



THE *informaa*' Quarterly

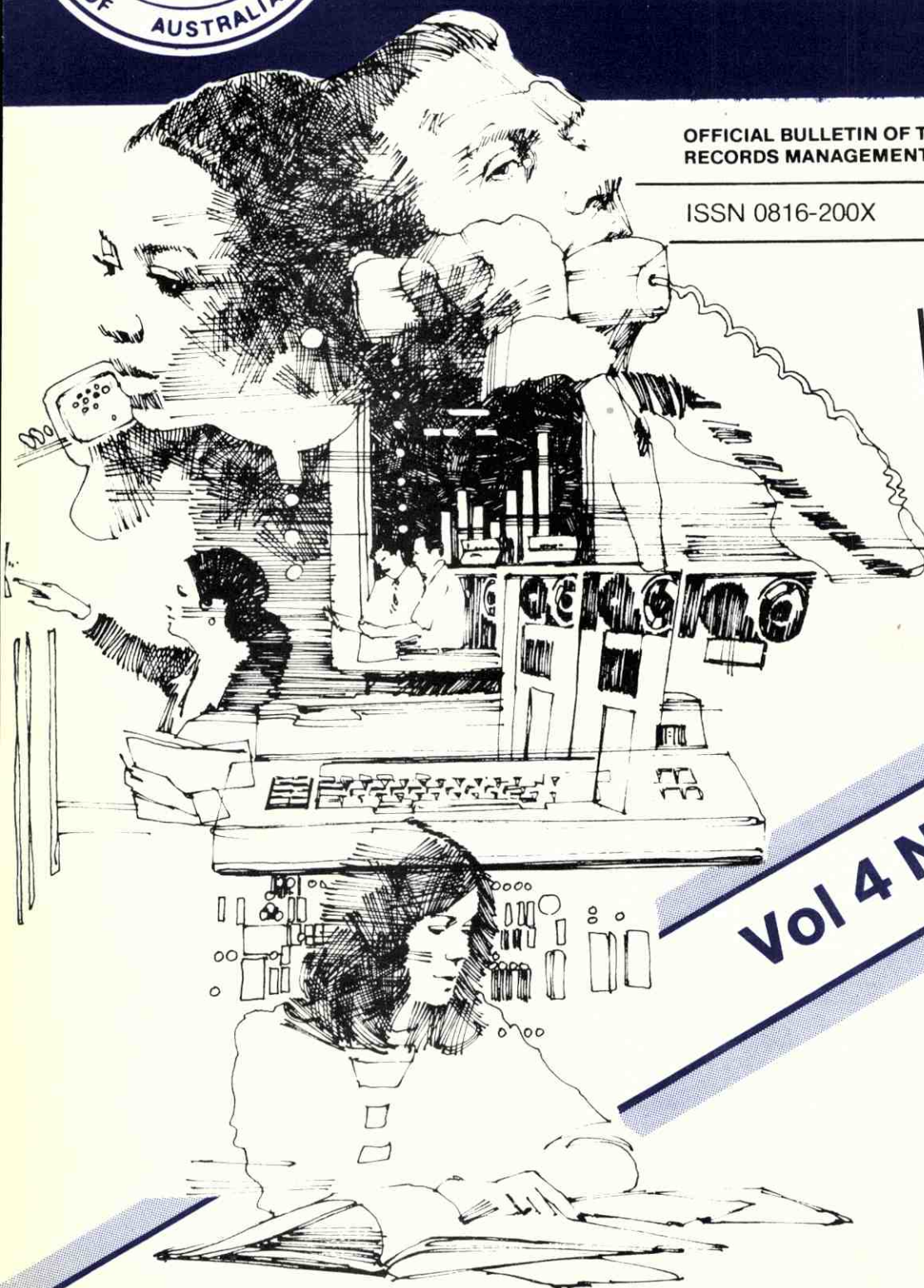
OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE
RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

ISSN 0816-200X

\$5.00



Vol 4 Number 1



AS

FEBRUARY, 1988

IF YOU DON'T AGREE THAT

RecFind

IS AUSTRALIA'S BEST
RECORDS MANAGEMENT PACKAGE
THEN YOU EITHER:

DON'T KNOW

RecFind

OR YOU
DON'T KNOW

RECORDS MANAGEMENT!

RecFind,

Conceived, Designed and Implemented in Australia
for the Australian Records Management Profession

Registry Management; File Tracking; Correspondence Tracking;
Loose Paper Management; Archiving; Free Text, Boolean Searches;
Resubmits; File Movements; Correspondence Action Management; Bar
Code Support; Remote Movements by Portable Bar Code Readers; etc.

By

GMB Research & Development Pty Ltd
P.O. Box 696, Chatswood, 2057. Phone: (02) 411-4422, Fax: (02) 411-6749



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Article	Page
From the Federal President — <i>Peter Smith</i>	2
Editorial Notes	2
From the Branch President — <i>Denis Comber</i>	3
Feature Article:	
RMAA Retrospective — Prospective	4
— Corporate Affiliate — <i>Tam Thin-Smith</i>	4
— Associate — <i>Barbara Reed</i>	7
— Member — <i>Tom Lovett</i>	10
Disaster! — <i>Wendy Duggan</i>	17
Keywording Local Government Records — <i>Annthea Love</i>	22
Marketing Records Management — <i>Fiona Meyer</i>	27
Teaching Records Management — A Personal Perspective — <i>Dale Kreibig</i>	29
Does Small Business Need the RMAA? — <i>Pam Camden</i>	32
The Human Side of the Equation — <i>Wendy Duggan</i>	33
Keyword Chapter RMAA (NSW Branch) — <i>Mary Hooker</i>	37
A Controversial Look at Australian Local Government Records, Dirt Roads, Dummies and All — <i>Peter Smith</i>	39
Book Review: "Information and Records Management" — <i>Barbara Reed</i>	45
Free Text and Thesaurus Control — <i>Denis Comber and Joy Stanford</i>	47
RMAA Federal Council — 1987/88	54
International Records Management Council	55

Volume 4 Number 1: Editorial Committee

Pam Camden
Wendy Duggan
Mary Hooker

Annthea Love
Fiona Meyer
Barbara Reed

Typesetting: STEP Typesetting, 139½ Regent Street, Chippendale NSW 2008. (02) 699 3459

Layout: Christine Sayer, Graphic Services, (02) 436 2790

1987 Convention Papers

Papers from the 1987 Melbourne convention are available from Victorian RMAA.
Contact Bill Williams (03) 658 9670.

FROM THE FEDERAL PRESIDENT

In this the Bi-centennial year it is appropriate that we place in perspective those things we have accomplished since our beginnings, where we perceive the future of records and information management and the role the Records Management Association of Australia will play as a leader in our profession.

I prefer to think positively regarding the history of the Association as something akin to ones childhood. The bumps, the bruises, the grazed knees all mixed up with the happy birthdays and straight A's on the school report — all part of the learning process, our growing and maturing.

But what of our future, have we learned by our experiences? Can we accept the challenge of the future? What is our perception of our role in this ever changing industry?

Can we accept change?

Everyone today is keenly aware of and concerned about change.

Blair J. Kolosa in *Introduction of Behavioural Science*, write of change:

“We may not recognise it or otherwise be cognizant of it; we may oppose it or we may even try to accelerate it. No matter what our position may be, change makes its course in the evolution of human effort. Change may take place so slowly that it is not perceptible in one generation or even two, or it may occur with such rapidity that we are left somewhat breathless in the wake of the waves.”

There is little doubt of the dominant role that change has played in contemporary society and this is nowhere more evident than in its organisations. All of today's organisations are vibrating from the external and internal forces of change. Are we prepared to accept the challenge of change in the competitive marketplace of technological improvements and innovations and the tremendous advances in this area?

To be competitive we must realise that we have to compete, yes compete in today's marketplace because to stand still is to stagnate. In our profession we must always be in quest of more knowledge, learning the new technologies and being prepared to provide leadership to our membership and the industry in general.

It was said by Charles F. Kettering, a great American Automotive Engineer, that,

“We ought to spent more time thinking about the future . . .
That's where we are going to spend the rest of our lives”.

Peter A. Smith, M.R.M.A.
Federal President

EDITORIAL NOTES

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

Copyright © in **INFORMAA QUARTERLY** is vested in the Records Management Association of Australia Incorporated.

Copyright © in articles contained in **IMFORMAA QUARTERLY** is vested in each of the authors in respect of his or her contribution.

Contributors' opinions do not necessarily represent the views of the Records Management Association of Australia.

This edition of **INFORMAA QUARTERLY** has been produced by the NSW Branch.

THE NEXT EDITION OF **INFORMAA QUARTERLY** WILL BE PRODUCED BY THE VICTORIAN BRANCH.

A Message from the Branch President

I am very pleased to report that the N.S.W. Branch has been striving to improve the quality of Records Management within the State. This has been particularly evident in the work performed by the Special Projects Committee and the Local Government Chapter Executive. Both groups have been extremely active in arranging special events such as Seminars, as well as providing competent speakers at Branch meetings.

I would especially like to express my gratitude to the Editorial Committee for producing this edition of the Quarterly. The interest and enthusiasm of this Committee has resulted in the compilation of a publication which complies with the highest standards of the Profession.

I would like to conclude by saying that with the ever increasing changes occurring in the Information Industry that members will take the time to consider their future career options. In this respect it is the responsibility of all members to urge the Association both at a State and Federal level, to provide advice, direction and a forum which will actively promote the professional standards and goals of the Association.

Denis Comber, A.R.M.A.
N.S.W. President

XX SULTAN MICRO XX
presents

ISIS

Information Storage and Indexing System

FILE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

FEATURES : Australian Made

Software for IBM PC/XT/AT under DOS 3.20 +

Keyword out of Context Filing System

File Borrower Tracking

File Resubmit Diary

Correspondence Control

Vocabulary Control for Keywords and Descriptors

Password Controlled Security Access

Full Report Generation

Retention and Disposal Control

Label Printing Facilities

Backup Capability to Hard or Floppy Disk

Supports Barcode Reader for Ease of Use

... plus many more features

PHONE (02) 90 4513

PO BOX 231 NORTH RYDE 2113

R.M.A.A. RETROSPECTIVE – PROSPECTIVE

Where have we been ?

Where are we going ?

INTRODUCTION

We have taken the opportunity of this Bicentennial edition to provide a feature focus for the R.M.A.A. The Association was founded in 1969 and is now in its 18th year; it has been born and developed in the midst of the information revolution.

The editorial committee considered that articles reflecting on the status of the Association were required; the information revolution leaves the Association with many challenges for the 1990s.

With this in mind, three articles have been commissioned. The committee requested “Retrospective Prospective” comments from three members of the Association each with different membership status.

Tam Thin-Smith is a Corporate Affiliate and provides a positive insight into the challenges ahead. Ms. Barbara Reed is an Associate and Councillor of the N.S.W. Branch and provides a progressive critique of the R.M.A.A. Finally Tom Lovett a Member of the Association provides a long term perspective for our analysis.

The editorial committee invites comments and discussion from the Association and these should be reported in the next edition of this journal; it is in dialogue and discussion that we grow.

Editorial Committee.

Corporate Affiliate – Tam Thin-Smith

The world of Records Management is passing through an era of great change. Almost every article on Records Management in any publication, academic paper, broadsheet, etc, is coloured to some degree by consideration of current and anticipated change. Indeed, judging from the evident pre-occupation with change one might be forgiven for assuming that Records Management people ‘per se’ are ill equipped to deal with it.

After all, almost every other professional area within the administration sphere has already undergone its own recent transfiguration without half as much squawking and feather ruffling. Changes in technology, corporate structures, management philosophies, skills profiles, communications and the like have had great impact on everyone from the accountant to the medical practitioner.

As a systems analyst and designer for ten years my work involved me in a very wide range of commercial activity during adoption of new technologies. Most of the people working in the midst of these changes seem to have adapted to the new ways of doing things with greater equanimity than I presently perceive amongst my RM colleagues.

Are we to accept then that we are less amenable to change or can it be that there is something fundamentally different about the way in which the present round of change is affecting RM activities?

It is my contention that this is indeed the case; that the greatest changes are yet to come; that a vastly different creature will emerge from the process to the one which entered.

In considering the reasons why things should be so different for our fraternity it is necessary to look briefly at recent commercial history.

Retrospect

Until little more than a century ago the one owner, or at most, one family enterprise was by far the most common business model. Throughout the medieval period in Europe this pattern was effectively, if unintentionally, ensured by the laws against Usury — the sinful practice of lending money for profit.

A characteristic of any such business is that the owner maintains close control on all business papers, correspondence, plans, designs, etc, and generally is not prepared to let them pass to the control of anyone else (other than a trusted private secretary) until the period of commercial usefulness is over.

Even with the relaxation of usury laws and the eventual growth of joint-stock companies these tended to be internally structured on the same principles insofar as records keeping was concerned. This firmly held belief that records should not be passed into the control of records-keepers until after they have served their primary function probably explains the great popularity enjoyed by 2, 3 and 4 drawer filing cabinets until quite recently.

The enormous changes which have taken place this century in the commercial, industrial and social spheres have vastly increased our stock of knowledge. New knowledge brought new expectations. Business in response to these expectations and utilising new technologies became more responsive to new demands. Against this backdrop of the increasing rate of change business owners and executives in both private and public sectors were no longer able to cope with the mass and complexity of information required to make balanced decisions.

Thus they looked to their ill-equipped, under-trained, badly paid records keepers who were stunned, shocked and horrified.

The resulting confusion and the resounding failures to meet these new demands were no more than management deserved. Nevertheless it was the records staff who 'copped the flak'. The reputation (and the morale) of records staff was at an all time low.

Out of this situation grew the change in management attitude (not yet universal) which has brought about a greater allocation of funding for records management, new training courses, better equipment, and so on. This period, the late '60s to early 70s', also saw the establishment of organisations such as our Association and the Records Management Office.

These organisations have done a sterling job over recent years, there are many examples of extraordinary and sometimes selfless dedication to the interests of our craft. Such people deserve loud acclamation and highest praise from the rest of us. And pray that there may be more like them for there's a long way yet to go.

In the systems design field there is an old adage which suitably edited, says "it is difficult to remember that you set out to drain the swamp when you're up to your butt in crocodiles". The sentiment so colourfully expressed in this quote may not entirely unfairly, be applied to the situation in which we practitioners of RM presently find ourselves.

We met the demand for a time with improvements to our time honoured alphabetic arrangements, cross-indexed cards, movements registers, etc. Then came some limited computer assistance through Data Processing bureaux in the production of KWOC or KWIC indexes on COM, first via punch-cards and later by way of installed terminals.

Manufacturers then started to take serious interest in this evolving market and many solutions were offered in furniture, storage systems, index systems, file covers and suchlike. However, although the application of these palliatives certainly improved some of our physical ailments, they did little to remove the basic problem which was after all a conceptual problem.

We were being asked to manage the information and endeavouring to find the solution in old methods for the management of paper.

Perspective

Through the medium of agencies such as our Association people interested and involved in RM systems were provided with a forum for the free exchange of ideas and experiences. We started to think more in terms of the information contained in documents (and other sources) and less about the oppressions of its physical storage.

It was evident that RM could only provide the answer if and when its practitioners were allowed to comprehend the objectives and activities of the organisations and to control the titles used to identify sets of information used in pursuit of these objectives. This required the projection of an image for RM vastly different to that which then held sway.

Herein, perhaps lies the RMAA's greatest triumph! Judging from inclusions in recent vacancy advertisements, negotiations with TAFE for a variety of courses, the lively interest of many commercial and industrial bodies and the evolution of specific RM software packages, it is more than evident that the countless hours of effort expended by members and staff of RM agencies is about to bear a full crop of fruit.

If indeed our credibility is thus strengthened, if our image is so much improved what are the implications for the future and are we prepared to meet that future?

Much has been done and continues to be done to ensure that people in this profession gain the knowledge and training necessary to be able to provide useful solutions to the needs of their employing organisations. Seminars, trade displays, guest speakers and special interest chapters all help to keep us abreast of current practices and technology. Many new training courses in the workplace have been devised and presented in recent years. The Records Management Office have been especially active and successful in this respect in the Public Sector. Numerous large employers in the Private Sector have seen the light and played their part.

There has also been the emergence of a number of formal tertiary courses which are an essential aspect of the foundation of any profession. Educational institutions throughout the country are taking notice and in some cases modifying their faculty structures. RM agencies are more and more finding it necessary to provide evaluative, counselling and advisory services to educational, industrial, commercial and community organisations.

We have been very busy therefore in preparing ourselves with the knowledge, skills and tools of our profession and busy applying these skills to solving inherited problems in our employing organisations.

But what are the challenges of tomorrow? How should we array our forces? Should we review our priorities?

Prospect

There can be no doubt that there is the prospect of a very bright future for the Records Management profession. Whether that prospect is retained and realised by existing practitioners and RM agencies will depend on a number of factors. Some of those factors are:-

1. Maintaining professional credibility
2. Ensuring availability of suitable professional education
3. Further developing interactive communication with suppliers of RM systems and equipment
4. Influencing employers to regard RM as a "career" and to provide a suitable grade structure
5. Publication of a comprehensive range of specific texts
6. Projecting the RM message to a wider audience
7. Determination of and provision for the expectations of younger members
8. Overcoming conceptual barriers between Records Managers and DP systems people

In respect of professional credibility and provision of education we have already noted how much has been done and is presently developing. Interaction with suppliers is already proving its worth in the evolution of specific (and realistic) software packages. Further consolidation of this interaction will be essential as further technological development is applied to information management.

Career structure is an area which requires much attention. The most common structure is still one of a discrete grading gap between the Records Manager and the next person on the ladder, with the majority of operators being at the base grade. We are all well aware of the frustration of seeing our best trained talent leave us in favour of a better graded job in another line of business. The good news is that the technological methods which we are now applying require increased skills on the part of our systems operators and this provides Records Managers with the necessary justification to obtain increased gradings for the jobs concerned. The bad news is that if we do not achieve this then our employing organisations will suffer increased and continuing losses via loss of valuable skills, Records Managers and RM agencies will not gain the confidence of operators, and RM as a profession, will never attain the status we seek.

The publication of specific texts also applies to the young, the student, the trainee. The last thing they need or want is a large tome of inalterable laws covering every tiny vestige of the whole spectrum of RM. Their need is for a series of texts, each covering a particular aspect or logically related group of aspects of RM subject matter. Most young students have difficulty in fitting \$70-\$100 into their budget in one hit. Therefore it would make more sense to offer separate but progressive texts each priced at around \$15 and which the student can obtain when required during the period of a course. Such texts are also much more likely to find application as reference material in the work place.

How to retain the interest and involvement of younger members is a question which must concern every organisation from time to time. No one has yet found the definitive answer to this question but we can not afford to stop seeking. Contact with students through RM training courses will always be one of the best potential contact points for recruitment to the Association. Certainly every such course should be visited at some stage by an Association representative who can describe the Association, its aims and objectives and the benefits of membership. This needs further investigation in the near future. Possible benefits might include:—

1. Concessions: — Publications; membership fees; trade goods.
2. Education: — Publications; library access; other courses.
3. Career: — Counselling service; vacancies advice; access to experience of members from many backgrounds; preferential access to consultancies; status aspects.
4. Social: — Association and related social events; possibility of formation of 'young' group.

I can hear already overworked members of existing committees groan at the prospect and this brings me to the final observation. Committees of the future surely require more people — they also require to be more flexible, co-opting expert assistance and advice on an ad-hoc basis, prepared to reform themselves as best suits the needs of the time. Rigidity of structure and attitude will not serve the needs of the future.

In summary, it is evident that there is very good reason why recent changes in records management practices have caused more dust-raising than we have seen in other administrative areas. It is because the changes in RM have been of a more fundamental nature. Not only are we required to provide a more sophisticated and comprehensive control of the media which contain information but, and more importantly, it is now necessary to classify and control the uses of that information through all stages of its life.

Through the foresight and hard work of a relatively small number of people we have been provided with a ground work of new methods, new prospects and new perceptions. We all have a part to play in ensuring that the evolving structure maintains the promise of the foundation.

Associate, Barbara Reed, ARMA

Background in the R.M.A.A.

In preparing to write this piece, I had to test my own filing system, and in doing so retrieved my initial welcome to affiliate membership of the R.M.A.A., a letter dated 2 September, 1981 from the then President of the A.C.T. Branch. Also on file was a letter dated 4th September, 1986 from Pam Camden, Secretary of the NSW Branch, notifying that my upgrade to Associate member had been approved.

I have therefore been a member of the Records Management Association since 1981, in three states and as three grades of member — Affiliate, Corporate Nominee and now Associate. However, it took me five years, and then some positive pushing from Pam Camden to apply for Associate status.

Why did I finally become an Associate member?

I became an Associate member after returning to my home city, Sydney, after a sojourn in Melbourne. Having attended meetings of the Association in Sydney through 1985, I became reasonably well known as a radical, a state of affairs which worried me not at all. Without casting any aspersions on the then Branch Councillors, I was dissatisfied at the way the Branch was conducted. I, with other members of the Branch, became vocal in criticisms about the lack of information on the affairs of the Branch and the Association as a whole which reached members and about the lack of consultation with members of the Branch. It had always been clear to me that it was unfair to criticize the efforts of others without being prepared to do something positive about altering the way things were done. To do this effectively, it was necessary to stand for Branch Council, and to do that, it was necessary to become an Associate member. It was this desire to assist in the process of change which finally stirred me to complete the rather forbidding Application for Associate membership form.

Why is the state of the Association of importance to me?

This question can be satisfied with two diametrically opposed answers.

Firstly:

It isn't of importance to me. I can earn my living quite adequately as a Records Manager, and more importantly, as a Consultant in the field, without any endorsement or approval from the Records Management Association of Australia. It just doesn't matter.

Professionally I find this state of affairs deplorable. The Association has no teeth. It has no regulatory powers over people of all types purporting to be specialists in records management. The Association has no fully accredited education scheme, no mechanism to register consultants, an inadequate and rigid structure, an entrenched set of values and no control over the areas of professional or occupational activity it purports to be representing.

On the other hand:

The state of the Association is vitally important to me. As a professionally-trained person, and one committed to the work which I do, I want to see the profession in which I work given the recognition which I, and many others, see as its due. Without a professional body to represent and promote the activities which we all undertake, in what we are constantly told is increasingly an information based society, we are ceding our right to be taken seriously as members of the Information Industry.

Why the Association needs to look at its structure and services

The Records Management Association of Australia was formed in the late 1960's by a set of individuals with the foresight to see the great importance of the records management function in our public and private structures.

From the small beginnings of the Association, Branches have been established in every State and Territory of Australia. A formal publication, *The Informaa Quarterly*, began production in about 1985. Conferences or conventions have been held annually since 1984.

It is these annual conventions which most clearly demonstrate the need for the Association to become more flexible. There members and non-members meet and discuss matters of common concern. They pay high fees to attend the conferences and are welcome to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Association, where they hear about the accumulated Association income and activities of those who run the Association. These annual general meetings should be the arena for discussion of the activities of the Federal Directors on behalf of the Association and a source of guidance for further activity. A spirit of lively debate and interest in the future of the Association should be fostered. The growing number of people attending the Association's conferences and an increasing number attending the Annual General Meeting since it was first held publicly in 1984, show that there is a growing interest in not only the matters addressed by the Conference programmes, but in the Association itself.

Instead of welcoming and using this increased interest, the reaction appears to be the opposite. Members are not encouraged to voice their opinions. Criticism is taken as personal attack instead of being channelled into productive action. Members feel isolated from the decisions being taken at all levels of the Association mainly, I contend, because of lack of information about, and lack of opportunity to be involved with, how the Association is structured and run.

The information industry has undergone a radical change, both here and overseas, in the last decade. The importance of records management and its associated skills are becoming increasingly recognised in a widening arena. If the Association takes no steps to move with the industry and promote its place within the wider context, it will find itself condemned as an unproductive backwater.

Who forms the membership of the R.M.A.A.?

I feel that the R.M.A.A. suffers because it has not defined who it wishes to represent. Records Management defined in the broadest sense is a complex relationship of personnel management, space management, systems design, micrographics, active file maintenance and inactive and archival records control. Many of these wide concepts are now being taught within Library Schools across Australia. Is it graduates of these Schools the R.M.A.A. should represent and encourage to belong?

Or is it the graduates of the vocational training courses with their narrower scope which have been established by the Association in various states?

Or are we attempting to attract both? And what are the different needs of the different groups?

Without such definition it seems that the Association will continue to attempt to do its very best without knowing what the expectations and demands upon it are.

Review the Articles of Association

Every member of whatever status should be given by right a copy of the Articles of Association on joining the Association.

When I finally obtained a copy of the Articles of Association I understood why this is not done. The photocopying bill to allow this to happen would be immense (at commercial rates it would cost \$9.00 to copy the 45 pages of the Articles for each member, and NSW would have had to spend \$387.00 to supply these to new members since July).

The Articles are inflexible. They are fiendishly difficult to alter and forbiddingly complicated. We need a set of Articles which can be made available to each member, and which can be altered as required by a mechanism which can be approved or rejected by the newly accessible annual general meeting. In this way the Association can respond to alterations in the environment in which it operates. The structures of the information world and the needs of the late 1980's are different from those of the late 1960's.

Open voting to all classes of membership

This matter was raised informally by two Branches at the 1987 Annual General Meeting. The issue had been, and was again, referred to Miss Margaret Medcalf of the Western Australian Branch for consideration. The report of Miss Medcalf should be available for discussion by every member of every Branch and Chapter.

The Annual General Meeting clearly demonstrated the concern over lack of representation. Affiliate members who pay their money which is currently \$35.00 per year, only \$10.00 less than that paid by Associates, have no vote. This is a deplorable state of affairs in the 1980's and one for which there is no rational basis.

The fear appears to be that if everybody had a vote, the Association would be swamped by trade interests. This does not appear to be a likely scenario to me. The interests of the trade people would be better served by a critical and informed membership which could act as an active arena for discussion, rather than the passive audience which seems to be envisaged.

Better communications

This one is a perennial problem in all voluntary associations. The people with the knowledge often take it for granted that many things are known by a wider body. They forget, without malice or intent, to keep others informed.

With the growth in membership (the NSW Branch has increased its membership over the last two years by one third), it is no longer proper to assume that everyone knows everyone else, and that informal communications are an effective mechanism. The small beginnings of the Association which allowed informal contact and where every body was known, are now long gone.

For that reason, I believe that a formal mechanism of reporting should be devised at both Branch and Federal level. Such a reporting process has been implemented in the Sydney Branch following some argument in 1986. It keeps the Branch members informed to a much greater extent. Also in Sydney, a summary of the Branch Council meeting is published monthly in the local *Informaa*.

I cannot point to any dramatic change in the membership reaction in Sydney. Perhaps more things need to alter before the effects of such actions can be seen. But it is no longer the case that Branch matters are conducted under a cloud of secrecy which creates an impression totally belied by the actual matters discussed. Members can choose not to be informed, but they can also choose to be informed.

Information on Federal Council activities could be greatly improved by the Federal Secretary including a statement of activity in every *Informaa Quarterly*. While undoubtedly tedious for the Secretary, the membership as a whole will be kept informed of the activities in a way which does not happen readily with the present ad hoc reporting of activity through the Federal Director to Branch Council and if all goes well, from President of the Branch Council to members.

Similarly it appears that the Federal Directors appoint or are eligible for appointment to International bodies. If these positions are undertaken as representatives of the Association, there needs to be a regular reporting mechanism to allow information to flow to all levels of the Association. If these positions are not undertaken as representatives of the Association, as a matter of general interest it would be desirable to report activities on the wider front as often as possible.

Formal position of Editor

The quality of our professional journal, the *Informaa Quarterly* needs to be made consistent, and we need to strive for increasing quality of content.

At present, responsibility for the production of the *Informaa Quarterly* is rotated between Branches and the quality of the journal is consequently patchy. A uniform cover design has now been approved (which may decrease the likelihood of it being mistaken for a travel brochure), but now we need to strive for more uniform quality of content. Looking back over the *Informaa Quarterly* for the past two years, some excellent articles have been published as have a great deal of page fillers.

The establishment of a formal Association Editor may be a way of ensuring continuity and increased overall quality for the publication. Branches could still be responsible for the production of copy on a rotating basis, but a strict Editorial eye could ensure standards. Production costs might also be an appropriate use of funds levied on profits from Conventions.

Conclusion

The matters raised here are just some of the matters which I believe need to be addressed by the Association. I would like to think that these opinions will find common ground amongst members. Things will only change in any Association if the members require them to. The activities of the hard working members who formed and fostered the Association are not denigrated by such comments. On the contrary, it is to them that the members of the Association are indebted for its continued existence. However, healthy comment and suggestions for improvement should not be stifled in deference to the feelings of individuals. Stagnation and inanition follow from that course.

As an Associate member of the R.M.A.A., I feel that things can be improved for the purposes of representing all Associate members, in addition to other grades of membership. Change will not happen by itself. But change is needed. An initial step would be for the Federal Council to appoint a Committee to look at the Articles which govern the Association.

I hope that members will feel strongly enough to agree or disagree with my views in the next *Informaa Quarterly* and that a lively debate about our Association and its role will be fostered.

Don't your files deserve

Professionally Managed File Conversion

...to a new computer system?

Having spent years getting and keeping your files in order, wouldn't you like to see their conversion to a computer system in professional hands?

Professionals like **Amarc** who have over 15 years experience in managing all aspects of data conversion; aspects such as:

- ★ Assistance with preliminary budgeting
- ★ Advice on preparation of files or indexes prior to keying
- ★ Exploration of alternative conversion strategies and costings, for even the most difficult or special file, whether handwritten, typed or printed (or a mixture)
- ★ Development of detailed conversion plans in conjunction with your own professional registry staff
- ★ Input to the process of preparing calls for tender
- ★ Arrangement of onsite microfilming to ensure document security
- ★ Assignment of the data entry task to local or offshore organisations, and day-to-day responsibility for their performance
- ★ Development of data validation systems using **Amarc's** powerful computer systems and specialised software
- ★ Provision of onsite staff and terminals to convert the more difficult sections of files, and to ensure consistent and reliable quality
- ★ Liaison with our professional librarians and computer specialists at all times.

This *unique* range of services is available as required by **you**, at reasonable rates. A list of hundreds of references is yours for the asking.

In these days of tight budgets, your files still deserve the best, at a price that is acceptable. Take the first step today, even if it is two years before actual conversion will take place.

Ring **Amarc**, the professional data conversion managers. For your files' sake.

amarc

DATA INTERNATIONAL PTY. LTD.
INCORPORATED IN N.S.W.

AUSTRALIA: 8-10 PITT STREET, PARRAMATTA, N.S.W. 2150, AUSTRALIA • PO BOX 301
PHONE 02-633 4922 • TELEX AA122008 • FACSIMILE 02-633 3779

NEW ZEALAND: PO BOX 7056 AUCKLAND • PHONE 09-37 2375 • TELEX NZ21235
FACSIMILE 09-79 3440

Member, Tom Lovett, M.R.M.A.

“Towards Excellence in Records Management”

Abstract

Characteristics of Record Management in Australia circa 1976; a Comparison of Objectives of the Founders and the Achievements of the N.S.W. Branch and Federal Council of the Records Management Association of Australia; and a Call for Excellence in Records Management. This article is a Member's contribution to the *Informaa Quarterly* feature on the Records Management Association in Retrospect and Prospect. **Copyright Tom Lovett, 1987.**

Introduction

Is the Association on the wrong track? Is it sacrificing Branch objectives and individual members' satisfaction for the glory of achieving Federal objectives and participating in esoteric activities of doubtful value to members working at the 'coal face'. Have the leaders lost touch with the members? What is the Association's mission?

The Association has not carried out its responsibilities nor achieved its founders' objectives. The Association is internally discordant and handicapped because its members have conflicting goals.

The New South Wales Branch of the Records Management Association of Australia (R.M.A.A.) so far has realised only 17 percent of the objectives adopted by its founding members in 1969. Members now receive only half of the benefits the Branch then promised. The overall Branch achievement score is 30 percent. Of the objectives adopted by the inaugural Federal Council in December 1969 only 57 percent have been achieved.

Professional societies¹ regularly formulate, adopt and achieve their members' objectives over a one, two or three year cycle. The Association of Records Managers and the Administrators International is a case in point.²² The R.M.A.A. in eighteen years has not yet achieved the founders' objectives. There has been no formal review and re-thinking of objectives involving all members since the pilot committee first formulated the original list.

The first two Branches were founded in one year. The Association has since formed new Branches at the rate of one third of a Branch per year. The two original Branches started with some 140 voting members. Over the eighteen years of its existence the Association achieved a growth rate of voting members of 11.54 percent per annum².

The four primary lacks that existed in Australian records management when the association was conceived in 1967, have been only partially overcome for only a small number of records management practitioners and neophytes. The lacks of association, communication, education, and innovation still exist for the majority of Australian records management staff.

The four lacks caused four limits to the personal growth of records management staff; limited advancement, limited recognition, limited remuneration and limited job satisfaction.

The lacks and limits caused four losses to organisations. The losses still exist; loss of information usefulness, loss of organisational control, loss of organisational responsiveness, and loss of organisational productivity and income.

The future offers records managers more challenges than ever before and the opportunity to come in from the cold. To achieve their place alongside the decision makers records management practitioners must strive for excellence by making an unusual effort to overcome the four Lacks, the four Limits and the four Losses. To achieve excellence, practitioners need the help of the Association.

The Association must motivate its members by giving each individual member an identity that "sticks out" at the same time giving members the sense of belonging to the profession and to the Association. It must throw off the trappings of bureaucracy that preserve the status quo and exclude many records management practitioners from voting and election. And it must define its mission and decide whether it is an association of professional people or an association of ordinary people interested in records management. **If this Association will not, other Associations will do what the members want. That would be unfortunate but the baby is more important than the bathwater.**

Four Lacks in Records Management circa 1967

When the Australian records management association was conceived in 1967 there existed in records management four primary lacks:

Lack of Association

People working or interested in records management lacked opportunities for associating with each other, being involved together on projects, research, seminars, conferences, nurturing neophytes, and other activities. There had been only one public seminar on records management conducted in the sixties and that was mostly related to archives.

Lack of Communication

Unbiased information on records management was not generally available in 1967. And that which was available from the office equipment companies was product specific. The handful of journal and magazine articles published in the 1960s, were mostly product "write-ups", and that fact prompted this author to write the series for *Modern Office*³ magazine 1967-1968 which caused much reader interest.

No forum existed for making contact with records management practitioners or specialists and exchanging knowledge and experience. The three-day records management workshop⁴ was convened by the author in an effort to establish such a forum. The NSW pilot committee for the establishment of the R.M.A.A. was formed by the workshop delegates.

A small number of government and business organisations had effective records management programmes. Information about their programmes was not accessible. Other organisations were "re-inventing the wheel". Their managers did not know that the problems they were experiencing were common and had already been solved by others. This prompted research to discover whether elements of good records administration the author had identified and described in the series of articles³ had been applied in any Australian organisations. It was found that some Australian companies had implemented most of the elements of good records administration. This research, which was presented to the American Records Management Association annual conference and published in the *Records Management Quarterly*⁵ in 1968, was later used in teaching the first course on records management in Australia, many graduates of which became officers in the R.M.A.A..

Lack of Education

In 1967 no records management courses existed in Australia. The Australian Government had discontinued its internal training for "registrars" and had provided no formal training programme for records managers for a decade.

The educationalists interviewed by the author in 1967 stated emphatically that neither universities nor technical colleges would consider introducing courses in records management. They incorrectly believed there was no demand in the community for such a course, and even if there was a demand there was nobody of knowledge to teach students. Establishing a course was a major motivation for convening the pilot committee for the Association and revising and re-publishing the author's series of articles (there weren't any others) in a book⁶ in 1969. The pilot committee's research later found a strong demand for a course existed.³⁰

Lack of Innovation

With the notable exception of a few innovative organisations which had implemented effective records management programmes,⁵ there was little innovation in records management in Australian organisations in 1967. Many were still using methods of the 1890s. Upgrading records management was carried out piecemeal usually by installing proprietary products and systems sold by the office equipment companies.

Modern concepts of records management, and innovative methods of indexing, filing, tracking, retention and disposal scheduling, etc., expounded by Schellenberg,⁷ and others and described in the literature of the American Records Management Association were unused in most Australian organisations.

Concepts of good management, such as, developing human resources (filing clerks, etc.), training users, documenting the procedures, and auditing the programme were almost entirely ignored in the records management area.

In most organisations records management was either decentralised or centralised. The integrated, centrally controlled, network system of information stations, advocated by Leahy⁸ and Cameron in the 1950s, was unknown. Although some elements of the network system were evident, in varying degrees, in some Australian organisations, these had just grown up as a result of the failure of both decentralisation and centralisation. Wellcome Australasia Limited was the first organisation to my knowledge in which the network methodology was used on a preplanned basis whereby the structure of the network was deliberately formulated from the analysis of information resources and usage data⁹.

Innovation in records management systems was designed around products. Because the "records explosion" was well under way organisations were turning to microfilm products to solve their storage problems, many of which would have been better solved by basic techniques of retention and disposal scheduling and well run off-site, low cost storage centres.

Four Limits to Personal Growth of Records Management Staff circa 1967

Resulting from the four Lacks were four Limits to Growth for records management personnel.

Limited Advancement

Opportunities for advancement in records management were extremely limited. People with skills and abilities or potential who found themselves working in records management were impatient to move to meaningful jobs with growth potential. The "registry" in the public service was "the pits". Or it was a passing phase, a training area in which a new junior employee spent a few months to learn the geography of the organisation¹⁰. But advancement lay outside records management. The educational requirements for and the grades and salaries of career registrars were low compared with other jobs of equal responsibility. The position of filing clerk in the private sector was the lowest rung on the organisation ladder.

Limited Recognition

While many career public service registrars had gained a lot of experience and had developed valuable skills, recognition for their experience and skills was very limited. Management rarely recognised records management as a function which contributed to the achievement of organisational objectives. Only when there was a failure in the system was records management noticed. This negative behavioural conditioning of records staff reinforced the organisational view of the low status of records management work and perpetuated its limited recognition.

Limited Remuneration

Records management personnel were poorly paid. Conditions were less than needed for them to perform well. The Limits to Advancement, Recognition and Remuneration ensured high turnover of records management personnel and failure to attract suitable people which severely affected performance. Poor performance perpetuated the low status, recognition and remuneration.

Limited Job Satisfaction

Records management personnel had limited Job Satisfaction. This was due in part to the Limits to Advancement, Recognition and Remuneration, their own (involuntary) poor performance, and the lack of innovation of effective records management systems, concepts, and organisation.

Four Losses to Organisations circa 1967

The four Lacks in records management and the four Limits to Personal Growth of records management personnel caused four significant Losses to Organisations.

Loss of Usefulness and Utilisation of Information

Organisations were unable to fully utilise the information contained in the records for decision making. The usefulness of the information contained in the records was affected by the tracking and retrieval difficulties and lack of file integrity.

Loss of Control

Managements' ability to control and monitor operations of the organisation was diminished due to the Loss of Usefulness and Utilisation of Information. Organisational improvement programmes, such as management by objectives, were less effective than they could have been with better records management.

Loss of Responsiveness

Organisational Responsiveness to external and internal stimuli was reduced due to the diminished usefulness and utilisation of information and diminished control and monitoring of operations.

Loss of Productivity and Income

The effectiveness of organisations without good records management was reduced. Not only because of the reduced productivity but also because of the effects upon decision making.

Stemming from these Lacks, Limits and Losses, was the ultimate loss to the nation of some of the effectiveness of our government and business organisations and some of our international competitiveness.

The Aims of the N.S.W. Branch

The Association was formed to overcome the causes of these Lacks, Limits and Losses. The origin of the idea for the Association and the objectives of the pilot committee is described in my article, "R.M.A.A. History Highlights" in the last issue of *Informaa Quarterly*.¹¹ At the inaugural meeting of the New South Wales Branch, in June 1969, Mr William J. Latona, Head of the School of Commerce, Sydney Technical College, said "By the act of inauguration of the Association, Records Management, the newest profession has been born. And this is the way most professions have become recognised."¹²

The Draft Constitution developed by the N.S.W. Pilot Committee and modelled on the Constitution of the American Records Management Association, was adopted unanimously by the funding members at the inaugural meeting of the N.S.W. Branch.

In a published statement following the inaugural meeting, as president, the author wrote: "Any person or organisation may become a member of the Association and there is no restriction apart from the approval of the Governing Council."¹⁴

Achievements of N.S.W. Branch

Of the Branch's founding members' nine objectives¹³ only one, No. 8, "status" has been achieved, and even that objective is only partially achieved as an estimated 85 percent of N.S.W. members² cannot vote nor hold an office. Objectives No. 2 "professional training" and No. 9 "information on new developments in systems" have been partially achieved. The Branch has failed to achieve objective No. 3 "operator training", No. 4 "research", No. 5 "active interchange among members", the exception to this is the Local Government Chapter, No. 6 "standards" and No. 7 "publish case studies, research, developments". The score is 0.5 for objectives, 2, 8 and 9 and nil for the rest, total 1.5.

Of the benefits of membership¹⁴ offered by the first Branch Council only No. 6 "courses" has been achieved. Given the manner in which Branch members' meetings have been conducted over the years and the notorious lack of participation of members none of the other promised benefits are being more than partially realised by the average member. The score is 1 for benefits 6 and 0.5 for the rest, total 3.

Branch achievement score: 4.5 out of 15. That is, only 30 percent of the Branch founding members' objectives and promised benefits have been realised.

Aims of the Federal Council

The Federal Council, comprising delegates of the two established records management associations, N.S.W. and Victoria, was inaugurated on 30 December 1969. It saw its role was to "control, coordinate and publicise the activities of the Association."¹⁵

Achievements of the Federal Council

Of the fourteen objectives^{16, 17, 18} adopted in December 1969, eight or 57 percent, have been achieved in the eighteen years of the Federal Council's existence.

Six objectives have not been achieved. The R.M.A.A. is not the voice of the records management practitioners. It is not able to make pronouncements in the public interest which is listened to by people. The records management deficiencies have not been overcome nor have techniques for minimising future problems been worked out. No external procedures have been developed. No specific research project of major significance has been undertaken by the Association although much research is urgently needed especially in performance standards, position descriptions, job specifications, etc. No affiliation with the American Records Management Association (now Association of Records Managers and Administrators) or other national body has been established except indirectly through IRMC.

From the base of two branches the average rate of new Branch formation was one every three years. Starting from no base at all, the founders formed two Branches in one year.

While the number of voting members in all Branches of the Association has increased at the rate of 11.54 percent a year,¹⁹ the Branch with the highest population, N.S.W. has now fewer voting members than it had 18 years ago. The N.S.W. Branch has some 300² members, of whom 53 are voting members,²⁰ a negative growth rate of voting members in the Branch of one percent a year.

The R.M.A.A. fails to provide normal essential services and activities to its members. The Constitution, or Memorandum of Articles and Association, is not distributed to members, there is no published list of members names, occupations, employers, addresses, telephones, dates of joining and status. One does not know with whom one is associating. Lists of terminated members are not promulgated. One does not know which members have terminated or failed to renew their membership and why. No research studies, study groups, or standing committees comprising ordinary members have been formed to develop guidelines, standards, policy, objectives or new initiatives.²²

Sadly, after 20 years, not many records managers and neophytes actively associate, communicate, educate nor innovate. As a result the Advancement, Recognition, Remuneration and Job Satisfaction of records management personnel are still limited and organisations continue to suffer the Losses of Usefulness and Utilisation of Information, Organisation Control, Responsiveness, Productivity and Income. ***More and more Australian managers are turning to members of other professions to improve the records management in their organisations. Is this what we are here for? Will the next 20 years be more of the same?***

A Call for Excellence in Records Management

This is the day of the relational database management system, word processing, desktop publishing, electronic document transmission, phone mail, local area networking, the optical disc WORM system, to name a few of the technological breakthroughs affecting records management that occurred in the 20 years since an Australian records management association was conceived.

This is also the day of the "search", indeed the "passion" for Excellence. In their best selling book *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*,²³ Peters and Waterman describe "eight basics of management excellence" which "... work because they make excellent sense. The deepest needs of hundreds of thousands of individuals are tapped ... , and their success reflects ... a sound theoretical basis ... (which) has stood the scientific test of time and defied refutation."²⁴ More than five million copies of this book and hundreds of thousands of copies of the sequel, *A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference*,²⁵ have been sold. Most thinking managers of Australian organisations are learning about the eight basics of management excellence and have their own copies of one or both books.

Technological change is revolutionising records management and the skill requirements of the records managers. Today, as never before in modern times, records managers have the opportunity to come in from the cold and take their rightful place alongside the decision makers. To achieve this place they must achieve "excellence".

Excellence in Records Management

For records management practitioners to achieve excellence they must *think* "Excellence!" And the Association must *recognise* "Excellence" and *motivate members* to *strive* for "Excellence!"

Records Management Practitioners

For Australian organisations to achieve excellence in Records Management it is only a matter for each ordinary practitioner to put in an unusual effort to overcome the four Lacks, Lack of Association, Communication, Education and Innovation (with the help of the Association more practitioners can overcome these Lacks) and for managers to facilitate and encourage the application of the eight basics of excellence to records management in their organisations.

The Association

To help records management practitioners of Associate, Communicate, Educate and Innovate, the Association needs to apply the principles identified by Peters and Waterman.²⁶

Motivate the Members

Since the early seventies, officers in the N.S.W. Branch, and in some other Branches, except the A.C.T., have remarked upon the poor attendance, effort, and support of the majority of members.²⁷ If the majority of members are *turned off* the Association cannot contribute what it should to the achievement of Excellence in records management. Its leaders have the responsibility to *turn-on* the members.

To achieve a *turned-on* membership, the Association needs to take notice of psychologist Ernest Becker's theory, described by Peters and Waterman,²⁸ "... man is driven by an essential 'dualism'; he needs both to be part of something and to stick out. He needs at one and the same time to be a conforming member of a winning team and to be a star in his own right ... Ritual is the technique for giving life. His sense of self-worth is constituted symbolically ... in an abstract idea of his own worth. ..." ***This means that the Association must give each individual member an identity that "sticks out" while at the same time giving him/her the sense of belonging to the profession and to the Association.***

For instance, office bearers should be elected by the membership at large. Trappings that serve to maintain the status quo also serve to de-motivate the ordinary member. Such trappings must be dispensed with as the Excellent Companies have done.²³ No longer should we allow the officers of the New South Wales Branch to be selected from the elected by a mere 15 percent of the membership. Denying 85 percent of members the democratic right to vote and be nominated for election means 85 percent of members cannot enjoy a sense of belonging and "stick out".

Define the Mission

What is the Association mission? Is it in the forefront of every member's thinking? The list of objectives of the Association cannot be retained in anyone's mind for long.

The Association is handicapped by conflicting roles. It has been trying to fill two roles and consequently neither role has been filled successfully. There is the role of improving the records management *profession* and there is the role of improving records management in organisations. These roles are not harmonious. When played together they are discordant.

A hypothetical example: The Law Society is interested in developing the profession of the practice of the Law. The users of legal services are interested in the Law from a different perspective. For instance, many users of conveyancing services in New South Wales would like the land broker system of conveyancing introduced but the NSW lawyers strenuously resist such reform, even though it would benefit users by making lawyers more accessible (less busy on conveyancing matters) and reduce the cost of conveyancing. The two roles conflict.

The conflict also arises in records management. Providers, the practitioners and consultants, are often approached by consumers, the managers of organisations, with records management problems. In many instances managers do not want to promote the persons doing the records management work even though part of the solution is for the person or persons to learn a new system and take on more responsibilities.

The Association is internally discordant and handicapped because mixed up in its ranks are both consumers and providers of records management services. These members have conflicting goals. The providers are the losers. Also many members' prime allegiance is to other professional societies. It can be assumed that for many such members the R.M.A.A. is merely a resource.

The Association has not carried out its responsibility to develop the profession. In 1974 records management scored only 1.5 out of 6 essential attributes of a profession.²⁹ And the score has not changed. ***There needs to be one association of providers for the development and enhancement of the profession, and the consumers should be in another association if they want one. Or else let us admit that this is the association for the consumers and not for the profession. Then the providers would think about joining or forming an association for the profession.***

Tom Lovett, M.B.A., M.R.M.A.

The author is principal of the records management consulting firm, Lovett Vickery and Associates, Sydney. He formed the N.S.W. and Victorian pilot committees, was N.S.W. pilot committee chairman, first president of both N.S.W. Branch and first president of the International Records Management Federation (now Council), N.S.W. education committee chairman for eight years and teacher of the first records management course in Australia at Sydney Technical College, 1971-1978. He commenced consulting in records management in 1967.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. The author is a member of seven professional societies and associations.
2. Membership details or statistics are not published by R.M.A.A. nor available to members. The only available information is hearsay.
3. *Modern Office* magazine, Sydney July 1967-August 1968.
4. *Modern Office* magazine, Sydney, April 1968, pp.6-8,30.
5. Lovett, T., "Paperwork — an International Problem", *Records Management Quarterly*, Vol. 2 No. 4, American Records Management Association, October 1968, pp.5-13.
6. Lovett, T., *Records Management Manual*, Austral-International Publications (available from Infoman Press), Sydney, 1969.
7. Schellenberg, T.R., *Modern Archives Principles and Techniques*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1965.
8. Leahy and Cameron, *Modern Records Management, A Basic Guide to Records Control, Filing and Information Retrieval*, McGraw-Hill, U.S.A., 1965, pp.79-96.
9. I designed the Wellcome Australasia Limited system in 1972 to serve the needs of the three diverse, previously autonomous and newly amalgamated operating divisions, Burroughs Wellcome, Calmic and Coopers and to facilitate their amalgamation.
10. For a description of two common approaches to selecting and training records management staff in the sixties and seventies, see Long, B., "Increasing Awareness of the Importance of Information", *Proceedings of the First Annual Conference on Records Management in Local Government*, Lovett Vickery and Associates, Sydney, 1976, pp.39-50.
11. Lovett, T., "History Highlights", *Informaa Quarterly* Vol. 3 No. 4, R.M.A.A. Brisbane, December 1987 (in print).
12. "Records Management Association Gets Under Way", *Modern Office* magazine, July 1969.
13. *Ibid.*
The objectives of the Association according to the Draft Constitution were as follows:
 1. Provide a source of information about the subject, records and information management, as applied in business, government and all corporate enterprises.
 2. Provide professional training for managers and students in records and information management.
 3. Provide training for records personnel, operators, and others on rules and procedures for good records handling and on the principles underlying the subject.
 4. Co-ordinate research on records and information management in Australia.
13. (cont)
 5. Develop active interchange of ideas and experience among members.
 6. Develop and promulgate standards for those engaged in records and information management.
 7. Publish details about actual records and information management programmes, research studies and new developments.
 8. Provide members with professional status, backing and help broaden their fields of interest.
 9. Provide members with information about new developments in equipment, systems, and appliances for record-keeping and information processing and storing purposes.
14. *Ibid.*
"The benefits of membership are probably best summed up as follows.
 1. The opportunity to meet other people with similar interests.
 2. The opportunity to share collective knowledge.
 3. The opportunity to learn how selected problems were solved and how they relate to your own problems.
 4. The opportunity to keep abreast with opportunities.
 5. Adding strength to the Association and its endeavours to bring about recognised courses on records management ... in established educational institutions ..."
15. *Records Management Newsletter*, Vol. 1 No. 6, R.M.A.A. N.S.W. Branch, February 1970, pp.3.
16. *Ibid.* pp.4-5
The first Federal Council resolved that:
 1. "The present 'voices in the wilderness' of the few advocates of the principles of good records and information management will become the collective voice of a recognised national Association with official policies.
 2. "and which is able to make pronouncements in the public interest which will be listened to by the people ..."
 3. "It is self-evident that the principal objective of the Association is to overcome present deficiencies in records management practices and work out the fundamental techniques for minimising future problems."

17. Ibid. pp.6-9.
Specific objectives of the Federal Council described in the Newsletter were:
 4. Educational Courses,
 5. National Journal,
 6. Membership Status,
 7. Constitution,
 8. External Procedures,
 9. Initiation of New Branches,
 10. Research Projects,
 11. Affiliation with the American Records Management Association,
 12. An International Federation,
 13. National Convention,
 14. Commemorative Publication.
18. *Records Management Quarterly*, American Records Management Association, July 1969, pp.42-43.
19. *Informaa Newsletter*, 1985, R.M.A.A., N.S.W. Branch. Some 69 persons at the inaugural meeting of the N.S.W. Branch became voting members in 1969. If a similar number enrolled in the Victorian Branch at its inauguration also in 1969, the two original Branches started with some 140 voting members. See also reference 21. According to the present federal secretary, the Association now has some 1,000 members eligible for election, which represents a growth rate of 11.54 percent a year. See *Informaa Quarterly*, Vol. 3 No. 3, R.M.A.A., Canberra, September 1987, pp.39.
20. The names of the fifty three members eligible for election were shown on the list attached to the nomination form distributed in May 1986 by the N.S.W. Branch secretary.
21. *Information Efficiency Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 1, February 1971, pp.34-35.
22. At the 1986 and 1987 Annual Conference of the Association of Records Managers and Administrators (previously the American Records Management Association) each president reported on the achievement of the objectives for their one-year term of office. The greatest emphasis is placed on Chapters, of which there are 122 in the U.S. and Canada.
23. Peters, T.J. and Austin, N.A., *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*, Harper & Row, 1982.
24. Ibid. p.xv.
25. Peters T.J. and Austin, N.A. *Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference*, William Colling & Sons, London, 1985.
26. Peters, T.J. and Waterman, R.H. *op.cit.* p.xv.
27. This conclusion is drawn from knowledge gained from discussions with Branch members who are able to attend members' monthly meetings more regularly than I, and from letters and editorials published in *Informaa Newsletter*, R.M.A.A., N.S.W. Branch.
28. Peters, T.J. and Waterman, R.H. *Op.cit.* pp.xxii-xxiii.
29. Lovett, T.R., "'Professionalism' in Records Management", *Informaa Newsletter*, R.M.A.A. N.S.W. Branch, June 1974, pp.3-5. "N.S.W. Education Course Starts 1971", *Information Efficiency Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 1, Infoman Press, 1971, pp.36, 38.

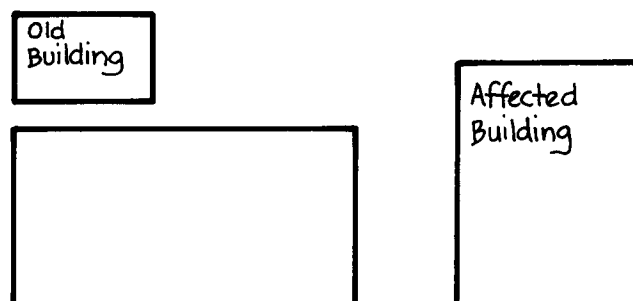
DISASTER !

This is not a paper on the theory of disaster recovery, but rather a fellow practitioner's real life experience.

Prologue

I call this phase the prologue to disaster recovery, because my experience proved that knowing what to do does not mean you have the authority to do it. The particular disaster I was involved in happened in September, 1986 and was a result of building extensions.

The physical site consisted of an old original building which had long since been outgrown and two other buildings which had subsequently been added so the complex formed a U shape. The building affected was two stories high and housed most of the technical staff, the Data Processing group, the PABX and most of the public access areas.



A decision was made to add two more stories to this building. Staff in the building were not relocated, nor was there any existing disaster recovery plan.

The disaster happened on the weekend of the Rugby League Grand Final, not significant in itself, but it did create problems with locating key personnel. There were heavy rainfalls for the entire weekend, continuing with renewed force into the following Monday. On the previous Friday, the roof of the building had been removed and a waterproof substance applied. At sometime over the weekend the afterhours answering service contacted the security people as there appeared to be a problem with the PABX. The security people visited the site but could not enter as they did not have keys. They tried to contact the designated officers with keys but could not contact any until late on Sunday. When entry was gained, the building was awash throughout. The stairwells resembled waterfalls, ceiling tiles had fallen and were crumbling everywhere and carpet tiles were literally flowing through the building. The local State Emergency Service was called. They covered the building with tarpaulins and covered as many desks as possible with plastic. I was later to be very grateful for their actions. Water was pouring into the two computers, which incidentally were still going!

Blissfully unaware of the drama, I kept an appointment at the State Repository at Kingswood on the Monday. I returned, very wet and feeling sorry for myself at about 3 p.m.

I wondered why everyone seemed to be crowded into the old building. I found my staff upstairs with a stack of soaked files. Someone at last filled me in on the disaster and at this stage I visited the flooded building to see for myself the extent of the damage. The sight was overwhelming. I returned to my office, gathered my thoughts and began to search what books I had for information on rescuing wet records. I phoned around for advice, to John Cross from State Archives and to Dale Kreibig. By then I had formulated my plan — to find an area suitable for the rescue, to evacuate affected records, to purchase needed equipment and to select the staff I would second to the task.

The following morning I approached management with my plan. I was so intent on setting the plan into action I did not anticipate any problems. However, management had to worry about relocating public enquiries, relocating the cashiers, finding places for staff to work, and dealing with the builders and insurance company. They really did not want to worry about wet records. It did not help that the builders had told them that everything would dry out when the air conditioners were turned on, just like a car's windscreen. The lack of similarity between glass and paper was not immediately appreciated. As it turned out the air conditioning was not functioning again for many weeks. It was no time to argue, so I uncharacteristically retreated and checked with a conservator, Neville Corbet. He confirmed my plan of action and offered to visit the site. I spent the rest of the day identifying records which would need attention, not just central records files but Departmental series and personal papers. By this time staff had returned to their desks and were throwing things out. It was obvious that they were upset at this disruption to their workplace, so I was worried about the quality of the decisions being made. I approached each Department head and offered what advice I could, emphasising that they could call for advice or help at any time. The Data Processing people were trying to get programmes to run on the supplier's computer, so the computer room was all but deserted. Racks of mag tapes were standing next to an open window, with water pouring down around them. They were removed to a safe place, and after consultation with the DP manager at a later time were cleaned and exercised.

That afternoon I tried again to convince management that paper records needed special treatment. Eventually I had permission to call the conservator, and implement the rescue plan. The conservator toured the building and offered some constructive advice. He also confirmed my plan of action and offered to write a report for management and the insurance company. At last we could act!

The site for the rescue, an unused lawn bowls clubhouse was prepared. As it was in a remote area, it had been badly damaged by vandals. Windows needed replacing, it needed cleaning, the phone and electricity had to be connected. Eight fans were purchased and an iron together with food supplies. All this had to be checked with the Insurance Officer and documented.

Recovery

Every empty box in the place was found. 10,000 sheets of blotting paper were purchased and every spare roll of paper hand towels were removed (these proved to be better than the blotting paper). While all this was going on, a thorough search of the building was made and those records needing evacuation were identified. They had to be important and not easily replicable. Things like inhouse publications were not included once it was found that the masters for those publications were available. Users were informed of what was being removed, where it was going, how to get in touch with us and what was going to happen to the records.

The next job was to decide how many staff from the section could be seconded. The section had to keep running so six staff were seconded and six left to run the section. Those selected had to be able to handle a challenge, to work without close supervision, to show initiative and, most importantly, they had to have a sense of humour. The following day the operation began. Records were evacuated, box by box. A list of all records removed was kept. Central records files were marked out to "flood". About seven (7) linear metres of central records files, numerous engineering drawings and books and one entire technical series, a total of approximately twenty seven linear metres, were evacuated. Users were to add more as the cleanup continued.

It was decided that we would need people to be at the bowling club twenty four hours a day to protect the records from vandals, but also to ensure that the fans did not malfunction and cause a fire. Arrangements were made to have some of the younger male employees sleep over in very trying conditions. Imagine trying to sleep on camp beds, with eight fans going flat out all night and the prospect of vandals calling at any time. The security people added us to their call list and were very reassuring. The bowling club had one very large room which overlooked the ex-bowling greens and three smaller rooms which could be used for the records. It also had a kitchen and toilet facilities.

All advice was that heat should not be applied to the records, but that absorbent paper should be interleaved in the wet records and fans used to keep the air circulating. On arrival at the bowling club, our home for the next eight days, the most damaged records were identified, the file pins removed (they would rust), pages interleaved with blotting paper and, as far as possible the file papers kept together. We did not mark unencoded pages with file references and with hindsight, this was a mistake. With all the fans going, doors open and miles of paper, some papers became what we termed "orphan papers". It took some research when we returned to identify the proper places for these orphan papers.

The records were placed on trestles and on the floors. All the rooms were filled with files and papers and we still had fifteen boxes to unpack. The enormity of the task began to be clear. As the blotting paper became wet it was replaced. Papers were turned twice daily and as much air as possible allowed into the stacks of paper. I told the staff to wear old clothes and bring something to read as I didn't think they would be occupied all day. This proved to be a gross error of judgement! They were flat out all day.

We strung "clothes lines" across the room which proved very handy for drying bound sets of plans, spiral bound reports etc. The circulating air quickly dried these items and they could be turned around quite quickly. Care had to be exercised to ensure that they were dry right into the bindings. Engineering drawings were easier to dry, but took up a lot of floor/trestle space. Some were particularly soaked and required gentle separation. They were then laid sheet by sheet on blotting paper on the floor in order and turned about four times a day. They dried very quickly and very little information was lost from the drawings. A little wrinkling of paper resulted and this could have been minimised by ironing each page, however this proved time consuming and not worth the effort. When the plans were rolled onto a cylinder most of the wrinkles straightened out.

Books from the surveyors containing valuable information which could not easily be replicated were fanned open and placed in front of fans so that air could reach into the separation between the pages. They took a long time to completely dry at the spine and were quite warped. A book press was provided to reduce this warping.

It became evident as the bulk of paper overwhelmed us, that the best we could do was to preserve the information contained in the files and books. Their physical restoration was not possible under the circumstances. This was especially so with linen plans which became badly distorted. It was impossible to improve their condition by ironing between two sheets of blotting paper, but if the information on the drawings could be rescued, the plans could be copied or redrawn.

The technical series consisted of about fifteen linear metres and all files in the series were water damaged to a greater or lesser extent. Their housing had been an empty lift well on wooden shelves. The bulk of these files was daunting. At first as we unpacked the boxes, those files which were damp only at the margin or the spine were laid out to dry. Twenty four hours later they appeared dry to touch, however on examination it was found that the plans in the files had soaked up all the moisture. This was found again and again. Evidently, plans attract moisture and it was safest to open out all plans in all files so that air could circulate between the pages. Even when this was done, plans got wetter and took longer to dry than any other pages.

TRIM

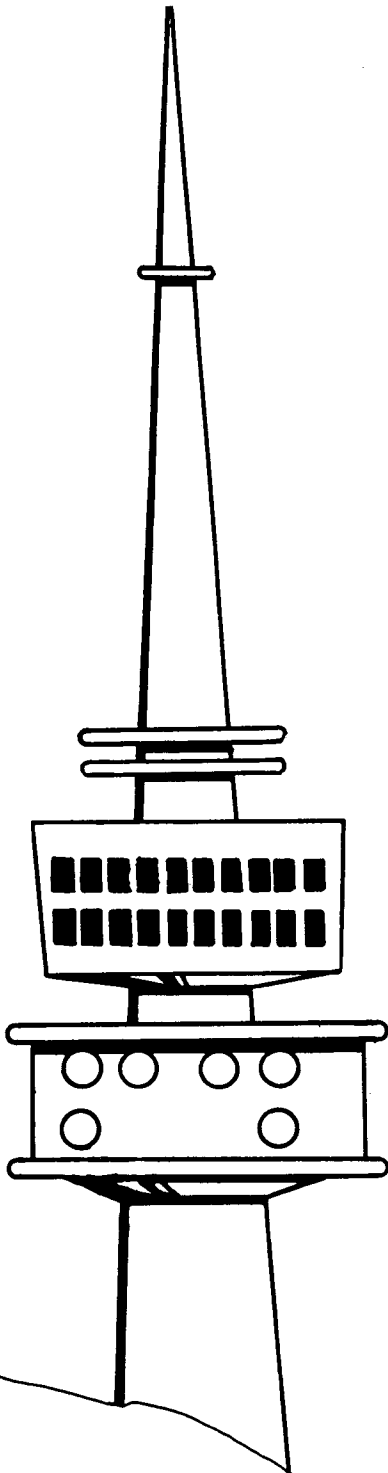
TOWER RECORDS and INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- o over 40 sites*
- o bar code tracking*
- o automatic archiving*
- o on-line thesaurus*
- o correspondence management*
- o executive mail management*
- o FOI, Ministerial systems*
- o fixed assets management*
- o full networking capability*
- o on-line documentation*
- o proven system*
- o tailored to your registry*
- o NSW Government Contract*

Call us for more information or for a demonstration

TOWER COMPUTING SERVICES

14 Fuller St
DEAKIN ACT 2600
Phone (062) 573721 (bh)
(062) 816053 (ah)



As files dried they were bundled into generic groups, i.e. central records files, engineering plans, technical series etc. When all papers from a group were ready for return, they were put in order, re-boxed and returned. After eight days the operation at the bowling club was complete.

On return decisions had to be made about whether to return the technical series to its previous site. As this was extremely vulnerable to further damage (the roof was still leaking) the risk was considered to be too great. A storage unit was obtained, generously loaned to us by Dexion. The last three years records in the series plus the registers were returned to the Department and this proved sufficient for them to operate. If they needed earlier records, as they often did, records staff retrieved them from a storage area in a separate building. All other papers were returned to users. We marked all central records out to "flood" when they were removed and re-checked them out to the users on return. This proved worthwhile as users began to remember what they were dealing with, what had been on their desks etc and began chasing files.

It was of paramount importance to keep staff morale high during this operation, both at the rescue site with lots of breaks, lots of hilarity and lots of understanding, as well as back in the section. They were struggling on, still getting the mail out and circulating files to very frustrated users. To call it a skeleton staff would be an exaggeration — they were marvellous! We kept in constant touch with them while we were exiled and this helped to mould the team effort. Fatigue was a problem among staff for some weeks after the rescue. I personally worked eighty seven hours that week and many of the staff worked almost as long. It was barely possible to give days off for them to recover, but every effort was made to do so.

I also made sure I went right through the damaged building every day during the rescue and for some weeks after. Being visible, users would seek help or advice which they may not have made time to do if they had to phone. It also let them know what was happening and that somebody really cared about their problems.

With the benefit of hindsight, always useful, I offer the following suggestions and advice, but hope that none of you has cause to use it. I have also incorporated advice given by Helen Price, Conservator for the Bicentennial project "Conservation on the Move" at a branch meeting.

- Find out if your organisation has a disaster recovery plan. If not formulate one for your areas of responsibility.
- Ensure that you will have the authority to deal with your area of responsibility in a disaster and that you will be notified at the earliest opportunity of the disaster.
- Your disaster recovery plan should include, from outside the building, site drainage. From inside the building the location of sinks and other drains which might overflow. The location of solvents and other flammable liquids. The location of water, sewer power and air conditioning ducts. Check for roof leakage. Determine the shut off points for water, gas and electricity. Find out who to contact in an emergency.
- Check the functioning of emergency equipment including smoke detectors, sprinklers, fire extinguishers on a regular basis.
- During building works or extreme weather conditions, make sure that staff keep all records in proper housings while they are not at their desks.
- Compile a file of relevant extracts from publications on disaster recovery. Include the name of a reliable conservator. Resubmit the file to yourself each month or two. This will allow you to update names and positions as they change and make any other changes necessary. It will also ensure that in the event of a disaster your reactions will be instinctive.
- Make a list prioritising files to be evacuated in the event of a disaster. Vital records should have security copies offsite or dispersed throughout the organisation.
- For wet files use blotting paper and lots of air. Do not use heat. For bulk wet records freeze them until you can get to them. There is also a technique for vacuum drying them but facilities for this in Australia are limited. I am told that if you take them up in an aircraft to 30,000 feet and descend they will dry. This may be a little tricky to sell to management but if your organisation has the facilities it could be worthwhile.
- Beware of outbreaks of mould and mildew. They can spread through your collection if not isolated.
- Be aware of plans in files. They may not appear wet immediately, but will soak up every bit of moisture around them.
- Keep a record of all things removed for rescue and of all things thrown out which could not be rescued or considered not worth rescuing. This will save a lot of time later.

- Document all staff time used and expenditure on goods for insurance claims. Take photos if possible to back the claims.
- Be visible and concerned. Keep checking the collection for outbreaks of mould or mildew or for records which were overlooked.

Wendy Duggan A.R.M.A.

Vice-President N.S.W. Branch Council, President Local Government Chapter, Chairman, Special Projects Committee, Chairman Informaa Quarterly Editorial Committee. Consultant, DL Associates.

KEYWORDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS

Local Government records systems are property based systems. This frequently takes the form of two distinct series, one a property series which holds documentation on specific properties in the municipality and another which holds administrative documents essential to the running of local government bureaucracy. These two systems can appear as the one administrative, or subject system, which includes the material on properties in addition to administrative documents.

It is the administrative subject files which are the most complex to index. Property files are simply indexed under the name of the specific street and/or property number. To index these files is a relatively uncomplicated task. It is the administrative subject files which are an indexing problem as they deal with a complex variety of subjects.

Many administrative records systems have benefitted from keyword indexing and local government records are no exception. The simplest way to begin keywording a system is to divide the organisation's functions into subject categories in order to create a subject classification scheme.

An organisation's administration consists of at least four common areas. These are:

1. General Administration
2. Finance
3. Legal
4. Personnel.

The subject categories are standard for any organisation from local government to a large finance company. In addition to the above four areas local government has at least another six subject categories which are unique to its administration. These additional categories are:

5. Community Services
6. Environmental Health
7. Parks and Recreation
8. Property and Land
9. Roads and Traffic Management
10. Town Planning.

The category **Property and Land** may be eliminated from the subject classification scheme if the property system is maintained as a separate series. Thus material on buildings such as schools, hospitals, etc would be filed in the property system.

A numbering system can be created for the subject files using the category number as the first part of the file number. For example in the above scheme all files which contain material on environmental health matters would have the prefix six. For example,

6/0001
 6 = ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
 0001 = Unique number for this file.

When the subject categories have been identified, keywords can be attached to the various categories. Creating keywords requires careful research into old indices and Council correspondence. Council personnel must be interviewed to determine which terms are preferable for each area of administration.

Keywords should have the following facets:

1. They should reflect the business of the organisation.
2. Standardised terminology should be chosen which will eliminate synonyms, etc from the scheme.
3. The same keyword should not be used in more than one subject category.
4. The plural term of a word should always be used.
5. Keywords can be phrases, or a single word.

Keywords for each organisation will be unique to that organisation. Those within the four common categories, that is **General Administration, Finance, Legal and Personnel**, may have common keywords, but not all the keywords related to those categories will be the same for every organisation. For example, the keywords related to **General Administration** may contain:

- Complaints
- Departments
- Publications
- Records
- Office Management.

It is very likely that these keywords will be common to every organisation, however some general administrative keywords such as **Aldermen** are relevant only to local government as they are unique to this type of organisation.

There are two methods of preparing a classification scheme. These are discussed in detail below.

1. The Hierarchical Scheme

The hierarchical classification scheme is a complex system which depends on keywords being further defined by the addition of the descriptors. The keyword is a broad subject area which can be subdivided into narrower subject areas. For example:

Keyword	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
1st Descriptor	ANIMALS
2nd Descriptor	DOGS
3rd Descriptor	REGISTRATION
4th Descriptor	DISCS

To compile such a scheme a broader 1st descriptor must be chosen under each keyword and there may be several of these describing a keyword. The same applies to 2nd and 3rd descriptors. In this way a classification manual is compiled which will outline the structure of the scheme, but only to 3rd descriptor level. Additional descriptors can be added which will further define the file title. These 4th and additional descriptors will contain the unique file title. All descriptors will contain the unique file title. All descriptors, like keywords, must be created in the plural sense. (For an example of a page from a local government classification manual see APPENDIX 1).

The hierarchical system is a tightly controlled scheme and is particularly suited to KWOC (Keyword Out of Context) indexing. A thesaurus should be produced in addition to the classification scheme. The thesaurus will act as a lead-in to the classification scheme and it may, or may not contain references to all keywords and descriptors used in the scheme. It should contain references to unused terms.

Advantages of the hierarchical scheme

1. Control of the system's language is established at file creation level.
2. It is suitable for KWOC indexing.
3. Indexed words are more easily accessed because they are part of a controlled scheme.
4. It is capable of infinite expansion within the subject areas.

Disadvantages

1. A complicated classification manual is required.
2. A thesaurus is required to accompany the manual.
3. Extensive staff training is required at file creation level.

2. Free Text Schemes

The second method of producing an indexing system is to eliminate the controlled descriptors found in the hierarchical system. Descriptors continue to follow keywords but these can be free text. This eliminates the need for a classification manual, however a list of keywords and their definitions is required to ensure control at file creation level. In this system it is likely that it will contain many more keywords than the hierarchical system. Frequently a term which is used as a first, second or third descriptor in the hierarchical system will be used as a keyword. This system can also be used to produce a KWOC index.

Advantages of Free Text Scheme

1. It does not require a complicated classification scheme.
2. If controlled keywords are used it is very flexible in its use of descriptors.
3. It is suitable for KWOC indexing.
4. It does not require extensive staff training at file creation level.
5. It is capable of infinite expansion within the subject areas.

Disadvantages

1. It requires enhanced control at keyword level and an extensive listing of keywords and their definitions.
2. Uncontrolled descriptors can cause difficulties when searching the index if terms have been used inconsistently. This is true of both hard copy and on line indices.

Although the free text method appears to have more advantages than the hierarchical method it can be extremely difficult to maintain. Corruption can easily occur in the index in the form of synonyms. This makes it very complicated for users to access the file title they require at the first attempt. Thus despite its complexity the hierarchical system can be the most economic in the long run as it will save users' time. Users and record staff will find the index simple to access if they are aware of the controlled vocabulary used in the scheme.

When the classification scheme has been compiled to a reasonable standard it must be tested on the existing subject system and on incoming documents. Any gaps in the system can be identified at this stage and keywords and descriptors can be created to make the system as complete as possible. The system is not static as new terms will continue to be added to it as the organisation's administration continues to grow.

Computerisation

Keyword indexing is designed for a computerised record system. There are many packages available, both on-line and PC compatible, which are specifically designed for a records management application. Local government records are controlled by government legislation and computerised records management systems must be specifically designed to cope with the local government situation. For example, under the Local Government Act local governments, like state governments, are required to maintain a register of correspondence. It is necessary for the software in a local government office to include a module on correspondence control in addition to its indexing capabilities. Modules on file tracking, the resubmit system and archiving must also be included. If a hard copy KWOC index is required it will require software which produces this in a readable format. (see APPENDIX 2 for a sample page from a local government KWOC index. This was produced by the ISIS software which is distributed by Sultan Micro.)

Conclusion

The method of keyword indexing used by a local government is not the main issue. What is important is that the keywords are controlled, standardised and defined as far as possible within the scheme.

The Hierarchical system may be more complex but it can lead to a more accessible indexing system. The free text method requires less staff training but it can become dangerously inconsistent.

Both classification schemes require a suitable records management software package to utilise them efficiently.

Annthea Love, A.R.M.A. A.L.A.A.

APPENDIX 1

Keyword GARBAGE

1st Descriptor

Charges

Contracts

2nd Descriptor

To Occupier
Trade Waste

Flats/Home units
Household
Instructions to Contractors
Public Conveniences

3rd Descriptor

Keyword ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

1st Descriptor	2nd Descriptor	3rd Descriptor
Animals	Cats Dogs Horses Poultry	Strays Pound Registration
Drainage	Stormwater Sewerage	Lines Mains
Food Surveillance	Mobile Food Vendors	
Immunisation Campaign		
Pollution	Air Noise Radioactive	
Pests	European Wasps Funnel Web Spiders Possums Rodents	
Septic Tanks	Applications	
Vegetation	Noxious Plants	Control

D L ASSOCIATES

Records Management and Archives
Advisory Service

We offer a range of services from total systems design and implementation to records education programmes.

Our services include:

- ★ Total corporate information system design.
- ★ Design and/or analysis of property based systems.
- ★ Design and/or analysis of keyword subject systems.
- ★ Implementation of KWOC indexing.
- ★ Thesaurus creation.
- ★ Evaluation of computer software packages.
- ★ Systems auditing.
- ★ Records inventories.
- ★ Disposal schedule design and implementation.
- ★ Staff training in professional records management.
- ★ Assistance with selection of records management staff.
- ★ Staff performance appraisal — design and training.
- ★ Disaster recovery planning.

We aim to provide you with the solutions to make your records system an effective Corporate Information Service which is efficient and cost effective.

For further information telephone: (02) 487 3457

49 Exeter Road, Wahroonga NSW 2076

APPENDIX 2

KU-RING-GAI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

CENTRAL RECORDS DEPARTMENT

ISIS Version 1.00 - SYSTEM 1 - Master File Index

serial no. 2-KMC-0001

Page: 37 Date: 1-May-87

	FILE NO.	VOL	KEYWORD*DESCRIPTORS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0212	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*GORDON CREEK CULVERT*TENDERS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0107	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*POLICY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0108	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0109	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*OWAN CREEK
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0110	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*EAST KILLARA POCKET AREA AND*TURRAMURRA
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0111	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*EAST LANE COVE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0112	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*FOX VALLEY CARRIER
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0113	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*KISSING POINT AREA
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0115	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*KU-RING-GAI CREEK*AREA 10 OVERFLOW
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0114	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*LOVERS JUMP CREEK
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0116	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*MAINS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0117	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*ROSEVILLE CHASE/ST IVES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0119	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*ST IVES CHASE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0118	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*ST IVES*PALM KITCHENER RICHMOND RDS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0120	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*SYDNEY HARBOUR
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0121	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*TURRAMURRA/WARRAMEE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0122	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*WARRIMOO RD
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0123	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*WEST LINDFIELD
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0124	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*SEWERAGE*WEST PYMBLE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0125	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*STORMWATER
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0127	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*STORMWATER*LINES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0126	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRAINAGE*STORMWATER*LINES*HILLEWA COONABARRA
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0172	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0128	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*FOOD SURVEILLANCE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0129	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*FOOD SURVEILLANCE*MOBILE FOOD VENDORS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0130	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*IMMUNISATION CAMPAIGN
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0081	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*INFECTIOUS DISEASES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0217	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*NOXIOUS PLANTS*DECLARATION
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0132	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*PESTS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0133	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*PESTS*EUROPEAN WASPS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0134	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*PESTS*FUNNEL WEB SPIDERS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0135	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*PESTS*POSSUMS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0225	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*POLLUTION*AIR
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0131	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*POLLUTION*NOISE
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0136	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0137	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*SEPTIC TANKS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0138	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*SEPTIC TANKS*APPLICATIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0139	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*VEGETATION
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0140	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*VEGETATION*NOXIOUS PLANTS
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0141	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*VEGETATION*NOXIOUS PLANTS*CONTROL
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0142	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*VEGETATION*NOXIOUS PLANTS*SPRAYING
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	2/0180	1	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH*WATER POLLUTION
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	6/0018	1	PARKS AND RESERVES*BUSHLAND MANAGEMENT*BUSHFIRE*ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	3/0038	1	TOWN PLANNING*CODES*ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOC	1/0105	1	LINKS WITH OUTSIDE BODIES*ENVIRONMENTAL LAW ASSOC
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING	3/0142	1	TOWN PLANNING*ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING*ABORIGINAL SITE SURVEY
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING	3/0041	1	TOWN PLANNING*ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING*DCP
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING	3/0082	1	TOWN PLANNING*ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING*ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING DEPT OF*REZONING

MARKETING RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Introduction

This paper will identify the ways to promote the benefits of records management programmes to management and the manner in which Records Managers may market their services within their organisation. My thesis shall be aggressive; Records Managers have a responsibility to adopt a marketing strategy within their organisations and be oriented towards service delivery.

There are three areas to examine:

- (a) firstly, I shall define the role of the Records Manager in terms of the marketing concept; we will talk about products, promotional activities and how records managers should behave in organisations;
- (b) secondly, I shall develop some strategies or methods for upgrading the role of the Records Manager in an organisation; and
- (c) finally, we shall briefly consider some of the broader issues for business and for records managers.

The Records Manager

Generally, the image of a records manager is very confused. The image and indeed the job description of a Records Manager can vary from a one person registry to a 70 person Records Branch. Budgetary responsibilities and participation in decision making mechanisms also vary.

The under valuing of Records Managers in organisations is in contrast to the trend of other professionals in the information industry. Contract programmers are available at rates ranging from \$40.00 to \$70.00 per hour; systems analysts and good project leaders at twice that rate.

So a contradiction exists; Records Managers work in the information industry but do not command the appropriate value in an organisation, nor indeed in the broader market place.

The Marketing Concept

The marketing concept is very simple. If people do not know or understand or want or need what you are marketing, they will not buy it. This is the principle upon which all business operates and it is true whether you operate as an individual or from within an organisation.

The corner stones of marketing are threefold:

- a) identifying the needs and wants of your clients;
- b) assessing the products or services you can offer them; and
- c) seeking the opportunities to deliver services to those people.

The challenge to records managers within organisations is to plan and consider their records strategy from a marketing perspective. The marketing mix, as marketers call it, has four major elements:

- a) products
- b) price
- c) promotion
- d) distribution

Products are what we do; the services we provide. **Price** is how we are rewarded for the products and the value a company attaches to those services and therefore the budget provided. **Promotion** is how we sell the product. **Distribution** is how we go about marketing our product and the processes we use along the way; that is, whether we use a committee structure or whether we use a line management person.

The marketing concept allows us to develop strategies which are a key not only to our personal success, but also a key to the success of the records manager in the Information Industry. The marketing of services is relevant not only in the private sector, but also in the public sector. From the marketing perspective, records management skills and systems must be perceived to be relevant and cost efficient before corporations will actually buy them, provide budgets and employ qualified Records Managers.

Records Management Products

When we consider records management skills and systems, we start thinking about indexing, classification, description, repository management, administrative processes and the ability to streamline systems and introduce keyword structures.

Records Managers are trained at a very high level of administrative process and can make systems work efficiently. Working and managing the administrative guts of an organisation is the most significant role of the records manager. In this context, the most important records management products are:

- a) efficient paper records systems;
- b) management of semi active records; and
- c) custody of archives and the historical material.

Whilst these are the traditional records management products, the way in which these services are performed and conducted within an organisation will have an impact in terms of the credibility in other areas. We need to change not what we are doing, but perhaps change the way we are doing things. The records manager must broaden their product range and service delivery so to flourish within their organisational environment.

The records manager must transform the traditional product area and take a developmental role within an organisation. They must perform some of the same activities in a different way; that is, refocus those activities. I will now introduce three strategies which can initially be used for developing a records management programme.

The Information Audit

The record series or information audit is the skill of identifying record groups, how they work, forming descriptions and developing a catalogue of systems for an organisation. The information audit is the fundamental planning tool for the records manager. The audit allows the manager to understand the existing systems and strategically plan a development path for their organisation.

The data from the audit must be classified functionally. The measurement and the analysis of the split between functional groups and the total kilometres of records in numerical and graphical formats becomes a powerful tool to provide the organisation with the details of the records in asset terms. By definition, the report from the audit can tell an organisation how effectively it is managing or mismanaging its records systems.

This rudimentary exercise, if performed in the right way and if providing results to the appropriate senior level audience, can dramatically change the perception of the records manager; they become a manager of assets of vast proportion within an organisation.

The Data Processing Areas

The second major area for development is with the data processing areas within the organisation. There are language barriers in these areas. What records managers understand as records and files, DP people have a completely different meaning. Until records managers realise they have some language hurdles they need to jump, they will not be able to talk to these people. Technical people are inextricably involved with the work of the records manager. A good technical system will work much better if the information analysis and the structure of the language controls are as well planned as the technical considerations.

Word processing systems, for example, will only work efficiently if the document creation and destruction process is well managed. The structure of these formats is the solution to managing the retrieval problems.

Data base design is perhaps one of the most valuable ways a records manager can contribute to an organisation. Involvement in the construction of the organisational client profile and marketing data particularly with regard to the construction of the corporate data base are of particular importance. Likewise, uniform record structures on the variety of media within an organisation and involvement in the management of electronic and optical media are important and growing issues for records managers.

For example, insurance organisations often structure all the information around a client policy number. The sounds fine on face value, but if a client has two or more types of policies, this system does not allow for information on the type of person to accumulate, unless the data base has been so designed. It is far more feasible to structure the records around the person so that you can see how that client's profile relates to the

total organisation. Many industries such as banking, finance, legal, accounting and consulting are turning their database around and developing a client profile. They are having considerable success in the marketing of their organisation when they know who is buying what services.

Strategic Planning

Information strategies within organisations are critical to upgrading the role of the Records Manager. The administrative and planning skills of the Records Manager provides a suitable mechanism for participating in the development of information strategies of an organisation.

Traditionally, strategic planning caters for hardware/software development, communication and voice processing and so on. Traditional paper records and processes are vital in that strategy. Getting records management strategies into information strategic planning processes within your organisation is one of the best ways of selling records management skills.

Restructuring and developing a corporate memory as part of the whole business process is vital to all organisations. Records managers should be modelling, planning, developing and maintaining the corporate memory within an organisation. This will involve planning and co-ordinating all records and media and understanding and managing the process by which those records are created, maintained and used.

We need to educate people in determining what is the price of the information in the organisation and what is the price of not having access to that information at all.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by leaving you with three issues for your consideration. Firstly, look at your own image in the organisation- are you market oriented? Your market is your organisation; how are you responding to that market; what do you need to do to overcome your lack of market orientation?

Secondly, look at the educational issues. What level are your data processing skills, the language you use and so on. What are your capabilities for office automation and business planning ?

Finally, what is the level of your entrepreneurial skills; how are you tackling the opportunities in front of you. Are you truly market oriented and are you truly advancing your position and professional capabilities?

The solution lies fundamentally in your own objectives and the energy levels you use to tackle these challenges. Records Managers have a significant responsibility in deciding their own fate within the information industry; looking at the possibilities from the perspective of the market place offers the greatest potential for the profession.

Fiona E. Meyer

TEACHING RECORDS MANAGEMENT A Personal Perspective

The academic year has drawn to a close. The fourth group of graduates from the North Sydney Technical College "Introduction to Records Management" course can set aside their texts for the moment, and delight in their achievements. Those from Newcastle and Granville can celebrate similarly.

Their challenge is just beginning!

Another examination is set before them now — that of applying their knowledge and skills to solving the problems facing Records Management professionals. There is no three-hour limit on this examination — it will continue for the remainder of their working lives.

My direct involvement in Records Management education began in 1982 through the NSW Branch Education Committee. Seventeen members volunteered to work within this committee on "getting a course going". Our idea was not an original one. Courses had been offered in the past and lapsed through lack of support. The need for a formal training had been spoken about for years. We did, however, gather enough enthusiasm, effort and persistence to turn an idea into reality.

We approached a number of educational institutions and debated the choice of venue with NSW Branch Members. Eventually, we coerced TAFE into mounting a "Pilot Special" course; a course which TAFE thought would be a flash-in-the-pan. Not so. Some courses were oversubscribed!

Cranshaw's Records Management System was rather hit or miss . . . is yours?

Systematics will point you in the right direction.

CAIRS, microCAIRS and MINISIS provide automated records and correspondence management systems:

. . . systems that cater for your present needs without constraints

. . . systems that cater for future needs as your role in managing your organisation's major resource, INFORMATION, expands.

& Systematics

Information Systems Pty Ltd

Sydney: (02) 411 3255

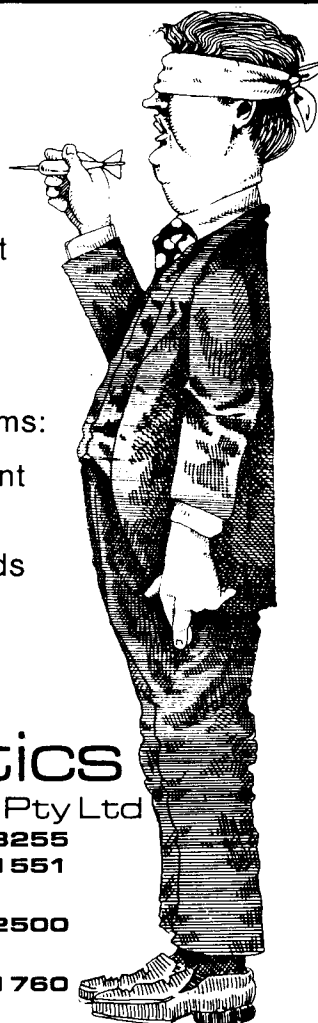
Canberra: (062) 57 1551

Abtec Information Services

Perth: (09) 444 2500

Margaret Findlay & Assoc.

Melbourne: (03) 818 1760



More than one hundred students have passed through the North Sydney course. I have taught most of them.

As I'm hanging up the duster this year, I invite you to share in these reflections on teaching records management.

What is education?

The Oxford dictionary¹ defines education (in part) to be:

"The systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young (and, by extension, to adults) in preparing for the work of life. Also, the whole course of scholastic instruction which a person has received . . . Hence, culture or development of powers . . ."

Education is systematic, it is about preparing for the work of life and developing powers. Learning then is about gaining skills and powers in a methodical way.

What is teaching?

Roger Mager² provides some insight.

"We teach or instruct because we hope that through our instruction the student will somehow be different than he was before the instruction. We provide 'learning experiences' with the intent that the student will then be a modified person . . . in knowledge, in attitude, in belief, in skill. We teach in order to influence the capabilities of the student."

The objective of teaching is to *change* the students through their involvement in 'learning experiences'.

Learning experiences do not, in my view, include spending entire lessons reading aloud from texts or notes, flashing a long series of slides before the students eyes, or in delivering a three hour monologue.

Rather, teacher and students should work to the syllabus and draw upon a variety of methods, including:

- assigning text reading as homework, preserving valuable class hours for discussing questions, covering areas where the text is weak, and providing practical examples of the application of theories;
- using audio visual aids at times where they enhance the learning activity; and
- incorporating practical work and discussion sessions wherever possible.

Teaching only one Records Management methodology is not valid. While each of us has our preferences, the students are entitled to learn about alternatives, and to be taught these alternatives in a reasonably unbiased way.

What motivates the teacher?

Being asked to teach is a compliment. The offer of a leadership role is difficult to reject.

The more sustaining motivation is the satisfaction a teacher can derive from the flash of understanding which shows on a student's face when a difficult point is finally clarified; from the increasing standard of student work throughout the course; and from following student career progress over the ensuing years.

There have been times when I did not look forward to a lesson; weariness, or despair at the workload had wound down my mainspring. Yet just walking into a room of students who were ready to learn was to be recharged.

What motivates the student?

The range of individual student motivation has been as wide as their age.

Most hope to advance their careers; some want to satisfy their intellectual curiosity; some are there as a condition of employment. All look forward to successful completion.

Short term, the motivation to come to classes week after week derives from the amount of interest the teacher can generate in the subject, the quality of the lessons, and the setting of assignments which are neither too simplistic (so as to eliminate challenge).

What next?

The demand for skilled Records Management personnel is high.

The introductory course is a success. Its continuation is vital. We need to find those among us who can teach, and encourage them to participate, and to seek to improve the present course.

Many of those who have completed the introductory course wish to further their studies in Records Management. In 1988 they will be disappointed, because the Certificate level course has been deferred.

Without it, where will we find our experienced and qualified Records Managers?

Dale Kreibig is the Managing Director and Senior Consultant for Curo Management Services Pty Limited, a Sydney firm of independent information and records management advisors.

She was NSW Branch President 1984-86, and has been active on the Education Committee since 1982.

REFERENCES

1. *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, third edition 1970.
2. Robert F. Mager, *Developing Attitudes Toward Learning*, Fearcon Publishing Inc.

DOES SMALL BUSINESS NEED THE R.M.A.A.?

Question: What problems might the small business firm have in planning a Vital Records Programme? Suggest some practical solutions to the problem.

The lack of information available to a small businessman on the importance of having certain essential documents available to set themselves up again after a disaster is unbelievable.

I went to the Blacktown City Library and spent over an hour checking every book they had on "how to run a small business". Some of the books did mention that certain records were essential and needed to be kept, however not one of them mentioned disasters, or went into the slightest detail of this very important aspect of business.

I remembered that TAFE runs a small business course, so I went to the library of the Blacktown Technical College. I spent four hours there and checked out sixty books and publications. This again produced little information. Some did not place too much importance on record keeping and devoted as little as one paragraph to it. Other books devoted whole chapters to the subject, and one acknowledged that there were records which were necessary to restart a business in the event of a disaster. I must confess that my heart skipped a beat when I thought at last I'd found something positive that I could use, however again there was no mention of vital records or the protection of the same.

The Office of Small Business must be the saviour of anyone wanting to set up a business, providing they know they exist.

The Office of Small Business publication "Seven Deadly Sins of Business" does explain record keeping and the need to keep equipment records in a book register or on a card filing system, but does not mention duplication or off-site storage.

The other Office of Small Business publication "Understanding Business Records" does at least explain the importance of keeping lists of certain records off-site, however no mention of duplication was made, except if the business had a computer. They mentioned the advisability of keeping records in a fireproof cabinet or safe, and I think this is common sense.

I spoke to two people who run their own business and asked them if they had given any thought to the protection of records which it would be necessary to have to re-start their business in the event of a disaster.

The first person I spoke to was a man who works by himself, and has one casual to help on very busy days. He more or less said "Tough, if it happens it happens." He felt that he paid insurance to cover him for loss, and said it wasn't worth the cost in time and effort to worry about protecting his vital records.

The second person was a lady who had one full time and one part-time employee. She said that when she pays her accounts she gives the receipts to her accountant on a regular basis.

She keeps an accounts ledger, and the accountant keeps her records on a computer. He supplies her with a printout every so often. I asked what would happen if he or she had a fire or some other type of disaster, and the records were lost. She said she took the precautions she could afford and paid insurance to cover such a loss. She stated that if something like that did happen, then all she could do was to try and start again.

Neither of these people was aware of the existence of the Office of Small Business. They did not know TAFE ran a course on small business operation, and they had never heard of the R.M.A.A.

Cost seems to be the main criteria in a small business. Any kind of records management seems to have an extremely low or minimum priority. If people set themselves up in business it would appear to me to be commonsense to try and gain as much knowledge as possible of the methods which should be used in the day to day running of a business.

Most small business people would not know of the existence of records management consultants, and this is a pity because the cost of a couple of hours spent with a consultant would soon be recouped with the efficiencies that would be gained.

I don't really know if there are any practical solutions to the problems of introducing vital records programmes to small business. The lack of specific information on this subject is incredible. The cost of trying to reach and educate all small businessmen in this country would be insurmountable.

Possibly a start would be for a professional organisation, through the Office of Small Business, to try to have something specific printed in their publications on vital records and their protection. A list of Associations available to small businessmen would also be helpful.

Small businesses easily outnumber large organisations, and play a major role in the economy of this country. That's obvious you may well say and yet efficient records management seems to be thought of only as the concern of big business, because they have so much information to manage. It is of equal importance for small business people to operate efficiently.

As stated previously, cost seems to be the main criteria in a small business. The hidden costs of poor records management, because they can't be seen, are not taken into account. What organisation counts the cost of searching for information which was poorly classified? Ignorance of records management can be more costly than people realise. It really all comes down to education and training, and I know that we, as an Association, are looking at ways to achieve this. In part our code of ethics says "we have an obligation to contribute wherever possible to the promotion and improvement of the profession of records management through training, study, education and research." Easier said than done is it not?

Hopefully we will continue to run successful National Conventions, and as an Association become more financially viable. While this may take a few years to achieve, we should be giving some thought to the forward planning of workshops and seminars which cater for small businessmen, accountants, secretaries, young people who have recently started working in records, and ofcourse large organisations.

I believe we should be liaising with TAFE to ensure the students undertaking the small business course are aware of the existence of the R.M.A.A. It is our responsibility as an Association to make our presence known wherever possible.

Records management is beginning to achieve the recognition it deserves, and we as an Association have the expertise available to accelerate this recognition.

Pam Camden, A.R.M.A.

The Author

Pam Camden is the Records Supervisor for Blacktown City Council. N.S.W. Branch Secretary (1986/87, 1987/88), Federal Director (1987/88), Member Education Committee (1985/87), Vice President Local Government Chapter (1986/87, 1987/88), Member of the 2nd National Convention Committee (1985) of the R.M.A.A.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE EQUATION

How often have you heard a group of records managers enthusiastically talking about "the system" — my system does such and such; are you barcoding? Will it run on a mainframe? How many megs will I need? Familiar? Certainly! For years we have been trying to bring successful automation to the records management field, and at last this appears to be happening.

However, if the human side of the equation is wrong, no "system" will be successful.

While we may be in sight of solving our automation problems, issues such as getting good staff and keeping them continue to dog the industry. Perhaps while the electronic whizz kids sort out our automation problems, we should be investing as much energy in resolving these staffing issues.

There is no escape from the fact that in records management there are many tedious, repetitious, uninspiring tasks. The records manager is often not directly involved in these tasks on a regular basis and therefore fails to appreciate their impact. When looking at work flow and drawing up job specifications, there can be a temptation to assign tasks according to convenience or what appears to be the most rational way to achieve greater productivity. Often the records manager is dismayed to find the plan has failed, or that the productivity gains are short term. People are not machines — they have active, inquisitive minds, they like to know what is going on, where they are headed and above all, at the end of the day, they like to feel good about themselves and to have a sense of achievement and self esteem.

Because technology has at last graced our industry and because of the knowledge explosion and the paper war, the industry itself is caught up in a process of rapid change. We are moving from a stable, almost moribund environment to a very unstable environment. There are greater expectations of the industry, the records managers and their staff. This transitional phase can be very threatening to some records managers, but especially to staff who are often not directly involved in the planning processes. At the same time their leader, the records manager, is totally caught up in planning and may not be devoting as much time as they would like to reassuring, training, informing and consulting their staff. It can be a problem that the new "system" will mean some staff will not be capable of making the transition. How these people are handled can either strengthen the group or split it asunder.

The Records Manager

This is an especially exciting and challenging time for records managers. All their technical skills are being exercised to the limit, there are great demands on their time and the "manager" in records manager is being tried every day. Communication skills are becoming increasingly important as they must concurrently deal with *management*, keeping them informed, making sure the new system fits into corporate information strategies; with *staff*, keeping the old system going, retraining, making implementation plans; with *users*, becoming unsettled by changes to a known constant in their working environment, with *other experts*, as they ensure the organisation's resources are invested for maximum effect. This time invariably highlights the lack of management training as opposed to technical training to which middle managers are exposed. The records manager may be tempted to see only technical or technological solutions to their problems. However, a knowledge of management techniques is necessary to carry out a proper diagnosis — to ascertain whether problems are what they appear to be or whether they are symptoms of deeper, underlying problems. This requires skill, time and "thinking space".

Staff

With an unstable environment, set objectives can rapidly become obsolete. The records manager can be mentally formulating new objectives on the run. To expect staff to know the new objectives is unreasonable, yet the old objectives clearly are now no longer applicable. So, are the objectives of the group:

- Known
- Realistic and achievable
- Did staff participate in their formulation
- Do they still mesh with organisational goals
- Is the goal path clear
- Does each staff member know their part
- Will they affect individual objectives
- Will they affect the perceived career path of individuals in the group.

If these questions have not been pondered and addressed, chances are the period of rapid change will also cause conflict and stress.

In the past 25 years the amount of technological change has been greater than in the past 200 years. This has been the reason so many academics have been studying management techniques as they apply to change. Kurt Lewin¹ has developed a model of change processes, seen as a process of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing as a continuum. "Change, like conflict is both necessary and inevitable"² It is the way that change and conflict are managed that can turn them into a positive rather than a destructive force. As situations change, behaviour changes, people are always motivated in some direction. The strength of the records group as a cohesive unit can be tried as behaviour such as dominating, attention getting, aggression and withdrawal is exhibited.

Well managed conflict can be functional, it can air *all* facets of grievance and result in good solutions and innovations. This is called integrative problem solving, which involves the rapid sharing of information by all participants. In reality this amounts to confrontation. Getting all the cards on the table quickly and completely in order to achieve the solution that will best assist in accomplishing agreed goals is what it aims to do.

Some common causes of conflict in the workplace are: different goals; allocation of resources; differing values or perceptions; work flow (especially interdependent and sequential situations); too much to do; uneven distribution of workload.

Stress can result from change and unresolved conflict. Edgar F. Huse in *Management* lists the psychological symptoms as apathy, withdrawal, irritability, procrastination, forgetfulness, tunnel vision, increased tendency to misjudge people and inability to organize activities. The behavioural symptoms are absenteeism, turnover, accident proneness and poor performance.³ The following are some causes of organizational stresses: roles in the organization; role ambiguity; role conflict; too little management support; holding a middle management position; relationships with colleagues (superior and subordinate); physical

environment (such as crowding, lighting, noise); change; job qualities (quantitative overload/underload and qualitative overload/underload); time pressures; responsibility for things/people; work pace; organizational structure (such as communications, lack of opportunity); hours of work; midcareer; obsolescence; status incongruity; underpromotion; overpromotion.⁴

How many of these stresses are today's records managers and their staff facing? Can they deal with their own stress to help their staff channel their stress positively? It is helpful for the manager to have a passing knowledge of MBO (management by objectives), communication techniques, transactional analysis theory, not to apply it as such but to be aware of the multiplicity of manager/employee relationships and to reach a "you're OK — I'm OK" situation. Introduction of time management techniques into regular training sessions is also a positive step. By being creative and thinking laterally it is possible to come up with methods of helping staff overcome these problems.

Being aware of these factors, steps can be taken to alleviate most of them. One of the most important is job design. When designing new job specifications for a changing system or when looking at problem areas, there is a job diagnosis survey technique which can be applied to measure the extent of job enrichment. The core job dimensions are:

Skill variety: the greater the number, the more potential for a meaningful job.

Task identification: the extent to which the job allows for a whole piece of work that is clear to the worker, e.g. reshelving returned files as opposed to dealing with the user, loaning and returning files.

Task significance: having a perceivable impact on others.

Autonomy: the degree to which the job requires the worker's own discretion in carrying out the task. Greater autonomy leads to a greater sense of responsibility, while providing a greater sense of freedom and independence.⁵

All these factors have a bearing on motivation and productivity but pose problems for the manager of monitoring standards and controlling input and output.

It has long been the case in colonial style registries that jobs are allocated according to specialised function, e.g. attaching clerk, movement clerk. This degree of specialization (skill variety) may seem logical but it does alienate the staff from a sense of completeness of task, of ownership of task and of identity with the user (task significance). Management theory passed through a phase where division of labour and specialization was considered appropriate (called the scientific management theory). This was closely followed, pendulum style, by the human relations school of thought, where recognition of individual worth and working conditions could be equated more readily to long term gains in productivity, than could time and motion theories. Professional growth results, so that staff are maturing into more responsible positions, and turnover rate is of course lowered, as motivated, fulfilled staff are happy in their jobs. The *Excellence* books *In Search of Excellence* and *A Passion for Excellence* rejoice in people as staff, as consumers and as service providers and users. Those companies who recognised people as individuals with value were successful. If turnover is a problem and training new staff is a perennial chore, a job diagnosis survey is worthwhile. Perhaps it is the job that is at fault and not the people doing the job.

Motivation is a complex, abstract concept. The scientific school believed that people were primarily motivated by economic incentives. It was necessary to specialise in tasks and to provide detailed instructions and controls. Workers had to be closely supervised. They believed there was a "one best way" of performing a task. Kast & Rosenzweig in *Organization and Management*, discussing performance see the concept as:

$$\text{Performance} = f(\text{ability, motivation})$$

"Ability is comprised of human and technical capabilities that provide an indication of the range of possible performance. Just how much of that latent capability and/or groups are motivated to perform".⁵ Most theorists agree that it is the manager's duty to motivate their staff. There are two basic types of rewards, extrinsic rewards (pay, promotion, praise, tenure, status symbols) and intrinsic rewards originating within the individual (accomplishment, enjoyment of work and self esteem). These are the tools the manager has to work with but frequently records managers are not in a position to control most extrinsic rewards. Staff are at work for approximately 8 hours a day, which 1/3 of an entire day, or 1/2 of the average waking day. Work takes up the major, middle part of each waking day. The emotional and physical well being of staff must be affected by what happens at work. This is an awesome responsibility for a thinking manager. Obvious things like physical surroundings and caring enough to reduce occupational health hazards are the easy part. Nurturing self esteem can be more difficult and a constantly changing challenge. Not only must the individual's needs be cared for, but the health of the group as an entity needs care also.

Positive re-inforcement, if carefully and irregularly applied, helps. This is the old carrot/stick choice. Anyone who has had to train young animals will know that reward is a much greater motivator than punishment. Huse lists the six rules for rewarding as:

- Do not reward everyone the same way
- Failure to respond also has reinforcing consequences
- Tell people what they must do to be rewarded
- Tell people what they are doing wrong, why they are not earning reward
- Do not punish anyone in front of others
- Be fair.⁷

Setting objectives for the group has been mentioned earlier. If these are realistic and attainable they can motivate staff to achieve, however if they are unrealistic or staff cannot relate to them, they will not even try.

One thing that is frequently overlooked is recognition and appreciation of the best worker(s) in the group. Often managers are so occupied with problem employees that the outstanding worker is taken for granted. They deserve the manager's attention and reinforcement and moreover they should be listened to. If it is clear that the best workers get the manager's time, attention and rewards, then others will strive to be a "best worker". Most mothers can relate to the "naughty" child taking up most of her time with attention getting antics while the "good" child is largely unintentionally ignored.

Reference has been made to management theories which have evolved over time. The current and most encompassing theory is called the systems theory of management. It encourages managers to look beyond single cause thinking. Knowledge of the interrelatedness and interdependence of the parts of a system aids the manager in diagnosing and identifying reasons for effectiveness or lack of it within an organisation. It puts each group and the organisation within the context of systems, subsystems and suprasystems. It is a comprehensive topic, too large to be dealt with here, but very rewarding to study.

Confronting and dealing with all these variables in the management of people makes automating a system look like an easy task. If our industry is to flourish beyond this technological stage and become a true information resource centre for our users, then people issues must be addressed by *today's* managers. If we allow the perception, held by many senior managers, of records staff as unintelligent, undermotivated misfits to continue, then this will become a self fulfilling prophecy. It is too easy to get lost in technicalities and forget the real reason for successful systems is the human side of the equation!

Wendy Duggan, ARMA

REFERENCES

1. LEWIN, K. Field Theory in Social Science.
2. HUSE, Edgar F. Management, 2nd ed. p.549.
3. Ibid, p.536.
4. COOPER, Cary L. and MARSHALL, Judi. "Occupational Sources of Stress. A Review of the Literature Relating to Coronary Heart Disease and Mental Ill Health". *Journal of Occupational Psychology*. 49 (March 1976): 12.
5. HUSE, Ibid. p.559.
6. KAST, F.E. and ROSENWEIG, J.E. Organization and Management.
7. HUSE, Ibid. p.393.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- COOPER, Cary L. and MARSHALL, Judi. "Occupational Sources of Stress. A Review of the Literature Relating to Coronary Heart Disease and Mental Ill Health". *Journal of Occupational Psychology*. 49 March 1976): 12.
- DRUCKER, Peter F. "The Effective Executive". Lond., Heinemann, 1976.
- HUSE, Edgar F. "Management". 2nd ed. St Paul, Minnesota, West, 1982.
- KAST, Freemont E. and ROSENWEIG, James E. "Organization and Management: A Systems and Contingency Approach". Syd., McGraw-Hill, 1981.
- LEWIN, Kurt. "Field Theory in Social Science". N.Y., Harper & Bros., 1951.
- PETERS, Thomas J. and AUSTIN, Nancy, "A Passion for Excellence". Lond., Collins, 1985.
- PETERS, Thomas J. and WATERMAN, Robert H. "In Search of Excellence". N.Y., Harper & Row, 1982.

KEYWORD CHAPTER R.M.A.A. (NSW BRANCH)

"The Branch Council may, from time to time, establish chapters of its Branch at any time in the State or Territory in which such Branch is established provided such chapters are governed by rules approved by Federal Council and it may appoint from time to time convenors to establish chapters or agents to carry on the business of the Association . . ." from the Memorandum and Articles of Association of Records Management Association of Australia (Article No. 105K).

The New South Wales Branch of the Records Management Association presently has three Chapters to cater for special interest groups. They are:

1. The Hunter Region Chapter for members in the Newcastle area
2. The Local Government Chapter for those working in, or interested in, records management in Local Government, and
3. The Keyword Chapter for those involved in working with Keyword Filing Systems. This is the newest of the Chapters and I would like to share with you the story of its beginning.

In February, 1985 I was appointed to my present position as Records Manager with a major construction firm. The company had appointed a consultant to implement a Keyword Filing System. While I had had experience in records management I was unfamiliar with this system and therefore had a learning process to go through. I was very fortunate in the company's choice of consultant as he was very knowledgeable in the field and most willing to share his experience. However, as always happens, consultants go on to other jobs and soon I was left to "carry the baby". As my staff and I struggled to establish a brand new department in what soon proved to be a very busy office, laid down procedures, learned the fine art of indexing file titles, attempted to overcome user resistance to this "strange new filing system", I often wished that there was someone I could talk to who had "been there, done that". I also worried that perhaps some of the things we were doing might damage the integrity of the system. I even thought that some of our ideas were good and could be shared with others. I mentioned these thoughts to the consultant and he said, "You should start a Keyword Chapter." "Who, Me?" I said incredulously and quickly put the idea away. "I am too busy." I thought. "Someone else who knew more should do it." I told myself. However, the thought persisted and about a year later the consultant and I spoke of it again. He decided to approach the Records Management Association with the idea of beginning a Keyword Chapter. We found them very receptive to the idea and before I knew where I was I found myself convenor of the Chapter.

People who were working with similar systems were approached with a view to joining and we had our first meeting on November 19, 1986. While the number who attended was small (7), most were keen to come together in such a group to share ideas and experiences.

The first pilot meeting was held on March 18, 1987 and at this meeting the "Rules of the Keyword Chapter" were drawn up. These are the same as those of the Records Management Association of Australia and also contain the following special objectives.

1. To encourage and extend the use of Keyword Filing Systems for organising and controlling office records. These Systems have the following characteristics:
 - (a) Discrete information areas are identified and then named with standard words or phrases.
 - (b) Each Keyword is defined as to its precise meaning within the organisation using a Keyword System, in a Thesaurus of terms which also lays down inclusions and exclusions from each information area.
 - (c) Each file is given a specific title comprising a Keyword and up to four (or eight if desired) descriptors.
 - (d) Each title is allocated a unique Keyword reference which effectively groups files of the same Keyword class together in the file housing.
 - (e) All records on the same topic bear the same Keyword reference. Individual documents are not individually referenced or indexed.
 - (f) All file titles are entered into an index, preferably a computerised Key Word Out of Context Index (KWOC).
 - (g) Three coded indicators are included in each file title, namely a code for the degree of protection and security required; a code for the retention period required; and a file station number.
 - (h) Files are designated either annual or reference.
 - (i) Annual files are transferred into inactive storage at annual intervals; whilst reference files are held as long as relevant.

- (j) Files are either destroyed at the end of the retention periods or retained in an archives if designated "permanent retention".
- (k) Shelf filing with edge tabbed colour-coded file covers are preferred.
- 2. To arrange meetings, seminars, workshops and training courses. To organise visits and other activities consistent with the objectives of the Chapter.
- 3. To do all such things to assist in the spread of good records management consistent with the Memorandum of Association or Regulations of the Association.

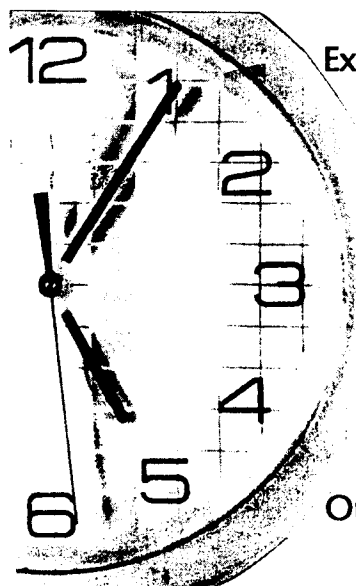
These Rules and Objectives were approved by the NSW State Council in May of this year and were ratified by Federal Council at the Convention in Melbourne in September.

In spite of the small numbers attending meetings, we have since had two very interesting visits to view Keyword systems in operations. One was at Coal and Allied Industries head office and the other was at the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat of the Anglican Church.

Our next hurdle is to obtain enough members with professional status to officially form the Chapter. The Records Management Association Regulations state that "The Chapter Council shall comprise seven chapter members . . . Members of Chapter Council must hold professional status." Presently we have one Fellow and five Associates, so we are almost there. At our last pilot meeting a plan of meetings, lectures and visits to systems already in operation was drawn up. Judging by the enthusiasm of those who have attended our meetings so far and the interesting discussions that have taken place at our visits to the two systems in operation, we feel sure that this is a great beginning of things to come.

Mary R. Hooker, A.R.M.A.

Keeping the Records Straight



Experienced personnel available to work on your records management problems.

Inventories and needs analyses
Systems design
Equipment Selection
Software specification, design and evaluation
Conversions
Training
Management Audits
Maintenance

Our experience is substantial. Our high standards, and independence of suppliers, ensure quality results.

CURO MANAGEMENT SERVICES PTY LIMITED
Independent Records Management Advisors

PO Box 795, Crows Nest, NSW 2065 Telephone: (02) 428-5711

A CONTROVERSIAL LOOK AT AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS, DIRT ROADS, DUNNIES AND ALL

A Background to Local Government in Australia Distinguishing between Governments

The historical reasons for the existence of the three kinds of government in Australia are worth explaining. Initially Australia was settled as a series of separate colonies, which only became one country at the beginning of this century. As the six original colonies grew, new communities developed away from the major cities. This made it harder for the state (colonial) governments to take care of all the different local needs. The various state governments encouraged people to group together to form local councils, in order to look after the people in their own community. Meanwhile, the benefits of joining all the colonies together as one country were becoming generally recognised and so a national government was created.

The different governments, however, do not exist simply for historical reasons. Some responsibilities and activities are inherently national in dimension, whereas others are obviously local. This sounds like common sense, but only by reference to history can we explain why, in a country as uniform as Australia, it is state governments (not national government or local governments) which provide the great majority of basic public services, such as police, education and hospitals.

To make things more complicated, in a state like NSW, there are some activities which are carried out in the metropolitan area by special state authorities (like the water board), but which are carried out by local councils in other areas. Consequently, in the country there is usually a greater awareness of the activities of councils than there is in the metropolitan area.

Now let me explain the "pot holes" in Australian Local Government.

It is probably simplistic to say that the period we live in is one of rapid social and economic change and, Australia even with its geographical remoteness from the rest of the world and the "down under" tag is no exception to this change.

Australian society now demands change in the role of its Government be it Federal, State or Local.

A report of the Royal Commission on Local Government in England in 1969 said:—

"Local Government is not to be seen merely as a provider of services. If that were all, it would be right to consider whether some of the services could not be more efficiently provided by other means. The importance of Local Government lies in the fact that it is the means by which people can provide services for themselves; can take an active and constructive part in the business of Government; and can decide for themselves within the limits of what national policies and local resources allow what kind of services they want and what kind of environment they prefer."

I believe our close knit urban societies would like this to happen but within the last few years I tend to think it won't happen.

Our complacency as an Australian Local Government community has kept us in the 19th Century, happy to have our garbage collected, our pot holes repaired as well as an adequate water supply and functional sewage service.

This lack of interest in Local Government affairs may cost us dearly in future years. It is not surprising that Local Government has evolved as a creature of State Government because of our reluctance to become involved in our own affairs looking to State Governments for parental direction.

Local Government in Australia has the potential to cope with the tasks and problems that confront it now or those that will be thrust upon it in the future as long as the tasks are examined within a suitable framework and the pressures from State and Federal Government are not too great.

We live in an age where Local Government has become a provider of social benefits to the community at large, this coupled with Local Governments accountability to the other Governments and the community, is causing some financial hardship.

The restriction on tariff charges and rates allowed to be made by Local Government Councils is affecting viability and their role in the community. Notwithstanding that, the role is a changing one.

These restraints in various forms on Local Government have in effect transferred the real power of determination, in selected areas of endeavour, to either the Minister or an ad hoc body. This trend has been accepted de facto by Local Government as the price of achieving financial assistance from the state. This closer involvement of Australian Government in the financial affairs of Local Government may well infuse new vitality into the activities of Local Councils, but the price will be an increase in the level of central control.

The reaction of Local Government to the move of the Australian Government into Municipal Affairs will most certainly be an ambivalent one. The financial assistance by State and Federal Government will be accepted for what it can provide but specific allocation of funds with "riders" will in most cases cause concern. Local Government should be strong in its resolve to protect the diminishing independence it has left. I understand that greater pressure will continue to be placed on this third tier of government to provide social benefits which in effect are a function of higher Government.

Obviously then the embargos put in place by way of controlled tariffs and rates and specific payments to the needy make it difficult for Local Government to remain self-sufficient and viable without the 'financial carrot' from the central governments. Thus the conflict of interests of wanting to be administratively independent but being tied and controlled by State and Federal Government by a financial crutch.

However at this stage a substantial proportion of Local Government revenue is still being raised locally and grants to a greater extent are unconditional. While this is very acceptable, comfortable and palatable at the moment this will over a period of time make Local Government dependant and erode its structure and identity.

Local Councils no matter what their size will always need financial assistance in addition to their own revenue by way of government grants. Therefore it must be made abundantly clear by Local Government to the other forms of government that a significant part of the financial assistance they provide should be by way of unconditional grants. I realise that this may not appear to be practical from a State or Federal Governments point of view but Local Government should demonstrate that it has the competence and integrity to handle its financial affairs with a minimum of interference and supervision from above.

Clearly our history and usage have played a large part in the relationship that prevails between State and Local Government in Australia.

The Local Government-State Government relationship should and does provide a very valuable flow of information both upwards from Local Government and downwards from State and Federal Governments. This flow of information from Local Government to the other Governments is of extreme importance in that it provides a useful purpose as a sounding board on community needs, as well as current thinking of the people. Obviously Local Government being close to community "grass roots" then will play an important part in providing the information required to assess future legislation and the framing of laws.

It is interesting to note that in an address by Hon. R.J.L. Hawke AC.MP, the Australian Prime Minister, at the opening of the Australian Local Government Centre earlier this year,

"The close relationship between Federal and Local Governments is based not just on the commonwealth's recognition of your ability to deliver services and assist people at the grass roots level throughout Australia.

It is also firmly anchored in the knowledge that now, more than ever before, we need co-operation among the various levels of government to meet effectively the economic and social challenges we face as a nation."

This address would tend to reinforce the observations I have made that, where the present attitude of Federal and State Governments is of assistance to Local Government there must be reservations, even some apprehension on the part of Local Government as to whether it can expect this attitude to continue without having to "pay the piper" at some future date.

Local Government Records

I would like to think that the first settlers of my country observed, wrote, noted, recorded and kept information about their every day events of Australia because they thought that the information would be important and valuable at some future date.

The detail of recording in some instances was nothing short of amazing reflecting the importance of conveying faithfully the exactness of the information that was being recorded.

I am well aware that the era of which I speak, time was of little importance with distance providing the necessary buffer to the amount of information being communicated between people, places and countries thus allowing for the meticulous scrutiny and recording.

It was fortunate that with Government being the controlling authority over the people these valuable manuscripts, letters, plans, reports and information have been preserved, generally speaking.

I am not at all convinced that the preservation of these records was a deliberate and conscious act on the part of our forebears, but whether this was the case or not is academic, although I firmly believe clerical staff in those years saw their role, as recorders of information, as having status in the community.

They may not have realised the significance of recording information at that time, never the less business information had its birth in Australia there and then.

Over the years the lot of the "filing clerk" be they in private business organisations or as public servants have had little to be enthusiastic about. Their status has been more akin to that of a "clerical labourer" with little chance of recognition by their employer.

There are several reasons which brought this about.

Earlier in Australia, as in most country's beginnings, the production of important business information was slow. The growth of industry was slow, therefore important policy and business decisions only had to keep pace with sales and manufacturing.

Most of this information, information of importance to the businessman, could and was securely locked away in the memory of that person, not written or recorded, remember most of the transactions were part of the barter system.

As Local Government began to grow in stature the significance of storing and providing information did not appear to have any relevance. The importance appeared to be focussed on the storage of the written work rather than providing the information for those people who could use it.

Even in more recent years it has been quite apparent that little or no importance has been placed on the provision of information when it was required by the user.

There is a history of "dusty roads full of pot holes lacking in maintenance" winding through Local, State and Federal Government records management over many years.

Lack of user confidence brought about by juniors and part time staff being allocated to do the "filing" and all the inherent problems and disasters that occur with this type of decision are part of the problem records management faces today.

The lack of training and skill of the practitioner has undermined the confidence of those requiring the use of information. Hence the problems multiply with people hoarding records and developing their own "filing systems" to the detriment of the organisation as a whole.

This lack of user confidence is no different for private organisations than it is for Government Instrumentalities; the important observation being that prior to this point in time Government was the leader in areas that were of importance to the community, so why now should there be no realisation of the significant part records and information plays in the structure of Government as an organisation.

Through the years Government including Local Government has played a major role in the collection and disbursement of statistical information. How then can accurate meaningful information be produced if the keepers of this information cannot provide this information upon request, or more logically provide all the facts and figures.

Local Government has found to its detriment that the community now requires it to provide accurate information on request in a variety of forms. The public are better informed as to their rights regarding access to information since the advent of "freedom of information" legislation. This awareness will increase pressure on all three tiers of government to provide information in the form that is acceptable to the community. Therefore the importance of professional records and information management is becoming evident as the community demands increase.

Accountability of Government organisations including Local Government has increased with economic restraint, with Federal and State Government involvement in Local Government requiring proof of expenditure for grant and loan finance. Obviously the importance of providing this information on expenditure has dramatically changed the position of Local Government and its accountability. Why then should the records and information resources suffer at the hands of the other established areas such as accounts, purchasing, sales, stores, etc?

Micrographics

Control over information is the key to modern office management.

Fuji MICLE 2204F does away with your jungle of filing

No-Paper Copier for push-button conversion into microfilm.



... a simplified microfilming unit that anyone can operate as easily as the common office copier.

MICLE 2204F operates just like an office copier. You place the document and push the button. After 90 seconds, the paper document is delivered in completely processed microfilm copy, ready for jacketing. Even books and solid objects, up to 280 x 356 mm (11 x 14 in.) in size, can be microfilmed instantly.

MICLE 2204F works at high speed, recording 20 pages of documents in a minute. And it delivers finished microfilm in 12-frame strips, automatically cut.

By a simple flip of a switch the 2204F converts to a 16mm roll film camera. To assist computer indexed retrieval single level blip marks, four digit numbering and automatic exposure are standard features on the Fuji MICLE 2204F — the new generation of microfilm cameras.



Discover what microfilm can do for your records management ...

MICLE No-Paper Copier — speedy convenience, without cluttering up your office environment.

**DISTRIBUTED IN
AUSTRALIA BY
HANIMEX**

NEW SOUTH WALES
108 Old Pittwater Road, Brookvale 2100
Phone: (02) 938 0279

TASMANIA
135 Bathurst Street, Hobart 7000
Phone: (002) 34 4296

VICTORIA
1 Sandilands Street, South Melbourne 3205
Phone: (03) 699 7477

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
75-79 Magill Road, Stepney 5069
Phone: (08) 363 1363

QUEENSLAND
17-31 Dover Street, Albion 4010
Phone: (07) 262 7555

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
22 Northwood Street, Leederville 6007
Phone: (09) 381 4622

Let me go back to 1976 when the first Annual Conference of Records Management in Local Government in Australia was held in New South Wales; at this conference subjects discussed were on such topics as:— “New Approaches to Decision Making, Increasing Awareness of the Importance of Information, The Importance of Records Management in State and Local Government, Coping with the Legislative Changes Affecting Local Government Information and Records Management Systems” and so on.

One speaker examined an important fundamental of the records management problem today, in stating that:— “Experience alone does not make us efficient unless we have the capacity to learn from our experience. One of the many problems that all people in decision-making positions face is to have, at their fingertips, all of the information relevant to making a particular decision. If we are not in possession of all the facts, then the chances that we will make a mistaken decision are increased.

Another speaker suggested that among objectives for Records Management should be:—

More streamlined communication methods;
Rationalisation of internal and external information systems.

He proposed that there were three basic rights associated with those objectives.

1. The right of the general public to know quickly the decisions taken by the Council and how and why of those decisions.
2. The right of the elected Aldermen or Councillors to have information available at the time of their decision-making.
3. The right of all involved Council staff to have the Records Management Section operating efficiently, with information to hand as and when necessary.”

Today records management in Local Government is STILL striving to achieve these goals.

A Victorian Local Government Records Management Working Party conducted a questionnaire survey of all municipalities in Victoria during 1980 to establish the state of records management in Local Government in that state.

The survey revealed that:— Sixty percent of the respondents rated their records management systems as being “hopeless”, “poor”, or only “fair”, nearly ninety percent has no written procedures relating to any aspect of the handling of their records. A similar percentage had no records disposal schedule, nearly two-thirds suffered the inefficiencies resulting from two or more of their departments operating their own records systems.

Strangely, the survey and subsequent investigations did not suggest that there was any lack of appreciation of the problems caused by neglect or poor records management. The picture which emerged was that the administrators wanted guidance on how to go about tackling the problem.

One thing is clear, however, there is wide recognition of the need to treat information as a valuable organisational resource giving it the same recognition of importance as other resources within the organisation such as material, equipment and manpower.

In 1987 there are no dramatic changes to the attitude of Local Government towards information as an organisational or corporate resource, those are the cold hard facts.

The majority of Councils pay lip service to the management of information and records being content to acknowledge that there is a management problem in this area but not being prepared to vote expenditure of money to rectifying or updating systems as they would in the computer area for example.

What is so wrong with our communication, then, that we cannot convince management that this important organisational resource is being left to languish in the era of the horse and buggy. Councils are accountable and competitive in so many areas of business that it is inexplicable that they disregard this valuable resource.

Councils become critical when information is not available to the user but do not criticise the management functions that do not support this area of the organisation.

It is very important that all forms of government realise that information is a resource that is accountable and there is a cost for its functions.

It needs to be accepted that Government has to have access to accurate and comprehensive information for the task of managerial decision-making.

It will only be by persistence on the part of records management professionals that we can hope to influence management to change their thinking with regard to the value of information as a management tool.

Local Government awareness of this valuable resource is only just beginning to have some affect in Australia and has only really touched the tip of the ice-berg.

This utter waste and neglect of the information resource will remain a major problem for management until Councils are prepared to address the problem realistically by providing finance for equipment and staff training.

The truth of the matter is that in the meantime Local Government in Australia will be less effective and less efficient. Office automation is real, is working and is part of our future. Local Government must recognise the potential of these systems and introduce this technology as the situation demands to its management structure.

Local Government must recognise the demands that the community will place on its services in the future and be aware that the lack of providing information to its management will severely disadvantage its functions so much so that its identity may change.

The Records Management Association of Australia Its History and Commitment

A pilot committee was formed in New South Wales in March 1968 which led to branches of the Association being formed in Victoria in March 1969 and New South Wales in June 1969. The other States followed until the last piece of the jigsaw was put in place with the Northern Territory joining in September of 1986 and Tasmania, realising our dream on the 20th February 1987.

A decision to incorporate was made by New South Wales in 1971 but it was not until 3rd October 1975 that incorporation was achieved by the Association.

It is not my intention to detail the objectives of R.M.A.A. but I do wish to dwell on some aspects of the Local Government Chapters and in particular the New South Wales Local Government Chapter which was the first Chapter formed by any state in Australia in May 1976.

This Chapter has a strong membership and over the years has provided a vehicle to promote records management in Local Government. Councils have accepted the objectives of the Chapter and the Association without any real commitment to the management of information as resource.

The Association, the N.S.W. Local Government Chapter and other Local Government interest groups presently being formed have the opportunity to push home the ramifications of the lack of commitment to a records management program. Management must have access to detailed and accurate information.

By the Association making its self "Visible" to Government, it gives both the Association and the Government instrumentalities the opportunity to provide a blue print for responsible records management.

The Association is endeavouring to provide education in various forms to achieve its goal, creating professionalism in the way in which information is being managed not only in Local Government but generally throughout Australia.

Seminars, lectures, workshops, discussion groups, publications help to encourage the development of records management. Setting standards to classify attainments and qualifications by granting professional status also to encourage participation but I consider the main thrust for recognition will come from the standardisation of education through all levels, from the introduction, certificate, diploma and degree courses. This is a difficult assignment for the Association given that the education establishments vary in application and requirements from state to state. Each Branch of the Association has an Education Committee with a Federal Education Committee to co-ordinate all the programs.

All States have education programs in records and information management. As more records managers acquire professional qualifications and can exercise this knowledge within their organisation, then we may see progress towards our goal of the information resource sharing in importance with the other organisation resources.

Local Government stores and uses vast amounts of information therefore records management must be regarded as a powerful tool in providing that information. Technology is changing rapidly making it possible for some dramatic changes to be initiated in the management of information but this can only be accomplished with the support of management.

Government within Australia, particularly Local Government must acquire these skills embracing equipment and manpower if it is to survive this century, let alone the next.

Local Government is "grass roots" Government therefore is closest to the community and as such has the responsibility of providing accurate, intelligent information, both upwards to State and Federal Government and downwards from higher Government to the people.

The Records Management Association, as a corporate body, as well as through its Branches and Chapters has a vital role play if we expect the attitude of Government to change.

We as professional information managers must identify the areas where change is needed and alert Government along with the Business community of that need, it is our responsibility.

We should be making available the information necessary to accommodate the changes in legislation required by technological advances and changes to practice and procedure.

If we the practitioners are to have any credibility we must actively promote records and information management as a valuable organisational resource.

There is no purpose in our Association if we are not prepared to explore, research and provide the resources necessary for change to be accomplished. Not change for change sake but change for the betterment of management.

Heaven knows, if we are to cope with the concept of what today's information is, and the methods of providing and storing that information in the future we have an onerous task but one which is vital to the whole community.

It is important then, that we be in a position to be able to provide leadership in the skills necessary to survive the demands that will be placed upon us.

The Records Management Association of Australia is aware of its responsibility to provide leadership and guidance to the community at large. It is important then to distinguish the difference between knowing and actually putting those objectives in train.

My Association must come to terms with that situation, now, and resolve to bring pressure to bear on Government bodies to harness and tap this valuable information resource.

Peter A. Smith M.R.M.A.

BOOK REVIEW

INFORMATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT, Robek, Brown and Maedke. Glencoe Publishing Company, California. Third Edition, 1987

This book is, or should be, well known to all records managers. Marita Hoo, quoting Fred Diers, stated in the *Informaa Quarterly* (August 1985, Vol 1 No 4) this is one of two books which reflect the role of the records manager in the corporate structure and which adequately projects the required image. For this reason, if for no other, the extensively revised third edition of *Information and Records Management* is worthy of note.

The book is divided into five parts — Role of Records Management, Records Organisation and Evaluation, Active Records Maintenance, Inactive Records Maintenance and Records Creation. These five broad parts are broken down into chapters dealing with various aspects of the subject. The book continues to be primarily a teaching tool with each chapter containing a summary, questions for discussion, projects and case problems.

The new features of the third edition include three new chapters, sections called "trends" and "corporate models" and many of the diagrams and tables have been updated. It is on these new features that attention will be focussed.

A chapter has been added on Systems Analysis. The chapter purports to "explain the scientific approach to establishing or improving records programs, whether they be traditional, electronic or a combination of both" (Preface). While an overview of the system analysis approach is certainly given more than adequately, the theory is not focussed upon records systems in particular in the text. The tables are used to provide the main records-specific examples. The information provided, while useful to understand the language of a different discipline, is more an introduction for the records manager in the techniques rather than a manual for implementation.

The same can be said for the new chapter, Chapter 9, "Electronic Information Management Systems". This chapter is mainly concerned with defining concepts such as types of computers, jargon concerned with operating systems, peripherals and storage devices. As such it approximates a basic introduction to computers for the records manager. At the same time, however, a more detailed discussion of data bases is included. While the book states:

"Users of database technology need a control point to go to for information and co-ordination. This administrative function, which may be supervised by persons who come from either records management or data processing departments, assists users in defining data, operation applications programs, and using the data" (p.209-210).

This is almost the extent of direct reference to the potential relationship between records management and what is referred to as "electronic filing". While the essentials of computer components are a basic set of ground rules for anybody dealing with information, this chapter fails to extrapolate the application of the traditional records management skills to "electronic filing", relying completely on an explanation of the methods and technology which can be imposed upon an organisation.

Other chapters have been revised to include references to computerised systems, although the one paragraph devoted to disposal of information in machine readable form will not assist anyone in that endeavour.

The new chapter on "Integrated Microimaging Systems" is a valuable supplement to the previous chapters on microforms. Brief outlines are provided for CAR and Optical Disk systems. Cautionary notes about the lack of optical disk standards and lack of recognition as evidence are sounded. A brief section introduces the reader to the newly evolving microimage transmission systems which deliver documents in a machine readable format to the most convenient VDU. The authors state "the concept is exciting to the systems designer and very much a part of today's technology" (p.311).

By far the most important aspect of the chapter is its emphasis on COM — computer output microfilm. The basic types of COM systems are explored, on-line units, off-line units, and mini-controlled COM recorders. Standards appropriate for output, criteria for equipment selection, the organisational placement of the COM responsibility and some guidance upon the controls needed to operate a COM facility are discussed in some detail. It is clear that the authors feel that COM will continue to have a vital role in records management.

Other features of the book which are introduced in this edition are the bright blue boxes labelled "Trends". These act as an effective tool for focussing attention and often comprise statistics of varying interest. Many will find great practical use as the basis for cost-effectiveness calculations — for example, for every dollar that the average company spends on forms, it spends another \$19 to implement the form (p.426) or that American offices are estimated to be producing 76 million letters a day (p.471).

The corporate models provided as a separate segment at the end of each of the five major parts. The models describe the structure of the records management programme within the company and outlines the areas of the records managers responsibility before concentrating on the aspect of the programme which equates to an aspect of the preceeding chapters. These models act as a splendid encouragement to believe that this is all possible. The companies chosen as examples have records management programmes headed by well known records managers such as William Benedon and Fred Diers.

Reading *Information and Records Management* should become a regular part of the routine or any practicing records manager. It is a comprehensive text and should be preliminary reading for any practitioner expanding his or her programme into a corporate records management role.

Barbara Reed

FREE TEXT AND THESAURUS CONTROL

'An analysis between free text and a thesaurus controlled vocabulary in searching an online records management database'

This paper discusses information retrieval methods associated with file based systems, although most of the literature within the information profession is not specifically written on this.

Definition: A file comprises a systematic collection of hard copy information which is titled according to the subject matters appearing in its contents.

(Denis Comber)

What is Free Text and Controlled Vocabulary

Free Text

The use of an *uncontrolled vocabulary* or *natural language* as it is sometimes called, has long been the traditional method of assigning a title to a file.

It is a task generally performed by records personnel who are authorised to scan the contents of documentation, correspondence etc. with a view to extracting a suitable name for file titling and indexing purposes and by extension, retrieval.

The file titler does not use any reference guide(s) but simply relies on an innate ability to accurately identify the most probable or likely title which describes the file contents. This method of naming information poses some problems. Firstly the capacity of the titler to assign the most correct name may be affected by the length of their experience, personal bias, inability to identify narrower subject terms, etc.

Secondly, it is quite common to find that over a period of time that the naming conventions used by agencies change, consequently information generated about identical matters may be titled differently e.g.

Person 1 may consistently use the term Motor Vehicles to describe a subject whereas,

Person 2 might use the term Transport.

Another problem relates to the frequent use of uncontrolled spelling conventions e.g. Program and programme.

Controlled Vocabulary

On the other hand, a *controlled vocabulary* attempts to preordain the naming of files. It provides a file titler with a means of naming files by providing that person with a document called a thesaurus or subject headings list.

A Thesaurus contains an alphabetic listing of all terms common to the user agency and has the following characteristics:

- It controls for synonyms, alternative spellings, uses scope notes and definitions and refers the user to preferred terms e.g. see and use references.

In this way, a thesaurus enables the titler to accurately assign a title to the file in question. Another benefit is that the words appearing in the thesaurus are the same terms that can be used in online alternative search terms.

How are files different from library items

Files generally contain a variety of documented information which is collected and arranged in a chronological sequence. To identify the contents of a file, it is necessary for the classifier to systematically examine the document/documents and then assign a suitable file title. In most cases this person relies on their experience, broad knowledge of the subject and institution for assigning a name to the file.

Without the benefit of any titling assistance e.g. a thesaurus/subject headings list, etc., the classifier will eventually build a series of titles which include the extensive use of synonyms and also include indexing terms such as *Miscellaneous* and *General* for information not easily identified. In essence the classifier allocates titles without reference to subject guides. In addition, there is often little opportunity to consult user staff about appropriate headings.

On the other hand, library materials are identified by author and title. In addition, the cataloguer has access to subject heading guides such as Dewey, which permit them to assign appropriate subject identifiers. There is obviously very little opportunity to stray from the accepted conventions. Consequently, the user has the opportunity to search for information by Author/Title and more importantly by Subject.

Another major difference, is that most classifiers in records systems receive little training whereas cataloguers in a library environment usually receive skills training at the tertiary level.

Overview of the Literature on the Topic

An extensive literature search on the topic of free-text vs controlled vocabulary was carried out in 1986. As previously mentioned, few of the articles and texts are written in relation to records management, although many of the comments are pertinent to this field of information management.

Writers' preference for free-text searching increased in the mid-seventies as computer systems developed the ability to store larger amounts of text online. However, a number of more recent articles have stressed the need to restore some form of vocabulary control for reasons which usually relate to time and cost factors.

Predominantly, opinions express the need for both free-text and controlled vocabulary in assigning subject headings and in online searching. The extent to which either is used depends largely on the situation, users needs and the type of information to be stored. Therefore, the information manager has to consider a number of factors before deciding the extent of the vocabulary control required:

- will there be a searchable full-text database or only brief bibliographic details and abstracts?
- is the subject of the database relatively static or is it rapidly changing (e.g. medicine) with many proper name terms (e.g. the names of diseases)?
- do the users require high recall of information (e.g. all tenders received by an organisation in the last year) or high precision in the information (e.g. only those tenders from a particular company relating to a particular piece of equipment)?

Undoubtedly, there is no easy answer to these questions and the literature can only highlight the need to carefully analyse each specific organisation's situation.

What is Information Retrieval?

If we accept the premise that the reason we create information is to retrieve it for later use, we must consider how we can best identify the subject areas we are interested in examining.

In a file based system, information is identified according to the title appearing on the cover, similarly to the title inscribed on a book. Within that title there appears a number of subject areas which are representative of its contents. Provided you obtain access to the right title then retrieval by subject does not present any problems.

However, there is a fundamental flaw in the retrieval of information which is subject based especially if the creating agency is large, and has been in operation for a long period of time.

Traditional methods of file titling have tended to rely on the use of free text and the expertise of the classifier. This has not always been a happy combination and has on many occasions resulted in long delays in retrieving information.

The essence of information retrieval is to locate the right information in the shortest possible time.

Users generally expect a filing system to:

- contain files which have been accurately identified by subject
- be easy to access
- locate combinations of related information
- avoid long delays in searching for the 'right information'
- positively respond to an enquiry i.e. the retrieval system must be capable of indicating which files are held in the system.

In terms of good information retrieval practices, the traditional methods contain several flaws, some of these are:

- The presence of synonyms, homographs and homonyms which have not been clearly defined in the system. The use of synonyms to describe like subjects results in many separate files being created on identical or closely-related subjects. For example, files could be created under the subject headings of 'absence', 'furlough', 'leave' and 'attendance' which are closely-related concepts. In this situation, an action officer could make a decision based only on information related to leave. In addition, the size of the index is considerably increased. If there is no control of subjects etc. Both factors complicate the retrieval of files from the system.
- The use of synonyms, if detected, necessitates the use of massive cross-referencing to allow for a number of access points in the index to locate all relevant information held in the system. Manual cross-referencing is a time-consuming process and, when employed, it has been estimated that it can increase the size of an index by at least 400%.
- can specificity and lack of specificity of subject headings:
 - (a) The subject headings assigned to documents are often so specific that unless the searcher knows or can guess at the first word in the subject heading it is almost impossible to gain access to the information. This system relies heavily on memory. Using the example of correspondence relating to an application for compensatory leave it is feasible that a classifier/indexer might classify this correspondence under 'application', 'compensatory leave', 'leave', 'staff — compensatory leave' etc. Instances where the search officer is unable to remember the precise subject heading used, the classifier/indexer is usually interrupted at the expense of other work being undertaken. In areas such as registries, which have a high turnover in staff, the system invariably breaks down as a new indexer/classifier is not aware of the system. In addition, although a high degree of precision in indexing is achieved, there is no provision in this system for high recall from the index.
 - (b) The subject headings assigned to documents are often so broad that the searcher is reduced to sequential scanning. The following example, taken from a Government Department, illustrates this problem: the subject heading COMPANIES is used with no alphabetical breakdown by name of company. Each index card (of which there were forty seven) contained entries for twenty companies, ten companies being recorded on each side of the card. Consequently, in order for the searcher to locate entries pertaining to the company in which he/she is interested it is necessary for each card to be scanned. With a system that permits limited precision in index entries we are likely to achieve reasonably high recall from the index but correspondingly low relevance. In the example cited above, the number of entries retrieved few entries that would be relevant. A further disadvantage which becomes obvious from the use of too broad subject headings is that files attract a considerable amount of paper which has to be sorted through before the required information is located.
 - (c) High cost of filing and retrieval operations due to the lack of standardization of procedures. In the majority of systems in operation throughout the New South Wales Public Service no procedure has been formulated with respect to classification. Singular or plural forms are used, different spellings for the same word are incorporated in the system without discrimination, abbreviations are used without explanations and excessive misfilings occur due to some officers filing word by word as opposed to other officers filing letter by letter. The problems posed by component order have also not been clarified. Some officers, for example, would create a subject heading for ELECTRIC as MOTORS, ELECTRIC whilst others would create a subject heading ELECTRIC MOTORS. Due to the inconsistencies of the classification procedures currently in operation the alphabetical order of the system cannot be maintained effectively.
 - (d) probability of error is increased due to the excessive length of subject headings. The majority of Government Departments employ lengthy subject headings due to the principle of subject specification. Research undertaken overseas has proved that as the length of a word increases the probability of error increases. Errors will have an effect on relevance in that wrong answers are provided. Errors will also affect recall from the index in that items which should be recalled are missed.

On the other hand, the adoption of a controlled vocabulary will overcome the deficiencies of the traditional methods in the following manner:

- The use of synonyms, homonyms and homographs will be controlled. Documents on closely-related subjects will not be scattered and files will not be duplicated.



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

FileNet does for paper what computers do for data.

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

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

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

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

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

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

FileNet works the way people do.

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

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

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

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

olivetti FileNet

For further information, fill in the coupon below and mail it to:
The Marketing Manager FileNet,
Olivetti Australia, GPO Box 3993, Sydney, NSW 2001.
Please rush me further details on FileNet —
The Document Image Management System

NAME _____

ORGANISATION _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

- High precision and high recall are achieved. The use of descriptors to qualify the Keyword ensures that a high degree of precision is maintained in the system as the searcher is led from the general (i.e. broad) concept to a more specific concept. The level of specificity increases according to the 'index depth' i.e. the number of descriptors employed. The necessity for sequential scanning is considerably reduced. In addition, the system permits high recall from the index as the searcher can ignore any descriptor if a general overview of the system is required. The provision of related term relationships also increases the potential for recall and relevance as the searcher is given references to related subjects which could provide additional sources of information.
- Consistency is increased and intellectual effort is significantly reduced. The provision of a lead-in vocabulary increases indexer/indexer and indexer/searcher consistency and reduces significantly the intellectual effort required. Without lead-in vocabulary the indexer or searcher has to decide by himself which descriptor or which combination of descriptors to use. This process is time-consuming and the classifier has to repeat the same intellectual steps each time a document has to be classified and there is no guarantee that the outcome will be the same.
- The hierarchical system of classification facilitates retrieval by ensuring that all aspects of a concept are grouped together in the index. Using the word LEAVE as an example, all narrower terms such as types of leave e.g. ACCIDENT LEAVE are grouped together. If a subject heading is not found in the most specific division of the subject group, it is likely to be found nearby in a more general division of the same group. The searchers' time is therefore reduced, faster retrieval of information is achieved, users' time is conserved and an improved service to departmental users of the system is provided.
- Integrity and continuity of records. The perpetuation of high record-keeping standards is assured despite reorganisation and personnel changes.
- Efficiency of personnel. Personnel master record-keeping in their own offices and easily acquire a working knowledge of all the files in all offices of their Department.
- Mobility of personnel. Through standardization, staff can easily be assimilated into a new organization with minimum training and disruption to the system.
- Better communication. A common language representative of the search criteria enables users and keepers of records to co-operate more purposefully in retrieving information.

Practical Considerations when examining information retrieval systems

Cost

1. The cost of operating either system must be thoroughly examined. On the one hand is it cheaper to proceed with a free text system with a corresponding saving in developing language controls but with added costs of needing an expanded data base, longer search times, more complex search strategies and the possibility of no confidence in a negative result?

Or, is it a better proposition to introduce a language control system which will provide clear subject headings, confidence in a negative search result and a subsequent improvement in search strategies? Such an undertaking would involve immediate thesaurus production costs however, would the long term benefits offset the high initial capital outlay?

It is suggested that even with the availability of truncated search terms, the larger a free text database becomes, the access times will correspondingly increase. On the other hand, a system using controlled language would be able to maintain faster response times even though the database would be growing in size.

2. Online retrieval systems are hardware and software dependent so that the option of systems upgrades and the 'user friendliness' of the software constitute primary considerations when examining retrieval requirements. Any prospective user of an online system must be prepared to conduct a thorough evaluation of their information system and it is entirely feasible that users who insist on using free text will invariably find that their hardware needs can be greater than if they elected to use a controlled vocabulary for file titling purposes.
3. A hidden cost in information retrieval is directly related to user and operator training. Once again, a thorough evaluation of training needs related to online searching techniques must be undertaken. Depending on the text system (free or controlled) selected by the agency, there will be a significant difference in the way search strategies can be taught, e.g. syntax, semantics and generic problems will be encountered in uncontrolled vocabulary whereas these will largely be overcome by a controlled vocabulary.

To quote from Ernest Perez (p. 128).

“Controlled vocabulary is like toothpaste, before people use it for a while they won’t understand why they should spend money on such a thing but after a while it will become a necessity”.

Information Retrieval — Today

Information retrieval today has been significantly affected by two factors.

The first, is the increasing need by agencies for rapid access to data.

The second, is the impact of computing technology which has overturned traditional indexing and information retrieval methods.

The information users in today’s electronic environment find themselves not only generating vast quantities of information they are also finding that an increase in subject headings generally leads to a lower success rate in retrieval.

In concert with the realisation that resources and funding are fewer, it is readily apparent that because time is money, users cannot afford slow or poor responses to requests for information.

Clearly there is an expressed need for a solution to this problem and this has been found in computer assisted retrieval systems. Even though computers offer speed and almost unlimited storage space, they can, however, be costly to maintain and operate.

The introduction of computers to filing has added a new dimension to information retrieval but they pose some problems. In our context, the most significant is to decide whether free text or a controlled vocabulary is the best means of classifying information.

Free Text

Advantages

1. An economic system as it permits the immediate entry of data without the need to consult a language control source.
2. Searching is easy because there is no need to learn a new vocabulary or train searchers in the use of control language systems.
3. No loss in specificity since the information has not been analysed, i.e. titling terms are extracted directly from the documents being classified.
4. Specific topics may be listed e.g. Hawthorne effect.
5. Eliminates conflict between the indexer and the user as both *should* agree on the titling terms.

Disadvantages

1. The searchers have a greater intellectual burden placed on them i.e. users must be aware of homonyms, spelling conventions, of synonyms and so on.
2. There may be a higher incidence of negative responses of incorrect relationship between terms.
3. Costs of terminal access could be higher because users spend more time carrying out a longer search.
4. A lengthy search strategy covering all possible terms may need to be devised before full interrogation of the database is possible.
5. Lack of confidence in a negative search result.

Controlled Vocabulary Online Retrieval

Advantages

1. Full control of the titling vocabulary is facilitated thus solving problems of communication and understanding between the classifier and users.
2. With the addition of scope notes in the thesaurus, classifiers can accurately assign correct keywords to each file.

3. If well constructed, the vocabulary will provide high recall and relevance thus providing confidence in a negative search result.
4. The hierarchical qualities and cross references in a system can identify related concepts.
5. The language should provide terms which are familiar to the indexer and user alike.
6. Reduction in search time because a more accurate search strategy can be used.

Disadvantages

1. The system can be expensive to develop and maintain. It will also require skilled personnel to maintain and update a thesaurus.
2. It is possible that there will be some conflict in the terms used in the system i.e. the language may not reflect the functions of the agency.
3. The system may be too inflexible for the information needs of the user.

Conclusion

There are a number of arguments surrounding this subject and a great many articles and texts have been written on each method. It is a matter for individuals to decide which system is preferable for their needs, based on the opinions presented in the literature and on the experience of similar organisations.

Denis Comber, A.R.M.A. and Joy Stanford

Annotated bibliography of related articles and texts

CALKINS, MARY. "Free Text or Controlled Vocabulary? A Case History Step-By-Step Analysis ... plus Other Aspects of Search Strategy", *Database*, June 1980, pp.53-59.

Calkins provides a clear, concise report on a study which examines the search strategies undertaken at the Environmental Protection Agency Research Laboratory, Cincinnati. The advantages and disadvantages of brief, controlled vocabulary searches and lengthy free-text are examined.

CLEVELAND, DONALD B. and ANA, B. *Introduction to Indexing and Abstracting*, Libraries Unlimited, Colorado, 1983. Chapter IV.

In this chapter, the theory behind the role of language in indexing is explained, with specific mention of controlled and natural language methods. A thorough coverage of controlling tools, particularly thesauri, and the elements of language that need to be controlled, is included.

DUBOIS, C.P.R. "The Use of Thesauri in Online Retrieval", *Journal of Information Science*, No. 8, 1984, pp.63-66.

Dubois begins by presenting a review of the literature on the free-text/controlled vocabulary debate, then concentrates on the advantages of thesauri. The article, although brief, is an excellent coverage of the arguments.

File Tiling and Indexing, N.S.W. Records Management Office, Sydney, 1985.

This publication addresses the problem areas of file tiling and retrieval of information by subject from the records index. It examines both the traditional methods of modern techniques such as the Records Management Office's keyword classification system for file tiling.

HENZLER, ROLF. "Free or Controlled C4Vocabularies: some Statistical User-Oriented Evaluations of Biomedical Information Systems", *International Classification*, Vol. 5, no. 1, 1978, pp.21-26.

Henzler's article presents both sides of the debate fairly and with sound examples. It is particularly useful as it addresses the input, or indexing side, as well as retrieval of information. Henzler sees the ideal situation as being a combination of both controlled vocabulary and free-text.

KENT, A.K. "Performance and Cost of Free-Text Search Systems", *Information Storage Retrieval*, Vol. 6, 1970, pp.73-77.

Kent's article is chiefly designed to evaluate the free-text system used by the United Kingdom's Chemical Information Service. However, it is not totally biased towards free-text — Kent sees little difference between it and controlled vocabulary.

KNAPP, SARA D. "Free-text Searching of Online Databases", *Reference Librarian*, Fall/Winter, 1982, pp.143-153.

Knapp is obviously convinced of the benefits of free-text searching. She discusses the way in which modern computer techniques, such as positional operators and truncation, can overcome some of the problems associated with this type of search.

LANCASTER, F.W. *Vocabulary Control for Information Retrieval*, Information Resources Press, Washington, 1972.

Lancaster could be regarded as one of the foremost writers on information retrieval and in this text he presents the various methods of controlling vocabulary used in indexing. Included are some particularly useful models of the information retrieval process.

MARKEY, K., ATHERTON, P. and NEWTON, C. "An analysis of controlled vocabulary and free text search statements in online searches", *Online Review*, Vol. 4, Sept., 1980, pp.225-236.

A report on the findings of a study which examined the search strategies (i.e. free-text or controlled vocabulary) used for the ERIC database. Although 68% used controlled vocabulary, it was concluded that the strategy should be dictated by whether high recall or high precision is needed.

PEREZ, ERNEST. "Text Enhancement: Controlled Vocabulary vs Free-Text", *Special Libraries*, Vol. 73, July 1982, pp.183-192.

Perez is specifically reporting on the debate in the publishing industry where full-text online databases of publications are held. He obviously favours free-text and many of his points conflict with other writers.

SANDERS, ROBERT L. "Subject Files: An Unanswered Challenge to Records Management," *Records Management Quarterly*, July, 1985, pp.32-43.

Sanders addresses the management of subject files, specifically in academic settings, including the problem of classifying this type of information. He raises some valuable points and indicates that terminological control is necessary for efficient retrieval.

R.M.A.A. FEDERAL COUNCIL

POSITION	NAME	STATE	TELEPHONE
President	Peter Smith	N.S.W.	(049) 26 9176
Vice President	Phil Taylor	VIC	
Secretary	Terry Tolhurst	ACT	(062) 88 2339
Treasurer	Jim Shepherd	QLD	(07) 378 2900
Public Officer	Ross Thompson	ACT	(062) 81 1245
Councillors	Judy Watts Ray Holswich Pam Camden Bill Williams John Behrens Jackie Elliot Ron Sharpe Graham Dudley Helen Francis Brigitte Kleinig Murray Stewart	NT NT N.S.W. VIC TAS TAS WA WA SA SA QLD	(08) 298 6627
Queensland Branch PO Box 361 NORTH QUAY	N.S.W. Branch PO Box 41 BLACKTOWN NSW 2148	ACT Branch PO Box E330 Queen Victoria Building PARKS ACT 2600	
Victorian Branch GPO Box 2270U MELBOURNE VIC 3001	Western Australia Branch PO Box 397 VICTORIA PARK WA 6100	South Australian Branch GPO Box 969 ADELAIDE SA 5001	
Northern Territory Branch GPO Box 3717 DARWIN NT 5794	Tasmanian Branch c/- Ms J Elliott GPO Box 646G HOBART TAS 7001		

INTERNATIONAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (IRMC)

The annual board of directors' meeting was held on 18th October 1987 at Anaheim, California, U.S.A.

Australia was represented by:

GRAHAM DUDLEY
PETER SMITH
HELEN FRANCIS

Executive Vice President
Vice President Australia & Oceania
R.M.A.A. Delegate

The board recognised board members present and accepted apologies and then accepted proxies.

The minutes of the 1986 Annual General Meeting were adopted as written and recorded with no amendments.

The President, Mr. W. (Bill) Benedon delivered the presidential address which highlighted the activities of the I.R.M.C. over the past twelve months.

Reports were received from the other office bearers and I include highlights of these as follows:

Report No. 1: Report from the Vice President, Australia and Oceania

The Records Management Association of Australia has had an excellent year 1986 / 87 with all states and territories now having branches of the Association with more than 1400 members.

I have written a considerable number of letters to contacts in New Zealand and several letters to New Guinea, but the results for membership in I.R.M.C. or contacts of any kind have not been forthcoming. I will continue to make approaches in the hope of fostering records management and eventually forming Associations in these countries.

I am told a contingent from New Zealand will be attending the 4th National Convention of R.M.A.A. in Melbourne in September 1987 and I will endeavour to engender some enthusiasm for I.R.M.C. and a Records Management Association in New Zealand.

Eddis Linton, a past president of R.M.A.A. has been working in New Zealand and offered to promote I.R.M.C. and R.M.A.A.'s assistant to help form an Association in New Zealand. Perhaps this will provide the opportunity we need.

I am still hopeful of getting an East Asian area records management group started. Correspondence with Mel de La Cruz has been slow but there is a glimmer of hope that we can get things moving and I am confident the Australian Government will support us in this venture once we can get the Philippines to make the initial request.

I have taken the opportunity to talk with Mr. Mohamed Zahair of the Maldives while he was visiting my Council earlier this year. He appeared to be enthusiastic about forming an Association in his country and getting support from R.M.A.A. to provide records management seminars, workshops and the like. I have heard no more since his return to the Maldives so have now, after some difficulty, been given a contact address and will follow up our initial discussion.

This report appears to rely on hope and expectation and be that as it may, I still expect to have some success in the areas I am pursuing but obviously, it will take a little time.

Report No. 2: Report from Helen Francis, The RMAA Delegate

Australia has finally accomplished a task that was set back in 1969 when the Records Management Association of Australia held the inaugural meeting — we now have a branch in every state and territory in Australia. The Annual Directors Meeting was held in Melbourne in September and as a result of that meeting, the following points are raised / confirmed:

Membership of the International Records Management Council was reconfirmed and subsequently supported from IRMC.

The Records Management Bibliography commenced by Mike Leigh has been completed and is scheduled to be available by March 1988.

The Vice President Australia and Oceania is actively engaged in helping New Zealand establish a national body. We also have a member at large in Hong Kong and reports are forthcoming on the situation there.

Directors are also concerned over the name change and would prefer the "International" to remain.

Confirmation is given of the attendance of the RMAA delegate to the meeting in Paris, France in 1988.

The arrangements for the 1989 Conference in Perth, WA are progressing with already confirmed support from sections of the trade sector.

Report No. 3: Jill Hampson, Records Management Society of Great Britain

International Records Management Conference, England, 1991

The RMS have agreed to be the principal host in 1991 to an international records management conference in England in conjunction with the IRMC. At present, it is intended to concentrate marketing on the encouragement of participants from Europe. Carl Newton as VP Europe has been actively sounding out other organisations for their support. I expect that Carl will have sent Bill Benedon a full account of progress in time for the meetings at Anaheim.

Profit & Loss Statement of I.R.M.C. as at 1st October 1987

Total Income	13,074.67
Total Expenses	5,817.57
Excess in Income over Expenses	7,257.10
Cash in Bank World Savings	2,696.54
Security Pacific	7,823.89
TOTAL	10,520.43

IRMC has been invited to participate in the I.C.A. Congress (International Congress on Archives) in Paris, France August 22 — 26 1988 and RMAA members are requested to submit papers for consideration, extracts can be forwarded to Helen Francis, RMAA delegate to I.R.M.C.

I.R.M.C. has also been invited to participate in the ARMA International stream again and a call for papers has been made. The ARMA conference will be held in October 1988 in Baltimore, U.S.A., again extracts should also be forwarded to Helen Francis.

The IRMC is compiling an international Glossary of Record Management terms and all members are requested to have input to this valuable document. I will forward a copy to each Branch Secretary for membership input. If you are interested in this work, please contact your Branch Secretary.

The IRMC is currently undertaking a survey of education courses available worldwide in Records Management and I will be contacting all branch secretaries for the current listing. If you would be interested in supporting IRMC as a speaker, I would be glad to compile a list of subjects and speakers and forward these to the Education Chairperson of IRMC.

Graham Dudley, Executive Vice President, I.R.M.C.,
Post Office Box 397, Victoria Park, W.A. 6100.



KODAK OD 1000 SYSTEM.

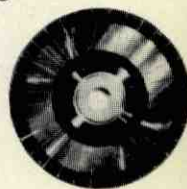
Bringing Digital-Age advances to the Office Environment.

The Kodak OD 1000 System is an IBM Personal Computer-based document management system that uses optical disk technology to speed document filing and retrieval.

The system eliminates the labour-intensive tasks of manually filing and retrieving paper documents. Never again will you have to worry about out of file, mis-filed or lost documents.

System features include:

- Flexible input document scanning
- Simplified file management indexing
- Removable optical disks for unlimited storage and rapid retrieval
- Laser sharp copies on demand.



BUSINESS IMAGING SYSTEMS DIVISION

The new vision of Kodak

