



THE *informaa*' Quarterly

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE
RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

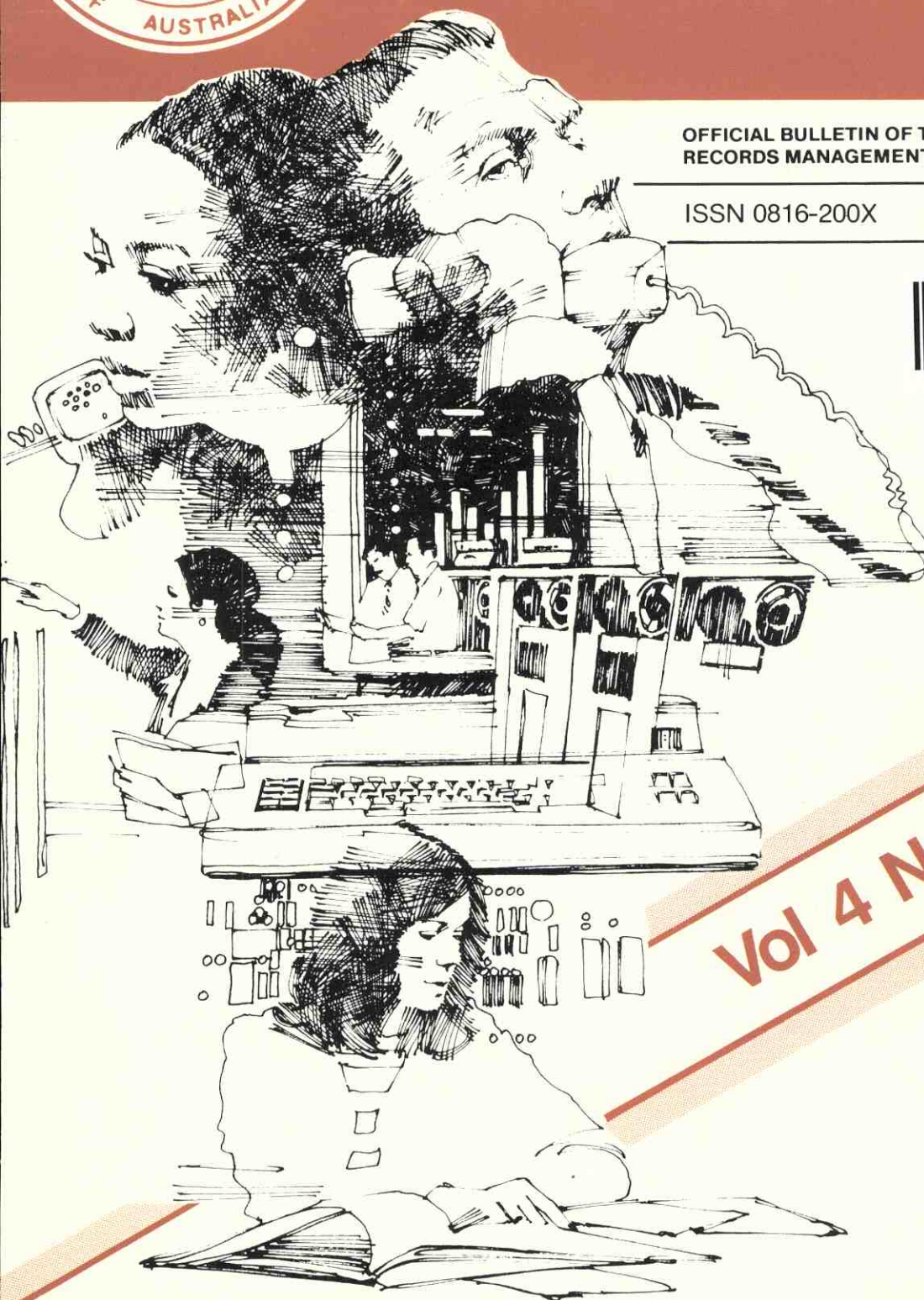
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SCSQ

Vol 4 Number 4



NOVEMBER, 1988



O H NO-O-O!!

Not another 'I want it NOW' request. I have no idea where that file (and 53 other 'lost' files) have gone to. This organisation wastes man years every year trying to find urgently required files.

W HAT IS THE ANSWER?

I was recently talking to someone who used a computer with a package called '**RecFind**' and didn't have any of our problems. They track file movements with portable barcode readers and know exactly where any file is at any time. '**RecFind**' has allowed them to release six staff for more productive tasks.

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'The Informaa' Quarterly

Volume 4 Number 4

Publisher: Records Management Association

MESSAGE FROM THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT

YOU ARE THE PROFESSIONAL!

What is RMAA? We are a professional association. What are you—its integral member? You are a professional in the records and information management industry. What does RMAA mean to you?

RMAA provides the membership with the opportunity to scan the human resources of over 1600 of your peers, through seminars, conferences, publications and association monthly meetings Australia wide. Thanks to the overwhelming acceleration of computers and advanced electronics of our industry, opportunities for career advancement have never been greater. You are being asked to digest new concepts, higher technology and even a new vocabulary, in many instances. The disciplines responsible for the increased opportunity are unfortunately so new that our formal educational institutions have yet to provide adequate course selection for our utilisation.

We cannot expect vendors to provide totally current information and a vendor cannot be expected to educate the masses of any industry with no remuneration. Our very own organisations, public or private seem to be labouring at daily survival and cannot be expected to answer our advanced learning requirements.

RMAA, your professional association, provides the forum, the educational opportunity and the peer interplay necessary to face the challenges of your industry. You the professional are RMAA.

The Federal Council met in Canberra in September 1988 and approved the draft education policy; your Federal Directors and Branch Secretary have copies of the policy. Request a copy, see if it meets your needs educationally. All state branches have an education committee and these committees are currently reviewing education courses available in NSW, VIC, QLD and WA. As professional members of the RMAA, be part of the educational planning process, seek out the Education Chairperson in your state, establish if the courses being conducted, or are proposed for your state, meet your needs and those of your staff. Encourage junior staff members to participate in educational courses being conducted in your state, promote the records management courses to your employer, let it be known that your profession, through the RMAA, is striving to gain professional recognition through education.

Graham Dudley (Federal President)
October 1988

EDITORIAL NOTES

INFORMAA QUARTERLY is a publication of the Records Management Association of Australia. Members of the Association receive this publication as part of their membership.

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This edition of INFORMAA QUARTERLY has been produced by the Western Australian Branch. Special thanks are due to the Publications Office, The University of Western Australia for the typesetting and layout.

THE NEXT EDITION OF INFORMAA QUARTERLY WILL BE A COMBINED ISSUE PRODUCED BY THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN AND NORTHERN TERRITORY BRANCHES.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

At a Branch Council meeting held immediately following the WA Annual General Meeting on 28 July 1988, the following members were elected to Branch Council for 1988/89:

Graham Dudley (President)
Margaret Medcalf (Vice-President)
Alan Howard (Secretary)
Graham Dudley (Treasurer)
Kandy-Jane Hendersen (Assistant Secretary)
Ron Sharpe (Assistant Treasurer)
Graham Dudley (Federal Director)
Rosemary Longhurst (Federal Director)
Christine Shervington (Chairperson—Standards and Status)
Chris Coggin (Chairperson—Education)
Nigel Chatres (Programme Director)
Rosemary Longhurst (Registrar)

Since that meeting the year has commenced at a flying pace with preparations for the 6th National and 2nd International Perth Conference to be held in September 1989 receiving top priority. Council realizes that planning for the Conference over the next twelve months will be crucial to its success. To that end, a Conference Committee and a number of sub-committees have been formed to co-ordinate all activities associated with the Conference.

The Education Committee, chaired by Chris Coggin, has been busily engaged in arranging two one-day Branch Seminars to follow-up last year's highly successful Business Records and Efficiency Seminar. Focussing on indexing aspects of records management the two seminars were fully booked well in advance of their implementation. The first was held in late September and the second will be conducted in early November.

The Education Committee is also liaising closely with Perth Technical College to ensure the successful continuance of the TAFE Certificate in Records Management course which commenced in the first semester this year.

This issue of INFORMAA is the work of the INFORMAA Quarterly Committee comprising Christine Shervington and Margaret Medcalf. Christine and Margaret, with early assistance from Marita Hoo, have spent many hours toiling over this production to ensure that the high quality of previous issues is maintained.

The Functional Review of the State Library Board, conducted by the State Government, has been an issue which has been high on the agenda of Council for most of this year. Some months ago, Ron Sharpe, in his former capacity as Vice-President, tabled the Branch submission at a meeting with the functional Review Committee and follow-up work is continuing to ensure that the views of the Branch receive full consideration from the Committee.

Finally, Council congratulated Graham Dudley on his election as the first Western Australian member to attain Federal Presidency. Graham's other positions include Branch President and 1989 Conference Convenor as well as Executive Director of the IRMC. Council unanimously supports Graham's efforts to co-ordinate both National and International aspects affecting the Association in the lead-up to the all-important 1989 Conference.

Alan Howard
(Secretary)

RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA 5TH NATIONAL CONVENTION, CANBERRA 7 TO 9 SEPTEMBER 1988

Extra copies of the Convention papers can be purchased for \$35 plus postage.
Conference Satchels are also available for \$20 plus postage.

BUT

If you purchase both the Conference papers and a Convention Satchel postage will be included in the price of \$55.

Telephone (062) 45 4375 or write to PO Box E330, Parkes, ACT 2600.

Kate McCarthy (Chairman, Convention Committee)

VICTORIAN BRANCH REPORT

ADDRESS PO Box 2270U
GPO Melbourne 3001

PRESIDENT Bill Williams MRMA

SECRETARY Gary Omond ARMA

TELEPHONE (03) 417 3738

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SEMINAR

Was attended by 100 members and was a very successful day.

The seminar consisted of 3 sections;

1. Effective Communication for Records Managers.
2. Marketing Management. Its application to Records Managers.
3. Optical Disk storage solutions and case studies.

STATUS UPGRADES

MEMBER Bill Williams
Philip Taylor

ASSOCIATE Robert Simpson
Kay Lewis
Carmel Apap
Michael Halls

Congratulations to the above.

5th NATIONAL CONVENTION

Over 65 members from Victoria attended the recent Convention which was an outstanding success. Congratulations to all concerned in Canberra. For those that attended and for those that did not, don't forget the 6th National Convention in Perth next year. It will be held in conjunction with the 2nd International Records Management Congress. Start budgeting now. Details will be supplied in the near future.

4th NATIONAL CONVENTION

The books are now back from the auditors and the nett profit was in excess of \$30,000. Congratulations to the organising committee.

Sets of papers from the 4th National Convention are still available. Please notify the Secretary if you wish to purchase.

EDUCATION

Twenty students are preparing for their final exams at Prahran TAFE in Certificate in Records Management. Good luck.

Guest speakers have been recently supplied to Melbourne CAE. A number of topics were discussed which created much debate.

MEMBERSHIP

This continues to grow and for those involved in the Local Government area, you will be notified shortly of a meeting to discuss the formation of a Local Government Chapter.

1988 FEDERAL DIRECTORS MEETING

The 29th Meeting of Federal Directors was held on the 5/6 September 1988, prior to the commencement of the 5th National Convention, Canberra, ACT.

The following is a precis of the Minutes of the Meeting

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

Federal President	Graham Dudley
Vice President	Phil Taylor
Hon. Secretary	Murray Stewart
Hon. Treasurer	Jim Shepherd
Public Officer	Ross Thompson
Chairman, Status and Standards Committee	Peter Smith
Chairman, Accreditation Committee	Graham Dudley
Chairman, Education and New Technology Committee	Phil Taylor

BRANCH OBJECTIVES

Branch objectives were submitted to the Meeting and are available from each Branch Executive.

INTERNATIONAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (IRMC)

Reports were received and adopted on the following IRMC happenings:

- Executive Board Meetings, Paris, France
- 1987/88 Activities
- 1988/89 Activities Projection

Major points of interest covered IRMC membership, which includes associations from Finland, Ghana, Ireland, Great Britain and the Philippines. The Federal President, RMAA, Mr Graham Dudley, was elected to the position of Executive Director.

Mr Peter Smith was elected as the RMAAs IRMC Delegate for a two year term.

Mrs Helen Francis was elected Vice President, Australia and Oceania, IRMC.

ASSOCIATED FINANCES

The Federal Treasurer presented the Financial Report as at 30 June 1988. Investigation of the most effective form of investment of surplus funds was approved and the Federal Treasurer and two other members are to report within two months.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

An increase of \$5.00 per membership fees was carried and the new fees will be:

Corporate	\$115
Additional Corporate	
Nominee	\$45
Affiliate	\$45
Associate	\$55
Member	\$65
Fellow	\$85
Full-time Student	\$25

ADVERTISING

Following the successful promotion during 1987/88, it was decided to continue the campaign at State level, with co-ordination to be carried out by Mr Bill Williams. A budget of \$5,000 has been provided and Branches have been requested through their Federal Directors, to provide mailing addresses and telephone contact numbers within thirty days.

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

After submissions by the NSW and NT delegates, Federal Council approved the following motion:

'That Chapter Council comprise a maximum of three professional members elected by members of the chapter voting at a General Meeting called the Chapter Annual General Meeting. Members of the Chapter Council must hold professional status. Councillors will hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.'

MEMBERSHIP REGISTER

The Public Officer, Mr Ross Thompson, is to use the NSW and Victorian Branch systems, liaise with those two Branches, and submit a report to Federal Council on a standard software package.

PUBLICITY

SA and NT Branches have elected to co-produce the February 1989 edition of 'Informaa Quarterly'. The timetable will, therefore, advance for the subsequent editions. Branches should note this alteration to the previously advertised timetable.

Mr David Kyle, Practical Marketing Group, presented a proposal to publish the 'Quarterly Informaa' on behalf of the Association. Federal Directors were impressed by Mr Kyle's presentation, but at this stage, have decided not to accept his offer. National advertising responsibility has been given to Mr Bill Williams, who will set the rates from time to time. Rates for advertising in Branch Informaas are at the discretion of each Branch Council.

The RMAAs official brochure is to be distributed to the membership, including a microfiche copy of the Memorandum and Articles. These brochures were distributed to all Convention delegates in Canberra.

ANNUAL REPORTS

The NT Branch Annual Report for 1987/88 has been adopted as the minimum standard for use by all Branches. Federal Council is working towards presenting an Annual Report to members prior to the Annual General Meeting.

EDUCATION

The Chairman, Education Committee, tabled an Education Policy which was adopted by Federal Council. The Education Policy is to be published in the February 1989 issue of 'Quarterly Informaa'. The work undertaken by the Committee has resulted in this policy and each member is to be congratulated.

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

- RMAA 6th National Convention
- IRMC 2nd International Congress, Perth 1989

The theme for Perth is 'Excellence in Communication—The Proper Approach to Records Management'. Planning is well underway and indications are that with the participation of overseas visitors, Perth is a must in '89!

- RMAA 7th National Convention, Brisbane 1990
Federal Council has approved the bid by the Queensland Branch to host the Convention in Brisbane.

- RMAA 8th National Convention, Darwin 1991
NT Branch successfully won approval to hold the Convention in Darwin and has already had preliminary talks with developers on a proposed Convention facility being built in the Top End.

- RMAA 9th National Convention 1992
Mrs Pam Camden has undertaken to ask the NSW Branch to consider making a bid for this Convention.

- RMAA 10th National Convention 1993
SA Branch is prepared to bid and is planning to submit a proposal.

OTHER INFORMATION SOCIETIES

Discussion on formal application to become a member of the Australian Information Technology Council, (AITC); resulted in a resolve that the Federal President commence dialogue with the President of the AITC and report back to Federal Council.

The Chairman, Status and Standards Committee, was appointed the RMAA Delegate to the Standards Association of Australia.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Federal Council granted Honorary Membership to Mrs Pat Ward (NSW) who has carried out work in the field of Records Management and in particular, on behalf of the Association.

TIES AND SCARVES

Scarves are available for the first time. Ties also have been re-ordered. Colour for the scarves is a light yellow with the RMAA Logo in green and yellow at each end of the scarf. Ties are now available in colours of Slate Grey, Maroon and Canberra Fawn.

Branch Secretaries are to request supplies direct from the Queensland Branch Secretary. Branches will be invoiced at wholesale costs (scarf \$12.90, ties \$8.08) with profits being retained by the Branch. Retail prices are set at—scarf \$15.00, tie \$10.00.

CONCLUSION

This precis is an outline of the Minutes of the 29th Federal Council Meeting.

M. R. Stewart, ARMA
Hon. Federal Secretary, RMAA

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The education environment for records management is entering a very exciting time. The Federal Council at its meeting in Canberra last September adopted an education policy which will apply standards to all courses in records management in Australia. The full policy will be published in the February 1989 edition of 'INFORMAA QUARTERLY'.

In the states good headway has been occurring in establishing records management courses. NSW should have an Associate Diploma in Records and Information Systems operating through the NSW Department of TAFE and offered at several different campuses in the Sydney area. Western Australians are hopeful that their Certificate in Records Management part 2a and 2b will be offered in 1989, and will

then become a recognised course in records management in that state.

Most importantly, representation has recently been made to the Australian Government seeking assistance and co-operation in connection with improving the establishment and recognition of records management courses. These discussions will continue to pursue issues relevant to improving and enhancing education in records management, which will eventually lead to records management being recognised as a profession.

Philip Taylor MRMA
Chairman
Federal Education Committee

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: THE WAY FORWARD?

by Christine Wright

Christine Wright graduated MA(Hons) in Modern and Medieval History from the University of St Andrews in 1980 and Diploma in Archive Administration at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth (1981). She joined the staff of the Archives Department of Manchester City Library as the Assistant Archivist and two years later joined the Greater Manchester County Record Office as First Assistant Archivist and later Deputy County Archivist. She emigrated to Perth in March 1988.

In the six months that I have lived and worked in Western Australia I have been forcibly struck by the differences and the similarities in records management here in comparison with the United Kingdom. It is inevitable, although not desirable, to go through this process of comparison. When I chose to emigrate I attempted to maintain an open mind about my new life and the working environment I was likely to encounter. I have been pleasantly surprised to discover that my experiences and perceptions of records management are generally in accord with those of Western Australian colleagues, despite differences in background and situation.

When I asked to contribute this article my initial response was one of guarded enthusiasm as my experiences in the United Kingdom were atypical and could not, I felt, give a true reflection of the situation as a whole. I came into records management because of a particularly unpleasant situation, the abolition of the local authority for which I worked, and my total experience evolved around that situation. I also began my career as an archivist and my whole working life has been spent in a record office whose first priority was, until recently, archives.

The basis of this article is my personal experiences as the First Assistant Archivist and later Deputy County Archivist for Greater Manchester County in the North West of England between the years 1984 and 1988. The opinions expressed in it are largely personal but to a certain extent represent a growing body of opinion, particularly amongst the younger members of both professions. Like many archivists in the United Kingdom today although largely responsible for the development of archive services for the record office I was closely involved with the development of the records management function of the office.

Greater Manchester County Record Office came into being in 1976 as a result of the setting up of the

Metropolitan Counties following regional reorganisation in 1974. When I joined it in 1983 the office had recently moved into newly converted premises. At that time the archival collections were in disarray, having been housed in three separate locations and moved around quite frequently within those locations. The initial priority was to solve this problem and make the collections available to an eager public. Records management only became a priority in late 1984 when the Local Government Act (1984) abolishing the Metropolitan Counties on 1 April 1986 became a reality.

To explain the actual events of the ensuing two years would require a whole article on its own and does not make particularly interesting reading. Suffice to say that we, along with the five other metropolitan record offices involved, were faced with a crisis situation and we dealt with it the best we could, with varying degrees of success. One of the less obvious benefits of the crises that we faced in those years was that they made us pause and reflect on the directions that our profession(s) and the organisations for which we worked were following and to consider where the future lay.

It is probably useful at this point to give a brief outline of the local government organisation of record offices in the United Kingdom. Records management is very closely allied to archives and the traditional base for that function has always been in the Local Government Record Office.

The majority of record offices in the United Kingdom are funded at Local Government level. Before 1974 this meant the traditional shire, county or, for the larger cities and towns, city or borough council.

Many of the record offices in England and Wales have been in existence from the immediate post Second World War years or, in a few cases, pre-war. Initially they concentrated on collecting and preserving the records which made up the fabric of local and national history. The backbones of these long established offices are usually the civil and ecclesiastical parish records, the Quarter Session and other court records and family and estate papers.

In 1974 'Regionalisation' introduced six Metropolitan Counties into the traditional structure. With the exception of Greater London, which already had a Record Office dating from 1965 with the formation of

the Greater London Council, there was suddenly potential for five new record offices as the new authorities were also designated as archive authorities and were therefore obliged to provide for the proper management and archiving of their own records. Some counties were more successful than others but the real importance of these years was the movement towards county-wide services in areas which had previously seen only small, rather poorly funded services. This movement was particularly successful in West Yorkshire which patiently negotiated five existing services into one. The benefits of these services were self evident. Expensive facilities like conservation, microfilming and education became realities with joint funding where before they had been impossible dreams. Also important was the pooling of manpower and expertise. In our own area sometimes the most important commodity we could offer was advice and sympathy or a 'heavy mob' for the more arduous physical jobs which are beyond one person.

Most record offices run records management sections of varying sizes with varying success but usually as an adjunct to their traditional function, that of the care and preservation of archives.

Generally they deal only with the records of the parent authority and the emphasis is on archiving. Very few would deal with active files. There has been an increasing awareness in the last few years that we ought to be involved in all stages of the record's life but few offices have the resources to turn this into reality and it is doubtful whether the current structure would be flexible enough to allow for it. Against a traditional background where archives have always come first it is difficult for records management, or records managers, to be accorded the status they deserve.

The 'Abolition of the Mets', as it came to be known, highlighted this situation very clearly. Although it effected only six counties it changed the traditional balance and the effect was closely watched by other offices. Overnight the important function of these six offices was no longer archival but managerial and the important people were not the archivists but the records managers.

The abolition posed two questions: how to efficiently manage the vast quantity of records which had to pass from the outgoing authority to the successor bodies (which in our case numbered 14) and how to ensure survival. The Local Government Act (1984) did not specifically make provision for the record offices. Like many others we were left to negotiate our own funding which eventually came from nine out of ten districts and four joint boards (Fire, Police, Waste Disposal and Passenger Transport).

For many of us who had geared our lives to archives

the discovery that our existence might depend on records management came as a shock. The record offices effectively became liaison organisations, bringing together all the interested parties and, in some cases, forcing them to talk to one another for the first time. It was interesting to watch this role develop as we certainly began from a very precarious position of mistrust and suspicion. In our case it was due partly to the fact that records management was an unknown quantity and partly to a union policy of non co-operation with central government. The effort involved to convince people of its effectiveness was tremendous but it slowly began to emerge that we were one of the few sections of the outgoing authority who could have some impact on a very confused situation.

Until approximately two months before the abolition date central government had not made clear its intentions for the continuation of many functions other than to say that the district authorities were to take them over. Our role in these months was to locate and identify records and personnel and try to match them to the correct authority.

Our first observation, then, was the importance of establishing a role within the organisation. The only way to achieve this was to be visible, be friendly, be aware and above all be trustworthy. We made a point of always fulfilling our promises. There is no doubt in my mind that our recognition of these points and our performance as regards the efficient management of the records ensured our survival.

What I have just said may appear rather simplistic and basic. It is a sad reflection of the way that some local authority record offices work that it has to be said. There is an unfortunate trend in some quarters for the 'people element' to be forgotten and one of the most important changes that must occur in archives and records management in the United Kingdom is a realisation that the user, be he fellow officer or member of the public, is important and his needs must be accommodated. The maxim that the document is always the first consideration applies equally to records managers and while it is undeniably important there is always a case for compromise to allow access to information where need can be proved.

The other point to emerge from these traumatic years was the need to consider separation of the archival and records management function. It is obvious that the two must interface but it is no longer appropriate for one organisation to deal with both operations, particularly if a closer involvement in active files is sought. To attempt to share staff and facilities inevitably leads to prioritising, particularly in an economic climate of recession such as the United Kingdom has suffered in the last decade. The records management sections have usually suffered most simply because

performance in most record offices has been measured by the number of searchers (usually genealogists in the majority). While counting the number of files issued is a reasonable measure of records management performance it will always be the public face of these offices which will be important to the funders. The benefits of an efficient records management programme to their own organisation are often overlooked.

There are a number of requirements in order to overcome this problem. Firstly, as previously stated, there must be some separation of the two functions to allow both room to grow. The sheer physical problem of housing both archives and modern records and their appropriate staff can be daunting and unnecessarily expensive. Whereas archives require careful humidity and temperature controls modern records do not necessarily. They do require to be reasonably closely situated to their parent organisation and it would therefore seem sensible for the records management section to be sited within the parent organisation rather than in a separate, albeit adjacent building, as is so often the case. The alternative is a records centre where the two function under one roof but with independent staffing and budget. A further extension of the concept would be to house the local museum and art gallery and the archaeological units, which many local authorities now fund, together in one complex.

As well as physically separating the records there is a need to remove control of the records management function from the county archivist, or at least lessen it. In the past the records manager has always been third, or sometimes fourth in the office hierarchy. He/she has suffered a confusion of roles. While he is responsible for records management he is quite likely to find himself having to perform archival duties as well e.g. search room duty. Again this has grown out of the primary role of the record office as an archival body and the chronic staff shortages which have been with us for years. This makes the argument for physical separation all the more potent.

A pre-requisite of this separation would be a reassessment of attitudes to the records manager and by the records manager of his/her status. Having been cast in a lowly role he is seen and, in some cases, sees himself in a less favourable light than his archival colleague. By raising his own self esteem he raises other people's perceptions of himself and, conversely, favourable feedback again raises esteem. To arrive at this situation is difficult. After years of considering themselves as and being considered as 'failed' archivists there must be radical change and the key to this is through training courses.

Many records managers in the United Kingdom today will have trained either as archivists or librarians.

I am not qualified to comment on the suitability of the library courses but having endured the Diploma in Archive Administration course (now MA in Archive Administration) I believe that it is not suitable for training today's records managers. By its very nature it concentrates on archives and the records management content concerns itself only with how records management interfaces with archives, not the practicalities of the discipline. In 1984 I was acutely conscious, as an archivist, that I was not suitably prepared to set up a records management programme. My knowledge of new technology was inadequate and faced with a number of different filing systems in a fragmented state I did not really know where to start. We were fortunate in having around us many competent and experienced people who freely offered advice and support but a solid background in records management either through training or experience, or both, was desirable.

There has to be recognition that no training course will really fit a person for a job unless it includes a considerable element of practical experience. There is much to be said for the old-fashioned apprenticeship. The situation as it stands produces an individual who may have the academic ability but lack completely practical skill. Inevitably this leads to frustration on both sides, and, sadly sometimes the departure from the profession of a disillusioned archivist/records manager. While this happens in many professions I found it alarming that so many new graduates had no idea what would be required of them. For instance, most were unprepared for the amount of contact with the public. Few realised how physically demanding the job could be.

A training course which provided the necessary academic and technical grounding coupled with considerable practical experience would seem to be more appropriate to archivists and records managers alike.

As well as training at a postgraduate level there is an urgent need for training for assistants or clerks and for a recognised career structure. Most record offices have excellent archive and record management assistants, some of whom will have held their positions for many years and really constitute the backbone of the office.

There has been an increasing trend, however, in recent years for graduates to fill these posts, sometimes with the intention of applying for either archive or library courses. Regrettably, competition is now so fierce many of these people are never accepted into courses. Many leave the profession and go on to more financially rewarding employment. This has led to a constant turn-over of staff at this level which might be avoided or slowed down if there were some career prospects to offer. This could take the form of progression through two or three salary scales but would

also have to be tied into training and qualifications.

At present training is usually done on an 'in house' basis and is very rarely structured and carefully planned, having to be fitted in around a busy office schedule. In our own area we began a series of seminars aimed specifically at archive and records management assistants. They proved to be very popular not only from the instructional point of view but also as the only time that these people met together as a group. While the archivists and records managers met together as members of professional associations the assistants have no real meeting point and thus tended to be isolated. The argument has raged for years over whether they should be allowed to be full members of the Society of Archivists and Records Management Association without professional qualifications. The Association takes a more liberal stand on this but regardless of their qualifications they must be allowed a voice as their contribution to both professions is important. This would go some way towards stabilising the situation and slowing down the rapid turn-over of staff.

An alternative method of training has already been utilised by the Society of Archivists who now run a correspondence course for aspiring archivists in professional posts who are unable to leave their jobs for a year to take the MA in Archive Administration. A combination of correspondence and regular seminars/days/schools would fulfill both purposes of training and meeting together. Without training and subsequent recognition as an invaluable part of the records management team these people are in danger of being severely under utilised to their own detriment and, ultimately that of the profession.

Finally it is clear that funding of archives and records management in the United Kingdom must be put on a more commercial footing. As previously stated we emerged from the abolition with 14 different sources of funding. To please 14 masters tends to concentrate the mind, particularly when that funding is not guar-

anteed from year to year. Local government does not encourage entrepreneurial skill but we began to look at ways of boosting our funding against the day when the participating authorities refused to fund us (which began to happen in late 1987).

Quite early in the proceedings a chance remark lead us to negotiate a small annual charge for storage for one of the local hospitals. They also agreed to pay us mileage and a small fee if we could guarantee the return of a file within one hour during working hours. Later we negotiated a substantial grant from a large chemical company who desperately needed storage space for their archive. Colleagues in the surrounding area were horrified that we could consider this action but it was acceptable to all parties and certainly gave us the beginnings of a much needed optional income. We must adopt a more commercial attitude to our skills and to the facilities we manage if services are to expand and improve in the twenty-first century.

I have purposely said very little about the role of the professional associations in all this. I am aware that there have been moves to address the problems of the training courses and the question of their own membership. However the more fundamental questions of the organisation and funding of the record offices will probably never be properly addressed. Any alterations in these directions would have to come from within the local authorities themselves, with pressure from the Society and the Association, and in the present economic climate it is unlikely that radical change would be acceptable.

As I said at the beginning of this article many of the opinions I have expressed are personal or reflective only of younger colleagues who are in the position of dealing with the vagaries of a system which has grown up by custom and tradition and is now in need of an overhaul. It is for these people and the generation of archivists/records managers who come after them that it is important that change should occur. It is also in their hands to make that change happen.

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TOWARDS AN AUTOMATED RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AT THE DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

by Ken Ridley, Dip.Pub.Admin., Cert.Pers.Mgt.(PTC)

Ken Ridley has worked in a clerical capacity in State Government over the past 19 years. This career has included State Insurance, Crown Law, Labour and Industry and Public Service Arbitrator. He first came into the records environment at DOSHWA in 1985 and is currently their Records Manager.

In April 1985 the Department of Industrial Affairs and the Occupational Health Branch of the Western Australian Health Department were amalgamated to form the new Department of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare.

In July 1985, I was invited to investigate and implement a computerised records management system.

I accepted the invitation with little consternation as I thought 'records' would be a short simple project. I was mindful of my recent tribulations during the previous two years as EDP liaison officer implementing a mainframe-based system to accommodate the registration and inspection requirements of this State's 60,000 factories and shops registrations and some 20,000 items of classified machinery (pressure vessels, cranes, lifts, etc).

A brief examination of the registry soon shocked me into the realisation that the task would be no pushover and indeed posed a considerable challenge.

There were, for instance, fifteen different file covers in use and eight different numbering regimes. One series of files dated back to 1905 and another to 1921. The earlier series had never been culled. A 'keep everything' mentality was clearly evident and file titles reflected the whim of the users. There was no control vocabulary and general correspondence files reigned supreme.

Needless to say, registry was not popular with either the clients or the records staff. Practices and procedures had remained unchanged for many years. Fortunately, the new management of the Department had already recognised that the chaos in records could not be tolerated. Furthermore, they had the vision to appreciate the great contribution an efficient records system could make in assisting the Department achieve its corporate mission. The availability of timely and accurate information to managers was seen as absolutely essential.

Advice was sought from the Western Australian Public

Service Board which had built up a team of some four consultants following joint development of the software package STATUS RMS in conjunction with Computer Power and the Systems Research Institute of Australia. At that time it was assumed STATUS RMS would be chosen and a strategy was developed for its implementation with the Board's assistance.

A new wrap-around file cover was introduced to protect folios and facilitate lateral storage. The NSW RMOs General Administrative Thesaurus was purchased to support the implementation of Keyword File Titling in the Department since this method of file titling was considered necessary for the registry's improved efficiency. The only computing facilities available to the Department were via an ICL mainframe operated by the Department of Computing and Information Technology.

The Consultants Price Waterhouse Urwick were invited to develop an Information Technology plan for the Department and they presented their report in April 1986. Among other things it identified the objectives which information technology had to support and described the main features of the applications systems which were consequently needed. The report gave no firm recommendation however, as to the type of hardware that should be purchased by the Department to support its information technology needs.

The feasibility of running STATUS RMS on the ICL mainframe was pursued up to the point where ICL (UK) decided that they would not support the development of the software to run on their VME operating system and early in 1987 I was directed to evaluate other records management software available under VME, CDOS or UNIX.

An evaluation was conducted on RECFIND developed by GMB Research and Development in Sydney. Implementation of this package had recently commenced at the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services. RECFIND proved to be a very sophisticated product but because of the unique legislative requirements of this Department it appeared to have some limitations, namely:

- the file title fields could not accommodate the size of our file titles;
- the format and content of its reports were insufficient for our purposes;
- there was a problem, at that stage anyway, with

'false drops' (due to soundex indexing) when interrogating the data base; and

- it did not run on VME, CDOS or UNIX.

Another package, called CARMS and developed by ORTEX AUSTRALIA in Canberra, was introduced to me by ICL in Perth since it could run on the UNIX operating system which the Department at that stage had chosen. In September 1987, I was able to attend the fourth annual RMAA Convention in Melbourne and I took the opportunity to visit ORTEX in Canberra. They kindly introduced me to several local registries where CARMS was up and running.

My initial impression of CARMS was that it would be acceptable because it ran on ICL under UNIX and it provided file tracking facilities and boolean search operators. There was also reported to be close liaison between ORTEX and the NSW RMO which appeared to augur well for its future development and the appreciation of modern records management practices.

In October 1987, the Department gave approval to engage a consultant to compile a functional thesaurus of occupational health terms and advise on the implementation of an as yet undecided software package. Marita Hoo (MRMA) from Information Enterprises was appointed. Her approach was to define and reach consensus on Departmental records management requirements and to test CARMS against these requirements. Essential requirements were defined as:

- an ability to accommodate 200,000 files;
- boolean search facilities;
- right-hand side truncated search facilities on alpha and numeric strings;
- the ability to search on alpha and numeric data;
- menu-driven;
- user friendly in novice mode;
- updates and amendments to be interactive;
- system defined reports to support all phases of the life cycle management of records;
- security checking; and
- comprehensive correspondence management facilities for loose and attached active and inactive correspondence.

Desirable requirements were defined as:

- support of records management industry;
- the ability to local print file title labels incorporating bar codes;
- willingness of developer to accommodate user enhancements;
- reasonable cost; and
- thesaurus and/or synonym facility.

Following extensive testing of CARMS and communications with ICL and ORTEX representatives, we concluded that this package was also a sophisticated product able to meet most of our unique require-

ments. ORTEX was prepared to make the DOSHWA-defined enhancements to the file module but it was not prepared to make the required enhancements to the DOCUMENT and CORRESPONDENCE modules. Comprehensive and flexible correspondence management facilities had been identified as ESSENTIAL requirements.

In February 1988, after a meeting with ORTEX, the Department decided to abandon the idea of implementing CARMS. Both Marita Hoo and I were then directed by management to identify and review ANY packages available regardless of operating system or hardware constraints. The following packages were considered:

REC FIND, RECMAN, STATUS RMS, TRIM

The first two had constraints in their basic data structure, reporting and thesaurus facilities. The latter two both appeared strong contenders and a period of review and testing was undertaken. In the final analysis, both RMS and TRIM could meet Departmental needs but TRIM was selected because it:

- is very user friendly;
- offers comprehensive state of the art correspondence management facilities, including workflow support and monitoring;
- provides a wide range of superior management and transactional reports on line as well as in printed format;
- provides superior disposition and archiving facilities; and
- has on line thesaurus facility.
- In addition the developers are committed to continually reviewing and upgrading the package to keep it in line with modern office technology such as optical disc storage and they will allow for the special requirements of users and will continue to support requirements under the standard package maintenance arrangements.

At the time of writing (September 1988) TRIM has not been implemented due to hardware tender evaluations although implementation is expected by mid-October. Data Preparation has been by way of tape (from the mainframe) and data input forms which match TRIM screens. The size of the task has dictated a staged implementation process and it is expected to take some twelve months. A team of four contract staff has been engaged to assist with implementation.

During the software evaluation phase of this project, considerable effort has also been made on updating other aspects of the registry to make it more efficient for both clients and registry staff. Administrative files have been retitled in accordance with the GADM thesaurus and with some fine-tuning and appreciation of the manner in which it should be used, the system is running efficiently. After an unsuccessful

attempt to find an appropriate functional thesaurus on occupational health terms, preliminary work on developing of our own thesaurus has commenced.

The large number of files (70,000) and the different numbering systems referred to earlier in this paper necessitated the introduction of colour coding and a method of integrating the number series. The evaluation process was greatly assisted by Castledex Business Systems which suggested a terminal digit colour code arrangement. The Company was able to offer folders which were pre-printed, keeping manual attachment of colour codes to a minimum. The terminal digit arrangement allows us to have one sequential numbering system with active records being evenly distributed. Returning files to rack is also faster and more accurate.

An extensive cull of old files enabled many boxes of closed volumes to be either destroyed or transferred to secondary storage or archives. These boxes had been stored on top of file racks and contributed to poor lighting and dusty conditions. Some large pot plants and moveable partitions were purchased and

strategically placed to improve aesthetics.

Staff duties have also been revised to share the work load and support a team approach. Historically, the registry supported distinctly separate Branches of the Department which reinforced a perception of separateness among the various functional groups. There was also a lack of understanding by records staff of the overall functions and activities of the Department as a whole. A help desk at the front of the registry was set up to deal with all requests for files and information. Our service to users as well as registry morale is improving and we expect both to be better still with the arrival of TRIM.

In retrospect, the analysis of registry operations and the software evaluation has been a most worthwhile experience even though it has taken some three years to automate my registry! I believe I have gained much by working on this project and have developed my interest in records management. In addition, the opportunity to work with a professional records manager has given me the experience and confidence to apply for upgrading to ARMA status.

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SUCCESS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORD MANAGEMENT

by Laurence Shervington

Laurence Shervington has recently retired from the position of Deputy Town Clerk of the City of Subiaco, WA after many years in local government.

Reference to the Concise Oxford Dictionary reveals that—

'Record' is defined as—'Piece of recorded evidence or information'; and

'Archive' is defined as—'Public record or place in which collected public or corporate records are stored, or records so kept'.

Thus defined there is little, if any, difference in the interpretation of both. However, for our purpose, if the definition of quintessence is accepted as 'refined extract' I think it fair to say that the archive is the quintessence of records. I think it is true to say then, as far as local government records are concerned, that good record management produces archival material as a by product.

Retention of records in certain specified categories in local government in Western Australia, quite apart from financial records which are in a category of their own, is a statutory requirement imposed by the Library Board Act and more recently by an amendment to the Local Government Act. I am inclined to think that the obligation imposed by these Acts is observed more in the breach than in the execution. It would appear that similar situations exist elsewhere as, as lately as 1982 the City of Sydney was reported as having the only formally established local government archives in New South Wales. As people involved and interested in *Records Management* I think you will agree such a situation is extremely regrettable, as so much invaluable information is being irretrievably lost or destroyed thereby increasing the difficulty of research, if not rendering such research impossible; a tragic situation when related to the possible creation of interesting local history and a storehouse of local knowledge of people and events.

Local government, by its nature, deals with a wide range of activities. It follows therefore, that its records will likewise be wide ranging and cover a diversity of subjects. By way of comparison, I would cite the records which it could be imagined an average medical practitioner in general practice would need to keep in relation to that practice. For the greatest part of his business I imagine his records would be confined to the personal records of his patients. Such records could, one would imagine, consist of re-

corded data kept on a name basis in alphabetical order. This may be an over simplification, but I think it serves to illustrate the infinitely wider range of records which evolve in municipal management. In addition to the Property Records and Financial Records, with which I will deal below, the general records in Subiaco at least, cover:

1. ADMINISTRATION with its sub-headings of—
General;
Elected Members;
Staff;
Financial administration as opposed to book-keeping and accounting records.
2. HEALTH AND WELFARE. The Welfare Section manages its own confidential records of persons dealt with.
3. ENGINEERING WORKS
4. PARKS AND GARDENS
5. VEHICLE PARKING
6. TOWN PLANNING AND BUILDING
7. COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ORGANISATIONS (Sporting Clubs, Service Clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and the like).

You will readily appreciate that the size of a Municipality's records is directly related to the size of its population and the scope of its activities in the interests of that population. A small rural authority in the past could manage adequately on a simple subject based system kept in alphabetical order. Such systems once established were inherited as staff came and went and were no doubt adapted from time to time by successive executive officers. Obviously the more sophisticated a council's operations became so its records system expanded. With the proliferation of government legislation this tendency will inevitably grow.

From the point of view of administrative records, the Council's Rate Book forms the basis of all information regarding properties within the Municipality as well as being the basis of its fund raising capacity. The Rate Book is also the basis for the preparation of the Municipal Electoral Roll. Paradoxically those authorities which have computerised their operations no

longer have a rate book as such, but only computerised records of the various properties within the municipality.

The Rate Book or its computerised equivalent leads to the property records system which is one of the three main records systems maintained at Subiaco with which I will now deal in some detail.

1. THE PROPERTY RECORDS SYSTEM

In this system a separate record is kept for each individual property as defined by a Certificate of Title or its equivalent. Such records would generally contain details of transaction by the owners with the Council concerning matters pertaining to that particular property such as planning applications and approvals, building licence applications and licences issued together with any conditions which might have been imposed, Health Orders and Information indicating compliance or otherwise with same, also information such as the nature of business carried out on business premises. Details of sub-standard conditions and requirements to bring up to standard together with notification of compliance would also be recorded. Each individual property is represented by an envelope containing the material just referred to which is stored numerically in street order, the streets being in alphabetical order.

2. FINANCIAL RECORDS AND INCLUDING ELECTORAL MATERIAL

These records of financial transactions are required by statute to be retained for a period of seven years. They consist in the main of invoices of goods supplied and accounts of payments made and vouchers authorising such payments, duplicates of receipts issued for monies received and of licences issued. The major problem experienced in the management of these records, in my experience, has been caused by limitation of adequate space for storage coupled with the duration of the period (seven years), that such records are required to be retained. However, a retention and disposal schedule as part of a records management system has been established, so disposal of these records at the end of the seven years period can proceed.

Another record which comes within this category (although not financial), and which must be retained for a period of two years, is material associated with municipal elections for councillors and mayors or presidents. However, these records are unique in that once an election is concluded the ballot papers and associated material such as electoral rolls used, must be wrapped, sealed and securely stored by the Returning Officer or some other duly appointed Elec-

toral Officer, and they must not be unwrapped or referred to except by order of a Court of Disputed Returns. After the expiry of the statutory period of two years they can be destroyed.

3. GENERAL RECORDS SYSTEM

This is the third and most difficult system to establish and manage because of its diversity of subject, as mentioned above. It is the evolution of this system which has been the most interesting and rewarding in regard to records during the twelve years I have spent at Subiaco.

When I took up by appointment at Subiaco the general record system was, as I recall, an alphabetical system housed in one or two old-fashioned wooden filing cabinets. There was no full time filing clerk and filing in the general system was undertaken in conjunction with her many other duties by a member of the secretarial staff.

The Property Records System by comparison had recently been overhauled and upgraded by the Planning and Building Department staff. It was even then housed in an adequate modern compactus and, apart from its sheer bulk and the ongoing necessity to cull unwanted material, has presented nothing like the problems associated with the General Records System.

Some time after my arrival, it was agreed that the increasing magnitude of the records management, although in those days only graced with the title "filing", warranted the employment of a full time filing clerk, whose duties would include the management of the general filing system as well as collecting and despatch of mail and the internal circulation of correspondence. The interest, enthusiasm and ability of successive incumbents in the position of filing clerk varied greatly, as did the standard of filing and retrieval of recorded material. However, a change was made from an alphabetical system to a decimalised system, and at about that time the first of our really enthusiastic and innovative full time filing clerks arrived on the scene from whose labours the benefits to the filing system soon became apparent. A compactus had been obtained and provided greatly improved, and at that time adequate, storage. The General Records System took a great leap forward. The person who had been so largely responsible for achieving these improvements then transferred to other duties in the Council.

Some time later we were fortunate to obtain the services of another enthusiastic employee who carried on the good work already underway. It was, I think, during the regime of this incumbent that colour coding of the filing index pages was introduced which,

in the main, coincided with the colour of the paper used for the agenda and minutes of the various Standing Committees. For example Town Planning and Building Standing Committee agenda and minutes would be produced on yellow paper. The filing index pages recording subjects dealt with by that Committee would also be yellow. The colour system was later extended as far as the limited colour range would allow to the filing jackets and this practice operates today with obvious benefits.

Towards the middle of 1984 the capacity of the general records compactus had reached its absolute maximum and it became obvious that one of three courses of action would have to be adopted to relieve the situation. The three options were:

- (1) Establish a microfilm system;
- (2) Extend the existing compactus. This would have been a very short term solution because limited space severely restricted the extension which could occur; or
- (3) Drastically cull the material in the files.

The third option was adopted as a preliminary measure while further action was considered. This proved in the long run to be a wise decision. Senior officers spent one Saturday morning each month going through those files which pertained to their respective field of responsibility. However, after several months of this activity, it was considered possible if not probable that in the enthusiasm to reduce the bulk of the stored material, those undertaking the task may have been sacrificing worthwhile or even valuable material. A halt was called to the culling activities, and an application was made for a Community Employment Programme grant for the employment of staff to undertake the establishment of municipal archives and the production of schedules of records retention and disposal. The application outlined that the scheme would provide municipal archives for the City of Subiaco, but it also strongly emphasised that it would establish a system for record disposal and retention with ongoing value to Subiaco and to any other Council wishing to adopt such a method.

The application was successful and I would like to acknowledge the very valuable assistance provided by way of advice both at the time of the application and subsequently by the Battye Library, and particularly to the Deputy State Archivist, Chris Coggin and

his assistant Kandy-Jane Henderson. Without the advice and subsequent training and guidance of those involved in executing the project by those two persons, it could not have been implemented.

The CEP Scheme commenced in about June 1985 and was completed in February 1986. Two persons were employed during that period on a full time basis, a research worker and an assistant. The end result was the production of an excellent Manual of Records Retention Schedules and Procedures. The Manual has been the subject of favourable comment by the Local Government Department as a result of which something like two dozen applications have been received from local authorities from around the State for the supply of a copy. The credit for the production of the Manual is due to Lorraine Smith aided by her assistant Jean May who faced, tackled and overcame the daunting task presented by the Subiaco Records System—or lack of it.

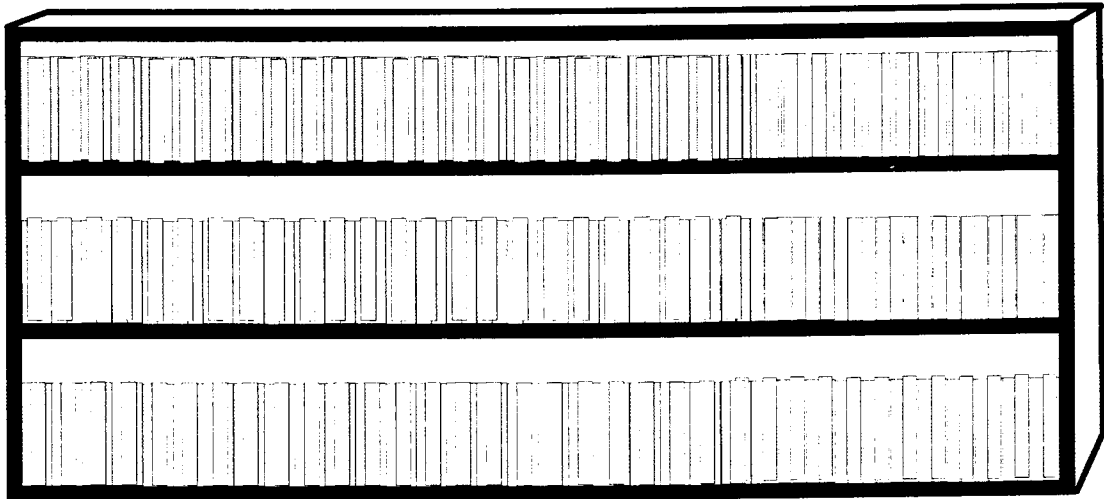
However, the completion of the Manual did not signify the completion of our records re-organisation. Much had to be done following that event to get our records to the well organised and comprehensive condition they are in today. The story has been very ably and succinctly told by Lorraine Smith, and published in *The Informaa Quarterly* of February 1987. I would commend the article to you.

Following the completion of the CEP Project, Lorraine Smith's services were retained by the City to undertake an exhaustive and exhausting culling of the Property Records System. That has now been completed and I understand there are approximately 10,000 files representing some 8,000 properties. Subsequently she has been appointed Records Manager/Archivist of the City and all three systems are now functioning with regular culling taking place in the general and financial systems. The general filing system now contains some 1100 files.

In June this year the Council opened its Archival Display which is housed in its own separate accommodation on the mezzanine floor of the City Library. I am informed that enquiries average about one or more a week which are either satisfied directly or the enquirer is advised of other possible sources of information.

I hope that the foregoing has helped to indicate that the City of Subiaco is in the vanguard in the field of municipal records management.

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MUSINGS ON AUSTRALIAN RECORDS MANAGEMENT EDUCATION FOR THE 1990s AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER INFORMATION PROFESSIONS

by Marita D. Hoo, MRMA, ALAA, AAIM

Marita Hoo, a qualified librarian, has worked in the records management profession for nearly twenty years. She has established and managed special libraries and records centres in both the private and public sphere. She is currently joint principal of Information Enterprises, a library and records management consultancy and employment agency in Perth, WA.

As one who has long promoted the need for records managers and records personnel to acquire professional training I am delighted to see the increasing establishment of courses and units of records management in tertiary institutions; and in our Association becoming more active in co-ordinating and facilitating developments in the education area.

RESTRUCTURING THE INFORMATION PROFESSIONS

It is generally acknowledged that records managers, librarians, archivists, data processing staff, etc are facing an unsure future and that a restructuring of these information related groups will take place in the near future. It was the tremendous growth in the quantity of records, publications and data in the past twenty-five years both for information and for purposes of accountability which brought about a similar growth in the diversification of information professionals.

During that time information handling technologies developed more or less independently of each other too. However the newer information technologies permit, or even require, integration. For the most part seekers of information place little importance on the original source, or format, of the information that they seek—as long as they receive it in a timely fashion and in a format that they can use. Current developments are therefore forcing information professionals closer together and into a symbiotic relationship. Consequently it seems impossible to consider records management education in isolation from that of the education of other information professionals.

It is therefore essential that the RMAA establish and maintain close dialogue with other information professional organisations to ensure that the education of

our future records managers is in concert with current information community developments. The concept of information resources management, as propounded by F. W. Horton in the late 1970s, is becoming a popular one and must be considered as a major factor within the education debate. Proponents of the concept seek to bring together, within an organisation, under one senior manager and one departmental function, the traditionally separate areas of telecommunications, text/data processing, paper records sections, information centres etc.

Marchand (1984) defines information resources management as:

'The management of the resources (e.g. data processing, text processing, communications, information centres, manual paper/records) of an organisation devoted to the handling or collection, storage, maintenance, transmission, or distribution of information.'

INTEGRATED COURSES AND SCHOOLS

In Australia we can already see courses in our tertiary institutions being established which take an integrated approach to the training of information professionals. Mary Sandow-Quirk of the Department of Library and Information Studies in the Queensland Institute of Technology conducted an informal survey in the mid 1980s to determine the demand within public and private organisations for information managers. She identified strong support within the public sector and a programme for an undergraduate degree in Information Management was subsequently accepted by the institute. Rogers (1988) refers to this course in her discussion paper on library education in Western Australia in which she argues for the establishment of a School of Information Resource Management within a Division which includes Business Management and Information Technology.

In the enthusiasm to address these new areas it must not be forgotten that as new schools and courses are developed the employment market must be continually monitored to ensure that there is an appropriate number and mix of graduates.

The use of the term 'management' in relation to

records has for too long covered activities and techniques associated with material handling. Little attention has been given to the real *management* issues, namely justification, goals, plans, budget, staff, monitoring etc. In some respects it is unfortunate that we graduate records 'managers' from our TAFE courses and not records 'technicians'. As we commence to develop and restructure records and information management courses across the entire tertiary education spectrum we need to establish the distinction between technician and management levels both in course content and in the names of courses.

COURSE LEVELS

It is my belief that that there is room for close integration, at TAFE level, between library and records courses. TAFE colleges should offer certificates in 'Information Resources Media' the holders of which would be equally at home working with published items or internal records (whether in paper or electronic format).

At college and university level, undergraduate four year courses in Applied Science (Information Resources) should be available. I envisage that for the first two years students would take a set of common units. Study of common units would ensure that students acquired an understanding of the value and use of information, all types of information, in society and organisations. Also they would have a common background and respect for each other when they came to work together, as they will have to, within their various careers. After the first two years students would specialise in the area of their interest e.g. programming, librarianship, systems analysis, records management, archives etc. Holders of such degrees should be able to rise to management status within their area of speciality, e.g. the special library.

Masters degrees in *Information Resources Management* should be offered. In these courses particular emphasis should be placed on the development of management skills, in addition to the honing of specific information management and information technology knowledge. Graduates from these courses could

become the organisational information resource manager, or even director.

Under the structure of courses proposed above library schools, *per se*, would, somewhat sadly, disappear from our tertiary institutions and would become part of Divisions of Management or Divisions of Information Studies.

CO-OPERATION

Until such time as professionals and academics have come to terms with the changes occurring within the information fields and the tertiary institutions have formally structured themselves to address the situation, close co-operation will be necessary between the current inhabitants of Marchand's 'islands of information management'. It is essential that the inhabitants of the records management island comprise part of the crew of the good ship 'IRM' as it embarks upon a challenging voyage which hopefully will end in a safe harbour for all.

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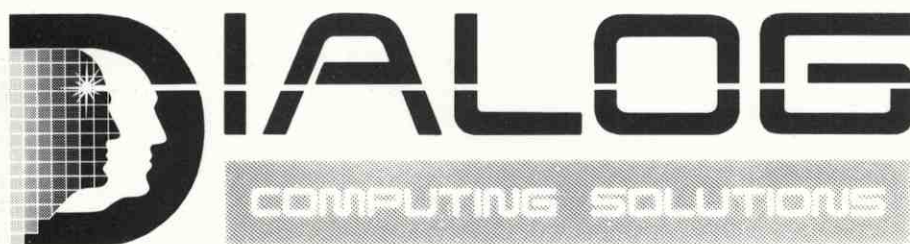
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RECORDS DISPOSAL—TOWARDS A NEW METHODOLOGY

Lindy Saul , BA(Hons), Dip.Archiv.Admin.

Lindy Saul is the Senior Records Management Development Officer at BHP Co. Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, we have heard a great deal about new technology: how it can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems we design and the productivity of those destined to operate these systems. Records Management, as a profession, has indeed been a beneficiary of the diverse range of information retrieval and office automation technology now available. A growing number of records managers are finding themselves in the information management arena as specialists with skills that complement mainstream computing disciplines.

My observation is that the willingness to become part of the technological revolution has worked very much in our favour. But I also notice that it has not caused us to question or examine many of the traditional ways we have of achieving our ends. The process of records disposal is a case in point.

Schellenberg's definition of disposal is as good as any I have come across:

'... all actions taken with respect to records that determines their ultimate fate. This fate may be transfer to a records centre for temporary storage or to an archival agency for permanent preservation, reduction in volume by micro-photographic means, or outright destruction.'

Where I would take issue with him, in 1987, is his statement that:

'The effectiveness of a records disposition programme should be judged **only** ... (my emphasis) ... according to the correctness of its determinations.'

From where I sit, in an organisation that takes the 'bottom line' approach, the correctness of disposal determinations is not the **only** measure of a disposal programme's effectiveness. I would find it difficult to argue that a disposal exercise was effective because the schedule was accurate, if other considerations were unacceptable costs and timing to complete the project. Today, and not just in private industry, the commodities of unlimited time and money have virtually disappeared.

It was this challenge—maintaining a quality product

within a reasonable cost and time-frame—that first set me seeking a more appropriate method of developing disposal schedules for client departments. Further, it was the reality of their budgetary constraints and my human resource limitations that led me to the conclusion that the comprehensive records survey technique was a luxury few could afford.

Before proceeding it is probably useful to explain how I view the disposal process. Disposition of records occurs for the following reasons:

- to remove inactive records from costly office accommodation;
- to facilitate retrieval of information from active filing systems;
- to ensure that records required for future use by the creating department are retained and accessible for the appropriate length of time;
- to guarantee compliance with State or Federal legislation affecting retention of records;
- to preserve permanently records required for evidentiary or historical reasons by the Company;
- to preserve permanently records that may be of future historical significance to the community.

These criteria, taken individually or collectively, indicate to me that records disposal is much more than a records management or archival responsibility. It is equally, if not more, the responsibility of management within the creating organisation and I believe we should be selling it to our organisations as a management tool.

What happens during the disposal process? Information is identified, examined, discarded or preserved according to the needs of the creating organisation. Which commodity is now acknowledged as vital for achieving a competitive edge? Information, made available to the right people, at the right time and at a reasonable cost. Records disposal is a tool that will enhance productivity and profitability. But organisations increasingly will reject programmes that absorb resources without quantifiable benefits. Our responsibility is to seek a cost-effective method of fulfilling the disposal requirements of our organisations, and promote the disposal function as a legitimate method of managing and controlling information.

In this article I would like to present two approaches we have developed at BHP for dealing with the disposal problem.

The first I will discuss, has been used with great

success on several occasions. It targets operational records created for use by specific groups within the Company and involves combining the preparation of disposal schedules with annual audits of operational filing systems. Surveying of systems is minimised and comprehensive disposal schedules can be prepared at greatly reduced cost and in a reasonable time-frame.

The second methodology is still under development but shows every sign of fulfilling its objectives. It is aimed at producing general disposal schedules and is closely tied to a concept known as 'information systems planning'. This methodology is normally used to develop strategic plans for the implementation of large, integrated computer-based information systems. However, it has proved possible to extrapolate this methodology and use it in the development of disposal schedules covering non-operational records created and used widely by BHP groups, for example, accounting/financial, personnel and administrative records. At this stage, it appears this approach may also have virtually eliminated the need for large scale records surveys.

Although we are now using a non-traditional methodology, we have not changed in any way the basic philosophy of disposal. We still seek to identify the structure of an organisational unit and reflect the functions and activities performed by, and the record types created by, that unit. Our criteria have been a reduction in time, labour and costs associated with the preparation of disposal schedules and in this I believe we have achieved a measure of success.

BACKGROUND

BHP is a large and diverse company comprising three main groups—Minerals/Utah, Steel and Petroleum. These groups operate as independent businesses directing their efforts towards acquiring, producing, marketing and selling their products competitively. A fourth 'division' is the Corporate Centre which represents the primary user base the Records Management group is required to service.

A centralised registry existed in Head Office until 1984, but was disbanded in this year because it was capturing less than 10% of correspondence generated by departments. Problems with the operation of the registry and the rapid rate of administrative change within the Company, led to the decision to completely decentralise record-keeping responsibilities back to departments.

The brief of the Records Management group was to develop a standard filing methodology suitable to the ever-changing BHP environment, and implement this throughout Head Office departments. Progress was

somewhat frustrated when our *modus operandi* changed and the Records Management group began charging for its services. We moved from being a free service available to interested departments, to a vendor of record-keeping systems. In a cost-conscious environment, with an emphasis on value for money, this had serious implications for our future success in achieving widespread implementations of filing systems and disposal programmes.

Automation of filing and retrieval systems, has gone a long way to addressing the problems in this area: departments pay for a 'package' that includes the software application and our assistance with implementation, training, documentation, etc. The solution to disposal scheduling became fairly obvious after several trial and error exercises in departments without upgraded, operational filing systems.

METHODOLOGY I— OPERATIONAL SCHEDULES

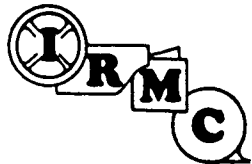
A lesson we learned the hard way, is that scheduling for disposal, records held in disorganised, unstructured filing systems is a wasteful and costly exercise. When we first began to look at upgrading filing systems, the imperative seemed to be ridding existing systems of the considerable non-current backlog that in some cases, had been accumulating for many years. To this end, we undertook to prepare several disposal schedules for departments prior to upgrading their filing systems. When completed, we found they had little long term value, did not reflect the way departments would ultimately organise their records and certainly did not contribute in the way we had hoped, to the development of a new filing system.

Our approach at this time was traditional: extensive records surveys and interviews with records creators we hoped would consolidate our research. Often, the painstaking survey work became like a jigsaw puzzle. The current administrators knew nothing of records created before their time and were uncertain of administrative history. The late 1970s and early 1980s were a time of dramatic organisational change for BHP. Regrettably these events were poorly documented, further complicating the search for some structure in the records. For the most part, departmental holdings defied attempts to identify or reconstruct records series and this led us into the trap of disposing on an item by item basis.

At this point we took stock of the situation. It had become part of our standard filing system methodology to perform audits on systems six to twelve months after implementation. This allowed us to review the control documents, ensuring they were still fulfilling the needs of a department, and rectify any problems or bad habits that had evolved in the use of the

(Continued on page 27)

2nd INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
International Records Management Council
in association with the
6th NATIONAL AUSTRALIAN CONVENTION
Records Management Association of Australia
Perth, September 25th-30th, 1989



Dear Colleague,

The combining of the 2nd International Congress and the 6th National Convention in Perth in September 1989 will give a unique opportunity for people involved in the business of records management and associated disciplines to get together for a programme that will provide the latest information available.

The meetings will be held at the Hyatt Regency Perth Hotel (formerly the Merlin), a magnificent new complex and part of a world chain of high class hotels that provide service at a price you can afford.

The RMAA has chosen PROMACO CONVENTIONS PTY LTD, a professional management group experienced in international conventions to organise the congress.

The theme "Excellence in Communication" has been chosen to reflect the interface of image management with other technologies and new attitudes in management concepts which will affect the whole industry. A broad programme to reflect those trends is being developed that will complement keynote speakers and the trade exhibition through the plenary sessions, workshops and special events.

The Congress will be supported by a comprehensive trade display that will feature exciting technology of the 21st century that will be a talking point during the whole programme. CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO BE THERE?

One of the most important aspects of any convention is for delegates to have time to talk and discuss what they know or want to know. Therefore the programme will include social functions that will allow visitors to enjoy the Western Australian way of life and do their talking in a relaxed atmosphere.

Accompanying persons are important people to us and a special programme will be prepared that will feature our well known hospitality at its best.

The next few pages have more detailed information to help you decide to be in Perth in September 1989.

WHERE ON EARTH BUT IN PERTH!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'G. Dudley', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Graham Dudley
Convention Convenor

"EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATION"
The Proper Approach to Information Technology

PROGRAMME

Time	SUNDAY 24th Sept '89	MONDAY 25th September '89	TUESDAY 26th September '89	WEDNESDAY 27th September '89	THURSDAY 28th Sept '89	FRIDAY 29th Sept '89	SATURDAY 30th Sept '89									
0830	UP	REGISTRATION														
0900			IRMC AGM	RMAA AGM	MEETING	MEETING	MEETING									
0930			Welcome & Opening	Plenary 2				Plenary 3 Speaker Peter Emmerson								
			Keynote Speaker Professor R. Sprague													
1030			M O R N I N G						T E A							
1100			Plenary 1	Session A	Session B	Session C	Session D	Session A	Session B	Session C	Visits	COUNCIL	COUNCIL	DIRECTORS		
1200			L U N C H						& B R E A K	O F						
1215			Session A	Session B	Session C	Session E	Session F	Session G	Session H	Session D	Session E	Session F	Workshop	FEDERAL	FEDERAL	BOARD
1400			A F T E R N O O N						T E A							
1515			Session D	Session E	Session F	Panel 2 RMAA & 2 IRMC	Plenary 4	RMAA	RMAA	IRMC						
1545					Next Conference Launch Closing Ceremony											
1700	EXHIBITION		Cocktail Party		Cocktail Party											
1730																
1800																
1930	Drinks			Convention Dinner												
2000																

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL Call for Papers

The International Records Management Council (IRMC) invites you to present a paper at its 2nd Congress. The Congress is co-hosted by the Records Management Association of Australia (RMAA), which will be holding its 6th Annual Convention at the same time. The only world-wide forum in records management, the Congress provides an excellent platform for the exchange of ideas and practices. Subjects of interest for this meeting cover all aspects of records management and related technologies.

For those interested in participating, either as a general session or special session speaker, it is requested that a two-hundred and fifty (250) word synopsis of your proposed paper be forwarded to the IRMC Headquarters, 22243 Miston Drive, Woodland Hills, California,

Speakers will be entitled to complimentary full registrations which include all sessions, exhibits and luncheons.

Your submission will be reviewed upon receipt and you will be contacted regarding further conference planning.

The Records Management Association of Australia (RMAA) invites you to present a paper at its 6th National Convention. The Convention is co-hosted by the International Records Management Council (IRMC) which will be holding its 2nd International Congress at the same time. The combined meetings provide an excellent platform for the exchange of ideas and practices.

Subjects of interest for these meetings cover all aspects of records management and related technologies.

For those interested in participating in the RMAA Convention, either as a general session or special session speaker, it is requested that a two hundred and fifty (250) word synopsis of your proposed paper be forwarded to the Convention Organisers Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd prior to March 1989.

Your submission will be reviewed upon receipt and you will be contacted regarding further convention planning.

Visual Aids

The use of visual aids to support papers is encouraged. However, to ensure a high standard, guidelines for preparation of slides have been included in the supplement.

CLOSING DATES

Abstracts 31st March, 1989

Final Paper 14th July, 1989

Records Management — Much More Than Mere Filing!

The modern office has changed dramatically since the introduction of computers in the 1960's.

Good management depends upon the accuracy and completeness of information. Organising this is the task of modern Records Management, which treats information as an essential resource.

Records Management, as a distinct office discipline, emerged during the last thirty years. Australia has played a significant part in its development as a profession. Records Management covers all aspects of records control, stored on any medium from paper, magnetic tape or disk, to microfilm and laser disc. It covers the creation, classification and indexing, retrieval, use, confidentiality and protection, transfer to dormancy and final disposition to an archives or to destruction.

Despite predictions that the computer would see the demise of paper records, the opposite has been the case. Most organisations are now realising that without professional assistance, they will gradually be swamped with paper. Paper records will be with us for the foreseeable future. The problems they cause will not be solved by the application of some 'band-aid' technology, but by highly trained professional Records Managers.

Records held in machine readable form are increasing in volume and variety. In many instances they will only ever be found in this format. The principles and practices developed over the years for the management of paper records are increasingly being applied to the management of machine readable records.

This Congress will afford participants the chance to increase their knowledge of an essential management discipline.

For the uninitiated, there will be introductory sessions; for the experts, the chance to update their knowledge. Workshops will enable participants to gain 'hands on' experience. An extensive display of the latest equipment and technologies will support the convention.

J. Eddis Linton

John Eddis Linton, B. Ec., FRMA, CRM, FAIM, FCES. John Eddis Linton is a Past President of the RMAA and one of only two Fellows, the Association's highest status. He has been granted Honorary Life Membership of the Association in recognition of his services. He has been a leader in the field of Records and Information Management in Australia for many years.

TRADE EXHIBITION

The Convention will be enhanced by a Trade Exhibition displaying the latest equipment and technological developments.

"Records Management covers all aspects of records control stored on any medium from paper, magnetic tape or disk, to microfilm and laser disc."

If you supply a product or service that is used in Records Management, you cannot afford to miss this opportunity to be involved in exhibiting at the concurrent 2nd International Congress and 6th National Australian Convention.

The exhibition areas will be adjacent to the Convention Hall (Grand Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Hotel) so that maximum exposure is possible.

To increase this opportunity to demonstrate products and services, morning and afternoon teas will be served nearby so that delegates and exhibitors can follow up leads in a convivial atmosphere.

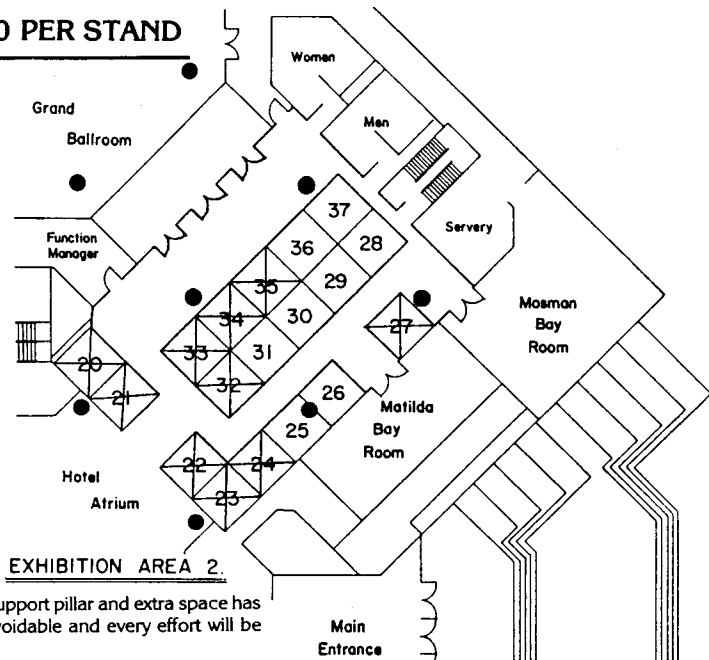
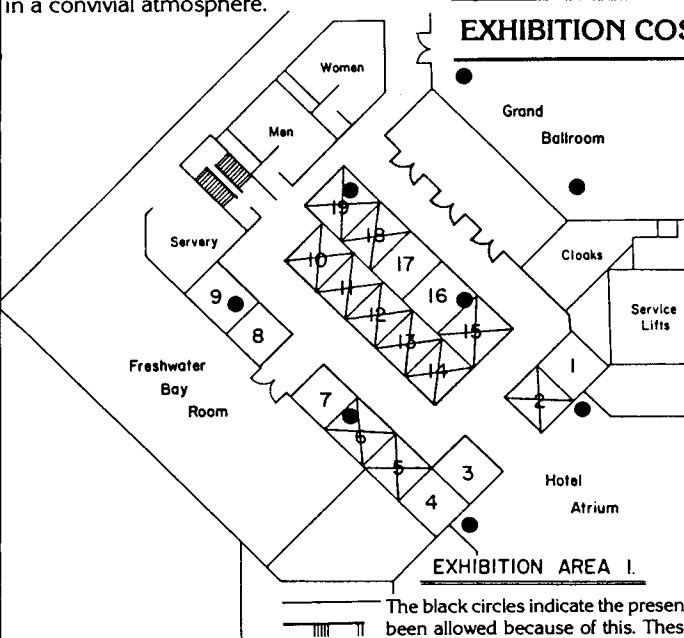
EXHIBITION STANDS

Stands will include:

- Fabric covered back and side walls
- Head board
- Name in foam cut out lettering
- 2 spot lights
- Power point
- Access to telephone service
- Tea and coffee facilities daily
- Each stand 3m x 2.4m approx

Contact the organisers for any additional requirements

EXHIBITION COSTS: \$ 1250 PER STAND



The black circles indicate the presence of a building support pillar and extra space has been allowed because of this. These pillars are unavoidable and every effort will be made to minimise their presence during set up.

It is suggested that exhibitors requiring 2 or more booths should consider using these combinations (5 & 6) (16 & 17) (24 & 25). Booths 4 (Area 1) and 23 (Area 2) can only be used where 2 or more booths are required.

PLEASE NOTE: Stands already taken

Accommodation

Accommodation will be reserved at the convention venue, The Hyatt Regency (formerly The Merlin) and also at a number of other hotels in the city.

All accommodation will be allocated in order of receipt of registration. Early registration will ensure allocation of a hotel in the category of your choice.

Listed below is a sample of room rates and facilities taken from 1988 figures to show you how your selection can be made.

As a general guide, 10% should be added to these rates to allow for 1989 figures.

Deposit for Accommodation

A deposit of one night's accommodation must be paid to confirm your reservations. This payment must be included with your registration fees.

Room Rates per Night, for Hotels

Hotel	Facilities	Single \$A	Double \$A	Twin \$A	Category
1. Hyatt Regency, Perth	A, B, C, D, E, F,	96	96	96	A
2. Hilton International	A, B, C, D, E, F,	97	97	97	A
3. Sheraton — Perth	A, B, C, D, E, F,	90	90	90	A
4. Airways House	A, B, E, F,	58	60	60	B
5. Mounts Bay Chateau	A, B, C, D, E, F, H,	49	49	49	C
6. Paradise Hill	A, B, C, D, E, F,	29.50	42	42	C
7. The New Westos	A, B, C, D, E, F, H,	49.50	49.50	49.50	C
8. Jewell House	B, E, H,	22	32	34	D

Code for Symbols

A. Air Conditioned	D. Bar	G. Breakfast Included
B. Telephone	E. Restaurant/Dining Room	H. Close to Breakfast Service
C. Swimming Pool	F. Colour T.V.	

Category

For the purpose of registration, the accommodation has been classified into 4 categories according to cost.

A	Hotels	1, 2, 3
B	Hotel	4
C	Hotels	5, 6, 7
D	Hotel	8

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The official domestic carrier, Australian Airlines, has special Convention packages available that make it very attractive to travel to Perth.

Based on 7 nights accommodation, these fares from all capital cities to Perth are substantially reduced.

As an example, the current economy return fare from Sydney is \$934. The special fare is \$700 taken with any of the accommodation rates shown and if paid for now will avoid any future fare increases. Hotel rates for 1989 have not yet been confirmed.

As a further help to prospective delegates Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd is prepared to accept payment for air-fare/hotel package in 4 equal instalments.

For further information contact Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd or return the preliminary registration form and indicate your requirements.

A forty page booklet is available with full details of the conventions. Please contact
Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd
Unit 9A Canning Bridge Commercial Centre
890-892 Canning Highway
Applecross 6153
Western Australia
Tel: (09) 364 8311. Fax: (09) 316 1453

* NOTE: These rates have been specially arranged for the Convention through Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd only. Therefore accommodation reservations should be made through Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd

PRELIMINARY REGISTRATION FORM
2nd International Congress (IRMC)
6th National Australian Convention (RMAA)
Perth September 25th - 30th, 1989

Early Bird
Before March 31st 1989
General
By June 30th 1989
Late
After June 30th 1989

PLEASE RETAIN PINK FORM FOR YOUR OWN RECORDS

FOR ALL DETAILS REFER TO FIRST CIRCULAR

DELEGATE

Title (Mr,Mrs,Miss,Ms)	Surname	Given Names	Sex
			M F
Place of Work / Organization		Position Held	
Postal Address			
	Country	Postal / Zip Code	Telephone Fax

ACCOMPANYING PERSONS

(1)	Title	Surname	Given Names
(2)			

CHILDREN / Age

Childminding Required

(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		Day	Evening
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REGISTRATION FEES

Paid Before
March 31st '89

Paid By June 30th '89

Paid After June 30th '89

Total

Delegate (MEMBER)	\$475	\$500	\$540	
Delegate (NON-MEMBER)	\$535	\$560	\$600	
Accompanying Person	Member \$165	Non-Member \$180		

All fees quoted are in Australian currency. Personal cheques can be accepted only if drawn on Australian bank accounts. Overseas registrants should forward a bank draft in Australian or U.S. dollars, payable on the Rural & Industries Bank. All cheques should be made payable to Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd.

TOTAL

ACCOMMODATION

Category <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See Second Circular	A	B	C	D	E	NO reservations will be required.I will make my own ACCOMMODATION arrangements.
No. of Rooms Single	No. of Rooms Double	No. of Rooms Twin	No. of Nights Single	No. of Nights Double	No. of Nights Twin	
Deposit - one night	NOTE: Category of accommodation indicated by delegates will be reserved. Payment for accommodation will be the RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH delegate on departure.					

TOURS

Please tick if this is the type of tour that would interest YOU!

Tour	City Sights	Cost \$15	Avon Valley Wildflower Tour	Cost \$40
	Wildflower Walking Tour	\$35	Ferry Boat 'n' Forest Train	\$50
	Fremantle Coach and Cruise	\$22	Visit to New Norcia	\$50
	Night Vineyard Cruise	\$35		

POST CONVENTION TOURS

Please tick if this is the type of tour that would interest YOU!

Tour 1	Cost \$148.50 (\$25.50 S.S.)
Tour 2	\$460.00
Tour 3	\$475.00 (\$109.00 S.S.)

Return to:

Promaco Conventions Pty Ltd
Unit 9A, Canning Bridge/Commercial Centre,
890-892 Canning Hwy, Applecross, 6153
Tel: (09) 364 5380 (09) 364 831 1
Fax: (09) 316 1453

NOTE: For any special requirements in regard to food,
disabilities or religion please advise organisers.

TOTAL PAYMENT ENCLOSED	
Registration Fees	
Deposit Accommodation	
TOTAL	
Delegate Signature	

REGISTRATION NO:

system. Several things emerged from these audits that we had not initially anticipated.

Firstly, in departments that had undertaken large conversion exercises at the time of filing system implementation, the system contained a representative selection of record types created and held by that department. Conversion was not always selective which meant that files going back many years (and which could have been regarded as non-current) were turning up in the upgraded filing system. While this was not necessarily the best thing for the new filing system, it meant that we had a broader perspective on record types that might commonly be created by that department.

Secondly, the way we were structuring new filing systems—on the basis of function and activities performed by a department—allowed us to develop disposal classes without resorting to surveying the records and preparing lengthy inventories. At most, we needed to conduct interviews with the records creators to ensure functions and activities were accurately recorded and clarify details of how long records should be kept.

Thirdly, during the audit process we identified all the files that had not had documents added to them for three years and were no longer referenced. We decided to establish a procedure for closing these files at the time of the audit. A 'Closed File' notice is stamped on the file cover and a sheet attached as the last document on the file indicating that the file has been closed and no further papers are to be added. The holder of the file is instructed to open a new file if the subject matter becomes current once again. These closed files are then actioned for disposal in the audit that takes place the following year, in accordance with the Disposal Schedule prepared as a result of this first audit.

The procedures we adopted to achieve our objectives are as follows: (See also **Figure 1**).

Step 1: in addition to preparing the normal audit documentation we also prepare a draft disposal schedule based on a department's file classifications and information provided by their registration process. Based on this information, we are able to define a disposal class of function, activity/task and record type.

Step 2: before commencing the audit, suggested retention times are given to each disposal class identified. This includes all research to ensure we have knowledge of special legislative requirements.

Step 3: as part of the audit process, interviews are conducted with key people in the department to

confirm the accuracy of disposal classes and receive administrative input on our suggested retention periods.

Step 4: the information acquired during these interviews is assimilated into the draft schedule and copies are distributed to department heads and the Corporate Archivist for final vetting and comment.

This may appear to be a fairly simple process but, in truth, there were many hiccups in its practical application. Our main problem was that the record types identified were not always sufficiently explicit for our requirements. This meant spending more time in interviews than either we, or the interviewee, would wish, and has led us, on occasions, to do some surveying. We learned that correct application of the filing system was a vital ingredient for developing disposal schedules in this way, and have taken steps to ensure that this will be the case in future.

Another, more important lesson was that regular disposal of records from departmental systems will only occur if the disposal schedule is closely tied to the current record-keeping system. Where we have developed schedules for non-current backlog, these have been used once (under the close supervision of Records Management) and may never be referred to again. Unless the disposal process is seen as a continuum of filing systems maintenance, short memories, staff turnover and different priorities doom them to extinction.

To us, the message was clear: if faced with a situation where organised disposal has not occurred for many years, where the organisation is a collection of diverse and autonomous groups, and where records management resources are limited and/or costly, exercise caution in the use of records surveys or inventories. A records manager wishing to build a reputation for timely and efficient service, may well be courting disaster by taking this approach. An archivist, however, may have responsibilities and cost/time constraints that are differently defined, and wish to be meticulous in the location and identification of potential archival material. In this case large scale inventories may be applicable. This decision will be based on job responsibilities and the needs of the administration.

Where an organisation has addressed both functions, the archivist and records manager should work together, balancing resources to gain control of records at the various stages of their 'life-cycle'. Commonly, the archivist will have responsibility for records no longer required for regular use by creators and administrators, while the records manager will concentrate efforts in the present.

METHODOLOGY II— GENERAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULES

The methodology we are experimenting with for general disposal scheduling is still under development and progress towards perfecting it is very much a question of juggling work priorities and commitments. However, the work we have done so far suggests it will be a great success. Ultimately, when we have perfected it for general disposal schedules, I believe it could apply just as well to the development of any disposal schedule and may even allow the development of departmental filing systems and disposal schedules simultaneously and without recourse to intensive survey work.

To provide some background, I will outline the situation at BHP and the thought processes that led me to look closely at the 'Information Systems Planning' methodology as a solution to our problems.

I have already mentioned the diversity and autonomy of our large divisions. This factor means that every division has its own administrative, accounting, purchasing and personnel functions and these are spread over Head Office, seven branch offices, three large steelworks and countless mine sites, not to mention subsidiary and otherwise affiliated companies. The prospect of ensuring that these records are disposed of correctly by these many different centres is frankly mind boggling!

It became clear that with a small professional staff we would not be able to visit and survey even a reasonable selection of centres unless their management was prepared to shoulder a very hefty bill for our services—a conservative estimate would be around \$35,000 for the smallest branch office, and over \$250,000 for a major steelworks. Add to this air fares and accommodation, clerical overheads for document preparation, time of local staff to assist with the project and the cost becomes awesome.

As the Records Management group is administratively placed in the Melbourne computing department, it has been relatively easy to acquire a knowledge of the scientific approach to systems development used by our computer analysts and in-house consultants. I come regularly into contact with systems planners and developers who follow well established methodologies to achieve their objectives. As a group, we have specified the development of computerised record-keeping systems and functionally I am responsible for a text retrieval software product used to develop shared information databases. Streamlining work practices is very much an issue in a department of information technologists.

I first came across the 'information systems planning' methodology in 1984 under its less obvious name,

'strategic data/systems planning'. The objective of information systems planning is to support the true business needs of an organisation and is used as a vehicle for translating business strategy into information systems strategy. While these may not be the primary objectives of records disposal, effective disposal practices nevertheless perform an important role in managing the records and information generated and collected by an organisation according to its business needs. This methodology can be equally used for determining what records are created and used, why they are created, who creates and uses them, and how long they are required for use.

The methodology is a three stage process designed to increase the strategic responsiveness of a user group and improve forward planning of information systems development. The first stage produces a matrix which shows likely information systems with the **processes** they cover and the **data** they need. The second stage refines the data groups and breaks the processes down into manageable projects. The result is the information systems architecture which best meets the business needs of the user group. The third stage produces a plan for the implementation of this architecture, starting from the current state of implemented information systems. (See **Figure 2**)

Looking at the description of 'information systems planning' above, it is a simple matter to replace the word '**processes**' with 'functions and activities' and the word '**data**' with 'information' or 'record type'. It was the method of collecting information that first interested me. The fact that matrices could be produced that would relate entities, (whether 'processes' and 'data', or 'functions', 'activities' and 'records'), seemed to me a worthwhile tool. I began to consider using this methodology to produce disposal schedules by following its established techniques. (See **Figure 3**)

The main development tools are interviews and the matrices—both well within the expertise of the Records Management group. These techniques allow us to identify: functions and activities of records creators; the record types they create and hold; and which records each position creates, references updates and destroys. Once we have gathered and collated this information, the process of determining retention periods is a matter of asking the right questions and undertaking the usual research on statutory requirements.

This technique means we gain the administrative perspective on record retention requirements without physically delving into files that may not have been brought into the standard BHP filing system and are unhelpful in yielding the necessary information to develop disposal standards.

ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY

Information Systems Planning, or Information Engineering as it is also known, evolved, not from the computing industry, but from the area well known to many records managers—organisation and methods. Its basic raw material is 'information'. The fact that these studies usually lead to implementation of computer systems is more a function of the tools available to control information, rather than a function of the methodology. It might as easily be applied to manual systems—or, as I am suggesting, disposal scheduling. This flexibility derives from the methodology's intent, that is, to identify elements within a system, analyse how the information flows between these elements and improve the quality and/or quantity of these information flows. This is a fairly simplistic explanation, but I believe an accurate one nevertheless.

An important feature of using this methodology is its disregard for the type of media on which the records are stored. Records are identified for their informational content and may be stored in paper format, microfilm or fiche, or computer media such as diskette or magnetic tape or disc. My experience of records surveys is that non-paper records tend to be overlooked or put in the 'too hard basket' and consequently ignored for disposal scheduling purposes. Using information systems planning techniques, a record is a record regardless of format.

HOW TO USE IT

Stage 1

The first requirement is to define the scope of the project. It may be a whole organisation, a division or department of an organisation, or a set of functions that cut across an organisation. Once the scope is established and realisable—don't change without prior agreement and commitment of the client.

The second and the most difficult step, is to gain the commitment of senior management for the project. This may not be such a problem where only one business unit is involved, but where several are involved a good sales technique is certainly an advantage. In a situation where the service is being charged, quantification of the benefits and a discussion of the techniques to be used are mandatory. It is important during these preliminary meetings to relate the disposal process to things that are important to senior management, namely, strategies, planning, effective operations and of course, cost.

Stage 2

To obtain information about the functions and activities performed by the client group, interviews or

preferably group meetings are conducted. These should be attended by senior people (the same people at designated meetings) who have a sound knowledge of the organisation.

Group meetings need to be carefully controlled. A situation where senior executives are being asked to agree on what they do is potentially explosive. It pays to be an effective mediator in moments of potential conflict—and of course, as chairperson, some hostility should be anticipated. There is always someone there under duress who cannot see the point of the exercise.

Stage 2 Matrix (Figure 4)

The first system matrix, known as the function/organisation matrix is usually produced at the end of the first round of group meetings and provides the information required to determine who should be interviewed and in what order. It will also indicate the areas that require detailed attention, that is, the areas likely to be the heavy creators and users of records.

Stage 3

Personal interviews are an effective way of obtaining information about record types once functions and activities have been established. There is no point in looking for record types before these criteria are fixed because without them the records have no context. A set of standard interview questions is crucial, and it is useful to have an official note taker along rather than try to rely on memory. The basic questions asked should confirm the functions and activities performed by the interviewee, determine the record types created, used or referenced, identify current disposal practices and establish retention times for the record types.

If new or different functions and activities start emerging during this stage in the information gathering process, it may be assumed that something has gone awry during the group meetings (Stage 2). Alternatively, and I speak from experience, the client group have organisational problems that should be referred to an experienced organisational planner.

People who work in an area are also often *au fait* with legislative requirements if they are of a specialist nature. For example, you would expect an Occupational Health and Safety department to be familiar with relevant legislation, but perhaps know little about Companies and Taxation legislation. If the right questions are asked research can often be minimised.

Stage 3 Matrix (Figure 5)

Once the information is gathered, the second system

matrix can be produced. This maps the activities for each function identified, against the record types those activities generate. This task cannot be done manually. Use of a PC spreadsheet package is essential. This was another case of learning the hard way.

The activity/record type matrices carry all the information required to produce a disposal schedule: the function, activity and record type equal a disposal class; and information about who creates (C), references (R), updates (U), and disposes (D) of the record is also mapped on the matrix, together with the nominated retention periods. Where two or more activities reference or use the same record type but have given different retention times, common sense dictates selecting the longest time for inclusion in the disposal schedule.

Stage 4

The remainder of the project is the familiar part: ordering the disposal schedule by disposal class and allocating administrative or statutory retention periods to each class or sub-class of records. All disposal schedules produced by the Records Management Group are authorised by the head of the client group, or heads of groups if multiple. The Corporate Archivist also sees the schedules and has the right to change temporary designations to permanent if the records are required in the Company's archival collection.

CONCLUSION

There are a few final comments I would make about this methodology.

Firstly, it promotes continual interaction with the client group. It seems to me that traditional survey techniques concentrate on getting in there, burrow-

ing away in the records, producing mountains of survey forms and getting out again as quickly as possible. Some time later, usually months, the client receives a disposal schedule that has long been forgotten.

From the surveyor's point of view, surveying can be a thankless and often purposeless task. Many a time after days of intensive survey work I have returned to my office creaking under the weight of survey forms and seriously wondered what I was going to do with all the information. In the final analysis, much of it would be useless and not at all pertinent to the functions and activities presently being performed by the client group.

The methodology described in this article eliminates both these problems: firstly, the project team has continual contact with the client department except for a few weeks when the schedule is actually being assembled; secondly, the information can be entered onto a spreadsheet as it is gathered, so that collation of results becomes an easily achievable, on-going process.

The second comment I feel obliged to make is about record series. I have talked about disposal practices for quite some time without describing how series are identified. The simple answer is, using this methodology the burden of identifying and describing records series is removed. A series of records is the end result of defining the disposal class of function, activity and record type or types.

Finally I will say that this methodology does cut corners. But as a more streamlined, cost effective approach to disposal scheduling, we are finding it to be of great benefit for an organisation whose priorities clearly do not lie in the records area.

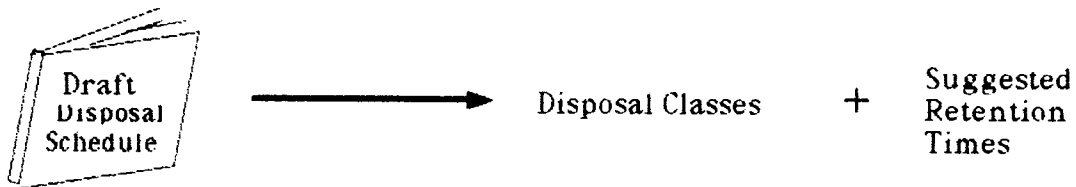
Figure 1

OPERATIONAL DISPOSAL SCHEDULE

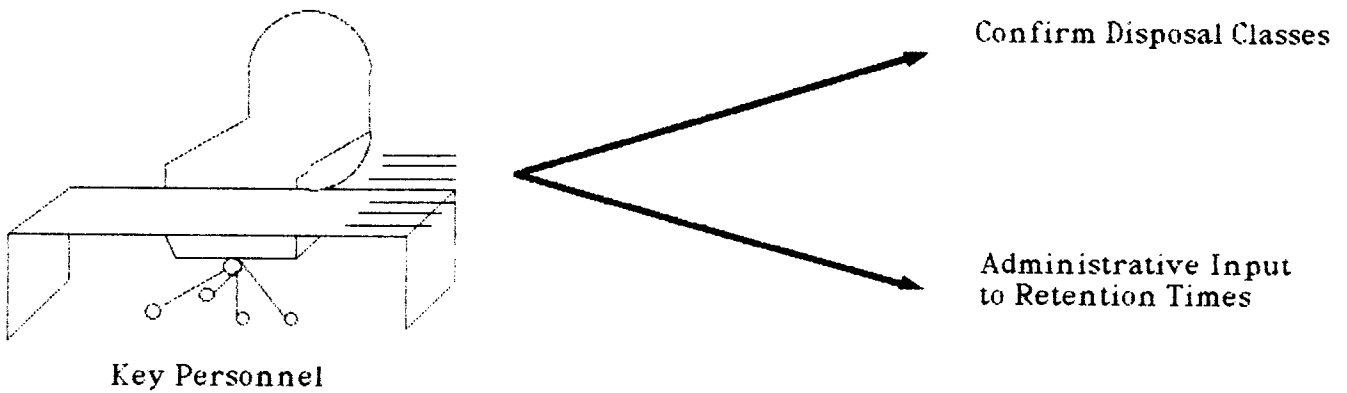
STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4

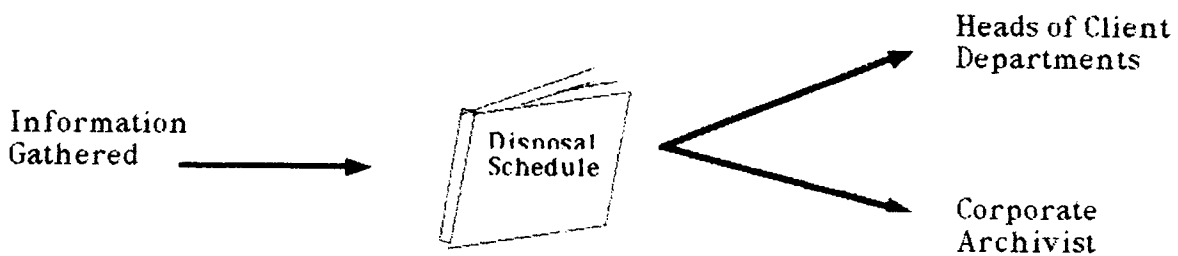
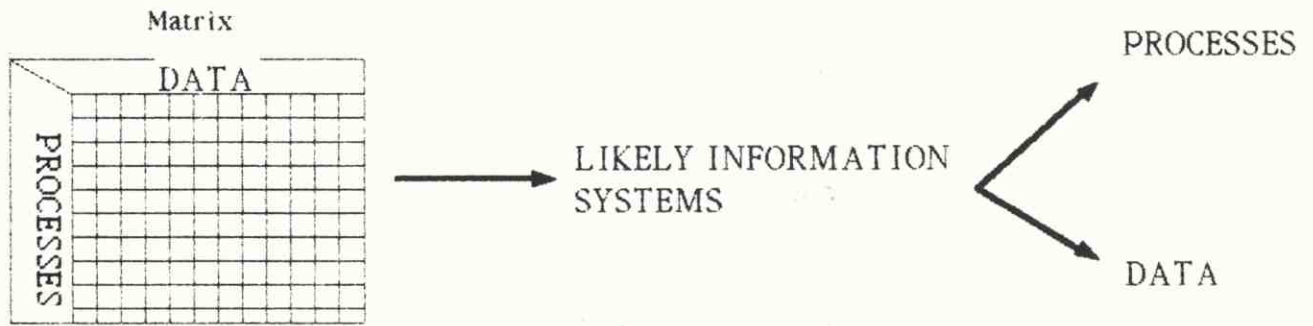


Figure 2

INFORMATION SYSTEMS PLANNING

STAGE 1



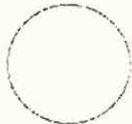
STAGE 2

Processes

Data Groups

Projects

Planning



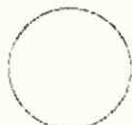
Business Plan

5 Year Plan



Business Analysis

Budgeting



Capital Budget

Operating Budget



Financial Analysis

Stock Control



Stock Inventory

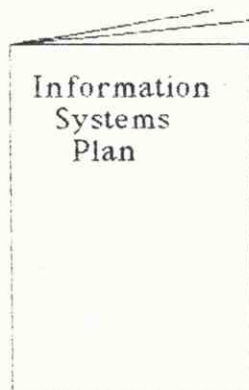
Requisition



Accounting/ Payroll

Stock Control

STAGE 3

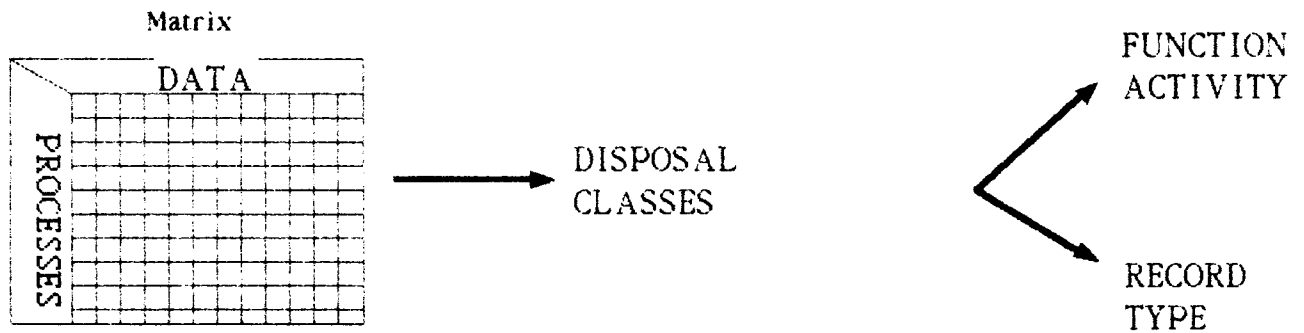


Information Systems Plan

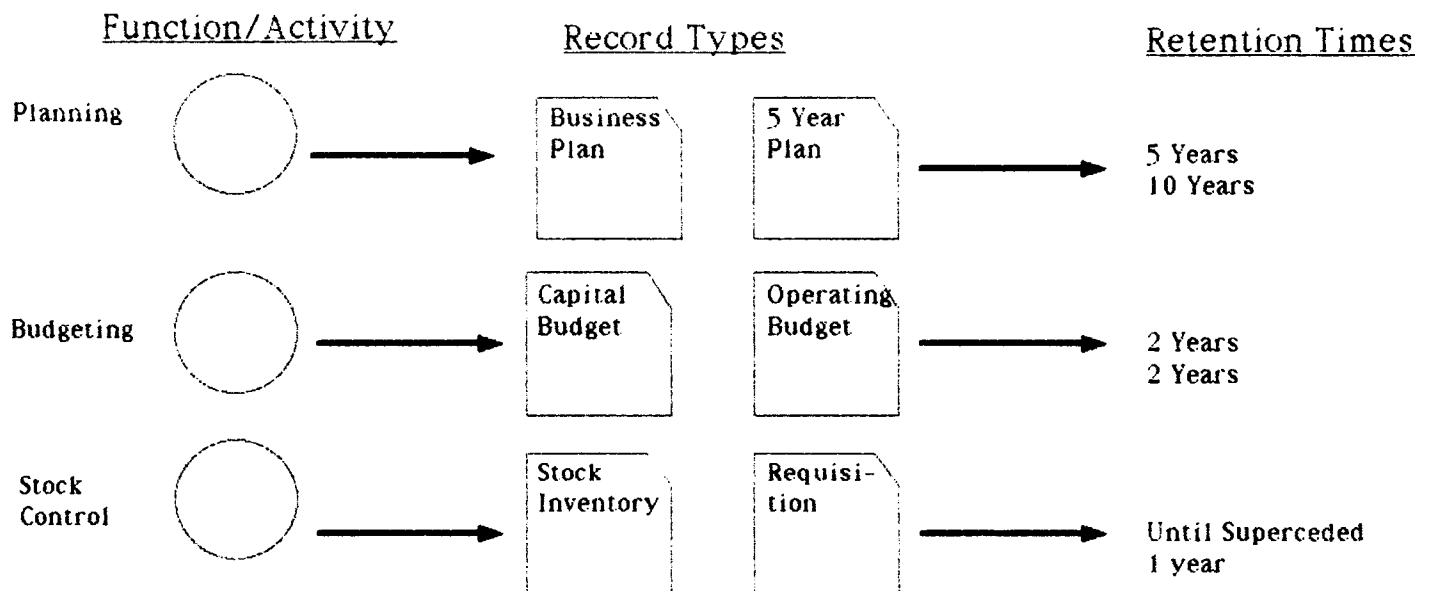
Figure 3

DISPOSAL SCHEDULE DEVELOPMENT

STAGE 1



STAGE 2



STAGE 3

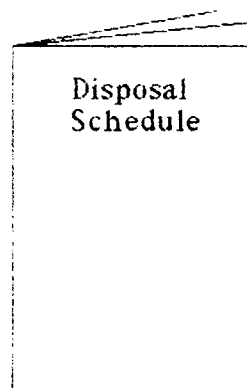


Figure 4

FUNCTION/ ACTIVITY		Marketing		Sales Operations			Engineering			Production			Materials Management			Facilities Management			Admini- stration			Finance			Human Resources		Management								
ORGANIZATION		Planning	Research	Forecasting	Territory Management	Selling	Administration	Order Servicing	Design and Development	Product Specification Maintenance	Information Control	Scheduling	Capacity Planning	Material Requirements	Operations	Purchasing	Receiving	Inventory Control	Shipping	Workflow Layout	Maintenance	Equipment Performance	General Accounting	Cost Planning	Budget Accounting	Financial Planning	Capital Acquisition	Funds Management	Personnel Planning	Recruiting/Development	Compensation	Business Planning	Organization Analysis	Review and Control	Risk Management
President		●	●																				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Vice President of Finance																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Controller																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Personnel Director																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Vice President of Sales		●	●			●	●	●															●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Order Control Manager																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Electronic Sales Manager																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Electrical Sales Manager																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Vice President of Engineering																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Vice President of Production																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Plant Operations Director																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Production Planning Director																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Facilities Manager																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Materials Control Manager																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Purchasing Manager																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Division Lawyer																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Planning Director																							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		Major responsibility and decision maker		Major involvement in the process		Some involvement in the process																													

Major responsibility and decision maker

Major involvement in the process

Some involvement in the process

Figure 5

PRICES AND PAYMENTS	Record Type	ACTIVITY	Register of Credit/Debit Notes	Day to Day Arrangements	Policy and Procedures	Rebate Claims	Rate Correspondence	Register of Terms	Tender Working Papers	Tender Agreements	Price Lists
Pricing					R-0					R-0	C-3
Tenders			R-0		R-0				C-1	C-1	R-0
Export Terms of Payment			R-0		R-0			R-6		R-3	R-6
Exchange Rate Recording							C-3				
Export Rebates					R-0	C-3		R-7		R-7	R-6
Export Incentive Schemes				C-2	R-0					R-3	
Credit/Debit			C-7		R-7		R-0	R-7		R-7	R-7

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A RECORD

by Graham Dudley

Graham Dudley is the Manager of WA Information Management Technology and is currently the Federal President of the RMAA and State President of the WA Branch Council.

By walking through any office and observing carefully, the person will quickly observe the great number and variety of records being used and stored. The cycle describing the route of the record from its creation until its disposal is the main focus of this paper.

The product of the office is information, and the medium for transmitting this information is the office record. Regardless of the level of the office worker—from office boy to secretary to department head to the board of management—much of the working time of office personnel is occupied with office records.

Most business information is stored on one of four major types of medium: paper, microform, magnetic media, and videodiscs. A brief description of the life cycle is to regulate within carefully defined boundaries the various phases of the record keeping cycle so that the job of using information to manage is made easier and enables the decision makers to predict with reasonable assurance how the work in the organisation can be carried out.

Paper, the oldest of the four media, is used in every type of information storage system found in today's offices. Because the output from one process is frequently the input of another, some of the paper documents are created at the conclusion of another information processing cycle. Nevertheless, this step marks the creation of the paper document. Frequently, paper documents are duplicated for distribution to other people both inside and outside the organisation.

Obviously, then, the first line of attack in the battle against unrestricted production of records is at the very beginning, the so called creation stage itself.

The life cycle of microforms is much more complicated than the life cycle of paper. Microforms are created in basically two ways—source document microfilming and computer output microfilming (COM). Source document microforms are in reality tiny pictures of actual paper documents, whereas COM is direct output from a computer.

Magnetic media exists most commonly in tape and disc form. The magnet record is created in many ways, utilising input from voice dictation, from data

entered into a computer through keyboards, punch cards and optical character recognition (OCR) reading of paper documents and from new magnet records created by processing other magnetic files.

As with microfilm, electronic records must be read with a special viewing device. The use of videodiscs as a storage medium is in its infancy, and most videodisc applications are confined to the entertainment market. However, videodisc holds great potential as an information-recording medium for business and government use. Because information on a videodisc is in digital form, transmission of information on this medium will be accomplished in the same manner as is digitised data on a magnetic medium.

Although the four information storage media differ in many ways, they have at least one thing in common—they need to be stored and controlled. But even more important, they must be stored in a way that facilitates retrieval. Hence, the focus in storage is not on the filing but on the finding. If records are stored so they give the records user whatever information they want whenever they want it, the major goal of records management has been accomplished. Along with their concern for rapid retrieval, office managers must focus attention on security and cost containment.

Basically, a records survey is made at the start of the program in order to determine the location, the volume, the frequency of use and the type of records that presently exist. Any thorough records survey should include every possible type of record within the office. Frequently, however, only the active file cabinets and storage areas are initially surveyed with the result that shelves, working files, desk drawers as well as bookcases are overlooked.

It seems to be human nature for many office workers to keep almost every piece of paper with which they deal!

So the problem of deciding what records to retain must be approached with certain caution for it involves certain basic aspects of job psychology. In such a setting, system breakdowns occur, records are difficult to retrieve or locate when needed, and the overall work efficiency of the personnel is reduced.

Filing and retrieval difficulties arise, decision making is delayed, space becomes limited, and fire hazards multiply. Some executives form the habit of discard-

ing everything not of current value. Should companies be sued and be unable to produce a certain document as evidence, legal problems might ensue.

To classify records as to their value, as well as to control the time period during which the records are maintained in storage, requires the combined effort of all record users, and will result in a records retention schedule being produced. By using the approved records retention schedule, records managers can evaluate each record in terms of its status; to be retained (and if so for how long) or to be destroyed. A logical follow through, therefore, on the retention

schedule is a plan for transfer control (inactive storage). When records are transferred to the inactive storage area, the disposal date for the records within the storage carton is clearly printed on the box. In such cases, records have been segregated so that those for temporary storage will not be stored with those requiring permanent retention. However, for purposes of orderly destruction and to provide a record of all those destroyed, modern records managers tend to prefer the use of authorisation forms. This form serves as evidence that management has released certain identified obsolete records for destruction.



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MECHANICAL AND COMPUTER CONTROL SYSTEMS

Ian Dockeary

Ian Dockeary has been employed in records management for five years and is currently employed by Community Services, Victoria. He holds a Certificate of Records Management from Prahran TAFE.

'It is no secret that advanced computer technologies often fail to achieve the dreams and visions of their designers and backers. Even though information technology is cutting costs and boosting productivity, many top executives fret that it isn't doing anything more, that it isn't leading to long-term competitive advantages and improved products and services. Why have things turned out like this?'

This is a statement that all senior managers, information technology managers and records managers should consider before embarking on the development of a computerised records management system or when evaluating an existing computerised system.

The marriage of information technology and records management is relatively new when discussing records systems. Many errors have been made and there is still a great deal to be learnt and achieved by both parties.

Up until recent times, the information technology people have been running the show when it comes to computerised records systems. This was most likely because senior management has considered information technology people as trained professionals, experts in their chosen field and records managers have been considered glorified filing clerks, managers of a system that causes nothing but headaches for management and other employees of the organisation.

The records managers have spent much of their time behind the information technology eight ball. They have found it difficult to work with technical people due to their fears and or lack of knowledge of modern technology. They must learn new skills if they wish to achieve their dreams of a modern records management system. They must gain a knowledge of computer applications to records management and develop communication and negotiation skills to allow them to deal effectively with senior management and information technology people.

The large number of new and further developed records management packages becoming available has now shown that records managers are achieving a greater input into systems and are developing a vision for the future of records management.

In the past there was a serious problem between the working relationship of technical and non-technical people. Records managers have been dictated to by times arrogant information technology people regarding the computerisation of records management systems and to a further extent senior management have been dictated to regarding not only records management systems but other systems undergoing computerisation. It has been a case of, 'we know what's needed, leave it to us and our computers and your problems will be solved'. Unfortunately the information technology people are not questioned because no-one really knows what they are doing.

All too often this results in the purchase of a system on the recommendation of the information technology experts because the system is technically more superior or the software may be written in a language that the programmers are familiar with. The package most likely will not be compatible with the system that the records manager has designed or the existing system that's to be upgraded. The information technology people must be aware that the purchase of a system that is not compatible to the designed or desired records system is just as disastrous as the records manager purchasing a software package that is not compatible to the organisation's hardware. Neither will be successful.

If the records managers are to achieve their dreams and visions they must take control of the project of modernising their records system, and of course they must take full responsibility for the success or failure of the project.

To achieve this control the records manager must convince senior management that records management is a professional administrative field and records managers are the experts in this field. They must convince management that if a modern records management system is to be developed, implemented and maintained successfully the records manager must be the person who has the greatest input into the decision making process of the project and records management issues in general. Senior management must also realise that information technology people are computer experts; they specialise in programming and operating computers. If they are required to develop a computerised records system they must write the software to suit the specifications designed by the records management expert.

When the relationship between the information tech-

nology and records management fields is settled and senior management is aware of the roles being played the project can begin with a chance of success. If the roles are not settled in these early days, the project will continue to proceed but it will not result with a system that will meet the dreams and visions of the designers and backers.

The development of the records system also should have the involvement of users of the proposed records system. The records manager should never lose sight of the fact that a major function of a records system is to assist staff of the organisation (the users) in their daily activities. With representatives of the users, technical staff and records management area it is most important that the input is managed. The ideal way of managing the input is to form a project team. The records manager would assume the role of project leader, technical staff would assume the role of technical advisors and representatives of the users will ensure that the new system will suit the needs of the users.

As well as the project team it is also important to identify a champion. The champion is ideally a senior manager who is totally committed to the success of the project. The role of the champion is to convince other senior managers of the importance of the project, obtain the necessary support required by the project team from senior management and the organisation in general and generally promote the project throughout the organisation. Due to the traditional poor image of records management systems it is most important that a champion is identified to convince senior management and the organisation in general of the benefits of a modern records management system. Otherwise the project team will struggle to obtain the necessary financial and managerial support.

The champion must be completely aware of the benefits of a modern records management system and if not should be thoroughly briefed by the records manager. When discussing the benefits, firstly the records manager and the project team must decide upon what benefits to the organisation they wish the system to achieve. The records manager must ask the project team questions such as, do they wish to improve the existing records system using modern technology, design a new system possibly more suited to modern technology but not designed to do any more than existing traditional systems, or develop a new system that will not only improve the records management functions, but will have new features that will benefit the organisation and allow records management to play a new higher profile role in the organisation.

This is when the original statement should once again

be given careful consideration. If the project team chooses to either improve the existing system using information technology or design a new system using traditional records management principles assisted by information technology the system will be far more functional but won't do anything more than previous systems.

If senior management of the organisation are concerned that the injection of funds into the records management area is only going to remedy the pitfalls of the existing manual system they will be reluctant to support the project. When considering senior management's point of view, they will obviously be concerned that records managers couldn't manage a manual system so why should they be capable of managing a computerised system. The senior managers will most likely support the views of the information technology staff considering information technology is bailing out the records system. Senior management will be far more excited about the prospects of a computerised system if it is going to do more than the existing system and in particular if there is something in the system that is going to assist them as managers.

If the records manager has the support of the project team, the information technology of the organisation is suitable and most important if the records manager has a vision of this future, the records manager should proceed to sell a fully developed records management system to the organisation.

The selling point to senior management should concentrate on the additional benefits of the system. The existing system would most likely consist of a manual card index, some sort of classification system, manual records of file locations, a bring-up system and possibly a manual register of incoming correspondence. Senior management in general are not concerned how the records are retrieved as long as they receive accurate, complete records in a workable form when required. This can easily be improved even with a poorly implemented computer system. If a functional classification system is developed and used with text retrieval records staff shouldn't have any problems identifying files; if barcoding is used for file movements the records officers have a greater chance of tracking files throughout the organisation, incoming correspondence can be registered, precised and linked to files and the bring-up system can be much more easily managed.

With a computerised system the records system can perform many additional functions. An elaborate reporting system can be designed. The records system can be decentralised yet records can still be searched and indexed centrally and the system can be interfaced with other systems within the organisa-

tion. A reporting system can be used as an effective management tool. Senior management will have access to information such as what staff are dealing with what matters and how long they are taking; management will receive reports on overdue correspondence and management can order reports on specific issues, such as number of complaints received on certain products.

Records indexes and file locations can be decentralised to relevant work locations. Officers needing access to the system can easily undertake their own searches. This practice will move information closer to the people who need it but more importantly the officers wishing to access information can access information relating to their own area as well as relevant information from other areas. This means the organisation will work as one rather than a group of individuals. The interfacing of the record system with other systems such as personnel systems, library and word processing systems etc will allow staff to access relevant information from other information systems when accessing the records system. It should also be pointed out that such a system would have built in security measures to ensure that confidential information remains confidential.

By offering the organisation these and possibly many other additional features in a record system it will move past just productivity and cutting costs towards assisting the organisation with competitive advantages, improved products and service. The records manager will be seen as more than a mere filing clerk which will in turn increase the chances of obtaining the vital management support.

Once the records manager has the new system up and running, there is an area that hasn't yet been addressed. That area covers quality information and effective use of information.

Records manager should ensure that the information managed is quality information. The records manager can manage a very efficient records system but if the quality of information is not up to standard it will not be an effective system. In the past users of the records management system could conveniently lose poorly produced reports, reviews and other documentation or blame the non-existence of documentation on the record system. Staff of the organisation will now be far more accountable for their actions. If the quality of information is not up to standard, senior management will need to support human resource development programs relating to report writing, plain english or other courses that will assist staff with the production of quality information and clear and accurate records of their actions.

Organisations must also be made aware of the value of effective use of information. In organisations with poor records management systems, many officers would have become accustomed to working without information. They would have spent years of attempting to retrieve information with no satisfaction, so they give up and begin to work without information. Once again extensive training must be provided to educate staff to the value of taking advantage of the records system, not only from the individual's point of view but also from the corporate point of view.

In summary, if the development and implementation of the system is approached correctly and in full consultation with senior management, users and operators of the system and with quality advice from technical staff, the system will have a good chance of satisfying the dreams and visions of the designers and backers. The designers should be pressured by senior management or the designers should convince senior management that with the use of technology the records system should do more and by doing more it can lead the organisation to competitive advantages and improved products and service.

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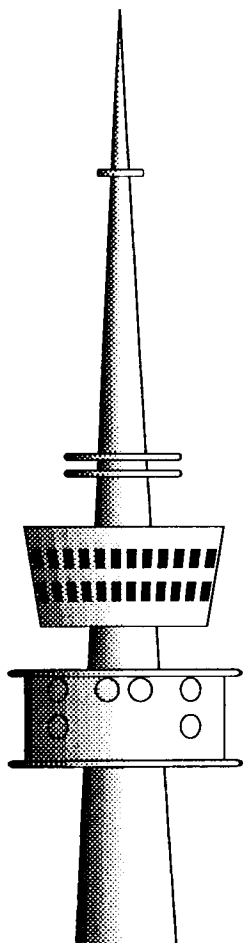
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INFORMATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE—AN EMERGING FIELD OF STUDY

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The search for conceptually unambiguous and universally acceptable definitions of 'information' and 'information science' have been something akin to the search for a philosopher's stone. And, it must be acknowledged that the results of the search are not a great deal more satisfactory either.

The problem of defining information and information science arises to a large extent from the potentially all-embracing scope of information science and the variety of the paradigms within which the study of information and information-related phenomena occur. A major text by economist Fritz Machlup (Machlup and Mansfield, 1983) documented the new academic disciplines which have evolved over four decades to study information problems and what he called the 'cultural diversity' in studies of information.

While the Machlup work is directed towards clarification of the field of study as a whole some writers (e.g. Shera and Cleveland, 1977) believe strongly that the search for a universally acceptable definition is time-wasting and that it is more fruitful to proceed with the business at hand, and wait for a definition to emerge, as knowledge about the phenomena under study amasses. Others (e.g. Buckland, 1983) see the lack of definitions as little handicap, in any event, and point to the lack of precise definitions of concepts such as 'life', 'energy', the study of which appears little hampered by the lack of clear definition. While these views have considerable attraction, adopting them does not resolve the practical difficulties encountered in course design in a school such as the Kuring-gai School of Library and Information Studies when a statement of the parameters of the study on which much of the course and the work of graduates is to be based, is required. Course design requires also a basis on which educators in other fields can derive an understanding of the phenomena under consideration within the course.

This brief review records and evaluates definitions of 'information' as it is understood by staff of the School of Library and Information Studies, and as embodied in all courses operated by the School. The review therefore is selective. (Citations to a number of more extensive review articles are available from the School on request).

INFORMATION

Some philosophers say we can be certain of nothing except our own experience, but the commonsense view is that we receive stimuli and messages from outside our bodies upon which we base decisions in the course of our daily lives. In common language this is referred to as 'information'. Also in colloquial language the term knowledge is used synonymously on occasion and even this may be attributed to a lack of precision in the English language (McGarry, 1981). The School of Library and Information Studies considers that there is a difference between knowledge and information, as do writers and researchers in the area, but it is outside the scope of this review to deal with that difference.

As indicated above, 'information' as a concept has been found useful in many areas of study. Scholars from areas such as cognitive science, informatics, artificial intelligence linguistics, information theory, general systems theory find the concept of 'information' helpful. Some examples of usages in a number of fields follows.

The field of biology supplies a variety of interpretations of the term. The term occurs in the study of genetics and the biochemical mechanisms of the cell which transmits messages or information. In neurobiology, signals passing along neural pathways are described as 'information'.

For the psychologist, information can refer to the stimuli which impinge on the individual from the environment and which are processed, stored and often acted upon. The term is also used to describe a resource used in problem-solving, with some psychologists characterising 'information' as the process which occurs in the brain when a problem and data useful for its solution are brought together. A further use of the term 'information' occurs in the context of cognitive structure and cognitive maps.

The concept of a cognitive map is based on the assumption that each person builds up a private view of the world as a result of the stimuli received from an early age. These stimuli come continually from, for example, the social, physical and religious environment and mean that the map is constantly being modified as a result of information being received. The informational content of this map may be described as 'private knowledge', and it is unique to the individual as long as it remains private and uncommunicated.

The approach to the definition of information which proposes the independent existence of knowledge or information *outside* the body is a useful one for information practitioners. This approach assumes that there is a reality that is separate and independent of the 'knower', and that the knower can interact with the reality, in this case, 'information'.

An example of an approach which acknowledges an independent existence for information is in the work of J. Z. Young (1971). Young is of the view that of the biological developments in one short evolution of the human race, the development of speech and writing were the most important. These mechanisms allowed people to store information outside their bodies in various records and these records can cumulate and exist even when the individual contributor to the information store dies.

An expansion of this approach and the concept of independent realities comes in the writing of Karl Popper. Popper questioned the subjectivism inherent in the classical approach (e.g. Socrates) in delineating the differences between mind and matter. He argued that knowledge is not something located in the minds of individual persons, and that there are three 'worlds' not two. Popper's conceptualisation of these three worlds may be summarised as:

World 1—the physical world, the earth, cosmos as it exists

World 2—the world of mental states which are subjective and personal to the individual

World 3—the world of objective knowledge which exists quite independently of Worlds 1 and 2, although it derived originally from them. It is made up of the products of the human mind as recorded in languages, the arts, sciences, the technologies and in all other artefacts scattered around the earth.

Popper argues, as Young did, for the independent existence of a world of information (World 3) by pointing out that if all machines, tools and subjective knowledge were destroyed, civilisation could be recreated provided that libraries and records of our culture survived. (Popper, 1979, pp. 115–116). In other words, once human (personal) knowledge has been recorded it attains a degree of permanence, an objectivity, an accessibility which is denied to the subjective knowledge of individual humans.

Popper has come under criticism by some epistemologists (e.g. Andren, 1982), for moving too far away from traditional subjectivism. Newer 'alternative' approaches to philosophy also have questioned the validity of the traditional dichotomy between the physical and abstract (mind and matter) and support the notion of there being one world which has physical and spiritual aspects fused together. Nonetheless

for a School of Library and Information Studies in its strivings to develop a definition of information on which to develop a course for information practitioners, Popper has made a useful contribution.

Within the literature of the field of information science, (as defined by information practitioners) the approaches to the definition of information have been of two types:

1. source-based: information is a symbol or string of symbols which have potential for meaning (the commodity of information)
2. receiver-based: information is that which adds to a changed (any) picture of the universe (the process of information) (Debons, 1981, p. 30).

Examples of both types of definition from the literature providing a theoretical foundation for information practice:

Information is the name for the content of what is exchanged with the outer world when we adjust to it and make our adjustment felt upon it. To live effectively is to live with information.

Wiener

Information, both in the sense used by the biologist and in the sense we librarians use it, is a 'fact'. It is the stimulus we receive through our senses. It may be an isolated fact or a whole cluster of facts; but it is still a unit; it is a unit of thought.

Shera

Information is that which is capable of transforming structure.

Belkin

Information relates not so much as to what you do say as to what you could say. That is, information is a measure of one's freedom of choice when one selects a message. Information applies not to the individual messages but to the situation as a whole.

Shannon and Weaver

Facts about any subject.

Becker

Information is data that have been organised and communicated.

Porat

Information is a written or spoken surrogate of knowledge.

Farradane

Thus the inevitable conclusion is that there is no definition acceptable across the board even among those writers and researchers professing to be information practitioners or scientists. This conclusion is supported by Belkin (1978) and Wilson (1981) who extensively reviewed the literature of the field.

In the final analysis at this point in the development of the study of information, the factors which appear to make any one definition acceptable or not acceptable to individual writers are the philosophical, particularly epistemological, stance inherent in the definition itself, and the intention for which the definition is being sought.

For the School of Library and Information Studies courses the definition by Otten is considered to be appropriate as it acknowledges the cognitive and communication aspects associated with the use of information and provides a practical basis for dealing with information in an information provision situation.

'Individual subjective knowledge, the product of cognitive processes, may be transformed into objective knowledge or information by public expression via speech, writing and so on. This information is publicly observable, is in a location (stored), is transportable (communicated to/from) and may be altered (processed) in various ways. Additionally it may be produced (generated by) and lost or altered in the process of communication.' (Otten, 1974).

This source-based approach to the definition of information might be unacceptable to those who argue that the mental component of, for example, a book remains only potential information or data as it awaits the human reader who picks it up and transforms it into information—a Popper World Two activity. Yet, if all human life were to be wiped out, an intelligent visitor from another planet could, through these records, reconstruct the life and subjective knowledge of humans. Once human knowledge or information has been recorded, it acquires a permanence and objectivity which is then accessible by others. Records of past civilisations which have been decoded in modern times are testimony to that principle.

INFORMATION SCIENCE

Just as the concept of information has been found useful in a wide variety of disciplines so too has the notion of a field of study called 'information science'. Individuals from a wide range of disciplines describe themselves as information scientists, yet the boundaries of information science remain fuzzy. Machlup and Mansfield (1983) provide a comprehensive overview of some forty disciplines which lay claim to the term of information science. Schrader's analysis of the scholarly literature over 80 years demonstrates both current use of the term by 'library and information science educators' and what he considers antecedents of information science namely, bibliography, documentation, scientific information, information retrieval, information (Schrader, 1984).

In order to define information science for the purposes of providing a basis for an education programme the following approaches were considered:

1. Definition of information science to include all the areas which contribute to an understanding of information. This approach described by Buckland (1983) as 'all embracing' would result in information science absorbing the areas of linguistics, rhetoric, philosophy, neurology, computing, electronic engineering, psychology, mathematics, cybernetics, librarianship, logic, literature and so on. This is the approach underlying the Machlup and Mansfield text (1983).

The outcome of such a delineation would be that the group of people called information scientists would at this stage have little in common in their techniques, terminology, paradigms. Secondly just who would be capable of integrating such a dispersed field, at this stage of the study of information, is not clear (Buckland, 1983). This approach was considered too broad for the present context.

2. Definition of information science on the basis of a current practice of information, for example, in the computer area or librarianship. Both of these areas have in fact been claimed at times to be synonymous with information science. Computer science is heavily involved with the study of information-related matters—coding of data into machine-readable form, and transmission, manipulation, and storage of these data. However, other information related matters such as human cognition, and manually-based information systems fall outside the realm of computer science as commonly understood. In other words the computer is not coextensive with all types of information and information handling.

As for librarianship, it contains much which has application and applicability outside what one ordinarily regarded as libraries. It has however tended to embody a view, at least in its education programmes, that information science is primarily the application of computers to library activities and the theoretical analysis of the information-retrieval process. (Dingle, 1986).

The definition of information science as synonymous with computer science or librarianship is therefore believed unsuitable for the context of the present proposal.

3. Definition of information science based on major perspectives of the key questions in information science as they evolved historically (Saracevic, 1978). These perspectives are:
 - (i) professional (applied, practical)—concerned

with information systems, services and networks, first in science and technology, but later in other areas as well.

(ii) technological—concerned with utilisation of information technology, particularly computers, micrographics, and telecommunications technology in handling of information.

(iii) scientific (basic)—concerned with theories and experimentation dealing with communication and information in a broader context than just scientific and technical information

The very historical nature of this approach is its limitations, as it records past achievements and perspectives rather than describing a potential.

4. Definition of information science as the theoretical foundations of information practice, encompassing generalisation, hypothetical, conceptual and pragmatic principles relating to the provision of information to users. This approach, also based on the literature, is considered both valid and appropriate as a foundation for courses of study and has therefore been adopted by the School of Library and Information Studies.

The substance of information science is defined as being related to the provision of information from its generation to its exploitation by an end-user.

Based on the literature and the acceptance of the approach to defining the parameters of information science indicated above, the School of Library and Information Studies has adopted a set of principles and beliefs on which its courses are built.

1. While the roles of the physical sciences and humanities in information science are acknowledged, the dominant paradigms and frames of reference of information science are considered to belong in the social sciences.
2. General theoretical concepts in the social and behavioural sciences, in particular psychology, sociology and communication, underpin many theoretical concepts unique to information science. For example, theories of the use of information in the field of information science rest on general theories relating to decision-making, information processing, cognitive style and so on in the area of psychology.
3. The relationship between the general social sciences theoretical knowledge base and the theories of information science should be made known to students, and that general knowledge base itself used by them to illuminate and develop the information science knowledge base.

4. The theoretical knowledge base of information science underpins the practice of all information professionals regardless of sub-grouping and title. That is, there is a knowledge base common to all information practitioners and it provides an appropriate foundation for the education of a generic information professional to operate at beginning professional level. (See Attachment A).

5. The theoretical knowledge base of information science as defined by the Kuring-gai School of Library and Information Studies may be described as a discipline since it deals with a body of knowledge about a particular set of phenomena being 'selectively refined and cumulatively developed as a result of enquiries which use established analytic and empirical methods'. (Birkett, 1978). It is acknowledged that the body of knowledge in question is at a relatively early stage of development, as a discipline in its own right rather than being well-established, but research since the mid 1970s in the area has brought steady advancement in identification and analysis of the conceptual framework and methodologies of information science.

In summary, the courses provided by the School of Library and Information Studies at Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education are based on definitions of information as an objective reality, and the field or discipline of information science as encompassing the theoretical foundations of information practice. It is not claimed that these are the 'best' definitions, simply that they are appropriate as a basis for academic study of information and information practice.

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REVIEW OF ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

At the meeting of Federal Directors held in Canberra in September it was decided to investigate whether the Articles of Association should be reviewed.

The Federal Council has requested me to commence the process by seeking submissions from each Branch on what, if any, are the problems with the Articles and an indication of how the issues can be resolved. In addition to branch submissions the views of the membership at large will be sought.

The first step that I wish to take is to request Branches to examine the Articles and provide comments on areas of concern. At this early stage I do not require detailed submissions; this will occur at a later stage once any area of concern has been identified. All I need now is an indication of which Article is being referred to by number, and a short comment on the problem. It would be appreciated if comments could be kept to no more than two or three sentences.

The Federal Council has requested a report within six months so I would appreciate your comments by the 31 December 1988.

I have also attached a copy of a letter which I am requesting be published in your local *Informaa* to seek comments from all members.

Philip Taylor
Vice President
Federal Council

BOOK REVIEW

Brown, R. A. *Documentary Evidence in Australia*, The Law Book Company Limited, Sydney, 1988.

Documentary evidence—documented at last!
As the Rt Hon. Sir Harry Gibbs states in the Foreword '... so far as I am aware, no learned writer either in Australia or in the United Kingdom has treated documentary evidence as a separate subject...' (pv).

Even though this book has been written for legal practitioners, it would be useful; for managers wishing to clarify or to discuss admissibility and related issues with legal advisers as they affect records management; for records management policy advisers; for records management consultants; or for recommending to your legal adviser.

It outlines the rigorous tests and precision required by our legal system and covers:

- the statute and common law as at 1 December 1987;
- the interpretation of Australian evidence statutes by civil and criminal courts;
- the complexities of the statutes in Australian jurisdictions;
- the admissibility of documents from other Australian jurisdictions;
- the roles a document fulfills; and
- the approaches to computer-produced evidence.

From the records management perspective it specifically looks at the various categories of documents and highlights:

- the benefits to organisations if documents are able to be retrieved quickly;
- the complexities of determining the storage medium on which to retain information; and
- the importance of documenting maintenance and operational procedures.


In fact, the benefits of documenting maintenance and operational procedures is evident when the author discusses computer records legislation '... [the] negative reactions of the courts to such legislation... and the reliance by judges on the developing common law rather than on the legislation to admit computer-produced evidence, [indicates] that such statutes have been a marked failure.' (p.335).

Like the Australian Law Reform Commission in its Reports Nos. 26 and 38 on *Evidence*, this book calls for law reform. However, until these reforms occur this is a comprehensive reference book.

Denise Druitt

Lecturer

Canberra College of Advanced Education



**In 105 A.D., the Chinese
discovered how to make paper.
In 1984, FileNet discovered
how to eliminate it.**

**FileNet does for paper what
computers do for data.**

If your corporation still relies on a 2,000-year-old technology like paper, you can lose your competitive edge.

Paper wastes time. People must go to file cabinets and file rooms to retrieve documents. Paper gets lost, misfiled, buried in out-baskets. So your people wait. Work waits. Customers wait. And business suffers.

This is especially costly in offices where paper volume is high and files are frequently accessed — such as customer service, loan processing, correspondence handling, etc. But there is a solution: FileNet.

FileNet eliminates paper by converting it into digitized document-images.

**Optical disk-based storage and
retrieval is only the beginning.**

FileNet eliminates file cabinets by permanently storing document-images on optical disk. Millions of document-images can be stored in a FileNet system. Users at multiple workstations can retrieve any document-image almost instantly. So FileNet makes high capacity storage cost-efficient. And frequent retrieval fast and easy.

FileNet works the way people do.

FileNet communicates with mainframes, provides word processing and displays document-images — all on the same screen. Simultaneously.

WorkFlo,™ FileNet's exclusive software system, automatically integrates, manages and routes the flow of document-images. So people have more time to work. Think. And produce.

**FileNet's users report improved
customer service and productivity
increases as much as 50%.**

Paper in the modern office. It's becoming ancient history.

olivetti FileNet

For further information, fill in the coupon below and mail it to:
The Marketing Manager FileNet,
Olivetti Australia, GPO Box 3993, Sydney, NSW 2001.

Please rush me further details on FileNet —
The Document Image Management System

NAME _____

ORGANISATION _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

CHAOS FILE



Turn this...

Exaggerated? A little, perhaps, but some filing systems do get pretty messy. When roll-out file drawers are pulled out they take up precious aisle space, making the work area cramped, even dangerous. Especially when stools are used to reach folders in the top drawers.

But, with DATAFILE, it's easy to instantly reach and select any folder on any of the six levels. No stools or ladders. No mess. In fact, DATAFILE can even enhance your office in 12 decorator colours, or will match any colour you require.

Saving SPACE means saving money. Both file rooms pictured above take up the same floor space (2.74m x 2.28m). The seven roll-out cabinets provide only 2245 filing centimetres, compared to 3109 filing centimetres in the six DATAFILE cabinets. A 38% difference in space utilisation!

Saving TIME means saving money. COLOUR CODING makes DATAFILE's filing 25% more efficient because folders are located immediately... misfiles are eliminated... file numbers are 'read' by the colours on the edge of the folders. Changing your top-tab file folders to DATAFILE's colour coded folders can be done

DATAFILE



into this.

automatically with our computerised labelling systems. They have been selected for departmental use by the Government Printer.

See the DATAFILE difference. Experience it. End 'Chaos' in the file room. Save space, save time, save money with DATAFILE.

Call us today for more information or send the coupon below for your free copy of our booklet '18 Ways to Save Money on Filing'.

DATAFILE

Colour-coded filing systems

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Agents in Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Hobart.

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