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EDITORIAL NOTES

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This edition of INFORMAA QUARTERLY has been produced by the Western Australian Branch.

The next edition of Informaa Quarterly will be produced in November 1990.

Editorial Committee

Shirley R. Cowcher
Neil Granland
Marita Hoo
Ken Ridley
Roland Sharpe

Production

Shirley R. Cowcher
Neil Granland
Mark Lingane of SECWA (Many Thanks!)

Printing

Colortype Press Pty Ltd

FEDERAL PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

GAINING PROFESSIONAL STATUS

One of the primary goals of today's records practitioners is to gain professional recognition from senior management and other professionals. More and more organisations, as they become convinced of the need for professional records managers, will expect standards and requisites by which those practitioners may be measured. The Records Management Association of Australia, an Association of records managers, is uniquely able to establish standards for education and accreditation for our profession. However, time is of the essence - industry, commerce and government will not wait for the Association to set the standards - the other alternative is that the standards will be forced upon us.

The RMAA should define standards of professional practices by establishing clearly defined baseline competency skills which all students with a certificate, or higher degree, in records management and practising practitioners will be expected to exhibit.

Such a statement should describe what students/records staff are doing in the work-place and identify skills required to perform these tasks and should be written to provide educators with learner objectives. These objectives would establish precise work-place entry-level skills that students/records staff would be required to possess.

Standards of professional practice should also be provided to organisations with a means to appraise records personnel, both within the department and within the organisation. Such standards would make many organisations aware for the first time of the skills necessary to perform the job and might result in promotion and salary increases for the records personnel. It will assist in establishing a career path for records staff and benefit the organisation.

The standards would allow organisations to better select records personnel who possess those skills required to professionally perform the tasks, thus improving the quality of the records management profession. Properly recorded job descriptions/statements would provide organisations with this information.

This, in turn, would promote records management education and certification because organisations would select those candidates matching or exceeding those standards and requisites as defined in the standard of professional practice by the Records Management Association of Australia.

Standards of professional practice would also provide criteria by which to measure any acts of negligence or incompetency committed by records personnel. By defining expected proficiencies and knowledge on each job level, standards would be the criteria by which to appraise practitioners.

Standard competency statements for all levels of proficiency are necessary to establish professionalism of the field of Records Management. The Records Management Association of Australia should regard the writing of these statements as basic to its education and accreditation programs.

Graham Dudley
Federal President
July 14th, 1990

REPORT OF THE SECOND FEDERAL EXECUTIVE MEETING

The Second Meeting of the Federal Executive took place in Sydney, Saturday, 19th and Sunday, 20th May, 1990, and was attended by the following Executive members:

Mr. Graham Dudley (W.A.)
Mr. Phillip Taylor (VIC)
Mr. Jim Shepherd (QLD)
Mr. Ross Thompson (ACT)
Mr. Murray Stewart (QLD)

NATIONAL EDITOR AND MANAGER, PRODUCTION/MARKETING

Following receipt of only one proposal, representatives of Formfile Pty. Ltd. were requested to attend the meeting to discuss their proposal covering both Editorial and Production/Marketing.

Discussion on costing's, editorial, production, quality, quantity, length of contract, etc., allowed for a full and frank debate which realised an understanding of the requirements of the Association and its professional journal.

A recommendation has been made to Federal Council and a decision is expected shortly.

NATIONAL BILLING

Investigations have revealed this item to be more costly than originally thought.

A recommendation to reconsider this matter at the Federal Directors meeting in September 1990, is being circulated to all Federal Directors.

INSURANCE

Quotations have been received and the role of Federal Council and State Branch Councils was discussed.

This decision resulted in a recommendation that Insurance cover for travel by Federal and State Branch Councilors be the responsibility of Federal Council and that State Branches consider their respective requirements for Public Liability, Professional Indemnity, etc.

BANKING AND INVESTMENT OF FUNDS

Federal Treasurer, Jim Shepherd, presented the findings of his investigations.

It was surprising to see the results which revealed a range of interest rates, bank charges and other services proposed to service the Association's funds.

Contact with some of the organisations and their method of handling correspondence shows a vital need for RM consultants and their products.

The recommendation to Federal Council was to move all accounts to one bank with resultant attractive interest rates, etc., with Branches having total control of their funds.

Further information will be forthcoming after the decision of Federal Council.

Murray Stewart ARMA
FEDERAL SECRETARY

BRANCH REPORTS

ACT BRANCH REPORT

Regular seminars have been held during the past few months and they have been very well attended. These seminars have included:

May Presentation by Remington on their Lektriever storage system and its interface to the CARMS Records Management System developed by Ortex - presented by Gareth Jude of Remington and Bob Trewin of Ortex.

June "New Directions in Disposal" - presented by Steve Stuckey of Australian Archives.

July Seminar on the background and context of award restructuring and changes in the administrative structure within the Australian Public Service, particularly as they effect the records management profession - presented by Bob Mann of the Department of Industrial Relations.

Future seminars include:

August Effective Communication

October Report on the IMC

Our one-day workshop on Documenting Procedures, held in April was well attended and the Branch intends arranging more educational workshops over the next year.

Copies of the "Storage Media and the Law" seminar proceedings can now be purchased, at a cost of \$25.00 per copy, by writing to the ACT Branch.

Our sincere thanks go to all the people who have presented seminars for the ACT Branch over the past year

WA BRANCH REPORT

This is a synopsis of the WA Branch President's Report presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Branch in July 1990.

It gives me much pleasure to present to you the Annual Report of the Western Australian Branch of the Records Management Association of Australia for the year 1989-90.

The office bearers for the year were:

M. Medcalf - President.

G. Dudley - Vice-President, Treasurer and Federal Director.

A. Howard - Hon. Secretary and Federal Director until Dec. 1989 (then leave of absence).

S. Cowcher - Assistant Secretary to Dec. 1989 and Hon. Secretary from Jan. 1990.

R. Sharpe - Registrar and Assistant Treasurer.

C. Coggin - Education Chairperson until Dec. 1989, then Councillor without portfolio.

M. Hoo - Programme Director, Membership, Standards and Status Chairperson and Education Chairperson from

Jan. 1990.

K. Ridley - Membership Promotion Chairperson.

N. Granland - Editor Informaa and Federal Director from Jan. 1990.

N. Chartres - Councillor without portfolio.

C. Shervington - Councillor without portfolio.

J. Bonzas - Councillor until Sept. 1989.

Membership of the Branch stands at 193 individual and 51 corporate members compared with 179 and 42 at this time last year. This includes one person with Membership status and 18 Associates.

Branch Council met each month except January 1990. Three special meetings were held in September concerning the decision as to whether to go ahead with the Conference that month.

General meetings were held as follows:

In July, when a joint meeting with the Australian Society of Archivists was held with visiting officers of the Records Management Office of NSW.

In August, when a discussion on salary scales was held, led by Marita Hoo, Ken Ridley and Lynn Kickett.

In September, when Maggie Exon spoke about the proposed degree course in records management at Curtin University of Technology.

In November at SECWA, when Nigel Chartres spoke about EDI and electronic mail.

In February, when a visit was paid to the Perth Mail Exchange and its systems were explained.

In March, when Mike Kosewahr spoke on the state-of-the-art in micrographic technology.

In May, when Graham Dudley spoke on RMAA relationships to international bodies involved in records management.

The highlight of the year was the joint Second International Congress of the International Records Management Council and the Sixth National Convention of the Records Management Association of Australia held in Perth from 10th to 14th December 1989. This meeting, which had been scheduled for September, had to be postponed to December due to the airline pilots' dispute, and this caused Branch Council many worrying hours. In all there were 254 full and 46 day registrations. Congratulations to Graham Dudley who was the Conference Organiser and thank you to all the members who worked so hard to make this such a memorable and successful Conference.

The publication of Informaa has continued bi-monthly. Congratulations to Neil Granland, the Editor, who has been able to gain sponsorship for the publication, which has enabled the Branch to run the publication at a small profit for the first time.

Margaret Medcalf

President

17 July 1990

Editorial Note

Margaret Medcalf has decided not to stand for Branch Council this year and we would like to thank Margaret for her support and work done on behalf of the RMAA (WA Branch).

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

PETER SMITH
NSW BRANCH



Peter Smith has been a member of this Association practically from the time of its inception.

Peter is a person of outstanding character, and his Records Management achievements, as well as his reputation have brought outstanding credit to the Association.

Peter was the Manager of Records for Shortland Electricity where he worked for 37 years before taking up a full-time teaching position with the New South Wales Department of Technical Education (TAFE).

In 1983 Peter initiated a one year course in Records Management at Newcastle Technical College which he taught as a part-time teacher for six years.

Peter has contributed unstintingly to the Association, and was the Foundation President of this State's Local Government Chapter. Peter has also held various positions on the NSW Branch Council including President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. At the Federal level Peter has held the positions of Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. He is currently Past President.

Peter has contributed significantly to Records Management education, not only by his teaching involvement, but by lecturing at State, National and International Conventions, and having many articles published in local and overseas publications.

Peter has given freely of his time to the profession of Records Management and his involvement with the International Records Management Council, where he currently holds the office of President, has enabled him to be involved in the establishment of Records Management Associations in several developing countries.

As stated previously, Peter recently became a full-time teacher, teaching Records and Information Systems in an Associate Diploma of Business course for TAFE in NSW.

The NSW Branch currently has 3 Life Members within its ranks, the others being Eddis Linton and Cec Partridge.

Life Membership is the highest honour this Association can bestow upon a member, and the NSW Branch is proud to have 3 such esteemed members within its ranks.

Pam Camden, ARMA,
NSW Branch Secretary.

Obituary

PATRICIA WARD A.M.

It is with deep regret that we inform the members of the Association of the death of Mrs Patricia Ward on Sunday 6th May, 1990. Pat, her husband John and her daughter were tragically killed in the train accident at Brooklyn.

Patricia Ward attended the March meeting of the NSW Branch of the Association to receive her award of Honorary Member of the Association. She was the first person awarded honorary membership of the Association in its twenty-one year history. On the Thursday preceding her death Pat attended the investiture at Government House following her appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia in the 1990 Australia Day Honours List.

Pat was a teacher-librarian by training. She was very actively involved in ALIA, in many activities of that organisation. It was an allied activity, the Action Committee on Local Government Records, that introduced Pat to the records managers of New South Wales.

The Action Committee was formed in 1981 as a joint committee of archivists, librarians and historians who were concerned about preservation of the permanently valuable records of Local Government in NSW as a continuing community resource.

Pat was the Honorary Secretary of the Action Committee from its inception. As such she used her considerable talents to bring together those people whom she considered could effect change in this area. The twin achievements of the Action Committee were to amend Ordinance 1 of the Local Government Act to protect nominated records, and to participate in the compilation of the General Records Disposal Schedule for Local Government Records in New South Wales.

Pat's involvement went far beyond the formalities of the Committee. She had a great commitment to continuing education. She perceived that if records of Councils were to be preserved, then the records managers must be educated to appreciate the value of the resources they managed. To this end she was instrumental in organising many seminars and courses for practitioners in local government.

She always said that she had little to contribute except her ability to facilitate, to bring the right people together and let them interact. Pat's great enthusiasm and unfailing energy will be sadly missed by all who had the privilege of working with her.

In order to recognise her contribution to our particular field, the Association wishes to perpetuate her memory in a very practical way. In order to do this we seek the input of the membership. Some ideas have been put forward, such as to establish an annual seminar, or lecture which covers the common interests of librarians, records managers and archivists, in order to cultivate the interdisciplinary co-operation which Pat fostered so effectively. Please contribute actively to the decision making process by sending your suggestions to P.O. Box 41, Blacktown NSW.

Branch Council
NSW Branch
RMAA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Editor,

SUBJECT: RECORDS RETENTION

I feel it is important that members and readers be made aware of the recent amendment to the Tax Act. Section 262 A(4) which now requires tax records to be retained for the current financial year plus a further five years from its end, a reduction of two years.

It will be appreciated that this misaligns the Tax Act with the Companies Code which still requires a retention period of C + 7.

It is obvious that this may create a grey area where the same records may have to be kept for different periods under each statute.

I have therefore written to the Attorney Generals of Australia and for New South Wales pointing out this anomaly and recommending that the retention period under the Companies Code also be reduced, with a consequent saving of literally thousands of metres of shelf storage space.

I would commend to the Federal Council that it takes this matter up officially on behalf of our Association as an approach from a professional body will carry more weight than will a private one.

I suggest also that there be liaison with the two Accounting Associations on this matter, to whom I have also written.

Yours Sincerely,

J. Eddis Linton
F.R.M.A., CRM

Response to Eddis Linton letter:

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Dear Mr. Linton,

I refer to your letter of 29 July 1990 to the Attorney-General regarding the requirement to retain business records under the Companies Act and Codes. The Attorney General has asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

I have noted your views on the possible consequences that may flow from the now different requirements in the Tax Act and the companies legislation as to how long records may be kept.

Your recommendation for an amendment to the companies legislation is being considered within this Department and will be taken into account in the context of the future review of the Corporations Act 1989 which it is anticipated will replace that legislation in January 1991.

Yours Sincerely,

(Sgd) B.O'Callaghan

(B.O'CALLAGHAN)
A/g First Assistant Secretary
Business Affairs Division

Dear Editor,

SUBJECT: RMAA HISTORY

In his article on page 66 of the February INFORMAA, H. Nunn writes that in December, 1968, the RMAA, Victoria Branch, was launched by a small group: A Skerman (not Sherman), P. Mulquiney, A. Black and M. Bassett. He also says that the NSW Branch had its first genesis six months earlier.

In case anyone is inclined to take this as the official record, the account is both misleading and inaccurate.

Early in 1968 Tom Lovett was lecturing in records management in Sydney and writing a column for Modern Office. Mike Leigh was a systems development officer for ACI Ltd., working in Melbourne, mainly on records management oriented projects.

At the suggestion of Ray Buckingham, ACI's Systems Development manager, Leigh wrote to Lovett (the two had been acquainted for some years) asking if he had knowledge of an association dealing with records management.

Lovett had not and asked his students if they thought an association was a good idea. Their support for the idea was unanimous.

In the next issue of Modern Office Lovett inserted a registration of interest form, inviting support from all over Australia. he advised Leigh to watch out for it. The issue in question was probably the April or May issue, 1968.

Five responded from Victoria. they were Leigh, N. Davies (Davy Ashmore), B. P. Munro (U & I Ltd) and representatives of A.S.C.O. and N.C.R. Ltd whose names escape me.

Lovett formed in Sydney what he called a NSW Pilot Committee. He then contacted the Victorian respondents with a view to a Melbourne meeting. The meeting was held at the Windsor Hotel, Spring St., over lunch in the July.

A Victoria Pilot Committee was formed. Leigh was chairman and Davies, secretary/treasurer. Munro and the ASCO gentleman were to help in the events that followed. The NCR representative attended no further meetings.

During the next few months the Victorian committee worked towards attracting people to an inauguration in the March of 1969. A number of interested people in records management were canvassed to participate in the effort. They included Mulquiney, Skerman, Black, Bassett, Bert Brewster and Bert Baensch, the latter being responsible for the venue, the RAAF Club in St. Kilda Rd.

Lovett travelled south for the occasion. (The NSW inauguration would not be until the June). Over 70 people attended the Victorian inauguration.

Guest Speaker was Prof. F. J. Willetts of the University of Melbourne, who made the statement that 'the universities would not touch records management with a bargepole' (until the fraternity or profession had developed maturity, standards and direction).

But the RMAA was born and already a major, 3-day seminar was being planned for the coming September and there was talk of a national governing body. the seminar was held at the SEC, Monash House, thanks to Brewster. The meeting of the Victorian and NSW delegates took place at the Davy Ashmore offices at 480 St. Kilda Rd. during the seminar and a Federal Council was born, with

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Nunn's involvement began when he called Davies and told him of his involvement in proposed Victorian legislation (culminating in the Public Records Act, 1973). Nunn said he thought he should not only be a member of the RMAA but also of the Council.

Davies rang Leigh (the two retained their secretary/treasurer roles after inauguration). Leigh said 'Grab him. We need him', and so began a long and fruitful contribution by Harry Nunn, - although some of the fruits had a few pips!

Looking back over those early days of the RMAA there were many contributors and many challenges to face. The two outstanding contributors in my own judgement were

Peter Mulquiney and Bert Brewster as far as Victoria was concerned. These two concentrated on developing Victoria's first Record Management education course.

In NSW I felt that Eddis Linton would make the Earth shake, and he did, but I know that justice would not be served if I did not state categorically that it was Tom Lovett, with his personla brand of dynamism, who takes the ultimate credit for bringing the RMAA into existence. The RMAA must never lose sight of that.

Mike Leigh, MRMA, CRM

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**THE FIFTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
RECORDS MANAGMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
WILL BE HELD AT 9 A.M. ON THURSDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1990
AT THE SHERATON BRISBANE HOTEL & TOWERS, BRISBANE,
QUEENSLAND**

THE PROPOSED W.A. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Address to the annual general meeting of the Records Management Association of Australia (WA branch)

BY JILL TOOHEY,

Technical Consultant, Minister for Justice.

INTRODUCTION

The subject I have agreed to speak on is "The Proposed W.A. Freedom of Information Act". That is possibly a little misleading in that it suggests that I will be able to give you in some detail information about the proposed provisions of the Act and its operation.

Many of these details are still to be decided upon by the Government.

What I intend doing is to outline generally the scheme of the proposed legislation and some of the issues involved - many of which are still in the form of questions rather than answers; also to set out what I believe are the principal benefits and advantages of FOI.

The principles underlying FOI legislation and the drafting of provisions to properly reflect what we want to achieve are not simple matters.

You will appreciate that there is a whole range of matters on which Cabinet is yet to make a final decision. I will not, therefore, be able to give you the details you would perhaps like - how will applications be made, what charges will there be, what precisely will the review structures and processes be. These are all matters still actively being considered. Some of what I will say are my own personal views.

However, what is certain is that the Government now has a clear commitment to Freedom of Information legislation.

Western Australia is well placed to come up with a workable, efficient and accessible Act. We have the benefit of being able to consider the Commonwealth Act which has been in place since 1982, the Victorian Act, in place since 1983 and the N.S.W. Act which commenced operation in 1989.

FOI is at various stages in the other states and we are able to consider their proposals. We have also the benefit of a number of reviews of the operation of the various acts and a considerable body of cases and academic writing. At the same time, the benefit of all that experience makes our task even more challenging - how to avoid others' mistakes, learn from their experience and also deal with a range of emerging issues such as personal privacy.

WHAT IS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION?

In the absence of legislation there is no general, enforceable (and that is a key word) right of access to Government documents. There is no right to obtain documents or copies of documents held by another person or body even where those documents are about oneself.

In practice, many Government Agencies and some private bodies allow access to a whole range of information. In some cases this is limited, in others it is quite extensive. Access in these cases is a matter for Administrative Guidelines and Departmental Policy: it is discretionary and essentially a benefit extended by the Agency rather than a right exercised by the individual.

As a Society we have come to believe that such prin-

ciples a Accountability of Government and participation by the public in the decision-making processes of Government are of value. We have also come to the view, largely as a result of the work of various consumer groups, that rights, unless truly exercisable and enforceable, are of limited and often illusory value.

These principles and values are reflected in FOI legislation both in Australia and overseas.

The Three Fundamental Features of FOI are:

- (i) A legal and enforceable right of access to Government records without a demonstrated need to know;
- (ii) Specific exemptions to protect essential public and private interests; and
- (iii) Where access is refused, a right of review by an independent body.

In keeping with these features and in common with other FOI Acts, the proposed Western Australian Act will concern three areas of information:

First, Agencies will be required to publish information about their structure and functions. This will enable members of the public to know how agencies are organised and what their responsibilities are. It will assist in identifying to whom to direct a request.

Secondly, a general right of access to Government documents is conferred, subject to specific exemptions necessary in the public or private interest. Access to those documents to which an exemption applies may be refused and that is an important point to make - that FOI

enables an agency to refuse access - it is not required to refuse it and may release documents for which an exemption might be claimed.

Thirdly, where personal records are concerned, the subject of those

records has a right to correct errors. Thus, in future, Administrative decisions affecting that person should be based on accurate information.

In more detail:

The Act will provide for a legally enforceable right of access without a demonstrated need to know to documents in the possession of those bodies, including Ministers, Government Departments and other Public Bodies which can broadly be said to constitute the Western Australian Government.

The details of the Categories of Exemptions are not yet settled. We want to take care to ensure that they are drafted to balance the public's interest in the right to know and the public's interest in a workable and functioning Government. But broadly they will be in line with exemptions common to other statutes and will include:

- Cabinet and Executive Council Documents
- Documents affecting Inter-Governmental Relations
- Documents which generally come under the heading "Internal Working Documents"
- Those affecting Law Enforcement and Public Safety
- Those affecting the Financial, Property or Commercial interests of the State or an Agency.

AND

- Documents relating to the Personal Privacy, Business Affairs or Research Activities of another.

Consideration is being given to the question of Ministerial Certificates, provided for in various ways in other Acts. These have the effect, when applied to a very limited number of documents, of providing a conclusive exemption.

In certain cases Agencies will have to consult with third parties before granting access to documents which might

affect their interests. Generally these will be documents affecting inter-governmental relations or the Personal Privacy, Business Affairs or Research Activities of a third party.

An essential element of the legislation will be the Review Provisions. These will enable review of decisions - primarily those relating to whether a document is exempt and, therefore, should not be released. Initially this will be by way of Internal Review within the Agency by a more Senior Officer. Further appeal will be by way of complaint to the Ombudsman or to a Court or Tribunal. We are mindful of the costs and general inaccessibility to many people of most court processes and are looking at ways of minimising both.

Charging is a difficult area. In a time in which we have become used to the principle of "user pays" we need also to provide a system which is as accessible as possible. The general principle which it is hoped to follow is that access to documents about oneself should be at a very nominal charge. There will be charges for access to other "official" documents but just how that is to be calculated is yet to be settled.

In either case provision will be made for waiver or reduction in certain cases, including financial hardship.

In order to assist members of the public to effectively exercise the rights conferred by the legislation, agencies will be required to publish or make available information about their structure and functions including making available copies of manuals used by the agency in making decisions or recommendations affecting the public. This requirement can be onerous on the Agency and costly and we are looking at ways of having that information available without imposing too great a burden on Agencies.

Finally, and possibly of greatest interest to members of the public, will be the right to correct inaccurate or incorrect information about themselves. We are having to consider carefully the meaning of such words as "amend", "correct", "inaccurate", "incorrect" and "misleading" to ensure that a useful right is conferred on the public which at the same time does not make the Records Keeper's life a nightmare.

WHY SHOULD WE HAVE FOI/WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS?

Assessing the costs and benefits of FOI is not a simple task:

They are measured in different terms - one primarily financial and the other broader, less tangible. To some extent FOI, like other human and civil rights initiatives such as Equal Opportunity, demands some faith: a belief in certain values and a conviction that we are a better society for incorporating those values into our legislative processes.

There can be no denying that the implementation of FOI is a task on a grand scale, involving considerable time and cost. You would know better than most people within Government just exactly what is involved in the collection and maintenance and retrieval of information.

Any new venture costs money and any far-reaching Administrative Reform demands resources. The real question is whether the benefits justify the resources committed to them and whether the initial costs settle down in time.

It is an important point to make that the Government already engages in a range of activities aimed at providing the public with information and receives a large volume of

requests for information, through letters to Ministers and direct oral or written approaches to Departments. Many Agencies have forms of Administrative Instructions enabling access to personal records and other documents. Part of the apparent workload of Departments and cost of FOI could perhaps more properly be regarded as a continuation of existing Departmental Services of providing information to the public.

Evidence from the Commonwealth shows that, as predicted, the costs of FOI are falling. In part this appears to be attributable to the increased efficiency of agencies in dealing with requests.

In addition, the cost needs to be put into perspective. The cost to the Commonwealth of FOI in 1985-86 was estimated at \$15.7 million. In the next year we paid \$16.4 million for ABC Concert music and \$14.6 million for public service furniture removal.

If assessing the costs with any precision is difficult, measuring the value of FOI is even harder. It is not measurable in dollars, or numbers of requests or numbers of documents released.

How does one measure the benefits that flow from greater Community awareness of what Government is doing and or increased accountability by Government? How to measure the benefit to the Community of the right to correct incorrect personal information; how to measure the value of the increased Community participation in Government which is made more possible by increased awareness of the structure and functions of Government.

To some extent we simply have to come to a judgement that these outcomes are real and that we believe in their value.

Those against FOI will argue that the scrutiny to which Departments will become subject will reduce efficiency and jeopardise the willingness of public servants to commit all the relevant information and advice to paper and include it in the official filing system. Those for FOI will argue that it will encourage a more rational and reasoned basis for Government decision making. Perhaps there is some truth in both.

But there is evidence and we do have some means of assessing the benefits of FOI.

The Commonwealth Department of Social Security provides one example. When FOI was first introduced and requests started rolling in from clients wanting to see their files, the inadequacies of the file retrieval system became apparent and the whole filing system was reorganised. The Department's procedure manuals, available under the Act to the public, were re-written in plain English so that not only the public but also the staff could better understand them. The results have been a more efficiently run Department.

The FOI report of the Victorian Law Department in 1984-85 gave another example:

The Health Commission reported that files which once resembled streams of consciousness have now become more succinct and to the point. Prejudicial Commentary has been significantly reduced. Inspectorial records have become more analytical and psychiatric records more reflective and relevant. "Mr. X. was drunk" has been replaced by

"Mr. X. appeared to have been drinking."

In 1986, in NSW, a public interest group used FOI in its campaign to defeat a plan to establish an Army Training and Manoeuvres Base on large tracts of land around Orange, Bathurst and Cobar. The group obtained

material that revealed concerns within the Defence Department that the land did not meet the Army's own specifications for a suitable site. The plan was eventually dropped.

There is often a fear on the part of Government and its Agencies that cases such as this will become the norm, that Government will be ground to a halt under the weight of requests for access and that the proper functioning of Government will be impeded by the release of such information. In fact, such requests represent only a very small proportion of those made. By far the bulk of requests are for access to personal documents.

FOI has, in fact, a very human face. Some examples of its benefits to users are :

- People have sought Governments Inspectors' reports on Nursing Homes before deciding where to settle an ageing relative.

- Parents have sought school reports about their children's playground accidents.

- Customers contesting power and Telecom Accounts have used FOI.

- In Victoria, a former ward of the State discovered through FOI that she had a half-brother. She located him and his adoptive family and they accepted the woman and encouraged her relationship with her brother.

- Students have used FOI to obtain details of examiners' comments and the raw marks from which their grades were derived.

These sorts of requests and the number of requests for personal documents put some of the concerns about FOI into perspective.

Members of your association will obviously have a very

real interest in FOI. It is easy enough for people in Government to extol its virtues. You will know first hand the problems which have arisen under other acts, whether the present information systems will cope with the demands of FOI, how systems differ between departments and all the practical difficulties.

I was interested to read in the 1978 report of the SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS ON THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL 1978 AND ASPECTS OF THE ARCHIVES BILL 1978 that your Association congratulated the Government on bringing the Freedom of Information Legislation forward. It argued that it would force the long overdue training of Information Managers. I appreciate that those comments were made some thirteen years ago and before the Commonwealth actually enacted its Legislation. We would be very interested to hear whether your Association is still of the same view and to have the benefit of any information or comment members may wish to give.

Any reform of this scale is long and slow. We are not yet at a stage, even with the Commonwealth Act which has been operating for nearly 10 years, to measure its costs, let alone prove that its benefits exist. We could easily overstate the case for FOI and attribute to it the full protection of the basis principles of Democratic Government - Openness, Accountability and Responsibility. At the same time a picture is emerging of Departments that are now aware that they can be held accountable and are more efficient and of a public which is becoming aware that FOI can work for them if they need it. Those are both healthy features of a society and ones which need our support.



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IS YOUR RECORDS CENTRE SUCCESSFUL?

KEN RIDLEY, DIP. PUB. ADMIN (PTC), ARMA

I recently had occasion to read once again that controversial article "RMAA RETROSPECTIVE - PROSPECTIVE (INFORMAA QUARTERLY - VOL 4 No. 1 FEBRUARY 1988) and I was very mindful of Tom Lovetts' call for EXCELLENCE in records management.

My contention is that for the Records Management Practitioner to be able to strive for excellence, he or she must be familiar with and use a number of contemporary management practices. For example, Personnel Performance Management Systems, Corporate Planning Strategies, Budgeting and Work Performance Indicators.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The development and use of performance indicators to monitor the activities of the records centre pose a considerable challenge.

In the report "MANAGING ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE - OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW", PSB, WA, 1987, the executive summary describes the challenge thus..."The function of managers in both the private and public sectors is to ensure that their product or service meets particular needs of consumers at an acceptable cost. Private sector organisations which fail this test do not, in the long run survive; Public sector organisations as agencies of Government, are seen as inefficient and ineffective."

I am sure you will all agree that it is essential that the management of an organisation's corporate memory must be efficient and cost effective. Poorly managed records will have a reverberative effect throughout the organisation. Senior Executives are beginning to appreciate the importance of management of documents when they first appear in the organisation rather than at the end of their life cycle when they are inactive. We have all experienced the scenario that the records centre (and the corporate memory) is taken for granted until an issue goes off the rails.

It is quite an achievement to computerise a registry - bar codes and all! It is even better to develop on-line thesauri and correspondence control systems, but the question remains - how do we know we are doing a good job?

Records Managers are operating in an environment where demands for services continue to rise whilst availability of resources to manage those demands are increasingly constrained. Information holdings grow and become more complex and decision makers require information in a shorter time frame.

To meet such challenges, most organisations have opted for an integrated approach to manage all available organisational resources. This integrated style of management can be facilitated by adoption of a program structure - (inputs, activities and outputs directed towards a common objective).

All managers operating within this program structure need performance indicators so that programs can be measured and reported to senior management. If the Records Manager is to compete for scarce resources with other areas of the organisation it is vital that some measures of performance be developed.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

In their book "ONE PAGE MANAGEMENT; HOW TO USE INFORMATION TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS" Khadem and Lorber suggest that certain Critical Success Factors listed in a "FOCUS REPORT" will quickly and simply give information on how successful a Unit or Branch is performing.

Managing the Corporate Memory requires records personnel to perform a variety of tasks, some daily (index correspondence and open mail) and some periodically (review thesauri and update disposition schedule). The Records Manager needs to know how well the records centre is functioning and to identify any problem areas as they arise.

It is fairly obvious that information about registry operations needs to be gathered and formatted in report form if we are to make judgements about our success or otherwise.

Thomas S. Monson, a noted American Company Executive and Church official has said:

"When we deal in generalities we shall never succeed.

When we deal in specifics we shall rarely have a failure.

When performance is measured, performance improves.

When performance is measured and REPORTED the rate of performance accelerates."

Khadem and Lorber (1986) suggest that managers generally need information to guide them to success. A Records Manager would have to ask 'What factors would I look at to show that I have been successful?' These may include such issues as the number of complaints about the level of service, percentage retrieval of information requested, number of file requests satisfied in a given time-frame and so on.

These factors are called success factors. They may be many but only the most important ones should be extracted. These important success factors become the CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS (CSFs) and generally there are only 3 to 10 CSFs which remain constant regardless of volume.

CSFs have a number of advantages...

- *They drastically reduce the amount of information necessary to be presented for monthly reports, annual reports etc.

- *They focus attention on these matters which required priority action.

- *They allow an external observer to immediately assess the Records Centre's performance and allow them to ask informed questions.

- *They provide feedback as to the Records Centre's performance.

The aim of CSFs is not to identify a poor manager but to ensure that where problems exist attention and resources can be provided promptly.

The attached Focus Report lists six Critical Success Factors that might apply to a Registry that has just introduced control vocabulary and a computerised tracking system. Three clear goal levels are set out.

The status is the current information about indexing mail clearances etc.

The minimum level is the borderline between satisfactory and unsuccessful performance. When you perform worse than this you know you are in trouble.

The satisfactory level suggests the progress towards the ultimate goal.

The outstanding level is the achievable but challenging

Brisbane 11th to 14th September, 1990 at Sheraton Brisbane Hotel and Towers

On behalf of the Convention Organising Committee, I invite you to join us in Brisbane.


The theme of the convention is "**Managing Information Today**", a most appropriate topic for the first year of a new decade. As we approach the end of the century, information — now more than ever — will be the lifeblood of organisations, both public and private. Decisions made today will reflect upon us all as we pass into this exciting period.

The keynote address "**Managing Information Today**" will be presented by Robyn Williams, OA, Executive Producer of the ABC Radio "Science Show".

Delegates will hear presentations covering a range of information and management topics. Each paper will enable a sharing of knowledge and will assist in the professional development of Records Managers. In conjunction, trade exhibits will demonstrate advances in computer technology, physical storage systems and other Information Management products.

The setting for the convention is the Sheraton Hotel and Towers, situated in the heart of our beautiful city. Delegates can be assured that Brisbane during springtime is a favoured holiday destination, and it's well known hospitality, will make the 7th National Convention a successful and important event in your business calendar.

We look forward to seeing you in Brisbane in September 1990.


Murray Stewart
Chairman, Organising Committee

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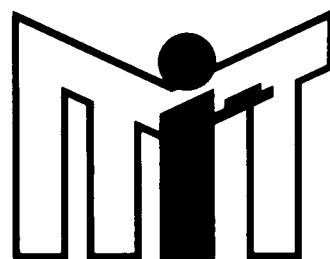
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BRISBANE 11th - 14th SEPTEMBER 1990



7TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
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ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Accommodation Only (Brisbane)

Hotel	Single	Double/Twin
Sheraton Standard	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00
Sheraton Towers	\$ 205.00	\$ 205.00
Gazebo	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.00

Accommodation and Airfare Packages

Based on 3 nights - in on 11th September and out on 14th September, plus economy class airfare. Airfares are subject to price increase. If extra nights are required, above costs apply. (Deposits listed below remain the same, regardless of number of nights accommodation required.) Balance of all payments to be finalised personally upon departure from hotel.

Below rates are per person for Twin/Double Share accommodation only.

Hotel	Sydney	M'bourne	Adelaide	Perth	Darwin	Hobart	Canberra
Sheraton Standard	\$ 647.00	\$ 849.00	\$ 993.00	\$ 1413.00	\$ 1201.00	\$ 1013.00	\$ 729.00
Sheraton Towers	\$ 729.50	\$ 931.50	\$ 1075.50	\$ 1495.50	\$ 1283.50	\$ 1095.50	\$ 811.50
Gazebo Standard	\$ 549.50	\$ 751.50	\$ 895.50	\$ 1315.00	\$ 1103.00	\$ 915.50	\$ 631.50

For **single supplement** please add the following costs to total package amounts: (All deposit amounts remain the same for Single or Twin/Double).

Sheraton	Sheraton	Gazebo
Standard \$ 225.00	Towers \$ 307.50	Standard \$ 127.50

All accommodation will be allocated in order of receipt of registration. Deposits shown must be paid to confirm your reservation. This payment must be included with registration fees.

Accommodation Deposit Payments

Same deposit rate applies to airfare/accommodation packages and accommodation only bookings.

	Sheraton	Sheraton	Gazebo
	Standard	Towers	Standard
Deposit	\$ 150.00	\$ 205.00	\$ 85.00

Please note, these rates have been specially arranged for the convention only, therefore your reservation must be made through the Convention Secretariat.

For those visitors with flights arriving in the early hours of the morning, to avoid confusion, accommodation must be reserved for the day before as check in time is not before 10.00am. Please indicate date and time of arrival and departure and also Airline or Coachline you will be travelling on.

Official Convention Carrier

All enquiries should be made to your local Australian Airlines Office. International delegates are eligible for travel concessions within Australia.

Social Functions

All fully registered delegates and registered accompanying persons are entitled to attend the Welcome Civic Reception, Convention Dinner, Trade Cocktail Party and the Convention Breakfast. To assist with catering arrangements please mark your intention to attend on the Registration Form.

The Social Functions will commence in the evening Tuesday, 11th September, 1990 with a Welcome Civic Reception at Brisbane City Hall, hosted by The Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Sallyanne Atkinson.

On Wednesday evening join us for the Convention Dinner which will be held at the wonderful Dreamworld Theme Park. Coaches will transport delegates from the Sheraton Hotel and back. Many of the Dreamworld attractions are outdoors so bring casual clothing suitable for a possible cool evening. "Wear comfortable footwear." Cost to all other interested persons \$60.00 per person. Others (Non-Registrants) wishing to attend the Convention Dinner, Convention Breakfast and Trade Cocktail Party may do so by completing this section on the registration form (please include numbers and payment) or by purchasing tickets at the registration desk in the Sheraton Hotel on **Tuesday 11th September 1990 only.**

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
7TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
BRISBANE 11 - 14TH SEPTEMBER 1990

Delegate

Surname Mr/Mrs Miss/Ms		Given Names	
Position Held		Place of Work	
Postal Address		Phone No.	State/Country
Postcode		Facsimile	

Accompanying Person

Surname Mr/Mrs Miss/Ms	Given Names
------------------------------	-------------

Registration Fees

Full Registration	Cost	Payment	Day Registration	Cost	Payment
Delegate (Member)	\$595.00	\$	Wednesday 12th September	\$220.00	\$
Accompanying Person (Member)	\$230.00	\$	Thursday 13th September	\$220.00	\$
Delegate (Non-Member)	\$650.00	\$	Friday 14th September	\$220.00	\$
Accompanying Person (Non-Member)	\$285.00	\$			
TOTAL		\$	TOTAL		\$

NOTE: All fees in Australian currency can be accepted only if drawn on Australian bank accounts or Bankcard. All overseas registrants should forward a bank draft in Australian dollars. Payable on the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. All cheques to be made payable to Records Management Association of Australia, 7th National Convention.

Accommodation - I will arrange my own ☐ Accommodation ☐ Transport

I require <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation <input type="checkbox"/> Transport	Arrival Date / /	Arrival Time	Departure Date / /	Arrival By <input type="checkbox"/> Car <input type="checkbox"/> Rail <input type="checkbox"/> Airline <input type="checkbox"/> Coach
Airline/Coach Name	Flight No.	Hotel Preference <input type="checkbox"/> Sheraton Tower <input type="checkbox"/> Sheraton Standard <input type="checkbox"/> Gazebo Hotel Other		
I wish to Twin/Triple share with	Room/s Required <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Double Twin Other Nights Single Nights Double Twin			
Required Number for Accommodation	Deposit for Accommodation	Deposit for Travel & Accommodation Package		As Detailed on Information Brochure

Social Function Costs - below are included in the Full Delegate and Accompanying Person Registration Fees. For catering purposes please indicate if attending.

Function	Cost	No. of Persons Attending	Day Registrant Payment
Welcome Civic Reception - 11th Sept.			
Convention Dinner - 12th Sept.	\$60		\$
Convention Breakfast - 14th Sept.	\$20		\$
Trade Cocktail Party - 13th Sept.	\$32		\$
TOTAL			\$

Total Payment Enclosed

Registration Fees	\$
Deposit Accommodation	\$
Deposit for Travel and Accommodation Package	\$
Social Functions	\$
TOTAL	\$

On completion of registration form forward to: Records Management Association of Australia, 7th National Convention, C/o Organisers Australia P.O. Box 177 Red Hill Queensland 4059 Aust.

Bankcard/Mastercard Details

Name	Expiry Date	Number
I hereby authorise the amount of \$ to be debited to my Bankcard as detailed above.		Signature

Please indicate number of people attending each session/function by placing the number in boxes provided.

AGENDA

Tuesday, 11th September, 1990

- 12 noon - 5.30p.m. Registration
- 5.30p.m. - 6.30p.m. ☐ Welcome Civic Reception in City Hall by The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Brisbane Alderman Sallyanne Atkinson.

Wednesday, 12th September, 1990

- 8.00a.m. - 9.00a.m. Registration
- 9.00a.m. - 9.30a.m. ☐ Official Opening
- 9.30a.m. - 10.30a.m. ☐ Keynote address - Managing Information Today - Robyn Williams, O.A. Executive Producer, ABC Radio "Science Show"
- 10.30a.m. - 11.00a.m. Tea or Coffee
- 11.00a.m. - 12.00p.m. ☐ Managing Information Needs - Bill Parr, Dept of Transport Qld.

12.00p.m. - 1.30p.m. Lunch

1.30p.m. - 2.30p.m. Trade Display Opening

2.30p.m. - 3.00p.m. Trade Display

3.00p.m. - 3.30p.m. Tea or Coffee

3.30p.m. - 4.30p.m. Trade Display

5.30p.m. - 12.00p.m. ☐ Convention Dinner

Thursday, 13th September, 1990

- 8.00a.m. - 9.00a.m. Day Registration
- 9.00a.m. - 10.00a.m. ☐ R.M.A.A. Annual General Meeting
- 10.00a.m. - 10.30a.m. Tea or Coffee
- 10.30a.m. - 11.30a.m. ☐ Facilities Management
- OR
- ☐ Learning Management

Thursday, 13th September, 1990 (cont.)

- 11.30a.m. - 12.30p.m. ☐ Managing Obsolescence in Technology
- OR
- ☐ Managing People in Information Services
- 12.30p.m. - 2.00p.m. Lunch
- 2.00p.m. - 3.00p.m. ☐ Managing Change
- OR
- ☐ Management Planning & Controlling

3.00p.m. - 3.30p.m. Tea or Coffee

3.30p.m. - 5.30p.m. Trade Display

6.00p.m. - 7.30p.m. ☐ Trade Cocktails *Not available to Day Registrants unless prior booking made*

Friday, 14th September, 1990

7.00a.m. - 8.30a.m. ☐ Convention Breakfast

8.30a.m. - 9.00a.m. Day Registration

9.00a.m. - 10.00a.m. ☐ Corporate Archives Management

OR

☐ Managing the Communication Network

10.00a.m. - 10.30a.m. Tea or Coffee

10.30a.m. - 11.30a.m. ☐ Managing Corporate Libraries

OR

☐ Managing Systems Development

11.30a.m. - 12.30p.m. ☐ Forms Management

OR

☐ Managing Conversions

12.30p.m. - 2.00p.m. Lunch

2.00p.m. - 3.00p.m. ☐ Managing Information Tomorrow - Vic Pullar, BEFIE (Aust), Chancellor, Queensland University of Technology

3.00p.m. - 3.30p.m. Tea or Coffee

3.30p.m. - 4.00p.m. ☐ Closing Address

4.00p.m. - 5.00p.m. ☐ Welcome Darwin 1991 Farewell Function

Registration Fees

Full Delegates

Registration and payment of fees by all participants is essential. This page contains all the necessary information to complete the attached registration form. Please read it carefully before filling out your registration which, together with your cheque, should be returned to the Convention Secretariat.

Australian delegates may pay by personal cheque, made payable to the Records Management Association of Australia 7th National Convention, or by Australian Bankcard or Mastercard. Payments from abroad must be made by bank draft in Australian dollars. No other forms of payment will be accepted. Your name and full address should be clearly marked on the back of your cheque. **Please Note** - your payment should cover: registration fees and deposit for hotel accommodation (one night). All fees do not include insurance of any kind.

Your registration details will be confirmed in writing in accordance with your form, a copy of which will be returned to you.

Any cancellations must be in writing to the Convention Organisers before **1st August 1990**. Refunds of cancellations received after this date will be made only in exceptional circumstances. Should the convention have to be cancelled by the Organisers, fees minus deduction of expenses already incurred would be refunded.

All Full Registration Fees include:

- Attendance at any sessions of the Convention
- Published Papers
- Morning and Afternoon Tea, and Lunches
- Civic Reception
- Convention Dinner
- Satchel containing various programmes
- Trade Cocktail Party
- Convention Breakfast

Accompanying Persons

Accompanying Persons are defined as spouses or friends of Full Registrants who wish to participate in the Social Programme, but not the technical programme. Older children wishing to accompany adults to functions should register as accompanying persons.

All Accompanying Persons Registration fees include:

- Lunches
- Convention Dinner
- Satchel
- Civic Reception
- Trade Cocktail Party

Day Registration

It has been decided to allow a limited number of day registrations with a maximum of two days to each person. Should you wish to be a Day Registrant please acknowledge promptly.

All Day Registrants are entitled to:

- Attend all sessions of the day chosen
- Morning and Afternoon Tea and Lunch of the day

Should Day Registrants wish to attend any of the Social Functions, tickets can be ordered with this form (please include payment).

Session Preferences

The Daily Programme is shown on the registration form. Where concurrent sessions occur, to assist with seating arrangements, it is **important** to mark which session you wish to attend.

Dress

The following dress is recommended for the period of the convention:

Civic Reception: Lounge Suit / After 5 Dress

Convention Sessions: Smart Casual

Convention Dinner: Smart Casual ***As this event is being held at Dreamworld Theme Park and some time will be spent outdoors it is recommended that a jacket/jumper be taken for the cool night air and the delegates wear comfortable shoes.***

Climate

Brisbane boasts a luxurious sub-tropical climate and averages 7.5 hours of sunshine a day. During September Brisbane's average temperatures range from a minimum of 12°C to a maximum of 24°C. This is a very pleasant time of year.

target that in most cases can be achieved over time.

The trend indicates if we are headed in the right direction. A 'B' is for a bad trend or worsening performance, a 'G' is for a good trend or improving performance.

It should be noted CSFs are not set in concrete and may change in time. Target levels (outstanding goals) may require periodic review. A run of particularly bad results may indicate targets have been set too high rather than being the result of poor management.

CONCLUSION

As we approach the turn of the century, managers of Corporate Information will be confronted with a quantum leap in technology - Electronic Data Interchange (including facsimilies), erasable optical disc and perhaps even smart card bar codes on documents.

We must strive for excellence.

To maintain our professional credibility we need to adapt and develop management techniques from other disciplines. Being able to quantify levels of performance via such instruments as Critical Success Factors, report on them and thus be more proactive in the competition for

scarce resources is a challenge for all of us.

Ken Ridley has worked in the W.A. State Government over the past 20 years. He has been the Records Manager at the WA Department of Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare since 1985 and member of the RMAA WA Branch Council since 1989.

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Lovett, T.: Towards Excellence in Records Management Informaa Quarterly Vol. 4 No. 1 February 1988.

FOCUS REPORT BRANCH: RECORDS MANAGEMENT

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	STATUS	MINIMUM LEVEL	SATISFACTORY GOAL LEVEL	OUTSTANDING GOAL LEVEL	TREND
1. CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL					
Percentage of active correspondence indexed and attached to file within one working day	75%	60%	75%	90%	80%
Percentage of non active correspondence attached to files within 5 working days	50%	50%	70%	80%	70%
2. FILE MANAGEMENT					
Retrieval of files requested by clients	within 2 days	within 2 days	within 5 hrs	within 2 ¹ / ₂ hrs	5 hours
Elapsed time to conduct file audit (listing)	30 hrs	7 hrs	5 hrs	3 ¹ / ₂ hrs	7 hours
No. of files cannot be found per week (total holdings 50,000)	40	30	15	10	10 hours
3. INDEX					
Accuracy and specificity of titles and index relating to corporate objectives					
- Administration	85% of holdings	90%	95%	98%	95%
- Functional	85% of holdings	90%	95%	98%	95%
4. Mail					
Mail cleared to Post Office	4 hours	7 hours	4 hours	2 hours	4 hours
Internal mail circulated officer to officer	4 hours	7 hours	4 hours	2 hours	4 hours
5. ONGOING PROJECT					
Construct thesauri	complete				
Instal Hardware/software	complete				
Conduct training	complete				
Data entry	15.12.90.	15.12.90.	30.11.90	30.10.90	G
Cover/label/files	15.1.91.	15.1.91.	30.12.90	30.11.90	G
6. DEVIATION FROM BUDGET	even	2% excess	even	under	G

SUCCESSFUL SOLUTIONS ARE SATISFYING - A Case Study.

J. EDDIS LINTON, FRMA

One of the continuing satisfactions that records management consulting brings is the creative opportunities it offers. The need to design a logical pattern as a solution to a specific problem imposes both a challenge to stretch one's imagination and ingenuity, and a responsibility to find a viable, acceptable and economical solution. A good solution, one that works in practice, should satisfy both the client's needs and one's own creativity. Any career work that does not give one a sense of fulfilment ultimately leads to boredom and frustration.

A case in point was a mounting problem facing Diabetes Australia, an organisation devoted to the welfare of people suffering from diabetes. Its National Office in Canberra receives, each month, several hundred registration forms from all over Australia from people with diabetes enrolling in the Australian Government's National Diabetes Supply Scheme (NDSS) administered by Diabetes Australia.

Under NDSS, insulin and hypodermic syringes are supplied to people with diabetes (they dislike the word 'Diabetics' preferring the acronym PWD) at special government subsidised rates.

Each registerer is issued with a pre-numbered identification card which enables sufferers to obtain supplies from approved outlets.

These cards are attached to continuous stationery and sent to the state organisations by the carton for issuing to those registering.

The registration forms, which are signed and contain certain medical information, are used as data entry forms to enter certain of their data into a national register of PWD's.

The original forms are then sent in monthly batches to the National Office for filing permanently, in case of fraud or future need to analyse the medical data not included in the register. The signature of the registerer could become important in a case of fraudulently obtaining supplies etc. It is possible at any time for the Commonwealth Health Department to ask for an original registration, if someone for example, attempts to register twice in different States, or to sell supplies.

The problem was to find some way to organise some thousands of registration forms having in mind the following:

1. The forms are roughly in monthly batches, dating back to 1987.
2. The only criteria from the National Register of use for finding a form are the name and the NDSS registration number.
3. It would be impossible to sort 100,000 forms into alpha sequence and maintain them alphabetically.
4. It would be equally impossible to maintain them in NDSS number order as the cards are pre-numbered and some States have a much lower incidence of use than others.
5. Storage space and labour is at a premium and funds are always limited.
6. Any solution must start with the current registrations and it must be possible to work backwards or forwards

from any point.

It soon became apparent that any solution would have to be based on indexing each form by the name and initials of the PWD and the NDSS number, as these were the only keys to finding apart from a month of registration which quite often does not tally with the month of receipt by the National Office. This led to the requirement for each form to have a unique filing identifier or reference, so as to meet the criterion 6 above.

This is where the flexibility of the Keyword Records Management System and its associated Keyword Indexing System software proved its value.

A technique evolved whilst working in the building industry involves selecting a letter of the alphabet in which there are no class names (Keywords), in this case Z. This enables 99 almost identical Keywords to be used with the Keyword Codes Z01 to Z99. The Keyword *Z-REGNS NDSS was selected followed by the year of registration, so that *Z-REGNS NDSS 1990 had the code Z90. Next year the keyword will become *Z-REGNS NDSS 1991 with the code Z91.

This means that any year of the past or the future will have its distinct keyword so that boxes of forms can be retrieved from the commercial store and easily sorted into their years of registration.

The next problem was how to segregate a year's records into monthly batches. This was solved by treating each month's forms as a separate file, numbering January 1990, Z90-0001, February 1990, Z90-0002 and so on. This gave us 12 monthly batches of files into which forms could be entered. Finally, each form within each monthly batch was given a successive sub-file number.

The result of this design means that forms can now be entered randomly into any monthly batch and be given the next sub-number. This results in a unique reference for each form, for example a Smithers, J.G. who registered in September 1989 and is the 23rd registerer in that month will have a unique reference *Z89-0009-0023. The only information that needs to be keyed in is a PWD's name, initials and their NDSS registration number.

Using the KWOC sorting capacity of the KIS Programme, indexes may be produced for any year, sorted by NDSS Number and alphabetically by name, or, by giving the files a special file station code, all the forms for all years combined could be produced. Having in mind the volumes concerned and the very occasional access, such a huge index could not be cost justified.

Instead a special feature of the program will be used. It will only be necessary to insert the NDSS number or the PWD's name and the computer will display the details of the form including its reference, making its retrieval a simple matter.

Someone may wonder why an asterisk (*) presides the Keywords. This symbol acts as an instruction to the computer not to bring the Keyword in as an indexing term. In this case it would save 100,00 lines of print, were a full index ever be required.

The technique is commended to users of the Keyword Records Management System, as it has application to a number of situations. For example the NSW Business School is using it for its student registrations with success, and World Square uses a similar method for its sub-contractor files.

J. Eddis Linton, B. Ec., FRMA, FAIM, FCES, CRM is the originator of the Keyword Records Management System. His latest book "Organising the Office Memory" will

THE ROLE OF DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT IN OFFICE PRODUCTIVITY

MARITA D. HOO, MRMA, ALAA, AAIM
Joint Principal, Information Enterprises

This paper was first presented at Tower Computing's TUF 2 User Group Meeting in December 1989 in Perth. It draws to some extent upon one presented by the author to the Third National Convention of the Records Management Association of Australia, in 1986, at Alice Springs entitled "Correspondence Management and the New Office Technologies"

Time and experience have only tended to re-enforce, in the author's mind, the points and issues raised in that paper relating to efficient correspondence / document management.

Introduction

A number of the turnkey computer assisted records management packages on the market today, provide, to a greater or lesser extent, facilities for the management of correspondence. However records managers are failing to use these facilities, either in toto or in part. I believe that if they had an appreciation of the role that pro-active document / correspondence management can play in the efficient functioning of their organisations they would be keen to exploit the capabilities of these systems.

This paper aims to develop that understanding.

Files : Artificial elements

Files have provided the facility to bring together like documents and subjects to present to the user an historical account of a matter to assist in on-going decision making. Yet files are "artificial elements, the products of our own records systems" [NSW RMO Publ. No.11, 1985]. The word file was possibly first applied to groupings of papers that were bound together by a thread; as thread in Latin is the word "filum". Since the papers undoubtedly had some common attribute, the connotation of a "thread of information" was also applied to the meaning of the word by information personnel.

Prior to the late 1800s there was virtually no attempt to place records on files as we know them today. Record keeping was based on the registry system whereby records, once their action was completed, were maintained chronologically in bound volumes. Groupings of records into files by subject or originator no doubt came about due to expansion in trade and the adoption of modern business practices with increased legislation and documentation requirements. Increased trade resulted from the population explosion and growth in literacy as a result of improved health and social measures in the 1800's.

Clerks and registry personnel found it simply became impossible to manage individual documents. They had to be grouped into like types - on files. Thus for the greater part of the twentieth century records managers have concentrated their skills and resources on file management. When the first computer assisted records management packages were developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a tendency to computerise the existing situation with great emphasis being placed on the life cycle of file

management and frequently only the facility to register the receipt of correspondence was provided. In short the skills of yesteryear in relation to document management had been forgotten. Gradually through the 1980s there was a realisation amongst some records managers and software developers that the computer systems could also manage documents through their life cycle as well as files.

It is essential that records manager quickly grasp the importance of correspondence management as emerging office technologies are treating the document as their prime entity. Already some of the records management packages provide interfaces to these systems such as the new optical disk image processing systems. Further, electronic mail systems and EDI (electronic data interchange) systems are all document, not file, based. All prime activity occurs on the document, although the systems usually provide the facility to electronically link (or thread) individual documents to form a file.

Computerised Correspondence Management Facilities - What they offer.

What then are the facilities that these computer assisted records management packages provide in relation to correspondence / document management?

Generally they permit the capture and indexing of some or all of the following data:

- name of author
- name of originating organisation
- address and title of author
- name of addressee
- security class
- reference identification
- subject of document
- date of origin
- date of receipt
- category of correspondence
- date of action due (if any)
- action officer/s

In addition to being able to retrieve documents by any of these elements and track their physical movement some packages, offer document workflow facilities. "Actions" and "Procedures" that must occur in relation to the action required on a document are entered and the stages in the document's workflow progress monitored. Examples of actions include:

- interim reply required
- draft reply
- reply dispatched
- etc

Additionally various actions can be linked into set procedures with certain procedures being allocated to particular categories of documents. For instance a set of actions which always occur in relation to Ministerials may be set up in a procedure called "ministerials". Each time a ministerial is received the procedure "ministerial" is allocated to the document negating the need to allocate each action individually.

Numerous reports may be generated which indicate:-

- documents received on a particular date,
- documents whose actioning is overdue

officers with outstanding actions ...
documents awaiting attachment to files
documents by category eg ministerials
etc

The reports enable managers to measure performance, identify bottlenecks and move to alleviate them, and monitor workloads etc.

Document management - How history repeats itself.

I find it particularly interesting to note the form of management applied to documents prior to the practice of grouping them onto files. In the very first regulations promulgated for the Colonial Secretary's Office of Western Australia in 1829 there were regulations dealing with the management of documents including requirements that "documents of every description whether issued or received are to be duly registered".

In 1884 over sixty regulations were issued for "the Conduct of Official Business and Correspondence" Amongst other things the Regulations specified:

- the size of paper to be used (foolscap!)
- the need to reference enclosures to the correspondence that they accompanied
- limiting correspondence to one topic only
- use and numbering of paragraphs
- need for prompt responses
- methods for handling confidential correspondence

In addition form letters were drawn up to be used in reporting on instances when correspondence had remained un-answered for seven clear working days.

The "General Instructions for Officers of the WA Department of Public Works" issued in 1897 had the requirement that "every field officer in possession of official documents shall forward to his superior a full statement at the end of every month of all instructions or paper on hand not yet dealt with ...". The report was to be made on a special printed form.

There is a tendency amongst the records managers of today to see document / correspondence management as something new, whose value has yet to be proved. In the foregoing we see real attempts to place management controls over the processing of correspondence, as well as the awareness of the importance of such controls to the effective functioning of government departments, even prior to the paperwork explosion. We also see how closely akin those systems were to the facilities that the computerised systems offer us today.

Correspondence / Document Management - Its Productivity Benefits

The same forces which caused the advent of files also caused the lessening or cessation of the monitoring of documents during their active phase. Controls for ensuring and monitoring the actioning of documents broke down as more and more files, each with a number of outstanding actions, moved slowly around the organisation.

Harrassed managers tended to ignore the "paper shuffling" activities in their offices and let short term profits take precedence over long term efficiency. They were content to enjoy the fruits of the great productivity benefits that had occurred in the manufacturing and farming in-

dustries in the 1960s and directed their attention to marketing, product development and technology itself. They neglected to question lack of productivity increases amongst white collar workers whose numbers were increasing three times faster than that of the blue collar workers. White collar productivity was not seen as relating directly to profits.

Productivity does not mean working harder or faster but rather working smarter and more effectively. The new office technologies which have emerged over the last twenty years have given us the opportunity to do just that but only if we thoroughly understand the systems and applications to which we apply them. Nor do they come without creating their own problems - think what the photocopier has done to the paper explosion.

Computerised document management facilities have enabled records managers and office administrators to turn the clock back 100 years and once again apply controls and monitoring activities to documents. Without that ability it is impossible to manage a document system, apply performance indicators or measure productivity increases. Strassman observes that waste tends to be greatest when means for measuring its costs are inadequate.

The extent that productivity may be measured is not always obvious. Kalthoff and Lee [1981] refer to the "productivity ripple effect" as "a linked set of human functions in which, the effectiveness of each affects the productivity and function of the next". The productivity ripple effect in a records system is easily identifiable and understandable. Firstly there is the records' store itself comprising a variety of records collected from diverse sources and organised under set principles. The users of these records are the second link in the productivity chain. They include anyone whose work is based on effective access to correct information. The performance level of these users in turn affects many sequences of people whose performance is dependant upon one another.

In WA it is necessary for the design of a crane to be approved by the Dept. of Occupation Health Safety and Welfare before it may operate. Delays in approving the design may delay work on construction sites causing considerable cost to owners, contractors and laborers alike. The same department must issue certificates of competency to riggers, crane drivers etc. Any delays can be costly to the individuals concerned. For instance an operator of a crane under 20 tonnes receives \$427.50 for a 38 hour week whilst an operator of a crane over 80 tonnes and under 100 tonnes receives \$478.00 per week. A \$50 difference. In certain instances there will be additional site loadings too. A crane driver seeking to upgrade his certificate will not appreciate a lengthy delay nor will the economy benefit from his spending, or saving, of those additional dollars during the period of delay.

Sound document management can do much to ensure the speedy processing of applications such as those sited above and significantly reduce a negative ripple effect.

It is essential that users appreciate that to apply workflow procedures effectively an indepth critical analysis must be made of the various categories of documents that exist in an organisation and their associated workflow patterns. Procedures work most effectively where the workflow for a category of documents may be clearly defined eg loan applications, submissions for approval etc.

I have noted a certain reluctance on the part of records managers to adopt the workflow facilities of these systems.

This is a great pity. They are preventing their organisations from reaping the fullest productivity benefits from the introduction of a computer assisted records management system. Further they are not taking the opportunity to hone their skills in document management in readiness for when the many documents with which we are familiar in paper format today will be in electronic format.

Workflow applications are not exclusive to paper based records management packages. They are an integral part of office automation and optical disc image management systems. Records Managers should be actively seeking out the electronic based document systems and applying their skills to them.

Some records managers have feared that the librarians, with their skills in indexing and information retrieval will take over their role. They will find themselves, very soon, being equally challenged from the computer professionals who, armed with the technology to capture and manage documents, have discovered they may now address the two elements of information provision - documents and data.

I believe that over the next 3 years office automation systems are going to overwhelm us as organisations realise the tremendous and varied benefits that they bring with them. For instance Meyer and Boon [1987] in their recent study of the value of office automation found that returns on investment in office automation frequently exceed 200% with payback periods often less than one year.

In their book they cite one example which has particular relevance in records managers in my opinion. It relates to a supplier of large power plants which stations full-time staff at approximately 30 customer sites worldwide to ensure the smooth operation of equipment. Each site manager submitted paper based bi-monthly technical reports which were distributed to other managers in the region. The reports were also sent to headquarters where they might subsequently be investigated and sent to other regions as technical bulletins. With the introduction of electronic mail facilities all site managers now share daily reports in concise outline format and technical bulletins are broadcast through the system as they are published. In one instance a problem with a pump that was identified in

one plant also affected another plant. As that plant was in a different region and dissimilar except for the pump in question it would not have received, under that paper based system, the information prior to its shutdown for preventive maintenance. With the electronic mail system the other plant was notified and the problem corrected by preventive maintenance (a \$US170,000 cost). Had the problem gone unidentified there was a likely chance that that the pump would have failed before the next scheduled maintenance and unscheduled closedowns cost about \$US 1,000,000 per day.

In conclusion I would like to emphasise my belief that with facilities such records managers are no longer the passive custodians of files. If they accept the challenges they can now become an active, vital player in the whole document processing system.

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RECORDS MANAGERS

"HAVE YOU HEARD THE CALL??"

ROLAND C P SHARPE, ARMA

For the past twenty five years, until my retirement early in 1989, I was involved with the introduction of technology for the management of State Government records in Western Australia. In my career as a Methods Officer I introduced concepts which realised the introduction of electronic storage and retrieval techniques for Western Australian Land Information Registries.

As a result of these involvements I am aware of the pressures applied to Managers of Records Repositories within Government and Private Sector Agencies to introduce digital techniques to improve the availability of management information.

These pressures are further exacerbated by changes to organisational structures where flatter structures are being introduced with a view to increase job satisfaction. Duties are being reallocated in a move away from specialisation and towards a multiskilled environment. These are admirable objectives and there is no doubt that both should be pursued vigorously if we are to achieve the promise of efficiency and effectiveness that the technological developments, already made, hold in store for us.

To be able to assess the impact of these demands on Records Managers, I interviewed a cross section of managers from government and private sector agencies. The results of those interviews will not be divulged in this article. However, as a result of the discussions I shared with them I have prepared a series of questions which I believe Records Managers should read and attempt to answer. The quality of the answers they are able to provide will or should suggest to them their level of maturity and their capacity to meet the demands that the 'now' technological environment is increasingly going to throw at them.

QUESTIONS

- Do you have the latest copy of the Organisation Structure in file and are you satisfied that your position and the position to which you report reflects the true correct salary level or responsibility for the services that you provide?
- When were the procedures of your records management functions last documented and critically analysed to improve work practices?
- Is your Records Branch responsible for the management of all records maintained by the organisation or are you only called upon to open and record incoming mail, attach, deliver and retrieve correspondence? If you are in the former category then you should be interested in the following questions.
- How far has computerisation changed the way in which your Records System is operated? What say did you have in the selection of the software?
- Has your Organisation undertaken a complete information requirement review to identify the interaction between each organisational group and the information that is exchanged as a result of these interactions? If a review was conducted, were you a part of that review group?
- What initiatives are underway in your organisation to introduce Electronic Mail/Electronic data inter-

change facilities? Have you been involved in the review of these systems?

If, as a Records Manager, you see yourself as being charged with the responsibility for the corporate memory of the organisation that you serve you should have ready answers for all the questions I have posed. If you are short on detail and you are not involved with the introduction of new technology, which is going to effect your every task, you need to reassess your role in your organisation and your involvement in the direction being set by it to manage its vital information in a changing environment.

I have held the view that Records Managers in government agencies see themselves only as the providers of the following services:-

- openers of mail.
- indexers
- attachers of correspondence to files
- deliverers and retrievers of files
- managers of the records repository

This perspective is captured in the flow chart shown in figure 1., where the key role of the records manager is the management of correspondence and the files in which they are stored. The major interaction is between the secretaries and records collection and delivery records clerks. The chart attempts to draw out the inconsistencies that are evident in the management of information that comes from sources other than the mail service. The rules that govern the information that enters or leaves the organisation by telephone, facsimile, telex are subject to less stringent guidelines.

In most cases the control of these additional sources of information exchange are not in the domain of the Records Manager.

All the Managers I spoke to hold the view that their role is the management of the 'corporate memory', the information that is vital to the well being of the organisation. In every case their domain had been exposed to the rigors of computerisation. However, it was limited to indexing and file marking which, although I agree are the processing bottleneck of a busy repository, is a long way from providing the links that are necessary to meet the information search requirements and information transmission requirements of Organisational Managers.

I have highlighted issues in figure 1. which require all records managers to review as they face the changing information recording and transmission requirements of their organisations. I do not have ready answers for the issues that are listed. However, there are a plethora of articles in which authors have been shouting a loud and clear message for a long long time.

Their advice to us for at least the last five years has been:

"THE AGE OF THE AUTOMATED OFFICE IS NO LONGER A DREAM - ITS UPON US"

I have drawn unashamedly from three articles to reinforce my view.

Col. (Ret.) Leonard S. Lee, in his paper - "Information and Office Automation: A Total Perspective" - given at a "Information and Automation Today and Tomorrow Seminar, held in Perth, July 1985 states:

"In the past most organisations operated on a compartmentalised basis. With rare exceptions functions were accomplished by separate staffs. The centralised paper records files department, the micrographics group, the computer facility, etc. Now a new trend is arising the centralisation of information management activities under

the umbrella of a single, as yet unnamed department. Some proposed labelling it the "Information Resources Department", others want to use "Information Centre" or "Information Management Facility". Regardless of eventual appellation, its purpose will be to place under one information manager all those activities that frequently functioned in the past as separate entities. Data processing (computers), word processing, micrographics, mail and records communications, etc.

The new department will be elevated in hierarchical importance and become the hub of future activity, with networked terminals strategically available to executives throughout the organisation. Information will be recognised as a valuable asset critical to planning and decision making....."

"Efforts will be made to capture information once at the work station and forever more use it, store it, retrieve it, disseminate it locally and to remote locations and eventually dispose of it all under automated conditions. It will require clever software to enable output of one device to become inputs for the next and efficient cost-effective communication links for data transmission.. ...

"We have already discussed the trend towards integrated information department with a juxtaposition of technology and media. Who will be the supervisor of such activities? When the various positions are combined each of the present department heads will be vying for the top slot. Which one will be the winner of the sweepstakes? Some claim EDP'ers have the edge, but is that a foregone conclusion? True, they may be familiar with operating and programming machines, but how much knowledge do they have of basic records management - and isn't that the major role of the new departments, regardless of the media employed."

"Needless to say, the records manager will not be anointed for the cherished position because of looks or disposition (at least not in most cases). The individual selected will be the one with broadest overall knowledge of the tasks involved - a person who has understanding of all or most of the functions, media and equipment who can supervise people, obtain productivity, maintain morale and get the job done. Perhaps none of the contenders have all the attributes today, but the one who wants to be the prime contender had better prepare for tomorrow and start on it NOW."

Fred V. Diers in his paper - "A Case Study: Fourth Generation Records Management" - given at a convention held in Perth, December 1989, states:-

"Software packages are emerging to assist the Records Manager in the control of all the organisation's information. The approach used by this (his) corporation is proactive and does contain some risk. No longer is the Records Management programme reacting to paper records problems, rather, it is offering a systematic approach to individual users in the management of their information using technology to ensure standards and compliance. Addressing information at its creation and applying retention and common indexing policies will enable the organisation to understand the total cost of managing their vital resource. The result will be enlightened decisions in the determination of the organisations success."

Records management professionals must become involved with the information departments within their particular organisation. Analysing both the external and internal factors influencing information flow and access and understanding the various technologies that are

being used for information storage and what is to be implemented in the short term. This knowledge together with a willingness to be innovative will ensure Records management's existence as an integral part of the organisation's total information management programme."

Peter Emmerson in his paper - "The Baby and the Bathwater: Managing Records and Information in the light of Electronic Systems Development" - given at the Convention held in Perth, December 1989 states:-

"Increasingly as office automation becomes a reality the work station becomes the source of all the information that the user requires, the user will be less concerned about whether the information is derived from internal sources or from a public database. Nevertheless he will assume that the records he needs to confirm that he has carried out his appropriate task, or those which are needed to monitor the performance of his subordinates against the instructions he has given them, will survive in an easily available and proven form."

"As realists in this particular area, records managers must learn to manage these expectations and, as far as possible to satisfy them. As the professionals who know the limitation of the systems in record terms, we must elbow ourselves into a position to influence their developments, to see that the basic evidential and operational requirements are met. We must ensure that sufficient trace is left of the activities carried out by the organisation to at least mark its passages."

The message then is that information workers of today who want to move ahead in the future must broaden horizons, expand knowledge and perspective. The blunders of narrow specialization must be replaced with the viewpoint of the generalists - one comfortable with diverse terminology and acquainted with techniques that range across the entire spectrum of information management."

Perhaps the greatest challenge is the direction that needs to be taken by the Records Management Association.

What will be its role in the technological revolution that is taking place.

What guidelines is it going to set to meet the demands for these changes.

"WE HAVE LISTENED WITH INTEREST TO THE SPEECHES AND THE PROMISES OF WHAT THE TECHNOLOGICAL FUTURE MAY OR MAY NOT DO FOR US - WE MUST TAKE OF OUR COATS AND TAKE THE LEAD IN WHAT IS OUR DESTINY!!

Editorial Notes: Due to production problems fig 1 was not included. Copies of the flow chart (fig 1) are available from the WA Branch.

CONVERGING TECHNOLOGIES:

THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

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(Reprinted from the Proceedings of the IRMC Congress & RMAA Convention held in Perth, Western Australia Dec. 1989.)

INTRODUCTION

It should be clear to everyone involved in the field of records management that information technology is having a major impact on the field. The future promises even more advancement in technology, and more impact on the field.

What may not be quite as obvious, is that the technologies and their use in records management, applications are evolving from several traditions. These traditions are converging, creating an area called Electronic Document Management. As a result, technologies are evolving that are broader than the viewpoint of any one of the traditions. The resultant synergy is creating new opportunities for people from several backgrounds, who want to focus on document management in the information age.

This paper first identifies the three traditions from which a focus on document management is evolving: the library tradition, the office tradition, and the MIS/EDP tradition. The second section examines some of the technologies that are emerging from likely developments in the future and examines several options records managers have in responding to these developments.

THE LIBRARY TRADITION

The oldest tradition in the management of documents comes from libraries. For ages, libraries and librarians have accepted the responsibility for storing and preserving important documents, and retrieving them from storage upon demand. Consequently, emphasis has been on storage media, methods, and approaches, with additional emphasis on organising the stored documents for access when necessary.

An evolution of the library tradition might be characterized in the following stages:

1.The Print Era

- Storage of documents on shelves
- Card catalogs and closed stacks
- Dewey Decimal Systems for organisation

2.The Film Era

- Microfilm and microfiche storage
- Card catalogs and open stacks
- Library of Congress classification

3.The Magnetic Era

- Magnetic tape and disk storage
- On-line catalogs
- Indexing and key words

4.The Optical Era

- Optical storage

- Full text retrieval
- Compound documents

THE OFFICE EVOLUTION

Much later, documents became more important in the offices of business and government organisations. Primary concern in the office has been the creation of documents, transmission or delivery to the desired recipient, filing these records as the "organisational memory", and proper disposal at the end of the required retention period. The office tradition might be characterised as follows:

1.The Typewriter Era

- Manual typewriters
- Filing cabinets
- Subject and chronological files
- Mail

2.The Electronic Typewriter Era

- Electronic typewriters
- Film storage
- Records centres
- Mail

3.The Word Processing Era

- Dedicated word processing
- Magnetic storage
- Automated records centres
- Early fax and email

4.The Desktop Computing Era

- Personal workstations
- Optical storage
- Automated records
- Email and fax

THE MIS/EDP TRADITION

Most recently, the Electronic Data Processing tradition (which became the Management Information Systems tradition) has evolved. Beginning with accounting data and financial transactions processing, the MIS/EDP tradition has only recently begun to apply technology to handle documents. The MIS/EDP tradition can be characterised as follows:

1.The Data Processing Era

- Transaction processing
- Magnetic tape storage
- Very little text

2.The Management Information Systems Era

- Reporting
- Data base management
- Mass disk storage
- Computer output microfilm
- Text files

3.DSS/EIS Era

- Reports with text
- High speed printers
- More disk storage
- End user computing

4.Image Processing Era

- Image processing
- Electronic Document interchange
- High speed transmission
- Local area and wide networks

CONVERGING TRADITION

It is clear that these three traditions are converging on the use of modern information technology to manage documents. Each comes from a slightly different perspective and each has used technology in somewhat different ways. Without communication among the three groups, the stage is set for a plethora of incompatible "islands of technology", handling documents for different purposes in different ways. Fortunately, through conferences such as the present one, the barriers to communication are being broken down, and the three groups are beginning to work together. The result is a "critical mass" of activity and technology developments that would not have evolved without this convergence. A little later we will discuss the underlying technologies and some specific technologies that are being applied to document management.

ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

This is the term that is emerging to encompass the use of information technology to handle documents. Its predecessors include document processing, and image processing, both of which seem a bit narrower. Unfortunately, the term is somewhat ambiguous, depending on where the emphasis is placed. Electronic Document Management might mean:

1. **Electronic DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT** the use of electronic technologies to manage documents.

The inference is paper documents or the image of paper documents stored on an alternative medium.

2. **ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT Management** the management of a electronic document.

Emphasis is on compound or multi-media documents.

Document Management Using Electronics: In the first case, documents are made up of symbols stored on paper using ink. These paper documents are stored in filing cabinets and/or on shelves. Eventually, storage space and retrieval time become troublesome so an "image" of the paper document is stored on film or in digital form, on magnetic or optical media.

In addition to using technology to store the document, it can be used to transmit, retrieve, and keep track of the document. Automated records centres use systems based on transactions processing concepts and database organisation to "manage" the documents in a record centre.

Managing Electronic Documents: In the second case, the documents consist of a variety of symbols, some of which are not susceptible to storage on paper. Numbers, letters, and special characters (written language) are combined with drawings, photographic images, voice, and video, to comprise a set of information that can exist together only in electronic form. The key difference from the first case above, is that the components or symbols in an electronic document can be changed, updated, and manipulated individually, which is not the case for a docu-

ment in "image" form. This characteristic makes the electronic document "manageable" in much richer ways.

The Combined Concept: Having drawn the distinction above, we will hereafter use the term Electronic Document Management (EDM) to include both concepts. Specifically, we will use Electronic Document Management to mean:

Electronic The use of modern information technology including computers, telecommunication, and a variety of storage media.

Document A set of related information stored and handled as a unit.

Management The creation, storage, organising, transmission, retrieval, and destruction of documents for a purpose.

UNDERLYING AND APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES

Although the concepts of EDM are not new, there are several emerging technologies that are making it increasingly easy to handle documents electronically. These include:

1. **Stronger Work Stations.** Document work stations are evolving from personal computers with large high precision displays frequently in full color.

2. **User Friendly Hardware and Software.** Work stations are easier to operate with pointing devices such as a mouse, light pen, or touch screen. Software is easier to use with menus and visual symbols (icons).

3. **Storage Media.** Film and magnetic storage media are joined by very high capacity optical storage media that make it possible to store the large quantity of data in documents.

4. **Pattern Recognition.** Techniques and devices which can recognise printed symbols and convert them to machine readable text the scanning of printed documents feasible. Special versions of pattern recognition are leading to voice recognition and voice synthesis.

5. **Artificial Intelligence.** A set of technologies from the field of Artificial Intelligence is promising better ways to represent the content or the meaning of documents when they are handled electronically.

These underlying technologies are being focused and shaped into specific forms for dealing with document of hypertext systems which allow non-linear handling of text. Others include formal definitions of compound or multi-media documents, document description languages, and document content representations.

THE FUTURE

It is fairly easy to forecast the future of information technology with words like more faster, cheaper, higher capacity, etc.. For information technology applied to documents and their management, we can be a little specific on several points:

1. Documents will play an increasing role in electronic information systems which are used to improve the performance of people in organisations.

2. Information technology will be applied to the management of documents in increasingly creative and powerful ways.

3. The information systems group will be given the responsibility for managing this new technology.

The first two assertions are self-explanatory; the third may not be quite as obvious. As long as technology is used

to merely replace a previous function, it can be used as a tool by the people responsible for that function or application. When the technology results from the convergence of several traditions and when the application of technology is new and creative, there is an open question of who should have the responsibility for its development and management. In this case, the MIS/EDP group has the technical experience to understand and develop these combined technologies, and they will most likely be given jurisdiction over it.

In the face of these three assumptions about the future, records managers have three basic options:

1. Preserve the Status Quo. Records managers continue to be responsible for paper documents and certain electronic ways of handling them. As compound documents evolve, they are managed by the MIS/EDP department. As a consequence records management slowly shrinks.

2. Declare War (Turf War). Records management demands jurisdiction over all documents. Because the distinction between documents and data processing records is becoming increasingly ambiguous. MIS/EDP objects. Because they have the technology background and expertise, they will win!

3. Form a Strategic Partnership. MIS/EDP manages the technology, while records managers contribute the principles and practices for managing document data.

It should be obvious which option is best. Unfortunately, it is not the option that will automatically evolve if no conscious action is taken. Option 1 will evolve if records managers are willing to take a comfortable, limited view of their mission. Option 2 will evolve if a broader mission is

perceived and full control of the technology to achieve it is demanded.

The Strategic Partnership of option 3 will be the most satisfying and productive, but it will require the greatest amount of careful thought and effort. The I/S group may have the technological history and expertise, but they are sadly lacking in the principles and practices of document management - the fate of the records management professionals. Only with such a strategic partnership will benefits of the evolving technologies be available in records management.

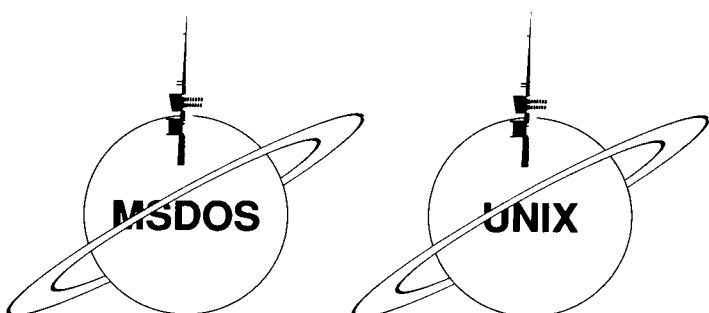
Dr Ralph H. Sprague, Jr.

Dr Sprague is Professor of Decision Sciences and Chairman of the Decision Sciences Department at the University of Hawaii. He is one of the two or three most influential authors in decision support systems research and virtually all DSS research papers today cite his book with Eric Carlson Building Effective Decision Support Systems. He is a co-founder of the PRIISM Consortium whose mission is to improve the quality of research and educational activities in information systems and management by facilitating interaction between institutions in the United States and the Pacific Basin Nations.


Dr Sprague has recently formed a team of librarians, records managers and computing professionals to pursue studies in the area of document provision within decision support systems.

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Setting the Record Straight

**NO TWO COMPANIES ARE THE SAME AND THEIR
RECORDS MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT EITHER...**

QCOM, the developers of **RMS II**, realised this at the outset and made it the most flexible and versatile Records Management System available. It is also the only system which integrates the powerful free Text Retrieval System — *The Corporate Retriever* — as standard.

Consider the **RMS II** benefits:

- each system is tailored to meet specific needs
- variable indexing
- supports central or multiple registries
- full recording of movements (including history)
- barcode interface and file location audit
- text retrieval facility can be used independently
- complete information security
- interfaces to many OA, Image Storage and Database systems available
- developed and backed by a leader in Records Management system development

DON'T JUST BREAK RECORDS — SET THEM STRAIGHT!



Call us now

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