides enhanced capacity to assemble and collate information quickly and make it available by automated enquiry to ASC offices nationwide.

Developed by Contec Data Systems (Australia) Pty Ltd, the new system, known as IMAGE II was extensively modified to operate across the ASC wide area network.

The system has a number of features to improve and streamline ASC library management:

• Loans module to record all loans, returns, overdues and statistics. Borrowers' recording function includes maintenance of SDI (current awareness) profiles of individual borrowers;.

• Records management to record all incoming material and to produce routing lists for its circulation. The system automatically produces claims letters for items not received;

• Acquisition module to assist in library budgeting through book fund maintenance, supplier details, requests, and order maintenance;

• Report writing function to produce details on any of the modules in reports. A bibliography on all materials on directors' liability, for example, will be a relatively simple task using IMAGE II.

The Image system operates in a Windows environment with mouse support and pull-down menus. Access will be available to all ASC staff through an icon on their networked PC. Any ASC PC will show what is in the library database, locally or across Australia, whether it is on loan and, if so, who has it.

ASC Chairman, Tony Hartnell, said this resource sharing not only "delivers the goods" in terms of information but represents an efficient use of resources.

IMAGE II can now be used to access books and journal holdings. To date, 7,500 records for 37,000 individual items have been added to the database. In the future it is planned to add other categories of information including legal opinions and unreported court judgements.

Planned enhancements include hypertext navigation and improvements to existing integration with scanned image storage.

For further information contact John Richards, System Librarian, Australian Securities Commission Ph: (02) 390 3096.

Macquarie Investment Trust, a private equity trust managed by Macquarie Bank has invested $3 million in Tower Technology. Tower is the Australian company based in Sydney, responsible for the Tower Imaging System — an Australian developed document image system.

Michael Traill, Associate Director of Macquarie Investment Trust, who will join the Board of Tower Technology, said: "We are most excited about our investment. The company provides product and service quality that is world class. It has proved this by establishing a dominant market position in Australia while competing against long-established multi-national competitors.

sector of the information management market."

The investment in Tower Technology by Macquarie Investment Trust follows an extensive evaluation of the imaging market in the U.S. and Australia. Macquarie Investment Trust provides equity finance for successful well managed unlisted companies, on a selective basis. To date, the Trust has invested in only five companies and they stake in Tower Technology is the first for the Trust's 1992/1993 reporting year.

Tower Technology was established in 1987 and within five years became an Australian market leader with more than 50 per cent share of the optical disk, jukebox based imaging market.

MACQUARIE INVESTS $3M IN TOWER

"Our research in the U.S. indicated that the demand for multi-user jukebox systems is likely to grow to more than 30 per cent annually over the medium term. The outlook in Australia is similarly buoyant as heavy information users such as government departments and financial institutions discover the efficiencies these systems can produce.

"Tower offers excellent support and service. Our discussions with Tower customers were extremely positive and this speaks very highly of the company's delivery capability.

"Tower's recent track record in the domestic market confirms the strength of its management team and its ability to effectively market the Tower Imaging System. With the capital now available, the company is in a great position to exploit opportunities in what our research indicates is the high growth

Tower Technology has also reached agreement with the Australian Patent Office (APO) to market the Tower-designed user interface to Patent offices overseas.

In December 1991, the APO introduced the Patent Abstract Image System (PAIS) to support its role as an international searching authority, by providing quick and convenient access to over five million patent abstracts in a cost effective manner. The Tower Imaging System was a strategic investment in the PAIS project.

Tower Technology won the tender for the supply of storage and retrieval systems in March 1991. Because of the special requirements of the APO, a unique user interface was developed by Tower and APO for use by its patent examiners.

SERVICE COSTS SLASHED

Canon is slashing service costs for its micrographics equipment with the introduction of an optical "Maximum Performance (MP)" service program.

The MP service program offers three years' free service to customers who pay a $100 registration fee at the time of purchase and agree to use only original Canon cartridges.

Canon's Marketing Manager, Information and Records Management, Tony Poynton said Canon could guarantee the quality and performance of original Canon cartridges.

The Maximum Performance service offer, launched to coincide with the release of Canon's new reader-printer, the MP60, is open to all purchasers of Canon's MP reader-printers from November 2.

For those who take up the offer, service over three years is provided at a fraction of the cost of existing micrographic service contracts. A company with a Canon MP 100 would currently pay up to $1,140 per year for the servicing of the machine. Under the Maximum Performance service offer it will pay only the $100 registration fee and then receive three years service at no cost.

Mr Poynton said Canon's confidence to propose such a bold service offer came from the reliability and quality of the Canon genuine cartridge system.

"The cartridge printing system is the key to the reliability and long life of Canon machines. Canon's all-in-one original replaceable cartridges contain all the parts which normally run or wear out in micrographic equipment. The system's strength is its simplicity, when the cartridge is replaced the machine is refurbished."

Canon invented the replaceable toner cartridge printing system which Mr Poynton said was also responsible for the quality output from the machines.

"Five years down the track the quality of the print-outs is the same as on the day it was first taken out of the box."

The new MP 60, brings Canon's range of reader-printers to four, complements Canon's MP 50, 90 and 100, and replaces the PC 70 which was introduced eight years ago as Australia's first plain paper micrographic reader-printer.
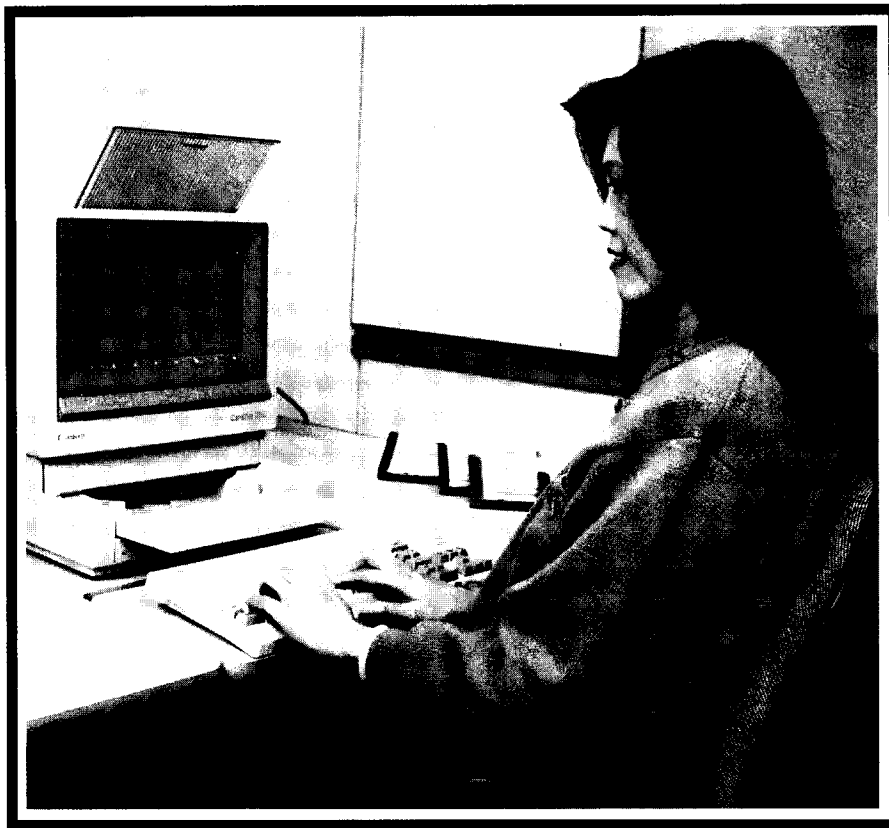
A VicIMAGE operator with an MOD drive and the Canon Friday scanning system which stores masses of documents on optical disks.

"There are over 4,000 Canon PC 70s operating in Australia. After eight years only one machine, which was used very heavily, has been retired," said Mr Poynton. "That's a fantastic track record which the new MP 60 is set to outdo."

NEW SERVICE FOR VICTORIA

A new, fast and efficient records management service has been launched in Victoria as a co-operative effort between private enterprise and government.

The service is an initiative of Canon and VicIMAGE, the survey and mapping unit of the Victorian Government's Department of Property and Services, and will greatly increase the efficiency of organisations through modern digital document storage.

The "VicIMAGE Optical Disk Service", has been established for government departments and local companies and offers time and space savings to those who use the service.

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Highlight for NSW was the National Convention, at the Hilton. As you know, the theme was Synergy - Information Professionals. The general consensus was that the convention was a great success.

At this point I would like to take the opportunity to thank Canon, our principal sponsor; Brambles, our second sponsor and all the trade without whom there would be no convention. I have received a lot of positive feedback about the professional trade show. All the companies I have talked with since then felt it very worthwhile.

Final numbers of registered delegates was 287 and over 310 people attended the dinner. Congratulations to the organising committee.

With the adoption in principle of the Marketing Strategy, the NSW Branch Council met for a full day in September on Strategic Planning. The council is keen to improve the communications between members and Branch Council and Federal Council. We are drawing up objectives and strategies for NSW and once completed will include them in the Informaa Newsletter.

Some of the areas we will be looking at are: a major membership drive during the first six months of 1993 with member incentives; a full day seminar on Wednesday, March 31 at the Holroyd Centre; actively seek and attracting professional writing; encouraging the provision of research papers; provision of a list of records management resources.

CHRIS FRIPP
Branch President

NORTHERN TERRITORY

The 6th Annual General Meeting of the Branch was held on August 6, 1992. The following were elected Branch Councillors:

Greg Coleman, Barbara Pedersen, Joan Grist, David Wilson, Patricia Smith (Alice Springs), Fabian Hutchinson (Alice Springs), Celina Natera, Gwen Donaghy, Judy Watts, Ray Holswich, Marlene Hewitt.

At the first Branch Council Meeting following the AGM, the following were elected Office Bearers:

President	Judy Watts
Vice-President	(left vacant)
Secretary	Ray Holswich
Treasurer	Kay Moody
Registrar	Marlene Hewitt
Federal Directors	Ray Holswich
	Judy Watts

The following were elected Chairpersons of the listed Branch Committees:

Status & Standards	Joan Grist
Branch Activities	David Wilson
Education	Judy Watts
Editorial	vacant

Members attended a presentation by the Australian Archives' Director of Electronic Records and Director of Systems Management on Australian Archives' project about the management of electronic records. The session was also attended by Commonwealth Government managers, IT specialists from government and the private sector, and staff from Australian and Northern Territory Archives, and an interesting, thought-provoking and educational discussion resulted.

On October 8, members attended an Executive Breakfast organised by the Australian Public Service's Staff Development Network in the NT, at which the Guest Speaker was Air Commodore Peter Nicholson, Commander, Defence Northern Command. He spoke about developments in the Defence Forces which are affecting the NT community including the rapid growth in the Defence force in the north from now until the turn of the century, and implications of internal restructuring and changes in Defence policy on government, business, and the community generally.

Another Executive Breakfast titled, "Should We Lead or Manage?" is to be held in November. It will be aimed at contributing to general management skills development.

Since the Branch's Federal Directors' participation in the Strategic Planning Workshop and Directors' meeting in Sydney in September, the Branch Council has met twice to consider and develop further the strategic planning documentation and process developed to date, and is to meet for a third time in November. Input will be provided into the national process.

JUDY WATTS
Branch President
Queensland

QUEENSLAND

Queensland Branch Council is investigating the needs of all Local Authorities in Queensland for a telecast on the 19th May 1993, titled Records Management in conjunction with the Local Government Training Council Qld, for the 1992/93 Local Government Satellite programme.

A similar exercise will be undertaken with other levels of government and private enterprise

for the production of a video on records management and is being undertaken by the Education Committee.

Branch Council has just completed its strategic planning workshop to develop the branch requirements towards the new national vision. This workshop was a great success with many new ideas and suggestions.

MICHAEL HANGAN ARMA
President

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

After an extensive advertising campaign in the national local government press the Branch conducted a very successful one day seminar in the regional centre of Mr Gambier on Friday, 23 October 1992. Several members flew down from Adelaide to join 10 locals for the day. The seminar addressed the basics of records management with speakers from local government and the profession. Peter Smith from Sydney updated us on the national TAFE initiative. We anticipate at least three new members as a result of this very successful venture.

The 1994 convention committee held its first formal meeting in early October. Preliminary thought was given to a theme and potential speakers. In addition several professional convention organisers were interviewed as part of the tender process to select a PCO for the event. Please accept this as a personal invitation to suggest themes, topics for sessions and speakers to either Helen Francis or George Smith at the SA Branch address.

The Branch's newsletter has taken a very informal format for the last two issues pending the preparation of a new banner. The national Australian Taxation Office initiative on record keeping for small business was addressed in the August issue. One of the speakers at the Mt Gambier seminar was Robert Hudson, the local manager for the ATO.

We have booked our Christmas luncheon venue, The Fishcaf, for December 4. In line with the national push to increase membership, we hope to see 40 members celebrating a successful end to the year.

GEORGE SMITH

TASMANIA

Preparation for the Federal Council meeting which was held in September in Sydney and the strategic planning sessions which resulted from the meeting of the Federal Council have kept all members of the Branch Council extremely busy over the past three months.

The Education Committee has continued to offer courses on a variety of topics for members and is planning the training program for the coming year. Courses which have been held in October and November include F.O.I. legislation and Train the Trainer.

The Convention Committee put in a great effort at the Sydney Convention to promote the 1993 Convention and to talk to prospective sponsors and trade exhibitors. The preliminary program distributed in Sydney was generally well received. However, the program will be adjusted to include areas indicated in the market survey and positive feedback received from other States. It has been very encouraging to receive such positive support from the other Branches. Thank you all.

TINA HOWARD
Branch President

VICTORIA

The new Branch Council has so far met its commitment to training. On August 27, the first of the "Back to Basics" workshops attended by 50 participants, with another 19 on a waiting list for the rerun.

Victoria again showed the other States what a talented lot we are. At the recent National Convention, our President once again won the local talent quest at the Karaoke night at Julianna's following the convention dinner. Two other less talented Victorians also performed. In doing so they showed the other States they were determined to at least have a try.

The Victorian Branch applauds the initiatives taken by Federal Council at the recent meetings. We look forward to working more closely with all States on records management issues.

The 1993 State seminar is an event not to be missed. Those interested should keep April 1 & 2, 1993 free. Further information will be distributed locally shortly. Also keep an eye out for the end-of-year Christmas bash. This year, once again, we aim to provide a joint forum for information exchange by holding the event with our affiliate associations.

Readers are reminded that Victorian State Seminar papers are still available from the Secretary for $25.00. Interested parties are requested to mail an order to:

The State Secretary
GPO Box 2270U MELBOURNE VIC 3001
R KACZYNSKI ARMA
State Secretary

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The WA Branch Federal representatives, Neil Granland and Ken Ridley returned from the Federal Director's meeting held on the 6th and 7th of September in Sydney with several interesting challenges.

Neil and Ken briefed Branch Council members on the outcomes of the meetings and the Federal Strategic Plan session which was held at the same time.

WA Branch Council held a Strategic Planning session on Thursday October 22 1992 to discuss our goals and objectives and mission statement for the next five years.

Maggie Exon, Chairperson Education Committee attended the Federal Education Committee meeting held in Sydney proved to be very productive especially in the area of standardising the Records Management courses throughout Australia.

Deborah Talbot and Julie Henderson have formed a programme Committee and are planning activities for members for the coming months. Members will be advised of these activities.
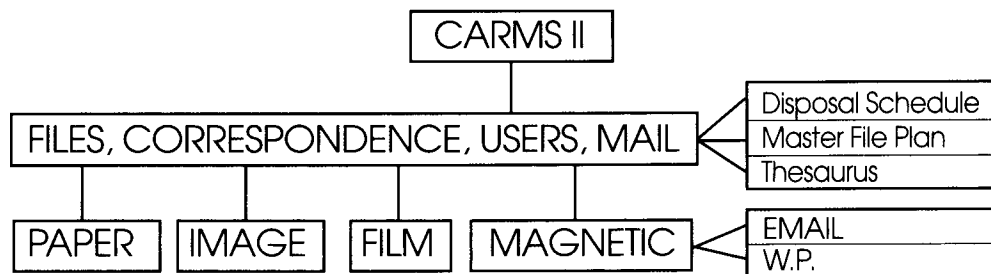
NORMA EASTHOPE
Secretary

Kodak (Australia) has provided an annual grant to the RMAA for an education-related project.

This exciting opportunity will enable those interested in records management to undertake an educational project to benefit the profession and the industry in general.

The grant from Kodak is worth $10,000 in total and will be issued in varying amounts. It will be managed by the Federal Directors of RMAA and the Federal Education Committee, Kodak, and whenever necessary, representatives of State RMAA Branches and Educational institutions.

The grant will provide an opportunity for professional members of the RMAA (Associate,

associated with conducting the project.

Consideration may also be given to awarding the grant as a `Kodak Prize' in recognition of outstanding achievement in a recognised course, or contribution to professional literature.

One Kodak grant will be offered each year. It may cover some travel expenses etc associated with the project. The project for which the grant is issued should be completed within three months.

ELIGIBILITY

RMAA members interested in promoting records management, or visiting speakers or lecturers, as detailed above under the categories Speakers and teaching grants, are eligible to enter.

• Broad use of grant, e.g. presentation of paper, research project etc.

• Any intended travel — showing places, institutions and, where possible, people to be visited.

• Length of time to be spent in each place.

• Work to be undertaken.

• Anticipated dates of commencement and completion of the proposed project.

• Description of the method by which results of the project will be reported.

• Description of the significance of the subject matter of the proposed project, the anticipated results, and their potential impact on

KODAK GRANT
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATION

Member, and Fellow), to travel, deliver a paper, undertake research, or study, which will benefit the profession and the practice of records management. Preference will be given to applicants who have developed projects of their own rather than those attending or contributing to activities co-ordinated by others.

In addition, the grant may also be used for visiting speakers who provide a significant contribution to upgrading professional knowledge and/or expertise of those attending, a contribution which would not otherwise be available to members.

Persons so engaged need not be RMAA members.

Teaching grants will be provided along similar lines.

Grants will also be awarded to members proposing to undertake research or other projects leading to:

• a demonstrable advance in professional knowledge, or

• the development of a report, study, or article of benefit to the profession.

The grant in this case will be used for cost-of-living purposes if the project is undertaken full time, if not, the bulk of it will be used for expenses
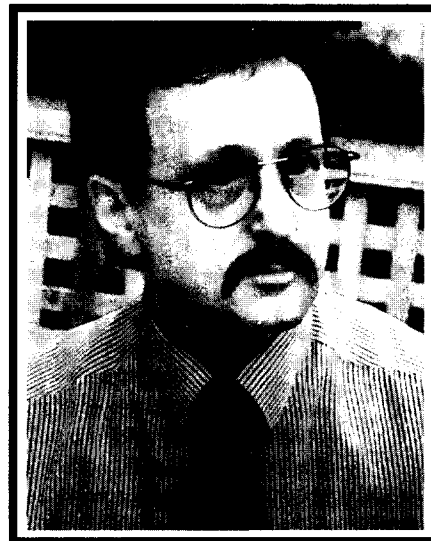
Applicants will be assessed according to the merit of the proposal by representatives of Kodak, the RMAA and its Federal Education Committee, and community representation. Equal Opportunity principles will apply.

The application requirement

There will be no standard application form. Applicants will be requested to address specified criteria. These details can be obtained from your local Branch Education Committee.

A detailed submission should include:

practices within records management.

• Information in support of the applicant's capacity and qualifications to undertake the proposed project and to apply the experience and findings towards improvement in records management practices.

Applicants must provide a curriculum vitae giving details of qualifications, employment history and special knowledge, experience or interest in the area which is the subject of the application.

Applicants must also submit a budget based on actual costs. The budget should identify all details of proposed expenditure.

It should be noted that the grant will not reimburse salary costs. The conditions of release from duty must be negotiated with the applicant's employer.

The successful applicants enter into an agreement with Kodak and the RMAA. This will set out the terms of the grant and the reporting requirements associated with the proposed project. Applicants will be expected to complete a concise report on their return (or a copy of their paper as presented).

DENNIS G WHEELER
Chairperson, Education Committee, RMAA

DISPOSAL SCHEDULE AN EFFECTIVE TOOL

by George R Smith. ARMA*

What is a DISPOSAL SCHEDULE and (more importantly) what is State Records interest in the destruction of records? Don't they provide a public research facility for the use of historical records? To answer those questions let me refer to some records management principles, the facts of life today and the (South Australian) Libraries Act 1982.

Records managers talk of the life cycle of a record, a cradle to the grave concept. The steps in this journey are: 1. creation, 2. classification, indexing and control, 3. administrative use , 4.storage, 5. retrieval for reference or audit, 6. post action examination and retirement, 7. destruction or transfer to State Records as archives.

A record is created to document a task or function. It is used for a variety of purposes during its active life. If it is lucky the record goes into planned retirement and is disposed of "thoughtfully". If records management practices are not well controlled many records will be mismanaged, misfiled, and probable spend many unnecessary years in the office before going to the "dungeon" where damp, dust, mould or neglect finishes them off.

During its active life managers and administrators like you and I use the record as evidence of what was done, why, how and when it was done and, perhaps how much it cost. As action officers we use it to protect ourselves and our Administrative Unit — we use it as evidence that the right things were done in the right sequence for the right reasons. We defend our actions to our supervisors, to the public (often via the Ombudsman or other appeals tribunal), and perhaps from the press or even posterity.

When active, a record needs to be indexed and controlled and conveniently stored so that the records staff can ensure it is available for action and reference. When the action is completed — watch for that term again in the DISPOSAL SCHEDULES

— we may need to refer to the record for background information if we get a similar case or it may be needed for audit. Generally, use in semi-retirement peaks at about two years after the action completed stage.

Not all records have a clearly defined finite life. During its active life a record is said to have value as evidence or for administrative and financial purposes which span differing time periods. Some records have secondary values: uses that do not necessarily relate to the purposes for which they were created; viz for various research purposes.

For instance, a case file may form a precedent which changes the direction of administrative policy, a policy docket may set out the development of plans and procedures for changes in the State's administrative structure... often it (sometimes in conjunction with others like it from other agencies) will give an insight into the political or administrative need driving that change. Both of these examples have value for the long term administration of the State, but they are also of great value to students of public administration and to a variety of historians.

It is about this time that the record is introduced to the DISPOSAL SCHEDULE during the post action examination stage of the records life cycle. A disposal schedule attempts to describe classes of records (sometimes, but often not whole series) which have the same values and prescribes their disposal. [As an aside, it may help the uninitiated to define disposal... my Collins paperback says: "dispose vb, ... b. to give, sell or transfer to another, c. to throw out or away...". In records management terms it is defined as: "to transfer ownership, to transfer custody, to destroy, or to retain permanently."] A disposal schedule is a very effective management tool because once disposal values have been established by consultation at management and expert level the implementation may be (and usually is) delegated to

lower classified (but hopefully fully trained) records officers. It promoted consistency when dealing with similar records (within the agency for RECORDS DISPOSAL SCHEDULES and within the State administration for GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULES). It facilitates the timely removal of records no longer needed from high cost central business district accommodation.

The (South Australian) Freedom of Information Act 1991 provides for public access to the records of the State administration. It gives managers some incentive to pay attention to their Administrative Unit's records management practices as the Act requires applications for access to be dealt with expeditiously; and politics or public pressure requires the process to be cost effective as most enquires are made on a user pays basis. Accurate identification at item level and fast access is facilitated by good control indexes and proper records management and disposal practices.

Part 3 of the Libraries Act 1982 deals with public records. It requires a person who has custody of public records to offer them for deposit with the Libraries Board when they are no longer needed for administrative or other purposes. The Board has the option to accept or reject them. Section 32 prohibits a person from selling, destroying or otherwise disposing of public records without giving the Board notice of an intention to dispose of them. State Records facilitates this process by providing appraisal, accommodation and retrieval services for records accepted by the Board on deposit.

From 1919 until the creation of Public Records Office in 1985 most deposits were of collections of older records generally accepted as of value for cultural and historical research purposes without formal appraisal or sentencing. This has resulted in a large quantity of material of no significant or lasting value being preserved in the State's repositories. State Records has a slightly different thrust: it was created in 1990 with a charter to, inter alia, increase

RMAA 9TH NATIONAL CONVENT

Sam Dy from the State Super Annuation Investment Management Corporation gets some advice from the Abax Group's Greg Bryan and Lachlan Moore.

CentreTech's Melissa Hinwood, Secretary, John Prentice, P.

Enjoying a break are Kerry Gordon, Consultant Provenance, Maria-Luisa Rodriguez, Records Manager Victorian University of Technology, and Lynne Engdahl from the Urban Land Authority Registry Office.

Phil Watts, Graham Corcoran and Warwick Mills from Sydn Electricity and Peter Burgess, Ortex.

...anager and Jenny McCarthy, Consultant.

David Wood, General Manager, Glenn Sanders, Product Manager and Graeme Bryant, Managing Director of Contec.

...icity, Tony Poynton, Canon Australia, Sonia Prentice, Sydney

Garry Edgecumbe, Victorian Manager, and Eric Coster National Sales Manager from Dexion chat to Ray Holswich, RMAA Federal President.

management awareness of the value and costs of records management. A major current goal is to review and if necessary appraise the value of records in its custody.

Its Reference Service at Norwich Centre continues to provide facilities for public researchers to use this valuable and active community resource. The agency Services Archivists assist the Libraries Board and agencies in determining the value of records by drafting records disposal schedules, providing cost effective storage non current records. The Records Management Consultancy Unit undertakes systems analyses and provides advice on records management systems and practices. State Records also administers the FOI legislation and manages privacy issues.

Now for the facts of life. The cost of storage, preservation and servicing records for historical and cultural purposes is a quite significant burden on the public account. Current policy dictates that records not be transferred to State Records unless their values have been formally assessed under the terms of a disposal schedule. While most records will have some research value to someone, sometime, the State does not have the facilities to keep every record forever in the expectation that someone will use it (once) someday.

The drafting of a disposal schedule is a labour intensive and costly exercise in terms of both dollars and management input. To repeat the same process for records common to all or many Administrative Units is both expensive and unnecessary. Hence the introduction of GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULES for ACCOUNTING RECORDS, ADMINISTRATION RECORDS, CONTRACT & PURCHASE RECORDS, MOTOR TRANSPORT RECORDS AND STAFF & ESTABLISHMENT RECORDS, that I have been drafting and consulting many of you on for the last six months.

What I have left you with is a set of reference and working tools which if utilised will decrease your rent and other accommodation costs and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of your records management functions over the medium term. A disposal schedule is not a panacea but a working tool that is applied at some cost to effect significant economies. The State has a legacy of less than adequate records management practices which have left an estimated 100 kilometres of non-current

records to be dealt with now or in the future. The application of the GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULES is just one of a variety of management strategies that will assist to clear this log jam.

The GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULES are available on STATEMAIL and in the form of a loose leaf publication in the distinctive State Records binder. Chief Executive Officers and managers can access the GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULES in a variety of ways on STATEMAIL. Probably most commonly a citation will appear on your computer screen as the result of a keyword or free text search of the whole database. Others more intimately connected with records management will deal with the paper version. Each section of the GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULES is colour coded and individually indexed to facilitate access. Again each GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULE has an introduction which sets the scene and may give essential instructions on the application of the particular schedule. Some of the schedule tables are expanded upon in a set of scope notes which assist in interpretation of individual entries. There are many cross references to cope with overlap between functional areas such as personnel and accounts; accidents and compensation; committees, working parties and conferences.

In finishing I must thank the staff of regulatory and expert agencies for their patience and assistance. Special thanks are due to the records managers from the Departments of: Education; Engineering & Water Supply; Housing & Construction; Labour; and Premier & Cabinet who acted as an advisory panel and provided practical testing facilities. When you have experienced the GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULES in practice, perhaps you will share your thoughts and experiences with State Records (and the readers of INFORMAA Quarterly) to facilitate their continued development.

*Mr Smith is a member of the Australian Archives South Australian Branch staff located at Collinswood. The Director, State Records and Information Policy, Euan Miller, arranged a staff swap to utilise his experience in the drafting of some GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULES for South Australia.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Conflict of Interest Guidelines were adopted by Federal Council as Regulation 22.

Conflict of Interest should be seen as:

• Use of Association mailing lists for personal or company gain/profit or unauthorised canvassing of members.

• Endorsement of individual products or services with the aim of promoting sales, and or personal gain as opposed to making an objective professional assessment.

• Preferential or biased treatment of a company, product or service, but should not restrict the expression of a personal appraisal not representative of the RMAA.

• Non recognition of records management companies in competitive areas of supply or consultancy listed in the Branch Registers of suppliers and consultants.

• Acceptance of substantial gifts/benefits that are intended to favourably influence decisions of Branch Council.

• Use of RMAA funds to provide hospitality for personal gain.

• Use of confidential RMAA information for personal gain.

• The use of Honorary Titles of the Association without the authority of the Branch and Federal Council, for company or personal profit/gain.

• Non-disclosure of pecuniary interest of self or family members in the business of Branch or Federal Council.

Conflict of Interest should not be seen as:

• Being actively involved in RMAA as a way to improve job prospects.

• Being involved in RMAA where it improves exposure to associated trades.

• Holding workshops/demonstrations approved by Branch Council of named commercial products.

• Accepting hospitality or services of companies as long as competitors in that particular field are given equal opportunity.

• Expertise overlap as long as RMAA and organisation benefits are clearly defined.

THE LEGAL RISKS OF INADEQUATE RM

Various statutes and statutory instruments, at all levels of government, impact directly on records managers. Many statutes prescribe specific formats and lifecycles for those records to which the specific legislation relates (1).

There are over 60 separate pieces of Federal and State legislation which contain provisions relating to the creation and maintenance of business and other records.

The Acts of general significance to records managers include the Victorian Evidence Act 1958 and the Limitations of Actions Act 1958.

The Evidence Act modifies and codifies much of the common law relating to the presentation of evidence before courts and other judicial bodies. Many of its provisions, particularly those relating to documentary evidence, impact directly on the requirements necessary for those records, or copies of those records, to be admissable as evidence in court.

The Limitations of Actions Act, and other statutes which have prescribed limitation periods for the bringing of any action, also indirectly impact upon the retention of records.

In developing retention and disposal schedules, records managers need to have a clear understanding of the legal context of particular records to determine whether these records are ever likely to be required in evidence for prosecuting or defending any claim. Only after legal context is fully ascertained can the retention and disposal schedules be finalised.

The present Limitations of Actions Act 1958 prescribes a six year limitation period for the commencement of actions founded on contract or tort (Section 6). The six years commences from the date on which the cause of action first accrued. The last point is emphasised because it means in many instances the records will need to be retained for a much longer period. By way of example many contracts entered into are contracts which impose

PHILLIP REYNOLDS*
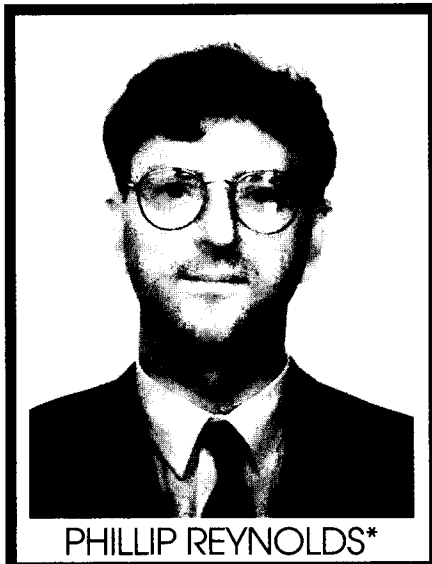
obligations on the parties for many years into the future. Only when the contract has been fully performed or otherwise discharged will the limitation period commence to run.

The Trade Practices Act, in particular the new product liability provisions, the topic of this paper, is an example of legislation which will have significant indirect effects on both the importance of records and the maintenance of those records.

The effects are only indirect because there is nothing in the Act which expressly deals with the making, keeping or disposal of records. It does however impose a significant burden on manufacturers relating to the safety of their products, the proof of which will ultimately pivot on the weight and quality of the records maintained in respect of the goods. It also extends the limitation period for the commencement of actions by persons injured by defective goods.

To understand the significance of manufacturing and marketing records under this new regime it will be helpful to outline the pre-existing common law position relating to defective goods and then to examine briefly the legislative changes.

EXISTING PRODUCT LIABILITY LAW

Assume a parent buys a bottle of soft drink from the local supermarket. The parent takes it home and the bottle explodes in the hands of his or her son, who is seriously injured. Under the present law:

(a) the parent has an action for damages for breach of contract as against the supermarket;

(b) the child, however, has no right of action in contract for the technical reason that he was not a party to the contract, i.e. he did not purchase the goods;

(c) both parent and son may have an action against the manufacturer of the bottle or the soft drink but only if they can prove, on the balance of probabilities, that the manufacturer of the bottle or the beverage was negligent.

Proving negligence is often a very difficult task. There are three principal aspects of a negligence claim which need to be proved:

(a) a duty of care owed by the manufacturer to all those whom it reasonably foresees might be injured by its acts or products;

(b) a breach of that duty of care; and

(c) damage as a direct consequence of that breach, which is of a type which is not too remote (i.e. damage of the type you would expect in the normal course of events).

The difficulties are so formidable with proof of these matters in common law negligence that a case which had exactly the above set of facts was dismissed by the court. The plaintiff child was unable to prove on the balance of probabilities that any of the three defendants (i.e. the bottle manufacturer, the beverage manufacturer or the supplier) had been negligent. The cause of the explosion was unknown and could not be established from the remains of the bottle (2).

THE NEW PRODUCT LIABILITY LAW

The Federal Parliament has now altered the common law position. In addition to the existing common law remedies, the Federal Trade Practices Act now contains a new Part VA. The legislation imposes strict liability on manufacturers for injury and loss caused by any defective goods.

It is no longer necessary for an injured person to show that the injury was negligent or in breach of contract.

Liability attaches to any defective product which causes injury or loss.

It is no longer necessary to prove that a duty existed and that that duty was breached or that the injury or loss suffered was of a type that was "reasonably foreseeable" by the manufacturer.

Further, such liability cannot be excluded by contract.

WHAT IS A "DEFECT"?

Goods will be deemed to have a defect if "...their safety is not such as persons generally are entitled to expect" (Section 75AC(1)).

What is clear from a reading of the Parliamentary debates and explanatory materials is that this safety standard is one which will require the courts to assess a product by general community "knowledge and expectations".

What is not clear at this stage is what evidence will be required to establish what the community "knowledge and expectation" of a product is.

The legislation itself lists a number of factors which the courts are required to consider in determining a products safety. These are:

(a) the manner in which it was marketed;

(b) its packaging;

(c) any instructions or warnings provided with it;

(d) how it might be expected to be used; and

(e) the time or date of its supply (Section 75 AC(2)).

These factors are reflected in the only four defences available to a manufacturer. However, records managers should remain mindful that their employers are likely to prefer prevention from being sued in the first place. Managers should adopt immediate pro-active measures such as a product liability records audit to minimise claims. Such audits should be an integral part of risk management for all manufacturers and suppliers.

DEFENCE (SECTION 75AK)

The defences available to a manufacturer are limited. All of the defences revolve around the implementation and maintenance of effective records systems relating to the manufacturers goods.

A. POST-SALE DEFECTS AND OBLIGATIONS

1. A manufacturer will have a defence if it can be established that the goods became defective after they left the manufacturer's control.

The success of this defence clearly rests on the manufacturer being able to produce clear documentary evidence (i.e. records) which establish not only when each product was made and distributed (i.e. when it left the manufacturer's control) but also records relating to those antecedent matters which establish that the goods could not have been defective prior to supply. These will include records relating to:

(a) all product planning, design and development, including all prototypes;

(b) quality assurance checks and systems during manufacture;

(c) labels or warnings which are or were provided with the product;

(d) marketing of the product;

(e) all alternative uses to which the product could be put; and

(f) sale and delivery slips.

All products will need to be clearly marked and serial numbered in a manner which establishes when and where the product was made.

Records of all customer complaints and responses to those complaints should be preserved. Manufacturers have an obligation to monitor the safety of a product after it has been supplied and to issue a warning or recall notice if necessary.

A system for product recall should be established by manufacturers.

Documents will be pivotal in product recall. Manufacturers must be readily able to trace product distribution.

To ensure swift recall, which will usually occur under urgent circumstances, requires records relating to the appropriate persons or organisations to be contacted, as well as customers.

Manufacturers need to be aware of the provisions in Part V Division 1A of the Act dealing with recall.

Obviously, the records required to be kept by manufacturers will now need to be more detailed and exhaustive than ever before. The limitation period established under Part VA for the bringing of proceedings by a person who suffers injury or loss as a result of a defective product is 3 years. However, under what is known as the "repose period" actions must be brought with 10 years of the supply of the product (Section 74J).

The new amendments only apply to products supplied after 9 July 1992, the date of Royal Ascent to the amendments.

B. OTHER DEFENCES

There are three other defences available to a manufacturer;

2. The defect only existed due to compliance with a mandatory standard (3).

This will require the manufacturer to maintain records of relevant mandatory standards applicable to the particular goods, changes to those standards and "reaction time" to the changes in any standards.

3. The state of scientific or technical knowledge at the time the goods were supplied was not such as to enable the defect to be discovered. This is colloquially referred to as the "state of the art" defence.

This will require manufacturers not only to thoroughly research the safety of new products but also to maintain a continuing research program in respect of existing products. This suggests greater use of librarians and researchers as well as records managers in the future. All information professionals will have renewed importance within manufacturing organisations.

4. The goods were defective only because they were comprised in other finished goods.

The effect of this defence is that a component manufacturer will be able to defend a claim if the defect arose during the subsequent assembly of the final product. however, the assembler who provides the final product has no correlative defence. If defective components are used in the assembly of another product, the assembler cannot maintain any defence based on the defective component.

DOCUMENT RETENTION

It is important that records managers ensure that no bias is evidenced in the retention and disposal schedules which are ultimately developed for manufacturers records. Selective destruction of documents critical of, or adverse to, a company's defence after litigation has been commenced can be particularly harmful. Unexplained absence of certain key documents can be very damaging to a company's case. In such circumstances, the court is entitled to draw adverse inferences about the possible content of such documents.

Destruction of original documents in an age of prolific photocopying is in any event somewhat naive. It is unlikely that all copies of the documents will have been destroyed. Consultants, key employees and associated companies keep their own files of company documents. These copy records can be particularly embarrassing and harmful when produced to the court on subpoena in circumstances where the company itself has destroyed the original records. The absence of the destroyed documents is clearly incriminating.

This does not mean that manufacturing organisations cannot set up retention and disposal programs. In fact, such programs are effective in establishing that a company adopts a responsible attitude to its records. Obviously, however, such programs should not reflect any bias towards the destruction of the types of documents which would go to prove the safety, or otherwise, of particular products.

PRIVILEGED DOCUMENTS

In some instances, companies may be able to minimise the risk of documents being used against them in litigation by ensuring that potentially damaging reports and other documents are prepared or sought in such a way as to attract "legal professional privilege".

Documents will attract legal professional privilege where they are created:

(a) to enable the client to obtain, or the solicitor to give, legal advice; or

(b) are prepared for the express purpose of, or in the contemplation of, litigation.

In the first instance, where there is no existing or contemplated litigation, a confidential report prepared by a third party may be privileged if it is commissioned by the company for the sole purpose of being furnished to a solicitor so that the solicitor might give legal advice, or where the company's solicitor requests the report on the client's behalf for the sole purpose of the solicitor to give legal advice.

Thus, it may be possible for "product liability audits" to be phased so that the initial stage is only conducted solely for the purpose of identifying problems so that legal advice can be obtained.

Records managers in certain circumstances may well wish to advise their organisations to seek legal advice prior to undertaking any product liability audit, including the records audit.

WHO IS A MANUFACTURER?

Liability for defective products is not restricted solely to pure manufacture. In certain circumstances, discussed following, a distributor of the goods or an assembler will face liability in circumstances where it has not been at fault. There is a strict liability for the distribution or assembly of the defective product in such circumstances. This will increase the number of potential defendants to product liability claims.

The result is many innocent companies will become deemed "manufacturers" and will be left shouldering liability without any resource. This will be so in circumstances where the party directly responsible for the defect may be unknown insolvent or overseas. It will be extremely difficult to defend these claims because the defect will have arisen prior to the supply of the goods.

The following persons are deemed to be manufacturers for the purposes of the act (Section 75AB).

(a) Assemblers

A person who assembles goods is deemed to have manufactured them. A car manufacturer, by way of example, has no defence to an action brought against it when the car ultimately proves defective as a consequence of some component failure. This will be so notwithstanding that vehicles are often comprised of thousands of components provided by independent manufacturers and even though the vehicle assembler cannot inspect all of the components supplied to it. The liability is strict for any assembler of goods.

(b) Retailer's "own brand" goods

A retailer which puts its name to a product manufactured by others, will be strictly liable for the defects in those products. Thus a large supermarket chain which distributes cheaper own brand goods will be strictly liable for injury or loss caused by defects in those goods.

(c) Importers

Importers of overseas goods will also be strictly liable for any inherent defects.

(d) Distributors

If a distributor is unable to provide particulars of the manufacturer or the person who supplied the goods to them, then the distributor itself will be a deemed manufacturer and will be strictly liable for any injury or loss caused by the goods supplied (Section 75AJ).

It is apparent from these deeming provisions that they operate in circumstances where the manufacturer cannot be identified or would be difficult to identify. Potential complainants are given assistance by a new section 75AJ whereby the claimant can serve a written request to any or all known suppliers of the goods requesting them to identify the manufacturer of the goods or the name of the party which supplied it with the goods. If the recipient of the request does not respond within 30 days the supplier/distributor is deemed to have manufactured the goods (Sub-section 75AJ(2)).

These deeming provisions clearly extend liability to a wide range of organisations beyond those that are directly involved in product manufacture. It will clearly encompass for example governmental authorities at all levels of government, in particular local governments, who are involved in the supply of community goods and services.

To avoid liability under the deeming provisions local and statutory authorities, retailers, distributors, importers and assemblers will need to keep comprehensive records of all suppliers and manufacturers of goods they sell or otherwise provide to consumers and others.

Manufacturers will need to keep their records well beyond the 10 years from the date of manufacture. This is because injury or loss may not be sustained until many years after the product has been in the market place. The 10 year limitation period commences only from the date of the first injury or loss.

WHO CAN SUE A MANUFACTURER?

The new legislation also extends the range of potential plaintiffs.

The right to sue goes beyond the customer or other person who actually purchased or acquired the goods.

Any individual injured by the product or other persons who suffers loss as a consequence of another's injuries will have a right to sue.

Persons who are bystanders, or innocent victims such as family members or other dependents of the injured person will be entitled to sue.

Loss is recoverable in respect of damage or destruction to personal property and real property.

In allowing these indirect claims, the legislation has removed the old proximity test which attached to negligence claims requiring that any loss suffered be restricted to loss which was reasonably foreseeable and of a type which would occur in the ordinary course of events.

In the future we can expect to see increased actions brought by those who suffer nervous shock or economic loss as the direct result of the injury of another person.

CONCLUSION

The combination of the extended limitation period and the limited technical defences available to manufacturers will result in manufacturers being at significantly greater risk of action arising from defective goods and the continued used or aging products.'

The legislation will cause more claims to be made as it has extended both the range of potential plaintiffs and the range of potential defendants.

Clearly manufacturers, retailers, importers and distributors of goods, and their insurers, will need to take steps to minimise the number of claims and to maximise the material available to defend them. It now behoves those organisations to recognise the renewed and extended legal significance their records will have.

Records managers should now be pro-active in informing their employers of the new potential pitfalls of poor records management and in ensuring that their employers are not put at risk through inadequate records management.

*Mr Reynolds, BA (Librarianship) LLB (Melb) Grad Dip Inf. Man. (Archives & Records) (Melb) ALIAA, ARMAA, is a barrister and solicitor at Minter Ellison Morris Fletcher.

This article has not been written as legal advice. Professional advice should be sought before applying the information to particular circumstances.

REFERENCES

(1) For example the Cheques and Payment Orders Act 1990 (Cth) prescribes that any cheque drawn on a bank be retained for seven years (Section 68). Similar provisions apply to payment orders (Section 112). Failure to retain the records for the prescribed period carries a penalty of $10,000.

(2) Kilgannon v Sharpe Brothers Pty Ltd & Ors (1986) 4 NSWLR 6000. (Leave has sought to appeal this decision to the High Court of Australia).

(3) Where the defence of compliance with a Commonwealth mandatory standard is successful, the Commonwealth will be liable to compensate the injured party (Section 75AL).

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1993 CONVENTION - HOBART

The Tasmanian Branch is looking forward to the busiest year of its life in 1993, with the National Convention being held in Hobart for the first time. But the fun has already started, with the Convention Committee well into the swing of things.

A massive promotional campaign was undertaken at the 1992 Convention in Sydney. Our preliminary program was distributed and an exhibition and sponsorship package handed to all trade personnel. Our Convention organisers, Conference Design, did a wonderful job with the promotion material and many delegates took advantage of the tourism information available.

The theme for the Convention is "Records the Heart of Management" and our sessions have been designed to reflect this theme. The aim of the Convention is to stress the importance of Records Management in the overall management of an

organisation. The issues being addresses by speakers include:

• Information management from a senior manager's prospective

• Records accountability royal commission

• Freedom of information

• Comparison of software packages

• Information management in changing corporate structure

There has already been a great response regarding the content of the Convention. In addition we will be incorporating workshops directed at local government, the legal profession, practical applications and management practices.

The Convention will be aimed at not only records management professionals and senior management but also those outside the industry.

A major initiative has been the opening of the trade display to the public for a full day at the beginning of the Convention. This will provide greater exposure for the trade as we recognise their very hard work and continued support for records management, sometimes without much return.

As Chairperson of the Convention Committee, I would like to thank all the people who provided advice in Sydney based on the previous experiences, most of it has been invaluable. It is also important to recognise the Tasmanian Convention Committee and all Tasmanian delegates for all their efforts in Sydney.'

The Convention Committee members include:

Kathy Holland	Chairperson/Business Program
John Behrens	Sponsorship/Business Program
Tina Howard	Trade Exhibition
Ray Cooper	Finance

Helen Adkins Social Program
              (Asst.Susan Hill)
Jill Saunders Publicity
              (Asst.Trish Wichmann)
Tina Howard   Business Program
Bill Taylor   Business Program

A major publicity campaign will be in force over the next few months through the State branches and INFORMAA Quarterly.

I would like to thank the NSW Branch and the Convention Committee for their co-operation and support in Sydney.

We look forward to seeing you all in Hobart September 1993.

KATHY HOLLAND
Chairperson
10th National Convention 1993 Hobart

NATIONAL COMPETITION LAUNCHED

A national Records Management Student of the Year Competition was launched at September's RMAA national conference.

The 1993 national competition is sponsored by Canon, to coincide with the introduction of a national curriculum in records management through TAFE colleges.

Peter Smith, Industry Training Specialist, Information Services, TAFE COmmission (NSW) said the national competition would play an important role in raising awareness of records management as a profession across Australia.

"Canon has sponsored the NSW competition for three years and has the vision to see that the national competition will benefit students in the short term and the entire industry in the long term," he said.

Candidates for the 1993 competition will be nominated by TAFE colleges from around Australia. The national winner or winners, to be selected by a judging panel, will receive registration at next year's RMAA conference to be held in Hobart in September, together with airfares and accommodation.

"The quality of students in records management has improved dramatically over the years," said Mr Poynton. "For this reason, we at Canon expect the prize to be awarded jointly to two or possibly even three students."

Winners of the 1992 NSW Records Management Student of the Year Competition are Michelle Tuckwell and Ted Hartley who received conference registrations as their prize.

REGISTRATION OF INTEREST

RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Surname _____ First name _____

Organisation _____

Address _____ State Postcode _____

Telephone (Wk)(   ) _____ (H)(   ) _____

Facsimile (   ) _____

I am interested in attending the RMAA Convention in Hobart in September 1993. YES ☐ NO ☐
I am interested in attending the Convention as a delegate ☐   trade exhibitor ☐   sponsor ☐

I would like further information about :

Travel and Accommodation Packages   ☐   Discount Airfares   ☐

Car rental   ☐

Three day gourmet tours visiting some of Tasmania's vineyards, cheese factories and other producers of our fine fare   ☐

Group post convention touring   ☐

Individual itineraries arranged for pre/post convention touring   ☐

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KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MAIRÉAD BROWNE*

It is probably safe to say that none of us is working in the job or environment we expected when we started in the information business, even if that was only a few years ago.

The pace of development in information technology has left many of us breathless. But we have to accept these changes, even if we do not welcome all of them with open arms, so that we can improve our approaches to handling information and thereby ensure that the services we provide continue to be responsive to user needs and organisations.

Given this pattern of rapid change and the need to adapt to it, how might the new generation of records managers be prepared? What knowledge can equip them with the ability to recognise the central concerns, the constants of information work, when modes of operation and organisational structures are in a permanent state of flux? And how can records managers be prepared so that they fit into the overall scheme of things in organsations and into the wider world of information practice and professionals?

In this paper I will argue that the cause and effectiveness of records management will be advanced only if education for record management is based on:

1. a recognition of both the unique roles of record managers and the common ground of knowledge and skills which record management shares with other information areas, and

2. what organisations want of their information professionals in terms of the tasks to be performed and the personal and professional attributes organisations want their information workers to have.

In other words, the education of record managers for professional practice must take account of other areas of knowledge and practice in information, and at the same time respond to what organisations say they want from their information specialists including the people who manage records.

UNIQUE ROLES AND COMMON GROUND

The history of the various groups which have worked with information in one format or another has been one where groups of individuals have identified quite narrowly-based problems of handling information and through trial and error developed some useful techniques for dealing with them. Scholars from the earliest time in Greece and Asia Minor developed ways of managing manuscripts based on listing the first words in the manuscripts. This system was eventually refined into the cataloguing system we know today which has its main emphasis not on the first words but on authors' names and titles. Another example from earlier centuries is the arcane information specialty called "diplomatics". This specialty is concerned with authenticating the seals attached to Papal edicts known as "bulls". The bulls were issued from the Vatican and it was critical for the recipients to know that the document was the real thing as it became a basis for action in areas of jurisdiction of the Catholic Church. Although I describe this as an arcane specialty in information work, it lives on as a specialty. On a recent visit to India I photographed an office doorway in Poona where a Dr Phansalker advertised his specialty as "Examiner of Questioned Documents". It is clear, therefore, that authenticating of documents is an enduring need and therefore a necessary specialisation.

The problem with specialisation is, however, that often the specialists dig too deep. I am convinced that many of the sub-groups of information workers — archivists, computer information systems specialists, company librarians, information officers, record managers, publications officers and so on — have lost sight of the basic rationale and functions of information work by becoming too engrossed in the uniqueness of their situations and the practical dimension of the job. They have lost sight of the functions and activities which are common and underlie the range of specialties. And the problem with such emphasis on uniqueness and practicality is that it cuts the specialist off from the mainstream of information work and a knowledge base which can be applied to solve information problems across the board.

A recent issue of Inform, the newsletter of the UK-based Institute of Information Scientists, has a review of conference papers of the Records Management Group of the Society of Archivists which demonstrates this point well. The reviewer, in discussing the relative merits of the papers, said, "theory is the least important aspect to the information professional faced with the practical problem of the responsibility of coping with the piles of boxes and papers which have to be

organised in a crisis or as part of new responsibilities" (James, 1992). How Sylvia James could manage without theory in tackling the task is beyond me, how she could make good decisions about ways of arranging material and listing it so it might be found again is incomprehensible without her using some knowledge of the future potential uses of the information; the different options open to her; and the relative merits of each option in light of the particular circumstances and the resources available. Without theory, or at least a set of general principles, Sylvia James might as well leave the boxes unopened. All information situations require principles to guide action.

But what might these general principles be, what could they relate to, and how might they be helpful to record managers? Certainly some of the general principles which will be used to effectively solve the problem of Sylvia James' boxes will be unique to record management but many will be general principles used in most areas of information practice. To find these it is necessary to go back to the basics and ask some questions about the nature of information work.

The fundamental element of information work is undoubtedly "information", the product of information, in whatever way it is packaged, be it as a floppy disk, a photo, a menu, a map, a book or a journal or as a file with many different formats within it.

A second essential element of information practice is the process of providing information from places it is held to the person who will use the information. For the children's librarian providing or transferring information might entail selecting information in the form of a film to show young people, or telling a story, or extracting a fact from an encyclopedia. For the archivist it could mean retrieving a letter for a historian researching the history of a local community. For the record manager, providing information includes anything from retrieving the records of a patient in a hospital setting to providing a file from the Independent Commission Against Corruption. What all of these have in common is a process of providing information to a person who has a need for the information. The process is often referred to as the "information transfer" process, and while it may appear self-evident, we as information workers all too often lose sight of this basic rationale for

information work as we deal with the hurly-burly of everyday practice.

Putting aside the different situations in which information transfer occurs and the unique aspects which characterise particular settings or purposes, what does information transfer entail essentially? There are very many models of information transfer based on extensive studies over many years (e.g. Allen, 1977; Browne, 1985). One of the useful and often cited ones was developed by King Research in the U.S. (Figure 1).

The model proposed by King shows that any kind of recorded information goes through a series of steps or "spiral" from the point at which it is generated by an individual to the stage where it is assimilated and used by someone else. At that point the information is incorporated into a new "package" of information, or report, and the steps in information transfer begin again. With a modicum of ingenuity this model can be used to describe just about every information handling situation, whether the information is in the form of a poem, an internal report, a novel, or a directory on a computer disk.

From our perspective, another key feature of this model is that it differentiates the roles of the different players in the information business. Publishers are distinguished from indexing services, information centres from creators of the information. It can thus be said that while a wide range of people is engaged in the process of information transfer, there is a focus on certain parts of the "spiral" by certain interest groups. Information professionals are the group most concerned with functions 6,7,8 and 9. If this then is what they are responsible for, the question to be addressed is: what sorts of tasks do information professionals have to carry out to ensure information transfer occurs?

At Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education (now part of the University of Technology, Sydney) we carried out research to identify the tasks of information professionals which flow from these responsibilities with the information transfer process. Using interviews with employers and people in the practice of information, overseas research and some analysis of job advertisements, we concluded that all information professionals, regardless of their job title, have to be able to perform these tasks:

• identification of information need
• information of search design

• retrieval of information
• evaluation of information
• analysis of information
• synthesis of information
• repackaging information
• dissemination
• design and provision of service

From this it follows that education for information professionals must address these common tasks, since they form the bed-rock of all information work, be it in computer information systems, communication management, teacher librarianship, archives, records management, information resource management or research assisting. It also follows that with such diversity in the practice of information, the emphasis in preparing people to carry out these tasks has to be on what is common and enduring, namely the theories and principles which underpin the successful execution of the tasks.

I am not saying that an educational preparation in the theory and principles of the tasks common to different information professionals is of itself sufficient for all fields of information practice. There is additional theory and skill which specialists have to master because of the differences in information practice situations. These differences arise from:

• the emphasis and degree of involvement in particular task phases, e.g., dissemination, organisation;
• the context within which the professional operates, e.g. organisational, freelance;
• the audience to which the professional relates, e.g., child, general public, organisationally-based maker;
• the type of information dealt with, e.g., published information, information generated within an organisation, synthesised information.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between theory and practice of the common tasks of information professionals and the special theory which informs the practioner in a special field such as records management.

Finally, I wish to add in here a comment on the need to differentiate between different levels of information work.

As an emerging field of practice, records management is, properly, establishing itself as an area of professional practice. It is important, however, to ensure that this development is not accompanied by assertions that all work with

records in organisations require expertise at the professional level. There is, and always will be, room for practice at technician or para-professional level as well as professional work. In identifying the different levels of work in records management, attention will need to be paid to what has been called "the drift-down" principle:

(i) Nothing should be done by a professional that can be done by a technician.

(ii) Nothing should be done by a technician that can be done by a clerk.

(iii) Nothing should be done by a human being that can be done by a machine. (Buckland, 1992, p.22).

In summary, educational preparation for information practice needs to prepare professionals to perform the tasks which are common to all professionals. In light of the diversity of situations in which the tasks are carried out, the professional must be able to work from general principles and adapt these to different circumstances. In addition, the successful information practioner will need to acquire some specialist knowledge and skills which acknowledge the unique characteristics of particular types of information practice. There will also be a need to differentiate between the different levels of work requirements in the field of records so that professionals and technicians are doing what is appropriate and challenging for them.

WHAT DO ORGANISATIONS WANT OF THEIR INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS?

I suggested earlier that the direction of development in record management as a profession needs to take into account what organisations are looking for when they seek to recruit people to work in information areas. I will argue that to do this adequately we need to free up our thinking and move away from a narrow focus on job titles like "Record Manager" and "Records Officer" and take account of the big picture in the organisation. The main reason for this is entirely pragmatic. Managers of organisations do not have a clear picture of what different types of specialist information professionals do (who has?) and so it is often sheer serendipity that leads an organisation to advertise for an "information officer", rather than a "record manager" or "librarian" in situation when the

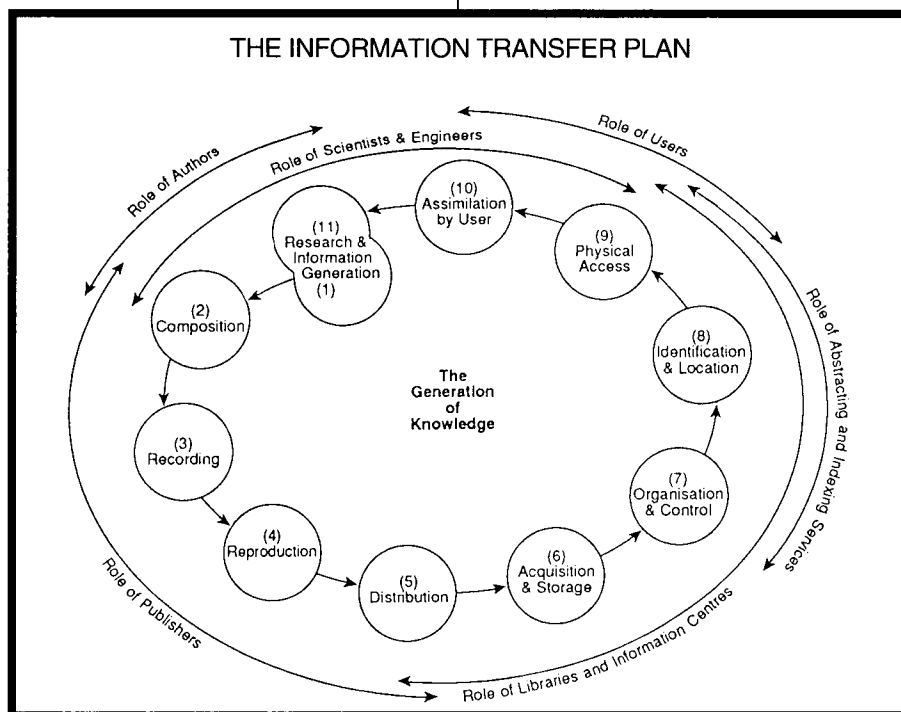information job to be done is essentially the same.

For example, while doing background reading for this address, I was very taken by an article written in INFORMAA in May 1992 by one of RMAA's associate members, Heidi McArthur of ANSTO. Heidi posed the question, "Why stop at files and folios?" and argues for a broad interpretation of the sphere of interest of records management. I suspect that with just a little editing the same article could have been written by an archivist, a librarian, a management information system person or the information officer in the organisation.

I am highlighting Heidi's article because it emphasises the need to think broadly about the roles of the people who handle information in the

organisation and to have as our starting point, not their job titles but activities they carry out within the broad framework of the common tasks discussed above as well as the more specialised tasks associated with information practice in different circumstances.

This is not to deny there is a job which is properly described as that of "records manager" but rather to say that the roles of the record manager are likely to be more, in reality or potential, than simply the management of records. Organisations are dynamic, constantly changing and shifting and hence the records manager needs to have the capacity to respond to those changes without being

anxious that he or she is moving outside the brief or inviting a demarkation dispute with some other information professional in the organisation.

But how does the profession know what activates organisations and their senior management want taken care of in the information area? One way to find out is to ask individual managers for their view, but this hardly constitutes an adequate basis for developing educational programmes for information professions.

A major study in the United States of the information industry (Debons, 1981) used a survey of information workers to identify the broad shape of the industry and the functions carried out. The aim of the analysis was to identify those who worked with information on behalf of others, rather than those who were only users of that information. On the basis of the survey, jobs in the information industry were grouped into ten categories which focussed on the functions performed by information professionals:

Managing information operations, programs, services or databases;

Preparing data and information for use by others;

Analysing data and information on behalf of others;

Searching for data and information on behalf of others;

Remaining operational information functions;

Information systems analysis;

THE INFORMATION TRANSFER PLAN

Information systems design;
Information research and development;
Educating and training information workers;
Marketing of information products and services.

The significance of the work by Debons is that it gives us a way of looking at the information transfer business other than on the basis of job titles, which are used idiosyncratically and give little idea of what the incumbent actually does. It is, however, a very broad approach which makes it difficult to understand what happens at the level of individual organisations. One way to get closer to organisational requirements is to look at the job advertisements for information professionals and see what patterns emerge there, in regard to the tasks and responsibilities employers are saying need to be done in organisations.

I was involved in such an exercise on behalf of the Australian Library and Information Association and we aimed to capture the broad picture of employer requirements across Australia. We did an analysis of job advertisements in six Saturday issues of the nine major Australian national and State-based newspapers over a one-year period from December 1989 to October 1990. We were interested in identifying the range of jobs available in information work as well as gaining a picture of the tasks, skills and personal attributes indicated for these jobs by the employers. A major rationale for the study was to provide the Board of Education in the Australian Library and Information Association and the educational institutions, with a basis for planning educational courses for information workers at all levels into the 21st century. The second phase of the study has been put on the "back burner" at ALIA for the moment, but I would like to share some of the findings of the first phase of the work with you as they have some very significant implications for the education of information professionals including record managers.

Some key points to remember in interpreting what I say about the positions we surveyed is that although we analysed 1606 positions, these occurred in a limited number of issues of newspapers and on a limited number of days, so generalisations have to be made with caution. And while it may seem like an easy task to clip and analyse job advertisements, it was a far-from-simple task in the event and we may well have unintentionally excluded several areas of

information practice which we did not recognise as such. What we do have, however, is a series of snapshots of the market for information providers and an indication of what the employers consider important in terms of the job to be done and the qualities of the people they are looking for. In other words, we have the beginnings of the balance I said earlier that we need to prepare the information workers of the future, namely, a feeling for what organisations value and say they want information people to do for them as well as an indication of the attributes and skills they want information workers to have.

There is a full documentation of the processes we used to clip and analyse the job advertisements and to find the patterns in the data. The materials are held by the Australia Library and Information Association but I shall be very pleased to share materials I have with any of you who are interested.

The main technique we used to find the patterns and trends in the advertisements was to do a count of the different words and phrases within different broad categories, using a keyword-out-of-context (KWOC) index package. The categories included job title; tasks to be performed by incumbent; attributes to be demonstrated by the successful applicant and so on. The vagaries of the English language being what it is with homonyms and synonyms in abundance, for the purposes of this paper I have only extracted word-counts where there appears to be no ambiguity. I have also clustered words of similar meaning ("liaison" and "negotiation"). In addition I have extracted only those key words which occur 100 times or more in the print-out with the word counts. [1]

Looking first at the functions or tasks named in advertisements for information workers there are clusters of words which predominate. These are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: TASKS/FUNCTIONS

Words	Number of occurrences
Interpersonal	
Liaison/negotiation	229
Co-ordination	196
Management	
Planning	151
Policy	171
Reports/reporting	215
Collection	
Materials	151
Records	137
Collection/collecting	153
Data/databases	401
Users	
Community	112
Services	425
Technical	
Maintenance/maintain	758
Researching	112
Computer	285
System	425

If it were possible (and valid) to take an average of these positions (which it obviously is not entirely reasonable to do), one might speculate on the typical job of the information professional in today's organisation. The most frequently occurring

GENERAL THEORY
SPECIALISED THEORY IN
INFORMATION WORK

Shared Theory

Common Tasks

Unique Theory

Unique Tasks
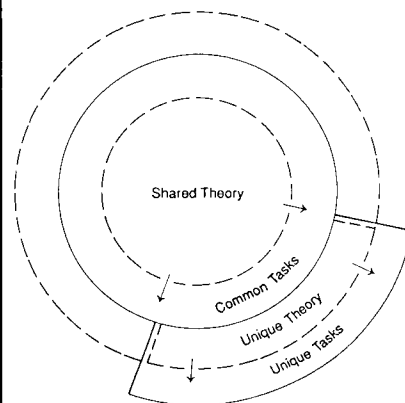
functions and tasks can be summarised as:

• collecting and maintaining collections of information in many different formats;

• relating to the community of users through provision of services based on the collections;

• undertaking technical tasks such as researching and developing computer-based systems;

• being extensively involved in liaison, negotiation and co-ordination activities;

• undertaking management tasks, particularly planning, developing policy and reporting.

These functions are not at odds with the description of the processes I described earlier as the

common tasks of information workers, but the job advertisements place emphasis in different places. The information transfer model and the common tasks derived from it are focused on the information itself and how it is selected and handled. The word count from the job advertisements suggest that organisations either take for granted or de-emphasise different aspects of information transfer activities and highlight the policy development and management aspects as well as the need for liaison and co-ordination by the information professional.

Moving to examine the attributes and qualifications specified in the job advertisements we examined, some further clear patterns emerge.

TABLE 2: KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES

Words	Number of occurrences
Communication	
(General)	549
Interpersonal	78
Oral	67
Written	220
Team	103
	1017
Generic Competency	
Experience	1569
Skills	1073
Knowledge	519
Understanding	158
Organisational Competency	
Issues	103
Management	307
Specific Competency	
Systems	274
Libraries	373
Records	122
Research	206
Professional Development	
Membership	126
Degree	230
Professional	1151

Looking at Table 2 it will be clear that the range of communication skills is important, as are tertiary qualifications and affiliation with a professional association. Experience is frequently sought with "skills", "knowledge" and "understanding" less frequently emphasised (or again perhaps, simply expected). It is of interest to see the emphasis on management background and an expectation of a capacity to deal with issues on the job. In terms of knowledge of the technical aspects of information work, "systems" in general are clearly important, but there are four not necessarily mutually exclusive areas of practice frequently mentioned: systems, libraries, records and research.

In summary, the pattern of words in the advertisements we looked at show that today's employers are concerned to employ people who can be described as having:

• excellent communication skills — oral, written, interpersonal;
• ability to work well in teams;
• wide experience, ideally with a background in several kinds of information situations such as research; information systems; record and library areas;
• capacity to manage well within a good understanding of issues impinging on the organisation;
• a degree and professionally-recognised qualifications;
• a commitment to a professional association.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF RECORD MANAGERS

Let me now pull together the threads of this paper and give my view of the foundations for the education of records managers into the 21st century.

It is my contention that the specialty of records management, which is crucial to the effetive management of organisations, will advance and flourish if it:

1. is thought of as part of the wider field of information practice;

2. is based on a thorough grounding in the information transfer tasks which are common to all information workers;

3. draws from the general knowledge and skills base of information work in general and applies these to problems of records management before focusing too finely on the unique characteristics of the records situation;

4. attends to the emphases in what employers say about jobs in information work and balances this against the emphases that the theory of information transfer suggest.

5. moves away from too much concern with job titles and what these used to imply historically about the proper domain of the records manager.

To achieve this requires something of a shift in current trends in Australia, although there is strong evidence that there are shifts underway. The RMAA journal and this conference demonstrate that the records management specialty in information work is a dynamic profession and is looking to define itself professionally within a broad vision of the future of the specialty.

Finally, let me suggest what I consider some things RMAA could do to advance the profession through education:

1. A revision of RMAA's objectives to stress the relationship of records management to the wider field of information practice and other information professionals but within the context of the Association's current objective to develop theory and practice in records management.

2. Course accreditation criteria which emphasise:

(i) general principles of information work as well as the special skills and knowledge for records management which build on those general principles;

(ii) a balance between the study of general principles and the practice of information work;

(iii) the needs of the workplace as expressed by employers and through research into the unique characteristics of the records management function.

3. A long term commitment to multi-skilling in records management practice but within a framework which recognises the different levels of work in any kind of information practice situation.

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NOTE
[1] I am indebted to Hazel Vickers and Ross Todd who worked on the project with me.

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