

ARCHIVES
and
MANUSCRIPTS

The Journal of the Australian Society of Archivists

The Archivist's Mission

Archivists ensure that records which have value as authentic evidence of administrative, corporate, cultural and intellectual activity are made, kept and used. The work of archivists is vital for ensuring organisational efficiency and accountability and for supporting understandings of Australian life through the management and retention of its personal, corporate and social memory.

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Reviews the work of the Australian Government's Government 2.0 Taskforce during 2009 from the perspective of an archivist who was a member of the taskforce. This article focuses on the challenges, issues and opportunities for archivists, recordkeepers and information management professionals posed by the work and recommendations of the taskforce. The analysis focuses on two main themes, liberating heritage collections and on capturing and preserving authentic and accessible evidence of Government 2.0. The article concludes with a consideration of implementation strategies facing the Australian Government now that it has endorsed almost all of the Government 2.0 Taskforce recommendations.

Kye O'Donnell Taming digital records with the Warrior
Princess: developing a Xena preservation
interface for TRIM37

The preservation of digital records is a challenging task that has been the subject of much debate in the archives and records management community. Following the implementation of an electronic recordkeeping system at the City of Perth, the local

government authority of the capital city of the State of Western Australia, a strategy was developed and implemented to ensure that sound processes were established to facilitate the long-term preservation of its digital records. Five major risk areas that affect the preservation of the City's digital records were identified: (1) data format obsolescence; (2) digital conversion errors; (3) loss of original document functionality; (4) storage media obsolescence; and, (5) storage media degradation. To address these risks, the City adopted six digital preservation principles to guide the development of its digital preservation strategy.

The City's digital preservation strategy incorporated the following key elements:

- using retention and disposal schedules to automatically identify records for digital preservation;
- extracting descriptive metadata and electronic records in proprietary data formats from the organisation's electronic recordkeeping system;
- normalising digital records using a long-term XML-based preservation data format;
- structuring recordkeeping metadata according to a national standard;
- encapsulating metadata into normalised records;
- human quality assurance processes; and,
- storing digitally preserved records online, in the City's electronic recordkeeping system.

This strategy was implemented through the development of a software interface between the Xena digital preservation tool (produced by the National Archives of Australia) and the TRIM document and records management system (produced by Tower Software). This paper examines the development of the City's digital records preservation strategy and its implementation through a systems integration approach.

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Archives reading rooms were once the only reasonable way of providing free, equitable access to records. An alternative is now available. Online access to digitised records makes access available to far more people and is more equitable and more efficient than access in reading rooms. Despite this archives continue to privilege reading room access over online access. They would better meet their access responsibilities by transferring resources from maintaining reading rooms to improved, expanded and free online access even if this means closing reading rooms or charging for access to them.

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Based on the text of a speech delivered at the Australian Society of Archivists Conference, Brisbane, 16 October 2009.

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Canonisation depends on evidence of sanctity, a disposition of soul. The article illustrates the importance of both written and unwritten sources of evidence in the cause of Mary MacKillop. There was a mountain of written material in archives, and also vast amounts to be revealed in human memory and popular conviction. The need for discretion is shown by the few occasions when the two sources clashed, and it became clear that we should not assume that the written word is always more reliable than human memory and firm tradition.

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