iQ

THE R·I·M QUARTERLY

Professionals Australasia

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Professionals Australasia

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FROM THE CEO

Kate Walker, Chief Executive Officer, RIM Professionals Australasia

When professionals breach the Code of Professional Conduct

Adhering to a Code of Professional Conduct is not as straightforward as it seems. RIMPA's CEO explains some of the different ways the code can be breached, and how RIM professionals should practise continual self-reflection and self-correction to avoid breaking the rules.

I sometimes get the sense that, as human beings, we tend to avoid thinking too deeply about things, because in doing so we would be confronted with having to act on what we discover. That is, having to deal with the inconvenient truth. This is often true when it comes to ethics (professional conduct).

There are so many instances where good people make ethical faux pas. Our immediate response is to question how a person who is considered 'a good person' can act unethically in a certain setting. Is that person simply just unethical at the core and their true colours have come to the fore? Or can one argue that the person was simply just too lazy to apply his/her mind to question the ethical validity of his/her decision in that specific instance? Or is the person's fibre just deficient of ethical intelligence?

When I listen to members who recount incidents of intimidation and victimisation, I have to wonder why it has become so prevalent in our times. And it is not just the overt type that I am talking about here. There are so many subtle varieties that come in many guises. They are so subtle sometimes that only our subconscious picks up on what is happening to us. In such cases, we may not even be aware of the influence such subtle intimidation tactics have over our actions or decisions. We could be manipulated into doing someone's bidding without realising that we have been used.

RIM professionals who engage in character assassination (whether it is top-down or bottom-up) are in breach of the Code

Essentially, that is what it boils down to when one is being intimidated, victimised or manipulated: we are being used to further someone else's agenda.

Overt tactics can be frightening. It can get as bad as someone truly fearing for their lives with very good reason. Whereas covert tactics may not immediately make you feel like you are in a horror movie, but they can be just as damaging when it dawns on the individual that they have been duped into furthering unscrupulous agendas.

Just the other day I was challenged by a member of ours who told me that they were very concerned about the fact that, when we talk about intimidation, we usually do so in the context of employers, and not about within the RIM fraternity itself. The former scenario is pervasive and does warrant our attention and intervention. But we also need to talk about those within the profession whose conduct brings the profession itself into disrepute.

In this context, it is important that we encourage RIM professionals to continually measure themselves against the Code of Professional Conduct. We should, in the process, not fall into the trap of thinking that ethics is only about not committing fraud or being involved in corruption (although these are very important aspects and should not be downplayed either). Unfortunately, we tend to allow fraud and corruption to overshadow the discourse around ethics, and miss other real ethical issues we face daily. For example, if a senior uses their position of power to intimidate or victimise a subordinate, that would be a breach of the Code of Professional Conduct. Bullying, and thus ruling by fear, goes against the grain of professional conduct. Unfortunately, many in leadership positions are often unaware of the fact that their bullying tactics are in fact unethical, and they have a tendency to find the means to justify their behaviour.

However, lest I be accused of picking on the leadership and creating the impression that bullying is only a top-down behaviour, let me hasten to say that leaders could also find themselves in a position where they are being bullied or victimised by subordinates. I have seen first-hand the effects of a saboteur who attempted to assassinate the leader's character – simply because they could not handle being told that what they had produced was not good enough. Needless to say, RIM professionals who engage in character assassination (whether it is top-down or bottom-up) are in breach of the Code of Professional Conduct, and there is no justification for behaviour that is aimed at damaging an innocent person's career and reputation. Let me also hasten to add that character assassination could happen in a deliberate manner, but also in an 'innocent' manner through gossip. It is amazing how many people in positions do not think twice about tearing someone's reputation apart behind their back, without one single thought dedicated to the fact that they are in breach of the Code of Professional Conduct. I have to, of course, silently throw in a question around whether it is ethical to watch someone being victimised, bullied, intimidated and not say anything? Just asking…

One would therefore expect that RIM professionals would ensure that they do not breach the Code of Professional Conduct by degrading others, no matter what background they come from. In the same vein, one would expect that RIM professionals would ensure that there is no discrimination in how people are treated in their findings and recommendations.

Some examples of other areas where we could ask the question "Is this ethical?" include:

- manipulating others by 'massaging' the truth
- utilising your position of power to force others to accept your position or ideology against their will
- not owning up to mistakes and letting others be the scapegoat/fall-guy
- being aware of unethical practices and not exposing them because you are afraid of what the cost will be to you personally
- shooting the messenger because they carry an inconvenient truth
- judging information based on who it comes from instead of interrogating the facts
- asking others to break the rules so that your tardiness can be covered.

I could go on and on, but you get the gist of it. Adhering to a Code of Professional Conduct is not as straightforward as it seems. It requires continual self-reflection and self-correction. We do however need to self-police too. When a professional breaches the Code of Professional Conduct it is incumbent on their fellow professionals to report them to the CEO of RIMPA (or whatever professional body they belong to). One of the key roles of a professional body is to hold its professionals accountable against a Code of Professional Conduct. I am proud to say that RIMPA has all processes in place to meet this obligation.

If you wish to discuss any concerns or simply ask questions, please feel free to contact me at kate.walker@rimpa.com.au ❖

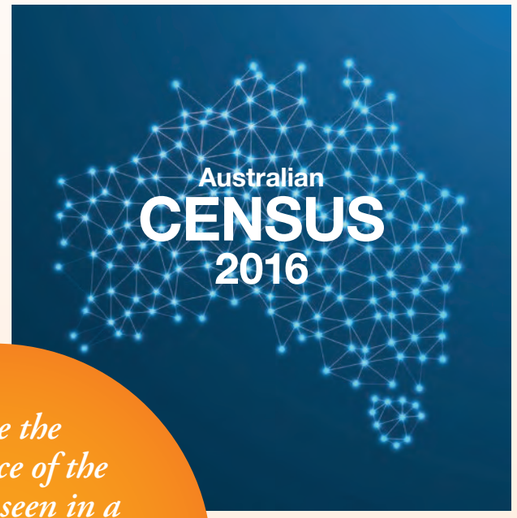
Lisa Read White, Chair of the Board, RIMPA

Looking at the lessons of 2016, and beyond

Welcome to the New Year. What a year 2016 was. Not only did we see many celebrities passing, we also witnessed a series of consolidation, mergers and takeovers in the vendor and service provider market. 2017 is shaping up to be yet another year of change and challenge.

2016 was the year of disruption in the technology market with several companies bringing something different to the table. Some re-invented existing models and others had been around for years, but as professionals we have only just become receptive to their offerings.

There were a couple of notable bold (but well overdue) moves to take advantage of technology to capture, manage, and analyse data. The one that touched every Australian and made international headlines was of course the Census. I think it's important to congratulate those behind the decision to use technology to their advantage and not let the failures overwrite the level of success this exercise achieved.



The Census is a major exercise – planned over five years, costing approximately $500 million, and employing 38,000 field staff. The ABS decision to change from the traditional model of drop and collect paper forms to an online submission Census was a bold and well overdue change, particularly for organisation such as the ABS. The move helped relieve the increasing challenges faced, which included physical delivery to remote locations, the homeless, and the elderly, and employing 50,000 temporary staff as Census collectors.

I hope the experience of the Census is seen in a positive light and lessons are transferred ... rather than used as a reason not to rethink the way we do things

The public resistance to online submission and media coverage about fines led to more than 3.5 million phone-call attempts to the call centre. This volume was not expected, and needless to say, the call centre could not cope.

In the lead-up to Census night, there was a lot of discussion around privacy and security of Census information. It seems the extent and nature of this was not anticipated by the ABS given the experience of Census 2011, which resulted in 33% of Australians completing the Census online. All previous Censuses required names and addresses, and data integration had been carried out since 2006. Our politicians were not necessarily supportive or working with facts either.

Whilst we could blame the lack of information, education or change management on the ABS, it is worth noting that ABS staff reportedly sat 380 media interviews in the weeks leading up to the Census. Even that much engagement could not counter the fear and concern.

The debate on what the issues are, and whose fault each of the different failures are, will continue for some time yet, and no doubt will overshadow the benefits gained in reduced costs, quicker processing and improved analysis. Overall it was a success, with 4.9 million households completing the Census online (2.2 million before the outage and 2.7 million after it was restored). Those that used the e-Census reported it was quick, easy and reduced the time taken by 70% compared to paper.

I hope the experience of the Census is seen in a positive light and lessons are transferred to many other projects, rather than used as a reason not to rethink the way we do things.

2017 promises to be another year of change and disruption in our industry across so many topics. Several key players such as banks and insurance companies are beginning or maturing their journey into using electronic signatures. This is one of the industry sectors that will really test the rule sets and help electronic signatures become normalised.

Local, State and Federal Government is now catching up on using cloud for storage and scalable processing. This is re-introducing the topic of data cleansing and disposal to ensure only relevant and active data is transferred. This is also stepping up the capture of all content electronically and process automation.

I look forward to the year ahead and learning from each of the specialists that share their experiences. Happy New Year!

WORLDWIDE NEWS

National Library of Australia receives funding boost

The National Library has received funding support in the pre-Christmas mid-year budget update to help it upgrade and expand its digitisation efforts.

The library's popular Trove service, which has digitised millions of records, will receive $16.4 million over the next four years to upgrade infrastructure linked to the service.

The library had stopped funding the digitisation of newspapers and other content in July, after cuts through the government's efficiency dividend were announced in late 2015.

The library has been subject to efficiency dividends under several consecutive governments, despite pleas from both sides of politics to ease pressure on the institution. It had also relied on contributors to pay for the uploading of new documents if they wished to expose their

collections through Trove.

Trove's search engine accesses a wide range of resources about Australia. It features content from more than 1000 libraries, cultural and education institutions.

The 2015 mid-year budget review included an efficiency dividend for cultural institutions totalling $36.8 million over four years.

Yahoo suffers another hack

Yahoo disclosed on 14 December 2016 that it has discovered a breach of more than one billion user accounts that occurred in August 2013.

The breach is believed to be separate and distinct from the theft of data from 500 million accounts that Yahoo reported last September.

Troublingly, Yahoo's chief information security officer Bob Lord says that the company hasn't been able to determine how the data from the one billion accounts was stolen. "We have not been able to identify the intrusion associated with this theft," Lord wrote in a post announcing the hack.

"The stolen user account information may have included names, email addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, hashed passwords (using MD5) and, in some cases, encrypted or unencrypted security questions and answers," Lord added.

Yahoo was alerted to the massive breach by law enforcement and has examined the data with the help of outside forensic experts.

The data does not appear to include payment details or plaintext passwords, but it's still bad news for Yahoo account holders. The hashing algorithm MD5 is no longer considered secure and MD5 hashes can easily be looked up online to discover the passwords they hide.

Yahoo said it would notify the account holders affected in the breach. Affected users will be required to change their passwords.

Yahoo also announced that its proprietary code had been accessed by a hacker, who used the code to forge cookies that could be used to access accounts without a password.

The revelations add to Yahoo's long string of security problems.

Source: techcrunch.com

Vale Ken Scadden

Kenneth Richard Scadden was a hard man to describe in a word or two.

But the descriptions that colleagues used after his death, aged 64, in his home town north of Wellington, included "friend", "mentor", "colleague", "humourist", and "truly remarkable man".

Former National Archives of NZ Assistant Director, director and curator of the Museum of Wellington City and Sea, latterly Archives Manager for the Society of Mary, Wellington, Ken Scadden was a remarkable man, indeed. His colleagues also remembered his professionalism and imagination, as well as his boisterous good humour and bonhomie, an inheritance from his Irish ancestors.

Ken held a BA (Hons) degree from the Victoria University of Wellington and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Information Management from the University of New South Wales. He was a Certified Archivist with the Society of American Archivists.

He had been a senior officer for the Pacific area branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA), was president of the Maritime Archaeological Association of NZ, a member of the NZ Sole Archivists' Group, a principal of his consultancy, Heritage Advisory Services, and a frequent speaker about archives, genealogy and marine history.

Ken died a fortnight before the launch of his last book, *Rugged Coast, Rough Seas*, a marine history of the wild coast of the Wairarapa, the district where he lived most of his life. Typically, he arranged last-minute to be at the launch virtually. Gaunt but bright-eyed, he sat with a glass of Irish poteen and a song, which he described with a laugh as "my last public performance". The song: the bittersweet Irish farewell *Parting Glass*.

Red Cross admits data breach affecting half a million donors

The personal data of 550,000 blood donors that includes information about 'at-risk sexual behaviour' was leaked from the Red Cross Blood Service in October 2016, in what has been described as Australia's largest security breach.

The organisation said it was told that a file containing donor information was placed on an 'insecure computer environment' and 'accessed by an unauthorised person'.

The Red Cross said it had been made aware that a file containing donor information was placed on an insecure computer environment and accessed by an unauthorised person.

The file was part of an online application to give blood used from 2010.

Red Cross chief executive Shelly Park apologised to donors and said, to her knowledge, all copies of the data were subsequently deleted and the risk of misuse of the data was low.

The Red Cross expressed its 'deep disappointment', and set up a link where those who were impacted by the breach could seek assistance.

Source: ABC News

New Greek Australian archive created

Determined to not let the rich history of the generation of Greeks that came to Australia in the '50s and '60s fade away, Associate Professor Nicholas Doumanis has started collecting archives from the archdiocese, community organisations and Greek clubs of New South Wales, while sourcing personal stories from ordinary people.

A/Prof Nicholas Doumanis

With the support of the State Library and University of NSW, A/Prof Doumanis, from the School of Humanities & Languages in the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences at the University of NSW, is documenting the fast disappearing first generations of Greek Australians.

A/Prof Doumanis has started working on the massive Greek Australian archival collection of historic value which includes letters, postcards, home movies and other documents curated by and held at the State Library. An oral archive featuring interviews with about 200 Greek Australians will also be available to the public.

A/Prof Doumanis is the author of several books on Greek history, including *Before the Natio*n (Oxford, 2012) and A *History of Greece* (Palgrave, 2010).

To learn more about the archive, contact A/Prof Doumanis at n.doumanis@unsw.edu.au

Source: Neos Kosmos

Digital excellence awards for top agencies

Commonwealth agencies with innovative digital projects are invited to nominate them for the National Archives of Australia 2017 Awards for Digital Excellence.

David Fricker announces the National Archives Awards for Digital Excellence.

The awards celebrate the positive changes and progress to making digital information more robust, fit-for-purpose and available.

Across Commonwealth agencies, skilled information management professionals are bringing people, technology and processes together to ensure that digital information assets are ably managed.

"Complementing the recently announced chief information governance officer role, this year an additional award category will recognise an outstanding individual within the Australian Public Service who has championed information management reform," said David Fricker, Director-General of the National Archives.

Award winners will be selected from case studies that demonstrate significant advancement towards meeting Digital Continuity 2020 policy targets. Digital Continuity is an approach to creating and managing information that can be trusted and used for as long as needed despite technological change.

Last year's winning entries included a process for gaining significant business benefits through digital transition and the development of a smartphone app for 6,500 Australians with bleeding disorders such as haemophilia.

The awards program is open until 28 February 2017.

Why Waipu has a piece of the UNESCO Memory of the World

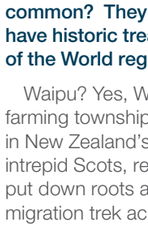
What do Amsterdam, Canberra, Haeinsa, Manila, Puebla, Reykjavik, Santiago, Washington and Waipu have in common? They all, along with many other world centres, have historic treasures inscribed in the UNESCO Memory of the World register.

Waipu? Yes, Waipu (nearly rhymes with "I do")! It's a quiet farming township (pop. circa 1,500) named after a local river in New Zealand's far north where, in the 1850s, a group of intrepid Scots, refugees from the brutal Highland clearances, put down roots after an almost unbelievable, 35-year migration trek across the world through settlement attempts and dashed hopes in Nova Scotia, South Africa and Australia.

Waipu is the first New Zealand rural community whose historic archive is inscribed in the UN education, science and cultural agency's Memory of the World. The collection was begun by the families of those intrepid Scots and comprises their photographs, letters and diaries in the town centre's Waipu Museum, in its earlier days more romantically known as the 'House of Memories'.

The Waipu Scottish Migrant Collection was added to the UNESCO project at the end of last year with three other Kiwi treasures stores:

- Auckland War Memorial Museum's documents and artefacts from the city's 19th-century founding father and esteemed benefactor, Sir John Logan Campbell
- the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, collection of papers of internationally-renowned early 20th-century NZ novelist Katherine Mansfield
- Dunedin's Hocken Library field notes, papers, photos and films of marine ornithologist, Lance Richdale, instigator of the unique Royal Albatross sanctuary on the Taiaroa Heads of the Otago Harbour.



Enthralled by the Waipu story

Another renowned NZ novelist, Dame Fiona Kidman, grew up in Waipu, 120 kilometres north of Auckland, and was enthralled by the romance of the Scottish migrants' story. At the Wellington inscription presentation ceremony in November, she explained:

Marine ornithologist Lance Richdale

Waipu founding father, Sir John Logan Campbell

"Some one thousand Gaelic-speaking people, representing 19 clans, had followed in the footsteps of the Reverend Norman McLeod, a powerful and charismatic Presbyterian leader who led his followers from harsh poverty to new lands and hopeful futures. McLeod took his people first from Scotland to Nova Scotia, on Canada's eastern seaboard, from there to Australia and ultimately to settle in Waipu."

The migrants built ships for themselves to move on from their eventually-insupportable Nova Scotia settlement. Dame Fiona said: "Believe me, these were lion-hearted people who braved many perils in their quests for better lives. The community was proud, successful, built on good farming practice and, for a time, ship building. They formed strong alliances with the local iwi (Maori tribe). Waipu preserved its cultural identity, its songs and its storytelling; indeed, its Gaelic language was spoken widely until the 1920s."

The museum collection comprises 1,350 photos, including some 200 portraits of original settlers, 11 diaries, 211 personal letters, 113 official correspondence, 76 printed documents with handwritten inscriptions, maps, inscribed books, shipping records, genealogy lists and drawings.

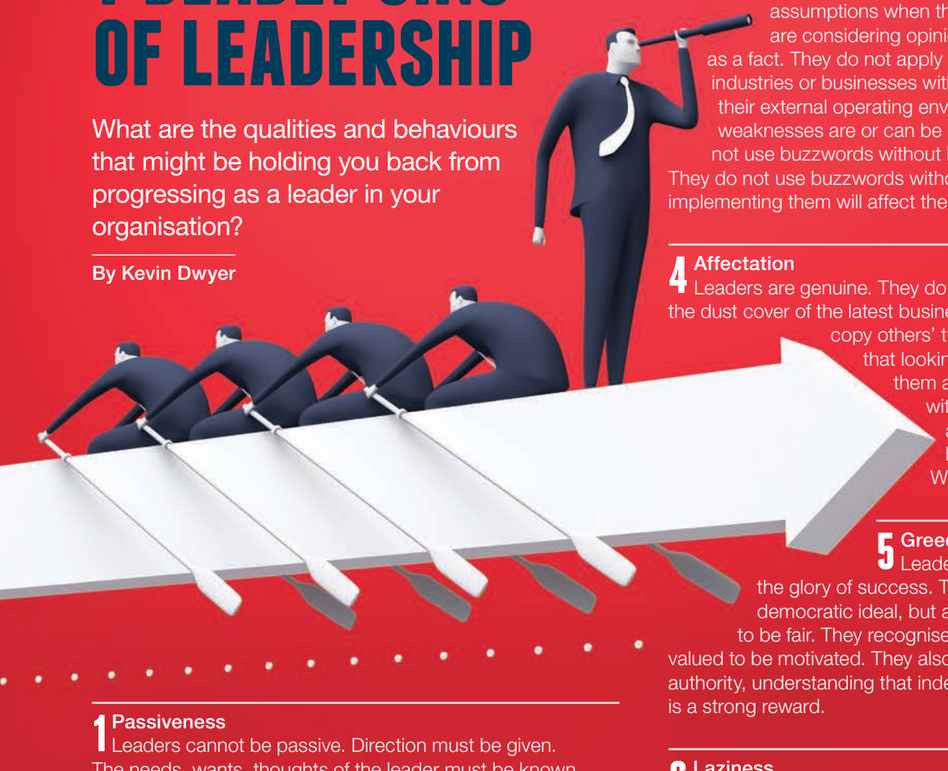
Dame Fiona told the Wellington gathering: "One cannot over estimate the value of this heritage, not only to the tens of thousands of descendants of the migration. Numerous writers and academics have benefited from the access provided by the collection. Writers of both non-fiction and fiction have drawn on those amazing stories of survival, resilience and skill. I'm one of them."

PS. Want to know what treasures other communities have in the UNESCO Memory of the World? Go to unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/homepage/ and all will be revealed.

7 DEADLY SINS OF LEADERSHIP

What are the qualities and behaviours that might be holding you back from progressing as a leader in your organisation?

By Kevin Dwyer



1 Passiveness
Leaders cannot be passive. Direction must be given. The needs, wants, thoughts of the leader must be known and asserted. Leaders need not be aggressive. They must, however, have the full range of assertive skills: ranging from basic assertion of their needs through to consequence assertion when their needs are not being met.

2 Unaccountability
Those who are in a leadership position take accountability for their actions and the actions of those they lead. People who influence groups to take group decisions and hide behind the group decision are politicians, not leaders. So are leaders who delegate responsibility for making a decision and do not take accountability for the ability of the person so delegated to make the decision. Leaders acknowledge their mistakes freely, safe in the knowledge of what they have learnt.

3 Thoughtlessness
Leaders think. They acknowledge they are making assumptions when they make them and that they are considering opinion rather than dress it up as a fact. They do not apply business models from other industries or businesses without considering whether their external operating environment, strengths and weaknesses are or can be made to be similar. They do not use buzzwords without knowing what they mean. They do not use buzzwords without thinking about how implementing them will affect their operation, in detail.

4 Affectation
Leaders are genuine. They do not assume a persona from the dust cover of the latest business guru book. They do not copy others' traits and habits in vain hope that looking like a leader will make them a leader. They are happy with who they are, warts and all. They are not, and do not have to be, a copy of Jack Welch.

5 Greed
Leaders share. Leaders share the glory of success. They see equity, not as a democratic ideal, but as part of what it means to be fair. They recognise that people need to feel valued to be motivated. They also share the workload and authority, understanding that independence and achievement is a strong reward.

6 Laziness
Leaders have high energy. Leaders will work through to three in the morning to meet a deadline. Leaders do not get upset or fazed by problems. Rather, problems become opportunities to solve the problem. Leaders understand what is important, not just what is urgent.

7 Inconsistency
Leaders are persistent and resilient. They set a goal, devise a strategy and execute the strategy. The strategy is changed consciously. The strategy is not changed unconsciously by reactive decisions. They do not allow their mood or the mood of their subordinates to change what they assert. ❖

This article was first published at changefactory.com.au/our-thinking/articles/

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kevin Dwyer, Director, Change Factory is a Change Management professional with more than 30 years' experience in the planning, design and delivery of change management programs. Since 2001, and the establishment of Change Factory, he has been involved in many Change Management projects ranging from re-engineering of customs processes to reduce risk to creating and revising performance management systems to improve customer service outcomes at five-star resorts. His first EDRMS project was as the Change Management partner for the REX project which was awarded the J.Eddis Linton Award for Excellence – Most outstanding group in 2010.

✉ He can be contacted at Kevin.Dwyer@changefactory.com.au

Privacy regulators study finds Internet of Things shortfalls

Six in ten Internet of Things devices don't properly tell customers how their personal information is being used, an international study has found.

The study, by 25 data protection regulators around the world, looked at devices like smart electricity meters, internet-connected thermostats and watches that monitor health, considering how well companies communicate privacy matters to their customers.

The report showed:

59% of devices failed to adequately explain to customers how their personal information was collected, used and disclosed

68% failed to properly explain how information was stored

72% failed to explain how customers could delete their information off the device and

38% failed to include easily identifiable contact details if customers had privacy concerns.

Concerns were also raised around medical devices that sent reports back to GPs via unencrypted email.

The data protection authorities looked at more than 300 devices. Authorities will now consider action against any devices or services thought to have been breaking data protection laws.

The work was coordinated by the Global Privacy Enforcement Network, and follows previous reports on online services for children, website privacy policies and mobile phone apps.

The action is being led by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in the UK. Steve Eckersley, ICO Head of Enforcement, said:

"This technology can improve our homes, our health and our happiness. But that shouldn't be at the cost of our privacy. Companies making these devices need to be clear how they're protecting customers. We would encourage companies to properly consider the privacy impact on individuals before they go to market with their product and services. If consumers are nervous that devices aren't using their data safely and sensibly, then they won't use them.

"By looking at this internationally, we've been able to get an excellent overview on this topic. We'll now be building on that, working with the industry and looking specifically at companies who might not have done enough to comply with the law." ❖

Next issue

Education & professional development

The May 2017 issue of iQ will feature a section on education and professional development, plus general features. If you have an article on any RIM-related topic, we would love to hear from you.

Copy due: Wednesday 29 March.

Energise compliance with technology

Technology implementation offers great potential for the bottom line, and is worth the effort to ensure successful implementation.

By Craig Grimestad

This is the last of a seven-part series on energising compliance. *The last? I thought technology would be the first!* Well maybe it didn't need to be last, but it shouldn't be the first. Technology is a great tool, but in and of itself, it does not address knowledge, understanding, discipline or attitudes that are key in implementation success. In fact, providing technology without knowledge, understanding and discipline can actually do harm. Records may be inadvertently misclassified, misplaced or deleted. Each of these creates an out of compliance situation, which requires extra resources to repair. Success is not guaranteed with the implementation and availability of technology.

I digress, but I recall when I got my first 'smartphone'. I got it just as I was leaving for vacation, and wasn't able to receive any training/instructions. Unfortunately (like many of today's products) the manufacturer must have assumed I had some prior working knowledge, would get help from a friend or the Internet, as the instructions were not sufficient to enable me to operate the phone. I pushed the buttons, pressed the icons, double pressed icons, but couldn't get the phone to function. I mean seriously, who would ever guess that you had to slide your finger across the screen of the phone to get it to work? Well, now that I've learned to 'swipe' I'm good. Well actually, I'm more than good. I'm advantaged, because I have all the functionality of a smartphone available to me.

So too, users of new technology, and the company as a whole, will be advantaged with increased technology utilisation. Information governance (IG)/records and information management (RIM) technologies have great potential to reduce errors, facilitate decisions (classification, retention, and disposal) and improve efficiency. The specific technologies to implement, and in what order, will be a unique company decision based on the current state of technology utilisation, objectives and priorities.

As mentioned in the last issue of iQ, new technology is a type of 'forcing function' that usually meets with minimal cultural pushback (See 'Psychology of RIM: Energise compliance with forcing functions', iQ, Nov 16). People like technology that makes it easier to do their job with better results, and feel like they are working in a modern environment. This 'goodwill' is a strong advantage toward successful implementation that you want to preserve and maintain throughout implementation.

> *... users of new technology, and the company as a whole, will be advantaged with increased technology utilisation.*

HOW DO YOU MAINTAIN THAT GOODWILL AND IMPLEMENT TECHNOLOGY WITH MINIMAL PUSHBACK?

COMMUNICATIONS: Have a good communications plan that clearly tells the workforce what is expected and when (no surprises). Have a resource readily available to answer any and all questions.

TRAINING: Make training readily available that takes the workforce from their present state of knowledge to being fully knowledgeable about their part in utilising the technology. Allow for individuals with minimal computer familiarity/skills and no familiarity with the technology being implemented. Provide an opportunity for individuals to practice with the new technology in a location that does not jeopardise actual data/records. Make it your objective that individuals are not just knowledgeable about their utilisation of the technology, but comfortable with it.

TIME: Allow plenty of time for each step in the implementation process. Keep in mind that individuals still have their regular daily work to do, and learn in different ways and at different paces. It is much better for the workforce to be well prepared and look forward with anticipation to the transition, than to be scrambling to complete their preparation and be dreading the transition.

Technology implementation offers great potential for bottom line results, and is well worth the effort to ensure successful implementation. When done in concert with other initiatives suggested in this 'Energising compliance' series, it can transform and institutionalise the entire RIM/IG business function.

For further tips and thoughts on 'people issues' when implementing RIM/IG changes within your organisation, see the 'Psychology of RIM: rules of the road for cultural change' series of articles by Craig Grimestad in earlier issues of iQ. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Craig Grimestad is a senior consultant with Iron Mountain Consulting. His specialty is designing RIM core components with a sub-specialty for RIM auditing. Craig holds a Masters of Science degree in Engineering and was the records manager for the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors where he participated in the development of the GM Corporate RIM program, and implemented and managed Electro-Motive Division's RIM program.

➲ He blogs to: blogs.ironmountain.com/author/cgrimestad

MEET THE CHAIR OF AUSTRALIA'S NEW DATA GOVERNANCE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

New independent data governance industry association, Data Governance Australia (DGA) was officially launched in October 2016. The new not-for-profit association is chaired by former Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Chair and current Monash Business School Professor Graeme Samuel. iQ asked Prof Samuel what DGA is all about.

iQ: Why was Data Governance Australia (DGA) created?

GS: It's about bringing together businesses, both big and small, which are associated with the collection or use of data, with the aim of establishing a code of conduct regarding how data is accessed, analysed and used.

The object is to enable industry participants to meet current and anticipated community expectations when dealing with data.

If industry can establish its own code of conduct that satisfies two fundamental tests – the test of integrity and the test of credibility – then it avoids the government needing to step in to regulate.

That is to be preferred – and I say this as a former regulator – for two reasons.

The first is, the government tends to over-reach when it regulates, and it does that because it's trying to meet community expectations – as is the case from time to time when we see media react to a particular event. Often the media reaction will be overblown – which then causes government to go into overdrive, and then over-reach in terms of regulation.

The second reason is, that government tends to be many months, if not years, behind community expectation in terms of its regulation, so it tends to react to community expectations rather than to anticipate them. Before the government will regulate, it will have an enquiry, and then once the enquiry has taken place, it will then consider the enquiry report, and it will consider the course of action it wants to take, and then it will draft regulations.

Now all that can take a year or two to transpire and by then community expectation has moved on.

If industry can get in place a code of conduct that meets the community expectations of today, and can operate with agility to meet community expectations as they develop, then the need for government to become involved in the regulatory process can be avoided.

iQ: How is the code of conduct coming along?

GS: There are over 100 members of industry that have become involved in the association and now what's happening is the association's board – with leadership from both the executive team and myself – is putting together a draft code of conduct, for discussion amongst industry to see if it meets industry aspirations and, at the same time, community expectations.

There are two really important things that will impact upon the code of conduct: firstly, many in the industry, including myself, will not be associated with a code of conduct that lacks integrity and credibility. Because it reflects upon the credibility of those involved in developing the code.

The second thing is, the industry also knows that if it doesn't establish a code of conduct that is in accordance with community expectations and satisfies the test of integrity and credibility, then it's wasting it's time – the government will simply step in and regulate.

At the same time as setting up a code of conduct, it is necessary, in my view, to have a process whereby business can test itself – that is, conduct its own self-audit, as to its compliance with the code. This is not dissimilar to what the privacy commissioner does in having what's called a privacy impact assessment – a PIA. It's not compulsory; it's simply a guide by the privacy commissioner to help business audit itself, as to whether it's complying with privacy regulations.

So it's proposed that DGA has a data impact assessment – a DIA – which will be a set of guidelines to enable members of DGA to self-audit, and be compliant with the code of conduct.

It's about bringing together businesses associated with the collection or use of data and establishing a code of conduct

iQ: What's your background and why were you chosen as chair?

GS: I've been involved in public service in one form or another since the 1980s and, in the 1990s through to 2011, I was the first president of the national competition council, the ACCC … and my role for many years has been to act either within industry, through industry groups, or through government, through the competition council, driven by one overriding objective – to act in the public interest. DGA will be driven by the same fundamental criteria.

iQ: What would you like the members of RIMPA to know about the new association?

GS: There will be a level of credibility attached to being a member of DGA, because being a member means that you subscribe to the code, that you have subjected yourself to the code disciplines, including a code authority that will also be there, to ensure that members are complying with the code.

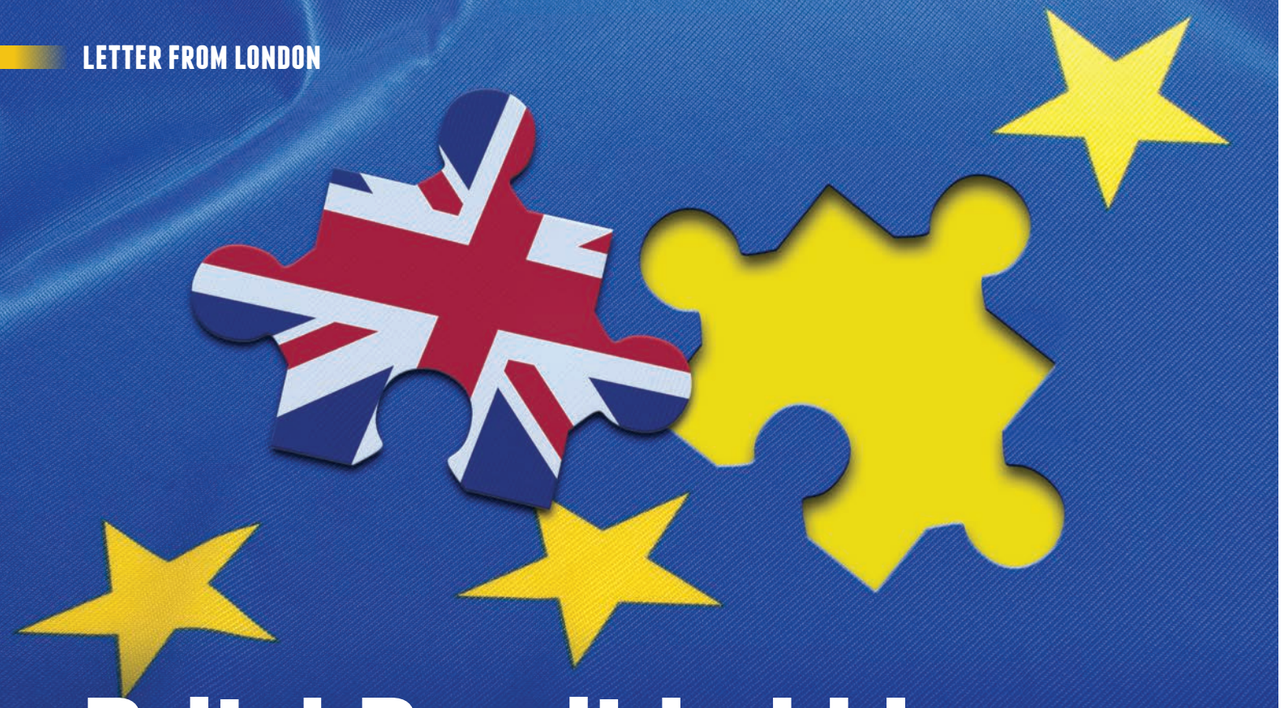
iQ: Who is your membership made up of?

GS: Any large business that has access to client data – banks, retailers, supermarkets, airlines, travel agents – large businesses that deal with the public. They have a massive amount of data as to their customer preferences, requirements and needs. Then there's a whole range of small businesses, ranging from those that are involved with data analysis, data analytics, through to those that are using and collecting data in their own businesses. Small business particularly, I think, can see the benefits of having a code of conduct and, in particular, a DIA as a form of self-audit. Because for a small business, having to have consultants, lawyers or advisors to tell you how to comply with government regulations can become a financial backbreaker – so this is going to be a very effective and efficient means of providing a substitute for that.

iQ: What do you hope to achieve in your role as chair?

GS: I would like to establish, in the relatively short term, the code of conduct, and to establish a raison d'etre for being a member of DGA that meets community expectations – as well as meeting those expectations of integrity and credibility previously mentioned. Now if we manage that, I will be very happy!

To find out more about Data Governance Australia, visit: www.datagovernanceaus.com.au



Brits' Brexit babble smothers IM talk, but the work goes on… Thankfully

Mike Steemson was our man on the ground following Britain's EU referendum last year. He sought high and low beyond Brexit headlines to track down some IM tales for iQ.

By Mike Steemson

After the earthquake of Britain's EU referendum last year, it was pointless hunting in public places for information management matters. Following the wafer-thin, 23 June Brexit decision, high and low-brow media-gurus continued furiously arguing the pluses and minuses and it's gone on ever since. As the months have dribbled by, nothing or no-one has cleared the Brexit air, but, below the hubbub, information management has continued occasionally raising its voice high enough to be heard.

Loudest voices, of course, have still poured from the normal collection of wishful thinkers like:

- energy supply companies' plans for sharing commercial data to thwart their users' annual $800-million thefts of electricity and gas
- Britain's spy agency, the Government Communications Headquarters, creating a 'national firewall to block malicious websites'
- new Information Commissioner's wish to extend Freedom of Information legislation to include private firms delivering public services.

Below this actually much longer list of yeah-right thumb-sucking, academic and professional organisations have, thankfully, got on with useful information management work.

COPYRIGHT BATTLE WIN

In mid-year, a long-running campaign by professional pressure groups achieved the repeal of a 100-year-old Copyright Act exclusion of the 'lifetime of author plus 70 years' rule from applying to 'works of artistic craftsmanship', roughly meaning manufactured art such as Faberge eggs or William Morris Arts and Crafts Movement designs. These items got only a total 25 years' copyright protection.

The repeal came into force on 28 July and took effect after a six-month transition period on 28 January making the lifetime-plus-70-years rule apply to all.

Organisations like Britain's Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), Design and Artists Copyright Society (DACS) and the Libraries and Archives Copyright Alliance (LACA) celebrated when the UK Government announced the repeal of the controversial Section 52 of the Act[1].

A CILIP statement, nonetheless, reminded information managers: "This is a complex area of law, made even more so by the lack of a statutory definition of a work of artistic craftsmanship."[2]

CASE FOR EVIDENCE

That morsel of good news was hardly noticed in the great British media's Brexit blitzkrieg.

It was just like another significant information management moment, the up-beat words of top civil servant, John Pullinger, UK's National Statistician, Head of the Government Statistical Service and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, no slouch when it comes to record keeping. He was speaking at Civil Service Live, a country-wide, root and branch conference of public servants.

He had Brexit misinformation much in mind when he declared: "At big moments in the life of our nation we need good quality, trustworthy and relevant evidence and good use of that evidence to help us make decisions.

"Without it we hear the selective voice of vested interests. We see the headline that emphasises the extreme or the unlikely. We are subjected to the rhetoric of a yarn designed to lure us into a fictional world. And we are denied the opportunity to set these influences in context."

He insisted: "In recent weeks, since the referendum result, some have spoken about the death of evidence following examples of bad use of numbers, misrepresentation of statistics and a disdain for knowledge.

"Of course, decisions are made on the basis of emotions and beliefs as well as science. Those who work in the world of evidence gathering need some humility in what we claim. But evidence does matter."[3]

He was speaking three months before the US Presidential election, but his anxieties applied there just as well.

ECONOMICS OF PRIVACY

Another overlooked top-level IM event was the London School of Economics (LSE) special Media Policy Project debate on 'Automation, Prediction and Digital Inequalities'. Dr Alessandro Acquisti, Professor of Information Technology and Public Policy at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Mellon University, spoke of the 'Economics of Privacy'[4].

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He challenged modern attitudes such as "privacy doesn't make economic sense", "loss of privacy is the price to pay for technological advances and benefits of big data" and "sharing personal data is an economic win-win".

He told the workshop: "The question about the relationships between data and economics whether we are going to use data in a way which simply changes the allocation of economic surplus or actually increases the total amount of surplus for everyone. I believe that privacy has a role to play in determining which of these scenarios will occur."

That was telling it straight but, sadly, who outside the LSE halls heard Dr Acquisti. Too few of us.

EU HYPERLINK CONFUSION

Then there was the bizarre case before the Court of Justice of the European Union in which a judge decided that any website linking to another site's copyright infringing material can itself be guilty of infringement. Even worse, it will be assumed that the second web operator knows of this if the links are provided "for the pursuit of financial gain".

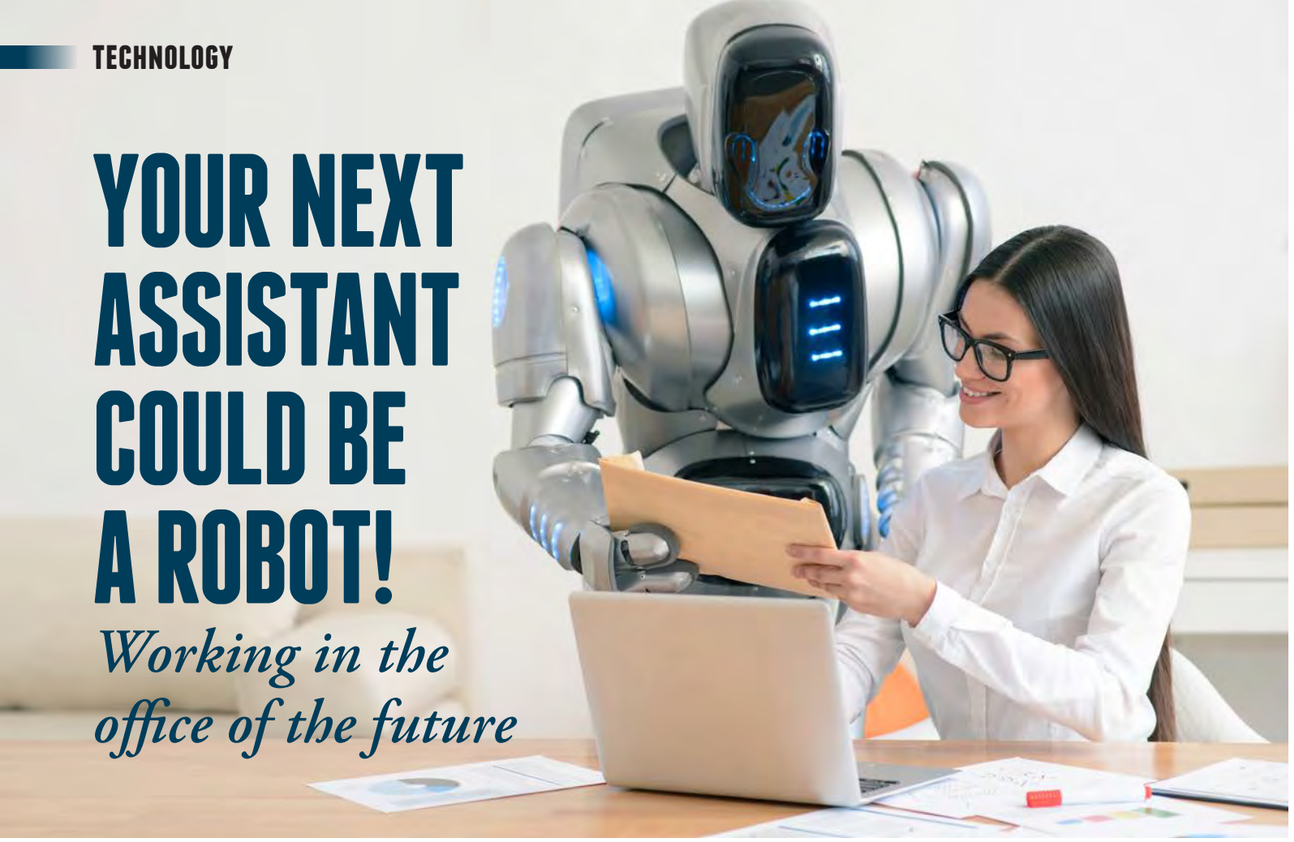
Only IM bloggers seem to have picked this up in the British diaspora and they could not agree. Electric Frontier Foundation analyst Jeremy Malcolm wrote[5] that the decision "threatens to cause turmoil for thousands if not millions of websites" while the A Register commentator Andrew Orlowski decided[6] it meant "URLs linking to infringing material are not themselves an infringement, except when they are. Confused? You should be – and perhaps that's the idea."

Veteran intellectual property rights consultant, Professor Charles Oppenheim, added further uncertainty with a CILIP blog[7] paper saying the EU court decision had "provoked a flurry of comments about the legality of putting URLs into a published piece". He went on: "Judging by some of the comments made on this case, this is the end of the Internet (at least in the EU), but I don't agree."

There's a lot more IM news to be found on the Brit blogs if not the mass media, but that dubious judgment may, after all, give good reason for Brexit. Such judicious obfuscation could be infectious and spread to saner, southern Anglophonic legislatures. ❖

Footnotes

1. See https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transitional-arrangements-for-the-repeal-of-section-52-cdpa.
2. See http://www.cilip.org.uk/blog/change-copyright-law-industrially-manufactured-artistic-works.
3. See https://civilservice.blog.gov.uk/2016/08/02/making-the-case-for-evidence/
4. See http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mediapolicyproject/2016/07/27/the-economics-of-privacy/.
5. See https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2016/09/european-copyright-ruling-ushers-new-dark-era-hyperlinks.
6. See http://www.theregister.co.uk/2016/09/08/eu_latest_copyright_ruling_hyperlinks_to_pirated_material/
7. See http://www.cilip.org.uk/blog/some-thoughts-hyperlinks-communication-public.



YOUR NEXT ASSISTANT COULD BE A ROBOT!

Working in the office of the future

Cognitive technologies have transformed robotics and given birth to the virtual assistant. This article takes a quick look at how the evolution of robotic process automation and intelligent automation are changing the traditional workplace.

By Linda Shave

It is no secret that the digital transformation and business activities are available anytime, anywhere, any place and this has resulted in data being generated faster than our capacity to manage it. In fact, digitally sourced information will continue to grow at a rapid pace; the ongoing challenge for information management professionals will be how do we manage such large volumes of content, secure it and make it findable. Will this require new skills, new ways of thinking and working? Are the old ways and tools we currently use, such as the business classification scheme (BCS) and general disposal and retention schedule (GDRS) agile enough for the future or are they going to be a thing of the past? Will we be doing things differently and doing different things?

Many organisations are asking these important questions, or similar ones. As a result, many organisations are beginning to explore the use of robotic process automation (RPA). Why is this important for information management professionals? Our everyday lives are already being affected by new forms of invasive technologies such as the availability of intelligent virtual assistants like Siri, Cortana and Google Now. These intelligent virtual assistants are changing how traditional services can be delivered. Welcome to the future! Robots and robotic process automation are here to stay!

WHAT IS ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA) AND INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION (IA)?

RPA is a way to automate routine tasks that are transactional, repetitive and often rules-based processes. RPA has the potential to change today's workplace significantly, just as the industrial revolution changed the factory floor. RPA software robots, 'bots' for short, can interact with business applications but they must follow a highly systematic set of instructions and simple conditional logic. RPA software robots are not humanoid robots nor something that can entirely replace humans; they are, however, able to replicate human cognitive functions.

There are two streams, RPA and intelligent automation (IA). Both RPA and IA have the potential to make processes smarter and more efficient in very different ways. Neither RPA nor IA solutions replicate human reasoning, they only follow pre-programmed processes.

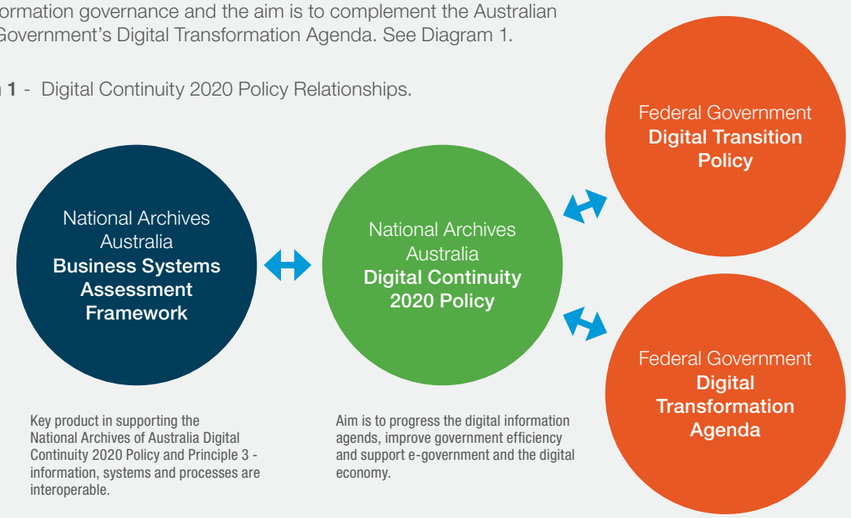
Table 1 - Describing the differences between RPA and IA.

Robotic process automation (RPA) Routine	Intelligent automation (IA) Non-routine
Automates tasks that are routine such as systematic, repetitive, transactional, rules-based	Automates tasks that are non-routine and require thoughtful consideration
Is able to follow instructions	Is able to come to a conclusion
They are software 'robots' that plug into, and access, existing business software	

HOW WILL ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA) FIT INTO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVES?

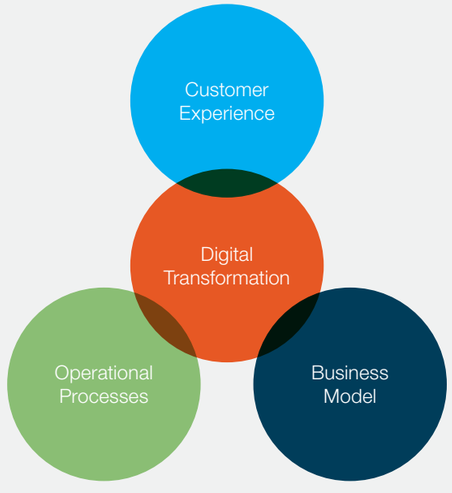
How will RPA fit into digital transformation initiatives? This is an interesting question. If we look closer to home, we could use the Digital Continuity 2020 policy as an example. The Digital Continuity 2020 policy is an approach to digital information governance and the aim is to complement the Australian Federal Government's Digital Transformation Agenda. See Diagram 1.

Diagram 1 - Digital Continuity 2020 Policy Relationships.



The purpose of the Digital Transformation Agenda is to make it easier for individuals and business to access Australian federal government services, and the digital service standard establishes the criteria that these digital services must meet to ensure that services are simpler, faster and easier to use. See Diagram 2.

Diagram 2 - Digital Transition Components

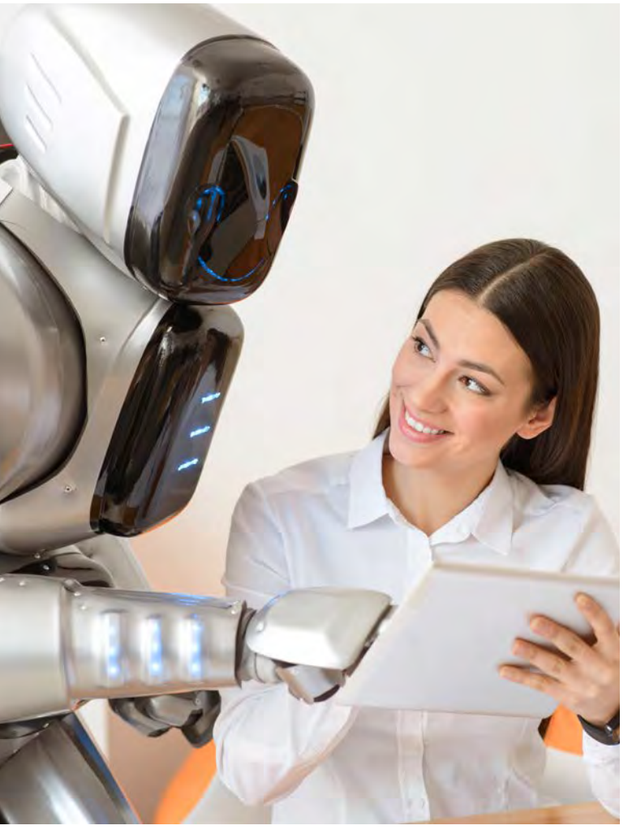


The long-term strategy of the digital transformation agenda 'to make services, simpler, faster and easier to use', might be achieved by using RPA robots to automate routine-based business activities and operational processes to deliver the primary outcome of 'customer experience'. For example, RPA robots could be used to:

- automate routine-based operational processes that are transactional, repetitive, rules based and involve users, data and systems
- automate the collection and integration of data from legacy business systems
- create a single view of multiple data sources
- transform data into valuable information.

The significance of using RPA robots for automation in order to achieve the longer term economic value of the digital transformation agenda cannot be overlooked. This digital transformation will be challenging and will require strong leadership to navigate and manage the human full-time employee (FTE) workforce through this invasive technology transition period. For example, leaders will need to:

- redefine FTE workforce roles
- redesign organisational structures
- enable cross-functional collaboration.



These leaders will require new skills and new ways of thinking to drive the evolution of these new jobs of the future. It will require new business models to build a new workforce that integrates human employees with their robot counterparts in order to:

- achieve economic value
- improve compliance, quality and control improvements
- reduce the need for outsourcing
- improve customer experience and digital inclusivity by making services simpler, faster and easier to use.

ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA) V TRADITIONAL BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT (BPM) PROJECTS

Traditionally, BPM projects focused on re-engineering the underlying processes to drive efficiencies, in most cases resulting in building new applications to replace existing legacy business applications. Whereas, RPA on the other hand focuses on automating routine manual intensive processes without changing or replacing existing legacy business applications and freeing up a full-time employee (FTE) to concentrate on other more complex tasks.

ADVANTAGES OF ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA)

Advantages of RPA over traditional approaches are as follows:

- RPA is a good candidate for almost any organisation that has a number of different business systems involved in routine transactional repetitive, rules-based processes. It helps to provide higher productivity benefits.
- Utilising RPA robots as a virtual workforce offers organisations an alternative to 'outsourcing' which in turn can result in lower operating costs.
- RPA technology tracks and monitors all tasks enabling improved compliance and controls and helping companies to meet audit and regulatory requirements.
- RPA technology has the potential to help management in redefining workforce roles, redesigning organisational structures and enabling cross-functional collaboration for the new jobs of the future – enabling organisations to develop new business models and building a new workforce that integrates an RPA robot virtual workforce and humans in new ways.

HOW MIGHT YOU EMBARK ON A ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA) JOURNEY?

Embarking on an RPA journey requires considering several questions. Using the 4WH methodology of Who, What, When, Why and How, Table 2 provides an example of questions you might ask when embarking on an RPA project.

Table 2 - The five building blocks for consideration for the RPA journey.

Question	Description	Considerations
What	Automation opportunities	• Which processes are the best candidates for robotic process automation? • Which process would be most suitable for a robotic process automation pilot?
Why	Prepare a business case	• What are the benefits of RPA? • What are the pain points that can be erased?
How	Determine the best operating model for your business	• Who will manage and monitor the software robot?
Who	Identify the best supplier in the RPA space	• Who are the main providers who cater for your specific business needs in the RPA space?
When	Plan the automation time line	• How long should your pilot be? • What is your strategy for the future?

HOW MIGHT RPA AND IA WORK IN A BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT?

RPA with cognitive technologies such as IA can be used to automate mundane business processes such as fulfilling a purchase order. An RPA robot virtual workforce can automate transactional repetitive, rules-based processes usually performed by people sitting in front of computers. By interacting with applications just as a human would, these RPA robots can open email attachments, complete e-forms, record and re-key data, and perform other tasks that mimic human actions.

The RPA robot virtual workforce can be assigned to the back office thus freeing up its human counterpart to undertake more complex and rewarding tasks. Diagram 3 is an example of how RPA and IA could be used to automate a purchase order process.

MANUAL PROCESS

Human periodically logs into business system to check for a new order	Human confirms the request, validates the purchase order	Human applies pricing and discounts as defined in customers contract	Human manually data enters and uploads purchase order to finance business system	Human sends purchase order to warehouse for shipment and invoicing	Human manually creates invoice from purchase order

ROBOT PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA)

RPA robot monitors business system checking for new purchase orders	Once a purchase is identified the RPA robot will automatically download and immediately passes it on for manual review and validation	Human manually reviews and validates the purchase order	RPA robot uploads the purchase order to the finance business system	Pricing and Discounts are automatically applied based on the customer contract (business rules)	Purchase order is automatically invoiced and sent to warehouse for shipment

INTELLIGENT AUTOMATION (IA)

RPA robot monitors business system checking for new purchase orders	Once a purchase is identified the RPA robot will automatically download the purchase order.	RPA robot automatically validates the purchase order and uploads the purchase order to the finance business system	Pricing and Discounts are automatically applied based on customer contract (business rules)	Purchase order is automatically invoiced and sent to warehouse for shipment

Diagram 3 - The evolution of RPA and IA in a purchase order process

MOVING TOWARDS THE NEXT PLATFORM – IA

The advantages of IA over traditional approaches will be the capability of automating non-routine tasks that require making decisions based on systematic consideration. See Diagram 3. IA is underpinned by cognitive technologies which are able to understand natural language, recognise images, and can learn from observing humans.

When IA is integrated with RPA and the use of powerful analytics, these combined cognitive technologies result in robotic virtual agents (also known as virtual assistants), who can either directly assist people in the performance of non-routine tasks or even automate these tasks entirely. This is fast becoming the norm with virtual assistants sprouting up everywhere.

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE!

As we move towards the future of intelligent automation and combine RPA and IA to create virtual assistants, humans will work hand-in-hand with robots to transform the way we do business. Just imagine your own virtual information management robot assistant carrying out both routine and non-routine tedious tasks, answering questions and assisting people 24/7 and freeing you up to do 'the important tasks' – ie, those tasks that need complex decision making and you currently never get the time to do because of the routine and non-routine tedious tasks.

Welcome to the future! Robots and virtual assistants have arrived and they are here to stay. Now is the perfect time to embrace the moment, identify and off load your mundane routine and non-routine tasks to your own personal virtual assistant. ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Linda Shave is acknowledged as a thought leader and architect of change. She is a researcher, consultant and auditor in areas of virtual information asset management, business process management, cloud migration, corporate governance and risk management. Linda is a former CEO, CIO and a member of numerous professional organisations.

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TECHNOLOGY

Is machine learning the future of records management?

Passive records management may well be the future through the use of machine learning, but only if we are prepared to entrust the principles of record keeping to machines and let them become our records management experts.

By Nicholas Fripp

As records and information management professionals, we have spent our careers training staff, management, executives and entire organisations how to be pseudo records managers – how to identify what a record is; what a business classification scheme is and why it is required; how to appropriately classify records; where to save records and where not to save records; and how to structure like information together. There is also the ongoing debate about whether the records management section should centrally control the corporate information or whether the staff should be trusted to appropriately capture, classify and manage our corporate information assets.

Traditionally, an organisation would develop a business classification scheme to identify the core functions of the organisation. From there, the organisation is trained (often painstakingly) on how to utilise this classification scheme to create folders in order to group like documents together within one folder. The staff within the organisation then develop a love / hate relationship with the classification scheme as they try to determine if the record is really about procurement, budgeting or accounting.

In a world abundant in technology, with each new day bringing technological advancements, are we as records and information managers ready to turn these scenarios on their head? Instead of training people on the principles of record keeping, are we prepared to train machines on the principles of record keeping and let those machines become our records management experts? Are we ready to relinquish the reins and enable records management to happen automatically in the background?

Don't worry, this is not suggesting that records managers will be out of a job; in actual fact, it is future proofing the role of the records and information management professional by transitioning roles into the digital workforce. Principles, frameworks, strategies, processes and procedures are still required, but instead of training the business in these processes, it is training computers how to undertake the processes to meet our recordkeeping framework requirements.

Regardless of which electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) is in use within your organisation, the smarts and designs behind these programs have progressed a lot in the past few years. No longer is an EDRMS where records go to die, an EDRMS is a fully intuitive, integrated piece of software which can enable an organisation to work smarter, faster and more efficiently. Leading EDRMS applications today are now equipped with some kind of machine learning capabilities, which means the EDRMS can learn processes and procedures without being programmed and they can teach themselves to grow and change when exposed to new data. Thus records management becomes a 'passive' activity for users, happening transparently behind the scenes while the user gets on with the job at hand.

> *Instead of training people on the principles of record keeping, are we prepared to train machines ... ?*

What I am defining as machine learning within an EDRMS is the capability for the software to review and analyse documents that are placed within the system, and then make determinations based on the document's content, related documents and other metadata on where to store the document, how to classify the document and how long to retain the document. Records managers can further train the system with sample records in order to improve the accuracy and confidence level of the system to undertake these processes. Where previously staff members, records management teams or system administrators had to actively review and determine how to save the document into the system, what to call the document and where the document should be stored, machine learning enables these staff members to simply save their work into the EDRMS, with little to no rules placed on them, and the system undertakes the determinations on the staff member's behalf, so that records management occurs passively behind the scenes.

Machine learning can additionally assist an organisation to understand which information is missing from the EDRMS, and breakdown the information silos across the organisation. These systems can be trained to look for keywords, patterns and algorithms across the network to find all the information and records stored through the IT environments, and then automatically send these records into the EDRMS, or help to identify and reduce areas of duplication, redundant and obsolete records that are costing the organisation to store and manage.

Machine learning encourages staff to store information into the correct locations / systems and helps to streamline duplicated processes.

There are many benefits to be gained from machine learning in records management, including but not limited to, increased user uptake of EDRMS, reduced cost in training and change management, reduced storage and management costs, and increased productivity and efficiency in decision making. The question then is, are organisations ready for machine-based learning and will machine learning become the future of records management? ❖

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nicholas Fripp, a principal consultant at iCognition, has been part of the records and information management industry for 17 years, and has been providing EDRMS consulting services for over nine years.

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EDRMS – answers and solutions for better records and information management

A couple of dozen Kiwi records and information managers gathered recently to share thoughts and opinions in one of its monthly 'mezzanine meetings' – so called because they meet informally on the mezzanine floor at the Wellington City Council Library at lunch times once a month. The topic of discussion was whether electronic document and records management systems have provided the recordkeeping community resolutions for better records and information management.

By **Beatrice Siu**

An electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) is designed to enable organisations to manage their records throughout a document's life cycle. It is meant to help businesses protect and manage their records to facilitate business workflow, while enhancing information management practices.

EDRMS came about because of changing environments in the workplace. Organisations began using computer technologies and the EDRMS was developed to be integrated with other computer systems. It is pitched as an innovative solution to reduce the amount of paper records and deal with the increasing consumption of storage space.

At the mezzanine meeting, the records and information managers gathered to address burning questions like:

- Is the system really fit for purpose?
- Has the system really helped reduce paper records?
- Has the system actually helped manage the records more effectively and efficiently?
- How have we used our system in managing our records?
- Is it the death of EDRMS?

Many commented that their EDRMS had not delivered on its promise to reduce paper records. Others thought their EDRMS programs were not well integrated with their business's computer systems. Opinions were varied but it seemed the general opinion in the room was not entirely positive. It sounded like the successes and promises of EDRMS had fallen short.

WHY THE LACK OF SUCCESS?

An interesting discussion developed on how to organise and manage physical and electronic records. There seemed to be an expectation to overlay the old way of paper managing in an electronic environment. Are physical and electronic records incompatible? Maybe physical and electronic record systems don't mesh? Possibly people were expecting their EDRMS to be capable of emulating a physical file structure and classification under an electronic paradigm. The focus seemed to be on users wanting their EDRMS to perform in a manner like physical filing.

As a contractor, I've been exposed to different types of EDRMS software like TRIM and Objective and can empathise with people's frustrations. What I know with certainty is that EDRMSs never did mirror a physical filing system.

Possibly people were expecting their EDRMS to be capable of emulating a physical file structure and classification under an electronic paradigm.

There's a need to point out shortcomings in each system. Electronic records won't have volumes like physical files. On the flipside, physical files can't store metadata information as well as electronic records. But the most systematic problem I see is that both electronic and physical records are incomplete. As a result, there's still a need to keep paper and electronic records alongside each other.

PROBLEMS WITH EDRMS

A major problem staff found with some EDRMSs is that

Changing tack and speaking from a perspective that makes sense to business owners can help bring these important individuals on board.

user interfaces are not user friendly. When creating and saving sets of electronic records, people found that configuring and completing the mandatory data and meta data fields is very tedious. Basically, using EDRMS systems can be cumbersome when creating new records.

Inefficiencies don't stem only from poor usability. The discussion revealed some systems were not performing at optimum levels because of financial constraints. Budgets determined that some of the most useful and advanced features of any given EDRMS program were not bought and activated because they were too expensive.

Sometimes also, higher management seemed reluctant to support the implementation of EDRMS systems. If there were no champions to support the implementation of EDRMS, success was even slimmer.

THE STORAGE DILEMMA

Systems and processes have changed but there are problems that don't change – records storage and maintenance. A big part of why electronic records and EDRMSs sounded so promising was because, it was said, they could solve the consumption of space as workloads continued to increase. It's important to realise that creating, storing and managing electronic records can use up space quickly over a short period because of the size of files and their embedded metadata.

Like physical records, maintaining a server storage space requires regular disposal. It may require less physical effort to move electronic records, but we still have to think about how the data is managed securely and effectively. It needs to be realised that EDRMSs certainly do not resolve the issue of consumption of space and storage. They do not reduce the amount of physical or electronic records being produced.

The good news. There are some useful solutions that can start happening. It simply requires a change in attitude and working habits.

Electronic records: The bulk of many organisation's records are administrative. Like physical records, the accumulation of working notes and drafts are far greater than final records. Many administrative emails can be deleted on an ongoing basis. Empty the trash, too. It's amazing how these changes can save space.

A cost-benefit analysis: Another brilliant solution was offered at the meeting. By running a smaller project and a cost-benefit analysis, we can gain a better indication of whether an EDRMS program adds any benefits to work loads and work processes. Is it worthwhile to move into the digital environment? Will there be greater costs in setting up and running an organisation's workload electronically? Will it streamline all business processes – if not, why move?

Re-pitching: Often many senior managers struggle to see why records are important in the work place. Changing tack and speaking from a perspective that makes sense to business owners can help bring these important individuals on board.

Whatever the obstacle may be, it is time to get talking ... about how to make the system work best for organisational needs.

Talk to IT programmers: This has plagued my mind for so long. Our dialogues should include the IT specialists and programmers who set up these programs. Opening a dialogue could lead to improving EDRMS software to fit record standards and become more user-friendly.

Whatever the obstacle may be, it is time to get talking and thinking about how to make the system work best for organisational needs. Records remain a critical part of facilitating work functions. We just need to be able to re-think how our recordkeeping processes and management can evolve to fit within today's fast-changing digital disposition. ❖

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AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKING STUDY 2016

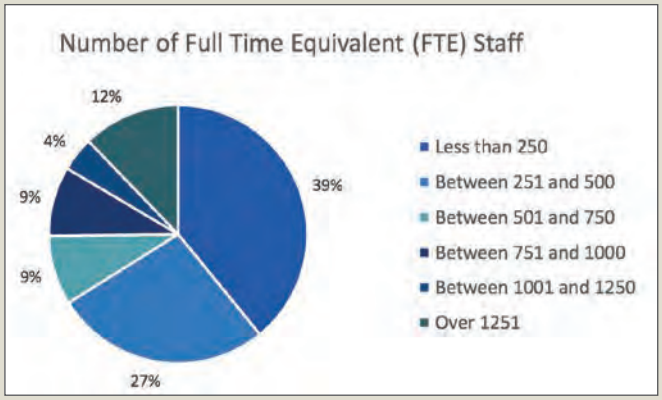
Votar Partners were engaged by the Wyndham City Council in Victoria to benchmark their records and information management service against other local governments in Australia. An online survey was conducted during September 2016 to gather data to benchmark records and information management activities, staff and systems, with a particular focus on the handling of incoming mail. This study produced some interesting findings, especially when compared to a previous study conducted by Votar in 2014.

By **Kye O'Donnell**

BENCHMARKING GROUP PROFILE

Survey responses were received from 188 organisations across Australia, including local governments and water authorities in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Most organisations have less than 500 full-time equivalent staff, as shown in figure one below. **See Figure 1.**

Figure 1: Number of Staff

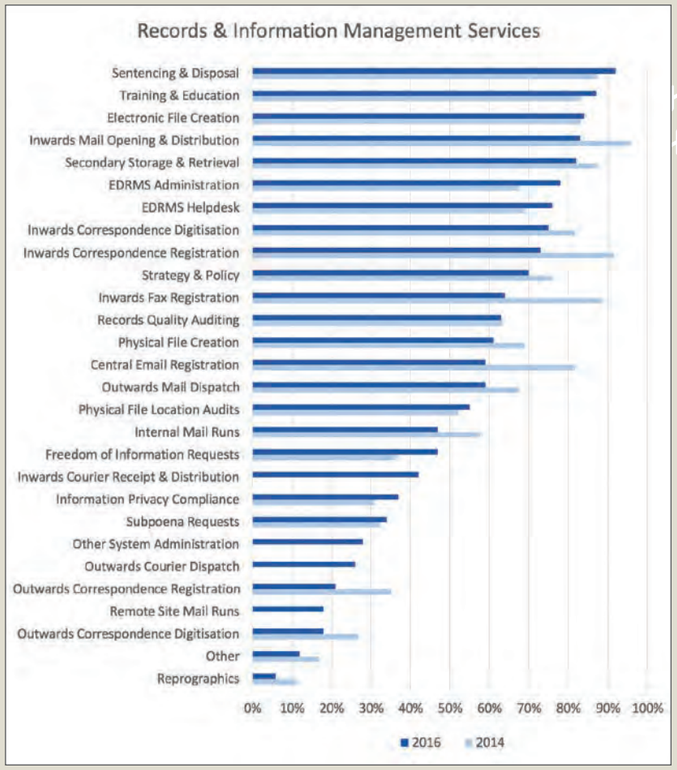


RESULTS

Services

The most common records and information management services provided to organisations in the benchmarking group are record sentencing and disposal (92%), training and education (87%), electronic file creation (84%), incoming mail opening and distribution (83%), and secondary storage and retrieval (82%). These are all fairly traditional records management focussed services. Other information management services are less common, such as Freedom of Information (47%), privacy compliance (37%), and subpoena requests (34%). There is also a noticeable decrease in the centralised handling of records between this study and the last study in 2014, as shown in figure two below. **See Figure 2.**

Figure 2: Records & Information Management Services



Outsourcing records and information management services to external service providers was not common among the benchmarking group, with 49% not outsourcing any of their services. The most commonly outsourced services are secondary storage and retrieval (33%), remote site mail runs (9%), and outwards mail dispatch (7%).

Staff

The number of people working in an organisation's records and information management team varies considerably based on the size of the organisation, the number and type of services provided and the volume of records handled. The average for small organisations (less than 250 FTE staff) was 2.06 FTE, and the average for very large organisations (over 1251 FTE) was 14.23 FTE. The use of contractors by organisations in the benchmarking group appears to be minimal, except for in very large organisations. The average number of records and information management resources in organisations in the benchmarking group is shown in figure three above right. **See Figure 3.**

Transaction volume

The volume of incoming mail handled by an organisation's records and information management team also varies considerably based on the size of the organisation and the type of services they provide. The average number of incoming mail items handled is 140 per working day. The average number of items registered into an organisation's electronic document records management system (EDRMS) is 109 (78% of the total), and the average number digitised is 79 (77% of hardcopy mail). There has been a significant drop in mail volume from when the last study was conducted in 2014, however the volume of central emails has increased and the proportion of mail being digitised and registered into an EDRMS has also increased. This suggests an improvement in record capture in local government as more records are received electronically.

Figure 3: Number of Records & Information Management Staff

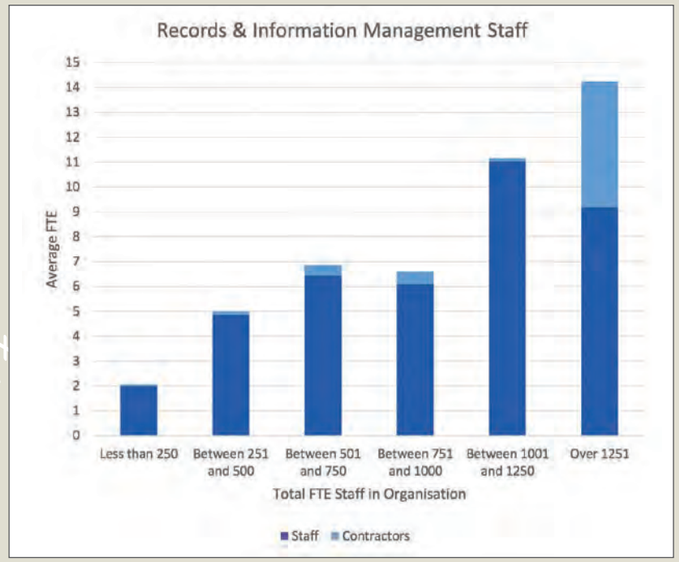
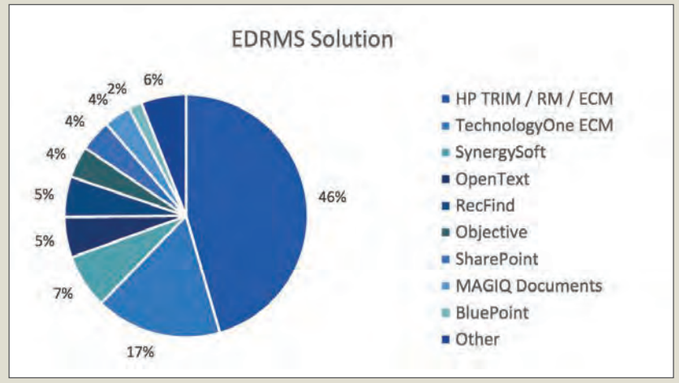


Figure 4: EDRMS Solutions



Despite a range of systems being used, most organisations in the benchmarking group are using their system in a very similar way

Systems

HP TRIM/RM/ECM was by far the most commonly used EDRMS in the benchmarking group (46%). TechnologyOne ECM (17%) and SynergySoft (7%) were the next most commonly used systems, as shown in figure four below. Most systems were installed within the last 10 years (56%) and have been upgraded in the last two years (64%). **See Figure 4.**

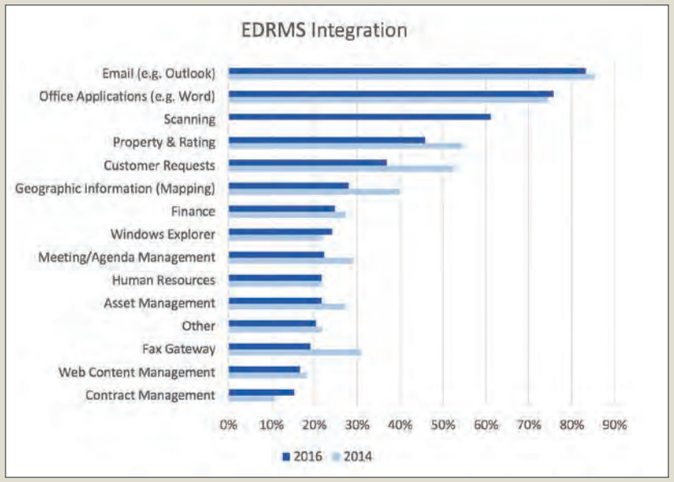
Despite a range of systems being used, most organisations in the benchmarking group are using their system in a very similar way. Most are using their system to capture electronic documents (96%), emails (93%), and digitised hardcopy documents (92%). While capturing digital photos is fairly common (80%), fewer organisations are using their system to capture audio visual material (55%), and only a small proportion are capturing social media records (33%) despite their current popularity in local government. It is however good to note that the capture of social media posts has increased significantly since the last

study in 2014.

Integration

Not surprisingly, email (83%) and office applications (76%) are the most common systems for an EDRMS to be integrated with. Integration with other core systems such as Property & Rating (46%), and Customer Requests (37%) is less common. Integration between the EDRMS and other corporate systems is considerably less common as shown in figure five below. The level of EDRMS integration appears to have decreased for most systems since the last study in 2014. This indicates that EDRMS capabilities are still not being fully utilised to improve the efficiency of record capture and retrieval in local government. **See Figure 5.**

Figure 5: EDRMS Integration



Metadata

The metadata elements being captured for incoming correspondence by organisations in the benchmarking group is mostly similar. Standard metadata elements such as the title (83%), date registered (79%), date created (78%), author (73%), document type (70%), file (70%) and action officer (66%) are captured by most organisations. Property ID is also being captured by many organisations (56%) if the record relates to a property. Some organisations are also capturing additional metadata elements which are less common, such as delivery mode (44%), application ID (49%) and customer ID (33%). Although there are similarities in the metadata being captured, the variation still points to a lack of adoption of well-established recordkeeping metadata standards in local government. There also appears to be less metadata being captured than when the study was last conducted in 2014.

Workflow

Many organisations in the benchmarking group (64%) are using automated workflow functionality to distribute incoming correspondence to action officers. However 36% of organisations still aren't using workflow technology to improve process efficiency and customer service responsiveness. This is similar to when the study was last conducted in 2014, indicating that there has been no improvement in this area.

Digitisation

Most organisations (87%) are digitising at least some of their hardcopy, incoming mail. It is very common to digitise both black and white, and colour documents (84%). It is also fairly common to digitise photos and plans up to A3 in size (70%). Plans over A3 in size are less commonly digitised (49%), as are large documents (62%). There also appears to be less document types being digitised than when the study was last conducted in 2014, possibly due to more documents now being received electronically.

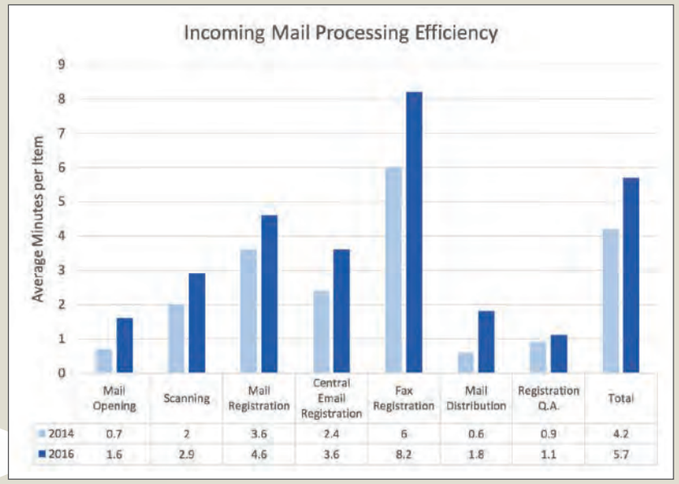
Efficiency

Benchmarking participants estimated the daily number of person hours being spent by records and information management staff on six key activities related to the processing of incoming mail. The average number of minutes being spent processing an item of incoming mail has been calculated based on the average daily volume of records handled by each organisation in the benchmarking group. The most time consuming activity is registration, with an average time of 4.6 minutes per item of hardcopy mail. Interestingly, central emails are slightly quicker to register (3.6 minutes per item). Faxes are significantly slower to register (8.2 minutes per item), possibly due to low volumes and the need to monitor this channel throughout the day. The next most time consuming activity is scanning, with an average time of 2.9 minutes per item.

There is a significant variation in processing efficiency in the benchmarking group. One organisation processes each item (on average) in less than one minute, where as another takes over 21 minutes per item. The average time to process each item is 5.7 minutes, as shown in figure six. Interestingly, incoming mail processing efficiency has decreased in all activity areas since the last benchmarking study in 2014.

The results of this study indicate that there are significant opportunities for many local governments to streamline the processing of their incoming mail. More sophisticated scanning software can reduce the time spent manually correcting images, and registration can be simplified through system configuration changes and the establishment of clear and consistent business rules and record titling protocols.

Figure 6: Incoming Mail Processing Efficiency (Average Minutes per Item)



See Figure 6.

CONCLUSION

This study provides some encouraging and concerning indicators for the future of RIM in Australian local government. The transition to more digital forms of communication and record keeping are leading to more decentralised handling of records and interestingly, to higher rates of record capture. The capture of newer formats, such as audio visual and social media posts, is also increasing. Unfortunately the quality of recordkeeping metadata being captured seems to be reducing and the adoption of automated workflows has plateaued. Integration between an organisation's EDRMS and other corporate systems also appears to be decreasing, possibly due to the cost of maintaining this integration during system upgrades.

Experience from Australian organisations shows that an effective RIM program will assist organisations to meet their compliance obligations, improve staff productivity and enhance the quality of the organisation's services. As more local governments make the move to a digital mode of service delivery, their records and information management practices must evolve. Practitioners need to engage with business areas, corporate system owners, and information technology teams to ensure good practices are embedded in the design

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What you need to know – an intranet tale

Intranets can be dark, unvisited backwaters with lurking hazards of outdated advice and missed opportunities. There are very good reasons to review and refresh your content.

By Lorien Mader

And so it was that an intranet was populated with records management advice, guidance, rules, links, references, obligations, attachments, extracts and caveats, the origins of which are lost in the mists of time.

The sheer volume of information for the average member of staff to digest was matched only by the 'high' tone of the language, requiring an education level of 'college graduate' (see the 'language' resource under 'Tools' on page 34).

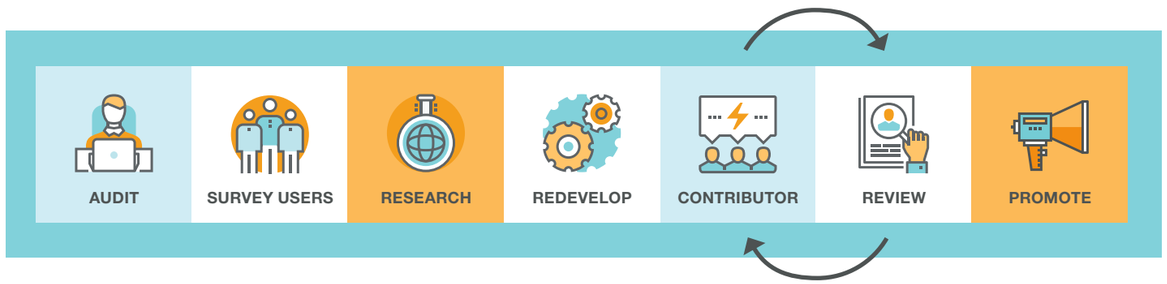
When you consider the number of factors involved for anyone tasked with addressing the Intranet issue, I'm pleased that the outcome has had such favourable reviews.

Some of these factors, or rather questions that must be asked, are:

- Who are we talking to?
- What do we want users to know, or do?
- Is anyone using this content?
- Who's going to manage the site?

The sensible order of business followed this line: audit, survey, structure and write, with a number of feedback and amendment loops as quality assurance reviews.

I had fun with Visio:



The audit revealed a large quantity of pages (31!) bound by arcane physics, that did not appear to meet the needs of my agency. There's no denying that the offering was detailed and comprehensive, but at best it was dense and at worst intimidating for users.

As a relatively recent arrival to the agency, I could see this and was happy to exercise a few capabilities that shouldn't be underrated: research and analysis (you can see the gaps and fill them), subject matter knowledge (you know what to promote) and relationship building (you'll be surprised by how many people you know that are willing to help).

I did bring a bonus package of enthusiasm for areas that we in IM don't often get to practice (expanding job roles anyone?), including Plain English, user-centred design and the web as a tool for community building and communication.

I was fortunate to have colleagues in our web team able to run a statistical visitor report on our set of records management pages and the results could have been better. The longest visit in a six-month period was for seven minutes. This was reflected in the user survey interviews – some people either hadn't used or even been aware of the records advice on the intranet.

Feedback from members of the survey group (of various lengths of service, levels of responsibility and experience) formed a pattern. They wanted advice, not a theoretical treatise or confrontation. In any area of an organisation's business, people want to have their colleagues appreciate

The audit revealed a large quantity of pages (31!), bound by arcane physics, that did not appear to meet the needs of my agency

their depth of knowledge and contribution. This can't be done effectively with swags of technical language and improbable cross-referencing threads. It's difficult to digest, hard to update and can frankly appear exclusive, keeping colleagues at arm's length. Nobody can afford these outcomes in our high-risk, low-resource times.

So, what an opportunity!

The users gave us themes to work with:

- The basics
- The big questions
- What's available
- What's going on
- More…

These themes became the bare bones of the redeveloped content. Here at least it was possible to go from 31 pages to five and still help people to understand how to do their jobs responsibly.

Applying a Plain English footing, an understanding of web accessibility principles, an awareness of the Digital Service Standard and my fascist tendencies, the content was worked and reworked to a point that it could leave the test environment and go live.

Some of the quickest and easiest gains fell out of the audit and review stage, identifying duplicated advice (in some cases entire pages), instances of link rot and outdated names and terms to delete or update – all relatively simple improvements.

Our freshly minted information management pages are tools to help our agency understand and adopt digital work practices

Our freshly minted information management pages are tools to help our agency understand and adopt digital work practices, subtly and explicitly. Introducing the basic concept of information management, grouping advices in a way that exposes people to broader ideas, speaking plainly on system capability and aligning notices on the future state of information in the agency with current work.

There is another bonus. The work done here will feed into an agency-wide project to redevelop its intranet service. In the same way that I found simple wins for our local content, the overarching project can itself have a simple win by transferring our redeveloped pages to the future platform. This is a task that lies ahead for other business areas. I'm upskilled and available for English translation services, user engagement exercises and weddings.

We're not iterating wildly, but it has been communicated to the broader community that the basic model is there, that we do want feedback, we will build on it – and it will meet their needs.

ADVICE

- Remember who you're writing for – it's not for other specialists, it's for everyone.
- Have a clearly communicated timeline for contributors – placeholders are for drafts only.
- Talk to people – formally in meetings and surveys, and informally in the coffee queue.

TOOLS

There is a vast amount of advice available on how to structure and write online content, but it can take time to filter out the dross and advertising to find what suits the need. Here are a few neat (free!) resources on:

- **structure** – http://4syllables.com.au/resources/structure-tips/
- **language** – http://www.readabilityformulas.com/free-readability-formula-tests.php
- **writing** – https://www.plainenglishfoundation.com/free-writing-tools

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Lorien Mader ARIM works in Information Management at the Department of Finance. Lorien has worked in records and information management roles with the National Archives, Comcare and the NHMRC. She is an ACT Branch Council member of RIMPA, an ACT Branch Committee member of the ASA and is an enthusiastic sharer of information resources.

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HONG KONG: PUBLIC RECORDS IN CRISIS

The former Director of the Hong Kong Government Records Service, Associate Professor Chu examines the facts behind many of the serious defects inherent in the public records management system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Government of China.

By Simon FK Chu

Historically, the Government of Hong Kong has never had a comprehensive and systematic program for records and archives management. This problem was examined by the British administration in late 1987 through a government-wide survey and review on the records management situation of the Hong Kong Government. This seemingly 'sudden' interest of the British Hong Kong Government was apparently prompted by request from the Chinese Government for a smooth handover of colonial records to the new administration in July 1997.

During the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong from December 1941 to the summer of 1945 almost all government records were destroyed. Those that survived, such as the Registers of Births and Deaths and Land Office Records were accessible by the public on payment of fees.

In 1995, the Records Management Strategy Unit (RMSU) was added to the establishment to take over the service-wide records management improvement program. This was the inception of the so-called 'Records Management Strategy' (RMS) aimed at controlling the excessive growth of government records and improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of records management in government agencies. The RMS was implemented in three phases, from 1994 to 1999, because of the complexity and resource implications.

After completion of the RMS, the RMSU was abolished in November 2000 and all its on-going records management functions were taken over by the Records Management Office.

2003 REORGANISATION EXERCISE

The current set-up of the Government Records Service (GRS) is the result of the 2003 reorganisation exercise, the basic aim of which was to realign GRS resources for the pursuit of electronic records management solutions.

Two major changes were noted in the reorganisation. First, there was a new dedicated unit, the Records System Development Office (RSDO). Its officers were drawn from archivist and executive grades to form a consolidated team to support the electronic records management solutions and implement a pilot project. Second, the functions and staffing of the existing units were realigned to absorb the electronic records management–related work.

Currently, Hong Kong Government's records and archives management function is executed by the GRS and its subordinate offices. Officially, the GRS is responsible for developing a recordkeeping program that enables government agencies to manage information resources appropriate to their purpose.[1] The GRS Director is responsible for this, and reports to the Deputy Director of Administration. He is supported by a little over 100 staff undertaking different types of records and archives management work.

MANAGEMENT BY GUIDELINES

However, the GRS has limited power and authority because it is not a statutory body with the backing of legislation to discharge its responsibilities and duties. The Government just put in place administrative arrangements for the management of government records. Government agencies themselves are responsible for establishing and managing their own records system in accordance with guidelines and requirements issued by the GRS Director through the Director of Administration.

These management guidelines were primarily the intellectual products of the archivist-grade staff working in the Public Records Office and the Records Management Office. The GRS is staffed by two major grades of staff, ie archivist grade and executive officer grade. The former comprises mainly professional records and archives management personnel; the latter are general administrative officers with no prior education, training and experience in both records and archives works.

Since 1989, at least 10 manuals and guideline on various aspects of records management practices, procedures and standards have been compiled and issued to bureau and departments for compliance.

Of particular interest and importance was the publication in August 2001 of the Records Management Manual of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (RMM) by the Director of Administration. The purpose of issuing this was to prescribe the code of practices for the establishment of a comprehensive records management program in bureaus and departments. The manual provides management standards and a number of key provisions requiring government agencies to manage records and information for operational, policy, legal and financial needs.

The manual also specifies that government agencies should follow the provisions, as far as possible, to ensure quality, consistency, accountability, efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the management of government records. They should use the manual in conjunction with the records management publications issued by the GRS.

In December 2006, the Director of Administration further issued General Circular No. 5/2006 'Management of Government Records'. The circular reminds government agencies of the importance of proper records management practices specified in the RMM and the GRS records management publications. It also reminds government agencies to adhere to the Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail.

According to the Government's Civil Service Regulation 410, an officer who commits any breach of the instructions contained in a general circular is liable for dismissal or lesser punishments depending upon the gravity of the issue.

On 22 April 2009, the Director of Administration issued General Circular No. 2/2009 'Mandatory Records Management Requirements'. The circular introduces a number of mandatory records management requirements, in order to demonstrate the Government's commitment to practicing good records management and preserving archival records. It states that it should be read in conjunction with General Circular No. 5/2006. The main change brought about by General Circular No. 2/2009 is that some key RMM provisions, as well as the Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail, are now set as mandatory requirement.

However, strangely enough, none of the 'records creation provisions' in the RMM are set as mandatory requirements in this circular. It could thus mean that it is not mandatory for government officers to create records as evidence of their official business.

SYSTEM FAILURE: PUBLIC RECORDS IN TURMOIL

Despite this seemingly well-established infrastructure for the management of records and archives in the Hong Kong Government, the current management system still exhibits gross deficiencies which ultimately affects government efficiency, accountability and transparency. This 'seemingly well-established infrastructure' has not been the result of the government's long-term strategic planning; it is simply the product of historical accident.

The crux of Hong Kong's records and archives management problem lies in the fact that the GRS lacks a clear legislative mandate to work with government agencies. In most jurisdictions around the world, this 'legislative mandate' is manifested in the enactment of an archives law. Though focus in different jurisdictions varies, its basic tenets are essentially similar. Archives laws are normally enacted to govern the behavior of persons holding public offices

In lieu of a law, the GRS has been using a number of administrative directives and guidelines to manage public records. These administrative directives and guidelines are without any legal status and government agencies are free to observe or disregard the guidance from the GRS as they see fit and without consequence.

The most important guideline, as discussed above, is the Records Management Manual of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (RMM). The RMM was originally intended to be a regulation of mandatory nature covering the different aspects of archives and records management. It was actually mentioned as a policy objective by Tung Chee Hwa's Administration in 1999. However, the then Director of Administration, Mr Andrew Wong, backed down after the draft was written and changed its status to a set of advisory guidelines. The Manual was later published with little promotion and has not been updated.

Therefore, at its best, today's mix of administrative guidelines and rules provides only a weak framework for archives and records management. The system continues to require, in the words of the 1994 Information Panel of the Hong Kong Legislative Council, "a high degree of self-discipline and motivation" on the part of government officials, which is often lacking.

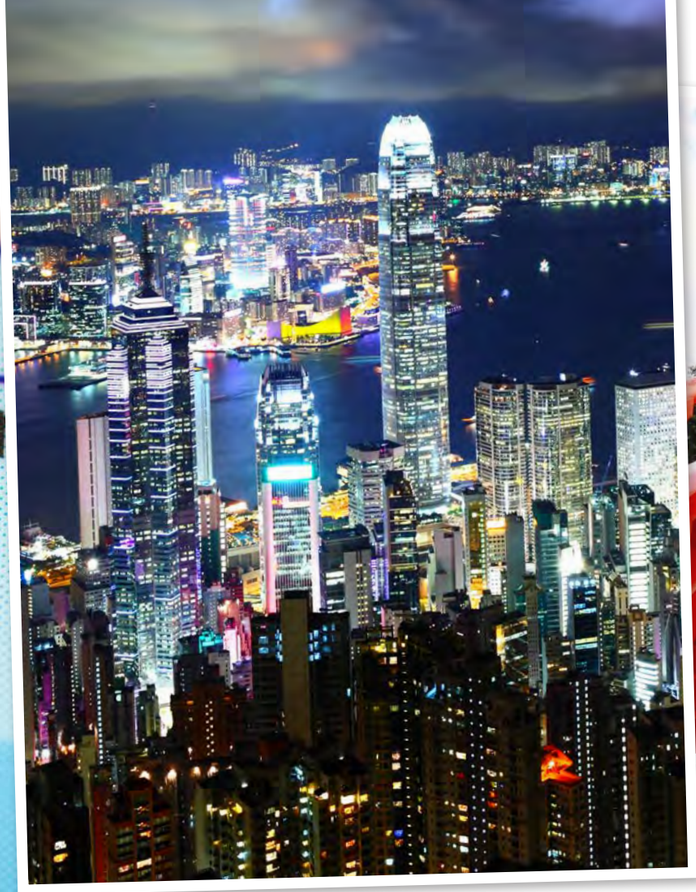
THE LIMITATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT RECORD SERVICE (GRS)

In the absence of a supportive records or archives law, the GRS is therefore not empowered to perform any records controlling or auditing function. There is simply no way that the GRS and its subsidiary offices can rely on their administrative guidelines to ensure that government agencies will perform their records management duties. In short, the GRS lacks the necessary authority, influence and resources to accomplish its mission.

These problems in systems and operations (detailed in the box, below) are no doubt detrimental to effective government record keeping. It is equivalent to a public auditor who is not empowered to inspect what needs to be audited, nor able to impose any penalties in a case of malfeasance. In fact, the works of the Hong Kong Director of Audit are sanctioned by the Audit Ordinance.[2] The work of GRS, on the other hand, has no legal support.

PROBLEMS IN SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS FACED BY THE GRS

- The GRS cannot issue regulations 'forcing' government agencies to comply with all records management provisions as stipulated in guidelines issued by the GRS.
- The GRS is not empowered to inspect or examine public records held by government agencies. Consequently, if government agencies do not initiate a records disposal request or inform the GRS of any proposed disposal, the GRS has no means of knowing about or controlling government information and record.
- Similarly, if government agencies decide to contravene GRS directives and choose to destroy their records without obtaining prior approval from the GRS, the GRS again has no way of knowing it. (In September 2011, it was widely reported in the mass media that the government had destroyed six million pages of records while preparing office relocation to the Central Government Complex in the Tamar district. It was speculated that prior approval for the destruction had not been sought from the GRS Director.)
- The GRS possesses no authority and cannot punish those agencies for non-compliance with provisions as stipulated in the guidelines or manuals.
- The GRS cannot oblige government agencies to transfer records of archival value to the Public Records Office when due.
- The GRS does not have adequate resources and the professional competency to perform its archives and records functions properly. The GRS' current leadership lacks awareness of and expertise in addressing many issues in archives and records management.



Chi lin Nunnery, Hong Kong

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Simon FK Chu is former Director of the Hong Kong Government Records Service and Honorary Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Hong Kong.

The management of public records can be said to be a neglected policy area in the Hong Kong Government

STAFFING ARRANGEMENT AND THE LACK OF PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY

The GRS' lack of authority is aggravated by the lack of sufficient professional capacity as a result of its staffing policy in the mid-1990s to de-professionalise the service. Hong Kong government records and archives services has, since its inception in 1972, always been operated and managed by a special professional grade, namely the archivist grade.

The archivist grade in the GRS is classified in the Degree and Related Grades Group. Entry to the basic rank requires a university degree plus two years of post-graduate research experience, study or training in specified subjects. It was permanently established in 1972 at the inception of the Public Records Office. In 1989, with the formation of the GRS, the top rank of principal archivist (D1) came into being, designated as the GRS Director. Therefore, the present structure of the grade has been unchanged since 1989.

Because of the absence of long-term strategic planning for the archival programs, much less consideration for a proper structure in the archivist grade, one could only trace simplistic operational considerations with the creation of each rank. The primary anomaly inherent in the grade's ranking structure is manifest in the absence of a proper link between the ranks of archivist and senior assistant archivist (SAA). The absence of this vital rung in the hierarchical ladder has considerably inhibited staff development in terms of professional and managerial training, experience and exposure, not to mention career advancement. It is often seen as one of the factors accounting for the relatively low morale of archivist staff in the GRS.

All assistant archivists (AAs) entering the service have to undergo a two-year probationary period during which they have to undertake an in-house records and archival management training program for two years. At the end of the first year, AAs have to sit and pass a proficiency test on basic skills and knowledge in records and archives management before they can proceed to the second probationary year.

AAs who have completed all probationary requirements at the end of their second year are required to study further and obtain a postgraduate degree or diploma in records and archives management. It has been an established policy that the professional qualification is a requirement for AAs to be promoted to SAA. In the past (before 1987), government practice was to have the AAs sent abroad to study in an archives school for a year, usually to Australia, as there are no local universities offering any degree or professional programs in archives management.

But this practice has been terminated since 1987 for financial (or political) reasons. In its place, AAs are currently expected to take a distant-learning program in records or archives management. This arrangement is in no way equivalent to the postgraduate program originally mandated. It is a misguided and obviously expedient measure erroneously adopted, betraying the administration's ignorance of the complexity of the archival discipline, as well as its disrespect for and belittling of the archival profession.

This change of staff training policy compounded by the introduction of more and more generalists (EOs) into the GRS are considered to be the primary factors accounting for the decimation of professional capacity in the GRS. Professionalism commands respect, and being respected is absolutely an important element in establishing authority. Unfortunately, this is what the GRS is lacking.

Worse, since the mid-1990s, many general administrative and non-professional staff from the executive officer grade have started to occupy key managerial positions which once were held by the professional archivist grade personnel. Perhaps the most harmful personnel change is with the position of GRS Director, a post originally created as the top professional (principal archivist) to plan, guide and lead all professional archives and records functions and activities in the GRS.

Most important of all, this top professional is supposed to be the only records and archives policy advisor to the Director of Administration who is responsible for the government-wide records and archives management and who happens to be another 'generalist'. This personnel management approach has rendered the GRS' operation ineffective.

Worse still, as generalists, EOs have to be subjected to regular career posting, meaning that they will be transferred from time to time (usually every two to four years, or longer in special cases) from one agency to another. Therefore, this group of officers is by nature transient and 'rootless'. It is not easy for them to develop the required expertise for the specialiszed functions and programs of the agencies they are serving, if they are destined not to stay there long.

CONCLUSION

The management of public records can be said to be a neglected policy area in the Hong Kong Government. Hong Kong is also one of the few jurisdictions in the world that has not enacted archival legislation. In the absence of such a law, Hong Kong government officials essentially have no legal obligation to:

- create records (ie, evidence) resulting from their official activities
- keep and manage the records thus created in a professional manner and in accordance with international standards
- have the records transferred to an archival authority for appraisal after their active use in their respective agencies
- transfer those records appraised to have historical value to the government archives for permanent retention
- allow public access to those archives having completed their closure period in the archives.

It seems that the absence of records and archives related legislation has resulted in gross structural deficiencies regarding the management of public records, which affects not only the preservation of documentary heritage but also the efficiency, transparency and accountability of government agencies.

The records authority (ie, the GRS) is supposed to play a key role in ensuring an effective regime of records across government, but it is not empowered nor has the professional competency to perform such a role. Perhaps, this is the single most important lesson to be derived from the Hong Kong scenario. ❖

1 See Government Records Service website at http://www.grs.hk
2 Audit Ordinance 2000, Chapter 122.

HISTORY

Record keeping through the ages

This ‘metanarrative of a journey from papyrus to contemporary complexities’ explores the journey of records from the simple and resource-limited early human endeavours through to the modern day. It is an exploration of cultures, contexts and civilisational values, as well as available technologies.

By Suparna Chatterjee

Above: Ancient Sumerian stone carving with cuneiform scripting. **Below:** The British Museum. The Museum contains almost 71,000 books, manuscripts, drawings, prints and antiques taken from all over the world.

The theoretical argument of this article is that, in spite of the illustrated objectivity of records to capture events with authenticity and accuracy to be relied upon for future, there is an inherent tension between record keeping and memory, authority and law. The empirical focus of this article is on the journey of records from the simple and resource limited early human endeavour in the valleys of ancient Mesopotamia to the staggering modern ideas of information gathering and storage challenges of today’s technological society.

This is a broad and eclectic historical survey, in which the first section traces the reasons for early human communities to develop record keeping as an efficient adaptation to reap the evolutionary benefits of cooperation and coordination during the agricultural settlement. Having offered this general evolutionary template, which outlines the advantage of record keeping, I have subsequently tracked routine compromises with social institutions in a historical context that impacts our level of trust on available records. Naturally, given the constraints of time and space, no attempt is made to offer an exhaustive listing, rather to provoke insight into the continuing tensions. Here, a story of command and control comes alive, a social story that is relevant to records professionals even today.

THE EVOLUTIONARY IMPERATIVE

The ascendancy of modern man (Homo sapiens sapiens), as the preeminent species among the many other competing primate species, is a relatively recent phenomenon. The first distinction of homo sapiens as a separate species emerged around 150,000 years ago; however, it is only in the last 10,000 years that our species has cemented its status in the animal kingdom. Charles Darwin identified this process whereby the environment selected those traits best fitted to survival as an explanation for the origin of life on earth and its currently cultural and biological complexity. In his magnum opus *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859, he states this process of advancement in dramatic terms:

> *“thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows.”*

According to evolutionary biologists, this was the ability to coordinate activity in groups. Thus our ancestors would have been superior hunters and gatherers to other primate species because of biological factors such as a brain capable of more efficient connections and data analysis and causal reasoning, as well as cultural institutions such as food production and communication and emerging norms of reciprocity and altruism.

Basu and Waymire argue that the emergence of formal record keeping and its subsequent co-evolution alongside other supporting cultural institutions was a crucial factor in enabling large groups of homo sapiens to coordinate effectively. The most significant point in the evolutionary history of our species was the agricultural settlement, a period that involved the domestication of various animals and the cultivation of plants as crops. The result of this settlement was the generation of food surpluses; these surpluses in turn produced specialisation of labor, increased barter and trade between group members, as well as production of non-food goods and services.

Record keeping outside the brain of an individual provided one such institution, enabling large group coordination because it allowed for a kind of memory which supported multiple interactions between an increasing number of group members. Of course, record keeping was entangled with a broader backdrop of cultural developments that had a similar cooperation enhancing function, such as the emergence of literate cultures in the Holocene period, agriculture, proto-legal systems and increasingly sophisticated dispute resolution mechanisms, increasingly sophisticated time scales from solar days and lunar cycles to multi-day years and the development of cardinal, integer, ratio and standardised weights and measures.

RECORD KEEPING AND MEMORY

Memory has always had a celebrated association with art and culture in ancient societies, for instance, the Greek goddess of memory, Mnemosyne, was the mother of all nine muses, who were respectively goddesses of literature, art and science. The story of Simonides provides a further illustration, Simonides of Ceos was a lyric poet who was invited to chant a lyric poem in honor of his host who was a nobleman of Thessaly. Upon completing his recital of the epic poem the nobleman exclaimed that he would only pay half of the agreed price and Simonides ought to collect the remaining half from the two Gods he had described in his poem. Simonides was soon beckoned from the banqueting hall by two mysterious visitors, once he was outside the entire hall came crashing down crushing all the guests in the hall. The bodies were so mutilated and disembodied that it was impossible to identify who was who, meaning that none of them could be buried according to custom. Simonides prevented this by inferring the identity of the bodies from where each guest had been sitting during the banquet. Cicero, the great lawyer, statesman and orator of ancient Rome, described the principle of memorisation illustrated by Simonides in the following terms in his seminal work on rhetoric, *De Oratore*, in 55BC:

> *“He inferred that persons desiring to train this faculty (of memory) must select places and form mental images of the things they wish to remember and store those images in the places, so that the order of the places will preserve the order of the things, and the images of the things will denote the things themselves, and we shall employ the places and the images respectively as a wax writing-tablet and the letters written upon it.”*

We can conclude, then, that the practice of record keeping is entangled in other cultural institutions such as art, literature and politics and second that early written forms of record keeping mirrored in analytical method the strategies used to augment memory.

Record keeping as a strategy to augment memory increased as the size of human communities increased and took many forms, however, most scholars agree that some systematic kind of record keeping was necessary for large scale civilizations. For instance, the tally stick was an ancient memory aid used to document quantitative data. One of the earliest known tally sticks was discovered in what was then the Belgian Congo by Jean de Heinzelin de Braucourt in 1960, the Ishango bone. The Ishango bone is dated by most scholars to at least the upper Paleolithic area making it more than 20 000 years old. The Tally stick was to play a central role in European administration, particularly in England, in the medieval period to the early 19th century. For example, in the *Dialogus de Scaccario* or *Dialogue concerning the Exchequer*, a mediaeval treatise dating from at least 1179 CE on the practice of the English Exchequer which was a central agency of medieval royal government, the author describes in great detail the split tally technique which allowed for the documentation of bilateral exchanges and debts. The split tally technique involved marking a stick with a pattern of notches and then splitting the stick lengthwise creating two identical documents. The split tally technique tried to protect the integrity of the information recorded by minimising the risk of the record being tampered with. The noteworthy point is that record keeping as a strategy to augment memory in the context of growing human communities has continued to be challenged by authenticity.

RECORD KEEPING AND SOCIETY: FROM SONGLINES TO THE STARS

Aboriginal song cycles and songlines are intriguing examples of knowledge transmission in an oral culture. Songlines are comprehensive records of a group's beliefs, ceremonies, obligations, social hierarchies as well as navigational instruments mapping the location of waterholes and food. The incredible complexity and beauty of these songlines is apparent from Dorothy Napangardi's use of the Mina Mina Jukurrpa story in many of her contemporary art works. The Mina Mina Jukurrpa is an important location according to dreaming stories in the Tanami Desert, Napangardi's stark black and white colors detail the location of various salt lakes in that place. Songlines are not just records of particular transactions between individuals or maps delineating the physical location of landmarks but cultural artefacts with broader social resonance. There was also a broader social order – eg, intersecting songlines of different tribes and communities outlines territorial jurisdiction of a particular community. Moreover, the acquisition of knowledge in learning them was in itself a ritualised way to acquire wisdom from the tribe elders. Songlines, then, are an important illustration of how recordkeeping practices might perform evolutionary functions of enabling coordination while at the same time increase in complexity in relation to other cultural and social institutions and practices.

A recent study by Fuller et all shows that the Euahlayi people, an Aboriginal language group belonging to north-central New South Wales and Southern Queensland, use the night sky for transmitting knowledge and record keeping. The authors observed that the Euahlayi people use the position of the Milky Way in order to predict when resources such as emu eggs are available. Importantly, the positions of the stars are not, for the Euahlayi, an actual map but a record because the stars are used as a reminder of where songlines go even before a journey is embarked upon. These songlines allowed for the group to travel to different nations to trade and perform important ceremonies; one particular songline covered thousands of kilometres from Heavitree Gap near Alice Springs in central Australia to Byron Bay on the East Coast of New South Wales. For the Euahlayi, songlines are not an objective and neutral record of a particular fact or transactions but a text that renews and reflects the shared social order and imagination of the language group. The eluding concept of records and records management is a universally accepted challenge across time. Variations in their definition have led to a change in perspective of its management to its status.

RECORD KEEPING AND LAW: A MESOPOTAMIAN CASE STUDY

Mesopotamia saw an early blossoming of record keeping both in oral and written form relative to other areas of the world, probably because this was the location of the most significant agricultural settlements. The earliest evidence of record keeping of transactions dates from 8000 BCE in ancient Sumeria, these early forms of record keeping in Sumeria typically consisted of plain clay tokens of various shapes. By 40000 BCE the Sumerians used complex incised tokens to represent manufactured goods.

An early challenge inextricably linked to the memory augmenting function of record keeping is confirming the authenticity of the record; the Sumerians addressed this challenge by sealing the tokens inside hollow clay spheres (bullae) that prevented fraud by including the seals of the parties to the transaction on the container's exterior, effectively a very early example of record verification by signature. Eventually, these bullae enclosures were replaced by Cuneiform writing. Vanstiphout argues that this transition to written record keeping had three advantages:

1. listing which unburdens human memory,
2. classification, difficult in speech or memory when the unclassified mass of factual information is great and complex and
3. reciprocal tabulation, which would be cumbersome when not visible or easily retrievable.

Major Sumerian records include standard receipts, debt record, purchased record, rentals, pay list tablet and its variations, income and produce records, all of them captured an elaborate detail of event for the purposes of transaction as a function and were highly regarded for its evidential value.

TECHNOLOGY DRIVING TRANSFORMATION IN THE REALM OF RECORD KEEPING

Since the time of the Sumerians, record keeping and its supporting framework have continued to evolve. It took 50 million or more years to progress from oral engagement to writing; about 5,000 years from writing to printing; about 50 years from printing to the development of sight and sound media like photography, telephone, sound recording, radio, television; and since then less than 50 years to the first computer.

Technology helped in our transition from an ancient to a modern world; it is a driver of objective decision making rather than reflecting on nature's whims or divine intervention. The sharp division between technology as viewed in the ancient and modern world is that prior it was considered as a state secret while later it was warmly accepted. Technology revolutionised our thoughts, and with the abilities of our scientists, engineers and statisticians, quality data was produced.

The combination of hardware, software, data and communication formed the core of information systems, and as each one of these dimensions developed, massive changes are noticed. With the advent of new and improved technology, our day-to-day operation has now become mobile. Our business model is evolving and has automated business functions like record keeping, securing our operating environment far more. Technology has allowed small business to gain economic profit, impacting 'value chain' and making companies competitive. It has substituted human effort in information processing and is generating more data than was available earlier. It has changed the fabric and texture of competition. It has not only impacted an individual's activities but also a department's ability to operate and link with other entities. We also see the establishment of legal compliance and audit frameworks, and risk management methods around captured corporate information, and all of these regulatory frameworks make records management far more complex. In pursuit of accuracy for good decision making and retrieving information on time at a low cost, along with the onus of protecting a department's records and the technology required to support it, records management has become a key priority for a department today. With record keeping and communication technologies, law has co-evolved in a large complex human group to resolve disputes.

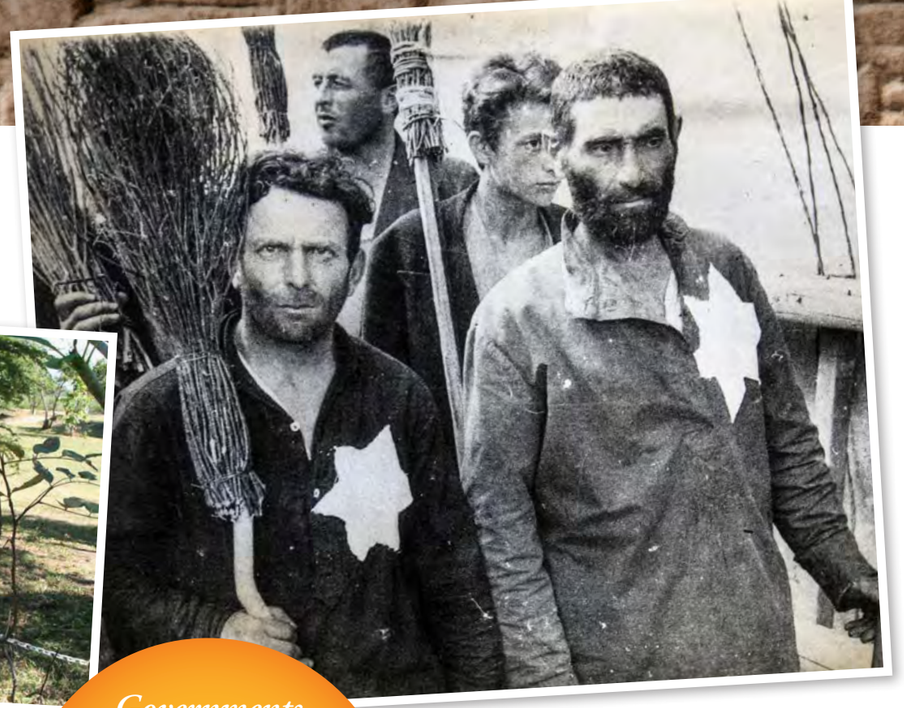
Aboriginal rock art at Carnarvon Gorge, Queensland, Australia

Since the time of the Sumerians, record keeping and its supporting framework have continued to evolve

Above top: Book of the Dead papyrus, Egyptology Archeology, Egypt. Above: the Great Sphinx of Giza with the Great Pyramid of Kufu in the background. Giza, Egypt.

The ephemeral nature of paper, compared to stone or clay, as a permanent public record was a shock to its long-term preservation, yet paper prevailed. With the transition from paper to electronic, further complexities were added; the distinction between original and copy got blurred and records are more easily duplicated. With printing and mass production of print matters, nature and breadth of written literacy spread from the elite to the masses. With digital technology revolutionising the print world, the portability of records associated with stone and clay tablets disappeared. Electronic records are not localised as ancient records on papyrus or wood were, depending on its availability. The definition of record and the intent of record keeping is ever evolving.

With the passage of time and advent of new technology, it has evolved from capturing memories for transactional accuracy and historical memories, to meticulous copying of critical text for preservation, to the quick dissemination available via printing helping educate the masses, to instant retrieval with technological advancement, and an overall benefit of good decision making relying on integrity and authenticity of captured information, often tendered as legal evidence and achieving compliance with established governance.



Right: Germany, circa 1940s: Four Jewish men with the Star of David sewn on to their clothes. During the Holocaust, filing cabinets and punched card machines became tools to subjugate citizens.
Below: The killing fields in Cambodia: the Khmer Rouge destroyed all government records as part of its 'Year Zero program'.

RECORD KEEPING, ITS EVIDENTIARY VALUE OSCILLATING BETWEEN AUTHENTIC AND FALSIFIED

Governments have always recognised the significance of record keeping as a means of controlling their citizens, as well as delivering services to them. During the Nazi times, filing cabinets and punched card machines became tools to subjugate citizens during the Holocaust. The Khmer Rouge in Cambodia destroyed all government records as part of their 'Year Zero program' as everything belonged to the State; in Tsarist Russia the harshest punishment would be 'legal death' for an individual where all records capturing the existence of the individual would be destroyed. We have seen manipulative plays on information like those in the Communist regime continuing in countries like China; we have seen how information can be tailored to suit its own interest in the hunt of mass destruction and the subsequent war on Iraq following the fall of the Twin Towers in the USA on September 11. There is often a pattern of systematic and ongoing records management failure in government and this can lead to a loss of trust in available information.

Governments have always recognised the significance of record keeping as a means of controlling their citizens

Information is evolving in our society, and we ask ourselves a pertinent question, 'today's expressed information – is it sincere information or is it manipulated information?' Historical analysis is a duel-edged sword, while we find instances where technology gets used to convince a nation to testify a government's work, we also have insights to on-going and continuing improvement of our society and a country with technological advancements. We find that both in the ancient world and the modern day period, a multi-level nature of leadership works to build our trust and confidence in the growing information around us. Mostly, a responsible government exercises good record keeping and records are maintained adequately.

Over the years, we have worked to build on governance, management, architecture, usage, quality, security and privacy, yet our biggest challenge remains around the integration and acceptance of analytical tools within the department, from an integration perspective. It is about how we integrate those tools with our existing technology from an acceptance perspective, and ensuring that the benefits of prevention are fully understood within the executive management community.

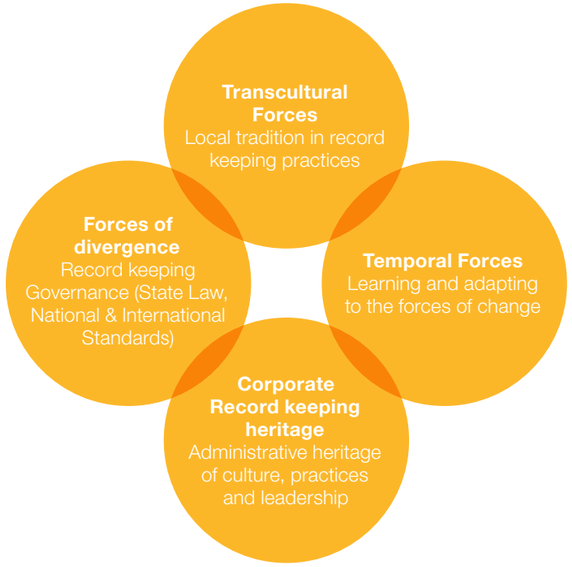
What is needed is corporate sustainability with a broad mix. The challenge is to investigate possible options to implement the desired outcome. The transforming contexts of technology, accountability and social imperatives have presented new and complex challenges for the new generation of record mangers of modern-day work organisations.

EVOLVING LEADERSHIP THROUGH TRANS-TEMPORAL AND TRANS-CULTURAL RECORD KEEPING

In analysing and exploring the trans-temporal relevance (ie, the message one period of time sends to the other) as well as trans-cultural record keeping (ie, the diverse meaning attached to record keeping in different cultures), we find that from the author of clay tablet to the scribe who wrote on papyrus, to the monk who copiously made religious scrolls, each was a records manager. The role of managing records made its beginning in preserving their recorded activities – therefore being an archivist. As we travelled through time from the Stone Age to the Digital Age, the relationship between people, profession and organisation with records and information is transforming within the context of technology, accountability and social imperatives, and we are presented with a new and complex challenge for the new generation of record.

Many scholars view the contemporary recordkeeping environment as 'the compliance age'. Recordkeeping practitioners are subject to intense scrutiny through government regulations, external, financial and corporate governance requirements that could be quite demanding. Accidental deletion of an email could well lead to substantial damage. Yet in this wide range of technical complexities, the underlying principle of records management remains unchanged, a viable and auditable record must be maintained at all costs. As the art of record keeping is developed, we focus more on the context and what we 'know' gets verified within the standards built to determine this knowledge. It is important for record keeping to capture this normative status of information in the ever-changing present circumstances.

Figure 1: Changing forces in contemporary record keeping



Shaped by culture, distinctively influenced both by the Western egocentric and Asian sociocentric selves, and being embedded as individuals within a large social network, we have evolved as unique information management leaders.

CONCLUSION

With every passing day, we progress and entangle ourselves in new and better technologies. We face the many impacts of this digital society, both positives like remote access and rapid distribution and negatives like reliability and a lack of reading them all with a focused attention due to its immense growth. To embrace new ways of working and interacting with community, organisations have to become more responsive and flexible with collaborative ways of delivering outcome. Leaders will have to reshape their organisation to operate as nodes in a widely connected socioeconomic network, and form a 'networked' government.

A digital strategy that leverages from the power of well-maintained corporate records will help us in making good decisions and deliver better service to the community. Implementation of this strategy will depend upon the emerging leaders with their digital knowledge and organisational capabilities. The study of records as a 'documentary reality' will continue to be impacted by our culture, society and ideological components and we have to act on this together. The frame of record keeping has over the years travelled across various disciplines and a concerted effort is needed to shed light on this complex discourse from a multi-disciplinary perspective.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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INFORUM HEADS TO BRISBANE IN 2017

inForum 2017 will be held at the Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre in Brisbane, Queensland from 10 to 13 September 2017.

Traditionally inForum has had a single overarching theme, however in 2017 there will be four distinct streams:

STREAM 1: DYNAMIC DIGITAL

"How deep is the rabbit hole?"

This stream covers social media, non-text channels (ie, chat, video, voice), content vs context, being a digital champion, data capture, digital security, and so much more.

STREAM 2: BUSINESS BUY IN

"How do I get management to support RIM?"

This stream covers demonstrating value, gaining support and management buy in through optimising operations, information governance, compliance and risk and meeting critical business needs.

STREAM 3: RIM 101

"Have we got the basics right?"

This stream covers defining records and information management, records frameworks, business classification systems, identifying requirements, implementing systems, user training, retention and disposal schedules, offsite and secondary storage, standards etc.

STREAM 4: ABOUT ME

"How can I improve my skills?"

This stream covers leadership skills, how to stay motivated, performance management, networking skills, project management, managing a team, professional development and more.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

SIMON WALLER

Topic: ***Positioning yourself as the Digital Champion: How to make RIM professionals indispensable to their business***

Work is increasingly driven by digital technology and the information we have access to. Sitting at the intersection of these two trends, RIM professionals are uniquely placed to be advising and supporting their organisations on digital challenges and opportunities. It is time for RIM professionals to building their reputation and business influence by positioning themselves as their organisations digital champions.

Simon Waller is a published author, speaker, trainer and mentor who helps people be productive with technology.

BRAM LAGROU

Topic: ***Develop your change leadership and create 'buy-in'***

This presentation will aim to empower delegates to becoming change leaders and successfully achieve Buy-In within their organisation, from developing a succinct 'elevator statement' to getting senior management support to fund projects.

Bram Lagrou is a highly dynamic speaker, trainer and consultant in the areas of business development motivation and leadership.

There is a justification letter template available on the inForum website to assist you in gaining employer support to attend the conference.

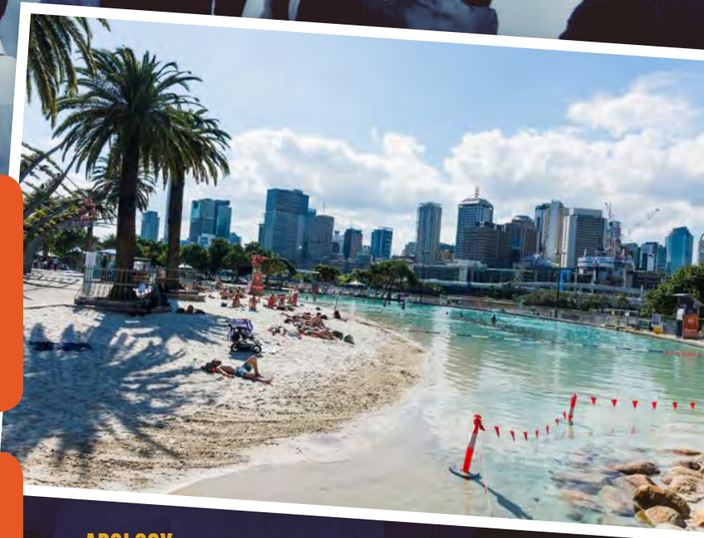
The program and registration forms will be available for download from early March. ***www.inforum.net.au***

SPONSORSHIP AND TRADE EXHIBITION

Any enquiries regarding sponsorship or trade exhibition opportunities should be directed to Wendy Morris at wendy.morris@rimpa.com.au.

RIMPA AWARDS

Nominations for the RIMPA Awards are open for 2017 – check the RIMPA website, rimpa.com.au or the next issue of iQ for details – closing date 30 June.



APOLOGY

On page 48 of the Nov 2016 issue of IQ, the winner of the Relevancy Recent Research and Education Grant was named as Katherine Stuart. It was in fact Katherine Clarke who won the award. Apologies to Katherine for the error.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

THE VALUE OF INFORMATION TRANSFORMATION

This article explores how information is changing, how our roles as information managers are transforming yet again and how we need to use our skills and knowledge to educate and assist our organisations to ensure that valuable information in all environments is protected and managed appropriately.

By Kate Cumming and Janet Villata

Valuable information – information that organisations need as fundamental business assets and risk management tools – is moving and morphing. Often this information is now located in third-party contractor systems, external cloud services, internal business applications, personal One Drive environments, team sites or social media accounts, instead of being safeguarded in EDRMS systems. There are often legitimate business reasons for this evolution. But what does this mean for our role as records and information managers?

THE E-LEARNING MODULE

The City of Sydney has recently developed an all staff e-learning module on records management. It's a records management game. In it, participants work for the fictional council, the City of Urbanville. They take on various roles liaising with the public, contractors and decision makers to build the City's brand new park, Smart Park.

In each of the scenarios they encounter, participants need to make choices that relate to records management. The better their record keeping, the more questions the participant gets right and the more features are added to enhance their park. Wrong answers, or poor recordkeeping choices, have the opposite effect, resulting in derelict areas or unfinished features. There is no pass mark and the module can be repeated as many times as participants want, enabling staff to have fun building either glorious or appalling parks, and learning about records management as they play.

The module is going live at the beginning of September but in pilot testing, staff have consistently reported how much they have enjoyed completing it.

The module does not take an 'all corporate records need to be in the EDRMS' approach. The reason for this is that they literally can't be

Of course, the e-learning module is a compliance exercise for the City of Sydney. It's helping the City to meet its legislated requirement to train and educate staff in records management. However, we have also designed the module to try to serve some broader objectives. To us, the module is fundamentally about promoting the value of information to staff, and highlighting their specific responsibilities for its management. For example, the game components of the course clearly demonstrate the consequences to business processes, service delivery and community outcomes if the value of information isn't properly managed and supported.

The unique opportunity to communicate to all City staff through this mandatory module has allowed us to impart an important truth: that the nature of corporate records is changing. Core business records are no longer simply documents to place in an EDRMS. As we all know, core records organisations need as fundamental business assets and risk mitigation tools into the future are now located in third party contractor systems, external cloud services, internal business applications, personal One Drive environments, team sites, social media accounts and more.

We believe that staff need to know and understand when key records that they, the organisation and the community will need to rely on for years are moving into diverse system and technology environments. Staff need to realise that information in all of these diverse environments may need active identification and management in order to meet business, legal or community needs. Staff need to be aware that they must partner with the records management team to enable this to happen. The module is our opportunity to communicate this to them.

MULTIPLE SYSTEMS OF RECORD

Very deliberately, the module does not take an 'all corporate records need to be in the EDRMS' approach. The reason for this is that they literally can't be. Corporate business operations are moving to so many diverse operating environments, it is unsustainable to consider integrating all of these with the corporate EDRMS. It's also increasingly technically impossible as cloud services are adopted that can't be integrated, or as different business applications start to generate records in forms that simply cannot be exported and managed in EDRMS environments.

While not denying the ongoing role of our EDRMS, the e-learning module encourages staff to understand that the City has multiple 'systems of record' – multiple business applications that perform key business activities and that maintain records of these activities within them.

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These multiple ‘systems of record’ are necessary because business areas are requiring these technologies to support the work they need to do. Therefore, rather than deploying an EDRMS-centric approach to records management, we are increasingly seeing it as necessary to adopt a risk-based in place approach to the management of a wide array of corporate information in these diverse systems of record.

DISPEL THE MYTH THAT RECORDS = EDRMS

The fact the information is now located away from the EDRMS does not diminish or eliminate records management principles or requirements in the slightest. Records management principles actually come much more to the fore in these types of distributed management approaches.

With EDRMSs, it is often the case that function and purpose has become indivisible from the software. Because of the power of the software, over many years the core records management message has been able to become very simple: put the records in the EDRMS.

As records and information managers, we all know that EDRMSs have inbuilt functionality to enable information accessibility, useability, trust, security and management for both the short and long term. They provide context and understanding of the business processes that generated the record. They provide sequences, relationships, chronologies and stories. They provide all necessary protections for high value corporate records needing appropriate and accountable management. They deploy a wide array of metadata that remains inextricably linked to the records it relates to, and this metadata explains, identifies and tracks the actions in the life of these records so that the history of their creation, management and governance is clear.

EDRMSs can also manage a multitude of format, accessibility and presentation issues and have tremendous storage capacity, without many of the size limitations that affect other systems. They provide point in time perspectives, ensuring that it’s possible to identify what happened when and to whom. The guts of record keeping – documenting who, what, when, why and how – is an inherent part of an EDRMS.

However, because it is inherent, this complex variety of functions that EDRMSs deploy never actually has to be explained or spelt out to people. In the interests of simplicity and clarity, the only message that has really needed to be communicated to staff was ‘put the records in the EDRMS’. When the records did go in the EDRMS, the controls and benefits, the valuable functionality and purpose behind the process and application, were invisible to the average user. Records management therefore lost a corporate understanding of its purpose and relevance and became instead associated with a technology.

While simple and widely effective, this ‘put the records in the EDRMS’ message has also had the effect of creating a mindset in many organisations that ‘records = EDRMS’. The corollary of course is that most people now think that if business information is not in an EDRMS, it is clearly not a record.

This could not be further from the truth. Records are needed as evidence of business transactions, wherever they are. And with the volumes of new systems and services flooding every business environment, the belief that ‘if information is not in the EDRMS it is not a record and doesn’t need to be managed’ is clearly a very dangerous assumption. Records can be any form of information generated in support of a business transaction. High risk records are records generated while performing high risk business operations and these operations are now transacted in a multitude of systems, not just the EDRMS.

Because of the power of the software ... the core records management message has been able to become very simple: put the records in the EDRMS

THE NEED TO CONVEY RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

So, this is why the existence of these multiple ‘systems of record’ forces us to become better at explaining what we do and why. We can’t say ‘put it in the EDRMS’, so what kinds of conversations do we have instead and what kinds of advice do we give?

In all our organisations, we have to try to have as many proactive conversations as we can. We need to get as involved in system design or service procurement as possible. We do have to scale our involvement along risk-based lines, offering less advice for systems making and managing short term value information, and much more detailed advice and assessments for long term or high community value information.

This advice has to consider all the types of management principles that are packaged up within the EDRMS, but break these down and reinterpret them for a new environment. For example, for a significant project database that is likely to be needed for an ongoing period to resolve future legal challenges, we need to recommend what information needs to be kept and how it needs to be managed. We need to consider issues like those outlined below:

HOW TO ENSURE ALL APPROPRIATE BUSINESS RECORDS ARE KEPT, MANAGED AND USED

As records managers, we need to recommend what information needs to be kept and how it needs to be managed. We need to consider issues like the following:

- What information input into the system needs to be locked down and kept?
- What information that describes how the database operates, its rules, permissions and users etc. needs to be kept to enable the system to be used and understood?
- How can the system functionality be preserved and used for the length of its retention period?
- Who needs access to the system?
- Given its likely contentiousness, how can we demonstrate the accuracy and authenticity of the information in the system through the maintenance of metadata, audit trails, workflows and approvals?
- What other controls might ensure the system can be kept for as long as required and not destroyed or tampered with?

Essentially all the principles or functionality that were invisible in the EDRMS environment need to be teased out and applied in other environments to ensure all appropriate business records can be kept, managed and used, wherever they are.

We need to acknowledge the genuine reasons driving these transformations away from the EDRMS.

We also need to understand and appreciate the genuine reasons driving changes to information. In most instances, these transformations occur when business areas are trying to fully leverage the value of their information, by making it:

- available through mobile devices and accessible anywhere at any time
- able to be aggregated, manipulated or reused effectively (the flat PDF in the EDRMS may not cut it)
- accessible in collaborative online tools to fuel partnerships between internal and external stakeholders
- available to the community for the co-design of strategies or services
- open to third parties who are responsible for performing work in the organisation’s name
- accessible and re-purposable as open data.

Wherever the EDRMS is providing definite and measurable business value, then we definitely need to continue with its use, but in scenarios like those above, the EDRMS may not always be the best solution. If the value of information can be improved by transformation or by movement to new environments, we need to get involved in this and make sure information moves to new environment with the accuracy, authenticity and accessibility it needs.

Our organisations need the best of both worlds, not a choice between the two.

In these scenarios, we need to orient our conversations away from software (EDRMS) and onto principles (how does this information need to be managed?) We need to recognise that our principles contribute fundamentally to the value of information. By doing what we do, we contribute context, storytelling, authenticity, trust, accountability, usability, security, understanding to information. These can all add exceptional value.

This is very firmly demonstrated by ChildStory, a system recently commissioned by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services. In ChildStory, web and cloud based technology connects a network of family, carers, caseworkers and service providers to enable early intervention and coordinated case planning for children. This solution seeks to break down traditional silos of information which may put children at risk. Authorised parties from different organisations can have quick access to key information about the child’s case from anywhere. What is remarkable too, is that in this solution the child is firmly at the centre of this network. They will have their own digital repository where they and their carers can collect photos, videos, documents, school reports in a ‘digital suitcase’, giving the child an archive and a story that is often lost in a series of fostering arrangements. The child also gets to see what is being recorded in the system, giving them more control over information about them and therefore over the care they are being given and the decisions that are being made on their behalf. For decision makers, it connects decisions to a child and to their story, adding a human dimension and accountability to all decisions. ChildStory is a beautiful example of how liberating information from EDRMS and other separate system environments, giving it a customer focus, connecting it, making it accessible and transparent can radically transform services and improve lives.[1]

THERE ARE ALREADY RADICAL TRANSFORMATIONS UNDERWAY

Significant information transformation is already underway and we do need to be prepared for how radical and profound these changes will be. For example, distributed ledgers created using block chain technology are smart recordkeeping systems, with the potential to transform how massive business sectors such as finance and government fundamentally function.

A recent report by the UK Government Chief Scientific Advisor stated that:

Distributed ledger technologies have the potential to help governments to collect taxes, deliver benefits, issue passports, record land registries, assure the supply chain of goods and generally ensure the integrity of government records and services. In the National Health System, the technology offers the potential to improve health care by improving and authenticating the delivery of services and by sharing records securely according to exact rules. For the consumer of all of these services, the technology offers the potential, according to the circumstances, for individual consumers to control access to personal records and to know who has accessed them.[2]

These distributed ledgers exist online. They are essentially databases that can be programmed with specific rules to perform any form of business. They can be shared widely across a defined network and all participants involved in a network have their own identical copy of the ledger which is automatically updated with any changes that occur to the ledger, and all changes are tracked. The security and accuracy of the assets stored in the ledger are maintained cryptographically through the use of 'keys' and signatures to control who can do what within the shared ledger. Entries can also be updated by one, some or all of the participants, according to rules agreed by the network.[3]

Distributed ledgers, which become intelligent transactional and recordkeeping environments, shared between citizens and the state, have the capacity to:

- reduce the cost of operations, including reducing fraud and error in payments
- create greater transparency of transactions between government agencies and citizens
- reduce the cost of protecting citizens' data while creating the possibility to share data between different entities, allowing for the creation of information marketplaces
- enable easier interaction between small and medium-sized enterprises and government at all levels
- foster innovation and business growth opportunities for business and for government.[4]

The value of information in these types of environments in undeniable and potentially unquantifiable in its magnitude. So profound transformation in our industry is definitely on its way.

Where do we start?

So where do we start? How do we begin to address the smaller but still radical transformation that is underway in each of our organisations and prepare for and understand the impact on the value of information? We believe a first step could be to understand what is happening to our information by tapping into a wide variety of sources. There may be documentation such as information architecture, systems registers, business process analysis reports, data collections etc, or you can talk to colleagues to obtain information about the current state of transformation.

The technology offers the potential ... for individual consumers to control access to personal records and to know who has accessed them

The City of Sydney has a lot of information about organisational EDRMS use, from regular reports on system use to annual Records Management Plans submitted by each business unit. However, we knew that other systems were being used for recordkeeping and that these were not reflected in the Records Management Plans.

Fortunately, in the last year there have been additional sources of information to draw on. A very large data collection exercise has been conducted by IT as part of their systems architecture work, which has provided very useful information about what systems are being used, and what services are being offered. There have also been recent assessments of personal information held across all business areas in the City.

Combining this data with the information from Records Management Plans has provided quite extensive data about what systems are being used across the City. This has provided the detail to then analyse what areas of business are using these systems and to try to identify what records are being made and kept in these systems. We are liaising with business areas to focus in more detail at the areas of high business and community risk and value to ensure that this information is protected and managed appropriately.

It is early days for us, but we believe that through partnering with the systems architecture work of our colleagues we should be able to build a very comprehensive profile of our organisation's business systems. We will have a good corporate understanding of where our information is, ensure it is visible to all appropriate stakeholders, we can start to apply our expertise to ensure the information has adequate controls so that it is secured and protected, and determine good governance and audit controls to help guarantee the authenticity and trustworthiness of information.

We are also keeping our ears to the ground about changes and are volunteering to assist business areas who are

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undergoing significant transformation. Sometimes they come to us, sometimes we need to approach them. And in working with business units, and by fully utilising communication mechanisms like the e-learning module, we are dispelling myths that we are only interested in the EDRMS.

CONCLUSION

So in conclusion, valuable information, information that organisations need as fundamental business assets and risk management tools, is moving and morphing. It is now to be found in a whole host of different internal applications, in third party contractor systems, in external cloud services, and in social media accounts rather than being safeguarded in EDRMS applications.

However, we should not feel threatened by this transformation. Sometimes managing records in other systems has the potential to enhance its value as a business and community resource. If we are committed to information management in our organisations, we just need to recognise that our roles may also need to change, to be less about administering EDRMS systems, and more about applying records management principles in all sorts of environments. We have the knowledge and skills, we have the understanding of evidence, accountability, context and meaning. So we just need to have our fingers on the pulse of change and apply our expertise in information transformations so we can truly value-add.

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