

# PIVOT Down Under: A Report

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*R. C. Hol and A. G. de Vries*

**R. C. (Roelof) Hol** studied Medieval History (*cum laude*) at the University of Amsterdam. His archival career started in 1975 as an assistant to Professor Van der Gouw, the former General State Archivist. He worked as a research assistant for the Dutch Scientific Research Association and for the municipality of Wassenaar. After archival training in the Rijksarchief in Gelderland he finished the Rijksarchiefschool in 1980 then he became Deputy State Archivist in the Rijksarchief in Zeeland. In 1984 he transferred to the Centrale Directie Rijksarchiefdienst, working in the fields of automation and conservation. In 1991 he became the State Archivist PIVOT and in 1993 he also became Deputy State Archivist. Since October 1997 he has been Regional Director of the State Archives in the province of North Holland. Roelof is also on the Board of Directors of the Archiefschool, is Secretary of the Dutch Rock Foundation and of the Holland History Committee. He lives with his partner and two children in the city of Leiden.

**A. G. (Bert) de Vries** graduated from Amsterdam University in 1987 in contemporary History. He worked at the State Archive in Noord-Holland instead of doing military service. After the State Archive School (1990-1991) he became a researcher with the PIVOT project. From April 1994 he was Deputy Manager of PIVOT and since October 1997 he has been Manager PIVOT. He is also a freelance teacher at the Archives School. Bert has published several articles on archival matters and on the history of the Jews in the Netherlands. He lives with his wife and his five month-old son in the city of Delft.

*The authors explain the Dutch method, the so-called PIVOT method of mass appraisal of records (files) from the central government since 1945. This method focuses on the context of government actions vis-a-vis society. After the context has been described in an institutional report, the actions (handelingen), not the documents, are appraised for preservation in the Basic Appraisal Document. The main objective of the appraisal decision making process is to ensure that only evidence that enables researchers to reconstruct government actions associated with core functions will be preserved. After the appraisal phase, only the files concerning the 'preserved actions' are described in a new Model Inventory. Other files are disposed of. Although the method is based upon archival principles, the method is criticised, especially by historians, who fear that too many records which could be useful for future research will be destroyed.*

## **Introduction**

In April 1997 a delegation of two Dutch archivists, invited by the Australian Archives and sponsored by Australian and Dutch archival and scientific institutions, visited Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

The main objectives of this tour were to inform Australian colleagues about the Dutch PIVOT project, which is concerned with the appraisal of central government records, and to make connections between the Australian situation and the Dutch experiences between 1991 and 1997.

During this trip the Dutch delegates promised to write down their story and to try to answer the many questions that were asked during the visit. In order to do so we will try in the following article to explain the Dutch PIVOT project and its potential relevance, as we see it, to other archival communities throughout the world. We may even be bolder and suggest that it is potentially relevant to any organisation that has to deal with the information problems of the past, and of the present and future when real documents will increasingly be virtual collections of data.

As in our presentations in Australia, we will here proceed from the broader context of the PIVOT project to its final products.

## **Modern records and archives: evolution in administration**

### *Functions of records*

Notwithstanding international terminology, we often have to inform each other about the specific archival definitions used in our respective countries or languages. So, when we use the term archives, it also means records, since there is no formal difference made between the two in the Dutch language.

Although the concept of modern records may differ in various countries, this article concentrates on archives created from the period after World War II. The 'paper explosion' in the Netherlands can be dated from that period, although in fact the real growth took place since the mid fifties. The increased role of government in society provided fertile ground for the growth of bureaucracy and consequently produced an enormous crop of documents. An estimation from the late eighties shows on the national level an annual production of about ten to twelve kilometres of documents within the central government. Of course many of these documents never reach the files, and yet research has established that for the period 1945-1975 about 600 kilometres of state archives will have to be appraised. For the next two decades (1975-1995) we think that about the same amount of state records are waiting for appraisal.

But before addressing this issue further we need to explore the function of archives. Government archives are not created as historical sources: they come into existence in support of, and within the context of, the functions and working processes of government. The government generates and uses archives for management purposes, to account for itself and to call others to account, as a legal remedy or evidence, and as the memory of an organisation. Apart from the government, records are also important for citizens to enable them to call the government to account, for use as a legal remedy and as evidence, and for historical research. But in essence, government archives are the administrative result of the actions of the government in the context of its environment i.e. the society.

### *Bureaucratic developments*

Several developments within the framework of the bureaucratic system in the

Netherlands and also in the field of records management have been significant. Many of these developments can be noticed in other countries too.

Firstly, in the last decade there has been a strong movement towards decentralisation. Departments have been given more responsibilities. Agencies outside the walls of the ministerial fortresses have become more independent and been given more competencies of their own. Secondly, up to the mid eighties the decentralisation of decision making has naturally been followed by decentralisation of recordkeeping. Therefore, the position of the ministerial record offices has changed. In general the 'central secretariats' have been replaced by decentralised units at directorate or lower levels. The coordination of information management in a ministry disappears with the involvement of so many units, which are themselves often under-resourced and have poorly trained staff. Thirdly, the new information technology boom since the eighties has had an enormous influence on the field of recordkeeping. Almost overnight records managers and archivists have had to cope not only with paper material, but also with digital archives. This not only presents us with the technical problems associated with preserving them, but also with managing the more complex information flows and their contexts.

The fourth and most important development, however, is the enormous growth of government activity. After 1945 the Welfare State has emerged with central government active in all parts of society. As a result, the bureaucratic system developed enormously and because archives are the administrative result of actions of government, as said before, the amount of archives and therefore the scope of recordkeeping expanded.

Besides the above-mentioned bureaucratic developments, the *Archives Act 1962* has been superseded. The old law mandated the transfer of records from government organisations to the public archive services after a maximum period of fifty years, when they became freely accessible to every citizen. The *Archives Act 1995* has reduced the transfer period to twenty years. The reader may imagine, keeping in mind the enormous growth of bureaucratic paperwork over the last fifty years, what that means for the National State Archives in The Hague.

In summary, the threats and challenges in the area of recordkeeping include growing quantities of records, a lack of quality in recordkeeping, reorganisation

of government bodies, new legislation and the introduction of information technology.

### *Identification of the problems*

The state of affairs with regard to management and maintenance of state records is dramatic.

With this statement the Minister of Culture concisely summarised the current situation during consultation with the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Welfare and Cultural Affairs in 1990. She made this remark with regard to the General Audit Office's report, 'State Records Management and Maintenance'. This report was presented to the Second Chamber of Parliament in September 1988. The researchers of the Audit Office found huge amounts of unsorted and inaccessible records in the ministries and government agencies which should have been transferred to the public archives. The General Audit Office thus confirmed the opinion of the National State Archives Inspection Division as stated in their yearly reports. Many of the conclusions stated by the General Audit Office will be familiar to archivists: not enough money, not enough qualified personnel, out-of-date working methods, no modernisation in terms of systems. Besides, as the auditors stated, many of the civil servants of policy making departments had been avoiding the central records offices. Why? One of the reasons has been that the need for the cumbersome regulation and classification codes used by the records offices has not been understood by the civil servants, who consequently have kept lots of records for themselves. The common complaint has been that too much records management exists solely for the sake of records management. Whereas from the records manager's viewpoint, new techniques of automated registration fulfill their purpose, they are not seen generally as serving the information needs of the operational staff.

Within the framework of Dutch government administration the Ministry of Internal Affairs has a coordinating responsibility in the field of information management. This ministry published in 1991 a memorandum, '*omslag in opslag*' ('Change in Storage: Return to Information Provision'). In short, this memorandum stated that the solution to the problem of records management might be to embed it in the work process: that is, to gear records management to the information requirements of the work process.

So from the point of view of the administration, new ideas were needed to solve the paper mountain problem, especially in a way that would prevent new mountains forming. The main conclusion of the General Audit Office, however, concerned the accessibility of records. Unsorted and unappraised records cannot be consulted by government and citizens alike. Furthermore the main purpose of keeping records is to produce them whenever there is need of them. So the public nature of records was endangered. How can the government justify itself to its citizens when its records, an important means of verification, are not properly accessible?

The shortening of the transfer period is designed to grant citizens earlier unlimited access to government files. When the files are still within the framework of the government the citizen has, according to the Freedom of Information Act (*Wet Openbaarheid Bestuur*), more restricted access to government information.

## Mission of the National Archives

The National State Archives Department consists of the General State Archive in The Hague (including the State Archive in the province of South Holland) and the State Archives in the eleven other provinces of the Netherlands. In general we may state that the essence of the National Archives' mission is: 'Preserving evidence for posterity of the actions of national and provincial bodies'. Preserving evidence means keeping a specific kind of recorded information: records or archives. In order to fulfill this mission, there are two sets of archival activities. The first relates to archives management, including keeping and preservation of archives and giving access to users. The other set is the supervision and inspection, or as many of us prefer, the advising of government institutions, who in fact provide the public archives services with the records. We have to work in this pre-archival phase in order to be able to fulfill our ultimate mission.

Under the *Archives Act 1995* there are three areas of archival activities relating to the record creating government institutions:

- advising and inspection, that is overseeing proper records management;
- appraisal, that is assisting in the setting up of disposal methods and schedules;
- transfer of records over twenty years old.

It is in the transfer area that the National Archives these days is very active. But to be active in transferring records into archival custody is not enough. In order to fulfill our mission it was recognised that the National Archives also needs a better specified objective for appraisal. So the appraisal goal has been formulated as follows:

using the appraised records it should be possible to reconstruct the government's 'actions in mainlines' [i.e. actions associated with core functions] in the context of its environment, the society.

The National Archives should not and cannot preserve archives that fully document society. Its role is to preserve those archives which document the interrelationship between government and its citizens. Documenting the society is not a responsibility of the National Archives alone but of many institutions in the field of preserving the cultural heritage. The National Archives' core business is describing, preserving, evaluating and reassessing institutional information on government actions.

## **PIVOT is born**

To identify problems is one thing, to solve them another. The basic questions are 'how and who is responsible?' Primarily, the government institutions are responsible under the *Archives Act 1995*, which states that every public body is obliged to keep its records physically and intellectually in good condition. But when a public agency neglects this duty, the *Archives Act* gives the General State Archivist little opportunity to take action against this misbehaviour. In general, the common practice has been that as soon as a public institution has no daily need of its records they are moved to the basements. Appraisal costs money and, as long as there is still space left, nobody seems to care. So the administration might be legally responsible, but the senior management seldom *feels* responsible. Formally, the National Archives is not responsible, although it has a supervisory role. But the Archives *feels* responsible, being conscious of the importance of the written part of the national cultural heritage. We want to avoid losing society's memory. We also have an obligation towards our future customers' needs. As we say, no customers, no reason to exist.

Against this background the National Archives decided to take on responsibility

for the situation, supported by the General Audit Office, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and the Ministry of Interior. A project was set up in 1991 for a period of ten years to deal with the backlogs in appraisal and transfer, and to develop and implement new methods for keeping and appraising records in a more effective and efficient way. The catchcry for the project has been appraisal and mass reduction.

The project name, PIVOT, comes from the acronym for the Dutch '*Project Invoering Verkorting Overbrengingstermijn*', which means Project for the Implementation of the Reduction of the Transfer Period. But PIVOT means as well, in English and in French, a short shaft, an axis on which something turns, and that is what PIVOT really wants to be: a turning point in appraisal policy.

Generally it was acknowledged that traditional methods and criteria for appraisal are not sufficient to cope with the bulk of records since 1945. The flood of records has pushed us towards new methodologies. Lack of storage capacity, lack of manpower and money make it imperative for archivists to define new criteria in order to avert the transfer of an unmanageable bulk of records, thus creating not a collective memory, but collective amnesia.

No change in appraisal policy would have meant intakes into the General State Archive of about 500 linear kilometres of records from forty years of post war bureaucracy. To make a rough comparison, nine centuries of Dutch administration left 160 kilometres of records at the General State Archive of which about 85% are from government institutions. Which politician would be eager to let the citizens pay through their taxes for keeping so many more records from less than half a century of administration?

Still more important is whether that quantity of records can be kept accessible for consultation, which is our main archival purpose

## **PIVOT objectives, starting-points, concept and methods**

The project objectives of PIVOT were clearly defined and given political and financial backing. The objectives are:



- to preserve historically valuable archival records which fit the appraisal goal of the National Archives and get rid of the bulk of the central government records since 1945;
- to transfer records to be kept for posterity in a good and accessible state to the National Archives;
- to avert a repeat of this sort of disaster in the (near) future;
- to enlarge the storage capacity within the National Archives in The Hague (concluded in 1994, with the addition of thirty kilometres of shelving);
- to experiment with methods of substitution of paper records by other information carriers such as film or new technologies.

A new appraisal policy might result in an enormous reduction of records. But it is the quality not the quantity that is the prevailing concern. Or as has been stated, if it were about the quantity alone, we would not need a ten year period in order to arrange a mass reduction. Percentages are always subject to lots of discussion. About 30-50% of Dutch government records of the pre-war period have been preserved for posterity. Although it has not been systematically researched, one may find in general that from post-war records that were appraised according to the traditional methods about 70% were destroyed. Of course percentages cannot provide a precise goal, but they give a general direction.

The records that should be kept are a representation, a mirror of the government's thinking and actions. It is neither the National Archives' mission to document society nor to document fully all government activities and processes. Only 'mainline' actions should be documented: those concerned with the interrelationships between government and the society. PIVOT considers it is the role of the National Archives to preserve evidence of 'actions in the mainlines', that is those associated with core government functions. Future researchers will then be able to research all the developments in society from the point of view of the central government. Three critical success factors were set as a precondition for PIVOT:

- appraisal decisions must be clearly stated and be able to be tested;
- the new method should, in the long run, make appraisal more effective and efficient;

- records to be saved will have to be stored in a logical context.

Within this appraisal framework the keywords are *handeling* (action) and *actor*.

## PIVOT concept and methods

In fact the guiding concept of PIVOT is simple. The scope is central government, its organisation and its environment, not primarily its records. The actions of government lead in principle to outcomes in the society. The evidential value of the records derives from the value of the action. In this concept the so called (and undefined) 'intrinsic' informational value of records plays no role.

In short, our method of appraisal is based on what we have called institutional research rather than on researching documents. The PIVOT research staff reads laws, regulations, policy documents and other sources describing the government's policy goals, the policy instruments and the actions (*handelingen*) the government has taken to implement policy. In terms of mass reduction and appraisal, lots of records may be destroyed without the documents themselves ever being inspected. To use a metaphor, here PIVOT tries to stop the flood of records without being overwhelmed by actually seeing the flood: we are still standing on the safe side of the dike. So the research staff of about thirteen researchers, supplemented by approximately the same number within the ministries (paid for by the ministries), do not need to go down into the basements to see their motivation flowing away as they view endless rows of files to be appraised.

The PIVOT method consists of a number of phases and steps. After formally negotiating a working document with the ministries, signed by the highest authorities, whole of government actions are defined within spheres of activity or areas of policy (policy fields). Government of a democratic state, apart from the way it is organised, may be seen as just another entity, fulfilling a number of functions for its environment, the society. For each policy field a research project is set up, which leads to a report.

Before explaining the method some remarks must be made. The PIVOT method has evolved from 1991 and is based on a model of central government which the PIVOT team has developed. Of course the method is suited to the goal of appraisal

of the National Archives, as stated above. Therefore the method emphasises central government actions from 1940 until now. We describe government 'mainline' actions from then until now so that appraisal results can be used for current records. PIVOT has not only to resolve the backlogs in appraisal and the transfer of records, but also to prevent new backlogs. So appraisal schedules must be valid for the whole period from 1940 on.

### *Institutional Report*

The basis of the method is the so-called 'institutional' research, i.e. the description of government actions within their own context. Although in the end the main object is to describe all the government actions as a whole, for organisational reasons the PIVOT research staff is split up along departmental lines where the researchers work with colleagues from those departments. The results of the PIVOT research are presented in several publications. When all publications are finished you can say the overall description is done.

A report on institutional research presents the results of the research on a policy field or policy area. The research consists of several steps. The first step is to define the policy field in terms of the goals of government in relation to the society and the historical development of that policy. Then the actors within the policy field and their interrelationships are defined within the context of that policy field. Of course an actor can be active in more than one area of government policy, but only the role of the actor in the area of targeted research is described. Within the policy field of each actor the actions – *handelingen* – are identified.

An actor is a government body or private organisation or even a private person that plays a role related to the goals of government. Only the actions of the government actors are described because these actors are within the scope of the PIVOT operation, although the description of a private actor can lead to a decision by the National Archives to try to approach the organisation in order to collect the archives of the private organisation.

A government actor is a government body or agency that has a competency or a responsibility to act. Its functional responsibilities lead to actions. The actor has an authority based on public law and has therefore an authority to act while

changing the rights of a private organisation or citizen or another government body.

A government body (or a minister) can delegate its authority or competency to another government body. If this delegation of authority is covered by law, then another actor comes into existence because the competency and responsibility have passed to another organisation. A government body can also mandate its authority to a lower agency, which undertakes the action on behalf of the body. In this arrangement, authority and responsibility remain with the higher body. Then in terms of the PIVOT method there is no new actor. The original government body is still the actor. The agency is only seen as an organisational unit of the actor.

Then what is an action (*handeling*)? The definition of action is the ‘complex of activities that a government body undertakes in exercising its competency in order to fulfill a task or responsibility’. The complex of activities (action/*handeling*) results in a product, e.g. issuing a permit. The product is not the administrative result of the *handeling* (the archives that document the issuing of a permit). It is the outcome of the *handeling*, the permit issued. In the reports on institutional research the actions are represented in a standardised form:

Actor  
Action  
Period  
Competency/source  
Product.

So within a policy field a government actor acts and so produces products for society in order to achieve established government goals. A government body acts through organisational structures and systems. Primary processes within the organisation undertaking the complex of activities lead to an administrative result which is the archives/records.

Traditional archival theory sees this administrative result as the object of research whereas PIVOT first concentrates on the governmental context, the actors and the actions (*handelingen*), which are the setting of the archives. The results of the PIVOT research give the recordkeeper or archivist the means for intellectual control

of the archives. Records management or recordkeeping concentrates on the archives itself.



To summarise, in the PIVOT reports we have a formal description of how the system worked, providing a clear and defined view of the context of the creation of records. With the results framed in the Institutional Report we are aiming, now and in the future, at being able:

- to assess the acts of government in an efficient and effective manner;
- to create a base for the improvement of records management within the governmental framework.

The Institutional Reports form the basis of the next phase. (For an example of an Institutional Report, see Appendix 1.)

### *Basic Appraisal Document*

The next step is to draw up the Basic Appraisal Document. (See Appendix 2 for an example document.) Although it may look similar to, for example, the multi-year disposition plans, used in several countries, it is also very different. The proposed PIVOT appraisal decisions concern the actions of government institutions and not, as is commonly the case, a specified range of documents. With this document the records management services should be able to carry out disposal, both transfer and destruction. Moreover, this document is a blue-print or basis for a new, easy to apply and maintain, recordkeeping system, regardless of the information carriers involved.

To PIVOT the appraisal document is most essential since it covers two principal areas:

- Retrospective appraisal, based on administrative functions. The document describes the appraisal choices which have been made; the criteria that have been applied; for each actor, a summing up of actions; and, for each action, the actual appraisal decisions.
- A prospective outline of future appraisal decisions and a guide to future arrangement and description. Both are based on the actor's business processes, thus adding new possibilities for the records management services within the government institutions (and also adding some new views on archival theory).

Advantages of this appraisal document in comparison with traditional disposition lists are:

- interested parties can test for themselves whether the appraised records will meet their information requirements;
- during the appraisal it becomes clear from this document if actions which should be documented within the records department are not being documented;
- as actors who do not fall under the jurisdiction of the archives law are also described, for example private organisations who work in the relevant policy area, it is possible to determine whether these private records could be a

useful and additional contribution to the reconstruction of government 'actions in mainlines'.

The Basic Appraisal Document is formally presented by the responsible secretaries of the ministries involved to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. The minister asks for advice from her/his advisory board on Cultural Affairs. On this board there are representatives of user groups and of the archival profession so that a balanced final decision on preservation or destruction of records can be made. Finally, the appraisal document is published and the next phase can be carried out.

*Arrangement and description: finding aid*

Once the appraisal has achieved a formal status, the ministries, advised by PIVOT, continue with the next phase, being the arrangement and description of the appraised records in order to enable them to be transferred in a good and accessible state to the repositories of the National Archives. Most of this work will be carried out by a government institution which is part of the responsibility of the Minister of Interior. The most important factor is that the arrangement of the records to be described follows the structure of the Institutional Report and the Basic Appraisal Document. PIVOT organised some experimental projects in order to find out whether our method would also be able to cope with records which, in one way or another, are arranged by organisational structure and not by actions.

These experiments did prove that the new instruments were also able to cope with the outcome of the practices of the last forty years of records management – or the lack of it. Secondly it proved that the time needed for the arrangement of records according to the new methods is much less, generally speaking, whereas using the old method it took about twelve hours to arrange one metre, the new method with PIVOT instruments takes about 6-7 hours. Probably the method is even more efficient because many government organisations can dispose of the bulk of their records without even making them accessible at a very high level. There are series of files that are the administrative result of one action and all the files can be kept or destroyed once that one action is appraised.

The new archival inventory should contain the following items:

- an introduction and instruction to the reader (policy area and context, referring to the report on institutional research);
- records description referring to the relevant act;
- the original structure of the records (principle of provenance!);
- elucidation of the process, yielding the structure of the archive which was transferred;
- restrictions on disclosure (if any);
- references to the Basic Appraisal Document with the date of adoption and publication in the National Gazette.

If this phase is concluded, the arranged records are, after transfer, directly accessible to user groups in our reading rooms. So, where earlier one often had to cope with transferred records in a very poor state of arrangement, thus adding more work to the already present amount of work for the archivist, in the future this will be avoided. Moreover the records arranged according to the PIVOT method are all presented in their context (the policy field) and with reference to their underlying relationships.

#### *Recordkeeping schedule/information schedule*

The described actions and their relationships make it possible for government organisations to use the results of the institutional research and the appraisal of the actions to organise their records management. If they are able to structure their records and files according to the related actions they will have an efficient way of keeping their records. They will be able to readily identify which files have to be transferred to the National Archives or which records can be destroyed after the passage of a certain time. The actions are described however at the highest level (i.e. that of the actor). To relate those actions to what happens within government organisations, they must be translated down to the business process level (as shown in the scheme above).

As a result of a seminar in October 1997 we may conclude that in theory the incorporation of the *handelingen* (actions) within the framework of recordkeeping



systems is possible. The actual incorporation, however, is dependent upon the cooperation of the record creating institutions, who are primarily responsible for maintaining good recordkeeping systems. But they also will be the first to profit from this efficient and cost-effective way of recordkeeping. Pilot projects are being organised in 1998.

## **Dutch experience Down Under: questions and answers**

During our visit we encountered many questions about the PIVOT project. They mainly fall into two categories: firstly, facts and figures, and secondly, the relationship between the concept of *handeling* and the documents that result from it.

Hopefully we have already answered questions that fall into the first category in this article. In relation to the second category we have put together a set of the main questions we encountered and some related comments. Essential background to what follows is to keep in mind that the appraisal method of PIVOT is based on collaboration with the government agencies, a factor critical to success.

One important question relates to the appraisal or capture mission of an archives. Is there a well defined appraisal goal? In the Netherlands we discovered that once you make your goal explicit, a discussion is born and the appraisal process becomes more transparent.

Will the appraisal goal be based on functions analysis or on the so-called informational value of records, which is very subjective, of course. In the Netherlands, we opted for the former approach.

Another question relates to the organisation of the appraisal operation. Is it possible to organise a system in which archivists work collaboratively with government agencies? As stated, the viability of the PIVOT approach rests on doing this.

One of the most asked questions on the subject of the relation between the *handeling* and the documents involved was: what criteria do you use in order to make the appraisal possible? At the time of our visit this was also a subject of

debate in Holland, for example in the national meeting of State Archivists. In the end PIVOT developed a series of criteria for the researchers to use when formulating their Basic Appraisal Document (see Appendix 2). It is important to acknowledge that the criteria for appraisal must be related to the context of government action. For example, if we use the Second World War as a criterion, it must be because during the Second World War a special set of circumstances existed in terms of the relationship between the government and its citizens. Just like in the period of the Great Flood of 1953. So the criteria are formulated with reference to the context not in relation to the individual documents or their supposed informational value. The PIVOT method is therefore in principle a value based appraisal method, but based upon functional values instead of informational values.

Once organised in the abovementioned way, it is possible to tie the appraisal method to the record creating period. Addressing the terms and criteria for long-term preservation in parallel with the terms and criteria of administrative needs is not only cost-effective in the institutional recordkeeping period, but it also enables an easy transfer of paper and digital records to the public recordkeeping period.

The PIVOT method has been developed for the appraisal of central government records. But based upon the concept of functional analysis, it also may be used in every kind of organisation whether governmental or commercial. As long as you can define your functions, you can develop a functional appraisal program by using the PIVOT method of identifying and describing your *handelingen*. The only difference will be: what criteria do we have to formulate for the actual appraisal?

## Conclusions and perspectives

The PIVOT method has been developed for central government archives in Holland. Although it was not the aim of PIVOT, it is also possible that the appraisal method may be used for provincial or local archives, since it is the focus on contexts that prevails within this method. Some of those organisations have already shown their interest. The PIVOT approach might be an agent of change for archivist and administration alike, not only on the subject of appraisal, but also on the subject of records management. This latter possibility becomes more important due to developments in information technology. When archivists are pro-active

within modern government frameworks with their new technologies, we still have to appraise. The advent of virtual documents will force archivists to focus on context.

The main debate is now with the historians, although the debate might be held more on the appraisal goals and criteria than on principles. Perhaps there is a similarity with the much older debate between archivists and historians on the methods used to support the accessibility of records. In Holland there have often been long (and often fruitless) discussions on this point: the one holding her/his archival manners and methods, the other more interested in historical information than in formal archival methods. In relation to principles, it might be better to ask if we are supply or demand driven.

PIVOT's starting point is the context of administration and therefore looks supply driven. Trying to satisfy the needs of archival researchers is problematical because they are always subjective, dependent on a person or a time. Not only are the needs of the individual researcher subjective, but the demands of historians are not well defined and change over time. So the archivist cannot develop a demand-driven strategy because there is simply not a well defined demand. The nearest thing we have is the need of the genealogist and indeed this demand is recognised and honoured.

In principle archivists should be as objective as possible and consequently time independent. It is to achieve this purpose that archivists 'invented' the principle of provenance. In the appraisal business the controversy between demand-driven and supply-driven is far-reaching. But, we agree with Terry Cook: to define future research needs as a basis for appraisal is wrong, 'it is unarchival and distorts good appraisal'. Whatever the outcome of the appraisal method is, the PIVOT approach makes its goal and criteria very clear and explicit in order that the choices of this generation will be transparent for present and future generations.

The Hague/Harlem, March 1998.

## Appendix 1: Example Institutional Report

(Based on a 1995 Institutional Report about hallmarking (*waarborgbelasting*) in the Netherlands during the period 1940-1995, prepared by a Pivot researcher. Research was done at the Ministry of Finance in The Hague. The starting-point was the 1986 *Hallmarking Act* (1986 *Waarborgwet*.)

Hallmarks have been struck on gold and silver objects since the late middle ages. Since 1813 there were in Holland several acts (e.g. in 1927, 1950 and 1986) that consider the manufacture of gold and silver articles. The Minister of Finance was responsible because hallmarking is a special tax act. The Minister of Finance installed several so called assay offices in Holland (*waarborgkantoren*).<sup>1</sup> Since 1986 the Holland Assay Office in Gouda (Waarborg Platina, Goud en Zilver N.V.) has issued hallmarks on the basis of this act under the supervision of the Minister of Economic Affairs. A protection based on law as in the Netherlands 1986 *Hallmarking Act* guarantees that an article or an object with the hallmarks laid down by that law contains the correct quantity of platinum, gold or silver. The purpose of the *Hallmarking Act* is to protect the consumer against deceit and to promote honest competition between businesses trading in platinum, gold and silver articles or objects.

### Actions

<b>Actor</b>	Minister of Finance; since 1987 Minister of Economic Affairs
<b>Action</b>	To prepare the making of acts on hallmarking
<b>Period</b>	1940-present
<b>Competency/source</b>	Article 181, 1938 <i>Constitution</i> ; Article 188, 1953 <i>Constitution</i>
<b>Product</b>	1950 <i>Hallmarking Act</i> ; 1986 <i>Hallmarking Act</i>
<b>Actor</b>	Minister of Finance; since 1987 Minister of Economic Affairs
<b>Action</b>	To set up the standards of fineness of platinum, gold and silver articles
<b>Period</b>	1940-present

<b>Competency/source</b>	Article 1.2, 1950 <i>Hallmarking Act</i> ; Article 1, 1986 <i>Hallmarking Act</i>
<b>Product</b>	Standards of fineness
<b>Actor</b>	Minister of Finance
<b>Action</b>	To fix the opening hours of the Assay Offices
<b>Period</b>	1951-1987
<b>Competency/source</b>	Paragraph 136.2 and paragraph 143.3, Regulations 27 September 1962, nr. D2/8111
<b>Product</b>	Several regulations announced in the National Gazette ( <i>Staatscourant</i> )
<b>Actor</b>	Minister of Finance
<b>Action</b>	To confiscate platinum, gold and silver articles that do not conform to the standards of fineness
<b>Period</b>	1940-1987
<b>Competency/source</b>	Articles 22, 34, 82 and 104, 1927 <i>Hallmarking Act</i> and articles 22, 34 and 104, 1950 <i>Hallmarking Act</i>
<b>Product</b>	Minutes of confiscation
<b>Actor</b>	Minister of Economic Affairs
<b>Action</b>	To make regulations for articles and objects that are exempt from hallmarking (assaying and marking)
<b>Period</b>	1987-present
<b>Competency/source</b>	Article 6.1, 1986 <i>Hallmarking Act</i>
<b>Product</b>	Hallmarking regulations
<b>Actor</b>	Minister of Finance
<b>Action</b>	To give standard of fineness marks for platinum, gold and silver on objects
<b>Period</b>	1951-1987
<b>Competency/source</b>	Article 12 and 13, 1950 <i>Hallmarking Act</i>
<b>Product</b>	Marks on objects

## Appendix 2: Basic Appraisal Document

This document is the list of actions as described in the Institutional Report ordered according to government body (actor). For every action a value is assigned. The value can be Preserve (P) or Eliminate (E). When the evaluation of data fallout from the action is Preserve, the criterion is added; when it is Eliminate, the retention period is added. For example if the evaluation is P, 1 means: Preservation according to criterion 1; and if the evaluation is E, 10 means: Elimination after ten years.

The decision for preservation is based on the following general criteria for evaluation:

1. The data fallout from actions relating to the preparation, determination and evaluation of policy shall be preserved.
2. The data fallout from actions directed at external justification or reporting shall be preserved.
3. The data fallout from actions aimed at advising on the main lines of the policy shall be preserved.
4. The data fallout from actions aimed at drafting rules directly related to the main lines of the policy shall be preserved.
5. The data fallout from actions directed at (re-)structuring of the policy organisation charged with the primary policy processes shall be preserved.
6. The data fallout from actions which are vital to a broad reconstruction of the government's actions shall be preserved.
7. The data fallout from implementing actions through which functioning in a general democratic manner becomes possible shall be preserved.
8. The data fallout from implementing actions removed from democratic control shall be preserved.

9. The data fallout from actions which are directly related to or which arise directly from exceptional times and incidents in the Netherlands shall be preserved.

For each action the assigned value and the criterion according to which this was determined is briefly summed up. For the actions relating to the several *Hallmarking Acts*, as referred to in Appendix 1, the Basic Appraisal Document is as follows.

**Actor** Minister of Finance  
**Action** To prepare hallmarking law  
**Period** 1940-1987  
**Competency/source** Article 181, 1938 *Constitution*  
**Assigned value** P, 1

**Action** To set standards of fineness of platinum, gold and silver articles  
**Period** 1940-1987  
**Competency/source** Article 1.2, 1950 *Hallmarking Act*  
**Assigned value** P, 1

**Action** To fix the opening hours of the Assay Offices  
**Period** 1951-1987  
**Competency/source** Paragraph 136.2 and paragraph 143.3, Regulations 27 September 1962, nr. D2/8111  
**Assigned value** E, 10

**Action** To confiscate platinum, gold and silver articles that don't satisfy the standards of fineness  
**Period** 1940-1987  
**Competency/source** Articles 22, 34, 82 and 104, 1927 *Hallmarking Act* and Articles 22, 34 and 104, 1950 *Hallmarking Act*  
**Assigned value** P, 9

<b>Action</b>	To give standard of fineness marks for platinum, gold and silver on objects
<b>Period</b>	1951-1987
<b>Competency/source</b>	Article 12 and 13, 1950 <i>Hallmarking Act</i>
<b>Assigned value</b>	E, 10
<b>Actor</b>	Minister of Economic Affairs
<b>Action</b>	To prepare hallmarking law
<b>Period</b>	1987- present
<b>Competency/source</b>	Article 188, 1953 <i>Constitution</i>
<b>Assigned value</b>	P, 1
<b>Action</b>	To set standards of fineness of platinum, gold and silver articles
<b>Period</b>	1987-present
<b>Competency/source</b>	Article 1, 1986 <i>Hallmarking Act</i>
<b>Assigned value</b>	P, 1
<b>Action</b>	To make regulations for articles and objects that are exempt from hallmarking (assaying and marking)
<b>Period</b>	1987-present
<b>Competency/source</b>	Article 6.1, 1986 <i>Hallmarking Act</i>
<b>Assigned value</b>	P, 4

<sup>1</sup> The examples in this article are based on G. Beks (*samenvatting*), *Echt goud, echt zilver? Rapport van een institutioneel onderzoek naar de taken en handelingen betreffende het waarborgen van (platina), gouden en zilveren werken over de periode 1940-1995*. PIVOT-rapport nummer 36 (Den Haag 1996) and on the Basic Appraisal Document *Hallmarking*.