

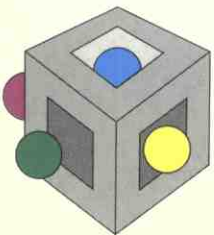
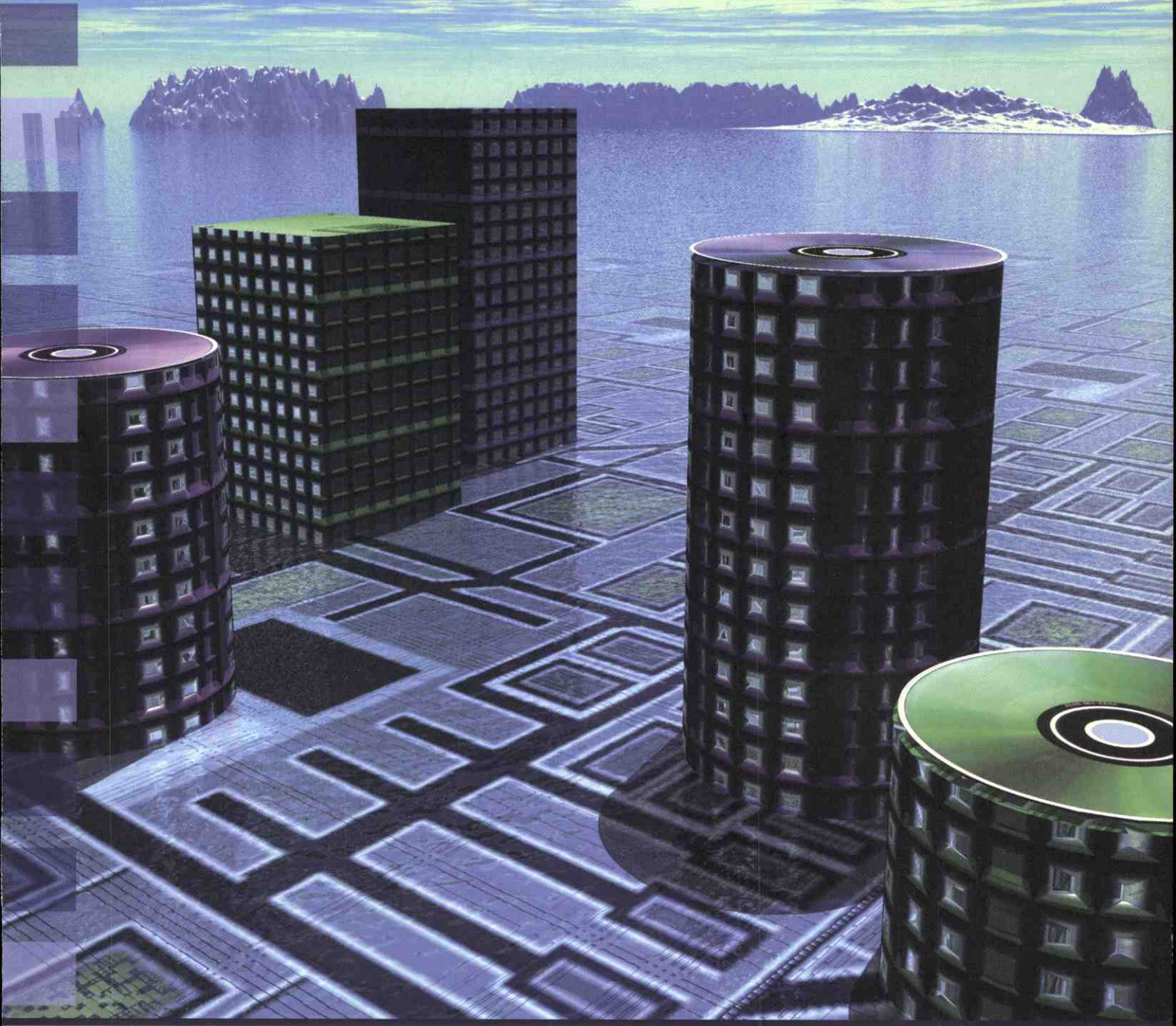
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VOLUME FOURTEEN NUMBER 4 NOVEMBER 1998

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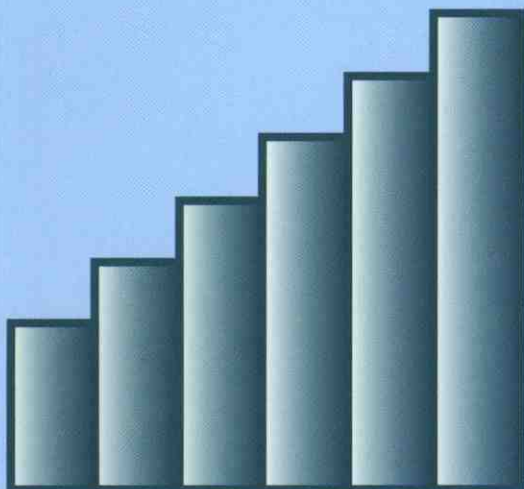
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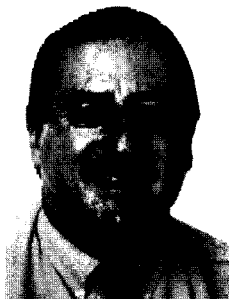
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14 December 1998

Deadline for the
February 1999 issue

President's Message



Prior to the National Convention in Brisbane during September, the Federal Board met in Cleveland for the second time this year.

Some of the major issues for discussion and decision included:

- strategies with other like associations: that is, to convene a meeting with Association Presidents to discuss like interests and possible conflicts;
- the ongoing issues of financial management. Recently, the Board appointed a working party to investigate options and strategies for the Association, and it is fair to say that the complications associated with such a review are far more outreaching than first anticipated;
- recognition of professional qualifications in the related fields of work within the industry;
- continued development of the Association's web site and its related pages with a view to improving access to Branch and national information;
- the strategic planning process, revisiting the Association's mission, vision, goals, objectives and key result areas (this is to be continued with the assistance of a professional facilitator in February, 1999);
- review of the centralised membership function;
- the Association's Code of Ethics; and
- the formation of SIGS (Special Interest Groups). A new By-law has been adopted to facilitate the activity.

Federal Representation 1998/99

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Before proceeding further, I would like to place on public record my sincere thanks to the following members who contributed massive time and effort on a voluntary basis during their continued presence on the Board. They are:

Neil Granland (WA)
Allan Kavanagh (QLD)
David Lilley & Denis Comber (NSW).

We have also lost the untiring services and efforts of **Julie Apps (VIC)** as Company Secretary, as well as **Ken Ridley (WA)** as the National Editor of the *INFORMAA Quarterly*. My personal thanks and gratitude to you both.

Anthony Eccleston (ACT) has been appointed as the National Editor of the *INFORMAA Quarterly* and, I'm given to understand, that Elaine has added a ninth day to his week! I really don't understand why, but I'm sure Tony will find out sooner rather than later.

In conclusion, may I offer my congratulations to the Queensland Branch for hosting and conducting another successful National Convention.

I'm sure 1999 will hold surprises for us all one way or another, so let's push on with the challenges. My offer of writing to me airing your grievances, opinions and/or suggestions still stands, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Ray Holswich
Federal President

Editorial



In this issue, we have a diverse range of material to start the RMAA year. The Federal President reports on the agenda the Executive has set for itself for the next twelve months, and introduces the new Federal Board elected in Brisbane.

From New Zealand comes a report of an apparently stormy Archives and Records Association of New Zealand Conference, recorded by Michael Steemson. The subject of the controversy, which was given an emotive airing at the Conference, was the changing status of the New Zealand National Archives, and the resultant perceived threat to recordkeeping standards. The proponents of the various positions included a Member of Parliament, academics, and historians, some of whom saw merit in drawing on the findings of the Australian Law Reform Commission's review of our *Archives Act 1983*.

In a case study, Amanda Crichton from Monash University recalls her experiences of the practicalities of conducting a major file audit. The main message of this article reflects the complexities of the process. It also draws attention to the lack of recognition of those complexities that this and related records management tasks are accorded both in the workplace and in the *National Records and Archives Competency Standards*.

Michael Steemson also reports on the Queensland Branch hosted RMAA 15th National Convention with its theme 'Making Information Work'. The issue that he identifies as pervading most of the Convention was, however, the increasing emphasis being placed on information and knowledge management, and the opportunities the new technologies and emphases provide for records and information managers.

Rather more a commentary than a review, Allan Connelly-Hansen has provided a comprehensive insight into a film

produced in the United States by the US Commission on Preservation and Access in association with the American Council of Learned Societies. The film *'Into the Future' - On Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age*, by Terry Sanders, is concerned with the increasing reliance on electronic media in the conduct of today's business, and the preservation of the 'human record,' over time.

In the August issue of *INFORMAA Quarterly*, Ken Ridley foreshadowed his resignation as National Coordinator, Editorial Committee, expressing anticipation that his successor will build on, and further enhance the journal. In large measure, this process will be dependent not only on the energy and dedication of the Editor and the Editorial Committee, but on the commitment of the State and Territory Branches and the membership of the Association. As your new National Editor of a few short weeks, I am still formulating ideas and considering options on content, form and structure. But, foremost in these thoughts is a recognition that, as demonstrated in the Branch Reports, there exists a mine of new ideas, evaluative discourse, and experience. Sharing these ideas, debates and experiences through the columns of the journal will advance the standards of the *INFORMAA Quarterly* and the image of the Association and the profession.

I am grateful to Ken's editorial team for agreeing to continue on the Committee. I have also asked Margaret Pember and Michael Steemson to join the Editorial Committee and bring their enthusiasm and significant expertise to the team.

Anthony Eccleston
National Editor

NEW FACES



Tony Newton - Manager of the Government Recordkeeping Program

The Archives Authority of New South Wales has appointed Tony Newton as Manager of the Government Recordkeeping Program.

The Government Recordkeeping Program has the responsibility for achieving the Government's policy objectives for records management and disposal across the New South Wales Public Sector. The Program has a statutory role under the new State Records Act to administer Part 2 (Records management responsibilities of public offices), Part 3 (Protection of State records) and Part 5 (Recovery of estrays and other State records.)

Tony has 10 years' experience with the National Archives of Australia prior to joining the Archives Authority of NSW. His experience includes records management and disposal, records custody and ownership issues in the privatisation/corporatisation environment, and the management of audio-visual records.

'I'm looking forward to taking a proactive and encouraging approach to assist NSW Government agencies meet the requirements of the new legislation.'

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New Zealand National Archives' Status Goes Public - At Last!

The ARANZ Conference 1998

Author

Michael Steemson

Principal, The Caldeson Consultancy

Michael Steemson leads the independent records and information management Caldeson Consultancy in Wellington, New Zealand. He spent a number of years in information management work with the British media group, Express Newspapers plc where he was responsible for the application development of the newspapers' Reference Library imaging systems for photographs and news clippings.

He is a member and former chairman of the Records Management Society of Great Britain. A regular participant in RMAA activities, he has now agreed to be a member of the *INFORMAA Quarterly* Editorial Committee.

Abstract

A battle for the heart and soul of the National Archives of New Zealand, which has for months been raging between the country's information managers and the Government, has been discussed openly for the first time in the country. Academics, historians and an MP controversially debated what one called the great 'risk to our rights and our power as citizens' at the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ) 1998 National Conference held in August of this year.

The argument was the dramatic high-point of the annual Conference of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ) in Dunedin. The Association had earlier that month lodged Appeal Court papers against a New Zealand High Court judgement¹ which had disallowed its action opposing Government plans to subsume the National Archives into a new, state business unit, the Heritage Group.

Days before the Conference, on legal advice, the Association had controversially withdrawn an invitation to its member, Dr J.O.C. ('Jock') Phillips, the newly-appointed historian head of the Heritage Group, to present a paper on the subject. He attended the Conference as a delegate.

The debate's stark sentiments will be grimly familiar to Australian State archive authorities, notably Western Australia's, Queensland's and Victoria's, and the British Public Record Office. Each has faced similar battles against political efforts, some open, others clandestine, to hobble funding, status and/or authority.

James Traue

Attention and attendance were high among the 90 Dunedin delegates when retiring ARANZ Vice-President, James Traue, a teaching fellow at the Department of Library and Information Studies at Wellington's Victoria University,

spoke of control of 'those entrusted with the power of governance', and the 'slimy creatures lurking under our own doorsteps'. He said that archives and records managers, as citizens, had a vital interest in good recordkeeping 'to maintain control over those to whom we entrust our governance'.

As increasing amounts of government activity passed to the private sector, and large corporations controlled greater parts of society, information managers, Traue suggested, should be pressing for more formal controls, higher standards and more investment in recordkeeping. He warned that '...what has been happening is the very reverse - a decline in the investment in and standards of recordkeeping with the constitutional risks increasingly being transferred to the citizen'. In the private sector, 'light' regulation had become the norm, and the role of National Archives in surveillance of overall government recordkeeping had been curtailed by financial restrictions.

Traue recalled the review of the Australian *Archives Act 1983* (Cwlth) by the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC), which saw the primary job of the National Archives of Australia as guaranteeing the integrity of the country's records system from the cradle to the grave. The ALRC recommended that the Archives be established as an independent statutory body, separate from executive government and free

from ministerial direction.² It said that the current 'laissez-faire approach to recordkeeping' within government agencies was inadequate.

The laissez-faire approach, Traue continued, 'which had been condemned by the ALRC, rules in New Zealand. At a time when National Archives, in the public interest, should be strengthened and directed towards a whole-of-government approach to records creation and maintenance, it is being diverted in another direction, down that same historical heritage blind alley that others have long since exited'. He said the new Heritage Group had brought together the Government's Historical Branch, the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Historical Properties (war graves and monuments) and the National Archives, and had given as justification for the moves - '... and here I am quoting verbatim from departmental documents, otherwise you wouldn't believe me...' - was to:

- *provide a stronger focus for Government's role in heritage,*
- *enable resources to be better utilised in order to gain the best return on investments,*
- *realise opportunities in building heritage products and services,*
- *focus and strengthen business development and generate third party revenue, and*
- *enhance service delivery.*

The Department of Internal Affairs, the managing government Ministry, had spelled out the benefits as 'a heightening of New Zealanders' sense of their own unique traditions and history, bringing the past alive, and making the records of our people and our government accessible to all New Zealanders'. To this, Traue responded 'I am not saying that we do not need wisely-selected, reliable evidence for the longer-term auditing of governance that the Greeks bequeathed to the world, something we call history, [but] I doubt the

wisdom of the Heritage Group in achieving these ends. We don't have the instruments of direct democracy that were available to the Greeks to control the performance of our governors - death, removal of citizenship, exile, - but we have developed alternatives appropriate to modern societies, and one of those is comprehensive and reliable recordkeeping for the short-term auditing of governance.

'We need to make greater public investment in National Archives to enable it to fulfil its proper constitutional role. The alternative of allowing the records of governance to be further weakened, poses a far greater risk to our rights and powers as a citizen.'

Dr Michael Cullen

Dunedin Member of Parliament, Dr Michael Cullen, the Deputy Leader of the New Zealand Labour Party, the Parliamentary Opposition, said he believed the National Archives was being submerged into the Heritage Group in order to shore up the 'shaky' Internal Affairs Department, and was designed by its Chief Executive, Dr Roger Blakeley, to give the Department 'an air of dynamism and indispensability'.

Dr Cullen said: 'Underlying the drive for reform was a mixture of pragmatic considerations - notably the need to save money - and high ideology, notably public choice theory and other offshoots of the revival of neo-classic economics. As with nearly all theories, there were important kernels of truth embedded within it. And, as with all theories taken to extremes, the results could be a peculiar combination of the absurd and the destructive. Institutions, cultures, fabrics built up over many decades were all too easily swept aside as lusty young intellectual barbarians acted in a way in which lusty young barbarians are wont to do, intellectual or otherwise.

'The plan involves separating policy and purchasing functions from the National Archives, a recipe for instability and witless change', he said, and 'the product of third-rate minds struggling with second-rate ideas. What was needed was an affirmation of the internationally accepted view of the purposes of the archives; a consideration of what other existing archives-related bodies should be brought together with National Archives; new legislation, and the separation of National Archives into an independent organisation.'

He outlined the purposes of the archives as preserving: evidence of the organisation, functions and transactions of Government offices; evidence of public and private personal and property or civic rights; and historical and general information.

'What in fact is clear is that the fundamental purpose of the National Archives is to preserve the record of government. The English term, Public Record Office, is in many ways much more descriptive of the true nature of the beast. That fundamental purpose is a constitutional not an academic one. It is about the accountability of governments to the people, now and in the future. It is in this fundamental purpose that the department's reorganisation seems to misunderstand, almost recklessly so.'

Cullen, who has described himself as a lapsed historian and as the Treasurer/Minister of Finance-in-waiting, called for the Archives to be made independent of other government departments or agencies, and for that independence to be clearly defined in statute. The Archivist should also be Chief Executive of the Archives, directly responsible to a Cabinet Minister. In my amplification, he said:

One reason for that is so simple and

overwhelming that I am surprised it has not been mentioned more often: the New Zealand Archivist must have the power over other heads of departments in relation to the disposal and transfer of records subject only, perhaps, to strictly defined and time-limited security provisions. That function is not consistent with any kind of subordinate role.

'I do not believe the New Zealand Archivist should be a Parliamentary office for, in the end, the public records being kept are most of all, those of government itself. The great complaint of most politicians who think long term is "what has posterity done for me?" We will never know the answer, but at least we can do something for posterity.'³

Dr 'Jock' Phillips

Dr Phillips, speaking from the floor of the Conference, denied suggestions that the Heritage Group had been formed merely to save the small history units from closure. The Dictionary of Biography was due to complete its work shortly, and the Historical Branch, 'one of the crown jewels of the department', was not under threat.

He told delegates that the National Archives needed much costly work done on its building, but its status gave it little chance of success getting funds for such work. He suggested that 'it was much more likely to get additional funding from this Government under the Heritage banner than a constitutional banner. Heritage affairs is recognised by Treasury as a legitimate activity for governments'. He added that 'the condition of Archives House storage and maintenance is a considerable scandal and a major issue to be addressed as urgently as possible. This month, we got almost \$2 million from Government to address the urgent problem'.

He said that the New Zealand

Government was considering a major review of governance in the areas of culture and heritage⁴ and that the Department of Conservation had called for a full review of historic and heritage concerns. His Department, Internal Affairs, had argued in favour of the plan, agreeing that there was great advantage in a reorganisation. It would be concerned with governance as a whole.

The Department was preparing proposals for the National Archives to become a separate entity, like the National Museum of New Zealand, and hoped to have its recommendations ready for the Government by the end of November. They would have huge implications, especially for information managers.

Associate Professor Sue McKemmish

Earlier, the Conference keynote speaker, Sue McKemmish, Associate Professor of the Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records at Melbourne's Monash University, in a paper entitled 'The Smoking Gun: Recordkeeping and Accountability', outlined the role of recordkeeping in public accountability. Its purpose, she said, 'is facilitating good governance in underpinning accountability mechanisms constituting national and societal memory. It must take part in constructing individual, community and national identity proving authoritative sources of information'.

'Proper recordkeeping serves two purposes. First, it is a pre-requisite to effective accountability. Without it, scrutiny by the Parliament, Auditor-General or Ombudsman can be blunted. Secondly, records themselves form an integral part of the historical memory of the State itself. A recordkeeping regime that does not address both requirements is inadequate.'

McKemmish cited recent official Australian enquiries into recordkeeping failings in public bodies.⁵ At high levels, they had found piecemeal recordkeeping regimes, inadequate recordkeeping law, weak or non-existent links with other accountability players and mechanisms, and a lack of professional standards and benchmarks for best practice. Archival authorities were not, she suggested, 'equipped with powers adequate to their purpose'.

The enquiries had exposed failures by cabinet and other seniors ministers, public servants, police officers, directors, businessmen and women to make records or to 'keep them faithfully', once made. They found deliberate cases of illegal destruction and inadequate corporate recordkeeping systems in both public and private sectors.

Professor McKemmish told the Conference that 'over and over again, the point is made that inadequate recordkeeping regimes limit the ability of society's watchdogs and corporate compliance managers to enforce accountability in governance and corporate affairs - and in recordkeeping'. What was necessary was accountable recordkeeping regimes at top levels, and compliant systems with which to apply them. She continued:

There must be an independent recordkeeping authority with the powers adequate to its purpose - an independent status within the jurisdiction in which it is placed. It must follow professional standards and best practice promulgated and accepted by society. It must create beneficial alliances with other accountability players, which include chief executives, freedom of information officers, information and IT managers, and trusted relationships with its stakeholders, the citizens, its clients and consumers, individually and collectively.

All this had enormous implications for modern archives and information managers, Professor McKemmish said. They must decide if they were passive keepers of documentary detritus, neutral custodians of inherited records, or active shapers of archival heritage. She asked whether 'as agents of corporate and societal memory, are we builders of memory palaces, validators of memory? In which case, whose memory are we validating? What is our role in structuring societal and organisational memory? What imprint do we leave on the record?

'Re-inventing recordkeeping and archiving means going back to fundamentals, building post-custodial regimes that integrated them. It means re-conceptualising appraisal, description and access in the records continuum, and developing new roles as policy makers, standard setters, strategic planners, system designers, educators, advocates and auditors. And it means forging new partnerships and defining new accountabilities.'

Professor McKemmish left a scary question for information managers to consider. She tasked the Conference delegates:

What is the specific role of recordkeeping in structuring corporate and societal remembering and forgetting? A key insight in this unravelling might relate to the notion that recordkeeping is essentially about the validation of the processes of remembering and forgetting. But whose remembering and whose forgetting?

Endnotes

¹ Mr Justice Ellis said that it was too early to determine whether the restructuring of the National Archives was a breach of the Archives Act 1957. He agreed that a transfer of \$300,000 from the National Archives budget to the Heritage Group may

have been illegal and he reserved the matter 'for further consideration'. Judgment of Ellis J, High Court of New Zealand, 31 July, 1998.

² Australian Law Reform Commission 1998, *Australia's Federal Record: A Review of Archives Act 1983*, Report No 85, AGPS, Canberra, pp. 62-63.

³ The full text of Dr Michael Cullen's paper may be found on the *Records and Information Management On-line Service* website at <<http://www.caldeson.com/RIMOS/cullen.html>>

⁴ N.Z. State Services Minister, Mr Simon Upton, in August ordered a 'structural review' of cultural and heritage sectors of Government which, he said, had an 'insatiable appetite for funds'. The review would seek alternatives to the 'fragmentation of responsibility ... to provide better co-ordination of policy advice and service delivery'. *Dominion* newspaper, Wellington, 28 August, 1998.

⁵ Royal Commission on Western Australia Cabinet, 1992; N.S.W. Independent Commission against Corruption on N.S.W. Police Service, 1994; Australian Law Reform Commission, 1998.

This review is available at The Caldeson Consultancy website at <<http://www.caldeson.com>>

Riding the whirlwind ...or, being in two places at once

The last few months have been hectic, to put it mildly. Msys managed to be in two trade shows in two States in the same week - but we add our voice to industry cries of 'Never again!'

1. RMAA '98 - Brisbane

General verdict seems to be that this show was a great success. Our team certainly enjoyed meeting hundreds of delegates. Star of Stand 37 was the Canon MS500 as key to 'The Digital Drafting Office'. The Msys mousemats were a huge hit as well - if you missed out, give us a call.

2. IIM '98 - Melbourne

To celebrate our recent appointment as agents for PHOTOMATRIX, we demo'ed this workhorse Scanner. It's not just high speed (would you believe up to 400 images per min !) but high-performance in every way.

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PS Recent release of the NSW State Records Act has added an extra dimension to consider in retention factors - more on this next issue.



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'THE GIRL FROM RECORDS IS COMING TO CHECK THE FILES'

Author

Amanda Crichton
Monash University

Amanda Crichton is Special Projects Officer, Records and Archives Services at Monash University, involved in a project for the Faculty of Business and Economics. For the past ten years, she has worked in educational institutions, setting up archives policies and procedures and managing archival collections.

A member of the Australian Society of Archivists Inc., Amanda was previously Convener, School Archives Special Interest Group, Victoria.

Abstract

Monash University Records and Archives Services recently carried out a full file audit as part of a program to change its file management system. Despite careful planning, the conduct of the audit proved to be more complex and demanding than had been anticipated, requiring patience, perseverance and good communication skills. The experience did suggest that records audit and related tasks are perhaps undervalued in the allocated level in the National Records and Archives Competency Standards.

In September 1997, Records and Archives Services at Monash University changed the Records Management Office (RMO) file management system from CTOS-based TRIM to Windows-based UCollect, known locally as MURSA (Monash University Recordkeeping

Software Application).

As part of the system conversion process, it was necessary to conduct a file audit in order to:

- close all TRIM files and make up new UCollect system correspondence files for ongoing matters,
- permit the continued electronic tracking of TRIM files now controlled by UCollect,
- prevent new attachments being made to TRIM files now closed,
- gather in TRIM files held unnecessarily outside the RMO, and
- confirm correct location of all TRIM files.

The files under audit numbered 19,781, spanning almost eleven years from November 1987. It is believed to have been the most comprehensive exercise of its kind ever attempted at one time. Certainly there had not been anything like it since the early 1980s.

To undertake an exercise of this scale required careful planning and the employment of casual staff to carry out the task. The initial timeframe was estimated at twelve weeks of 0.6 workload (three days a week) to cover about 260 registered users in six key client groups, at four different campus/office locations. Built into this twelve weeks was the training of staff, the customising of MURSA and the documentation of audit procedures.

Implementation

Files intended for audit were in three categories: those held by the RMO in current storage, files out in the client

workplace, and those held by the RMO in secondary storage. The audit process applied to each category was basically the same.

One of the essential accountability issues associated with the audit process itself was to have a clear, concise and accurate record of all communications with central records system clients. Procedures, new forms, and a proposed client sequence list were also developed. Advance planning was based on this list.

In September, and again in November 1997, a blanket notice was circulated to all users of the central records system, alerting them to the audit and introducing the responsible officer.

Each department was contacted at least a week ahead of the visit to make the necessary arrangements for the audit to be conducted. The preferred contact person was always a manager or his/her nominee who then became responsible for notifying their own staff about the audit.

It was the auditor's responsibility to explain the intrusive physical nature of the process, including thorough inspection of filing cabinets, workstations, and cupboards, and to record contact details such as time, date, person, department. Sometimes a preliminary visit to the audit site was made to familiarise both the auditor and the client with each other and the office layout. Also, clients were requested to make themselves, or a representative, available when their workstation was being audited, both to protect their privacy (handbags, personal belongings) and

to give the auditor security in the event of mishaps. Within two days of the scheduled audit date, the manager was contacted again by the auditor and arrangements confirmed.

The actual audit process was simple: a portable barcode reader swiped across each file, a mark on the file to indicate it had been audited, a File Closure sheet attached and the file cover stamped 'Closed'. If correspondence was ongoing, a 'Request for New File' sheet was attached to the front cover and the file returned by the client to the RMO via the normal channels. If the file was required for reference, it was retained by the client. Alternatively, the file was returned to the RMO if action had been completed.

Once back in the RMO, the auditor transferred data from the barcode reader into UCollect, where it was processed and the audit title recorded on the documentation for that particular office. New files for ongoing issues were then made up and the TRIM file and new UCollect file returned to the client.

The Audit Experience

The audit proved to be more complex and took considerably longer than anticipated.

The main difficulty proved to be poor communication within client offices. This led to serious misunderstandings both about the nature of the audit process and the professionalism with which it was to be conducted.

On one occasion, a major client of the central records system familiar with both file confidentiality and security issues, had the auditor escorted from the building because there were confidential files held by that department. The manager had not been notified of the audit by the

personal assistant and when informed that 'the girl from records is coming to check the files', the manager's natural reaction was to protect file confidentiality as perceived. This was not the only client group that had difficulties with the audit because of such misunderstandings.

The client group that had the least difficulty with the intrusive nature of the audit was the group that had the most justification to be concerned about potential breaches of confidentiality. The reason for this was based primarily on the long and successful working relationship between that client group and the RMO; the former having a thorough working knowledge of the RMO and its business functions.

The auditor spent forty-one days outside the RMO auditing and closing files. While this is only five days more than the original allocation of time, it does not take into account the training on UCollect, planning, drawing up of documentation, or the time required to make up the new files for clients - sometimes longer than it took to audit the office itself. At the time of writing this paper, there are still some 13,000 files held in the RMO's own current and secondary storage as yet unaudited. It is estimated that approximately six weeks' full time work would be needed to complete the closure and audit of these files. Subsequently, the decision has been taken to suspend the audit for files controlled by the RMO pre-1993, and routinely close these files as they are recalled for reference purposes.

Outcomes

The time taken to complete the audit was an area for concern. Were it not for the fact that the TRIM system was being shut down, the blowout in the allocated time would have brought the validity of the exercise

into question. The audit started in one area in November and finished in another in June of the following year. Not all of this time was spent auditing - staff were seconded to other RMO duties during this period. Clearly, files moved between locations in the meantime have not been captured.

Of the total number of files captured in the audit, reports indicated that numerous files were found in the wrong location (i.e. marked out to another user), with the remainder accounted for correctly. Only one file marked as 'lost' was found. RMO staff knew when contact had been made with individual departments about the audit; files that had not been seen for years appeared out of the woodwork prior to the audit. Perhaps the word 'audit' itself generated an impression to users that they had to be accountable for what they held - surely a good thing! The requirement to have inactive/unused files returned to the RMO was definitely satisfied.

There were also some unanticipated outcomes of the audit:

- In the process of looking for TRIM files, many pre-TRIM files were located. The movement records for these files are held with the Monash University Archives. Location of these files was confirmed to the Archives Manager and, if further action was needed in relation to these files, the manager was able to deal directly with the holder.
- Another benefit was the update of the RMO user database. With changes of staff and the constant re-organisation of departments and hierarchies within the university, systems user records are in a state of constant flux. By physically visiting each office and speaking to users, these changes were recorded in the database

resulting in a completely up-to-date and current list of users, 295 compared with the 260 reported in 1996/97. As a by-product of this process, the structure of the database changed from a hierarchical, departmental listing to an alphabetical list of users by surname. This has proven to be a far more flexible and an easier method of managing user registration. Non-current users, totalling 130, have been moved to a 'non-current users' section as opposed to being deleted entirely from the database. This means that those non-current users may be re-instated at a later date if necessary.

Lessons

(1) The issue of confidentiality and the perception that 'the girl from records' should not have access to confidential files may need to be dealt with on a department by department basis. One client group requested that a confidentiality agreement, drawn up by them, be signed prior to the audit. Although strictly speaking unnecessary, because of our adherence to professional recordkeeping codes of conduct, this procedure meant that the audit of those offices went ahead relatively unhindered. Other departments, some using only restricted and case sensitive files, did not have any concern about the confidentiality issue. Such clients were familiar with the functions and business activities of the RMO.

(2) The importance of maintaining clear and accurate communication records (time, date, name, outcome of contact) kept for all communications with clients no matter how trivial it may seem at the time, needs to be emphasised strongly.

(3) A mark needs to be made on the electronic record of each file so that RMO staff can see at a glance that 'X' file was located in 'Y' office on 'W' date. The physical file is marked - the electronic record of that file should also be annotated.

(4) The record of the day-to-day file movement audits carried out by RMO staff at the time of the audit were stored electronically in the same place as the File Audits. This led to confusion when accessing audit logs. The need for a separate location created for day-to-day records to prevent this crossover has been acknowledged and will be remedied.

(5) Consideration also needs to be given to the length of time the electronic records, both the day-to-day movement records and the specific File Audit records, are retained.

(6) The adage 'time equals money' needs to be considered when deciding whether or not an audit is a worthwhile exercise. In this instance, the benefit of regaining control of the superseded system must be weighed against the time taken to complete what is a routine task. This may appear disproportionate when compared with the cost in wages. By contrast, there were instantaneous outreach benefits. The process of being out in the user community reinforced the professionalism and utility of the RMO to its users. This goodwill cannot be measured in dollars.

(7) The validity of the exercise is still questionable when undertaken on this scale. File movements between offices need to be minimal to obtain an accurate record of the location of the files at any time. Given the time frame, this was not the case. An alternative is to conduct traditional file audits on a smaller scale, department by department, on

a rotational basis. In the past, the RMO has not allowed time for this, but it is now recognised as an essential part of good recordkeeping.

Conclusion

The majority of users were accommodating and understanding; only once was it necessary to show official ID to authenticate the status of the auditor. There was one occurrence of deliberate obstruction. Nevertheless, the organisation of the audit and the communication skills required to carry it out were underestimated. It was not an easy clerical task! As well as being confident and assertive, one had to rapidly acquire a thick skin and broad shoulders. It was not a comfortable experience having to riffle through people's belongings and workstations. The auditor needs to be aware of client sensitivity about the intrusiveness of the process and, at times, be prepared to feel a little under siege - due to misconceptions surrounding the audit process and the importance of it.

Many employers are unaware of the existence of the recently published *National Records and Archives Competency Standards* (November 1997) and *Australian Standard AS4390 - Records Management* (1996), both of which set national benchmarks for professional recordkeeping practice.

If these sources were to be incorporated into general office practice in the workforce, then the standing of the profession of records management would change considerably. However, as the Manager of Records and Archives Services Monash University has stated recently:

Even the most casual examination of the new Competency Standards reveals the high expectations the industry now

has of its servants. And also, how far removed these expectations are, both from assumptions about traditional on-the-job training being all that is required for recordkeeping professionals and about the nature of recordkeeping responsibilities. The very language in which the Standards are described effectively puts the profession of recordkeeping at a senior level beyond the aspirations of largely unskilled records clerks who once dominated the industry.¹

Nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in the process of 'Conducting a File Audit' which falls under Level 2 of the National Records and Archives Competency Standards - *Maintaining and Managing Records Over Time*. Even though this is the lowest level of our professional work, auditing is listed along with appraisal, migration, quality assurance and sentencing - all units of work that require a standard of professionalism not previously recognised as part of normal registry practice.

While this lack of understanding of accountable records management processes persists, records officers are likely to remain the equivalent of the 'poor person from records looking for lost files' rather than a professional records officer providing clients with an accurate, accountable, reliable and confidential service.

Endnote

¹ Personal communication, May 1998.

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RM ALMOST DEAD!

Long Live Knowledge Management

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Abstract

The RMAA 15th National Convention held in Brisbane, Queensland on 6-9 September 1998 had as its theme, 'Making Information Work'. However, the subject that pervaded most of the Convention was the increasing emphasis being placed on knowledge management and the need for Records Managers to adapt to this change to survive as a profession.

You might not have guessed it from the accent, but it was an Englishman who set the virtual cat among the information pigeons at the Records Management Association of Australia's Convention. He told them that records management is dying, will soon be dead. Long live knowledge management, he said. No-one screamed. Somebody laughed!

Judging by statements in other papers during September's three-day Brisbane faq-fest,¹ he struck at one or two nail heads. None of the other speakers said it so brutally, but there were echoes there.

The Convention was themed 'Making Information Work', but it was actually mostly about making information managers work, a topic with resonance way beyond the high, wide and handsome walls of the

Queensland capital's new, gazillion-dollar convention centre on the south bank of the Brisbane River.

UK Newcastle-born Sydney-sider Frank McKenna² started it. Well, he would, wouldn't he! He's one of the founders of Australia's burgeoning RM software industry and captain of his own GMB company's RecFind flagship system. Mr McKenna first shook the 350 delegates by answering his own question: 'Does records management software have a future as a discrete application? In the long term, in five years plus, it has none!'

He set the 'real' future at some five years ahead, around the year 2003. He conceded coolly: 'You may view this as a surprising utterance from someone who makes his living from records management software. However, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that records management software is a dinosaur due for extinction'.

Of course, he had a reason. He put up another question: 'Will records management software exist as part of a grander scheme, part of a larger more comprehensive application, a knowledge management system?' Again, he answered it himself: 'In five years plus, it will be mandatory. All enterprises will be using knowledge management software incorporating records management principles'. He based these assumptions on feedback from what he called 'RecFind's 50 per cent share of the Australian installed base of records management systems'.

Then came the real shaker. He warned everyone to hold onto their seats, saying: 'Is there a future for records managers beyond the year

2003? I'm sorry to have to tell you that, no, there is no future for you beyond the next five years'. There were no screams, a few nervous titters, someone actually laughed!

Mr McKenna's Irish forebears passed him down good thespian genes, as well! He had paused for seconds, and continued '...unless you are prepared to take on the job of knowledge manager!'

The Sizzle Factors

He based his dramatic statement on research into use by RM software clients of their systems' 'sizzle features designed to dazzle and win over the techno-heads and consultants'. At present, only a small percentage of clients used these features which could access corporate databases, the Internet, electronic document management and imaging. By 2003, 100 per cent of them would be using all these functions fully.

He explained: 'Even though I am a firm believer that the term "records" includes all corporate objects, the majority of the business community simply does not agree and cannot be convinced. I am, therefore, of the firm belief that records management functionality will be incorporated into knowledge management solutions, and that IT professionals will assume the responsibilities of records professionals within five years. This is simply the inevitable result of a battle between "low-tech" and "high-tech".'

'The fact that the records management community and organisations like RMAA and ARMA (and I am a member of both) have

failed to sell their solution as high-tech, state-of-the-art is their greatest failing. I firmly believe that the situation is now irreversible and that the only future for records managers is within the IT community, as knowledge managers.'

It was pretty extreme stuff. He's nearly right, too, I reckon. I think it will take longer than five years, but there's no doubt the original, close 'records management' form and function is doomed. Several other speakers, as far as I know without any advance notice of the McKenna bombshell, thought so too. One, **Chris Simpson**, Records Manager of Queensland's Ipswich City Council, believes they will become records management 'technicians' working behind the scenes 'out of sight, out of mind'.

The head of Brisbane software house Advanced Data Integration, **Chris Gorry**, spoke of the move from records management to 'information resource management' coming with the dramatic change in organisation communications.

Another Chris - what a popular name it was a generation or so ago! - the Director of Corporate Services at Logan City Council, one of the nation's largest local bodies, **Chris Rose**, forecast change more optimistically: 'Records are basically recorded information, therefore records management is actually information management. As we move into the information age, its proper management will become extremely important. Herein lies both a great challenge and an excellent opportunity for records managers'.

Choice: Custodians or Dinosaurs

Mr McKenna shared the debating platform with one of his software competitors, another English-born

Australian electronic records management (ERM) pioneer, **Roger Worthington**,³ chief executive of Brisbane's QCOM company. He swore there had been no collusion between them, but agreed with his rival almost entirely, challenging the profession: 'You can be the custodians of information, or you can be the dinosaurs. What will you be?' He said records managers faced their biggest opportunity ever. The evidence was in the booming PC-usage in homes and offices, soaring email, world wide web and electronic commerce figures, and 'blue chip' high-tech stocks and shares. He said: 'This is the biggest opportunity you are ever going to get. It's no longer coming. It's here!'

'What do you, as custodians, need to do to grasp the opportunity? You have to learn about the technology: servers, networks, PCs, laptops, palm computers, wearable technology. You have to learn the jargon: object management, metadata, templates, electronic commerce, workflow, imaging, contact management. Then, you have to sell your employers the notion that there needs to be a discipline that only the Records Management profession has, to be trusted with the organisation's most valuable resource - information.'

Mr Worthington urged, 'Don't say "I don't understand the technology". You can learn. It's only jargon. It's still dealing with things you have known for ever. Don't say, "I'm not as clever as these IT people". At what? Writing programs? That's not what I'm talking about. Your strengths are self discipline, rigour, persistence. These are not traits of the IT professional, as a rule, but they are the traits of records managers.'

He seriously suggested that records managers should change their title to 'information custodians'. They should make a take-over for the

information assets of their organisations. He exhorted, 'You know all the reasons why you should do it. But many of you don't. Why? The Guardians' job is yours for the asking. Go ask for it!'

Industry in Revolt

So, the industry is revolting! But why? Other speakers had suggestions. The boss of the DocTrieve software company, **Earl Woolley**, said, 'Documents are no longer only static thin sheets of dead trees. The power is the knowledge contained in the document and that knowledge must be used, re-used and multiplied. Endless information requires endless space. Virtual space is the only option.'

Chris Gorry thought it was because 'time is now the essence in communication'. He said, 'The movement of information between organisations and individuals within the organisation has reached new levels. We no longer wait days for information. We expect responses the same day and in many instances, within minutes. The tools we now have - email, facsimile gateways, etc., make "immediate" forms of communication available to everyone.'

To cope, standards for automatic information management were being developed, allowing workflow engines to communicate with one another, passing information for business processing between themselves. He said, 'The need for the receiving organisation to register or determine manually the tasks required will be reduced or removed completely. Although it will be information critical to the corporate system, the records department will most likely never see it'.

He said the role of records managers was no longer restricted to

registration, housekeeping and retention processes, adding, 'The modern records manager is being asked to assist in the utilisation of the information to undertake the business processes. The challenge is for him or her to be aware how information is used within the organisation, not merely how it should be registered.'

Australia Post Marketing and Communications Manager, **Christine Corbett**, had statistics to prove the theories. In the past 35 or so years, the total 'messaging market' had increased eight times, in Australia from three billion to 24 billion a year. The market would grow a further 40 per cent by 2005. She showed that these percentage rises applied all over the developed world. But in the past two years, business to business snail-mail showed 'virtually zero growth' - the impact of the new technologies. Though it, too, is soaring in volume, business correspondence now relies on faxes, the telephone ... and email.

Model for Information Guardians

Victoria State consultant, **Julie Apps**,⁴ set out an answer in her paper on 'Traditional methods versus the future.' She showed that records, physical or electronic, could become knowledge and be used to meet an organisation's objectives simply by applying discipline and organisational functions to meet business needs, accountability and expectations.

She set out a fine model for the new records management, knowledge management, information guardians, or whatever they/we are to be called: 'The architecture of the structure is to move away from the central and/or decentralised records management structure of ... maintenance and storage [activities] and move towards

a consultative and management role in terms of records keeping. The devolution structure requires the service providers to become innovative in their approach to the management of information, rather than merely physically undertaking routine tasks associated with custodial issues.

'The records management centre must be adequately resourced with trained and innovative staff who understand their role and responsibilities, if the service is to be of on-going value.

'The devolution model relies very heavily on access to technology to enable the records management centre to change its focus away from the actual manual tasks ... towards a consultative, and monitoring role.'

The software would be required to show compliance with records management policies, procedures, standards and business rules and operate a structure that recorded and maintained information intellectually.

Ms Apps said, 'The records management centre function would change from being a filing station and custodian of all records to that of an advisory and policy unit with limited hands-on involvement with current records'.

Kemal Hasandedic, the Records Policy Officer in one of North Queensland's fastest growing councils, Thuringowa City, works by his own two-edged maxim, 'Ask the users what they want, give them the tools to do what they need, *and* what we records management professionals require'.

It works particularly in his dealing with his IT colleagues as he gets to grips with systems. He declared, 'I do not proclaim to be an IT technocrat. I ask questions of IT professionals

and get a second opinion from outside my organisation. Then, using my new-found knowledge, I encourage IT to be a party to changing the organisation. I try to ask semi-intelligent questions and if I do not understand the gobbledegook I am given, I ask for a simpler answer for my overworked brain'.

He believed in 'shooting from the hip' and saying what he believed to be right. But he did not set out to tread on technologists' toes. Everyone has a safety zone and if threatened within it, reacted in various manners. He advised delegates to 'suffer ... sorry ... enjoy' training sessions on behavioural management or understanding the human psyche. They would put it to good use.

'My relationship with IT has not been plain sailing. Far from it! But face-to-face meetings where both parties threw cards on the table have sorted out differences and misunderstandings. And fortunately, the IT personnel find it refreshing when someone keeps them informed and is honest with them,' he said.

Training to Raise Morale

Training consultant **Joy Siller**, director and principal consultant for Siller Systems Administration, had some pretty scathing things to say about training amongst records management professionals. She identified one of the benefits as being to 'improve morale leading to a reduction in absenteeism and turnover'.

I would certainly put that near the top of my wish list.

She questioned whether the common belief that lack of RM training was solely the fault of top management. She said that in a Brisbane survey, poor regard for RM staff by senior management was cited as a major reason for a lack of training. In a New

South Wales Archives Authority inquiry only 49 per cent of government agencies reported records management training. She commented, 'In both surveys, a number of other reasons were given for the low rate of training: inadequate funding; apathy of RM staff; staff cut-backs and resistance to change and new techniques suggested in training programs'.

She went on, 'Could it be that the problem lies not just with the lack of senior management support, but also with inadequate planning by those designing and choosing the records management training program?'

'Could it also be that senior management sees a lack of proper planning and results from records management training, and this perpetuates the lack of support? It may be the responsibility of the records manager to take a proactive role in establishing a strategic and result-based training program to convince senior management of its worth.'

I reckon **Alan Howell**, the Preservation Manager at the State Library of New South Wales knows what he's talking about when he addresses the technical challenges that face recordkeepers. He is chair of the Australian Co-operative Digitisation Project's Technical Advisory Group (try making a pronounceable acronym out of that!) and convener of the Australian Library and Information Association's special interest group for preservation of library materials.

In his paper, 'Historical technology: Love it or lose it', he pleads for greater co-operation by information resources for the management and availability of information. He told delegates, 'The cultural and information sectors cannot afford to work in isolation either from each

other or from their users. It is ineffective, inefficient and institutional suicide to do so. We need to move the locus of our work out from the institutions and into the community. More cross-sectoral liaisons, building on the work to date but driven by partnerships with users, are required to demonstrate the benefits of this approach.

'Similarly, it is also counter-productive to work without cognisance of the major developments overseas. We need to develop more international linkages that foster common cost-effective strategies and benchmark our strategies against the best in the world'. Mr Howell was talking about libraries in particular, but his advice fits just as neatly into the worried, work-threatened world of records and information management.

Endnotes

¹ Faq-fest: A forum for Frequently Asked Questions. Geddit? Geddit?

² Frank McKenna, Managing Director of the GMB Group, PO Box 867, Crows Nest NSW 2065. Tel: +61 (0)2 9439 2811; URL:[http:// www.gmb.com.au](http://www.gmb.com.au)

³ Roger Worthington, Managing Director of QCOM Pty Ltd, 457 Upper Edward Street, Brisbane QLD 4000. Tel: +61 (0)7 3839 3544; email: qcom@qcom.com.au; URL:[http:// www.qcom.com.au](http://www.qcom.com.au)

⁴ Julie Apps, Managing Director of RDM Consultancy Services, 53 Douthie Road, Seville East, VIC 3139. Tel: +61 (0)3 5964 8530; email: julie_apps@onaustralia.com.au

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'Into the Future'

On Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age

Author**Allan Connelly-Hansen****A film by Terry Sanders****Narrated by Robert Macneil**

A sequel to the award-winning film *Slow Fires: On the Preservation of the Human Record* (focused on issues relating to preservation of information in a paper-based environment), *'Into the Future': On the Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age*, is a co-production of the US Commission on Preservation and Access - a program of the Council on Library and Information Resources - in association with the American Council of Learned Societies. The video is available in one-hour and half-hour VHS versions from the American Film Foundation for \$US 59.50 and \$US 39.50 respectively (plus shipping and handling). Contact details are:

American Film Foundation
PO Box 2000
Santa Monica, CA 90406

Into the Future progresses through a range of comments from various (mainly North American) practitioners and experts in relevant professions, featuring viewpoints and insights from 'prominent shapers and thinkers of the Electronic Age', such as:

Peter Norton*Founder of Norton Utilities***Tim Berners-Lee***Father of the World Wide Web***John Seely Brown***A chief scientist at Xerox Corporation***Michael Dertouzos***Director of M.I.T. Laboratory for Computer Science***Deanna Marcum***President of the US Council on Library and Information Resources***Jeff Rothenberg***Senior computer scientist for RAND Corporation***Paul Le Clerc***President for the New York Public Library***Kenneth Thibodeau***Director of the Centre for Electronic Records, NARA; and***Dr Margaret Hedstrom***Associate professor, School of Information, University of Michigan; ex-director of the Centre for Electronic Records; and ex-Chief of State Records Advisory Services at NARA.*

The program, originally aired on the US public broadcast network, uses colourful analogies - the World Wide Web described at one point as 'a gigantic mass of spaghetti spanning the entire globe'. Further, it exploits the features of video by using various illustrative and practical examples to accompany the narrative, each helping to visualise and reinforce key points. For example, footage of a technology junkyard filled with mainframes costing millions of dollars less than a decade ago and being dismembered for useful sub-components, certainly reinforces the scale and rate of technological obsolescence.

Into the Future provides an insight into the reliance on electronic media in today's 'knowledge-based society'. It reflects on the limitations of traditional approaches to preservation in addressing the issues specific to the preservation of data in digital formats, which are carried on

relatively unstable media, and can only be read and/or interpreted using hardware and software prone to technological obsolescence. It offers a strong warning regarding the unlikely survival of the electronic human record if awareness of the issues is not raised, suggesting appropriate strategies need to be put into place, conscious decisions made, and action taken by relevant individuals, to ensure its preservation. Stewards of recorded information stored in digital format face the task of balancing the benefits and costs of new technologies in enhancing long-term accessibility to recorded information in digital formats. As each individual in society is affected, either directly or indirectly, they too should be aware of the issues involved.

Will humans twenty, fifty, or one hundred years from now have access to the electronically recorded history of our time? The first lines transmitted via telegraph and telephone were consciously recorded and preserved for our generation. But has consensus been reached on the content of the first email message transmitted, or first website created?

*So long as men can breathe or eyes
can see,*

*So long lives this, and this gives life
to thee.*

This couplet from Shakespeare's 18th sonnet, perhaps better known by its opening line - 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' - represents both an example of the colourful analogies used throughout the video, and a favourite example of longevity for one commentator. According to his interpretation, 'this' in the couplet

refers to the sonnet itself, with the inference that Shakespeare thought the sonnet would last forever as he scribed it. The commentator states that we need to do something equivalent for digital information. Would the sonnet still be readable when discovered in 100 years, or even 20 years, if it was recorded today on a personal computer, saved to a floppy disk and left on a shelf in the interim? Unless it was saved to a more stable and durable medium, and migrated across generational changes in technology, the chance of survival is small. Can we still read those magnetic tapes from early space explorations? What happened to Windows 2.2, and reel-to-reel? What about CD-ROMs in 20 years? These questions lie at the foundation of the message being conveyed in *Into the Future*.

Before addressing the specific problems surrounding digital preservation, the video emphasises the massive scale of the crisis. In an attempt to quantify the magnitude of the problem, it takes the viewer through a range of statistics and facts on the rate of digital storage expansion. For example, it is estimated that when Bill Clinton leaves office, his administration will transfer in excess of eight million electronic files to the National Archives, and that by the year 2000, seventy-five per cent of all US federal transactions will be handled electronically. It is noted that, with increasing frequency, individuals are creating material electronically in the first instance, never to exist in paper format, only on the Internet or in an electronic publication. The video makes the point however, that *quantifying* the magnitude of the digital preservation crisis provides only one dimension of the problem.

The video takes the viewer on a journey through the historical perspectives of preservation, the

general issues underlying why we should be concerned about it in the digital landscape, the technical issues involved, what can be done to address the situation, and points to ways in which individuals and groups can work collaboratively to investigate and develop solutions to the challenges posed. *Into the Future* presents the need for collaboration between the stewards of collections and the developers of technology as critically important, highlighting that both the private and public sectors must enter discussions and form partnerships in developing and adopting common standards that are essential to realising universal information storage and retrieval. In addition, reference is also made to the need to be involved in promoting changes to the regulatory infrastructure that will ensure universal access to public domain information.

Most issues regarding preservation in the digital landscape cannot be considered in isolation from accessibility issues. Robert Stein, founder of the Voyager Company (producer and publisher of electronic books), confirms how the creative possibilities of digitisation are exciting and immediate relative to any preservation considerations. *Into the Future* demonstrates that whilst digital technologies have greatly enhanced possibilities for information discovery and access to information, they are far removed from ideal from a preservation perspective owing to the instability of the associated storage media, and the rate of obsolescence of the hardware and software required to read them. Further, it describes how the process of physical decay that records stored on digital media are susceptible to, even if stored under controlled environmental conditions, is not necessarily apparent to the naked eye. It is not until somebody tries to read the records that deterioration is revealed, or it is realised that the record cannot be read

or interpreted using the most recent generation of hardware and/or software.

Margaret Hedstrom notes that, unlike paper which can be discovered by accident hundreds of years after creation and still be legible, 'digital records do not just survive by accident. Conscious decisions have to be made that they are worth keeping, and on creation establish which standards to use, and make a commitment to keeping them alive and able to be read and retrieved'. As we approach the new millennium, more practical examples of the problem surface daily. The video presents a number of examples of the crisis at hand. These include:

- considerable difficulty has been experienced in terms of locating machines with the capacity to play reel-to-reel tapes holding valuable records of tribal oral history at Arizona's Navajo Community College, and even when this is achieved the tapes themselves (although recorded only 20 years ago) have deteriorated in many cases to the point of being unreadable;
- NASA's deep space explorations ten to twenty per cent of vital data recorded on magnetic tapes from the 'Viking' Mars mission has significant errors. The video describes how the majority of resources, at the time, were allocated to initiatives directed at improving the chances of being the first spacecraft to visit Mars, at the expense of undertaking any measures to ensure preservation of the data once compiled;
- in 1976, the Census Bureau was asked by the US National Archives to provide parts of the 1960 Census data that had 'long-term historical value', but took three years to furnish the records because it no longer had machines capable of reading the data;

- the lost history of the Internet because it originated in laboratories more interested in discovery than preservation;
- email messages have been deleted in unimaginable proportions, some significant but often not captured as records because of the immediacy of the mode of communication and/or ignorance of the fact that certain email constitutes evidence of business activities;
- the US National Research Council has revealed recently that Earth observation data gathered by satellite in the 1970s, critical for establishing deforestation trends in the Amazon basin data, was written to now-obsolete tapes.

Deanna Marcum, president of the US Council on Library and Information Resources, expresses concern regarding the trend towards reckless adoption of digital formats, noting that tightening budgets and economic rationalisation often compound the problem. She explains how existing preservation projects (e.g. microfilming) are being abandoned to divert funds to digitisation projects without applying appropriate preservation safeguards, resulting in a potential double loss for society and an immense cost for recovery (if possible at all).

A clear message underlying the video is that, although inextricably linked, the physical survival of recorded information is not the only crucial aspect to preservation in the Electronic Age. The ability to decipher and understand recorded information's meaning and context is also essential. This point is clearly demonstrated with imagery using the Rosetta Stone, with the accompanying narrative expressing how it was the key to understanding the writings of an entire civilisation because, prior to its discovery, scholars had tried unsuccessfully for centuries to

interpret Egyptian hieroglyphics. Though physically intact and legible, the meaning of the symbols had been lost over time. Unless appropriate measures are put into place, stored 'enduring value' information in electronic formats will become as unreadable as Egyptian hieroglyphics before the deciphering of the Rosetta Stone.

Donald Waters, Associate University Librarian at Yale University, makes a key point regarding the required change in attitude of individuals and society to meet the challenges of the digital landscape. 'It's moving from a period where we don't understand all the pieces and interrelationships that have to be put into place, to a point where we are *naturally* dealing with digital information and moving it forward as interest requires. That is the cultural change and hub of the problem we are really dealing with here.' I certainly agree with this claim, based on my experience on a project team implementing an electronic recordkeeping system at the National Archives of Australia.

Owing to the wide target audience, the coverage of the program is generally limited on the 'how', with the focus restricted to the 'what' and 'why'. Similarly, the video focuses almost exclusively on information and knowledge generally, rather than on records and archives as understood by recordkeeping practitioners. There is no detailed coverage of the issues surrounding maintenance of authenticity and reliability, capture of full and accurate records to serve as evidence of business transactions and activities, functional appraisal, provenance, and so on. None the less, continuum-based thinkers will be pleased to learn the video suggests that because of the problems entailed in the electronic landscape, one of the most important measures stewards of digital information can take now to curb the developing crisis is to 'give

careful consideration to the long-term preservation needs of digital information *when it is first created*' [my emphasis].

It was surprising, given the litigious nature of American society and obsession with rights of privacy and freedom of information, that no direct coverage of privacy and security issues was included in the program. Most refreshing for me was the absence of any debates regarding terminology or custody. It was interesting however, given the recent discussion during the Australian Law Reform Commission's Review of the *Archives Act 1983*, to hear the term 'enduring value' used. Those with an insatiable appetite for deliberations about custody might be interested in the discussion of the US Centre for Electronic Records, which has over 800 live data streams of 'vital information' (e.g. on health, population and housing) from various agencies.

These observations should not be considered as shortfalls however, as the production is designed for public consumption, aimed at providing general exposure to an audience that is not aware of the multitude of issues surrounding the management of information in digital format. Further, it should be noted that this review is only based on the half-hour version of the video and does not include discussion of the accompanying discussion guide and compendium of other sources packaged with it, apart from noting here that this supplementary material is informative and useful. To its credit, above meeting its target audience, the video is also well-suited to information professionals or senior managers looking to reinforce, consolidate, or heighten their awareness of the issues.

A shorter version of this review is being published in the November 1998 issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*.

THE RMAA's COURSE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Dennis G Wheeler

BA, Grad Dip Business & Professional Mgt, ARMA.

In 1997, the Association commenced planning and subsequently undertook a pilot program in Course Recognition. The pilots involved three universities in two jurisdictions, the ACT and Western Australia. Prior to undertaking site visits, a major planning exercise was undertaken involving the Federal Education Committee members. This process included the production of a guide to assist Course Recognition Assessment Panel members with the steps involved, criteria, reporting time lines and administrative procedures to be followed. This document has been updated to reflect the experience of the pilot programs. The Course Recognition Assessment Panels normally comprise two local State Branch members, one who acts as



Chair, and usually the Coordinator, Federal Education, or an academically qualified representative nominated by the Coordinator, Federal Education.

Recognition is usually granted for a period of five years or until significant changes are made to course content. An annual report by each institution is included as part of the process. Recognition may be granted for a lesser time if the Panel believes that there are issues that require change or modification by the education institution concerned. That organisation would be contacted and the issues and suggested changes discussed. Naturally, if a course was deemed unsuitable for Recognition, it would not be granted.

The first university to be visited was the **University of Canberra, ACT**, and the following courses were reviewed:

- Bachelor of Information Management (Office Management specialisation) (Library & Information Studies specialisation)
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Information Management
- Graduate Certificate in Records & Archives Management.

Course Recognition Assessment Panel Members:

Thomas Kaufhold

ACT Branch representative, Chair

Ross Thompson

Industry representative

Dennis Wheeler

Coordinator, Federal Education Committee (interstate representative)

As a result of the extensive review, the following courses were recommended for official recognition by the RMAA:

- Bachelor of Information Management
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Information Management.

The Graduate Certificate in Records & Archives Management received endorsement as 'Pending Recognition' with a further review to be undertaken following the graduation of the first group of participating students.

In September 1997, two Course Recognition Assessment Panels were established in Western Australia to undertake reviews at the following universities.

Edith Cowan University, Perth

- Graduate Diploma of Science (Archives & Records)
- The Records Management Minor
- The University Certificate in Public Sector Records Management

Assessment Panel Members:

Graeme Merton

WA Branch representative, Chair

Dennis Wheeler

Coordinator, Federal Education Committee

Anthony Eccleston

Interstate and industry representative

Curtin University, Perth

- Graduate Diploma in Records Management & Archives
- Bachelor of Applied Science (Records Management)
- Bachelor of Applied Science (Records Management) Honours

Committee Members:

Graeme Merton

WA Branch representative, Chair

Dennis Wheeler

Coordinator, Federal Education,
interstate representative

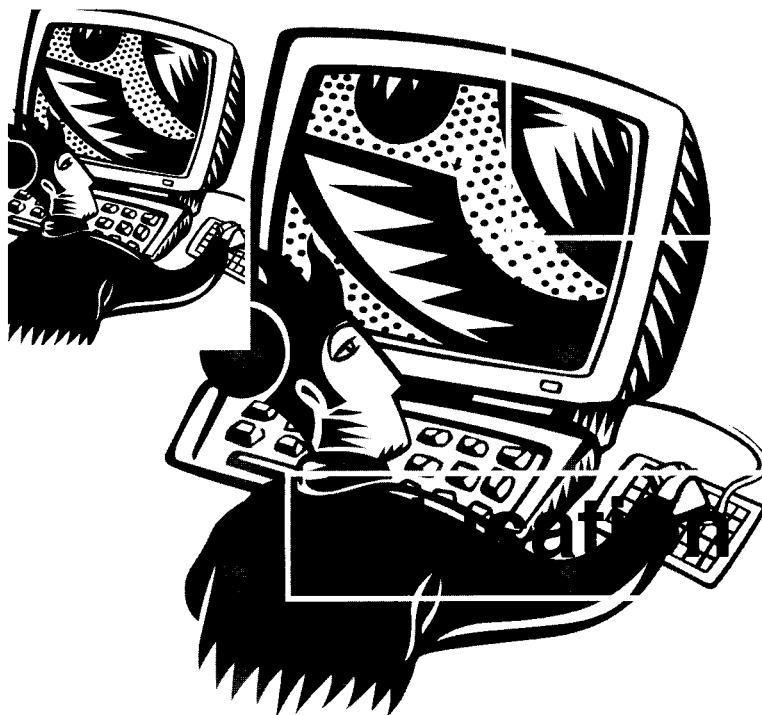
Shane Culbertson

WA Branch representative

As a result of the reviews, the panels recommended that those courses on offer by both universities be granted Recognition.

A number of issues were raised during the process. These have been heeded by the Association and appropriate amendments and mechanisms to address those issues have been built into the Guidelines.

A Course Recognition visit usually takes two very full days of quite intensive work and all those involved on the Panels are to be thanked for their generous donation of time and energy.



99

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- Graduate Diploma of Science (Archives and Records)
- Master of Science (Information Science)

Undergraduate/Professional Development

- Bachelor of Science (Communications and Information Technology) (Records minor)
- University Certificate in Public Sector Records Management

These courses are recognised by the Records Management Association of Australia. Special entry and advanced standing are available. Course details available at <http://liswww.fste.ac.cowan.edu.au>

Applications close soon.

For further information contact:

Postgrad/Grad/ Professional Development Kay Noble, phone: (08) 9370 6344, fax: (08) 9370 6624
email: k.noble@cowan.edu.au

Undergraduate: Pam Phillips, phone: (08) 9370 6299, fax: (08) 08 9370 6100,
email: p.phillips@cowan.edu.au or phone K. Anderson on (08) 9370 6276.

www.cowan.edu.au



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UNIVERSITY**
PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BENCHMARK EC5445

CompuTechnics

Workflow Automation Speeds Compensation for Victims of Serious Crime

Victims Compensation Tribunal Expedites Claims Involving Homicides and Other Serious Crimes, Improves Tracking & Claim Management

The NSW Victims Compensation Tribunal (VCT) is identifying and prioritising compensation claims from victims of serious crime with a workflow automation solution from CompuTechnics.

The core business system developed by CompuTechnics, the Workflow Automation System, or WAS, helps the VCT manage compensation claims and implement processes to expedite claims involving homicide, sexual assault and other serious crimes.

The VCT, which is part of the NSW Attorney-General's Department, manages claims for compensation from victims of crime. The process generates large amounts of correspondence and paperwork from a number of different parties including lawyers, courts, defendants, counsellors and victims.

Facilitates Team-based Work Process

WAS speeds claim processing by facilitating a major change in work processes. Instead of the old process of routing files through different departments, small teams of eight to ten people are allocated specific claims.

WAS allocates the work to officers

depending on their seniority. Members of a team manage every step in the claims process and control all the information on a particular case. Any officer in the team can find out the status of a claim allocated to the team or other relevant information.

Any number of people in a team can be working at the same time on different aspects of a file. Claims or inquiries aren't held up because officers in a section are away, departmental bottlenecks don't develop and priority can be given to claims as necessary.

Fast & Painless

According to Phil O'Toole, director of Victim Services, WAS is critical to keeping track of the claims process and helps move cases efficiently to their conclusion.

'Our clients are the victims of crime. Some of them have endured an enormous amount of suffering. We aim to make the compensation process as painless and as easy as possible.

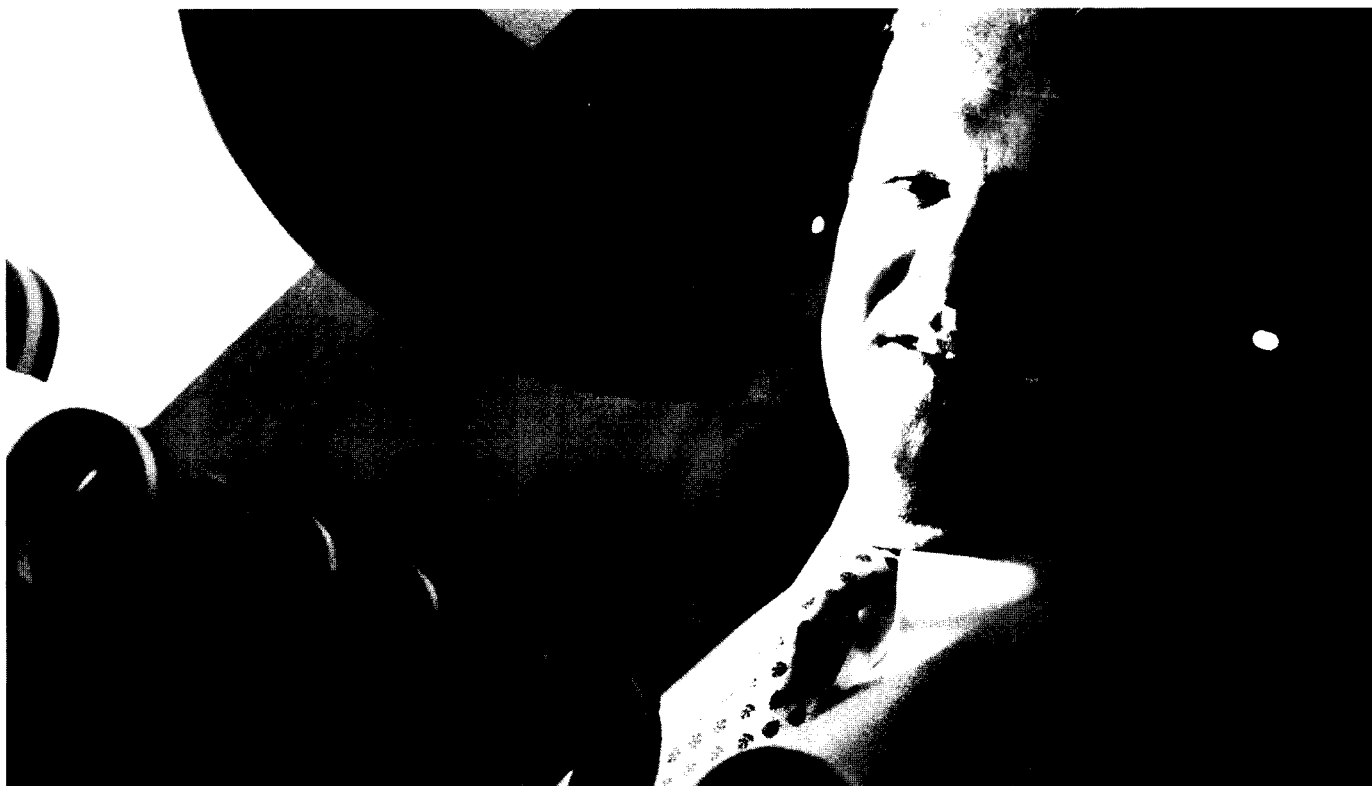
'WAS helps manage what is often a very involved process. WAS quickly and easily presents the status of any claim in the compensation lifecycle. VCT officers can quickly provide claimants with more details on their case, where the relevant paperwork is at and what actions are needed to complete the claim,' he said.

Legal Process

Anyone who has been the victim of a personal act of violent crime, regardless of whether there was a criminal conviction or not, is entitled to make a claim to the VCT. The VCT decides on a balance of probabilities whether a victim is entitled to compensation. The victim is able to claim financial compensation for loss of income, medical expenses, pain and suffering. Many also apply for counselling services.

The process of claiming compensation for a criminal action involves a number of stages. The start of the claim process requires the victim to fill out a detailed report of the incident which is then registered into WAS. WAS automatically performs a number of functions, including identifying missing information, outputting letters to claimants for follow-up information and letters to police for police reports.

Once all the relevant information has been collected, a process which may take many months, WAS downloads all the relevant information and produces a summary report. The matter is listed for determination by either an assessor or magistrate. Their decision is entered into the system and, if it's not a common law compensation case under the old legislation, WAS generates the compensation entitlement and outputs a letter to the claimant. If this offer of compensation is accepted by



Phil O'Toole, Director, Victim Services

the victim, the payment is automatically generated via the Attorney-General's Department.

It can take anywhere between nine months and two years between the lodgement of a claim for compensation and its settlement.

Claims on the Increase

Once the compensation process has been finalised, the VCT restitution process begins. If there has been a criminal conviction, the VCT seeks to recover the monies paid out in compensation from the criminal. The person must be tracked down and ordered to pay.

The length and complexity of the restitution process will then depend on whether the amount of restitution is disputed in court, the capacity of the person to pay, the involvement of debt collectors and a host of other variables.

The importance of accurate record keeping and the automation of

routine correspondence is vitally important to help officers keep on top of the workload. This is especially important considering that the number of claims for compensation has doubled over the past few years. At any one time, the VCT is handling more than 11,000 compensation claims and 5,000 applications for counselling.

Cheque Turnaround Time Reduced by Two-Thirds

When the compensation offer is accepted by the victim, payment is generated automatically by accounts payable in the Attorney-General's Department. WAS interfaces directly with databases in the Attorney-General's Department, saving the re-keying of data and the possibility of errors. Automation of this process alone has reduced the time it takes to issue a cheque from four weeks to one week after acceptance of the offer by the victim.

'WAS's interfacing with other

databases is invaluable,' said Phil O'Toole. 'It operates seamlessly with accounts payable in the Attorney General's Department, reducing manual processing and getting the money to victims faster.

'Once the new system is fully rolled out to the restitution process, WAS will also interface directly with A-G's accounts receivable and VCT's imminent debtors management systems,' he said.

Proactive File Management

CompuTechnics has delivered WAS in three stages:

- WAS I: workflow systems for the compensation of victims and restitution against defendants
- WAS II: a further 10 workflow processes in relation to counselling, claims, payments to service providers and reconsiderations, resulting from new legislation implemented in 1997
- WAS III: added system

functionality including further interfacing with other databases and system alerts.

WAS III will enable the VCT to exercise more proactive file management. For example, pre-set system alerts will notify officers if a police report hasn't been received, or if a response from a client's solicitor is late. The officer can download the relevant fields and issue a standard follow-up letter to the relevant parties.

WAS has also reduced the risk of fraud by 'heuristic' searching of data files. Heuristic searching is a method of cross-matching data according to a

defined set of rules to find related or duplicated files. This enables the VCT to identify spurious or duplicate claims under different names.

A clearly defined electronic audit trail reduces the possibility of internal fraud and clearly accounts for all outgoing monies.


Crime Statistics

WAS also delivers a wide range of crime statistics and management information. Any number of different crime statistics can be produced from the system according to region,

occupation, social demographic or electorate.

'When you are running tens of thousands of cases, each with its own mountain of paperwork, having an efficient way of managing and controlling that information is critical,' said Phil O'Toole.

'WAS organises our information and helps us manage our work. While it's already delivered considerable efficiencies, even more benefits will flow as we further adapt the system and make use of it,' he said.



NEW FACES

INFORMAA needs your help to report on new faces that are emerging in the Records Management Industry.

In the next edition of Informaa there will be a section that reports on new people with new ideas. If you or anyone you know has recently changed positions or developed a new idea for records management, **INFORMAA** would like to know about it.

All you need to do is send us a photograph and fifty words and we will consider it for printing in **INFORMAA**.

Deadline for copy and photos for February 1999 issue:

19th December 1998

Please send copy and photos to:

Christine Pollicino

MAP Marketing

Cnr Scott St & Parnell Place

Newcastle NSW 2300

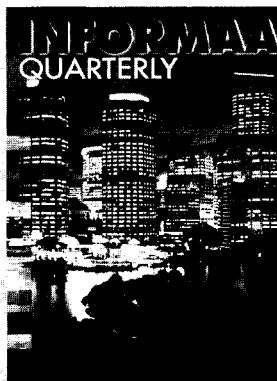
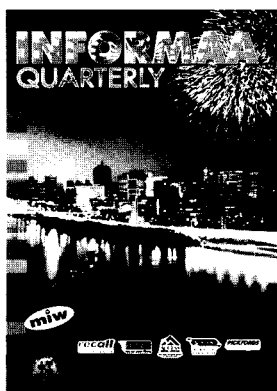
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Don't Use the Fridge as a Filing Cabinet - Get a HomeOffice Box as Your Personal PA

The new HomeOffice Box means those important personal and household papers that often lie around and get lost can now be managed with all the efficiency of a professional office filing system.

This simply operated home organiser from TAB Datafile safely accommodates and organises all those pieces of paper which might otherwise end up under the fridge magnet - including bills, bank statements, tax papers, car registration, investment certificates and insurance policies.

It comes complete with 25 pre-labelled folders that include categories for telephone, water, gas, and electricity. Each folder's label is letter coded as well as named, so that the user can see at a glance where the information is stored.

The folders fit into two plastic Databoxes that keep them upright and rigid. The Databoxes can be placed on a desk while in active use, or stored in a drawer.

As well as the Databoxes for active documents, a record storage box is supplied for archival safe-keeping of papers such as tax records and product warranties.

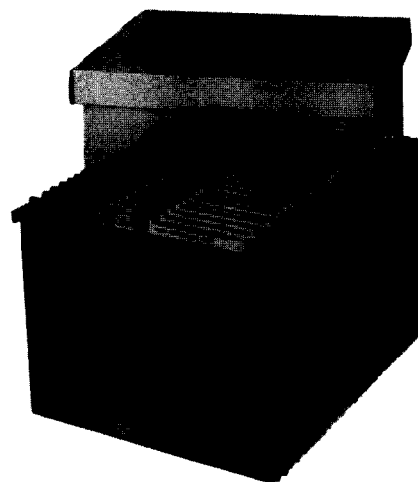
For storing one-of-a-kind information, HomeOffice Box can be fitted with the 1-to-100 file, which provides an ordered home for miscellaneous items such as newspaper articles, maps, diskettes, airline tickets, passports and concert schedules. The customised index of the 1-to-100 file tells the user exactly where to find each piece of information, making retrieval simple.

HomeOffice Box can also be used with various other types of files from TAB Datafile, including A-Z files, month-by-month files, or day-by-day files.

Available from TAB Datafile Express by phoning freecall 1800 636 304, the HomeOffice Box is one of a family of organising solutions ranging from files and labels to complete office fitouts.

The HomeOffice Box is designed with all the expertise that has made TAB Datafile one of Australia's leading corporate information specialists, with full size systems serving many of Australia's biggest companies, ranging from AMP to Westpac. By empowering households to take control of their paperwork, the HomeOffice Box functions as a personal administrative assistant at home.

For the latest catalogue or information on your local representative, phone 1800 503 453 or fax 1800 633 118.



TRIM Top in Federal Government

TOWER Software's TRIM product is going from strength to strength in winning the enterprise wide market for capturing and accessing corporate records in the Federal Government. The Federal Government's push to doing business electronically has created a need for federal agencies to ensure they have the tools required to support electronic business. TRIM is helping agencies address this need and minimising the risk of doing business electronically.

In the last six months a number of large agencies have chosen to roll out TRIM across their organisation to their desktops, to ensure that they efficiently capture, manage, and access their corporate documents and records irrespective of whether they are in electronic or paper form.

With a move to electronic business, organisations are increasingly making business decisions in all types of media including email, spreadsheets, word processing, paper etc. TRIM enables the capturing of all these different forms of business decisions or records for subsequent easy access at the desktop. At the same time, it enables organisations to manage their electronic documents in such a way as to ensure they are captured for the organisation's record.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs was the first Federal Government department to choose TRIM under the Office Of Government Information Technology (OGIT) 'Shared System Suite' for worldwide implementation on all desktops. The software solution involves the integration of TOWER Software's TRIM Electronic Recordkeeping system with CVS's electronic object storage

system, Optegra.

The National Archives of Australia, a world leader in developing policy and guidance on Electronic Recordkeeping, is now working to establish its own best practice recordkeeping operation using TRIM. The new system will combine National Archives policies with the Australian Standard on records management (AS 4390.1-6). It will manage both electronic and paper records and will support the capture and retrieval of electronic records. The software solution, from the OGIT Shared System Suite, involves the integration of TOWER Software's TRIM Electronic Recordkeeping system with IBM's VisualInfo object store.

'The Archives is keen to demonstrate the practical side of electronic recordkeeping,' said the Director-General when announcing the contract.

'We will use our recordkeeping system to research and illustrate best practice for Commonwealth policy on electronic recordkeeping. The new system will show Commonwealth agencies what can be achieved. With constantly changing technology and the pressure of modern business, electronic records management is a major challenge for administration and government. Valuable evidence of an organisation's business transactions risk being lost through inappropriate management practices.'

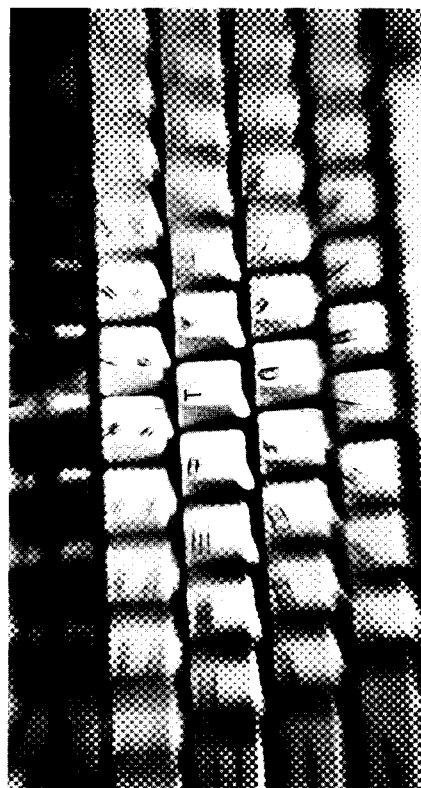
A number of other large federal government agencies have chosen TRIM and are currently running pilot systems.

TRIM is an essential tool for doing

business electronically to ensure an organisation's business decisions are captured efficiently and securely. At the same time, TRIM reduces the risks inherent in doing business electronically by ensuring that all documents relating to a business decision are captured and related. The business decision process cannot then be lost or dissipated.

For more information on how TRIM can help support your organisation's move to doing business electronically, contact:

Jan Rosi
National Marketing & Sales
Manager



As Housekeepers, Our Computer Networkers Aren't Really Making the Grade

As mainframe computers are replaced by networked PCs and servers, IT managers are wrestling with the problem of how to accommodate burgeoning numbers of terminals and towers in a systematic and ordered manner.

Servers and screens are now being linked in multiple formations of up to a hundred or more, although in Australia a typical Local Area Network (LAN) will still contain much fewer than that.

According to recent international visitor Michael Hussein, product developer of the moduLAN technical furniture system distributed in Australia by TAB Datafile, the trend is to accommodate the hardware on modular furniture systems which can grow as workstations expand. Despite the trend, outdated and inflexible computer furniture such as desks and custom-made joinery were still commonly used, both here and overseas.

After his September visit to TAB Datafile Headquarters in Sydney, Mr Hussein said that these outmoded practices signify a failure to anticipate an organisation's future needs for growth and change. He said the ability to look ahead is one of the most difficult tasks facing IT and management staff.

The task could be lightened by the adoption of organic furniture systems such as moduLAN, designed to expand or be reconfigured three-dimensionally as networks grew or as existing computer hardware was replaced.

'With flexible and adaptable moduLAN you only need buy what you want now, rather than for the future. The system can be easily extended or altered to cope with an organisation's changing needs,' he said.

Conventional joinery - as well as lacking versatility - had the added disadvantage of not possessing the

great strength and rigidity required to store computer hardware in multiple clusters and vertical stacks that took full advantage of existing storage space.

The moduLAN system could be configured to fit space-efficiently around corners, walls, windows, angles, and irregular room spaces. The furniture could be custom-cut, but ample stock in common shapes and sizes was available in Australia for immediate delivery.

'In practice, the only limit on the capacity of the moduLAN system is the size of the room. So far, in Australia we are quoting for systems that will accommodate up to 30 computer towers. In Germany we have done jobs with 500 servers,' Mr Hussein said.

The system could accommodate small workstations too. 'An organisation with a local area network of more than three terminals in one location is a potential customer for us.

'Many organisation still don't realise that special furniture exists for LANs and large workstations. We are still educating the market worldwide. Fortunately others have already recognised the virtues of the flexible systems,' he said.

Customers for moduLAN are typically diverse, but they are generally computer or technology intensive and normally have 60 employees or more. Among these businesses are accountancy, architecture, automotive, building construction, communications, defence, education, electrical, electronic, engineering, food processing, government, hospitality, health including hospitals, insurance, laboratory and science, law, manufacturing, mining and petroleum, packing, printing, property, retail, tourism and transport.

A notable feature of the moduLAN system is its innovative cable

management system that imposes order on the spaghetti tangle at the rear of most computer storage systems by integrating the power, telephone and data cables and containing them within specially designed leadthrough ducts.

'If cables are not organised properly, changing a computer configuration is extremely inefficient and time-consuming, moduLAN is designed to ensure the procedure is as fast and simple as it should be,' Mr Hussein said.

The TAB product is cost-effective for an organisation when the value of what is being safely and conveniently stored is considered. The high-grade frame structure uses mounting components that will each support weights of up to 150 kg, with additional reinforcement available if required.

'Cheaper alternatives to our product are not cheap if the computer hardware as well as its valuable stored information literally crashes to the floor,' he said.

With computing power no longer concentrated in hidden backrooms, the aesthetics of computer furniture have also become important - 'Computer hardware is now being integrated into the office, which means that the design of cabinetry is now a vital factor in its purchase,' said TAB Datafile National Sales Manager Tony Tiftis. 'Many of our customers are now architects and designers rather than IT managers, and they appreciate the fact that moduLAN and related products fit well with the professional appearance of a modern office.'

For more information, please call TAB Datafile, phone (02) 9436 4000, freecall 1800 503 453, or fax 1800 633 118 for your local representative in all States and Territories.

Federal Education REPORT

Dennis G Wheeler

BA, Grad Dip Business & Professional Mgt, ARMA.

Course Recognition

The major focus for education at the federal level over the past twelve to eighteen months has been that of Course Recognition. This is covered elsewhere in this edition. For those members not familiar with the Recognition process, a site visit usually takes two days and involves:

- Extensive examination of the documentation in support of the application
- Interviews with university staff involved in the development and teaching of the courses, both collectively and on a one-to-one basis
- Examination of additional information supplied by university staff
- Visits to computing and teaching facilities and to libraries
- Review and discussion of all teaching materials and course content, including work experience
- Review of teaching methodology, for instance, full time/part time, on campus/off campus
- Recognition of prior learning procedures/recognition of prior knowledge
- Alignment of course content with the National Records & Archives Competency Standards
- Discussions on student composition, for example, local students/overseas students ratio, mature age students
- Meetings with past and present students, professional reference groups, and employer representatives.

These are examples of the work involved in the process. The range covered is partially determined by the institutions concerned. The RMAA's Course Recognition Guidelines provide the teaching bodies with a list

of essential information required.

As all of the above work is undertaken voluntarily by those members of Assessment Panels, either in their own time and/or that of their employers, they deserve a vote of thanks. Those involved in the panels to date and those who worked on the Association's Guidelines are mentioned in the Course Recognition article.

Federal Education Committee Meeting

This Committee held its annual meeting in Brisbane during the September Convention. Naturally, the main topic of discussion was Course Recognition. A further matter of importance was that of the TAFE National Core Modules and also the teaching being undertaken in some areas of TAFE.

The Core modules have been in use for approximately five years and it was agreed that it is now time for a review. They were produced before the national competency standards and should be mapped against those to determine if there are any gaps that require attention. The standard of teaching in certain areas was raised and considerable discussion was entered into in relation to this issue. The RMAA and the records industry in general have relied on the TAFE sector for much of its lower to middle level teaching over many years. For this reason, they have monitored course content and standards of teaching. A formal letter is being written in relation to both issues.

Courses Available Across Australia

At this time of year, a list of courses on offer nationally is usually published. However, a complete list is not at hand and I would suggest that intending students contact the following Education Chairs in the respective States for information:

ACT

Anthony Eccleston
(02) 6254 7616

NSW

Stephen Smith
(02) 9980 4151

SA

Debbie Ophof
(08) 8346 4551
or 015 606 192

NT

Ray Holswich
(08) 8946 6076

QLD

Philip Taylor
(07) 3367 3300

TAS

Debbie Allie
(03) 6230 8106

VIC

Betty Powell
(03) 9306 7124

WA

Margaret Pember
(08) 9351 2732

Please note that the following courses have been recognised by the RMAA:

University of Canberra

- Bachelor of Information Management
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Information Management

Edith Cowan University, Perth

- Graduate Diploma of Science (Archives & Records)
- The Records Management Minor
- The University Certificate in Public Sector Records Management

Curtin University, Perth

- Graduate Diploma in Records Management & Archives
- Bachelor of Applied Science (Records Management)
- Bachelor of Applied Science (Records Management) Honours.

Notification of further courses granted Recognition status will be made in this journal as they are reviewed and recommended.

Branch Reports

SA Branch

The new year has been a busy one for both the Branch and the SA State Government Chapter, with a renewed focus on professional development opportunities for members. In surveys towards the end of last financial year, members were asked to give details of the subjects and topics they would like to see covered in an RMAA event. After analysing those surveys, the current Council developed a series of Seminars designed to meet those needs.

In August the State Government Chapter hosted a half-day seminar focusing on *Achieving Best Practice* in records management. The event covered relevant legislation, implementation of AS4390, and the State Records Policy and Procedure Manual. Jan Fisher's session on AS4390 made excellent use of the Queensland Branch's video on the same topic. Over 70 people attended the event. Perhaps the most encouraging point was that approximately one-third were not members of the Association.

Later in the same month, the Branch, again taking its lead from previous work of the Queensland Branch, staged *Classification:*

The Great Debate. Spiros Sarris opened proceedings with a paper on the question *Why Classify?*, which was followed by a session on the *Keyword AAA Thesaurus*. The morning was rounded out with a lively four-person debate, which pitted subject classification against functional classification.

Due to the National Convention, no local events were held in September, but two more half-day seminars are due to be scheduled. One, hosted by the Branch in October, was entitled *Records in Evidence*, and focused on the management of records to meet changing evidentiary requirements. In early November, the State Government Chapter hosted *Managing Records for Success*, which brought together speakers from a range of agencies who described successful elements of their records management programs. In addition, Helen Onopko from Records and Archive Services, presented a paper on records management performance indicators.

Bernadette Bean ARMA

VIC Branch

The Victorian Branch Council has been busy over the last three months preparing a strategic plan to ensure that the services provided by the RMAA, accommodate the needs of the members.

The new Branch Council elected in July and listed below is dedicated to the future of the Association and the type of services that will be offered.

Executive President	John Sim
Vice-President	Sandra Pickett
Treasurer	Julie Apps
Secretary	Rhonda Kinghorn
Councillors	Anne Cornish
	Garry Edgecumbe
	Dianne Moore
	Rita Mauito
	Rex Hibbert
	Michael Tonta
	Peter Gaca
	Betty Powell

The Branch Council is considering objectives that focus on the promotion of the Association and the profession. It is the plan to improve the image of records management professionals within organisations, and to articulate clearly the functions of a records management professional.

The electronic world is still progressing and the Victorian Branch is taking an active role in how this affects our members. Representation has been made to the VERS Project and we are heavily involved in the acceptance of electronic documents in Victoria.

The Branch Council encourages members to assist with this strategic outlook by providing comments or suggestions to John Sim on (03) 9747 3077 or fax (03) 9747 6599.

Upcoming Events

Victorian members can look forward to the following events:

- Joint Local Government Chapter Meeting between Victoria and NSW to be held in Albury on November 25 and 26. For further details, contact Anne Cornish on (03) 9747 3077.
- A two-day seminar to be held in early 1999 (date to be advised) addressing pertinent issues affecting our industry.

John Sim ARMA

NT Branch

Branch Council recently conducted a 'mail-out' to local organisations in the Territory to encourage and seek new membership. The exercise has attracted some interest, and if the Branch gains a handful of new members it will have been a worthwhile exercise.

It was timely but merely accidental that our guest speaker at the recent AGM, Rick Gray from the NT Parliament, spoke about developments towards Territory statehood, unaware that the path to statehood was to be announced a week or so later.

As most members of the Territory Branch are employed with the Territory Government, there has been considerable involvement in establishing the whole-of-government records management strategy, and working towards selecting and developing a whole-of-government system. This movement has brought Territory records managers closer together, and has certainly improved cooperation among members.

NSW Branch

Our AGM in July brought a number of new people onto Branch Council. It provided the opportunity to thank Ann Hampson who was standing down as Branch President. Council also said farewell from Council to Joy Siller and Denis Comber, both of whom have made major contributions to both the Branch and the Association generally as both Councillors and, at times, Federal Directors. Both Denis and David Lillee stood down this year as Federal Directors to be replaced by Conni Christensen and Chris Fripp.

The July meeting also had as guest speaker David Roberts, CEO of the State Records Authority (as it will soon be known) who spoke about their new Act. The October meeting had a solicitor speak on *Legal Risk and Admissibility of Electronic Documents and Records*.

We are working on a Branch Christmas function, workshops later in the year, next year's program, and the 2000 Convention (which will be held in December 2000 and not September owing to the Olympic Games).

The major focus of the Branch Council in recent months has been in relation to the planning of the 1999 National Convention to be hosted by the Branch in Darwin, 29 August - 1 September 1999. Promotion of the 1999 Convention commenced at the recent National Convention in Brisbane. Preliminary programs and trade opportunities have been prepared, and the major effort extending into next year will be in marketing and encouraging potential delegates to participate in *Records Management - Whose Territory?*

Not forgetting the local members, there is a strong thirst for general training in records management, so we are planning to conduct some general records management workshops, probably in February/March.

Greg Coleman ARMA

The Local Government Chapter continues to develop under Chris Fripp and other very dedicated people. The Branch continues to grow with our September Council meeting accepting recommendations for six people to be upgraded to professional status.

My thanks to the Councillors who have stayed on for another year, and to those who have joined the Council. The year ahead will be exciting and busy, and we trust our members will benefit greatly from the Councillor's efforts.

Geoff Smith ARMA

Branch Reports

QLD Branch

1998 Annual Convention

The Annual Convention is over for another year. Over 350 delegates from around Australia and overseas gathered in Brisbane from the 6-9 September to enjoy one another's company, to learn more about this rapidly changing industry and to obtain the latest information on products. By any measure, the Convention proved to be a big success. The venue of the Brisbane Convention Centre provided the right environment from the beginning. The welcome cocktail party set the agenda, with delegates able to meet old friends and to make new ones. The 'meet and greet' competition was a winner. Over the next three days, delegates attended a wide variety of presentations on the latest issues affecting records management. Who will ever forget the Keynote Address by Professor Takashi Kinoshita. During the Convention, there was ample time to visit the trade display and to talk to representatives regarding products available on the market. At night, it was time to enjoy the mild Brisbane weather at the 'Brisbane by Night' Convention dinner.

We hope all delegates enjoyed themselves. Michael Hangan, Convention Chairman and his team are to be congratulated on their splendid effort. Also, a big thanks

to the various sponsors of the Convention. Without their support the Convention would be difficult to organise.

And lastly, thank you to all the delegates who supported the Convention by their attendance. The next Convention will be held in Darwin - start thinking about attending it now.

Other Queensland Branch News

The AGM in July formally ended Jim Shepherd's association as a member of the Branch Council. Jim has been a member of the Queensland Branch since 1975 when a Pilot Committee met to discuss the formation of a Branch in the State. In March 1975, he was on the inaugural Branch Council. Over the intervening 23 years, Jim has been involved in every facet of Branch activity. He has been President, Treasurer, Federal Councillor, educator, speaker and mentor to a number of people. At the AGM, Jim was presented with a special commemorative plaque by Branch President, Ray Chambers. Well done, Jim. We look forward to seeing you at future Branch functions.

Philip Taylor MRMA



Jim Sheperd (left) being presented with his award for many years service to the RMAA from Federal Director (QLD) Michael Hangan.

WA Branch

I would like to say 'out with the old, on with the new', however, that is not really the case! Many of the same members have been returned to Council for the 1998/99 year, with a slight re-shuffling of responsibilities. New upgrade to professional status, Trevor Yardley has also been 'co-opted' onto Council. The new Council comprises:

President	Ken Ridley
Vice -President	Margaret Pember
Secretary/Treasurer	Maggie Exon
Minute Secretary & Newsletter	Gail Murphy
Strategic Planning	Mark Robert
Technology	Laurie Varendorff
Marketing	Neil Granland
Education & Programs	Vicky Wilson
Membership	Jim Bonzas
General Councillors	Norma Easthope Trevor Yardley
Federal Directors	Ken Ridley Margaret Pember

Members are reminded that Branch Councillors are on Council to represent the members at large. If you have any concerns or need further information on issues concerning the RMAA or records management in general, please contact one of your Councillors. Contact numbers are in the local Informaa Newsletter. Branch Council meetings are 'open' and members are encouraged to attend as visitors (no voting rights). Meetings are generally held at

4.30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month in the Conference Room (7th floor), Department of Minerals and Energy, 100 Plain Street, Perth. Dates are rarely changed, but check with the Minute Secretary, Gail Murphy on (08) 9335 2533 to verify.

The WA Branch begins the new financial year in a healthy position due to the successful Convention in 1997, and other successful events in the past. Emphasis this year will be on continuing professional development opportunities for members and a drive to increase membership. With Vicky Wilson back on the Education Committee, I am sure we can look forward to some very exciting and challenging events in the near future. If anyone would like to sponsor an event, please contact Vicky on (08) 9370 6301.

A contingent of 21 Western Australians made the trip to Brisbane for the 15th National Convention, *Making Information Work*. It was very pleasing to see some new RMAA members attend. As usual, it was difficult to make decisions between sessions. Much lively discussion was generated by Dr Takashi Kinoshita of the Kinoshita Nippon Corporation, Japan, and Allan Pease of 'body language' fame. A WA dinner on the Monday night was well attended and very enjoyable. Winning two Qantas tickets to any place of your choice in Australia was the highlight for Debra Tilbee of Alcoa, who was attending her first Convention. Congratulations, Debra.

Margaret Pember ARMA

TAS Branch

Tasmania is yet again in the process of change, this time in the field of State Government. Following the change of Government in Tasmania last August, the number of State Government Agencies was reduced to nine. Nearly all State agencies are now involved in the amalgamation process. Many persons working in records management have experienced several amalgamations over the last few years and are aware of the pitfalls. Agencies are optimistic that with the greater awareness of records management responsibilities, the process will be handled in a professional and effective manner.

The change of Government has, for Local Government, put the process of amalgamation on hold. However, the Chapter is aware that many worthwhile discussions were held and strategies developed which should provide a foundation to handle the records component of amalgamation if it were to proceed.

The highlight of the AGM, held in July, was the speaker from the Hobart CIB. I understand that although his address was records-related, it also involved a number of interesting stories!

A Strategic Planning Evening was held during August and, as a result, Tasmania now has a Strategic Plan for 1998/99.

The Marketing Committee arranged for Branch participation in the Careers Expo, and is working on National Awards.

The Education Committee is working towards the State Seminar planned for April 1999, and progress is being made towards the 2001 Convention.

Jill Saunders ARMA

Branch Reports

ACT Branch

After the AGM in July, the following people were elected as ACT Branch Council members for 1998/99.

President/Federal Vice-President

Julie Lenson

Vice-President/Marketing

Stephanie Ciempka

Honorary Secretary/Registrar

Lesley Boye

Honorary Treasurer

Sandra Fabbo

Education Officer

Anthony Eccleston

Seminars

Veronica Pumpa

Federal Directors

Thomas Kaufhold

Julie Lenson

Newsletter Editor

Lesley Boye

Jewel Gilbert

Councillors & Assistants

Elaine Eccleston

Ross Thompson

Kate McCarthy

Following the AGM, our Branch held a forum on *Classification versus Free Text*. This debate was lively and our panel of specialists outlined the advantages and disadvantages of using classification schemes or free text methods. Veronica Pumpa chaired the debate, and panellists were Marion Hoy (National Archives of Australia), Elaine Eccleston (University of Canberra), Lesley Boye (ACT Branch Registrar) and Julie Lenson (CSIRO).

Our Christmas seminar will be held on 26 November, commencing at 4.00 p.m. with a presentation by OPC Records Management Division followed by drinks.

Proceedings from our March 1998 seminar, *Contracting Out of Recordkeeping Services in Government* are still available for \$39.95. Please contact Sandra Fabbo on (02) 6276 6766 for further details.

Planning is proceeding for our next major seminar to be held on 10-11 March 1999, titled *Intranets - Problems or Opportunities for Recordkeeping*. Keep your eye on Branch newsletters for more information; again, the seminar will be held in the Parliament House Theatre.

Julie Lenson ARMA

RMAA ACT Branch Seminar 1999

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To be held at Parliament House, Canberra on 10-11 March 1999**

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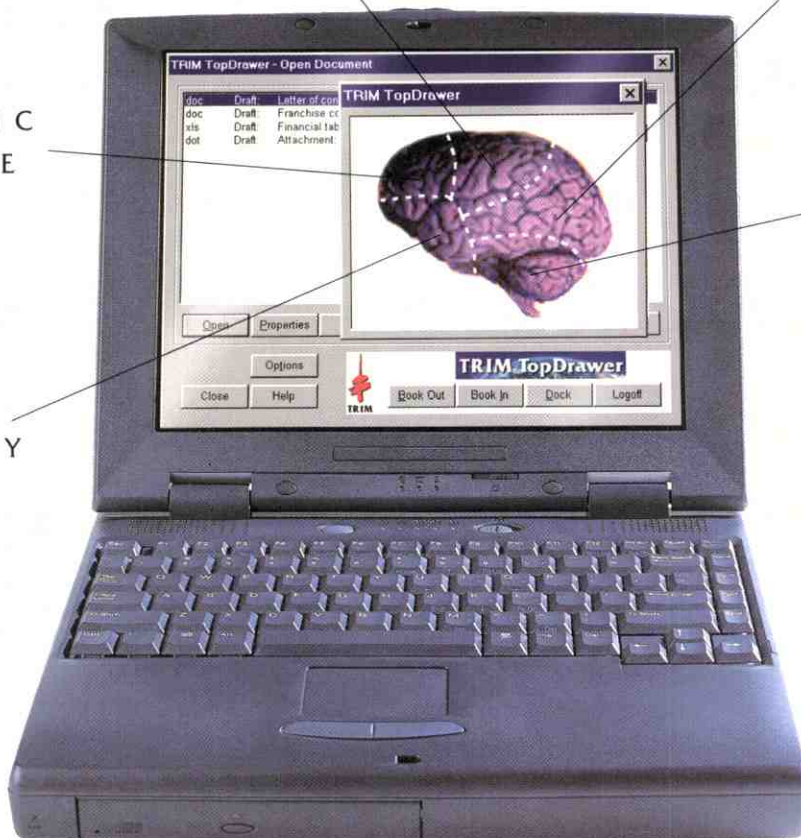
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