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INFORMAA Quarterly

Volume 16, Number 2, May 2000

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Federal President's
Message

Think Nationally - Act Locally

Have you checked out our web page **www.rmaa.com.au**? The marketing team is working hard at keeping members up to date on events, meetings, conventions and reports. This site is always being updated and, as stated last time, the Association will be using the web as the communications hub. So, visit the site regularly.

With the introduction of the GST, the Association will be centralising the accounting procedures. This means that all invoices and accounts for payment will be dealt with from one location. The centralising of the membership details a number of years ago has worked well and reduced the workload of the Branches. The GST would place tremendous pressure on our volunteer treasurers, and the Board felt that it would be more appropriate to appoint a person with a financial background to manage all our finances from one central location.

The National Finance Committee will be working closely with each Branch Council during the development process over the next few months.

In the last edition of *INFORMAA Quarterly*, I spoke about the introduction of Certified Records Managers (CRM). This topic has generated a number of responses both for and against. I would like to thank those who have either rung me or sent me emails on this issue.

I must admit that I did get carried away with the concept, but what the Board and I would like to pursue is the concept of professional certification in some form or another, and how one maintains certification. The Federal Membership and Status committee is currently reviewing and updating the 'professional status guidelines'. The concept of certification and comments received from our members will be taken into consideration at this review.

The alliances of RMAA and ASA continue to be discussed, with the Executive of both the ASA and RMAA meeting in Melbourne in April to discuss the issue of closer liaison between the associations. It is great to see healthy discussion on the ASA list serve.

The 17th National Convention registration brochures should be out now. I encourage all members to attend the biggest event in Sydney this year. The 2000 Convention will be held from **3 - 6 December** at Darling Harbour, Sydney. The theme is 'Bridging the Gap'. The program looks great, the venue is great, and the convention dinner will be great. The dinner will be held at 'Sega World', this is the only one in Australia and is only one of five in the world. It will be an experience you won't forget. Plan to be there and book early to take advantage of the discounts.

Chris Fripp MRMA, MAICD
Federal President

Editorial
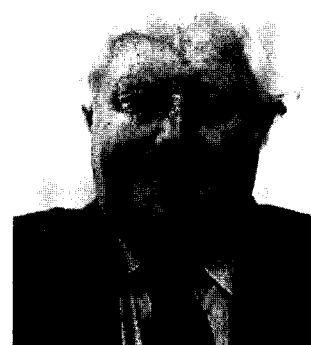
On Thursday 30 March, in a crowded, colourful exhibition hall at the National Archives of Australia (NAA) building in Canberra, Dr Allan Hawke, Secretary of the Department of Defence, formally launched 'e-permanence', the NAA's projections of best practice in modern recordkeeping. Represented by an egg-shaped stone image engraved with an 'e', e-permanence, according to the NAA press release, is meant to imply 'the enduring nature of information captured as records'.

The strategies of the National Archives implicit in this launch comprise two strands: firstly, the release of a range of recordkeeping standards and guidelines, and secondly, a supporting marketing, promotion and training program. The products include the **Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems Manual** (the DIRKS Manual), and **Appraisal Guidelines for Commonwealth Records** that complement the new Administrative Functions Disposal Authority, which in turn connects with the Keyword AAA Thesaurus. The **Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for Commonwealth Agencies**, though officially launched at the RMAA National Convention in Darwin late last year, was included in the suite of initiatives, as was the recently released policy entitled **Archiving Websites: A Policy for Keeping Web-based Records in the Commonwealth.**

Pre-launch promulgation of some of these initiatives has met with mixed responses in the practising work environment of information and records managers. Some have expressed enthusiasm, while some have been guarded. Some have adapted, and some, as was evidenced in the February issue of the *INFORMAA Quarterly*, have expressed concerns. Whatever the reaction, the drive towards setting modern recordkeeping standards, and promoting them at the highest levels of management, must lead to a better understanding that good recordkeeping supports the effective conduct of business, and ensures adequate accountability particularly with the burgeoning demands of eCommerce and eBusiness.

In recognition of the importance of these new strategies, not only to the Federal Government sector but also to the wider discipline of the recordkeeping industry, this issue of the *INFORMAA Quarterly* has placed some emphasis on the e-permanence products. For example, in our first article, Russell McCaskie describes in some depth the environment into which the DIRKS methodology is being introduced. He focuses on the increasing demands being placed on greater efficiency while resources continue to be pared, the greater appreciation of the need for accountability both fiscal and social, and the need to adapt to widespread cultural and technical change. He recognises and promotes the DIRKS' potential, but concurrently, challenges the NAA to adopt a consistent, strong and dedicated role in its promotion at high level, of user acceptance, and its implementation.

In responding to the concerns at the NAA initiatives expressed by Grant Williams in our last issue, Kathryn Dan and Colleen McEwen from the National Archives of Australia, provide a description of the development processes of the new Administrative Functions Disposal Authority, and attempt to allay misconceptions that they discerned to exist in Williams' paper. The next article in this issue, prepared jointly by Robina Sanderson and Anne Robinson, records the application and adaptation of the new standards into the development and implementation of a business classification scheme for the Department of Defence.

Despite the prominence that has been given to the National Archives' strategies in this issue, we should also recognise other significant activity and productivity in the information and recordkeeping domains over the past few months. Laurie Varendorrf in his report from Western Australia, summarises some of these achievements which include: developments in the Draft ISO 15489 - Records Management, the new three-volume Recordkeeping Manual produced by the State Records Office of New South Wales (which we hope to have reviewed in our next issue), and the Public Record Office of Victoria's draft Functional Requirements for a VERS Recordkeeping Standard and their Standard for Management of Electronic Records.

Anthony Eccleston
National Editor

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

President's Message, vol. 16, no. 1

As one of only three Australians who are members of the U.S. Institute of Certified Records Managers (the professional arm of ARMA) entitled to use CRM as a qualification, I feel I must comment on the Federal President's proposal to replace Associate, Member and Fellow with a single designation 'CRM'.

I agree strongly with his proposal to make members keep up-to-date by contact maintenance, the same idea used by CPAs (Certified Practising Accountants).

However, I disagree just as strongly with his proposal to dispense with the three degrees of professional status. This would be a retrograde step for the following reasons.

1 Most Australian professional associations have ascending degrees of membership based on achievement and experience. Our degrees of status are readily understood by others.

2 Elimination of ARMA, MRMA and FRMA would reduce all members to the same lowest common status, leading to stagnation.

3 The present degrees encourage members to work towards the next level by their personal contributions - lecturing, writing articles or teaching.

This incentive is totally missing in the American Institute, where a new CRM is seemingly of equal status with one of long experience and proven ability.

4 In our Association, one with MRMA is self-evidently more experienced and with more ability than one with ARMA.

The late Ed Johnson, CRM when out here consulting with me to the Victorian Department of Education, told me that recent admissions to ICRM were competing as consultants with CRMs of long standing and proven ability. This position could not arise in Australia, he commented, because those with more to offer a client hold higher status. Some disasters had occurred, he added.

There is much more to being a true professional in our Association than merely the passing of examinations and attending a quota of seminars.

Those with higher status should self-evidently be our top professionals. This would not obtain were there only one degree of status.

J. Eddis Linton
B.Ec (Sydney), FRMA, CRM

Dear Editor

The RMAA should not amalgamate with the ASA. The RMAA has served practising records managers and neophytes well over the last 30 years, as substantiated by its membership base and healthy balance sheet. This does not mean that the RMAA can now be complacent or that every issue it has dealt with could not have been more vigorously analysed or reported upon.

Quite simply, the RMAA does not need to consume the ASA. It would be lamentable to see a power struggle ensue over the many differences that exist between the two organisations as part of an attempt for example, to create an Australian Records Keepers Association. I acknowledge that many practitioners maintain membership of both organisations but the reality is that traditionally each organisation has catered for quite distinct fields of work - and in my view, should continue to do so.

As noted in my paper at the Darwin '99 Convention, it was the ASA that changed its rules in Fremantle in 1998 to suggest its members will now be functioning at the creation stage of the records life cycle - designing and implementing systems - an area that clearly is the bailiwick of records managers. I find it somewhat surprising, therefore, that the **RMAA Board of Directors** has initiated even the prospect of amalgamation.

I view with some concern the fact that the records continuum theory has now been enshrined in the Australian Standard on Records Management. The continuum theory rejects the records life cycle. It is the life cycle of course, that keeps archivists out of the main 'front end' game. One might well ask: does the archival community have some overt desire of
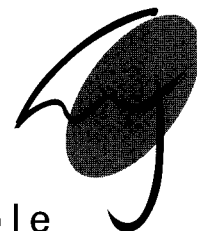
becoming the owners and major players in records management, or to be more politically correct (in Australia) 'records keeping'? I note, in passing, that the continuum theory and the term 'records keeping' have not been mentioned in the draft ISO Standard 15489.

Records are not created **primarily** for historical, social and research purposes. With less than 10% of records becoming archives to be kept in perpetuity, archival considerations should not (in my view) **dominate** records management business imperatives such as efficiency, accountability and risk management.

I am aware of certain synergetic relationships between the two occupational groups and claims that the application of metadata standards, for example, to electronic records may integrate archives management and records management in an online environment. If such claims are valid, it could lead to more **collaboration** between records managers and archivists at the workplace level, and as part of professional development, but it does not necessarily follow that professional associations must merge.

I urge the RMAA Board and members at large to treat this whole issue with great caution.

Ken Ridley MRMA
Perth, Western Australia

New faces

Liz Heise

RM veteran, Liz Heise, joined the busy Qualified Records People Sydney division of The One Umbrella Group as a Recruitment Consultant, November 1999. Clients and prospects alike have already been impressed with Liz's warm personality and her skill in pinpointing and offering solutions.

John Williams

John Williams has risen to the challenge of establishing the Qualified Records People division in The One Umbrella Group Melbourne office. John's solid reputation in the records industry is built on an impressive list of qualifications and extensive experience in State, Federal and Local Government as well as the Private Sector.
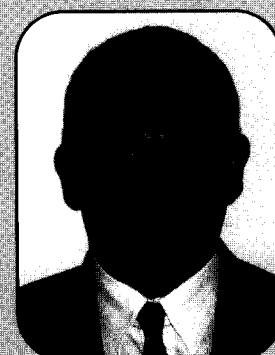
Confronting Change: Reflections on Information Management in Networked Agencies

AUTHOR

Russell McCaskie

Russell McCaskie is Manager, Corporate Records and Archives Strategies, CSIRO Information Technology Services. He holds a BA (Hons) from the University of Queensland, Graduate Diploma in Librarianship (UC) and Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management (Griffith University). Since the mid-1990s, he has participated in a range of information management projects in public sector agencies. His personal research interests include communication and information in organisational decision-making.

ABSTRACT

The National Archives of Australia (NAA) March 2000 launch of the Developing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems (DIRKS) methodology, based as it is on functional frameworks for managing information, is posing a challenge to affected organisations where significant change is endemic structurally, financially and culturally. In promoting the acceptance of the DIRKS methodology, it is hoped that the National Archives, having assumed the role of advocate and mentor for these recordkeeping standards, will present a consistent view of implementation strategies, and have the capacity and commitment to assist in their adoption.

Introduction

Human memory is short and unreliable, even when we really want to remember something. [1]

Through experience, I've been converted - away from the idea that technology can do it all, and back to the idea that we still, for the foreseeable future, will need to ensure quality indexing and cataloguing using humans aided by tools. ... we will always need structured documentation - standard tags, standard vocabulary. You cannot rely on the document author indexing the document correctly, nor will tools do the job entirely. [2]

Depending on one's perspective (or professional bias), in recent times, it seems to have become de rigueur to blame technology, culture or executive intransigence - or a combination of these - for our inability to achieve effective solutions to the information management challenges we are facing in public sector agencies. For those of us (information management professionals - in the widest sense) imbued with an enthusiasm for adventure, we are fortunate to live in interesting times with a number of initiatives churning away in regulatory agencies such as the National Archives of Australia (NAA) and its State counterparts. Additionally, we should mention legislative change (Electronic Transactions Act 1999), the impact of electronic commerce and market testing, competitive intelligence requirements, and of course the ubiquitous "k" word - a little about that shortly.

Our concern here is to assess what we (frontline records, archives or knowledge managers) need to do to respond adequately to the challenge of change, in order to provide meaningful and relevant services and structures to support networked agencies in an environment of discontinuity. This brief paper then will endeavour to highlight some of the issues that arise when reflecting on the state of information management in the public sector. Drawing on discussions from the management literature, the paper will pose a few questions - some rhetorical -

about the impact of the NAA's strategies, especially the DIRKS methodology. Hopefully, the paper will generate discussion among colleagues whose comfort zones are being challenged by such recent strategic initiatives.

Managing knowledge and information

It is almost impossible to ignore the fact that there is some serious debate within the literature about the concept of knowledge management and what it really means. Indeed, a brief search of the Internet will reveal almost as many definitions of knowledge management as there are web sites offering knowledge management solutions. Suffice it to say, ownership of the concept and what it means for all manner of information professionals, ranging from Information Technology (IT) professionals to librarians and records managers, appear to be up for grabs. At the outset, we should indicate that there is no intention to join the debate here. For the purpose of this paper, we will focus on the narrower concept of information management, defined by at least one Australian agency as:

the measures required for the effective collection, storage, access, use and disposal of information to support agency business processes. The core of these measures is the management of the definition, ownership, sensitivity, quality and accessibility of information. [3]

A second definition, which goes some way towards establishing a relationship with knowledge management, is:

the systematic control and management of all formats of information, including those traditionally managed by the library, records centre and archives. It utilises computer technologies and telecommunications for acquiring, processing, storing, retrieving and disseminating information. [4]

The latter definition clearly forces us to acknowledge the issue of convergence - an aspect of our operational environment that some colleagues have been reluctant to embrace. If we accept either definition (and remember these are only two of potentially many, depending on one's viewpoint), it is increasingly obvious that one of our core tasks is to provide a robust information management framework to support manifold organisational networks. But what are these networks? We should not lose sight of the fact that organisational networks may involve relationships between people, as well as IT systems that transport data within and outside individual organisations. Networks make it possible to create virtual space in which products and services are offered ... or in which people widely separated in space can interact and communicate in real time, allowing new forms of inter- and intra-organisational cooperation. [5]

Is this an accurate illustration of what is tantamount to a potentially volatile organisational environment? If so, we have to ask ourselves, as information managers, if we are suitably placed to influence our line of business and information technology colleagues to ensure responsible recordkeeping practices are factored into the design specifications for all interactions and business systems. If the answer to this question is 'yes', we can probably rest assured that we are serving our agency's executives well by complying with our legislative and corporate governance obligations. If the answer is 'no', I think we have a significant problem.

The way we approach this design process is not trivial - and one suspects that this is where agencies will benefit from initiatives such as the DIRKS methodology. The impact of the changing environment is that we will be required to develop skills that allow us to cope with some of the characteristics of a multifaceted networked organisation. By way of an example, at a time when electronic commerce is no longer an abstract

concept, we should recognise that our knowledge workers will demand quick and up-to-date information from potentially disparate sources, of which organisational memory systems are but a few. We may have to promote the development of 'zero-latency' strategies to facilitate 'the immediate exchange of information across technical and organisational boundaries to achieve business benefit'. [6] Such a strategy would ensure that 'as soon as information is captured by any application system in any workgroup, it is made available to all other interested parties' (including other applications). This can only be achieved by developing an 'appropriate IT infrastructure', incorporating 'proper end-user interface tools' and developing 'a business strategy with business policies and processes - all with the goal of sending, receiving and acting on information quickly'. [7]

As suggested above, IT infrastructure may comprise an array of 'memory systems' which comprises 'the means by which organisations collect, store and make knowledge accessible to their members' and clients. [8] This is not the place to attempt an exegesis on the culture and artifacts of community memory: suffice it to say that social networks and their memory systems are an endemic part of any community (of which organisations may be counted). Of course, in an organisational context, administrative process is also an endemic, if much maligned component of the business environment. If we were to ask scientists about administrivia, we would step back and watch the smoke billow from their ears; yet if we were to ask the same scientists about recordkeeping, they will probably tell you that they have been doing it for years. The difficulty is how to convince them about the corporate implications of local/personally developed practices! The same applies to our knowledge workers. Invariably, they are well aware of the rigour of research and collection management (the bread and butter of any

student), but who have been seduced by the technology of the Internet, word processing, email, and manifold desktop applications to develop largely autonomous and quite arbitrary management practices of their information. Any attempt to control or constrain the freedom they have enjoyed will be met with indifference, if not open hostility! In this environment, we may be grateful for the development of, and general commitment to the continuum and its manifestation for Commonwealth agencies in the DIRKS methodology. One anticipates that it will be significant in the development of solutions to support corporate governance requirements and thereby, manage the component parts of our agencies' memory systems.

As information professionals, we are being urged to concentrate on developing holistic approaches to managing our corporate knowledge where the 'creation, flow, accessibility, use and maintenance' of information is paramount. [9] This does not mean, however, that we can afford to ignore the fact that the 'existence of organised knowledge raises intrinsic questions about sharing or withholding' the vast array of resources which comprise corporate memory. [10] As we have seen above, we are now not only dealing with traditional structural entities, but ad hoc workgroups comprising members chosen from a range of units in our agencies because of the unique nature of the skills or knowledge which can be applied to achieving desired outcomes.

DIRKS may prove to be a positive step towards addressing these challenges, although there are some aspects of the methodology that may need to be adjusted. Under DIRKS, we will be required to establish function-based frameworks for managing our information. Will this be possible as our agencies develop more open communication processes that transcend hierarchical boundaries? Is NAA's toolset sufficiently flexible to allow agencies to develop along such lines? A crucial issue in

ensuring the viability of any design proposal is the need to recognise that organisations evolve - with structures and functions potentially subject to change. This is likely to have substantial impact on attitudes to information access and service delivery. In increasingly networked organisations, hierarchical structures are largely inconsequential from a client's perspective of access to information or delivery of a service. To provide a recent perspective on this, we will have to remember that 'users do not need to know the physical location of the ... [information], nor take the time to check the ... repositories of every function or department'. In such scenarios, 'stewards may be needed to take care of maintaining integrity in the content and structure of the knowledge base'. This is where our roles as systems designers are changing. [11]

To define organisational functions and relationships accurately, we will have to have a clear understanding of the culture and corporate governance traditions of our organisations, not to mention the organisational politics and changing priorities which may inhibit communication flows. However, we also need to accept that while it is important to recognise functional roles and traditions, such functional silos 'can create barriers to effective information flow and encourage managers to adopt protectionist stances'. [12] While undertaking an analysis of our organisations, a challenge will be to ensure information access and service delivery are not adversely affected by imposing irrelevant or inappropriate criteria on the manner in which information is to be organised. Can we do this using DIRKS?

In deference to colleagues who can draw on much greater experience and wit, we probably need to recognise that we may be dealing with something akin to a paradigm shift as we develop strategies to address the challenges of more flexible organisational structures. We may have to be prepared

to adopt fundamentally different management approaches to deal with the increasing complexity in our organisational structures, and the quantities of records being generated within ad hoc workgroups. Records will be generated and managed in myriad formats - with myriad applications supporting increasingly integrated business processes. Will this result in the continued development of myriad recordkeeping systems? How are we to repair the fragmentation that has already led to the development of islands of information? This is a concept that has been around for some time, but judging from recent vendor presentations, is now seen among our industry suppliers as a significant obstacle to the development of an organisational knowledge base.

Our key challenge is to design and implement business solutions that support virtual intra- and extra-organisational communities. If we have not recognised that IT affects where (with whom), when, how, and for whom we work and have factored this into our design specifications for our recordkeeping solutions, we are abrogating our responsibilities to our organisations. [13] This is where the continuum model acquires significance. One suspects also it is where the application of DIRKS will prove to be auspicious.

Despite one's optimism about the timeliness of the NAA's strategies, one would urge the NAA not to lose sight of the fact that this is an era of lean and mean government. Innovation in administrative practices will only be tolerated if it leads to significant savings. Many agencies simply cannot afford to indulge in the luxury of potentially expensive, cutting-edge projects which may be seen to be only remotely connected to a core business such as policy development. One would hope that the NAA is embarking on a series of lobbying exercises not only within agencies, but within key Minister's offices to ensure the success of its almost eighteen-month planning and development enterprise. They may have to invoke some of the tried and tested war stories to

illustrate their advocacy, and arguments to ensure that information management services continue to be valued, and that the integrity of our agencies' memory systems is not subject to arbitrary rightsizing. We do not have to look too far to find disturbing examples of what one writer recently described as 'the cost of contracting in the dark'. [14] In this article, we are provided with harrowing evidence about the impact of losing critical corporate memory - in this case, specialist engineering knowledge. Focusing on incidents familiar to Australians, (the HMAS *Westralia* fire, the Royal Canberra Hospital implosion, and the ESSO Longford explosion) all of which resulted in the tragic loss of life, we learn about the effect of 'de-professionalising' in agencies, and the loss of 'subject matter knowledge' or 'technical expertise'.

In this context, we are reminded about our public sector proclivity to indulge in cynicism. In a personal communication, a colleague recently suggested that despite the many initiatives emanating from agencies such as the NAA in response to discontinuous change, she was concerned that 'it is going to be near impossible to implement these new methodologies without top driven support, and I am not convinced we will get it. NAA seems to forget that although records and archives are their lifeblood, most agencies still see it as a very low priority which is resource intensive.' [15] Participants at professional fora have also expressed such concerns. Myriad management texts testify to the need for executive imprimatur to ensure, or at least expedite change. In the Commonwealth public sector context, we have to assume that NAA is already lobbying agency heads to ensure that its ambitious and innovative program for reform is not stifled by bureaucratic inertia or indifference. Why then does the issue of executive support seem to be such a testy issue?

Our goal should be to ensure that the services we provide are attractive in terms of cost-effectiveness, responsiveness and

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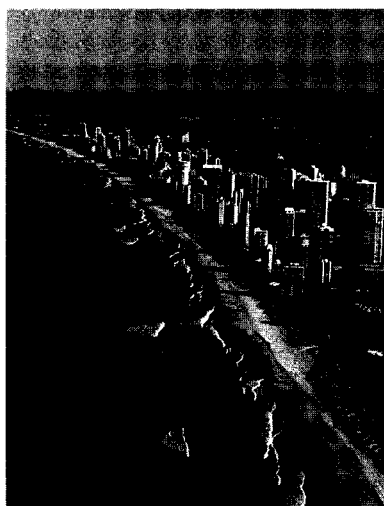
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The Information Management Unit (IMU) is seeking a records management professional to act as a consultant to the Project Team responsible for planning and implementation of Council's new automated records/ document management system. Council's chosen product suite is PC Docs Open & Record Manager, digital scanning and electronic workflow.

Required Experience
- Proven track record in leading or taking a key senior role in the building or transformation of a contemporary organisation's records/information management activities.
- Substantial experience with implementing and working with an automated record/document management system, information needs analyses, user education & changer management in a diverse organisation.
- Prior experience in the successful implementation of electronic records/document management in a medium to large organisation (>1000 users) will be highly regarded
- Experience in local government will be highly regarded
- Ability to coach/mentor others
- Mature interpersonal skills, including negotiation and conflict resolution
- Exceptional communication skills
- Records and document management qualifications (Not IT)
- Input into Policy development
- Provide advice/consulting role on Records Management Principles:
  - **New Index and Thesaurus:**
  Assist with reviewing the "fit" of the current index and new thesaurus with software eg. RecordManager v 3.2
  - **Training:**
  Participate in the development of records management/indexing training.

Application Details:
The position will be for 3 months and based on performance could be reviewed for a longer term. Applications should indicate costs and proposed methodology to address the criteria.

Contact:
Ms Linda Wulf, Coordinator Information Management Unit, for further details
Ph: 07 55 828 466
email: lwulf@goldcoast.qld.gov.au

Applications to:
Paul Stevens, Chief Executive Officer
"Records Management Consultant - TRACKS Project"
Gold Coast City Council, PO Box 5042 GCMC, Bundall Qld 9729

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31st May 2000

GCCC
Gold Coast City Council

efficiency. We ignore this at our peril: we have to ensure that we prepare our services with an eye to optimising these qualities. As information professionals, we have to ensure that we support an array of agency practices, many of which have evolved far beyond a Weberian model of bureaucracy, but which are still **perceived** to be the domain of the registry or filing clerk. But how far should our support extend? There would be many who would support the argument that the organisational 'structures we have inherited are sufficient for a world organised around mechanistic thinking and material production. They are, however, insufficient for the demands of a world of information.' [16]

Conclusion

Let us not forget, however, that DIRKS is a model: it is a framework which governs how we address problems and challenges. Without a complete understanding of the inherent nature of the model, we all run the risk that we will grope in the dark searching for answers that may no longer be valid. Agencies will have to ensure that staff are adequately trained in, and can apply principles required of them by the NAA. These are non-trivial issues: from our experience, there seems to have been some inconsistency in the manner in which we are being urged to interpret the DIRKS methodology as, in many respects, DIRKS has been an intellectual or academic exercise to this point. While there have been some opportunities to engage NAA in debate, we are now presented with a set of strategies which are designed to facilitate our work for decades. The launch of the products in late March was the equivalent of a stake in the ground. We will now expect our lead agency to provide us with a **consistent** view of what needs to be done to ensure that we can implement their strategies appropriately.

Within a decade, the fledgling Internet has become a pervasive and essential component of our desktop tool set which, along with email, word processing, and similar applications has added complexity to the information landscape, and our

capacity to manage it in a coherent fashion. It goes without saying that agencies continue to lose potentially vital information, as our desktop tools become more flexible and less constrained by system-driven business rules. Nevertheless, the landscape will continue to evolve and will remain a critical component of our agency business of providing access to and evidence of past practices and decisions.

In conclusion, one can only hope that the NAA has the capacity and wherewithal to assume the role of indefatigable advocate of responsible information management practices at a time when agencies are being urged to adopt increasingly sophisticated solutions to complex organisational challenges, with fewer resources. We will need to embrace change. It is inevitable that our routines and job descriptions will be different: we will continue to need a sound knowledge of our departmental operations, but one might suggest that we will also need to demonstrate an 'ability to leave behind the way things were always done'. [17] One suspects that as the dust settles after the announcement of the NAA's initiatives, it will be essential for a recruit to an agency's DIRKS project team to demonstrate an unequivocal capacity to meet this criterion.

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The National Archives of Australia's Administrative Functions Disposal Authority

AUTHORS

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ABSTRACT

The February issue of *INFORMAA Quarterly* published an article, **The New Functional General Disposal Authorities: A Business Perspective**, on the National Archives of Australia's new Administrative Functions Disposal Authority. The author expressed various

concerns relating to the project and the use of the disposal authority. This article describes the way the authority was prepared, examines its main features, and addresses some misconceptions about the way it can be used.

Background

In March of this year, the National Archives launched a suite of products to support best practice recordkeeping in Commonwealth agencies based on the methodologies of the **Australian Standard AS 4390 - Records Management**. The launch and the associated products herald a major change in the way the Archives operates. The Archives is moving from being a service provider to a standard setter; issuing guidelines and directions to assist agencies to implement best practice recordkeeping to support business needs. These products will enhance the records management advice provided by the Australian Standard AS 4390. They are designed to ensure that appropriate records are created and managed to provide evidence of business activities and to support the needs of both the organisation and the Australian people.

The Administrative Functions Disposal Authority is one of these products. It is not just a procedural-driven disposal directive, but provides a recordkeeping strategy. It presents options and opportunities for those records managers who wish to play a proactive and vital role in their agency's recordkeeping practices. For those who want to follow a more traditional role, the Authority also offers the flexibility to pursue this option.

In February 1999, the National Archives entered into a whole-of-government contract to license the use of the State Records Authority of New South Wales' **Keyword AAA Thesaurus of General Terms (KAAA)** by Commonwealth agencies. In order to provide integrated titling and disposal capability for Commonwealth agencies in line with the recordkeeping methodologies of AS4390, the Archives decided to redevelop the existing set of General Disposal Authorities covering common administrative functions. The redevelopment aligns disposal classes with the 17 functional terms of the KAAA Thesaurus. An agency can attain complete classification and disposal coverage for their records by developing an agency-specific thesaurus and linked disposal authority for core functional records. These specific tools can be merged with the KAAA and Administrative Functions Disposal Authority.

Project methodology

The Administrative Functions Disposal Authority was compiled using the methodologies contained in the **Designing and Implementing a Recordkeeping System Manual (DIRKS)** and the Archives' new **Appraisal Guidelines for Commonwealth Records**. Both of these products were developed during the project and are now available on the National Archives' website (www.naa.gov.au). DIRKS was developed as a joint venture by the National Archives and the State Records Authority of New South Wales and is based on AS 4390. The Australian Standard itself was developed in the early 1990s with the participation of records managers,

archivists, health information workers and the relevant professional associations. After its publication in 1996, the Standard was endorsed by the National Archives for use in Commonwealth government agencies.

Using the business classification scheme (ie the function and activity levels) of KAAA as a starting point, a detailed analysis was carried out of each function in the Commonwealth. The DIRKS approach involves researching requirements to create and keep records, identifying stakeholders with an interest in the records, and examining the risks associated with how long records are kept. The project team also considered requirements to keep records as part of the archives of the nation.

Initial consultation and research

Agencies with overall responsibility for the KAAA functions were a major source of information (eg Comcare for Compensation and Occupational Health and Safety, and the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission for the Personnel and Establishment functions). In particular, any guidance issued by these lead agencies, along with legislation relating to the function, formed the basis for the comprehensive business analysis that supports the Authority.

Action areas of operating agencies were also approached to provide information about how they implemented the legislation and guidelines within their environment. A total of 57 interviews were conducted during the course of the project. These interviews were taped, transcribed and registered in the database developed to manage the project.

All sources were analysed to determine recordkeeping requirements and to produce a transactional flow for each function and activity set, together with a list of key records.

Undertaking the appraisal

Each function and activity set and the resulting records were then assessed to identify the needs of stakeholders with an interest in the records. A risk assessment was carried out to identify the minimum period where business and accountability requirements would be met, after which time the records were unlikely to be needed. The risk analysis is designed to ensure that records are not destroyed before their useful life is finished. It involves examining the consequences of not having the records at a particular time, and the likelihood of the records being required for any particular purpose after the nominated period being examined.

An assessment was also made against the criteria listed in the NAA discussion paper **Making Choices: Deciding Which Commonwealth Records to Keep for Posterity**. The **Making Choices** discussion paper was distributed widely for comment in 1998. Copies were sent to the heads of each Commonwealth agency, and to groups of interested stakeholders such as historians. The publication was also placed on the Archives' website and the Archives actively sought responses to the issues raised.

The criteria that the Archives outlined in **Making Choices** as a basis for retaining records were:

* to provide a concise record of the source of authority, machinery and most important decisions and activities of the Commonwealth and Commonwealth institutions;
* to enable future generations to gain knowledge about significant aspects of Australia's culture, heritage and people; and
* to retain other records which are very likely to be of substantial benefit to society at large.

If the records were found to meet any of these criteria, they were designated to be 'retained as national archives'. If they didn't, the minimum business requirement identified in the risk analysis was used as the disposal action.

The aims outlined in the **Making Choices** discussion paper have been further refined in the past year and the Archives' new statement on selecting records for retention, **Why Records Are Kept: Directions in Appraisal**, can be found on the Archives' website.

Drafting and feedback

The draft classes for each of the 17 functions were circulated to those agencies that were interviewed, as well as to a large number of agencies that indicated an interest in participating in the testing phase. Comments were also sought from the Public Access and Reader Services Branch of the Archives, as a representative of the views of public user stakeholders.

A detailed presentation on the methodology to be used for the project was first presented to Canberra-based Commonwealth agencies at the December 1998 meeting of the National Archives-Agency Strategic Issues group. Subsequent presentations at Strategic Issues meetings in March, July and November 1999 allowed us to give information on the project as it developed, and mention issues that had been raised during the analysis, drafting or feedback processes. A presentation

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

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To nominate please email: recordkeeping@naa.gov.au providing your name (individual or company); position/title; address; email; telephone and fax numbers; and a description of the products or services you provide (eg paper manufacture; storage provider; records management training; software developement etc).

was also given to the Keyword AAA Commonwealth Users Forum in February 1999. Information about the project was included in several articles in the National Archives' newsletter, **Memento**.

The Disposal Authority as a guide to recordkeeping

It is intended that the Administrative Functions Disposal Authority serve both as a guide to recordkeeping and an authorisation for the disposal of records. In the past, disposal authorities could be used as a guide in creating and titling records, but this practice was seldom implemented. The Administrative Functions Disposal Authority sets out to assist more directly in the creation of records.

This approach begins with the use of, and alignment with, KAAA that is already being widely used for titling and control. The Administrative Functions Disposal Authority enhances the use of KAAA by suggesting methods of creating records for more efficient management at the class level. For example, in the 'policy' activity, records relating to the development of a policy are in a different class to the 'final' policy even if they have an identical retention period. The retention period is the same when the analysis showed that the documents about development of a policy provided important contextual information and should not be destroyed before the main documents. However, by having two classes, the Authority encourages agencies to file the final policy separately to the working papers. Not only will this facilitate disposal, but it will also assist in the retrieval of the final policy. This approach can be particularly useful when dealing with electronic implementation. Naturally, agencies are free to decide whether they will follow this practice or whether they will file these records together and use the longest retention period.

Flexibility

Beyond the fundamental parameters of what is required to be kept, the Authority is designed to be flexible in implementation, and can be tailored to suit an agency's particular needs and organisational culture.

Minimum retention periods
As is the case with all existing National Archives disposal authorities, the retention periods stated are minimum ones. If an agency considers that their business circumstances require a longer retention period, they should keep the records for as long as needed. There are also some instances where it will be necessary to consult action areas. For example, the disposal action 'Destroy 5 years after policy is superseded' if applied at creation will require liaison with policy officers to assist with the nomination of a trigger point to review the records. If sentencing inactive records, the sentencer will need to seek advice on the status of the policy.

The successful implementation of the Authority will require a degree of interaction between an agency's records manager and action officers. This is an opportunity for records managers to become more visible within their agency and to raise awareness and understanding of recordkeeping tasks and principles.

It is also possible to implement the Authority on several levels.

Document level
The Authority mentions specific documents or record types such as Final Audit Reports, Plans, and Minutes. This is not an uncommon practice in disposal authorities. However, because specific record types are mentioned, this does not mean that the Authority is structured at a document level. The majority of classes are made up of groups of transactions and the records that are needed to carry out those transactions. The Archives expects that

most agencies will continue to manage records in the traditional paper file format or as 'document containers' in an electronic recordkeeping system. If an agency chooses to manage records at the document level, they would need to identify all the transactions and any resulting records relating to each activity, applying the collective disposal action to each document. This would be a very labour intensive exercise to undertake and agencies would be advised to do a cost benefit analysis before proceeding with such an approach.

Activity level
In sentencing, especially with existing files, agencies may also decide to 'group' disposal classes. If there are several disposal classes applicable to a function/activity set, agencies can choose to retain all the records for the longest retention period.

Sentencing from creation
One of the areas where linked titling and disposal is likely to bring greatest efficiency is in sentencing. The Authority provides the option of sentencing from creation, allowing the records to be managed from the point of capture into a recordkeeping system. Detailed strategies for adopting this option can be found in the Introduction to the Authority. These strategies focus on identifying trigger dates for disposal action, and reviewing the records when the nominated triggers have been reached. Of course, the Authority can still be applied to all existing records, regardless of how or when they were created. Whatever course is taken in implementing the Authority, the agency concerned will need to weigh the options, the associated risks, and the resources available.

The context of functions and activities

Classes in the Authority are made up of the function and activity names and

scope notes as well as the records' description and disposal action. Similar records descriptions can appear against different activities and functions. For example, the Authority includes classes for 'Strategic Management - Planning' and 'Staff Development - Planning' with very similar records descriptions. The disposal actions, though, are different. This is because the function and activity context means that there are different requirements for keeping the records. Policy for the 'Fleet Management' function does not have the same value as policy for the 'Personnel Management' function. It is likely that the disposal action for the policy records within an agency's core business function will be different again.

Conclusion

The National Archives has a dual responsibility. It is concerned with providing agencies with a recordkeeping framework that will ensure records are created and managed to meet evidential business requirements. The Archives also has a major role in identifying the archival record and ensuring that it is kept and appropriately managed for the benefit of the whole community. The Administrative Functions Disposal Authority will assist the fulfilment of both of these aims. This Authority is the first major implementation in the Australian federal jurisdiction of the approach promoted in AS 4390. It incorporates the function-based approach of the Standard, and integrates the records management operations of classification and disposal. The Archives is keen to monitor its implementation and receive comments on its use over the coming year.

A Real Change Challenge: Building and Implementing a Function-based Business Classification Scheme

AUTHORS

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Document and Records Management System project in the Department of Defence required an ability to create a relationship between the newly promulgated National Archives of Australia (NAA) Administrative Functions Disposal Authority, and a function-based Business Classification Scheme (BCS) to allow for sentencing of records on creation. Drawing on Keyword AAA as a foundation, the BCS has now been

introduced. Further developments planned for the BCS include its association with the new NAA Administrative Functions Disposal Authority, and implementation of a third level of classification.

Introduction

In 1997, Department of Defence in Canberra realised their existing file management system (an in-house product called CENREG) was not Year 2000 compliant and would need to be replaced. This led to a lengthy needs analysis/statement of requirements and tendering process through which an off-the-shelf product was selected. The Defence Directorate of Records Management Policy (DRMP) set up the DRMS (Document and Records Management System) Project to implement the new system.

Two of the major requirements when the new system was selected were the ability to use the functional disposal schedules in development by National Archives of Australia (NAA), and to relate this to a function-based Business Classification Scheme (BCS). The overall goal was to create relationships between the function-based disposal schedules and the BCS to allow sentencing on creation.

Once formulated and reviewed, the draft BCS has been implemented in the new file management system. The BCS final review and authorisation is under way by the DRMP Appraisal Project. This will also link the BCS with the newly released NAA Administrative Functions Disposal Authority (AFDA) and the Defence-specific Records Disposal Authorities (RDAs) developed during the Appraisal Project.

Why function-based?

At the launch of e-permanence at the National Archives on 30 March this year, the Secretary of the Department of Defence, Allan Hawke, established the Defence commitment to the new 'best practice recordkeeping standards' and their attendant functional principles regime.

In principle, the functional approach is common sense. A function-based BCS provides a classification structure that can be used across the agency, and provides more stability than previously existing organisation-based classification schemes (as recommended in AS 4390). As with many organisations within Government, Defence undergoes significant organisational change, so a major goal was to provide a consistent structure that could be used by all Defence sites over time.

In addition to providing a more stable environment, functional classification allows for sentencing on creation through linking the functional classifications with functional disposal schedules. This is in line with the NAA policy of introducing a function-based Disposal Authority. Defence expects to achieve significant time and cost savings by automatically specifying disposal action as records are being created, rather than reviewing the records long after their active use. To provide a sense of scale, last year the main file creation system in Defence in Canberra alone created 44 000 files and file parts. This is not to say that Defence will rely solely on automatically assigning disposal action on creation. There will still be review processes, but particular classes of records will automatically be flagged for disposal based on their functional classification.

The vision here is to enable desk officers to undertake basic recordkeeping processes, and reduce the multiple handling of records. Recordkeeping expertise is then only required where it is more effective - at the sentencing review stage.

The relief of not having to reinvent the wheel

A final, but not insignificant, consideration was the ability to leverage the considerable work by NSW State Archives and NAA expended in the creation of the Keyword AAA Thesaurus (KAAA), and development of the functional approach. Defence shares many functions with other agencies and organisations. The ability to take a body of work and adapt it to the Defence environment, rather than start from scratch, was not only attractive but in an era of Public Sector streamlining, an organisational imperative. It enabled the DRMP Control Tools Team to implement the BCS and initiate its project to develop functional disposal authorities for Defence, confident of success. The systematic approach by NAA provides the logic, standards and advice needed to implement the considerable changes required. The NAA emphasis on stakeholder involvement to authorise and facilitate change is an important concept, and was of great assistance when implementing the Defence BCS.

Formulating the BCS

The Defence BCS was developed from a variety of sources including KAAA, existing file classifications, and original analysis of organisational top level goals, objectives, and functions, Defence specific legislation, and government Administrative Arrangement Orders. Using KAAA as a base, the Defence DRMP Control Tools Team began by identifying all Defence functions. Existing classification schemes and file plans were solicited from all areas within Defence. These schemes were correlated with the Defence organisational structure, and existing documentation on the Defence mission and goals. Defence organisational and reporting structures were analysed to provide an understanding of functional relationships, and how different areas within Defence shared information. Existing RDAs were also examined to provide an understanding of records specific to the agency, and to attempt to identify Defence-specific functions from these records. These disparate sources were integrated, and an overall appreciation of Defence functions emerged.

Challenges with the Business Analysis Process

The major challenge was to convince stakeholders that the prime purpose of a functional BCS is to classify information of value so that it can be sentenced and disposed of against the new NAA disposal authority. We have the situation in Defence of diverse subject or numeric classification schemes used by individual units to achieve control and retrieval of records. The schemes are not incorporated in the BCS, but managed by other metadata in the DRMS system.

One of the biggest challenges to the process of developing an agency-wide BCS is convincing stakeholders that the terms and concepts used must cover the whole of the organisation, and not be specific to any one area. This means that the wealth of detail available in a classification scheme specific to one business unit cannot be incorporated in an agency-wide scheme. It also means terminology must be agreed on and be consistently applied. This requires attention to change management techniques and strong communication skills. The Project team identified significant stakeholders and kept them involved in the Drafting and Review process for the BCS through regular email correspondence. Meetings were used to focus attention on specific issues in the Project where it was felt ideas or viewpoints could not be adequately expressed in email. This was an important strategy as it kept people informed and provided feedback for the Project, while only interrupting stakeholders' schedules when necessary.

Another major challenge in the development of the BCS was reconciling the emphasis placed on particular concepts by the creators of KAAA with the emphasis placed on these concepts by Defence. For example, in KAAA the concept RESEARCH is a second level activity, Defence argues that this concept describes one of their core functions. One of the major concerns was to adhere where possible to the KAAA terms and definitions (as deviation would cause significant problems with the introduction of the function-based disposal schedules), while maintaining a list of terms practical in the Defence environment.

Overall, the principles and concepts involved in the functional approach take time to permeate the organisation and gain acceptance. The difficulty is time and resources as many queries for explanation come from so many diverse areas. Acceptance is an ongoing challenge and will, hopefully, be stabilised at the conclusion of the Appraisal Project.

Implementation

The DRMS has been operational in Defence since mid-December 1999, when it was rolled out to an initial 60 users. The system was bedded down, and has since been extended to another 110 physical records creators. The overall vision is for the system to be available on all Defence desktops in Canberra for the creation and management of both physical and electronic records, and will eventually be on all Defence desktops nationally. For the initial implementation, two

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levels of classification were used: function and activity. The Project Team decided to wait until the new disposal authority was released to ensure any third level terms would correspond to the Class level of the disposal authority. In addition, when the NAA authorises RDAs for Defence at the conclusion of the Appraisal Project, these will also be incorporated.

The DRMS is based on the Objective software product which supports the use of KAAA and one-to-many keyterm relationships. Terms in the BCS are displayed in a thesaurus view, i.e. a hierarchy of top level Functions, followed by Activities (and where a third level is implemented, Classes or subject categories). The thesaurus view effectively enhances the selection process. Related and non-preferred terms are also available to the user and can be searched for or used to clarify the meaning of a selected term. This functionality has been of great assistance when people first use the system and must adapt to a functional classification scheme when they have been used to an organisational or subject-based scheme. This is not to say that the DRMS could have been implemented without training and floorwalking support, but the functionality provided in the system complemented the other learning strategies involved.

Challenges with changing classification behaviour

As with the implementation of most technology, there were technical difficulties to be overcome during the implementation of the DRMS. These difficulties, while not trivial, were of less concern than changing the behaviour of people within Defence. The DRMS fundamentally challenges the way people were used to thinking about their documentation with the movement from an organisation-based classification to a function-based classification. The idea of placing

only documentation relating to a particular activity on a file is not new, but has not always been embraced within Defence. The requirement to associate a function and activity with a file and only place on the file documents relating to that function and activity, is a difficult concept for those areas used to organisational subject-based files. It also means breaking people of the habit of creating miscellaneous or 'bag' files. This was a change management issue rather than an issue with the way the BCS had been set up, or with the technical functionality of the system.

In addition to changing the way people logically group documentation, users had to develop an understanding of the terminology used by the BCS. What one business unit might call 'Legal Advice', another might call 'Legislation - opinion'. Because only one term could be used in the scheme (and it might have been different again), users had to adapt to the new terminology. The DRMS has tried to minimise these problems by providing users with comprehensive scope notes at the point of choosing the function and activity, by providing training in the use of the BCS, and by providing support through floorwalkers and the helpdesk.

However, these two challenges are ongoing. As the DRMS is rolled out to new areas or new users, changes will be required in how people have previously categorised and classified their documentation. The DRMS sees the movement to function-based classification as one of the fundamental changes associated with the introduction of the DRMS and an issue that requires ongoing change management strategies.

Further development

There are two further areas of work required to fully obtain the benefits of implementing a function-based BCS in Defence. These are: associating the

new function-based disposal authority (and developing function-based RDAs) to allow sentencing on creation via the BCS; and implementing the third level of terms where appropriate.

These goals are interrelated and will require analysis, not only of the activities and transactions carried out by Defence, but also in their relationship to the record classes identified by NAA. Work has begun on analysis of the AFDA and also on the third level of classification. We have found the difficulties associated with applying a consistent logical structure to the classification scheme, determining the level a concept should occupy, and agreeing on terminology, are all compounded by a third level rather than alleviated. However, given the investment in the process by Defence, NAA and many other agencies, and the pressing business reasons to solve these problems, we are convinced the solutions will be found.

Challenges for people in the process

Stakeholders' review and use of the BCS is fundamental to its success - we depend on them to analyse correctly the value of the information in the records that they are classifying. We thank the Canberra rollout records managers, shopfront staff, and their clients for ongoing efforts to understand the BCS. The DRMP Control Team expertise of Dave Thompson, with consultants Sandra Blackburn and Jan Fisher, ensured the first draft of the BCS made sense. Input from other agencies gave confidence that Defence was up to standard in the structure of its BCS. Strong DRMP management continues to provide the leadership and resources required to deliver our objectives.

Life Cycle versus Continuum - What *is* the difference?

AUTHOR

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Peter Marshall works as a systems administrator in IT Services at the CSIRO Corporate Centre. He is studying part-time at the University of Canberra for a Bachelor of Arts degree with an Information and Records Management major.

ABSTRACT

Technology is changing the way in which records are created and stored, and recordkeeping systems have to meet this challenge. Can the Records Life Cycle system of management be adapted to the rapidly expanding world of electronic records, or is the Records Continuum concept the way of the future for archives and records management?

Introduction

Although much has been written about the Records Continuum approach to records and archives management, many recordkeeping professionals would be hard-pressed to define both the Records Life Cycle and the Records Continuum in a few short sentences, or coherently explain the differences between the two concepts.

Few readers of this journal would argue or disagree with the following definitions:

Record - recorded information, in any form, including data in computer systems, created or received and maintained by an organisation or person in the transaction of business or conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity. To be considered evidence a record must possess content, structure and context, and be part of a recordkeeping system. [1]

Recordkeeping - making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information. [2]

Records Management - the discipline and organisational function of managing records to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations. [3]

Unfortunately it is difficult to find a short definition of the Records Continuum that is as easily understood, or which clarifies the differences when compared with the Record Life Cycle without causing argument, disagreement, and claims of misrepresentation.

A frequently heard definition describes the Records Continuum as being the management of records from the time of their creation, through to retention as archives or destruction, with assessment for archival value performed at the time of creation. Quite understandably, many Records Managers cannot see the difference between this description and what they have been striving to do throughout their professional careers - under the impression that they were following the Records Life Cycle model.

This paper briefly discusses contemporary records management and the challenges it faces, and then looks at the main features of the Records Life Cycle and the Records Continuum concepts and how each affects recordkeeping. It concludes with an assessment of which approach seems the most suitable for the evolving world of archives and records management as we move into the twenty-first century.

Records and records management

In recordkeeping terms, records should always be thought of as transactional evidence. It is the context - the transaction that created or used the record, the participants in the transaction, the date and time, links to other records - that gives a record evidential authority.

Records are produced as a result of an organisation pursuing its business, and are kept to meet operational needs, to fulfil legislative and regulatory requirements, and to be used as evidence in a legal context. Indeed, many records are vital to an organisation's ability to function, or to even exist. The issue of accountability has also become increasingly important. Legislation covers areas such as freedom of information, evidence, privacy, and recordkeeping and archives responsibilities. Statutory, judicial and societal expectations compel organisations to be certain that they can account for their actions. David Bearman states this succinctly: 'Organisations have to understand the risks posed by the social requirement of accountability. For public organisations the ultimate risk is the loss of legitimacy and for private organisations it is in incurring liabilities beyond the ability of the organisational purse.' [4]

Records management has traditionally involved paper records, but the growth of computer-based business systems in recent decades has led to the increased

presence and use of electronic records. The risks associated with not keeping adequate records can be very high, with serious consequences for the organisation and its officers. There is now a strong push, emphasised by the Australian Law Reform Commission in 1998,[5] to place ultimate responsibility for effective recordkeeping in organisations at the very top, with the Chief Executive Officer, to ensure that expected standards are applied and followed. With the release of Australian Standard AS4390 - Records Management in 1996 (which is being used as a basis for the developing International Standard ISO15489), organisations now have available a recognised standard of 'best practice' to follow.

The digital challenge

The ever-increasing use of computer technology in business activities has brought change to the way many records are created, received, used and stored. Desktop computers with electronic mail, word processing, spreadsheet and graphics packages have decentralised and isolated record creation and usage patterns in organisations. The extent of these 'uncontrolled' records is difficult to gauge because they are not visible to the naked eye unless displayed on a screen or printed.

When viewing the temporal image of the record on a visual display or a printed document the assumption may be made that the electronic original contains the same elements of content, structure and context. This is not actually the case. The elements of the electronic record may come from several different sources: a selection of fields from one or more databases, a text or graphics file, a link to an Internet site, and so on. This makes it extremely difficult to establish the reliability and authenticity of the record as evidence. In electronic records, the content can be ephemeral and transitory, the structure a virtual construct provided by the software and

hardware used, and elements of the context difficult or perhaps impossible to trace once the transaction that the record is supposed to provide evidence of has concluded.

Staff awareness and understanding of the need for records to be made and managed is also far from being widespread. An all too common belief is that records are paper, or that responsibilities for records apply only to paper records. Every person in an organisation who holds this view, and who has a PC at their workstation and an email account, is a time bomb waiting to go off. The problem is not only with the failure of records to be created when they should be. The retention of records that either should not have been made in the first place, or that should have been destroyed after passing their legal retention age, can just as readily expose the organisation to risk. Discovery orders, where parties in litigation are given access to the other party's records, apply to *all* records, not just those in the official records management system.

The Records Life Cycle

A system requires a conceptual base and the primary model for records management systems since World War II has been the Records Life Cycle. As its name suggests, this concept sees records as having a 'life', from creation through stages of distribution, use, maintenance and storage, then disposal by archiving that minority of records with continuing value, and destroying the rest.

Although called a cycle, it is really a linear process, much like a conveyor belt, that sees the record transported from the point of creation through iterative stages of usefulness and activity until it no longer serves any business purpose, and so dies - or is reincarnated as an archive if it has been assessed as having historical or research value. This can lead to the perception that a record's archival existence is outside or beyond the life cycle, and that the

appraisal of a record for its archival value only occurs at the end of the life cycle. But such a view appears to be at odds with this statement from the Records Life Cycle-oriented *Records Management Handbook:* 'It inevitably results in records with significant value being destroyed and records with little value being retained. The time to appraise a record is at its creation'.[6]

The Life Cycle and recordkeeping

The life cycle's principles were formulated at a time when 'records' meant physical (usually paper) records, and it has evolved into a system that manages those records very well. A physical record is a physical object, a singular entity, which cannot be in more than one place at the same time. Paper records tend to be associated with 'repository' or 'custodial' storage, in that file folders are finite objects, usually under central control, and are often stored centrally in a registry or records centre when not actively being used. If several people want access to the same physical record at the same time, each has to wait his or her turn.

The life cycle method deals with electronic records the same way it assimilated earlier non-paper records such as film, recordings and microfiche - by treating them as physical records with special handling requirements. Those special requirements include the hardware and software needed to obtain access to the record, and the longevity and handling of the storage medium. But the major concern is with ensuring that all of the necessary contextual information is captured along with the record. This cannot be guaranteed with the tools and business systems currently in use.

The life cycle's view of a record as a physical entity having a series of distinct and separate phases of usage runs into difficulties with electronic records, as the nature and volatility of these records

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negates this approach. Electronic records must be located where the hardware and software systems that provide their 'living' environment are located, thus defying the traditional repository and custodial orientation of the life cycle. As far as accessibility and use are concerned in the networked world, the actual location of the systems that store records is irrelevant.

The Records Continuum

In the past few years, a different model of records management has been gaining support, particularly in Australia. The Records Continuum approach to recordkeeping is multi-dimensional. Rather than a record passing through a string of time-based stages as in the life cycle model, the continuum encompasses all aspects of a record's existence and use simultaneously.

There are four dimensions to the records continuum:

- *First dimension:* records of business activities are created as documents.
- *Second dimension:* records created or received are tagged with metadata to support their capacity to act as evidence.
- *Third dimension:* records are incorporated into a system of storage and retrieval, becoming part of the organisational or corporate memory.
- *Fourth dimension:* records needed for societal, cultural or historical reasons become part of wider archival systems constituting the collective memory. [7]

The dimensions are not boundaries defining separate stages in the life of a record; they are different aspects of the record's purpose and function during its existence, and a record can exist in more than one dimension at the same time. The continuum also has no separation of the records management (administrative) and archival (historical) roles; the roles are intertwined, and blend into the single role of professional recordkeeper. The intent is to manage a record for all of its existence, which calls for records to be assessed for archival value at the time of their creation and throughout their lives.

The primary focus of the continuum is the multiple purposes of records. It aims for the development of recordkeeping systems that capture, manage and maintain records with sound evidential characteristics for as long as the records are of value to the organisation, any successor, or society. It promotes the integration of recordkeeping into the business systems and processes of organisations.

The Continuum and recordkeeping

The continuums purpose-orientated, systems approach to records management fundamentally changes the role of recordkeeping. Instead of being reactive, responding to the need to manage records after they have been created, recordkeeping must be proactive, identifying in partnership with other stakeholders those records of the organisation's activities that need to be retained, and then implementing business systems that are designed with built-in recordkeeping capability to capture records of evidential quality as they are created.

This emphasis is a major step forward in the management of electronic records in particular. Built-in capture and assessment means that records of value are created in the first place whenever electronic systems are used for business transactions. With appropriate metadata to ensure that they are accurate, complete, reliable and usable, these records have the necessary attributes of content, structure and context to act as evidence of business activity, and to support accountability. And knowing from the outset which electronic records must be kept for the longer term means that those records can then be migrated across systems as hardware and software upgrades occur. The encouraging results from the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy Project show us that much of this is possible and achievable now.

Conclusion

The demands on organisations to maintain and manage their recorded information have never been greater. In addition to providing evidence of transactions, meeting statutory requirements, and enabling an organisation to undertake or defend itself in litigation, there are now greater long-term societal expectations of accountability and ethical behaviour.

The changing nature of records themselves as a result of spiralling growth in the use of electronic records provides additional challenges that must be met if organisations are to fulfil their recordkeeping obligations. Awareness of the purpose and importance of records must permeate the organisation, and all staff should be familiar with recordkeeping requirements and responsibilities. Methods for the capture and retention of electronic records with full context, and their storage intact over time and through system changes, must be put in place.

The Records Life Cycle model aims to manage records to meet organisational objectives for the full life of the records, sees the value that records have after their active organisational life for the traditional archival purposes of historical study and for research, and also for long-term legal, regulatory and societal accountability. It supports the assessment of records for these values at the time that records are created. But the life cycle is a euphemism for records management with a narrow focus on the records themselves.

The continuum concept of a record being in more than one dimension simultaneously parallels the reality of electronic records being available for multiple use to multiple users, concurrently. The only limits to the quantity of simultaneous uses of a record are the number of users that the storage and retrieval system can cope with, and any restrictions imposed to govern access to the record. In theory,

every person on the planet could use an electronic record at the same time.

The vision of the continuum is a regime for recordkeeping using systems that ensure *all* records are assessed at the time of creation, and that *all* records of value are captured into the organisation's recordkeeping system. Within that system, the record's essential characteristics of content, structure and context will be maintained permanently and unalterably. The record will be available for multiple use by a variety of users for a range of purposes across the full span of its existence.

It is conceivable that the continuum approach will lead to recordkeeping being so completely integrated into business systems that it will be transparent to users of those systems. Creation, assessment, retention, storage and access-control will be guaranteed because these processes will occur automatically, behind the scenes.

The system of management we call the Records Life Cycle evolved from the need to effectively control and manage physical records. The Records Continuum is evolving from the more demanding need to exercise control and management over electronic records. The networks and systems through which these records are created, transmitted, stored, retrieved and used make the continuum not just possible, but unavoidable. We should accept and embrace the inevitability of Records Continuum, where the recordkeeping system is adapted to the nature and purpose of the records, rather than trying to force records to adapt to a management system designed for the records of half a century ago.

Endnotes

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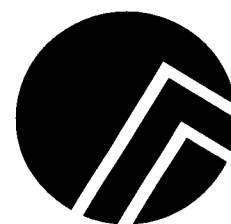
Records Management - Whose Territory?
RMAA 16th National Convention, Darwin, 1999

REVIEWER

Anthony Eccleston

Lecturer
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The title of the RMAA 16th National Convention, held in Darwin was appropriately, 'Records Management - Whose Territory?' This wasn't just to locate the Convention in the Northern Territory, but to pose the question that is increasingly being asked throughout the information industry. Is records management the domain of records managers only, or does it include archivists, or knowledge and information managers, or perhaps even accountants or librarians? Or, can we cast a net even wider than this?

The stated objectives of the Convention were to demonstrate the shifting boundaries and alliances in the field of records management, and the effects on records management of burgeoning technology, restructuring and downsizing within organisations, privatisation and outsourcing, and increasing obligations to maximise accountability and accessibility.

Each of the three days of the Convention had its own theme. The first day was to concentrate on stakeholder issues; the second, the dynamics of recordkeeping; and the last day, the central issue of whose territory is records management?

Day One

The 'theme' for Day One was not particularly apparent when related to the speakers themselves, nor sometimes to the subject matter they offered. For example, speakers on the first day discussed subjects as diverse as document management from a US military perspective, the dangers inherent in poor records management, accountability, or the lack of it in government records, privacy, intellectual property, and corporate memory. The relevance of the 'stakeholder' tag was a little hard to discern.

However, after a predictably entertaining and relaxed official opening, the first keynote speaker, **Karen Shaw**, an American from the Center of Lessons Learned (CALL), Fort Leavenworth, Texas was introduced. Karen's adjusted title was 'Redefining the Document', which immediately raised the perennial problem of semantics, and varying international perceptions of the meaning of terms. A fundamental definitional departure from the Australian lexicon involved differentiation between records and documents.

Variance in language was particularly apparent throughout this opening presentation. Karen introduced a very American title for records managers - 'Functional Subject Matter Experts'. The 'functional' element of this title is applied to a shorthand description of 'knowledge workers', that is: 'Functionals' which, in turn, is differentiated from computer systems administrators, who are designated 'Technicals'.

A general undercurrent emerged that the commitment to technology, despite claims to the contrary, has subjugated any commitment to an intellectual or user focus. Karen posed several challenges to the information management profession, each of which she suggested, needed further attention:

- the office environment - in which she admitted that, in her experience, there was little management of records at all at the office level; and, at best, it is disjointed;
- the web environment, which related to the ubiquitous use of PCs, where documents required basic descriptive control measures including metadata tagging to permit being uploaded to a web server, with indexing being applied through search engines; and
- the knowledge-based environment, particularly in the contemporary military circumstances, in which crucial loss of corporate memory seems to be an accepted fact.

In the CALL commitment to achieve 'Knowledge and Speed', the overall impression that one was left with was of great technology and impressive funding being applied to gain greater intellectual control of records. Unfortunately, success in overcoming the specifically identified challenges appears rather doubtful as they demand much of the creators and users of the records who will, in all probability, not be compliant.

The second session involved the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, **Bill Blick**, speaking on 'Recordkeeping as People's Resource'. He opened by recalling the necessity to keep proper records is that justice may be provided to the individual. However, the commitment to 'efficiency' in government in the use of

records often is in conflict with the justice principle. There is often a lack of understanding, particularly at the most senior levels of government, of the need to make a record to record a decision, or provide an evidential record of a transaction.

The area that offered significant concern to Bill Blick, other than retaining for posterity census records, was in the prevailing commitment in government to outsource functional business areas not perceived to be 'core' business functions. Increasingly, this includes both records management and computer systems administration. This drive to contract out functions brings with it the need for contractual arrangements to be in place to ensure that efficient and auditable recordkeeping practices were an essential element in the contract agreement.

Malisa Golightly, Executive Director, Performance Audit Business Unit of the Australian National Audit Office followed, again changing the earlier subtitle to meet her presentation theme. She addressed recordkeeping from an auditor's perspective. Though accepting that records are not created for the auditors, they are the fundamental resource for the auditor to assess whether an agency is conducting its business appropriately, with propriety, and ethically. Changes to records control and communication induced by technological change were highlighted in a comparison between the Audit Act 1901 and the recently enacted Audit Act 1997, and the limitations that are now being addressed in government. Three case studies gave emphasis to the rather parlous state of recordkeeping in government agencies, particularly as agencies attempt to adapt to the special requirements for electronic records.

After an amusing traverse with **Andrew Freeman** through the ways

Internet technologies are used for personal or professional networking, **Kevin O'Connor**, the first Privacy Commissioner, gave some reflections of the early years of privacy protection at the Federal level of Government. After scanning through the days of the Australia Card, the introduction of Tax File Numbers, and concerns at data-matching by federal government departments, Kevin moved to his emerging concerns at the effects of outsourcing of data management and data processing, which extended into the recordkeeping domain. He did, however, introduce the proposed extension of privacy principles, albeit voluntary, to the private sector. Called National Privacy Principles, the thrust appears to be related to direct marketing use of information, the relationship with law enforcement agencies, access to, and correction of provided personal information and its protection, and limiting the collection of sensitive information. Having canvassed State regimes, he closed by reminding delegates of the European Union Privacy Directive, which limits the transfer of their data to only those countries which, in their perception, provide adequate protection to personal information.

A powerful discourse followed, provided by **Michael Grant**, on the needs of document management in large commercial organisations, particularly in terms of the threat of litigation. Using a case study, he described the use of the 'discovery' process and its practical application, and the potential advances offered using imaging technology. Completing the day, **Professor Kevin Davis**, Pro Vice Chancellor of the Northern Territory University, described the processes involved in introducing an online university enrolment system and the ultimate extension of the technology to accommodate the document and records management needs of the University, including adaptation for ISO 9000 certification.

Day 2

The theme of the second day, designated 'Dynamics', or the dynamics of recordkeeping, was rather more closely adhered to. It was opened by **Mike Steemson** of the Caldeson Consultancy based in Wellington, New Zealand. The theme of his paper was relating confusions and controversies inherent in the dynamics of technology, to the opportunities for records managers to take the initiative and control the information market. Bravely adverting to his paper given at the 1997 RMAA Perth Convention, Mike revisited the areas of major technological development and their associated problems, identifying where opportunities were presenting themselves, particularly in selling the requirement for meticulous recordkeeping.

The translation of the Australian Standard AS 4390 to an International Standard increases recordkeeping credibility in the community, and changes in both Federal and State legislation, with the increase of emphasis on accountability and ethical conduct in business, all give rise to increased opportunities. And finally, Mike suggested that the potential for information managers of eBusiness and eCommerce is limitless, provided only that they get 'wired-up'.

The title of the next paper was advertised as 'Cost Justification', but this was significantly expanded by **Len Asprey** to 'Dynamics of Strategic Information Management Solutions: Key Points in Resolving the Prophet without Budget Syndrome'! Len proposed some conceptual issues on the implementation of corporate information management systems, establishing the objectives of being able to organise, retain, share and secure the organisation's information to meet its diverse requirements, and to introduce the fundamental building blocks for records management.

Having addressed issues such as corporate culture, executive and middle management attitudes, Len proceeded to list and then elaborate on essential project characteristics and the development of project plans. He illustrated the need for establishing a business case which justifies the cost, and an information management system framework which fits in with the corporate strategic plan.

Heather Norris, the Project Manager for NT Whole-of-Government Records Management System, followed with an animated and wholly encouraging description of the introduction of the Territory's IBM/TRIM system, with the establishment of standards, business rules, disposal schedules and improved skill levels in Territory staff. She identified the elements of her records management strategy as recognising the need to accommodate a whole-of-government infrastructure, the regulatory infrastructure, to exploit the information technology available, to meet the concerns of change, and to develop staff skills.

Heather's projection for the future included seeing maturation of policies and guidelines for electronic records, rationalisation of existing image systems, and the development of appropriate interfaces between business systems and TRIM.

Presentation of the next paper was shared between **Dr Ross Wilkinson and Andrew Waugh**, two members of the CSIRO component of the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy (VERS) Project Team. Their commitment was to promote the Victorian Public Record Office Victorian Electronic Records Strategy, describing their appreciation of what is happening now in the electronic records arena, to define the problem, elaborate on how they approached the issues, and why, and demonstrate what they have achieved. He summarised their objective as being

to give future generations the capability to retrieve, read and understand 100-year-old electronic records, created on unknown hardware, using unknown software, in their authentic and original form.

Andrew took a more technical stance, describing what the VERS object looks like, and then elaborating on four issues: the technical goals, the challenge of preserving electronic records, the (exciting) techniques used, and finish on an explanation of the implementation details. Ross concluded the joint session with the claim that electronic recordkeeping and archiving are achievable now.

Dynamics in recordkeeping systems was again demonstrated in the next presentation, titled 'Living in the Shared Systems Suite: Guidance for Potential Tenants Needing an RMS Solution', and given by **Greg O'Shea**. While not underplaying the frustrations and complexities of implementation, Greg provided a lucid and inclusive description of the Shared Systems Suite, its objectives and requirements, and the extension of expected functionality from document management to accommodate the wider demands of electronic recordkeeping. Though the Shared Systems Suite was, as Greg put it, 'arguably one of the most significant developments to have occurred in the history of Records Management in this country', the unsympathetic response by senior management based on a lack of understanding of the fundamental issues, and the costs just when human resources and financial management systems had taken their toll of budgets, was not unanticipated.

His advice on how to get corporate support, to create and foster alliances, and how to initiate, generate, maintain and successfully conclude the project may have been unconventional, but the hard-headed reality was not lost on the delegates.

Brand Hoff, Managing Director of Tower Software, spoke to the title 'E-Recordkeeping is E-ssential to e-Commerce'. With such a title, the presentation followed the expected path of identifying trends in community response to changing technology, standards, work practices and legislation. The demands on communication needs and networks, and the knowledge, information and recordkeeping domain in an eCommerce environment, are driving towards integration of desktop services, and the individual user accountability that comes with it.

Day 3

On the morning of the third day, we reverted to the central theme of 'Whose Territory is Records Management?' However, the relevance to the theme of the first speaker was a little tenuous, with **Glenys Roper**, of the Federal Government's Chief Government Information Office, discussing the Federal Government's commitment to online services. The title of her paper was 'Building Partnerships, Demolishing Barriers, Constructing the Future'. Relating the effects of the present information age to that of Europe when Gutenberg increased access to information through the printing press, she identified the consequential need to harness that information and selectively make use of it to benefit people.

The message being projected was that, as an increasing proportion of the Australian community has access to the Internet, the Government was committed to providing both information and services through that medium. In doing so, the objective was to provide those services seamlessly, across departmental barriers, meeting personalised needs rather than just responding within the specifics of departmental authority or identified competencies.

The next two papers, those of **Ken Ridley (Records Manager)** and **Steve Stuckey (Archivist)**, were central to the theme of 'Whose Territory is Records Management?' and accordingly, deserve to be considered together. Ken Ridley, Manager of Corporate Information, Fisheries, Western Australia, and immediate past National Editor of the *INFORMAA Quarterly*, initially defined the traditional differences in functions and specialist practices of records managers (the business administration and accountability domains), and archivists (the historical, social and research domain). He then noted the 'comprehensive change in the Australian Society of Archivists' definition of 'archivist', formalised at their 1998 Fremantle Conference', a change that appears to move deliberately into the records management territory. He acknowledged that, in the broader spectrum of what is increasingly being accepted as the records continuum, 'Archivists have now established themselves in a very powerful position by being the active players - drafting laws, and setting standards and policies'. However, he challenged the integrationist approach, and posited the need for records managers to 'preserve their integrity whilst they work collaboratively with archival and information systems professionals'.

Steve Stuckey, Assistant Director-General, National Archives of Australia, on the other hand, saw dangers in continuing separation of the two disciplines. Without integrated cooperation between archivists and records managers, both risk being even further marginalised to the point of being ignored. He exemplified his argument using Rick Barry, an international authority in the field, who links archives and records management in the acronym ARM, 'archives and records management'. Steve recalled that the Australian Standard AS 4390 - Records Management was the product of such

collaboration on an even broader scale, as was development and production of the National Records and Archives Competency Standards. A telling conclusion to the debate was that, on being asked by Steve Stuckey, not one delegate indicated against a merger of the two professional bodies, the RMAA and the ASA.

Unfortunately, the reviewer was unable to attend **Ann Murdoch's** presentation, and her paper was not available subsequently for consideration. However, the closing speaker, the Executive Director, Office of Communications, Science and Advanced Technology of the Northern Territory, **Jo Bryson**, projected an image of the ultimate in integration of information and knowledge management, where intellectual property is changed into intellectual capital, and where this is done by individuals who now identify themselves variously as records managers, librarians, or information technology specialists (though, interestingly, omitting archivists!). The process Jo illustrated involved organisational restructuring, creating a learning and sharing, rather than hoarding and 'knowledge is power' culture within the workforce. The integration of the intellectual property and the means to communicate it through the organisation to meet identified informational needs was a fundamental element in the equation, as was the ability to value the intangibles such as corporate image and customer loyalty. This scenario is not necessarily futuristic - there are many organisations that are implementing these changes now, as the increasing use of the position title **Knowledge and Information Manager** bears witness.

Doing Business Electronically: Electronic Commerce and Electronic Recordkeeping, Recordkeeping Systems & RCRG, Monash University, ANU, Canberra, 1-5 November 1999

REVIEWER

Andrew Lund

Export Manager, Upper Spencer Gulf, Whyalla Development Board, SA

Recordkeeping Systems and the Records Continuum Research Group of the School of Information Management and Systems at Monash University, presented a five-day Seminar which addressed the relationship between recordkeeping and eBusiness using the high-level SPIRT model as a structural framework. At this level, the SPIRT model identifies three primary entity classes: BUSINESS, PEOPLE or AGENTS, and RECORDS, and the relationships between them.

The Seminar was held in the near idyllic environment of University House at the Australian National University.

The exercise brought together around a working table, leading practitioners in records and information management from across Australia and around the world, and from government, academia and the private sector. Participative/interactive seminar sessions were complemented by workshop exercises, together with presentations from specialists from outside the group.

The objectives of the Seminar were to:
- consider developments in eCommerce and eBusiness;
- identify key players and key issues;
- identify emerging policies, directions, strategies, and legal frameworks;
- consider how recordkeeping fits; and
- identify what Australia is and should be doing in relation to recordkeeping for eCommerce.

The event was ably led by Barbara Reed and Sue McKemmish. Key input was provided by John McDonald, Senior Adviser, National Archives of Canada, Hans Hofman, National Archives of the Netherlands, and Chris Hurley, Chief Archivist, National Archives of New Zealand, with contributions by Nicholas Moss of DSTC Professional Services, Carey Butler, Livia Iacovino and Frank Upward of Monash University, Michael Easthope of the New South Wales Office of Information Technology, Anne Picot from the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority, Tony Levison from the State Records Office of NSW, Marion Hoy from the National Archives of Australia, Justine Heazlewood from the Public Record Office of Victoria, and Brendan Hills of the CSIRO.

Visiting presenters were: Tom Dale from the National Office of the Information Economy (NOIE), Cedric Israelsohn of Delphi Consulting Australia, and Brand Hoff, Managing Director of Tower Software Engineering (a leading Australian developer and exporter of recordkeeping software).

The first two days consisted of intensive consideration of the concepts involved: electronic commerce (eCommerce), electronic business (eBusiness), and recordkeeping, and exploration of models for understanding them. This was followed by a day in which participants considered the legal and technological context for eBusiness and recordkeeping, and knowledge and information management, and were provided an overview briefing of international developments at the forefront of electronic recordkeeping. Participants then went on to consider the issues and implications from the perspective of each of the entities in the SPIRT model. These sessions covered topics including: identity, authentication, trust, privacy and security; delivering versus describing services electronically; functions and business relationships and the related issues for recordkeeping; describing business functions - the Netherlands experience, Keyword AAA and AGIFT; managing the time element in recordkeeping; and records - process or object.

The Seminar was very wide-ranging with valuable input and discussion contributed from around the table. The space available for this review allows only brief comment on a few of the issues raised.

The Seminar participants understood eBusiness and eCommerce in a broad sense, defining the former as business conducted using any electronic media (from the Internet to telex and teletype) and eCommerce as the commercial transactions carried out using digital data over open electronic communications networks - the nuts

and bolts of eBusiness. Transactions, whatever the technology or medium, are the raw materials of records, and it is therefore apparent that effective records management is crucial to successful eBusiness. The advent of the Internet and the commercial imperatives to be online only serve to underscore this importance.

There remains a degree of hype in the eCommerce debate, and some of the statistics quoted in relation to up-take and use must be questioned. There are serious equity considerations, particularly in relation to public services, if the reality of access is not properly understood.

eCommerce and eBusiness are not new, but the influence of the Internet, advances in technology, and competition are forcing businesses into this new paradigm for doing business. It remains important to remember that the business fundamentals and economic principles remain the same. eBusiness involves applying new techniques and using new media - changing the processes. To do this successfully requires that the fundamental processes be understood. Records management

provides the tools, knowledge, and experience to address these issues. Records and knowledge management are strategies, in contrast to technologies which are enablers.

The fundamental issues for records management: authenticity, reliability, description, and relationships, are the same as ever, but are heightened in the rapidly evolving eCommerce paradigm. The models presented by Hans Hofman and John McDonald provided some useful insights into the issues of understanding the relationships between business, business functions, business processes, and recordkeeping processes.

Governments in the four countries represented (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Netherlands) are moving in the same broad direction - towards the delivery of information and services online as early as possible in the present decade. It was noteworthy that the Canadian experience demonstrated a higher level of trust and community between government and citizens than is evident in the more adversarial systems of the United States and Australia. This has resulted in some different concerns and

emphases. There remains the need to effectively address recordkeeping and archival issues in the mainstream of planning and debate.

Whether in the commercial or public arena, there is a need to balance business, legal, social, and cultural requirements in the implementation of eBusiness and eCommerce.

Adequate description to enable effective retrieval and access is essential for effective electronic delivery of services, particularly government services. This is essentially a metadata issue. The Netherlands experience, together with experience from the Australian SPIRT and AGIFT projects formed the basis for developing further insights into the issues surrounding the description of services, and the relationships between services, functions and organisational structures.

Overall, the seminar provided a stimulating and well-informed environment to progress thinking on the important task of applying records management and recordkeeping to enable the effective delivery of eCommerce.
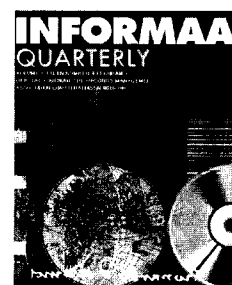
Managing Your Organisation's Records, by Elizabeth Parker, Library Association Publishing, London, 1999

REVIEWER

Diana Murrell

Manager, University Records, Australian National University, Canberra.

The subject of this review is one in a series of self-help books designed to assist the information professional to understand the basics of managing their organisation's information resources. Like others in this series, the format consists of a relatively slim volume of straightforward, commonsense advice about the various aspects of information management principles and practice.

Each chapter contains easy-to-read paragraphs and dot points on specific records management issues, together with helpful samples of forms, charts and case studies which illustrate Parker's text. Whilst the legislation, standards and anecdotes cited have a decidedly British bias, readers could readily substitute examples from their own jurisdictions. Similarly, terminology regarding Disposal Authorities, Disposal Schedules, and the like, could be transposed to the Australian, US, or other contexts.

Each chapter covers one principal aspect of records management, such as appraisal, storage, disposal, vital records and so on, all in a conversational style of English which makes for easy reading. Parker has directed her remarks to those who may be charged with managing the records in various organisations, whether they be in the public, private or charity sector, and they are therefore relevant to a wide audience.

The book is strong on identifying records in whatever format they may exist: paper, magnetic media, email, drawings, photographs, even medical and geological samples. Without being overly prescriptive about the management of each medium, Parker illustrates how all these items are subject to the same recordkeeping principles and procedures when they constitute evidence of an organisation's business transactions.

It is curious that development of policy for records management is left until the latter part of the book. Publication and promulgation of a policy is generally the first step towards gaining organisational support for the other elements of the recordkeeping regime which Parker advocates in her earlier chapters. Given that this slim volume can be read in one sitting, however, it is open to readers to implement the procedures in any order they choose, having first gained an overall appreciation of the discipline.

Experience teaches us that we must implement whatever improvements we can in managing an organisation's records whenever the opportunity arises, rather than seek to accomplish them in the 'correct' order. There is a certain element of serendipity when trying to reverse the errors of many years of poor recordkeeping. The astute records manager will make the most of any opportunities to advance the cause of good recordkeeping, albeit this may not always be done in an orderly fashion.

Apart from identifying some electronic documents and email as organisational records, Parker does not provide much guidance on computer-assisted management of records. This may be to avoid the perception that she is endorsing any particular proprietary system, or it may be a function of fewer choices in the British market when selecting specialised recordkeeping systems. It may also be that the author was constrained by her editors to keep the book focused on broad procedural issues.

Whilst the practices Parker advocates are sound and well recognised among records management professionals, the contents of her chapters seem to assume the reader who is newly assigned to managing an organisation's records has a 'clean slate' on which to begin. Her advice for acquiring new stationery, equipment and systems is sound but tends to overlook the fact that most of us come to our jobs with these items already in place and a limited budget with which to upgrade the tools of our trade.

Similarly, on arrival in a new organisation, we often find recordkeeping practices among existing staff are well entrenched but do not always reflect best practice, as recommended in published standards and records management texts. However, as Parker states, new records managers firstly need to analyse the business activities of their organisations before beginning to develop new classification schemes, disposal schedules and other improved procedures.

Effecting cultural change in the recordkeeping field is no less difficult than in other evolving disciplines. People do not take kindly to the new records manager advising them to adopt different procedures and one must negotiate and encourage colleagues towards the desired reforms. Parker points out that this should be done by stressing the benefits to them in terms of better access to the information they need and saving of valuable resources. As many of us know only too well, our fellow employees have their own work agendas and most tend to accord recordkeeping a very low priority.

As Parker suggests, enlisting the support of senior executives for the introduction of new recordkeeping systems and procedures is critical in gaining compliance of other staff in the organisation. In many cases, the authority of senior staff is needed to overcome resistance to measures designed to improve the management of records. Consultations with other professionals such as auditors, legal officers and computing specialists are also needed to ensure adoption of correct recordkeeping procedures.

On a practical note, the book is equipped with an adequate index and a list of useful addresses, including Web sites, from which readers may obtain further information from international societies, including the Records Management Association of Australia. It is also gratifying to note that Parker makes reference to the Australian Standard AS 4390 and the fact that this is being used as the basis of an international standard for records management.

In short, this book is a useful tool for the information professional who may be new to the discipline of records management. The policies and procedures outlined represent the ideal, rather than the real world faced by many records management practitioners, but Parker has assembled some commonsense guidelines to assist the reader who is embarking on this role for the first time.

consultants

TRIM PA (TRIM Personal Assistant)

TOWER Software has developed a simple product that overcomes many of the obstacles that previously prevented organisations from properly managing their corporate electronic information.

Information is increasingly an organisation's greatest asset. However, without proper management, information can be an enormous liability. In the information age, organisations receive and create vast quantities of digital information. Business decisions and business transactions are increasingly being undertaken online. The volume of electronic information is growing at an accelerating rate.

Most organisations now recognise that they have electronic records. However, few organisations have successfully implemented systems that will ensure legal compliance for the management of these records.

Two major obstacles that organisations face when implementing an electronic records management solution are cost and user acceptance.

TRIM PA (TRIM Personal Assistant) has been developed by TOWER Software to enable records creators to upload important electronic records without changing the way desktop applications are used. TRIM PA will copy (or move) electronic items placed in email folders and/or Windows directories into a controlled corporate repository. The upload process links the source folder with a file-folder defined in the corporate records system. Thereafter, each document is subject to proper and appropriate records management controls. Virtually any electronic record can be 'invisibly' captured and registered in the records management system using TRIM PA.

TRIM PA effectively provides an invisible interface for users to file electronic records. The capture of these records is undertaken with virtually no change to user work practices, thereby overcoming one of the major obstacles currently preventing the capture and management of electronic records.

This 'no-click' filing will assist corporations to capture, manage and dispose of electronic information in a manner that ensures that legal retention periods are met.

Information Management in the "New Economy"

Rapid technology developments are underpinning the so-called "new economy" which features increased emphasis on e-commerce models, business to business (B2B), Internet/Intranet enabled portals, digital dashboards, and other innovations. These types of "new economy" service delivery models typically involve exchanging electronic information with potential customers, business partners or service providers. These stakeholders may be diversified by business lines, product lines, geographical location, and similar factors, potentially on a global basis.

There is a compelling requirement for the information that is exchanged with customers, business partners and service providers to be managed. Information management (IM) practices, systems and technology need to be viewed as a core element of a "new economy" style business framework. For example, Integrated Document Management (IDM) systems provide a controlled environment for document objects, integrated workflow and web publishing tools to enable businesses and government to deliver the right content to the right audience, at the right time.

IDM systems also have the capacity to link externally or internally generated documents to asset-related data and physical processes, and offer the capability for integration with Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. For example, the IDM manages all relevant electronic business objects associated with supply chain management, from customer contact, through the placement and management of purchase orders, supply requests, warehousing, inventory management, and accounts management.

The IDM library services should also support records management extensions, which feature a record classification schema that also integrates with the organisation's retention and disposal authorities. Information objects involved in an electronic business transaction may be queued for classification by information managers, and registered a record.

The "new economy" initiatives pose significant challenges for information managers. The strategy to develop an IM Framework might be an information manager's first step in defining the essential practices and information architecture that will enable electronic communication and information exchange in a managed environment, thus supporting e-commerce and B2B initiatives.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Len Asprey on 1300 720 024 or email pracinfo@ozemail.com.au

Len Asprey
Director
PIMS Practical Information Management Solutions P/L
http://www.pims.com.au

The Year of the Portal

This year will see a convergence of applications and technologies into 'Portals'. So, what types of Portals are there, what features do they have, and what is a good example of one?

There are basically two types of Portals - Consumer and Business.

Consumer Portals (Yahoo and Telstra are examples) provide a pre-defined set of data sources and applications by the commercial portal provider. Examples are Online Shopping, News, Sport, Weather, Stocks, and Chat Rooms. These portals have the following key attributes that are also shared by Business Portals:

• Simple & attractive interface based on a Web browser
• Customisable to the information sets & look-&-feel that you want
• Simple, unified searching mechanism
• A mixture of 'trusted' (News reports) & 'untrusted' (Chat Rooms) information.

Business Portals (Enterprise Portals, Corporate Portals) use a range of similar back-end technology, but have a totally different *raison detre*. Corporate Portals exist for individuals and workgroups to contribute and to use corporate information to better the corporate goal and strategy. They are still Web based, but have a number of different attributes:

• Access to corporate managed & generated information *(Records Management)*
• Ability to cope with disparate & evolving data sources *(Global Search Engine)*
• Ability to connect to any data source on any platform *(Connectivity)*
• Ability to display & interact with legacy systems *(Terminal Emulation)*
• Group discussion, review & approval *(Workflow)*
• Unified security model *(Central security mapping & administration)*

The unification has been the challenge. All of the components that make up a portal are mature technologies in production use. The key issue is to bring these all together. As usual, the two approaches of 'systems integration' versus 'single vendor' seem to be the options. Some companies like Hummingbird have gone for a mixed approach - they have focused on providing a single-vendor solution for absolute core functions, and an open interface to allow integration with any third-party applications.

Hummingbird's EIP (Enterprise Information Portal) has the following core features that applies across all applications within the portal:

• Single Interface
• Single Search Engine across Records, Electronic Documents & Structured Databases
• Single Security Model & Authentication
• Single Repository for all Electronic Records & references to Physical Records

The biggest business advantage of a portal is a Single Search interface to all applications. So, forget about learning how to search in different applications, and start thinking about plugging them into an Enterprise Information Portal.

RMAA Notes

Imaging *INFORMAA Quarterly* Project

The aim of the imaging *INFORMAA Quarterly* project is to provide a resource to information studies students. Specifically, it is to image all copies of the *INFORMAA Quarterly (IQ)*, index them in a suitable way, and publish them on CD-ROM at a subsidised or, certainly, affordable cost to students.

The project was initiated by the RMAA and NSW TAFE for records management students studying at TAFE colleges throughout Australia. However, the Association, which is responsible for the project, considers the resultant CD will have relevance to graduate and post graduate students (and to the smaller number of students who may be interested in historical research in this field). It will also be relevant to practitioners who wish to improve their professional standing in the Association and industry in general.

The *INFORMAA Quarterly* was first issued in 1985, so there have been about 60 issues containing a large number of articles.

The intention is to produce a CD-ROM with each article from each issue being held as a separate multi-page TIF image. There will be a records management subject thesaurus, and each article will be catalogued along library lines using this thesaurus for the subject indexing. The thesaurus will be published on the CD as well, and this will also provide a useful resource.

It is hoped that we will be able to use one of the new thesaurus products, such as Metasaurus, as the link from the subject terms to the articles. Thus, a user will be able to navigate the thesaurus using this tool and move from broader to narrower terms and to related terms and, at any stage, be able to see a list of articles indexed under the chosen subject term. The user would then be able to jump by hypertext link directly to the chosen article(s) from the list.

As RMAA is a volunteer organisation with limited funds, we are intending to do this on a sponsorship basis. Presently, we have a sponsor, The Imaging Centre Pty Limited, for the major component which is the imaging and CD-ROM production.

Siller Systems, a records management consultancy which has been involved with the Association for many years, has agreed to help develop the thesaurus. Joy Siller, when on the NSW Branch Council some time ago, started indexing *IQ*, and so we have the start to the thesaurus and some of the indexing already completed. However, the cataloguing of the articles is the most difficult and critical part of the project.

Here, we are talking to the universities and, of course, TAFE, encouraging them to use this work as part of course projects for both library, records and information studies students. So far, the response has been encouraging but the Association would be delighted to hear from anyone in the field able to offer assistance.

Please contact Anthony Meggitt on 02-9904 1963 or by e-mail at <anthonymeggitt@machservices.com.au>

Coordinator Reports

MEMBERSHIP AND STATUS REPORT

The hours our membership office is open are 8.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm (EST) Monday to Friday. If you have a question regarding membership, change of details, change of employment, please call Cathy or Sharon on our free call number 1800 242 611 or email to rmaasec@rmaa.com.au. The membership database can only be kept up to date if you let us know of any changes.

New members since 1 July 1999   213
(increase of 55 members since February)

Total Membership as at 21 March 2000   2867

Total Inquiries since 1 July 1999   665

Individual Branch Membership Numbers
as at 21 March 2000

ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD
277	741	535	440

SA	WA	TAS	NT
237	382	149	106
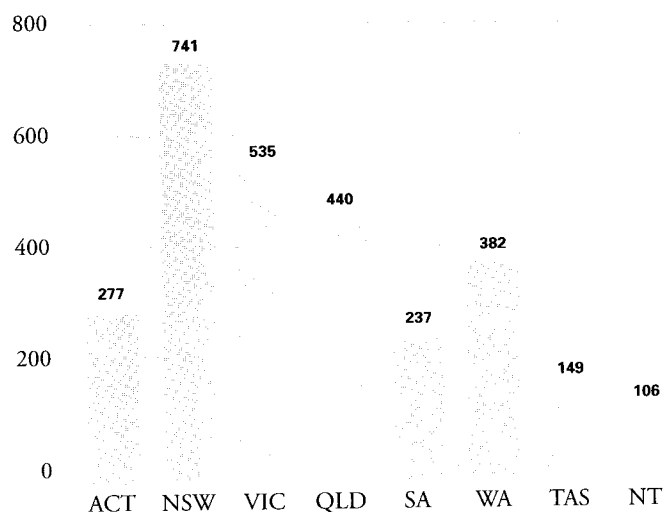
Total Professional Members
as at 31 December 1999   327

Individual Branch Professional Member Numbers
as at 21 March 2000

ACT	NSW	VIC	QLD
20	67	49	81

SA	WA	TAS	NT
26	28	35	20
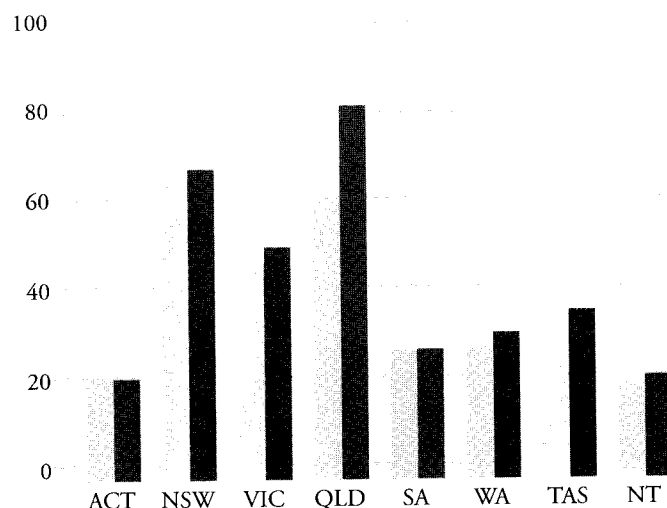
This quarter, the Membership and Status Committee received three applications for upgrade to Member status. The Board in February approved the upgrade from Associate to Member status of Ken Ridley - WA, and Cheryl Princehorn - QLD.

The third application was asked to submit additional information. Congratulations to both Ken and Cheryl in the submission of very impressive applications.

Chris Fripp MRMA, MAICD

EDUCATION REPORT

In recent months, information relating to professional development and competency standards has been included on the Association's website at **www.rmaa.com.au.** This information is provided as a member service.

The professional development area on the site includes: a list of vocational and educational courses focusing on records management and related areas offered by Australia's tertiary institutions; and details of the RMAA course recognition program providing the objectives of the program, details of the recognition criteria, and the application process for institutions wishing to apply for recognition.

Information relating to the Records and Archives Competency Standards is provided under the member services area of the site including:

* what is a competency standard;
* Records and Archives Competency Standards;
* what is a training package; and
* how to obtain copies of the Records and Archives Competency Standards.

An analysis of the feedback received from the survey of the Records and Archives Competency Standards has been completed by the consultant engaged by Business Services Training to conduct the review of the Standards. The results of the survey were discussed at a meeting of the Technical Steering Committee held on 15 March 2000. As a result of this feedback, a draft amendment will be prepared for discussion at focus groups to be held in various States during May 2000.

I will provide progress reports on the review of the Competency Standards and the development of the training package in future reports.

Tina Howard ARMA

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Help wanted!

At the Federal Directors meeting in Adelaide, Terms of Reference for the National Information Technology Committee were adopted. The convenor of the Committee is Anne Cornish.

The Terms of Reference are very demanding; some could say onerous which is why help is being sought. Each Branch of the Association should have a person nominated as an IT representative, but we would be interested in hearing from others who may be interested in assisting the Committee.

One item that we wish to move on quickly is a Web resource for the Association. So, we are looking for web sites or documents on the web that have information relevant to Information Technology and how it relates to records management. One such document is the Technology Issues Report that I produce monthly. These are available either by email or via the RMAA Web page. Both the National Archives and State Records NSW have bibliographies and various documents of relevance to electronic records.

This report is the first of what will be a regular page in this journal. To help us, we would appreciate your ideas on what should appear here. Options are: providing details of documents, sites etc. that are considered worthwhile; or examining some issues in depth; or a combination of these two.

For the Committee to operate, we need your help and would greatly appreciate hearing from you. Your ideas, thoughts, or questions are sought and can be directed to either Anne Cornish or myself.

Geoff Smith ARMA

Branch Reports

TASMANIA

The Tasmania Branch has had a quiet start to the year as a number of members find themselves with increasing workloads and very little time for extra activities. Despite this, there are still dedicated, enthusiastic members and organisations which continue to support the activities of the Association.

TAFE Tasmania has discontinued its records management course for 2000 as the accreditation for this course expired at the end of 1999. A six-months' accreditation extension has been granted for students who have nearly completed the course. TAFE Tasmania have been very supportive in relation to records management, however, they are now waiting for training packages using the Records and Archives Competency Standards which are currently under development.

The Branch is to update the Business Plan in line with the Federal Business Plan, and has organised an evening in March for preliminary discussions. Planning for the 2001 Convention to be held in Hobart, jointly with the Australian Society of Archivists Inc., is now well under way. A joint meeting, with appropriate refreshments, was held with RMAA and ASA members as a brainstorming exercise to ensure a varied and interesting program for both associations will be developed.

Jill Saunders ARMA

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

February saw the SA Branch, in conjunction with GMB and the SA State Government Chapter, host a Recfind demonstration for members, titled **Corporate Memory: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow.** It was a full-day seminar in which David Moldrich of Deloitte Consulting and John Kunar of the Delphi Group (Canada) spoke about Electronic Records Management and Knowledge Management.

They were joined later in the day by Nick Gonios of Open Text who provided a live knowledge management system demonstration, and Sally McMartin of Oz Train who discussed **Managing Change.** A cocktail party sponsored by CDK Employment Services followed the event. All reports were that the day was a success and, judging by the attendance figures (80), the topics were of interest to our members.

The next event on the SA Branch calendar is a full-day seminar on 26 May on the theme, **Diversity in Information Management** that will touch on a range of topical issues such as Portals, EDM, Knowledge Management, GST, and e-Business, and will include case studies. Our aim is to help people to understand the issues and draw links between them and managing information. See the SA Branch web page for details.

Kristen Green ARMA

QUEENSLAND

The seminar series continues to provide education in a range of records management topics. Recent seminars have dealt with the issues of automated records management systems and access and security. The Branch will be conducting a workshop on disposal schedules and thesaurus on 4 April 2000.

The Branch has completed its Strategic Plan for 2000-2001. The Branch recently considered a number of applications for professional membership.

Congratulations are extended to Gaylene Anderson, Mandy Fitter, Fay Huet, Linda Kelly, Clare Moynihan, Janette Rapson, Lyndell Rixon, Janelle Tolley and Julieanne Robinson from Maroochy Shire Council for achieving Associate Status. Maroochy now has 11 professional members. Jackie Bettington of Queensland State Archives was also granted Associate Status.

Congratulations to Cheryl Princehorn who has been granted Member Status. A report will be placed into the next issue.

The Local Government Chapter has been active in promoting records management in the Local Government environment. A recent seminar attracted 23 participants from 10 different local government organisations.

Michael Hangan MRMA

VICTORIA

The Victoria Branch is focusing on a membership drive to recruit new members and to followup previous members to encourage them to rejoin. The Branch is liaising with the in-house Administrative Office and various educational institutions to develop a marketing strategy in an attempt to increase member numbers in Victoria during the year, and beyond. In the meantime, Victoria congratulates two existing members, Paul White and Rod Hose, for their recent upgrade to Member status. It is always rewarding to see members like Paul and Rod being recognised for their ongoing contribution within the industry.

On the subject of strategies, the Branch has scheduled a brainstorming workshop to take place on 13 April. The purpose of the workshop is for the Branch to work collectively in identifying what our core objectives are for the year, how we can achieve these objectives, and where we see ourselves in the future. Members will have the opportunity to provide input in due course.

The first meeting of the Archives and Records Management Week (ARM) Committee has been organised for 6 April 2000. Representatives from the Public Record Office Victoria, Australian Society of Archivists Inc. and the Victoria Branch will be in attendance. Issues on the agenda include promotion and marketing of the previous event held in November 1999, and the formation of various committees to undertake work associated with this year's event. The Branch is always seeking volunteers to assist with special events, so, if you are interested, please contact our Communications Officer, Kay Lewis on (03) 9740 4821.

Sandra Pickett ARMA

NORTHERN TERRITORY

It was very encouraging that one of the few seminars/workshops that was doing the rounds, and that actually made it to the Northern Territory, was so well attended. Strategic Information Management for Government and Integrating Workflow and Business Information Systems in Government, organised by PiCS (Performance Improvement Conferences and Seminars), and run by the Chair of the Institute for Information Management Ltd (IIM), Len Asprey, attracted a very good number of participants from the IT, Library, and Archives fields. There was even a records manager - just one! It was felt that maybe there should have been a few more representatives from this discipline. It begs the question '...is information management the territory of records management?' given the theme of last year's RMAA National Convention held in Darwin - **Records Management - Whose Territory?** Certainly, the excellent workshop we attended covered records management systems, document management systems, imaging systems, workflow, and so on, suggested that it is in the records management field.

In the light of the recent debate concerning the possible merger of the RMAA and the Australian Society of Archivists Inc. (ASA), should we cast our net even wider to link up with other organisations such as the IIM? Its contribution to professional development and knowledge in our field is far from insignificant. What exactly is the territory now?

Apropos National Conventions, the books have now been closed on last year's Darwin event and all outstanding accounts settled. Sincere thanks go to the organising committee - Ray Holswich, Greg Coleman, Linda Bell, Pauline Hollier and a fifth whose name cannot appear here (modesty forbids). Our thoughts are with Sydney who are going through the agony and/or ecstasy of organising the next Convention due in December, and we've been contacted for convention-related information by our Tasmanian colleagues who are responsible for the ground-breaking joint RMAA/ASA event in Hobart next year. Best of luck to all those involved from one who is more than happy it's all behind him now.

Any volunteers to run a joint RMAA/ASA/IIM convention in the future...?

Barry Garside ARMA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Before I get to WA Branch issues, I wish to express my congratulations to the organisations that are making this a marvellous time to be involved in the Records Management profession. I wish to single out several organisations that are currently, and have over recent times upped the ante in regard to quality input to the profession.

These are not listed in order of merit:
1. the State Records Office of New South Wales for all of the quality publications and initiatives being released;
2. the National Archives of Australia for similar activities to that of the State Records Office of New South Wales;
3. the Public Record Office of Victoria for their work with the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy, and related work; and
4. the various committees and related organisations involved in the creation of the new International Standard ISO 15489.

All of the above organisations and their related individuals and supporters need our recognition for the work required, and the results achieved in these activities.

Several small steps for Records Management and a giant leap forward for the Profession.

Now to WA Branch matters

The organisation for the 14 June 2000 one-day Seminar 'e-COMMERCE or e-CHAOS? **Managing Records in the New Millennium**' is well under way. The venue is set at the Sheraton Hotel, under the sponsorship of the Department of Commerce and Trade, Office of Information and Communications. This will be the premier event in WA for the year 2000 in the Information and Records Management scene. By the time you read this in the *IQ*, you will, or should be well aware of the event, and have already signed up for the day. If you have not signed up and wish to do so, please contact me and I will arrange for your attendance.

The Branch held another successful breakfast meeting with 80 attendees at the Matilda Bay Restaurant. The Chairman of Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee, Mr Max Trenorden MLA give us an insight into the operations of the Committee, and provided us with an explanation of a recent report #42 on the issue, **The Role of the Government in an Online Environment**, and its impact on records management in Western Australia.

The Western Australian State Records Bill 1999 is on the Notice Paper for discussion in the Legislative Assembly. We now have a new Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Mike Board JP who has taken over the portfolio from the Hon. Peter Foss QC. Vicky Wilson and I met with the new Minister to discuss the legislation on 8 March. We were able to put forward the RMAA's views on the legislation, and discuss the progress of the legislation with the Minister. Both Vicky and I left the meeting with the feeing that the Minister wished to get the legislation passed by Parliament in the near future. Since that meeting, the Branch has had further discussions with the Opposition Shadow Minister, the Hon. Tom Stephens and Independent, the Hon. Phillip Pendal. After discussions with these parties, we have advised the Independents (five in total), the Greens WA and the Australian Democrats of our support of the legislation even though it is not perfect in the eyes of the RMAA. We have requested the support of all political parties and politicians for the legislation in its current form.

I am still in the process of compiling an email listing of all WA Branch members. At the last meeting in November, I requested all members to email his or her address to me to add to the list. I received a single, solitary reply. My thanks to that person and they will know who it is. I still live in hope - please email me your electronic address so we can get information to you in a timely manner. PLEASE!

The Mentoring Group's meeting for March was cancelled due to lack of interest. Vicky Wilson is willing to continue to coordinate the Mentoring Group if sufficient interest persists.

Congratulations are appropriate to our two new Associate members: Lesley Ferguson and Josette Mathers who have been awarded status upgrades to ARMA. Presentations were made to Josette and Lesley at the 29 March breakfast meeting at the Matilda Bay Restaurant. Lesley Ferguson has also joined the Branch Council and is active in the organisation of the June Seminar.

We welcome the following new members to the WA Branch: John Druin, Fiona Cameron, Ron Roltz, Suzane McLeod, Judy Freestone, John Mahoney, Helen Starkie, Gail Percel, Jonathon

Toquero, Ivy Branson. We congratulate you on joining the WA Branch and we invite you to be our guests at the next function held. You will be suitably notified in advance of the event.

Thought for the Month:

Convergence - similarity of form or structure caused by environment rather than hereditary.

There has been an ever-increasing use of this word in the latest IT and other publications. Another buzzword, a genteel concept, or reality? There may be many more head and side on crashes than all parties converging with dignity and honour from six lanes to one.

Laurie Varendorff ARMA

NEW SOUTH WALES

In NSW, we are moving forward into a very busy year continuing the busy program we have developed, as well as hosting the National Convention. The Branch Council is being kept active, and our resources are being supplemented for the Convention with our very capable convention organiser Fiona Waldron, as well as Janet Knight and Kerrie Monzo. Other people have also always been willing to help when asked.

Planning for the 2000 Convention (3 - 6 December at Darling Harbour) continues. We have chosen to make much use of the RMAA web site in keeping people informed of what is happening. We are very excited about what is evolving. The Registration Brochure should be in this issue of the journal, and will also appear on the RMAA web site. We intend issuing regular news updates to advise people of developments.

Our first members meeting in 2000 was on Auditing, with Steve McLeod, Director of Audit from the NSW Auditor-General's Office, and Catherine Robinson of State Records. The March meeting (14 March) on Professional Development was also very popular, with interest from interstate. For this meeting, we had a panel of Glen Morgan of Workcover as an employer, Marion Nicholson of Qualified Records People as someone from a firm that specialises in employing records managers, and Barbara Reed who spoke as an academic and as a spokesperson for the profession. Eddy Wilkinson of Synercon Business Consulting, moderated the panel.

The April meeting (11 April) will be on Tender Preparation and Evaluation, and on 9 May we will have our annual Technology Seminar. To keep up-to-date, check our pages on the RMAA web page <www.rmaa.com.au>.

In my last report, I mentioned that the reports on Technology Issues that I produce will, from the start of 2000, no longer appear in the Branch newsletter. They will, however, be available on the web site. This is a pity, but it does provide us with more control of production. It is something we were moving towards anyway. If current readers do not have access to the Internet, can they please let me know as soon as possible so alternatives can be considered. My contact details appear elsewhere in this journal.

Records management traineeships have now been approved in NSW and we are marketing these to interested parties. 'Well done' to Stephen Smith for his hard work. The remuneration survey by Qualified Records People has been finalised and, by the time this is written, the survey should have been completed. Such information will be very useful to us as an Association.

On 15 March, I attended a meeting of the NSW Branch of the Australian Society of Archivists Inc. as a representative of the RMAA as they were discussing the proposed merger between the RMAA and the ASA. Also speaking were Baiba Berzins and Barbara Reed. Obviously, there is much work to be done, and much of it involves addressing the sorts of concerns people always face in times of change. We need to talk to find out where we are close, and where we are apart. It was a very positive evening and I would encourage Branches to grasp such opportunities.

My thanks to my fellow Councillors who help make the work easier, and to the membership and other interested people who, by their involvement, continue to encourage and enthuse us. We trust 2000 will be a great year for us NSW RMAA people.

Geoff Smith ARMA

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

The last few months have been busy times for the ACT Branch involving joint seminars with both the Australian Society of Archivists Inc. and the Australian Computer Society. In addition, the Branch held a members' meeting on 16 February 2000 to discuss the new Commonwealth Recordkeeping Regime. Thomas Kaufhold (ACT Branch Federal Member) chaired the meeting, following an agenda which introduced specific initiatives included in this regime. These topics, with the introductory speakers, are listed below.

- Appraisal Guidelines for Commonwealth Records -Tracey McKnight
- Keyword AAA Thesaurus of General Terms - Ann Nicholls
- Administrative Functions Disposal Authority (based on Keyword AAA) - Grant Williams
- The DIRKS Manual - Tony Eccleston
- Recordkeeping Metadata Standard - Tony Eccleston

Several letters have been forwarded to National Archives of Australia (NAA) representing the members' concerns. A reference group was set up to convey in more detail the outcomes of the deliberations of this group on the new Commonwealth Recordkeeping Regime, launched by the NAA under the heading 'e-permanence' on 30 March 2000.

The ACT Branch conducted its annual major seminar in March at the Australian Institute of Sport. This year we chose the topic: **eBusiness Transactions: Providing Accountability through Effective Recordkeeping**. By all reports from delegates, the Seminar was a great success. I would like to thank our sponsor, **National Record Managers**, for their support, and to thank the committee for all their hard work in organising the Seminar. The Seminar proceedings will be published and will be available at a cost of $39.95. To purchase copies, please visit the RMAA ACT web site at <http//www.rmaa.com.au>, or contact Veronica Pumpa on (02) 6217 1911.

Stephanie Ciempka ARMA

PRODUCT guide

Yes, I would like to know more about the products offered by the following companies appearing in *INFORMAA Quarterly* - Volume 16, Number 2. (Please Tick)

- ○ Inside Front - *Objective Corporation (formerly CompuTechnics)*
- ○ Page 6 - *Qualified Records People*
- ○ Page 10 - *Gold Coast City Council*
- ○ Page 13 - *Edith Cowan University*
- ○ Page 14 - *National Archives of Australia*
- ○ Page 18 - *Pickfords*
- ○ Centre 1 - *National Archives of Australia*
- ○ Centre 2 - *MDY*
- ○ Page 25 - *Formfile*
- ○ Page 28 - *Microsystems*
- ○ Page 33 - *Synercon Managment Consulting*
- ○ Page 34 - *Records Solutions*
- ○ Page 35 - *PIMS*
- ○ Page 36 - *Hummingbird (formerly PC Docs)*
- ○ Page 37 - *Curtin University*
- ○ Inside Back - *Tower Software*
- ○ Back Cover - *GMB Research & Development*

Name

Position

Company

Type of Business

Address

Telephone

Facsimile

Please post or fax a copy to:
MAP Marketing
Corner Scott St & Parnell Pl
Newcastle NSW 2300
Ph 02 4929 7766
Fax 02 4929 7827
Email: maria@mapmarket.com.au

is this your e-mail policy?

"All employees may

• Have unfettered use of e-mail during working hours and may spend as long as they like reading and writing personal e-mails and still get paid for forty hours work every week;

• Send insulting, libellous, racist and sexist e-mails to anyone they dislike; involving the company in countless expensive lawsuits;

• Download pornography, jokes and huge AVI and WAV files and store them on the Company's fileserver."

Or, would you prefer a policy similar to GMB's. And, would you also like a foolproof and totally automatic way of implementing and managing your E-mail policy?

GEM is a totally new, totally automatic, totally non-intrusive way of implementing and managing E-mail policies. GEM connects to your mail server implements your rules, saves and indexes all important E-mails and provides detailed statistics as well as secure, enterprise-wide access to all E-mails with ful text searches against all E-mail fields as well as the text of attachments.

GEM isn't a 'gate-keeper'; it is a fully automatic electronic document management system for E-mails.

When you call or E-mail ask for a copy of GMB's e-mail policy.

Don't take our word for it; try out GEM under a no obligation 30-day trial. Contact GMB today.

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