Reviews

Edited by Adrian Cunningham

Publications

J. Michael Brittain (Editor), *Introduction to Information Management,* Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University-Riverina, Wagga Wagga, 1997. 325pp. ISBN 0 949060 36 4. $55.00 + $5.00 postage. Available from Centre for Information Studies, Locked bag 660, Wagga Wagga, NSW 2678.

When I was at library school back in the 1970s there was a trend amongst library educators to emphasise the need for a broad base of training in what was then somewhat pretentiously called 'information science'. There was strong view (which has since been vindicated) that a narrow training in traditional librarianship would not adequately prepare graduates for the career demands of the 1980s and beyond.

This view no doubt signified a recognition of the fact that information exists in places other than libraries and that, in the words of Stephen Roberts, 'special libraries, however effective, were never at the strategic centre of business information handling'.

The views of my 1970s teachers proved especially prescient (though not

terribly helpful) when, during the 1980s, the information technology revolution handed corporate information supremacy to the IT boffins. 'Information science' became the domain of techos, while special librarians became even more marginalised within their organisations.

More recently the realisation has hit home that microchips, wires and screens doth not a strategic information system make. Mirroring the increasing managerialism of global thinking, the library educators have now shed their attachment to 'science' and firmly hitched their wagon to the power-suited engine room of 'management'. Movers and shakers have belatedly recognised that even with all the best technology in the world, information still needs to be professionally managed. As a consequence we are now witnessing the emergence of the pseudo-profession of 'information management'. Twenty years later it seems that my erstwhile teachers were right. If traditional librarians and records managers can remove their process-oriented blinkers and see the wider value-adding applications of their professional skills, the world can be their oyster, possibly.

So what exactly is information management?

Well, if this book is anything to go by, whatever it is, it is not terribly well defined. Moreover, as Roberts states, it lacks a unified and coherent body of theory and a unified professional identity. Maybe it is too soon to expect such things? Perhaps information management is but a short-lived buzzword that is already being made redundant by the latest model, 'knowledge management'? One of my definitions, for what it is worth, is that information management is an amalgamation of corporate librarianship and records management, writ large with some hefty doses of information technology and strategic managerialism. This definition is, however, limited to the corporate/organisational setting. As the work of the Commonwealth Information Management Steering Committee demonstrated a couple of years ago, information management principles and strategies can also have application in the broader online public access domain.

Ultimately, information management may turn out to be not so much a profession as a means of empowerment for information professionals. So, where does this leave recordkeeping professionals? Do recordkeeping

professionals have more to gain or more to lose by mouthing the mantra of information management?

This book devotes a whole section, consisting of five chapters, to records management and archives. Because a similar level of attention is not paid to basic librarianship, this suggests that the book is written for the edification of librarians. On balance I am glad that recordkeeping earns a guernsey in the information management arena. If information management is to be a means of corporate empowerment, then recordkeeping professionals need to ensure that their skills are not overlooked. Having said that, recordkeeping professionals need to ensure that they contribute on their own terms, not on somebody else's.

This raises the vexed issue of 'convergence' between the information professions. Many of the contributions to this volume assert blandly that records management and librarianship share common if not identical goals and theoretical principles. The three articles by Susan Myburgh (more Ranganathan than Jenkinson) are notable culprits here. If 'convergence' means obliterating the different, yet valuable, contributions that librarians and recordkeeping professionals can make to the overall cause of information management, then frankly most of us would prefer divergence. But divergence would do us and our clients a grave disservice.

Fortunately, the answer lies within Ann Pederson's masterful contribution to this volume. Pederson explores the particular nature and significance of records as information entities, the benefits of well-managed records and the functions and principles of the archives and recordkeeping mission. She then bemoans the myopic fragmentation that has led to the growth of the separate and occasionally warring camps of records managers, archivists and librarians. Under Pederson's model 'convergence' means pluralistic inclusivity and compatibility – cohesion and cooperation rather than competition. Professional recordkeeping has a critical role to play in the broader environment of information management. But in order to fulfil this role properly, professional recordkeepers cannot afford to jettison their particular professional skills and principles in favour of some kind of generic or homogenised version of information management.

Pederson's article is also noteworthy for the holistic manner in which it

integrates the managerial and cultural roles of records, archives and recordkeeping. This is all achieved within a progressive records continuum-based conceptual framework, a framework which is notably absent from the outmoded life-cycle approach of Susan Myburgh. The other contribution in this section, by Pember and Exon, constitutes a sound introduction to the basics of records management, but suffers from the publication time lag inherent in monographic publishing (e.g. while AS4390 is mentioned, there is no mention of the *Keyword AAA Thesaurus*, only its predecessor GADM).

Overall, I would say that, if it is possible to produce the definitive textbook on information management, then this is certainly not it. The volume lacks a coherent thread and merely serves to highlight the lack of theoretical solidity (let alone sophistication) that currently bedevils this thing we call information management. Having said that, however, I would urge everyone to do whatever they can to read the landmark contribution by Ann Pederson.

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Frank G Burke, *Research and the Manuscript Tradition*, The Scarecrow Press, Inc. and The Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 1997. 309 pp. ISBN 0 810833 48 4.

This book is the product of Frank Burke's 35 years work at the University of Chicago Special Collections, the Library of Congress' Manuscripts Division and in various posts in the US National Archives, and also teaching at the University of Maryland where he retired in 1996 as Professor Emeritus. Its intended readership is researchers who, while they are probably familiar with studying in libraries, Burke rightly feels do not adequately understand the basics of working in archives and manuscript libraries nor with primary source materials. Too many researchers, whether academic, professional or amateur, have picked up knowledge of archival arrangements and methods like many acquire sex 'education', namely trial and error.

Research and the Manuscript Tradition provides a basic explanation of the nature of archives and in particular personal papers (more on these in a moment) as historical evidence. There are also sections on the usual accessibility suspects such as finding aids, use of the Web and access restrictions, plus discussion of acquisition and selection, published and other surrogates, various legal issues such as copyright, and reading room and other security inspired rules. The key objective in each case is to explain archivists' and manuscript curators' (sometimes seemingly unhelpful) objectives, processes and standards.

Attempts to do something about users' limited knowledge can only be applauded and emulated. There was a time when university history programmes included formal subjects to impart such basics, as part of instruction in historical research methods. Some still do (subjects taught by Don Garden and John Lack are two obvious Melbourne examples) and libraries, archives, and historical and genealogical societies and institutes also do their best. At least now in the US there will be no lack of a substantial text as continues to be the case in Australia. Of course whether Burke has chosen the most appropriate vehicle (an SAA imprint rather than say the AHA or AASLH) and length (309 pp.) remains to be seen.

Within that overall objective of researcher education, Burke concentrates on what he variously calls personal papers or manuscripts, as opposed to archives and records which are essentially products of organisational activities, pre-eminently those of governments. Apparently the former are managed by manuscripts curators, the latter by archivists. What one calls the many people who manage both papers and records of non-government bodies is not stated. Occasionally this strict dichotomy is forgotten, and 'archives' and 'archivists' take on their more correct all embracing coverage. But actually, for the researcher, there *are* important aspects of copyright, conditions of use established by donors, the limited relevance of privacy and FOI laws, terminology and baggage adhering to the manuscript curator's descriptive practices and so on which researchers would benefit from understanding.

Woven throughout, however, are positions the author takes on professional debates which scholars will either completely miss or simply not understand,

and which many archivists (at least in this country) will want to debate. These opinions all connect in some way to Burke's belief that there are some critical differences between corporate and government records on the one hand and personal papers on the other. These have implications for arrangement, definition of series and pretty much anything which depends upon 'function' as a central organising idea. Though as indicated these views are dotted throughout the book, the following quote will suffice in a review of this length to convey what I'm referring to:

> The differences between the two genres have been obscured in much of the archival literature, which has led to complications as archivists have attempted to merge the two forms into single systems of arrangement, description, application of standards, and automated structure. The confusion has carried over to the education of archivists and the preparation of standard manuals, with some notable exceptions. (p 3)

For Burke, the differences include the reason for the creation and the rationale for keeping personal papers, their processing methods, access provisions, legal aspects and their role as historical evidence. On the old original order issue, his advice is very relaxed: simplify the arrangement to aid the researcher and don't complicate it 'to fulfill some external, theoretical mandate' (p 166). One has a strong suspicion that he would regard concepts such as societal warrants and functional requirements for personal recordkeeping and a unifying 'Beat the French' mission as a load of rubbish.

For every page on which I wanted to angrily scribble marginal rebuttals (for example I think he overstates differences in reasons for creation and keeping) there were passages to tick enthusiastically. There is much common sense acknowledgment of pitfalls and wise advice in the book, which I found uncannily applicable to the local scene. All this is strengthened by Burke's delightful phrasing and constant use of examples from historical scholarship and various highly publicised US cases such as those involving copyright and theft. And the last chapter, where he reflects on personal communication in the electronic age, is superb. Provocative and thought provoking, I was simultaneously annoyed and engaged by the book. Despite

this and the inevitable US orientation, everyone interested in personal papers should read it.

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Shelley L. Davis, *Unbridled Power: Inside the Secret Culture of the IRS*, Harper Business, New York, 1997. 284pp. ISBN 0 88730 829 5. Hardcover. US$25. Available through www.amazon.com.

Shelley Davis has done us all a favour - and, so far as I can see, with little more than a 'Thanks for sharing' from the archives profession and the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), both of whom she feels her work and book tried to elevate. She has done something that I don't know anyone else has cared enough to do: observed – from the outside looking in – the recordkeeping function and community at work in a powerful government agency, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the agency charged with the collection of Federal income taxes.

  Davis says that she wrote about what she saw the way she saw it. The story isn't pretty. She uses real names and real dates. So far, even in the litigious United States, no one has thus far felt her story to have been untrue or sufficiently inaccurate to sue or even threaten to sue her for libel or defamation of character. She uses this story to warn us what can happen when virtually no one is watching the store and doing something about it – agency management, archival organisations responsible for receiving related archives, legislative oversight committees, professional associations and public advocacy groups.

  Why should anyone outside of the US wish to read this book? Because the issues it gives rise to – the thoughts it should make us all pause to consider – are relevant in most countries where there exist powerful government organisations charged with carrying out such functions as intelligence,

criminal justice, tax collection, collection of census or other sensitive personal information, such as social services. These are organisations that, in democracies, are typically the concern of legislative oversight bodies because they can be among the most intrusive into the personal lives of ordinary citizens and the attendant dangers inherent in their potential abuse of power. This book is about one such agency and is told by an experienced government historian who was no stranger to recordkeeping.[1]

When such organisations – in whatever country – fly under the radar of oversight bodies and allow recordkeeping to be carried out by ill-trained or uncaring staff, the potentially damaging impact on human rights and accountability under the law can threaten the underpinnings of government by law.

As the old saying goes, there are two things in life that no one escapes: death and taxes. The US has no monopoly on either. Nor does it have a monopoly on government organisations that abuse their power. And it is not alone in having such organisations that purposely, or through executive neglect, turn recordkeeping practices into enablers of such abuses – no more than Australia is alone in its 'Heiner case', or Canada in its 'Tainted Blood' case. Having practised in countries in most continents of the world, from the Americas to Europe, Africa and Australia, I have observed and heard about all too many such cases – again illustrating the international relevance of this book.

What is her story? What happened? Without revealing too much about 'who did it,' the basics can be briefly summarized by drawing from political pundit Mary Matalin's Foreword to the book:

> Shelley Davis says she isn't as afraid for herself as she is for the country, unless the IRS is reformed, and reformed fast. [...] This is a person whose only crime was trying to do her job, as best she could. Part of that job involved telling her bosses, 'Heads up, guys, but do you know we're breaking the law?'

> As she reveals, the IRS routinely destroys its own records. That's against federal law. And the problem with breaking the Federal Records Act is, as Shelley says, that without records, there is no history. Without records, there is no accountability.

Davis arrived on board IRS in 1988 as the first and, until now, only IRS Historian, full of the challenges of the new job, but also failing to fully appreciate until it was too late that this was no Department of Defence when it came to recordkeeping. Her initial instincts that IRS didn't have a sense of national history or its place within that history were painfully confirmed in subsequent days and years. After taking up her new post as Historian, Davis reports that the head of the records management unit, someone who was not a records management professional and who had been transferred from an earlier job in the personnel department, told her that she would have to wait a couple of weeks before she could meet with Davis because she was just too busy. When they did meet, Davis says that her invitation to co-operate was icily received, a harbinger of their subsequent relationship. More importantly, she found great difficulty in getting answers to simple questions: Where are the records? How many are in the National Archives? How often do you send records to NARA? Are there places in the building I should look to find records? On what basis are records being destroyed?

The picture that emerged, following discussions with the NARA appraisal archivist for IRS, was that for decades IRS had been successfully ignoring NARA requests for the appraisal and transfer of records of archival value. Furthermore, independent revelations by others to Congressional officials showed that IRS staff frequently violated privacy policies by viewing the records of citizens who were not part of their authorised cases – neighbours, Hollywood celebrities, political figures, etc.

In 1976, Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code was revised by Congress to include severe punitive measures for anyone found to be misusing confidential taxpayer information. However, this change provided IRS a new '6103 defense' upon which to deny disclosure of or access to virtually any IRS records. Consequentially, access to non-taxpayer records – even those that had been released to journalists and researchers prior to 1976 – were denied. One of the few IRS records Davis found at NARA was a refund letter to President Lincoln informing him that he had overpaid his taxes. IRS contended that, under 6103, it would be illegal to permit public access to that document.

Davis reports how, for seven years, she tried to change all of that by working

within the system until her options were reduced to either living with what she knew was a very bad situation or becoming a whistle blower. She wrote a report summarising the situation and warning IRS management that the agency was operating in contradiction to the law. A copy of her report was given to NARA officials by her manager in mid-1995 and she also sent augmenting information to the National Archivist, from whom she received a 'Thank you' note that did not address the substantive issues she raised in her report. When her options ran out, she finally resigned her position in December 1995. With Government doors closed to her, this government historian subsequently turned to writing this book.

A couple of people with whom this reviewer spoke said there were inaccuracies in this book and that Davis had her own agenda in writing it but none would get specific with me. Are these behind-the-scene speculations getting in the way of the bulk of Davis' observations and messages? If there are questions of this nature, wouldn't the profession be better served by dissenters asserting the inaccuracies or dark agenda, putting them up to the light of day and asking Ms. Davis in an open forum to defend herself against such assertions? Otherwise they should drop them.

If Davis is not regarded as something of a pariah by NARA or archives and records management professional associations, after the successful mainstream publication of her book, why has she not been invited by any of these organisations to speak about the very hard earned lessons – the good and the bad – that she has learned about recordkeeping during the course of her twenty years as an archivist and historian? Perhaps it would add a little pizzazz, not to mention healthy discussion of the relationships between archivists and records managers and archives and records management professionals and historians, to our otherwise often inbred conference programs.

Archivists and records managers will not necessarily agree with Davis' every point, nor be comfortable with her in-your-face way of putting things or *ad hominem* remarks about individuals she encountered at IRS. She admits that at least some of this was done at the encouragement of the publishers to spice up what might otherwise be considered a dull – even if important – accounting of the workings of a federal agency. Nonetheless, her story should

be of deep interest to all professional archivists and records managers, and we should not allow her presentation to get in the way of the underlying accounting. It is a rare event when someone who is both professionally qualified and a strong supporter of the archives and records management field shares a user's perspective on what we do.

This book was intended for public consumption – to shake up complacent readers into seeing the important role of records and recordkeeping in a democratic society. Don't expect it to read like a paper out of *A&M, The American Archivist* or *Archivaria*. Will we use some less well done aspects of her presentation that are emotional or lacking in science as a way of ignoring her messages about recordkeeping? Whistle blowing almost always has those attributes along with some very important messages that are easy to get lost along the way. Nor should we consider it dishonorable for whistle blowers like Davis to 'sell' their stories when they have foregone their jobs and sources of family income to do what they thought was ethical. Selling their stories, even if sometimes giving in a bit to the publishers to spice things up, is small recompense for their lost future income streams.

For reminding us in this book what the best of what we do is all about, archivists and records managers owe Davis a debt of thanks.

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Endnotes

[1]   Some detractors of this book raise questions about the author's credibility and her authority to write such a book. For this reason, and because the interaction between the author as IRS Historian and the IRS records management office and National Archives is such a central element of the book, it is important to briefly comment on Davis' background. Although her career was ultimately as a historian, Shelley Davis gained records management credentials through education, through working in the trenches and even through marriage. After receiving her MA in military history from the University of Nebraska, which included course work in archival studies, she began her professional career as an assistant archivist at the University Library. She later married an Air Force records management officer who wrote the Air Force's records management manual. After-work discussions of records management issues were not uncommon in the Davis household.

Anthony Eccleston (Editor), *Contracting Out of Recordkeeping Services in Government,* Proceedings of a seminar conducted by the ACT Branch of the Records Management Association of Australia, March 1998, RMAA ACT Branch, Canberra, 1998. vii + 91pp. ISBN 085918 027 1. $20.00. Available from GPO Box 2591, Canberra, ACT, 2601.

The seminar, of which the proceedings is the outcome, brought together a well rounded mix of professionals who were very experienced in their respective fields and had a lot to say. The speakers represented the Senate, the National Archives, the Archives Authority of New South Wales, the legal profession, a former Privacy Commissioner, a senior executive from the Commonwealth Office of Government Information Technology and a representative from the private sector who provides consultancy services. There was much emphasis on practice and experiences, rather than theorising or postulating. Senator Kate Lundy reminded us all about the human factor in outsourcing, often forgotten in the chase for the dollar or quest to save a dollar.

Having read the proceedings (which I found easy to read) I then asked myself who should read this publication? I shall list them to illustrate the breadth of relevance of the content.

1. Politicians, so they might realise the complexity of outsourcing from a legal, administrative and social point of view - that outsourcing is not the same as looking up the 'yellow pages' for a service and handing over a fee.

2. Lawyers who might be engaged by an agency or service provider to develop contracts, so they ensure that the issues of records and recordkeeping practices are considered at every point and not as an adjunct.

3. Agencies whether they be government or private, who might be considering outsourcing any function, not just their recordkeeping services, so they might appreciate the range of issues they need to

master in order to have a watertight contract and can assess the performance of the provider and know what questions to ask and how to ensure responsibility is addressed and known by all parties. The session presented by the Office of Government Information Technology gave a clear message as to how the work generated by the outsourcing is going to be managed - electronically and over the Internet.

4. Consultants so they can ensure that they have the appropriate skills to provide the service and can anticipate the kinds of questions they might be asked and issues that they need to address and cost into a tender or contract.

5. System analysts and designers who will need to ensure recordkeeping requirements are built into the system of the agency seeking the outsourcing and the businesses who provide the service - for one day the agency will choose another provider and will want all their records back. Alternatively the agency will be abolished and the records will need to be identified and sent to another agency, who queries the charges. If the system cannot identify the records, then court action may ensue.

6. Archivists, who are in training or are involved in the outsourcing, so they can provide advice (in public or private sector) and point to a solid reference guide.

In conclusion, any outsourcing will involve consideration of recordkeeping, whether it is shipbuilding or publishing and no contract or development of a service agreement can afford not to consider recordkeeping as a core component of the service or contract. I only hope the reference to 'recordkeeping' in the title of the Proceedings does not cause those listed above to ignore it, because its relevance goes far beyond outsourcing recordkeeping services and into the heart of managing a business. Every agency/business outsources something and every agency/business has to protect the evidence of its transactions - whoever does it on their behalf.

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Livia Iacovino, *Things in Action: Teaching Law to Recordkeeping Professionals*, Ancora Press, Melbourne, 1998. ix+276pp. ISBN 0 86862 028 9. $40.00. Available from School of Information Management and Systems, Monash University, Caulfield, Vic. 3145.

The need to record and preserve decisions which have the force of law (in the broadest sense of that term) is the foundation of the archival profession. Yet the relationship between archivists and lawyers is not always an easy one. Both professions regard the authority of the record as fundamental, but there can be significant differences in the ways in which they deal with records. Archivists are sometimes disturbed by the lawyers' tendency to see records merely as cards to be played in the endless game of poker which is the adversarial system of litigation. Lawyers can be frustrated at what they see as archivists' over-protective attitude towards records and their inability to produce instantly the precise record which will demolish their opponent's case. Tensions can also arise over the interpretation of archival legislation when the lawyers say 'This is what your Act requires you to do' and the archivists respond 'But that is not what we meant it to say'.

  The need for archivists to have an adequate knowledge of relevant areas of the law has become imperative as we all become multi-skilled (or at least more broadly semi-skilled). In the good old days we would ask the Attorney-General's Department for an opinion, free of charge, on any legal point which was bothering us. In due course we would receive an erudite reply which weighed up all the issues and concluded that it was a nice point and we should find out the answer when we got into court. Nowadays, when everything must be paid for, the temptation is to figure it out for yourself and take a chance on not ending up in court. I had one of my first encounters with the law as an archivist when I received a subpoena to appear in the New South Wales Supreme Court with Tariff Board records relating to asbestos; attached to the subpoena was a grubby two dollar note apparently intended to fund my journey from Canberra to Sydney. We successfully resisted the subpoena, which in legal terms was a victory; whether it was victory in moral terms is a more difficult issue. Since then I have become entangled with the law on issues ranging from the pursuit of Nazi war

criminals to the review of archival legislation, together with a series of Administrative Appeals Tribunal cases on public access exemptions. These experiences have confirmed that archivists and lawyers can differ significantly in outlook and operating strategies. Indeed there were occasions before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal when the warring parties had to cease hostilities temporarily in order to attempt to explain jointly to the Tribunal what on earth we were arguing about.

Livia Iacovino's book, which publishes her Monash University Master of Arts (Archives and Records) thesis, is therefore a timely and comprehensive investigation of this important subject. Her starting point is that continuum thinking and the development of new recordkeeping technologies make it vital to establish an adequate conceptual framework to deal with the relationship between the law and recordkeeping. The 're-discovery of the common roots of archivists and record managers' that is implicit in the continuum has highlighted the fact that 'Despite its ancient roots, the recordkeeping profession [...] is [...] at an embryonic stage, only now commencing to define the body of knowledge and skills required to form the basis of professional identity'. Iacovino restates Luciana Duranti's contention that the law must be integrated into core archival knowledge rather than be studied as a relevant but separate discipline from archival science. Some archivists already have formal legal qualifications and their numbers will no doubt increase, but for both professional and practical reasons recordkeeping training must embrace legal issues adequately. This is no small undertaking in a country which has nine major legal jurisdictions, with legislation on many subjects ranging from tantalisingly similar to fundamentally different. Even legislation directly relevant to recordkeeping is difficult to compare in summary form. The challenge for educators is to teach the legal fundamentals which underlie our profession and to introduce their more important practical manifestations, without at the same time submerging students in a sea of comparative legislation. We cannot hope to achieve this merely by buying segments of courses off the shelf from Law faculties.

Things in Action is not only a plan of campaign, it is also a useful survey of the relationship between recordkeeping and the law. It examines the origins and current state of the recordkeeping profession and reviews the literature

relevant to the law, arguing that much of its utility is diminished by the absence of a continuum framework. It then considers possible definitions for a juridical and legal system, supporting Duranti's model of a juridical system made up of a collectivity (social groups and institutions), an organisational principle (the common ground which keeps the collectivity together) and a body of rules, written or unwritten, which are binding on the collectivity. This leads to a more detailed consideration of the relationship between the law and recordkeeping in areas such as access rights, property, duty of care, breach of confidence and evidence.

The last two chapters develop a scheme for the legal education of recordkeeping professionals. They review the legal content of graduate archives and records courses taught at Monash University in 1994 and elements of undergraduate Law courses relevant to recordkeeping. Iacovino suggests that most of the law-related literature used in the archival courses was concerned with 'How to' skills rather than 'Why' questions. She recommends that, rather than concentrating on industry-specific legislation, courses for records professionals should focus on general legal principles and basic legal research skills, giving an overview of the whole juridical environment and thinking as conditioned by the legal system at a particular point in time. She proposes a legal curriculum of eleven modules, which can either be offered as a stand-alone course or incorporated into existing archives and records courses. The modules would introduce the relationship between the law and recordkeeping, the nature of legal and juridical systems, ethics, sources of law, and statutory interpretation and place the record in its legal context. They would examine issues such as evidence, ownership and access and conclude with a summary of the legal obligations of organisations and the legal requirements for recordkeeping systems.

In summary, *Things in Action* is a comprehensive and stimulating study and one that merits careful reading by all who have an interest in the education of records professionals.

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Jay Kennedy and Cherryl Schauder, *Records Management: A Guide to Corporate Recordkeeping*, 2nd edition, Longmans, South Melbourne, 1998. 313pp. ISBN 0582 81007 8. $35.00.

One of the signs of a maturing profession is the development of the basic texts which provide information on trends and development. The second edition of this well-known text is a good indication that records management is reaching the level of maturity which is long overdue. The book has been expanded in size from 299 to 313 pages, substantially reorganised and rewritten, incorporating many recent development in records management. The change in title to 'Records Management: A Guide to Corporate Recordkeeping' instead of the previous 'A Guide for Students and Practitioners of Records Management' sends a positive message to the reader that this book is much more than a guide to technology, classification systems, filing equipment and sentencing and disposal of records. The most notable new feature of the text is its emphasis on recordkeeping and the development of the corporate memory. This represents an important phase in the development of practices and procedures for the management of records.

The other notable feature is the liberal use of excerpts from the Australian Records Management Standard, AS 4390. The use is very clever and provides a firm anchor to explain the meaning and practical application of the standard.

The influence of the Monash University philosophy is evident throughout the text and is especially acknowledged by the authors.

The layout of the text with ample use of graphics, pictures and cartoons to emphasis points provides a very readable environment for reading. The use of jargon is kept to a minimum and, where it does occur, all words are explained relying on definitions contained in AS 4390. The majority of the chapter titles have been changes to more reflect the recordkeeping theme.

The text commences with an introduction to records management. It is

fairly conventional and sets the scene by identifying the influences on records management and discusses the increasingly turbulent environment in which records management now finds itself. The chapter also includes an introduction to AS 4390, explaining its importance as a foundation to understanding the context of records management in organisations. The concepts of the records continuum are well explained.

The following chapters explore needs assessment and solution development. These introduce the reader to the issues associated with developing policies and devising records management programmes which will ensure records are made and maintained as accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions. After that there are chapters devoted to 'corporate recordkeeping requirements' which discuss issues associated with recordkeeping to meet business needs and provide a good explanation of how the law interacts to ensure evidence.

Chapters on appraisal and disposal are couched in records continuum terms emphasising the importance of these functions to ensuring that full and accurate records are created and captured into systems. The text explores the issues from both the paper-based and electronic perspectives. The chapter contains a useful discussion on managing electronic mail messages and, while not arriving at any firm conclusions, provides plenty of food for thought.

The next chapter is devoted to classification and indexing systems and is a considerable improvement over the first edition. It has been extensively rewritten and incorporates many more examples. Immediately following is a chapter devoted to constructing thesaurus and classification systems which is a very competent analysis with good examples, although I would note that there was no discussion on the disadvantages of using a thesaurus. The next chapter returns the reader to the world of managing active paper records. It covers the issues associated with appropriate organisational arrangement for active records, file numbering systems and the various types of filing equipment.

The following chapter focuses on computerised records management

systems. It is well written and provides a very good analysis of the features and use of these systems. One disappointment is the treatment of document management systems as synomous with records management systems. It is clear that there is much confusion and misunderstanding of the nature, structure and use of document management systems. It was unfortunate that the opportunity was not taken to explore the issue better.

The book goes on to cover electronic systems as represented by imaging and workflow technology. It is a useful chapter to gain a broad understanding of the issues associated with this type of technology.

No records management text book would be complete without a chapter on vital records and storage of inactive records. Both issues are dealt with in a practical way with plenty of examples.

There are four appendices. The first relating to rules for filing which are becoming very dated, for instance they ignore Asian names and with the increasing use of computers the rules have become less relevant. The promotion of the RMAA without acknowledging other kindred bodies, such as the ASA is disappointing. An adequate glossary and index are incorporated, but a bibliography does not appear; instead, at the conclusion of each chapter a list of references is provided. The reference lists could be substantially improved. Many references are old and have become irrelevant. It is strange to note the absence of significant authors in the electronic records management area as well as the work of the National Archives and the New South Wales Records Management Office.

This book is a must for anyone associated with archival and records management programmes. It is an essential text for every practitioner as well as for those senior managers who remain blind to the real issues, but who have important strategic responsibility.

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Eric Ketelaar, *The Archival Image: Collected Essays*, edited by Yvonne Bos-Rops, Hilversum Verloren, 1997, 125 pp. ISBN 90 6550 565 2. $US20.00.

Recognising the ongoing importance of his published papers, the editor of *The Archival Image* has brought together a number of seminal articles by Eric Ketelaar focusing on archives and users. The book was compiled as an initiative of the State Archives Service of the Netherlands on the occasion of Eric Ketelaar's retirement as Dutch General State Archivist to mark his achievements and contribution to the archival profession. Ketelaar devoted much of his time to establishing and maintaining international contacts, and, after resigning as General State Archivist, has remained with the Dutch State Archives Department as head of the State Archives Inspectorate and coordinator of Dutch activities in the international arena.

The book is a collection of eleven articles by Ketelaar which have mainly been written for the foreign public and have been published previously in professional journals. The articles are based on keynote addresses and papers which he presented at international meetings during the years 1985 to 1997. Three articles are reprinted in German and eight in English, one of which also has a French translation.

Ketelaar looks at various aspects of the relationship between users and archives. The title of the first article 'Archives of the people, by the people, for the people' is a recurring theme throughout. He explores the fundamental responsibility of the archival profession to care for the heritage of today for use in the future; the need for the preservation of records as well as the safeguarding of their integrity, a major challenge for modern archivists in a world of constant political upheaval and of rapid technological change. He looks at the moral position of the archivist who has to make access, selection and disposal decisions. A matter of major concern to him is the importance of access to public records, as he sees their consultation and use as the ultimate reason for preserving and making archives available. The provision of access leads to the ethical dilemmas faced by archivists when confronted with the question of right to access versus the right to

privacy. Ketelaar argues that in some instances the right to research, a social right, has to be forgone in favour of the right to privacy, a fundamental human right. This delicate balance has been sensitively exemplified through case studies from recent history from the Dutch archives.

The user is again the centre of attention when Ketelaar discusses the importance of identifying user needs. He suggests that generally, archival institutions do not focus sufficiently on what their clients want. He investigates different ways in which archives have traditionally been made accessible and asks whether, indeed, archivists 'in developing provenance-based access, created the best information retrieval system'. When considering electronic records, he argues that users and their needs ought to be the dominant factor when deciding how to facilitate access that will allow exploitation of those records. In his view, archivists will have to make innovative use of computer technology and develop new strategies and methods to exploit records, in traditional as well as new formats, if they are to support their clients properly. Archivists will respond to user needs by combining provenance-oriented and content-based retrieval methods. The implication of the increased use of technology is that archivists, too, will need to change in order to adapt to the world of the new archival record.

Further investigating the image of archives, Ketelaar finds that as early as the 17th century, officials and their records are portrayed as representing accountability, evidence and corporate memory. His own research into the use of archives by the media reveals that archives are used more frequently as evidence rather than as historical sources. He concludes that archivists should focus on accountability when promoting the archives.

Several articles deal with Muller, Feith and Fruin and their contribution to the development of archival theory, both in the Netherlands and at the international level, the role of the archivist and the image of the profession. The historical development and structure of the Dutch archival system is outlined in 'Centralization, decentralization and the archives in the Netherlands'.

I found the book a pleasure to read. A number of typographical errors detract only slightly from this otherwise attractive publication. The articles

complement each other well by expanding on issues touched on in preceding papers. The A5 format make it a handy publication and the use of illustrations is visually pleasing.

The book will be of interest to those who seek to reflect upon a fresh restatement of the universal principles and maxims underlying the archivist's profession as well as to students who are learning of them for the first time.

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Ted Ling, *Solid, Safe, Secure: Building Archives Repositories in Australia*, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 1998. 144pp. ISBN 0 642 34403 5. $30.00 + $3.50 postage. Available from Publication Sales, National Archives of Australia, PO Box 7425, Canberra Mail Centre, ACT, 2610.

Solid, Safe, Secure is written by Ted Ling, Director of the Darwin Office of the National Archives of Australia and an archivist who spent six years with the National Archives Facilities Programme. *Solid, Safe, Secure* is an excellent publication about building and managing archives buildings. The literature on archives buildings is limited in both the number of available publications and their scope. Whilst there are other books available they have been written from a North American and European perspective. This is the first Australian publication on this subject and is intended to be a 'How To' book which tells you how to design, build and maintain an archives building. It is written from the perspective of an archivist not an architect, builder or engineer and has been written with the intention of providing a reference source for archivists, particularly those faced for the first time with co-ordinating the construction of a major facility on behalf of their archives.

In 1968 Bob Sharman stated that the only person who is competent to plan an archives building is one who has just completed the planning of one and

seen it erected and brought into use. *Solid, Safe, Secure* is based on a number of recent experiences of designing, constructing and maintaining buildings, primarily in Australia, but with reference to overseas experience as well.

The book opens with an overview of archives buildings, past and present. Of particular interest in the first chapter is the changing nature of the archival repository. In the early part of this century some institutions relied on grandiose palaces, chateaux, and stately buildings as the centres for their archives. In many cases the emphasis was on an impressive facade rather than a true understanding or appreciation of the real functions the buildings were supposed to perform. In the 1960s there was a tendency to build large repositories to provide limitless storage capacity and in the Cold War period resistance to nuclear explosions was a concern. Since the 1970s repositories have become smaller and storage areas far more compartmentalised. In the 1990s there is a much greater understanding of a building's total structural integrity. The purpose-built repository is designed and constructed to perform three principal functions: to protect records; provide facilities for clients to consult the records; and provide a safe and comfortable environment for staff and visitors.

Solid, Safe, Secure is a very readable publication and includes sections on site selection, building fabric, environmental conditions, air conditioning systems, lighting and energy management, fire safety and security, special purpose storage areas, shelving, occupational health and safety issues, integrated pest management programs and disaster planning. The exploration of the issues to be considered when deciding to refurbish an existing building or construct a new one is very good and will be of particular use to archivists who need to deal with that issue.

There are also chapters on writing a design brief and the construction process, including documentation requirements, as well as individual chapters on building in the tropics and the lone archivist. The chapter on building in the tropics is enlightening for those of us who have never needed to consider environmental factors such as extreme temperature and humidity levels, high levels of rainfall, cyclones, storms and lightening strikes.

The design and layout is excellent with photographs and illustrations,

tables, checklists and summary boxes used to reinforce and highlight key concepts. Case studies are included on site selection, environmental conditions and energy management, the construction process and moisture control. The final chapter is an excellent summary and checklist of the issues and points stated in earlier chapters.

My only regret after reading this publication is that it wasn't available six months ago when the User Group for the new University of Melbourne Archives Building was formed because, as well as being an excellent reference source and practical guide for archivists, it is an ideal publication to lend or give to the architect, builder or engineer constructing an archives building.

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James O'Toole (Editor), *The Records of American Business*, The Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 1997. 411pp. ISBN 0 931828 45 7. $US40.00. Available from the Society of American Archivists, 600 S. Federal, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 6065, USA.

Lesley Richmond and Alison Turton (Compilers), *Directory of Corporate Archives*, 4th edition, Business Archives Council, London, 1997. 114pp. ISBN 0 950864 53 6. Available from the Business Archives Council, Clove Building, 4 Maguire Street, London, SE1 2NQ, UK.

The Records of American Business could well be sub-titled 'managing the paper that business no longer wants (and convincing them to pay for it).' As a practitioner in current records management, I found it startling that few of these writers see a role for archivists in managing the current records of American business. The volume is intended to contribute to discussion of the history of business and its place in American society. This is reflected

throughout in the emphasis on the selection of records of continuing value for historical research purposes.

For many years it has been said that the corporate and information revolution will leave archivists behind unless we reposition the archival role. Several writers in the volume make statements on the issue, but few recognise that unless archivists get involved in the process of records creation, there will be no records left to select. Most writers in the volume take the approach that appraisal processes are a way of improving the selection of archival records - presumably paper records already in existence and no longer required for current use. Such an approach is a long way from the definition of appraisal in AS4390, which identifies the importance of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured. In an increasingly electronic environment it is risky to hope that valuable records will somehow drop into the archival programme. Electronic records are rarely mentioned in the volume.

Richard Cox's focus on the evidential nature of records sets his paper apart from the others. Cox argues that the traditional archival focus has been on historical rather than organisational needs, appraising records for their informational rather than their evidential value. Cox advocates a role for both in-house and collecting archivists to act as gatekeepers in a post-custodial world, as electronic recordkeeping systems demand the early involvement of archivists to ensure that integrity and reliability is maintained over time. Although the electronic environment is prompting archivists to change their appraisal practices, Cox argues that the changes were necessary anyway.

For Christopher Baer, appraisal has traditionally been a cost-benefit analysis, as opposed to archival theory which is concerned with the integrity of records. Strategy, structure, detail and function are the parameters of his appraisal approach. Baer argues that this approach covers everything that an archivist needs to know in order to select records based on their importance in the creating organisation. The likely result is increased managerial records, providing greater evidence of an organisation's activity than 'corporate' records. To avoid 'accidents of evidence,' where the records that survive may be misconstrued as the important records, Bruce Bruemmer argues for the use of functional appraisal. In the electronic environment

archivists 'can no longer afford to linger at the end of the records cycle' (p. 155). Bruemmer contends that functional appraisal allows the archivist to define selection criteria regardless of extant records, and possibly at the beginning of the records 'cycle.'

The 'Minnesota Method' developed by Mark Greene and Todd Daniels-Howell, grew from a belief that existing appraisal theory did not address the enormity or complexity of the task facing a large collecting institution. Their 'pragmatic' approach to the selection of records provides a framework to identify collecting priorities, and to determine the level of documentation to acquire. Other writers suggest ways in which gaps in the archival collection can be filled from non-traditional sources. Timothy Ericson suggests the use of external documentation to achieve 'documentary goals,' whilst James Fogerty advocates oral history programmes to ensure that corporate knowledge is captured.

The 'debate' between in-house and collecting archives continues the focus on preserving records for historical research. Michael Moss and Lesley Richmond support increased international convergence between the archival and historical professions and suggest that in-house archives can only ever be a partial solution. In discussing the advantages and disadvantages of in-house and collecting archives Karen Benedict asserts that collecting archives are more susceptible to funding cuts. Benedict suggests that outsourcing may be one alternative to ensure the maintenance of corporate memory.

The foreword by James O'Toole emphasises the importance of archival services becoming more pro-active to meet the needs of their users. Philip Mooney argues that the under-resourcing of corporate archives is largely a result of the archival community's inability to adapt archival practices to changes in the corporate world. As archivists must be able to link into corporate goals and strategies, Mooney argues for the importance of selling to the organisation the benefits and use of their records. Marcy Goldstein's paper examines the importance of archivists responding to changes in the corporation, and contributing to corporate goals. Goldstein suggests that by taking advantage of new technologies corporate archives can move from being a store of 'dusty files' to become a corporate knowledge centre.

For me, an obvious role for corporate archivists is to be involved in the management of all records in the organisation. Effective records management programmes contribute to the efficient operation of the organisation and ensure records of continuing value are created and captured appropriately. The overall approach in the volume perpetuates the artificial divisions between archives and records management. Even if archivists are concerned only with historical value, changes in archival practice are necessary to ensure the capture of electronic records of continuing value. The volume does provide some interesting statements on current practice, but provides little guidance for managing business records into the future.

The Directory of Corporate Archives contains information on 88 businesses in the UK offering access to their archives. The information has been obtained by surveying corporate members of the Business Archives Council. The Directory is targeted at researchers, and provides useful information about the history of the company, scope and description of the archive, and details about inquiries and access. Details of modern records management responsibilities are included. The history of the company provides important contextual information about the activities of the company, and details of mergers and acquisitions. The Directory is alphabetical, however an index would be useful, as would an industry listing. Although only a small number of companies are listed, this would be a very useful volume for researchers.

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William Twining and Emma Varndon Quick (Editors), *Legal Records in the Commonwealth*, Dartmouth Publishing Company, Aldershot, Hampshire, 1994. xi + 332 pp. ISBN 1-85521-448-2.

This book was one of the outcomes of the Commonwealth Legal Records Project which was sponsored by the Association of Commonwealth Archivists

(ACARM) and the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA). It is an exploratory study only and it had its origins in the resolutions approved at the Toronto Conference on Legal Literature and Information in Small Jurisdictions in 1978.

The Project team who contributed to the book was international and multidisciplinary. The focus of the project is on modern legal records of semi-current or archival value. The problems relating to the management, appraisal, preservation and destruction of legal records in Commonwealth countries are examined through the use of case studies and theme papers.

Twining provides a theoretical perspective of legal records in the Commonwealth. A particular legal theory was adopted to provide a framework for the project, namely the 'law-jobs theory' of the American jurist, Karl Llewellyn. This is akin to a functional approach as it looks at law and its functions. It also takes a broad sociological approach that does not distinguish between archives jurisdictions, and includes records creators such as the courts, government departments, law societies, legal aid commissions, community legal services as well as legal practitioners. A provenance-based definition for legal records was adopted, i.e. records created by 'institutions specialised to law'. A decision was not made to amend this definition where it was difficult to ascertain whether certain institutions fell within the scope of the definition. These matters were resolved on pragmatic grounds.

In the first footnote after acknowledgements to those who assisted them, Twining says:

> The views advanced and the manner in expressing them are my responsibility alone. If any of what follows seems eccentric, heretical or novel to archivists or colleagues in other disciplines, this can be attributed to the fact that this is the work of a legal theorist, who is neither an historian nor an archivist...

The case studies were of Xanadu, a fictional case study which is a composite constructed to provide an overview of the problems of preservation and disposal of legal records in any comparable jurisdiction. The other case

studies were of Ghana, England and Wales, and Kenya. The theme papers were entitled 'Records Management in the Court Service in England and Wales' by Enid Smith, 'The Use of Unpublished Data in Socio-Legal Research' by Neil Rickman and 'The Perspective of the Legal Historian: Legal and Socio-Legal Historical Research' by Louis A. Knafla. Twining and Varndon Quick provide the conclusion.

Given the focus of the project and the nature of the jurisdictions from which it draws, how useful is this publication to Australian archivists and records managers in the current recordkeeping environment?

Its focus is quite squarely on semi-current records and records of archival value. Twining admits to drawing heavily on Schellenberg and for the purposes of the project, the concept of 'archival value' was central. The records continuum is a dominant feature of the current debate in Australia and there is a school of thought that rejects the concept of 'records of archival value', i.e. records that have a status or value determined by archivists. In spite of this, the term still has currency among practicing archivists. The more holistic approach of regarding records as part of a continuum poses challenges to archival institutions about how they now carry out the activities that they have traditionally undertaken. *Legal Records in the Commonwealth* takes this debate no further as it represents very much the traditional approach.

I do not think that it is useful to accept the proposition that 'a national archives policy should address legal records as a key element in its overall agenda'. Current developments in recordkeeping practices depend on the need for a business analysis to be undertaken to document the functions and activities of the organisation carrying out those functions and activities. Legal records are types of records and the approach inherent in the proposition would cut across this type of business analysis. The emphasis when undertaking a business analysis is not on the nature of the records created but the nature of the activities that are carried out.

There is still a need to evaluate the activities and it may be at this point that the idea that legal activities may be worthy of special consideration in that the records that document those activities, i.e. the legal records may

'embody a crucial part of the history and national heritage [of Australia]' as they propose.

   What underlies this book is the idea of a documentation strategy although it was never described as such. The strategy, however does not recognise jurisdictional boundaries. What relationship is there between such a documentation strategy within the jurisdiction, the policies of the archival organisation with the responsibility for that jurisdiction, the needs of stakeholders, and the recordkeeping practices of the records creating bodies within it?

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Reports

Australian Law Reform Commission, *Australia's Federal Record: A Review of the Archives Act 1983*, AGPS, Canberra, 1998. 430pp. ISBN 0 642 30536 6.

Australia's Federal Record: A Review of Archives Act 1983 is exciting, sensible, and occasionally depressing. It is a credit to those involved in the Review, as it is obvious the archival concepts and demands within the sector have been well understood. It is also a credit to all those organisations and individuals who made constructive submissions.

   It is wonderful to read that the National Archives is held in high regard. Over the past decade they have become leaders, providing support to the archives/recordkeeping worlds, and this hard work should be appreciated.

   It is obvious that the experience gained in implementing the *Archives Act* since 1984 has been used to great benefit and the necessary changes are reflected in the Review. The original Act was innovative and was part of the

rise in importance of administrative law. Its strength is confirmed by the fact that the Review has not scrapped the original version but expanded and revised it in line with the changed environment.

The Review highlights how the government environment has changed dramatically since 1984, especially in relation to the record. Paper is increasingly being replaced by electronic media. It is interesting how the emphasis in the profession has changed from managing the archives as an end product to concentrating on the records continuum to ensure that records are created properly in the first place so that archives survive in good condition.

The Review recommends: amalgamated access categories of restriction, an emphasis on mandatory standards, the need to develop and test new appraisal strategies, the right of an individual to amend their records and be advised of disposal policies in relation to personal records, the extension of the FOI Act to cover records not in the open period, the exclusion of a workload test, the maintenance of Archives' offices in each capital city, the recognition of the complex issues surrounding records relating to indigenous people, and the need to ensure contractors maintain records. These are all rational, sensible, decisions which will ensure accountability, protect people's rights, and enable better access to the records.

The recommended new legislation will make some substantial changes. The Archives' power will be enhanced by becoming a statutory authority, yet its power will be influenced by the reshaped Council, the expanded responsibilities given to agencies, and the emphasis placed on standard setting rather than involvement in the archival work such as appraisal and disposal.

Becoming a statutory authority is recognition of the need for independence. An Archives never fits comfortably in either a cultural, or agency focussed portfolio, as its roles are diverse. It needs to be free of a focus determined by the priorities of a parent agency and be able to determine its own destiny.

The new Council will have the power to give directions to the National

Archivist in a way which is far more encompassing than the present advisory role. The Council will be a high level, well credentialed group, representing a broad range of views not just those of specific stakeholders. It is an exciting yet daunting prospect to have such a Council. Its composition will be of great importance. If members are informed and inspired, the Council will be a wonderful champion for the National Archives and have entre into various levels of government and society which, perhaps, are not available to the Archives at present. It will require a rethink on the part of the Archives, as the Council will require work, education and attention. The management style and organisational independence will be answerable to this external body. Overall this should be a positive change. The Council will be a powerful ally and contribute in a positive fashion to the direction of the National Archives of Australia.

The change in emphasis from paper to electronic records has changed the relationship between the National Archives and agencies in a way that is very interesting. Records management is now more important. The Review is plain that the Archives must be involved in records from their creation. Good recordkeeping has to come from the top and Chief Executives must ensure records are created, maintained and preserved. The definition of custody changes. Custody of records as a key role of an archival institution is replaced by how best to make the records accessible. This may mean leaving them in the agency to be managed.

The management of temporary records, including long term temporary records, is given over solely to agencies. The imposition of charges is recommended for access to records other than personal files. The intellectual control will remain with the agencies. This is worrying as some temporary records, especially personal files, are kept for many years and it would be much more sensible to have at least the intellectual control centralised in the National Archives.

Access management under the new legislation can also be decentralised. The National Archives and an agency may enter into an access agreement thus allowing responsibility for giving or denying access and the access review process to be managed by the agency rather than the Archives. This is also a worrying departure from current practice, as an understanding of issues

surrounding access to records is built up over time by looking at the complexities which arise over a broad range of records. By giving the sole responsibility to an agency, the knowledge, understanding, and broad view will be lost to all involved. The influence and knowledge base of the Archives will be diminished.

Throughout the Review an emphasis is placed on the National Archives becoming standard setters. This is sensible. There is also a role for the Auditor to assess agencies' recordkeeping practices. The report makes no reference, however, to the need for education and for archivists from the National Archives to be involved with the nitty gritty work in agencies to ensure it is done acceptably. Nor does the report consider the need to appoint archivists within agencies to ensure the work, especially appraisal and disposal, is carried out effectively. Standards are nothing without support to make them work. Commitment from the Chief Executives is a good intention but it is acknowledged that the public service structure has been devolved, outsourced, contracted out, and its numbers reduced. In this context it needs to be emphasised that there is a need for staff with a responsibility for recordkeeping to be in each agency to help the National Archives' staff ensure the standards are met. In the present climate the proposed legislation could lead to no-one taking responsibility. If responsibilities are to be devolved to agencies and the standards set by the Archives, the structure must exist within agencies to ensure recordkeeping is understood and performed.

The section on financing the National Archives is a bit odd. It is assumed that because the Archives will no longer be involved in temporary records that the budget can be reduced progressively by 20%. It does not seem to be understood that the same functions need to be performed whether temporary records are managed or not. The new legislation places increased responsibilities on the Archives. The fact that it will be a statutory authority and that the new Council will cost money is not acknowledged. The finances should be maintained at the present level at least. The Review should not have as one of its goals to reduce the Archives' budget.

It also proposes a $5 public entry fee to the Archives. Honestly! The statistics show that 15,335 people visited the Archives in the last year. If this was

maintained (which is doubtful if a fee was imposed) the National Archives would raise $76,675. By the time the staff collect the money, give receipts, and have it processed through the system, there will not be much profit. There are also notions of accountability of government and the public's democratic rights, but never mind. It will be very pleasing when this notion of the public service being half service industry, half business enterprise, is abandoned.

The appointment of a National Archivist within the government hierarchy is refreshing. It acknowledges the broad ranging responsibilities of archivists and helps protect the position from becoming a political appointment.

The Review does reflect exciting, changing times and highlights how the archives' world has changed in the past decade. The recommendations, on the whole, should ensure that the National Archives of Australia survives in a strong position well into the next century.

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Electronic Commerce: Building the Legal Framework, Report of the Electronic Commerce Expert Group to the Attorney-General, 31 March 1998. Available at: http://www.law.gov.au/aghome/advisory/eceg single.htm[1]

As I waded through this 164 page report I found myself looking for the erratum, which would say (rather like the one at the beginning of *1066 and all that* 'for pheasant, read peasant throughout') 'for information, read record throughout'. I did not find such a message, so this review might be construed as the missing erratum. For there are two things to be said about this report: one is that it proposes a minimalist, legislative response, and two, that the response is based on a minimal understanding of

recordkeeping. While the first, the minimalist response, may not be a problem, the second needs addressing, and it needs addressing by us, the recordkeeping profession.

In June 1997 the Commonwealth Attorney-General commissioned an expert group to develop a option to deal with problems impeding the further growth of electronic commerce in Australia. The problems boil down to this:

- there is a reluctance to engage in electronic transactions because there is no public consensus about accepting electronic signatures;

- nor is there any agreement about how to validate and keep records of electronic transactions;

- and there is no certainty that the law will protect any-one who has engaged in such electronic transactions and finds themselves in dispute.

The lack of confidence is apparently located primarily in the field of Internet trading, despite the statistics of massive growth often brandished at the luddites who prefer shopping in real space shops.

Context

The Attorney-General set the following terms of reference (which I have somewhat edited):

> The expert group is to report on the form and scope of the appropriate arrangements for regulation, if any, of EC transactions, taking into account the following objectives:
>
> (a) Legislation should be recommended only if it will increase the overall efficiency of EC transactions. In developing options, the expert group will seek to ensure certainty in the market place and in contract dealings and other commercial transactions, to minimise the regulatory burden on business and government, and keep litigation and costs to a minimum.

(b) In assessing the matters in (a), regard should be had to the need to resolve the legal uncertainties which are often cited as an impediment to the adoption of EC, and the appropriate means of updating the law to take account of technological change.

(c) Any proposed legislation must be uniform and conform with existing international standards and uniform rules...

(Appendix 2, Terms of Reference)

These terms are amplified to identify eight substantial issues:

(i)   types of electronic transactions to be covered;

(ii)   legal recognition, retention and attribution of data messages;

(iii)   how requirements for writing, a signature and an original can be satisfied in an electronic medium;

(iv)   admissibility and evidential value of data messages;

(v)   formation and validity of contracts;

(vi)   liability of third parties, such as the operators of value-added-networks;

(vii)   codification of trading partner agreements; and

(viii) consumer protection issues.   (*ibid.*)

Whatever proposal the expert group developed, the brief insisted that 'the potential application of alternatives to legislation and court-based remedies, and mechanisms to support these measures' and 'the effect upon any sector of business and government' (*ibid.*) had to be taken into account.

I have taken this space to summarise the terms of reference as they make clear both the large range of matters the expert group was supposed to investigate and the attitude of the commissioning agency, the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. It is necessary to understand the context in which the expert group was working as one of general governmental hostility to interventionist regulation of commercial activities and an expressed preference for individual arrangements with

recourse to litigation as the principal means of redress in the event of disputes. An earlier report the experts refer to makes this explicit:

> what is needed is a non-regulatory, market-oriented approach that facilitates the emergence of a predictable legal environment to support business and commerce.   (*ibid.*, 4.2.9)

In many ways the most interesting thing about this report is that the inquiry took place at all despite the explicit reluctance of the Federal government. That the group should propose Commonwealth legislation to respond to the issues explored in these circumstances is testimony to the strength of the perception that real difficulties are impeding the growth of electronic commerce in Australia. The expert group was made up of a mixture of experts from predominantly the legal field (public sector and private) and representatives from the business world, with the information technology industry represented by the Executive Director of the Australian Information Industry Association.[2] It included no representative from the recordkeeping profession nor from any archival institution. Given the impossible task they were set, the course of action they took, to solve predominantly legally-defined problems, is not surprising.

What did they do

The group deliberated over a period of eight to nine months and reported on 31 March 1998. As the report puts it, the group's interest was in 'how these changes [electronic means of conducting business activities, commercial and government] will impact upon the law, both in Australia and internationally, and the extent to which Australian laws need to be updated to ensure that Australian business is given the opportunity to be at the forefront of electronic commerce internationally' (from the Overview in the Executive Summary of the Report, *ibid.*, p.2).

They looked at:

- doing nothing;
- leaving matters to individual contractual arrangements;

- or leaving matters to the courts to determine, on the basis of existing law; and

- at providing a legislated framework.

Because the individual solution and the option of leaving matters to case-law could not provide a broad and consistent basis for operating, and because there are gaps in the law's recognition of information technology, the group determined that new, Commonwealth legislation was needed to provide a national framework for electronic commerce. They argue that the new framework has to be accepted internationally so the response needs to be based on the Model Law on Electronic Commerce developed by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law of 1996 (referred to hereafter as the UNCITRAL Model Law). In fact, for the legislative proposal to be acceptable to the then federal government, the expert group needed the leverage of the international model and international consensus it represents. This is a pity because Australian law and Australian recordkeeping practices and standards offer better models for the admissibility of electronic records as evidence.

So the report is structured around commentary on the UNCITRAL model law (see Appendix 3 of the report), not the issues highlighted in the terms of reference. (You will look in vain, for example, for any discussion of consumer protection matters under that heading). Since the group reported, the Federal Attorney-General has announced, on 30 July 1998, it will proceed:

> The Government intends to encourage business and consumer confidence by setting a light-handed regulatory framework to support and encourage development, led by the private sector, of the information economy   (News release, Attorney-General's, 30 July 1998)

Aims and boundaries

These are the key objectives the group set itself:

> the need to increase the overall efficiency of electronic commerce transactions, the need to resolve the legal uncertainties which are

often cited as an impediment to the adoption of electronic commerce, and the appropriate means of updating the law to take account of technological change.   (*ibid.*, p.4).

Achievement of the objectives was guided by two sound principles:

- achieving functional equivalence, which means that, as far as possible, paper based commerce and electronic commerce should be treated equally by the law; and

- the related principle of ensuring technology neutrality, which means that the law should not discriminate between forms of technology
(*ibid.*, Executive Summary, p. 2).

In Chapter 1, they set the investigation's scope with some definitions and boundaries:

- the definition of 'commercial' follows the usage of the UNCITRAL model law ;[3]

- consideration of electronic commerce is limited to 'trade or commercial transactions involving computer to computer communications' (*ibid.*, p.15);

- despite the very broad scope of the UNCITRAL model law's view of commerce considerations were confined to 'broader generic issues of contract formation and statutory form requirements such as requirements for certain contracts to be in writing or signed' (*ibid.*);

- matters relating to security, privacy, copyright, law enforcement, credit reporting, taxation and others are excluded;

- and although Chapter 3 analyses electronic signatures at some length, the public key authentication framework is left for another working group.

Analysis of the problem

The report identifies the problems as follows:

- the need 'to build business and consumer confidence in the security

of electronic transactions which occur on the Internet between parties that do not have a pre-existing relationship' (*ibid.*, p.13);

- the problems of definitions, which both create uncertainty and make data collection difficult;

- lack of accepted general infrastructure for electronic commercial transactions in which parties have the same confidence that they have for paper-based dealings;

- the problems of rapid change in information technology which means today's legislative response is likely to be tomorrow's dodo as soon as it is passed.

Recommendations

They looked at what was needed for confidence in the infrastructure of electronic transactions to match that of paper-based exchanges. What they consider should be in the legislation is embodied in recommendations 4 to 15. This includes:

- a basic recognition that information, records and signatures in electronic form should not be denied legal effect on the basis of their electronic form;

- a data message [which] should be 'accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference' to replace 'in writing' requirements in acts;

- functional equivalence of electronic signatures, with certain exceptions;

- reliability of author identity and content approval to be as reliable as possible at the time the method was used;

- complete and unaltered information as equivalent to originality;

- the Commonwealth and NSW evidence [law] model to be adopted to satisfy requirements for admissibility of electronic documents;

- an electronic equivalence for the retention of electronic and paper-based [documents];

- validity of data messages in contract formation;

- onus on [the] addressee to prove that a message was sent by the originator or with their authority as in the paper world (in common law the addressee needs to authenticate the originator's identity);

- time and place of despatch rules and time zones differences to be covered.

(This masterly summary was provided by Livia Iacovino in her paper, 'Regulating Net Transactions: The Legal Implications for Recordkeeping in Australia', presented at the 1998 ASA Conference in Fremantle).

Comment

Well, you might ask, and what is wrong with that? In many ways, one cannot criticise what is proposed. It is more what is left out, or not referred to, or the framework of reference in general which is problematic. Let us consider the eight matters identified in the terms of reference:

(i) types of electronic transactions to be covered

The report limited its scope to trade or commercial transactions with a more restrictive definition than that of the UNCITRAL model law (see p.135, electronic commerce). Despite identifying the problem of lack of agreed definitions, transaction itself is not defined. This, I think, creates significant problems for the expert group as it confirms a view of the records of electronic commerce as *post factum*, passive products, not the means of conducting the transactions themselves. There is no evident comprehension of the link between the transactional nature of records and the problems of acceptability of electronic commerce with which the group is attempting to deal. Even in the discussion of the need to accept data messages for contract formation, where the transmission of messages and their acceptance is the transaction, the nexus is not recognised.

(ii) legal recognition, retention and attribution of data messages

The exclusive focus of the discussion on the UNCITRAL model law results

in the use of 'data messages' instead of records throughout. It can be argued that Australian evidence law has real advantages over the international model for accepting documents and communications generated by electronic systems, based on recognition of 'business records' in case-law and statutory law. The business records concept has enabled the acceptance of computer-generated documents as evidence and established tests for their reliability.

Retention is more difficult but there are Australian standards which can be invoked. The group accepts the Commonwealth and NSW evidence legislation for the purposes of meeting the UNCITRAL model law's admissibility requirements without understanding what that implies about recordkeeping. When they look at the retention issue, (e.g. 4.5.59) they propose that 'Record management systems should be standardised at a technical and policy level, based as far as possible on a common definition of what constitutes an electronic record'. It is impossible to tell whether this is a pious hope on their part or an indication that they know these standards and definitions exist.

(iii) how requirements for writing, a signature and an original can be satisfied in an electronic medium

Writing

The discussion which incorporates the UNCITRAL model law's analysis of the uses of writing is one of the more interesting sections of the report (see 2.6.2 in the Legal issues chapter). The drafters of the model law identify eleven reasons for requiring writing for transactions or documents.[4] While the discussion recognises some overlap with the signatures issue, the majority of the reasons have more to do with the fixity of records than the authorisation (a signature matter), their reliability over time or acceptability as evidence in a variety of contexts. Reliability and acceptability are recordkeeping matters, pure and simple, and the issues have been around rather longer than electronic commerce. The formula that they adopt: 'a data message [which] should be 'accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference' to replace 'in writing' (Recommendation 6) effectively ignores reliability in favour of fixity and acceptability.

Signatures

I think it fair to say that the group regarded the issues of signatures as too hard and adopted the UNCITRAL model law's limited equivalence and reliability test. The Victorian model, expressed in the *Discussion Paper, Promoting Electronic Business: Electronic Commerce Framework Bill,* (July 1998) I think comes up with a better solution. They propose a definition as follows:

> In this Act, 'electronic signature', in relation to a person, means a process applied by the person to a document in electronic form:
>
> (a) by which the document is authenticated by that person; and
>
> (b) which contains an acknowledgment that the document is being signed.   (p.16).

Original document

The discussion of an original [document] seems oblivious of the fact that the Commonwealth Evidence law has abolished the original document rule as a means of proving the contents of documents (see S. 51) in favour of other tests for the acceptance of documentary evidence (see Sections 146 and 147.)

(iv) admissibility and evidential value of data messages

Yet here they accept the efficacy of the Evidence legislation (in admitting documents generated by computer systems) and note, with approval, that more states (Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia) are moving to pass mirror legislation to the Commonwealth Act.

(v) formation and validity of contracts

The report accepts the need for a legislative provision in principle which accepts the validity of data messages for provision of offer and acceptance in contract formation. This seems to me to be a specific instance of acceptance of data messages as equivalent to writing and signatures dealt with in Articles 5 and 6 of the UNCITRAL model law.

*(vi) liability of third parties, such as the operators of
value-added-networks*

Not addressed

(vii) codification of trading partner agreements

This is dealt with only in the contract framework

viii) consumer protection issues

What?

Nothing specific and covered only implicitly in the contract formation discussion and the issue of the general validity of data messages.

It should be clear from this account that we are looking at an extreme, minimalist response, which seems more concerned to conform to the international models than solve the perceived problems. The decision to use the term 'data message' which follows the UNCITRAL model law is indicative. This follows the decision to use the term in the 1998 regulations appended to the *Carriage of Goods by Sea Act 1991,* which will recognise the use of electronic documents, the implication being that they were waiting on the UNCITRAL model law to frame these rules. An alternative, such as 'record', was apparently not considered. While the political context of the report explains why this has happened, it does not mean the recordkeeping profession should allow it to go forward unchallenged.

In Chapter 4 the report identifies five issues to be resolved for confidence in electronic transactions:

> What is needed is that the infrastructure which already exists for paper exchanges can also be established for electronic exchanges, so that:
>
> (a)   services and networks are secure and reliable;
>
> (b)   transactions are safe and private;
>
> (c)   there are ways to prove the origin, receipt and integrity of information received;

(d) there are ways to identify the parties involved; and

(e) there are appropriate redress mechanisms available if something
     goes wrong.   (4.2.12)

Of the five matters only the last, the issue of redress, is actually a legal one. The first two, are in part technological, and in part recognising the need for a trusted, third party, service provider, equivalent to Australia Post or other providers of that sort of service. The other two matters (c & d) are in fact issues which recordkeepers have been dealing with since the beginning of written records: the means to prove the origin, receipt and integrity of communications made and received, and ways to identify the parties involved. If records of electronic transactions can be accepted as evidence, then the courts should be able to offer redress in cases of disputes.

The usefulness of the Commonwealth/NSW 1995 evidence legislation is recognised: it is accepted that it provides a sufficient basis to satisfy the requirements of Article 9 of the UNCITRAL model law. This requires that evidence law should not deny the admissibility of data messages purely because they are data messages. It then goes on to discuss the issue of their weight as evidence:

> Information in the form of a data message shall be given due evidential weight. In assessing the evidential weight of a data message, regard shall be had to the reliability of the manner in which the data message was generated, stored or communicated, to the reliability of the manner in which the integrity of the information was maintained, to the manner in which its originator was identified, and to any other relevant factor.   (Appendix 3 of the report, p. 130)

The provisions of the evidence legislation dealing with documents produced by devices, and which form part of the records of a business, (see Sections 146 and 147) are considered to satisfy Article 9. Why could not these provisions, which are based on, and are intended to replace the common law acceptance of business records in evidence, have been used for much of the framework for establishing the reliability tests for electronic commerce transactional records? No connection is made in the discussions in the report.

Conclusion

There are Australian recordkeeping standards and practice which should be drawn on to develop a more useful legal response to the perceived problems. Australian evidence law supports a record-based solution to the issues of acceptability and reliability of the records of electronic transactions. The next step seems to me to be obvious: we need the recordkeeping voice to be heard in the next part of the process, the development of the legislation based on the UNCITRAL model law. The then Federal Attorney-General proposed the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General as the means of developing a uniform model law for enactment in all Australian jurisdictions. The expert group understood that their report would be subject to discussion by a wide range of groups including governments, government agencies, the private sector, EDI advisory bodies and consultants but I am not aware of whether that included any of the bodies with a professional recordkeeping interest. Certainly now there is a need for intervention by Australian recordkeepers. This is not to say that the minimalist response proposed will not successfully form the basis of a legal framework for electronic commerce. It is more that we have something unique to offer to assist its development actively, recordkeeping standards and definitions, supported by a degree of consensus in our profession which is unusual by international standards.

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Endnotes

[1]   This review has been developed through numerous discussions with colleagues, particularly Livia Iacovino and Barbara Reed, and also owes much to the influence of the writings of Chris Hurley. The responsibility for the opinions expressed and any errors is, of course, my own.

[2]   The full membership was: Mr Philip Argy, Partner, Mallesons Stephen Jaques; Mr Murray Briggs, former Director, Legal Management Service, Attorney-General's Department, NSW; Mrs Karen Hamilton, General Counsel, Stock Exchange; Mr Peter Leonard, Partner, Gilbert

& Tobin; Mr Robert Martin, Chief Counsel, Crown Solicitor's Office, South Australia; Mr Adrian McCullagh, Senior Associate, Gadens Ridgeway; Mr Claude Piccinin, Assistant Director, Business Council of Australia; Mr Colin Simpson, Managing Director, Card Systems & Services, ERG Limited; Associate Professor Mark Sneddon, Faculty of Law, University of Melbourne; Mr Peter Upton, Executive Director, Australian Information Industry Association; Chair: Ms Jenny Clift, Senior Government Lawyer, Information and Security Law Division, Attorney General's Department.

[3] Foonote **** of the Model Law on Electronic Commerce defines 'commercial' thus:

> The term 'commercial' should be given a wide interpretation so as to cover matters arising from all relationships of a commercial nature, whether contractual or not. Relationships of a commercial nature include, but are not limited to, the following transactions: any trade transaction for the supply or exchange of goods or services; distribution agreement; commercial representation or agency; factoring; leasing; construction of works; consulting; engineering; licensing; investment; financing; banking; insurance; exploitation agreement or concession; joint venture and other forms of industrial or business cooperation; carriage of goods or passengers by air, sea, rail or road.
>
> Appendix 3 of the Report, p.127

[4] they are:

(a) to ensure that there would be tangible evidence of the existence and nature of the intent of the parties to bind themselves;

(b) to help the parties be aware of the consequences of their entering into a contract;

(c) to provide that a document would be legible to all;

(d) to provide that a document would remain unaltered over time and provide a permanent record of a transaction;

(e) to allow for the reproduction of a document so that each party would hold a copy of the same information;

(f) to allow for the authentication of information by means of a signature;

(g) to provide that a document would be in a form acceptable to public authorities and courts;

(h) to finalise the intent of the author of the 'writing' and provide a record of that intent;

(i) to allow for the easy storage of information in a tangible form;

(j) to facilitate control and subsequent audit for accounting, tax or other regulatory purposes; and

(k) to bring legal rights and obligations into existence in those cases where a 'writing' was required for validity purposes, including where required under the terms of international instruments.

Gatekeeper: A Strategy for Public Key Technology Use in the Government,
Office of Government Information Technology, Canberra, 1998.
144pp. ISBN 0 642 32032 2 Also available on the Web at http://
www.ogit.gov.au/

On 6 May 1998 the Minister of Finance and Administration, Mr John Fahey,
launched *Gatekeeper: A Strategy for Public Key Technology Use in the Government*
with the statement that it 'provides a clear framework through which users,
government and the private sector can pursue and promote electronic
commerce in an environment of authenticity and integrity'. The phrase
'authenticity and integrity' is one which strikes a chord with archivists and
should alert the profession that this is a publication that deserves their
consideration.

The subject of the report is public key technology or PKT. Unfortunately
the report is peppered with acronyms, many of which have been invented
within the project and make reading heavy going. Public key cryptography
is an accepted method for securing electronic communications. It provides
the same security assurances that signatures and paper envelopes have always
provided in the paper world:

- authentication - a guarantee that a message really has come from the
  person who claims to have sent it;

- integrity - proof that the message contents have not been altered,
  deliberately or accidentally, during transmission;

- non-repudiation - the certainty of knowing that the sender of the
  message cannot later deny having sent it;

- confidentiality - evidence that the contents of the message have not
  been disclosed to third parties.

In the traditional mail system a person's signature is the main identifier
that provides authentication, integrity and non-repudiation, while a sealed
envelope provides confidentiality. In the electronic world, digital signatures
and encryption provide these security services.

In a public key system, every user has a set of two keys: a private key known only to them and a public key that is known to all other users. These keys are used to generate digital signatures and encrypt documents. If I use my private key to create a document then others can use my public key to prove that it was created by me. If I create a document for a specific person I use their public key which is known to me (and others). The person for whom the document is intended is then the only person who can read the encrypted document through the use of their private key.

The Project Gatekeeper report proposes a strategy to establish a rationalised voluntary mechanism for the implementation of public key technology by Commonwealth agencies. The technology will facilitate interoperability and allow users to choose from a panel of service providers whose products and methods of delivery have been evaluated and accredited to meet prescribed Government standards for integrity and trust. The project seeks to ensure that public key technology to these standards is available to everyone who wishes to conduct on-line transactions with Commonwealth agencies. This includes industry and the public on matters as diverse as doing business with the Commonwealth to the receipt of Commonwealth services.

The report describes the basic processes involved in the generation and use of public key technology, describes and recommends administrative bodies and processes for their management and addresses a range of issues including privacy, security and the law.   Listed among the agency requirements there is the mention of the non-repudiation of transactions and that non-repudiation needs to be sustained over time:

> Public keys that support the authenticity and reliability of Commonwealth records will need to be preserved along with their directory entry for at least the life of the record.

Legal issues were addressed by the Attorney General's Department in *Electronic Commerce: Building the Legal Framework, Report of the Electronic Commerce Expert Group to the Attorney General,* 31 March 1998, the Executive Summary of which, including recommendations, has been included as an annex. While the development of legislation to facilitate the implementation and conduct of electronic commerce in Australia is recommended, legislation that

specifically addresses digital signatures is not. Any new legislation should strive to be technology neutral and ensure that information, records and signatures in electronic form are not denied legal effect solely on the grounds that they are in an electronic form. Similarly a provision that allows data messages to satisfy requirements for an original, subject to requirements about the integrity of the data message, should be enacted.

Many of the legal issues raised and discussed are of direct interest to archivists and records managers. Public key technology itself has the potential to be a valuable tool for use in the development of recordkeeping systems that maintain the authenticity and integrity of records. If stable standards are developed and directories of public keys maintained over time, public key technology will form a major component in future recordkeeping, as it has a significant role to play in showing that records contained in recordkeeping systems are authentic and reliable.

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Manuals

European Commission *Insar* **Supplement III,** *Guidelines on Best Practices for Using Electronic Information: How to Deal With Machine-readable Data and Electronic Documents*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, 1997. 60pp. ISBN 92 828 2285 0. OOPEC catalogue number CM AC 97 SO2 EN C. Sales in Australia through Hunter Publications, PO Box 404, Abbotsford, Victoria 3167, telephone 03 9417 5361, fax 03 9419 7154. Also available on the Web at http://www2.echo.lu/dlm/en/gdlines.html

The *Guidelines on Best Practices for Using Electronic Information: How to Deal with Machine-readable Data and Electronic Documents* were a result of the DLM Forum, an event which was jointly organised by the member states of the European

Union and the European Commission, and held in Brussels in December 1996. The forum was attended by a broad cross-section of participants from various fields, such as research, industry, administration and archives. The aim of the event was to discuss the effect of technological innovation on the authenticity and long term preservation of electronic information. The guidelines, developed by a multidisciplinary working party and commented on by forum participants, were published as a supplement to the European Archives News journal *Insar* in 1997.

In the preface to the guidelines, Dr Martin Bangemann, member of the EC responsible for information and telecommunications technologies, notes that they will 'help to define the short and medium term strategies needed to solve the [...] problems of managing and conserving electronically stored information'(p.5). There is no specific mention in the introduction of the guidelines' relevance to the challenges of electronic recordkeeping, and this brings about an expectation in the reader that their focus will be largely on the data management and data quality aspects of managing electronic information. This focus is not, however, actually maintained in the guidelines, leading to a confusing mixture of data and records issues to the detriment of some useful information and effective methods of presentation.

The way in which certain basic concepts of recordkeeping are addressed in the guidelines is, in some senses, at odds with the understanding of such concepts and the relationships between them which is widely held in the Australian recordkeeping community. The guidelines' treatment, for example, of the nature of records, information, data and documents suffers from a lack of emphasis on both the evidential nature of records (in all formats), and the relationship between electronic records and other forms of electronic information. Similarly, such introductory explanations should, if the guidelines are aiming to address recordkeeping issues, include reference to recordkeeping systems. Other conceptual problems evident in the guidelines include a jarring mixture of continuum theory and life-cycle approaches (particularly in the section titled 'Transfer') and a discussion of the archival description of electronic records which lacks any substantial reference to metadata.

In contrast with some of these conceptual problems, the use of graphics

and coded 'information boxes' in the guidelines is excellent. The boxes contain a range of different sorts of information, including 'basic' or 'advanced' explanations of concepts, examples from existing projects and institutions and options to consider in making decisions. A 'decision box' is used, for example, in the guidelines' description of technical standards, where different options are outlined with reference to their usefulness for managing and maintaining complex electronic documents. Standards are again discussed in relation to accessing and disseminating electronic information, and technically based information such as this is consistently well presented throughout the guidelines.

It is proposed in the introduction to the guidelines that they aim to provide advice and guidance for the range of disciplines who are stakeholders in good electronic records management, such as public administration, archives, information technology and research. This is a broad audience, and a narrower focus would possibly have resulted in a more useful tool. The introduction to the guidelines states that 'they can be used in conjunction with the International Council on Archives' (ICA) guide on electronic records which deals with electronic records from the point of view of a single discipline'(p.7). For the guidelines to complement the ICA guide[1] most effectively, they should be read primarily to obtain guidance on strategies for the management of electronic information – which is their strength - rather than for gaining an understanding of the challenges of electronic recordkeeping relevant to the Australian context. As a set of guidelines for managing 'machine-readable data and electronic documents' over time, these do, however, offer some useful information which can support the strategies we develop for keeping electronic records.

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Records Management Office of New South Wales

Endnotes

[1]   This guide, *Guide for Managing Electronic Records from an Archival Perspective,* was published by the ICA's Committee on Electronic Records in February 1997 and is one of a suite of three studies on electronic records, including a literature review.

Public Record Office Victoria, *General Disposal Schedule for Common Administrative Records,* Melbourne, 1996.

Queensland State Archives, *General Disposal and Retention Schedule for Administrative Records,* Brisbane, 1997.

Retention and Disposal Schedules are essential to the legal and accountable disposal of information throughout government. General Disposal Authorities developed by various State institutions throughout Australia are becoming increasingly important management tools, eliminating the need for individual government organisations to develop their own disposal authorities for specific sets of records.

The General Disposal Schedule for Common Administrative Records developed by the Public Record Office of Victoria covers seven categories of administrative records common to government agencies throughout the State. The Schedule is intended to reflect administrative processes within the Victorian government and operate independently of a particular record format, thereby prolonging the application of the Schedule.

The objectives of the Schedule are clearly stated, along with instructions for use and its relationship to other Schedules and Standards.

The body of the Schedule is set out in an uncluttered and easy to follow manner under clear headings with the welcome addition of a column for 'Examples of Records'. Good examples are included under this column heading, but no provision is made for those records which may exist in multiple formats. It is possible for instance that Asset Registers, Contract Registers, Plans and some indexes may be held in both hard copy and electronic form. Whilst the footer on each page states that Normal Administrative Practice is to be used with duplicate records, no guidance for identifying the original is given. The Standard alluded to in the introduction to the Schedule may provide such instruction but this is not clear.

Whilst it is accepted that retention periods and dispositions will differ

within each State and Territory, it was somewhat perplexing to find a listing for taxation records with the disposal action of 'to be finalised'. Perhaps this was merely an oversight but, without explanatory notes, such a disposal action suggests that the sentencing decision was too difficult to make at the time of publication.

The value of a comprehensive index to aid users in their search for listings cannot be underestimated. It is unfortunate that there appears to have been no cohesive approach to the development of this particular index. For example, the term 'Ministerial' listed in the index does not appear in the body of the Schedule itself. It could be construed to fall within the gamut of 'Enquiries Control' on page 6 but this is implied rather than stated. The term 'Temporary Staff' is referred to in the index but the term used in the body of the Schedule is 'Casual Staff'. Perhaps the former was intended as a 'see' reference.

Some items, such as 'Vehicle', are listed repeatedly, with qualifying statements to distinguish between each listing, and narrow the search. Other items are listed more than once but with no qualifying accompaniment to determine the difference. For example, 'Lease Applications' is listed twice but only on referencing the body is it apparent that one listing relates to assets and the other to property. There are a number of similar listings which would benefit from further qualification and ultimately reduce the search time.

Some attempt has been made at keyword out of context (KWOC) indexing but this approach is not consistent.

For example, 'Evaluation - Contracts - Under Seal' also appears as 'Contracts - Under Seal' but is not listed as 'Contracts - Evaluations - Under Seal' or 'Under Seal - Contracts - Evaluations'.

Incomplete class numbers which are missing the alpha suffix may also cause some frustration during the search process.

Other items which would immediately add value to the Schedule would include an explanation of acronyms, definitions and examples of electronic

records, and a definition of the term 'culling'.

These issues aside, the content of the Schedule is a clear reflection of the considerable research and consultation that went into its development.

The General Disposal and Retention Schedule for Administrative Records developed in 1997 by the Queensland State Archives (QSA) is a very sophisticated document encompassing a broad spectrum of administrative records.

The introduction, scope and instructions for use of this Schedule are comprehensive and informative. QSA are to be congratulated for including a statement to protect historical records created before 1920. However, whilst it is stated that archives may be held by individual agencies or by QSA, no instruction is provided as to how agencies should manage their archives, particularly in the case of electronic records.

In general terms the body of the Schedule is established to provide comprehensive coverage of administrative records including the valuable addition of ephemeral records and the process of privatisation. Although the Schedule lacks a definition of electronic records, it was gratifying to see the inclusion of a section for 'Data control and management' which encompasses records specific to the migration and security of electronic information.

The 'Permanent/Temporary' status used for personnel files is somewhat confusing. The disposal action column refers the user to the disposal criteria within the description column but this column contains no such criteria. One would assume that these files are intended to be archived but it is not stated. Further, one wonders about the judiciousness of destroying Temporary Employee files after only seven years from date of last action when Workplace Health and Safety, and Workers Compensation files are held for 50 years and 70+ years respectively.

There are a number of anomalies in the index, the major ones being the listings for Policy and Procedures, both with the indexed reference to page 59. However, Policy is also mentioned on pages 27, 29 and 30 and Procedures

on pages 22, 27, 29, 30 and 33. Despite such anomalies, the Schedule is thorough in its approach to the identification and description of administrative records and no doubt works extremely well.

There is no understating the enormous undertaking in the development of such schedules. Both the PRO Victoria and the QSA are to be congratulated for recognising the need and progressing the development of these schedules. Although each schedule is unique in format, structure and content, both will be of great assistance to the management and authorised disposal of recorded information for agencies within their respective jurisdictions. By extrapolation, they will be extremely useful for comparative purposes when used by organisations elsewhere, as long as careful consideration is given to the legal environment in which such organisations operate.

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Multimedia

Department of Information Management, RMIT Business, *ARLIT on Computing and Communications Vol. 2, No. 2, 1940 - July 1997* (CD-ROM), July 1997. Platform: WinSPIRS (Windows SilverPlatter Information Retrieval Software).

Informit's expanding list of searchable databases now includes a bibliography of archives and records publications. ARLIT stands for Archives and Record Management Literature in Australia and New Zealand. It indexes material published in, by and about the archives and records management professions in Australia and New Zealand.

Coverage is comprehensive, including around 1600 entries on topics

such as recordkeeping systems, electronic recordkeeping, disposal, user services, arrangement and description, collection management and access. The entries are principally taken from journals, conference papers and books published in the two countries, as well as material by Australian and New Zealand authors published around the world. This edition includes data cumulated from 1940 to July 1997. Needless to say, *Archives and Manuscripts* is the largest single source, but a wide range of other sources is referenced.

The fields include Author, Source, Title, Descriptors, Document Type, Place of Publication, Publication Year, Publisher, Conference, Date of Input, and Document Number. Searches can be carried out on a few or all fields, and the display customised as desired.

As a newcomer to the field of archives administration, I have been eager to find resources which enable easy access to a wide range of literature about archives and records management. My current and planned studies make access to such a list of references very useful indeed. Australians and New Zealanders have contributed a great deal to the worldwide profession and practice here is somewhat different to that elsewhere. As a resource for accessing that contribution, the ARLIT database is extremely useful. Thus it seems like a good starting point for students.

It is disappointing that the database does not include a wider coverage of the field. Due to RMIT's focus on local areas, seminal texts are not covered except where they are published in Australia or New Zealand, or by authors from those countries. Occasionally this does include material published elsewhere that refers to theory and practice 'Down-Under'. I found this a bit frustrating, wanting as I did access to all the principal material ever printed! An unreasonable demand to be sure, but as a beginner I would like to access the principal work published by all the prominent authors in the field.

Fortunately, the database works as more than a listing of articles. It documents the development of Australian records theory and practice over time. For example, as well as the detailed listings, some interesting historical

and statistical information can be found. Manipulation of the index display will show that the number of articles published has increased steadily from the 1940s (average two per year) to the 1990s (average eighty per year) with a large bulge in 1991 (120 articles published). This database will prove useful to anyone doing research into archives and records theory and practice in Australia and New Zealand

ARLIT uses the excellent SPIRS retrieval software, available for Windows, DOS or Mac. I found this particularly easy to understand even though I had not looked at a bibliographical database for several years. It is well laid out, and quite intuitive. The on-screen index, a wonderful feature in itself, is also manipulable, showing different sorts of information as required. The options available (such as limiting, saving, and printing searches) are useful and uncluttered. With a bit of investigation a user can easily customise the layout, appearance and fields displayed. The use of a highlighter to mark desired records is particularly useful to select a few entries from a list. The Help feature explains all of the fields in concise language and also provides a guide on how to tailor searches for best results. It gives clear guidance on use of all the functions of the database.

I have no doubt that ARLIT will prove to be a valuable addition to the tools available for research into the field of archives and records. For Australian students, it is a very good place to start on a study of archives and records management. Easy to use, with an index, and a wide range of search mechanisms, it will provide an excellent base for finding published material. In addition, the detailed coverage of material on, by or about Australian and New Zealand records theory and practice makes it an excellent resource for anyone doing research into professional, academic or practicing institutions, and general theory and practice in this part of the world. One can only hope that this sort of index will soon be available for all material in the field.

(Tested on a Pentium 200 MMX, 32 MB RAM, with Windows 95)

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Into the Future: On Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age, a film by **Terry Sanders**, Commission on Preservation and Access and American Film Foundation, 1997. Available in 60 minute and 30 minute VHS versions from the American Film Foundation for $US 59.50 and $US 39.50 respectively (plus shipping and handling). Contact details are: American Film Foundation, PO Box 2000, Santa Monica, CA 90406.

A sequel to the award-winning film *Slow Fires: On the Preservation of the Human Record* (which focused on issues relating to preservation of information in a paper-based environment), *Into the Future: On the Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age,* is a co-production of the US Commission on Preservation and Access in association with the American Council of Learned Societies. The programme, originally aired on the US public broadcast network, progresses through a range of comments from various (mainly North American) practitioners and experts in relevant professions, featuring viewpoints and insights from 'prominent shapers and thinkers of the Electronic Age', such as:

- Peter Norton – founder of Norton Utilities;

- Tim Berners-Lee – father of the World Wide Web;

- Deanna Marcum – President of the Council on Library and Information Resources;

- Kenneth Thibodeau – Director of the Centre for Electronic Records, US National Archives and Records Administration; and

- Dr Margaret Hedstrom – Associate Professor, School of Information, University of Michigan, ex-Director of the Centre for Electronic Records and ex-Chief of State Records Advisory Services at NARA.

Into the Future provides an insight into the reliance on electronic media in today's 'knowledge-based society'. It reflects on the limitations of traditional approaches to preservation in addressing the issues specific to the preservation of data in digital formats, which are carried on relatively unstable media, and can only be read and/or interpreted using hardware and software prone to technological obsolescence. It warns that the survival

of the electronic human record is unlikely if awareness of the issues is not raised, suggesting appropriate strategies need to be put into place, conscious decisions made, and action taken by relevant individuals, to ensure its preservation. Stewards of recorded information stored in digital format face the task of balancing the benefits and costs of new technologies in enhancing long-term accessibility to recorded information in digital formats. As each individual in society is affected, either directly or indirectly, they too should be aware of the issues involved.

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

> *So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,*
> *So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

Would this couplet from Shakespeare's 18th sonnet still be readable when discovered in 100 years, or even twenty years, if it were recorded today on a personal computer, saved to a floppy disk and left on a shelf in the interim? Unless it were saved to a more stable and durable medium, and migrated across generational changes in technology, the chance of survival would be small. What happened to Windows 2.2, and reel-to-reel? What about CD-ROMS into the future?

The video takes the viewer on a journey through: historical perspectives on preservation, the issues underlying why we should be concerned about preservation in the digital landscape; the technical issues; and what can be done to address the situation. It points to ways in which individuals and groups can work collaboratively to investigate and develop solutions to the challenges posed.

Into the Future argues the need for collaboration between the stewards of collections and the developers of technology. It suggests that both the private and public sectors need to pursue discussions and form partnerships in developing and adopting the common standards that are essential to realising universal information storage and retrieval. In addition, reference is also made to the need to be involved in promoting changes to the regulatory

infrastructure that will ensure universal access to public domain information.

Most issues regarding preservation in the digital landscape cannot be considered in isolation from accessibility issues. The video demonstrates that, whilst digital technologies have greatly enhanced possibilities for information discovery and access, they are far from ideal from a preservation perspective, owing to the instability of the associated storage media and the rate of obsolescence of the hardware and software required to read them.

A clear message underlying the video is however, that although inextricably linked, the physical survival of recorded information is not the only crucial aspect to preservation in the Electronic Age. The ability to decipher and understand recorded information's meaning and context is also essential. Unless appropriate measures are put into place, stored 'enduring value' information in electronic formats will become as unreadable as Egyptian hieroglyphics before the deciphering of the Rosetta Stone.

As we approach the new millennium more practical examples of the problem surface daily. The video presents a number of examples of the crisis at hand, including:

- NASA's deep space explorations – ten to twenty percent of vital data recorded on magnetic tapes from the 'Viking' Mars mission has significant errors. The video describes how the majority of resources at the time were allocated to initiatives directed at improving the chances of being the first spacecraft to visit Mars, at the expense of undertaking any measures to ensure preservation of the data once compiled;

- in 1976, the Census Bureau was asked by the US National Archives to provide parts of the 1960 Census data that had 'long-term historical value', but took three years to furnish the records because it no longer had machines capable of reading the data;

- the lost history of the Internet because it originated in laboratories more interested in discovery than preservation.

Margaret Hedstrom notes that, unlike paper which can be discovered by accident hundreds of years after creation and still be legible, 'Digital records

do not just survive by accident. Conscious decisions have to be made that they are worth keeping, and on creation establish which standards to use, and make a commitment to keeping them alive and able to be read and retrieved.'

Owing to the wide target audience, the coverage of the programme is generally limited on the 'how', with the focus restricted to the 'what' and 'why'. Similarly, the video focuses almost exclusively on information and knowledge generally, rather than on records and archives as understood by recordkeeping practitioners and theorists. There is no detailed coverage of the issues surrounding maintenance of authenticity and reliability, capture of full and accurate records to serve as evidence of business transactions and activities, functional appraisal, provenance and so on. Nonetheless, continuum-based thinkers will be pleased to learn the video suggests that one of the most important measures stewards of digital information can take now to curb the developing crisis is to 'give careful consideration to the long-term preservation needs of digital information *when it is first created.* [my emphasis]'

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

These observations should not be considered as shortfalls however, as the production is designed for public consumption, aimed at providing general exposure to an audience that is not aware of the multitude of issues surrounding the management of information in digital format. Further, it should be noted that this review is only based on the half-hour version of the video and does not include discussion of the accompanying discussion guide and compendium of other sources packaged with it, apart from noting here that this supplementary material is informative and useful. Beyond its

target audience, the video is as well-suited to any information professional looking to reinforce or consolidate their knowledge of digital preservation, or who might only require a high-level awareness of the issues. It would also assist in convincing senior managers that preservation of information in digital format is an issue requiring serious attention and dedicated resources.

Allan Connelly-Hansen
National Archives of Australia

Conferences

Place, Interface and Cyberspace. 1998 Annual Conference of the Australian Society of Archivists, Fremantle, 6 - 8 August 1998.

The theme of this excellent Conference was 'Place, Interface and Cyberspace: Archives at the Edge'. The speakers shared a vision of archives at the edge of a new era, providing remote access to a range of new users through the Internet, and working to improve this access through the use of tools such as metadata standards and Internet locator systems. We were urged to move beyond debating about custody of records and think of ways to ensure that the electronic records society is now creating will be accessible, regardless of their physical location. We were also shown a vision of archives as a force for change in societies such as South Africa, and as a force for reconciliation in our own country.

Margaret Hedstrom, Associate Professor at the School of Information, University of Michigan, gave an excellent keynote address which looked at how computers have and will become the interface for archivists with their users. She urged us to think about our users more, in particular our remote users, for whom the online virtual archives becomes the archives collection.

In her keynote address, Marie Olivier, National Archivist of South Africa, gave an inspiring paper on how the Archives is acting as an agent for transformation in the country and an active shaper of social memory. Through

new legislation the Archives is attempting to overcome a legacy of suspicion that it functioned as an arm of government during the apartheid regime, and is dealing with the problem of establishing itself in a culture of oral tradition. It has moved from a climate where the tape recording of the first conversation between Nelson Mandela and P.W. Botha was destroyed because a tape recording was not considered to be an archival record, to an institution that is now responsible for the records of government, non-government, legislative, judicial, and statutory bodies, and a national oral history program.

Greg O'Shea gave a masterful presentation on the custodial versus post-custodial debate, arguing that the real issue is ensuring electronic records are accessible over time, not who has custody of them. Custodial regimes do not always guarantee authenticity and safety, given events such as the bombing of the Bosnian Archives, and the fact that archives exist in undemocratic regimes. It is also not true that creating agencies are only interested in keeping records for current business - some Commonwealth agencies are keeping them for much longer than is required. In any case most archives are not equipped to preserve and provide access to electronic records. If the needs of the user are best met by transferring the records to Archives, they should be transferred. If they are best met by leaving them with the agency they should be left there. As a profession we will be left wandering in the desert if we continue to debate post-custodialism vs custodialism as if there were an option. Someone must have custody but the decision as to where the records should be is best decided on a case by case basis.

Elaine Eccleston's response on behalf of the custodialists was disappointing. Although it was billed as a 'lively discussion', she did not respond to the issues Greg raised, merely restating all the arguments about records being safe only in archival custody that Greg had shown to be unrealistic. In her commentary on the papers, Sue McKemmish raised some interesting questions. What do we actually mean by custody? Is it guardianship, physical control, intellectual control or physical possession? Does the concept apply only to government archives? How does it affect collecting institutions?

Sue McKemmish and Adrian Cunningham performed a double act on metadata and the Australian Government Locator Service (AGLS) which is being developed to enable easy access to government information and services on the Internet. Adrian asked if we should ditch traditional archival

description practices and start again using continuum-based recordkeeping metadata as our model? There is much of value in our old control systems (the series system in particular) but not all of them are useful for all records. We need to resolve the tension between static descriptions for paper records, and the dynamic descriptions needed for electronic records.

Marian Hoy and David Robert's presentation on natural language thesauri continued this theme. The National Archives of Australia is developing a thesaurus to speed up the retrieval process for users of their computerised control systems. David reported on recent developments in the way functions are being used in business classification schemes, in appraisal, in archival description (where functions are being recognised as entities) and in retrieval through thesaurus tools, top down inventories and metadata schemes.

John Roberts gave an interesting account of the challenges faced in New Zealand where the National Archives simultaneously regulates appraisal and charges for it. This situation does not lend itself to strategies such as macro-appraisal, as appraisal tends to be focused on what the agency wants to get rid of and they tend to put it off as long as possible. This especially affects electronic records. Despite the air of economic rationalism, the operation is probably not full cost recovery, and there is probably not true competition between the National Archives and commercial providers, as National Archives is still the largest (and the cheapest) player in the market. However, it has led to better quality control systems.

The inclusion of a session on film archives was a very welcome one, as film archives do not tend to get a look in at most conferences. However, Gerard Foley's talk was a little disappointing in that it did not really address the topic set out in the programme - the challenge of reconciling the established culture of format-based film archives with modern archive/recordkeeping methods and theories. It was more a presentation on the history of film archives in Western Australia.

It is good to see the continued inclusion of student papers at conferences, and both of the papers were well received by the audience. Paul Scifleet spoke about his guide to the papers of the New Australia Co-operative Settlement Association, the first electronic finding aid developed using SGML and the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) standard. Robyn

Mackenzie's paper was an interesting study of the record-keeping practices of the Queensland Police Service Human Resources' Department.

Lesley Ferguson told of how the City of Wanneroo had coped with the aftermath of a Royal Commission. Don Boadle added to the theme of archives 'at the edge' in his report on how Universities have succeeded (or in most cases not succeeded) in re-engineering their institutional record-keeping practices and in making themselves relevant to their institutions. Livia Iacovino spoke about recordkeeping in cyberspace which does not exist in a legal vacuum, despite popular beliefs that it does. For the most part, existing laws can and should regulate it, with copyright being a good example of a law that does apply.

Shane Carmody and Ross Gibbs were to present a paper on a joint project of the Public Record Office of Victoria and the National Archives to digitise records relating to indigenous Australians. Unfortunately the funding application for the Project was not successful, despite nearly two years of planning. However, they were able to give a report on other projects, including the establishment of record forums for Koori communities, funding for training two Koori archivists, a moratorium on the destruction of records, and the 'My Heart is Breaking' exhibition.

Shauna Hicks was to have discussed the Queensland State Archives' provision of remote access through the Internet. Unfortunately, their new automated control system had only just begun operating. Such are the perils of technology and having to put your conference topic up at an early stage. As a result, her presentation focused on QSA's publication of a CD-Rom which provides remote access of a sort and her predictions of the advantages and disadvantages of providing remote access.

There were other sessions held concurrently that I could not attend that covered film and sound archives, the electronic research archive at the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, an overview of the competency standards and distance education.

In her summary of the conference, Margaret Hedstrom touched on some of its themes. There is a much broader definition of archives as institutions of social memory, which encompasses a wide variety of formats (film, audio-

visual, oral, electronic and digital) without isolating them as special problems. There is a growing diversity in the purpose of archives and in the user community, including legal, business, and educational uses, and the use of archives to protect human rights and challenge injustices. Marie Olivier showed us archives as agents for social transformation, which conflicts with the traditional view of archives as agents for continuity. Margaret asked in what ways should we provide this sort of discontinuity. She raised the question of trust and what it takes to have a trusted archives. Perhaps archivists have neglected the social side and have not come to terms with trust being earned and not granted. We can earn trust through showing competence in understanding modern technology, by proving that we can move beyond the rhetoric of good intention, and by admitting past mistakes and injustices. We have to look at the question of mutual respect - why don't we trust record creators and users? How does this reflect on us? If we don't trust them, why should they trust us with their records?

Around 240 people attended the conference. This led to much rubbing of shoulders in the more popular sessions. The single exit meant that by the time everyone had squeezed out of the room and grabbed a cup of tea it was almost time to go back for the next session. This was my only gripe with the conference but I am not sure that these sorts of problems can always be overcome.

On the positive side, apart from the excellence of the speakers and the programme in general, the organisers deserve credit for their choice of Fremantle as the city (surely one of the most pleasant cities in Australia), for allowing time for questions from the audience after the sessions and for the little things that add to the general enjoyment of a conference. These little things included the rather stylish coasters embossed with the ASA logo that were presented to each speaker (perhaps the ASA should think about getting more of these to sell to the membership at large), the production of mugs with the ASA logo and the very cheap room rates negotiated by the committee and which allowed many of us to stay the at the wonderful Esplanade Hotel.

Angela McGing
City of Sydney Archives

Working With Knowledge. International Archives Conference, Canberra, 6 – 7 May 1998. Organised by the Australian Science Archives Project.

If I go to one more conference where a speaker refers to arch–IVE–ists I think I'll scream. There. I've got that off my chest.

The Working With Knowledge conference had the aim of bringing together 'international and local experts to examine Australia's leading role in utilising [information] technologies to meet the needs of contemporary science and technology-based industry'. While the Academy of Science's Professor Brian Anderson, in welcoming delegates, seemed unable to pronounce the name of the profession, he did introduce what were to be the main preoccupations of the conference. These were the importance of context and technological challenge. The Australian Science Archives Project's (ASAP) Gavan McCarthy introduced the conference by exploring the meanings of the title 'working with knowledge', emphasising the archivist's knowledge of the contexts of creation and use and of practical and academic thought on records and recordkeeping processes.

The two themes intersected at a number of levels. Papers from ASAP staff examined the adaptation of technology to manipulate and represent information. Gavan McCarthy gave his thoughts on using data visualisation systems to build graphical representations of intellectual control systems. Rosanne Walker and Tim Sherratt gave an overview of the Bright Sparcs world wide web database. Christopher Jack's paper, delivered by Joanne Evans described the accessions database used by ASAP field officers. These various papers demonstrated instances where technology can be or is being used to help us get a handle on contextual information about records.

More prevalent, and perhaps more widely applicable, were the papers with a reverse approach – adapting archival control systems to represent records created in new technological environments. Standardisation was the name of the game here, but there was little agreement on which rules to apply. The keynote speaker, Peter Horsman of the National Archives of the Netherlands,

started the ball rolling on this argument by describing the various archival description models (ISAD(G), RAD and EAD) as 'old wine in new barrels'. Horsman's preferred model for archival description avoids the hierarchies evident in existing standards as being too static. Horsman prefers to examine business processes and the relationships between organisation units, competences, legal frameworks, functions and processes as the context of recordkeeping systems. In Horsman's view archivists should not design descriptive standards but rather recordkeeping systems that are self-describing.

Not surprisingly, there were parallels between Horsman's views and Sue McKemmish's paper on standardising recordkeeping metadata. McKemmish drew on AS 4390 and the writings of her Monash University colleagues to illustrate the changes in thinking that are required to identify and standardise a set of recordkeeping metadata. She sees appraisal as an evaluation of business activities to determine business, accountability and community recordkeeping requirements and expectations. Description is the attribution of information about identity, content, structure and context of records to meet management requirements. These concepts are essential to Horsman's vision of the self-documenting recordkeeping system. McKemmish reminded us that metadata or contextual information is not new. In traditional systems, metadata was captured in the recordkeeping system itself, in finding aids and in the structure of records. Horsman's standard might see all of this information consolidated in metadata within the recordkeeping system.

David Roberts (then not-quite Principal Archivist at the Archives Office of NSW) also sought to demystify metadata. In another echo of the keynote address, Roberts suggested that the recordkeeping system might replace the series as the basic unit of archival description. Documenting a recordkeeping system as a set of related series is not enough, however, and Roberts points to the computer science definition of 'systems' which includes external factors such as people and procedures. He outlined the DIRKS (design and implementation of recordkeeping systems) methodology advocated in AS 4390, emphasising the importance of documenting the development and implementation processes. This documentation, which would include analyses of business processes, risk assessments, a business classification scheme and a

'gap analysis', then forms the metadata or contextual information that documents and describes the recordkeeping system.

Others examined the search for contextual information in existing systems. Lisa Enright's (ASAP) paper emphasised the need to reconstruct contextual information about electronic systems that were not designed to keep adequate records. Didier Devriese of the Universite Libre de Bruxelles was also concerned about reconstructing not only the records but also a sense of the environment in which they were created. Stephen Ellis described the search for entry points into existing archival control systems at the National Archives of Australia through other information sources such as transfer and disposal documentation. Ellis, while repeating others' arguments that metadata might be found in many sources not always within an electronic recordkeeping or records management system, argued against the merging of archival control systems with recordkeeping systems.

Ellis was not the only speaker to lean toward what Horsman described as the bibliographic tradition of description adopted in ISAD. Peter Harper outlined the application of the UK National Council of Archives rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names, which he described as a precursor to national name authority files. His comment that the University of Baths' National Cataloguing Unit for the Archives of Contemporary Scientists' decision to abandon the use of EAD in favour of HTML for its web-based catalogue as too costly, is perhaps an interesting comment on the nature of technical standards.

The papers mentioned here are not the only ones that were presented at the conference, but merely those in which I could detect a running theme. After two days of stimulating papers, excellent food and the comfortable seats at Becker House (not to mention the conference dinner) I was not up to the challenge of following Conference Observer Anne Barrett's brave attempt to provide a conference summary. The fact that the promised conference statement has not yet (at the time of writing) appeared on the web site says much about the diversity of subjects and opinions aired over the two days. Papers from the conference are now emerging on the web at http://www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/asa/stama/conf/ and I am looking forward to the opportunity to reexamine the inspiring papers given by

Bridget Goodwin, producer of the acclaimed documentary *Keen as Mustard*, and Jenny Learmont, from the Australian Red Cross Blood Bank, on their research uses of scientific records.

The fact that the stated aim of examining the use of technology in archives seemed overtaken by more general concerns about description and intellectual control perhaps shows how far the profession has come in Australia. We have become comfortable enough with technology to accept it as merely a factor to be considered within our professional expertise, rather than a wall blocking any further progress. We are in fact 'working with knowledge', not just technology, after all.

Danielle Wickman
National Archives of Australia

Preserving Yesterday, Managing Today, Challenging Tomorrow, 14th National Convention of the Records Management Association of Australia, Perth, Western Australia, 14-17 September 1997.

The 14th National Convention of the Records Management Association of Australia presented an opportunity for participants to explore the past, examine how recordkeepers are managing in today's fast changing environment, and to identify the challenges in the records management world of the future. The Convention programme held much promise with many well known speakers addressing topics relevant to today's practitioners.

Proceedings extended over three days. Each day had a keynote speaker, a plenary address and a series of concurrent sessions.

The Convention was opened by the Hon. Justice David Malcolm, Chief Justice of Western Australia. His presentation was an insightful confirmation of the value of records as evidence of actions of their creators and their

particular importance in recent political events in the West. He also provided an interesting glimpse into recordkeeping at the Supreme Court which maintains all its records permanently, and the problems encountered in recent years with the flooding of basement storage vaults.

Keynote addresses were presented by Luciana Duranti, Professor in the Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Colombia; Jack Gregor, Commissioner on the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission; and by Mike Steemson from Caldeson Consultancy in Wellington, New Zealand.

Each of these papers explored the theme of the convention from different perspectives. Luciana Duranti examined the characteristics of recordkeeping since the 16th century and showed the evolution of the social function of the recordkeeper from guardian of the records to facilitator and mediator, auditor, and the last bastion of administrative, legal, political and historical accountability. She presented the traditional recordkeeper as an officer entrusted with the management of records 'as instruments of action rather than sources of information'. It was suggested that recordkeepers of the present and future needed to possess authority and competency to establish and maintain recordkeeping systems that can be scrutinised for evidence of actions by current and future users. In doing so it was suggested that recordkeepers will 'act within their society as guardians of its rights and a force for its continuity'.

The importance of maintenance of the public record in support of the proper functioning of society was discussed by Jack Gregor, Chairperson of the W.A. Commission on Government. His paper referred to comments made at the W.A. Royal Commission into the Commercial Activities of Government and other matters on inadequate recordkeeping which led to instances of unauthorised loss, destruction, tampering and failure to create adequate records and to adhere to proper archival processes. The recommendations of the Commission on Government concluded that if the current recordkeeping practices are not adequate in being able to supply reliable evidence they should be amended or supplemented to ensure that the Government and its agencies remain properly accountable.

Commissioner Gregor also commented on developments in information technology which present new and complex challenges for records managers.

The third keynote address, delivered by Mike Steemson, also explored these technological challenges. In his paper titled 'The Recordkeeping Future: Managing Records or Managing Media?' Steemson drew pictures of a world in the second decade of the 21st century in which records managers and archivists are qualified personnel involved in managing records in complex electronic formats from high level administrative positions. He identified four weapons needed to face this new age: standards, codes, retention schedules and records management software.

The papers presented in the three plenary sessions supported the past, present and future themes taken up by the keynote speakers. Sue McKemmish outlined the concept of the records continuum as a way of maintaining and making records accessible, reliable, authentic and useable in a seamless process divorced from the traditional current and non-current emphasis in the life cycle model. Her paper stressed the need for archivists and records managers to work collaboratively and build partnerships for the creation and maintenance of records for as long as they are needed by agency and community stakeholders.

Tony and Elaine Eccleston summarised the various research programmes in Australia, Britain, the United States, Canada and Europe presenting diverse theoretical guidance for the management of electronic records. They went on to offer advice to practitioners on compliance, developing policy and associated information management plans, and on the implementation of practical, accountable and useable recordkeeping systems.

The last plenary address was an outline of modern recordkeeping in ASEAN countries presented by Robert L. Bailey, a consultant and senior lecturer in the Information Studies Programme at Temasek Polytechnic in Singapore. This paper detailed how systems inherited from colonial powers are now being replaced by new technologies, but not without some difficulties, particularly associated with a lack of training and proper planning.

Thirteen concurrent sessions were conducted over the three days of the convention covering contemporary and future recordkeeping issues such as: establishing a recordkeeping regime across the NSW State government based on the continuum model; outsourcing records management; and a review of the strategy adopted in South Australia to introduce a records management system across the whole of government. Sessions were also included on records legislation in Western Australia. Case studies covered the management of electronic records in the Sutherland Shire Council and the ADMIRE Project at Hydro Tasmania, as well as an overview of recordkeeping at the Perth Mint between 1899 and 1996.

One of the most controversial sessions in the concurrent group was that presented by Maggie Exon on the Records Management Thesaurus which was particularly critical of the Archives Authority of NSW Keyword AAA Thesaurus. Further debate on this topic was promised by David Roberts and a response from the Archives Authority has been published in the February 1998 issue of *Informaa Quarterly*. Such a debate should be encouraged in order to define more clearly the difference between a thesaurus used as a records management tool which aims to link records to an organisational function, to aid retrieval, and assist in their ongoing management and appropriate disposal, and a thesaurus used traditionally as a retrieval tool.

Education, Local Government and Technology workshops were also included in the programme. The education theme was taken up by a number of the speakers highlighting the need for formal training for recordkeepers in a rapidly changing and challenging environment. Loretta Winstanley the Executive Director of the National Finance Industry Training Advisory Body spoke on the development and benefits to be derived from the National Records and Archives Competency Standards for the industry, education providers and individuals.

As with previous RMAA conferences the proceedings were published to coincide with the event and were presented to attendees after the last session. While most formal papers are included, a consequence of this early publication is the absence of the excellent opening address by Hon. Justice David Malcolm. Later production of the proceedings would have also

allowed summaries of other parts of the convention to be included e.g. the breakfast meetings of the Special Interest Group, various workshops that were held as part of the afternoon concurrent sessions and the concluding panel discussion.

The convention provided a venue for archivists and records managers to discuss the many challenging issues that are facing the recordkeeping profession.The final panel session, as well as presenting an opportunity to sum up the convention, also brought out a brief discussion on the appropriateness of the continuum and the associated merger of the archival and records management professions. Audience reaction to this indicated that there is a long way to go before records managers view themselves working collaboratively with archivists under a 'recordkeeping umbrella'. What must occur is rigorous debate between the two groups and a meeting such as this provided an excellent opportunity for such dialogue. However, this debate did not occur during the formal sessions of the convention mainly because of the tight timetable which left little time and, on some occasions, none at all for discussion at the end of each paper. In many instances this was very unfortunate because the participants showed a willingness to comment.

In the last couple of years the recordkeeping profession has moved a long way to facilitate a merger of the records management and archival professions, including the adoption of the Australian Records Management Standard AS 4390 and the Archives and Records Competency Standards. Conferences are a good way to encourage dialogue between the two groups and the joint RMAA/ASA Conference proposed by Sue McKemmish in her paper for the year 2001 presents the profession with an excellent goal to work towards.

Colleen McEwen
National Archives of Australia

Endnotes

1.   Catherine Robertson & Janet Knight, 'The Records Management Thesaurus Response', *Informaa Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No.1, Feb. 1988, pp. 12-25.

Guides

Nan Bowman Albinski, *Australian Literary Manuscripts in North American Libraries: A Guide,* Australian Scholarly Editions Centre & National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1997. xv + 262pp. ISBN 0642106908. $40.00.

Possibly the most startling aspect of this exceptionally well researched and presented guide is the vast extent of holdings of Australian literary manuscripts in North America and the somewhat disturbing realisation that these manuscripts are keenly sought after and collected by at least two United States Libraries! These are the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre at the University of Texas and the Pennsylvania State University.

The work performed to bring this guide to fruition has obviously bordered on the Herculean, with extensive travel to many parts of North America. The result of this brings together in one place for the first time an almost comprehensive overview of holdings, which also gives the location of the major holding of a particular author's archives in Australia if this exists.

Scanning through the entries gives a sense of the extensive contacts Australians have built up with North American publishers over the last century. From Miles Franklin who spent some of her early career in the US to Richard Neville of *Oz* magazine who corresponded with Random House over royalties. It was also interesting to discover that the third copy of Patrick White's twenty two page vanity publication *The Thirteen Poems* is held at Penn State University (the other two copies being in the Fisher Library, University of Sydney and the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales). Unfortunately a perusal of the entry for Patrick White did not reveal the discovery of any new manuscripts recording his work. White had a policy of destroying his papers, the only exception being the manuscript of *Of Many and One* which he donated to an anti-apartheid group in South Africa. (The manuscript subsequently made history by being purchased jointly by the National Library and the State Library of New South Wales.)

Each entry in the guide gives the name of the author with birth and death dates, the author's designation (for example journalist, critic) the name of the collection, an archival reference, the name of the holding institution, any cross references to other collections and most importantly the name of the library in Australia with the major holding relating to the author. Access to the collections is also covered in the 'How to Use' section and when a collection is available on microfilm this is also mentioned, as are any requirements for permission to copy or publish from copyright owners.

Australian Literary Manuscripts in North American Libraries: A Guide deserves a place on the shelves of the major research libraries in Australia and in academic libraries overseas offering courses in Australian studies. The editor and publishers are to be congratulated on supporting a work which will have a rather limited market. Perhaps a future edition could be linked with the Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts (RAAM) and made available via the Internet to ensure the widest possible access to the location of Australian manuscripts world wide and a greater opportunity for keeping the Guide up to date.

Alan Ventress
Mitchell Library

Margaret Chambers (compiler), *Finding Families – The Guide to the National Archives of Australia for Genealogists,* National Archives of Australia in association with Hale & Iremonger, Canberra, 1998. 300 pp. ISBN 0 86806 648 6. $34.95 postage included. Available from Hale & Iremonger, PO Box 205, Alexandria, NSW, 2015.

This second edition guide to the genealogical holdings of the Australian Archives, now called the National Archives of Australia, supercedes the much slimmer first edition, published in 1988 under the title *Relations in Records – A Guide to Family History Sources in the Australian Archives,* compiled

by Lorraine Macknight.

Genealogists in Australia have long been daunted by the prospect of finding genealogical data in the 500 or so shelf-kilometers of the 'Australian Archives'. State archives have been visited far more often in the great ancestor hunt.

Whilst this is partly due to the fact that older records tend to be held in the state collections, the lesser patronage of the 'Australian Archives' collections has been influenced by a general public perception that 'there are no indexes to the records and no user-friendly finding aids'. Although the first edition of this guide produced ten years ago was a positive attempt to counter this belief, this new book is a significant step forward for genealogical studies in Australia. It should encourage a much greater use of the national government collections by family historians.

The latest yellow and blue covered edition is twice the size of the first red-covered one. It is more profusely illustrated with record examples and photographs. Furthermore, the index has been totally revamped – for the better. For example, all beginner genealogists attending classes given by this reviewer are encouraged to 'always check the indexes first – published and unpublished'. Unfortunately, the index of the first edition was silent on basic genealogical topics such as 'indexes', 'crew lists', 'pictures' and 'genealogy'. I am very pleased to see that these topics are now included, although there is still not one for 'ships pictures'.

Notwithstanding, the arrangement of the guide is much improved over the first edition, which grouped Commonwealth records under only four broad subjects, namely Immigration and Shipping, Defence, Population and Commonwealth Employees. The new guide describes them more comprehensively under fourteen different record groups on a state by state basis.

The groups are: (1) Immigration, (2) Defence, (3) Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People, (4) Security & Intelligence, (5) Transport, (6) Works and Property, (7) Communications, (8) Parliamentary, Census and Ceremonial Records, (9) Education & Training, (10) Arts & Science, (11)

Government Employment, (12) Territories, (13) Legal & Customs, (14) Repatriation, Health & Welfare.

Finding Families gives a detailed description of each record group stating region covered (e.g. Victoria), record title (e.g. Migrant Selection Documents – Maltese), date range (e.g. 1948-61), reference number (e.g. MP210/3) and location (e.g. M = National Archives – Melbourne Branch).

Appendices A, B, C and D comprise Select Bibliography, National Archives of Australia Addresses and Hours, Genealogical Society Addresses (for each state and territory) and Abbreviations used in the text.

I like this book. It should set many a genealogist on the road to success.

Nick Vine Hall
Genealogist

S.G. Foster, Susan Marsden and Roslyn Russell (compilers), *Federation: the Guide to Records,* Australian Archives, Canberra, 1998. 377pp. ISBN 0 642 28301 X. $60.00.

There are only a handful of thematic guides to Australian historical sources. *Federation: the Guide to Records* is the most substantial and important to appear for several years and almost certainly the best-looking ever to have been published in Australia. Its maroon and gold dust-jacket, high quality paper, spacious layout, effective use of different type fonts, and splendid illustrations make it a pleasure to handle and browse. At a time when works of this kind are increasingly relegated to the Internet, the National Archives of Australia has shown that a book can still be a highly effective means of revealing to the public the range and location of sources on a major subject.

It is an ambitious work, possibly overly ambitious. Both 'Federation' and

'records' have been defined very broadly. It deals not only with the Federation movement of the 1880s and 1890s but with the Federal idea in earlier times and the Federal political system in the twentieth century. While official records and personal papers have pride of place, the guide covers an extraordinary range of products: paintings, films, photographs, sound recordings, furniture, teapots, stamps, medals, banners, jardiniere. Even George Reid and Billy Hughes doorstops are listed. It is perhaps a little curious that teapots are included while pamphlets and newspapers are mainly excluded, but a bibliography on Federation would require a separate volume. The range of archival institutions represented in the publication is also very broad. Totalling almost seventy, they include all the national and state archives and libraries, four university archives, several major museums and galleries, and a number of local museums and historical societies. This broad representation is one of the strengths of the guide.

A work of this kind could be organised in various ways. The compilers have chosen a chronological division, with four main sections: precursors of Federation 1840s-1880s; the making of Federation 1883-1901; the making of the Commonwealth 1901-14; and the legacy of Federation 1901 onwards. Within each section the records are described under the name of the holding repository, with the repositories grouped by State or territory. In view of the long time span it is a useful arrangement, but there are some drawbacks. The holdings of many repositories are spread over three or even four sections. More seriously, the descriptions of particular record groups can be split between two sections or else assigned somewhat arbitrarily to one section. Thus series 1-11 of the Deakin Papers are summarised in the second section (pp. 43-44) and series 12-15 in the third section (pp. 137-38). On the other hand, the papers of W.M. Hughes are entirely dealt with in the third section, while the papers of his Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, are consigned to the last section. These anomalies would not have mattered much if there had been more cross-referencing.

The core of the book is the second section, the making of Federation. Records relating to the Federation movement and the inauguration of the

Commonwealth have been located in a large number of institutions and societies. They document not only the political processes but also the popular and celebratory aspects of Federation. There are few startling discoveries: no secret caches of records of Kingston or Forrest have been uncovered. Nevertheless, it is good to have information about local collections, such as the Bathurst Historical Society, and the records of important pressure groups, such as the Australian Natives Association. It is difficult to point to any significant records that have been overlooked. One area treated too briefly is British sources. Joseph Chamberlain and Lord Hopetoun have entries, but not Lord Derby (who was responsible for the 1885 *Federal Council of Australasia Act*) or Richard Jebb and Berriedale Keith, both of whom corresponded regularly with Deakin and other Federation Fathers. Another minor oversight has been the papers accumulated by some of the historians of Federation. There are references to papers of J.A. La Nauze and A.W. Martin, but not to the huge collections of R.B. Joyce (the biographer of Griffith) and L.F. Crisp.

Questions of balance arise with the official and personal archives described in the second section. The editors rightly point out that there must be great differences in the treatment of record groups. Some entries deal with two letters, others with hundreds of volumes (though this usually has to be inferred; size is rarely indicated). Finding-aids vary greatly in detail and quality. Yet it is evident that in some cases the compilers have gone beyond the finding-aids and examined the actual records. This has resulted in some very detailed entries, including copious quotations from the documents. The Barton Papers, for instance, are accorded ten pages and provide a far better overview than the National Library finding-aid. Such entries make for lively reading, but inconsistencies and anomalies abound. Two letters of Barton to James Drake take up nearly as much space as the entire Griffith Papers. Contextual information also leads to imbalances. In some cases, more information would be useful, such as the provenance of the Federal Convention records in the National Archives. In other cases, there is an excess of biographical information, swamping brief descriptions of the records. For instance, there are seventeen lines on the life of Sir Joseph Cook followed by one line on his papers (pp. 41-42). There are some extremely useful entries; the Inglis

Clark Papers and Federation records in the Public Record Office of Victoria are examples. Researchers would have benefited from similar treatment of the papers of such figures as Parkes, Griffith, Josiah Symon, Rose Scott, B.R. Wise and Joseph Chamberlain.

The other sections are less satisfactory. More research probably needs to be done on early Federation proposals before widely scattered records can be firmly identified. The relevance of some of the records mentioned, such as the letters of Sir William Denison, is not obvious. Another governor, Sir George Bowen, referred frequently to Federation in his long, tedious letters, but he is missing. In contrast, the final two sections cover a vast quantity of records. The legacy of Federation can be seen in almost every sphere of government, whether it be defence, immigration, trade, health, education or taxation. The book performs a useful function for historians in listing major series of records held at the National Archives, grouped under broad subject headings. Non-official records are treated more cursorily. Shipping and mercantile companies, for instance, have had to grapple with the 'burden of Federation', but they hardly rate a mention. The guide covers some of the major collections in the National Library, although there are some curious omissions, such as the papers of Sir John Latham and J.H.L. Cumpston and the archives of the big political parties. With other repositories the selections seem arbitrary. The entry for Melbourne University Archives has the briefest mention for William Harrison Moore (not indexed) and none for W.S. Robinson, though both dealt closely with Federal governments and with federal problems.

Perhaps the compilers were too ambitious: if they had concentrated on the period 1883-1914 the significant records of Federation might have been described more fully and consistently. Nevertheless, the broad brush approach has its advantages and political historians in particular will find the guide to be of immense benefit in identifying sources held in repositories throughout the country. The book is a great achievement and a credit to the historians and archivists who worked on the project.

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Ekarestini O'Brien, (Compiler), *Australian Joint Copying Project Handbook Part 8: Miscellaneous Series 3rd ed.*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1988. xix + 252 pp. ISBN 0 642 10696 7. $40.00 + $5.00 postage and handling. Available from Publication Sales, National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 2600.

The Australian Joint Copying Project is believed to have been the longest-running microfilming project of its kind in the world. It was established to identify and microfilm archival records in the British Isles that relate to Australia, in order to facilitate access by Australian researchers to those records. Filming commenced in 1948 and the final reels of film were delivered to Australia in 1997.

Over the course of this fifty years of filming, the great bulk of the records copied were sourced from the Public Record Office in London. Over the last 15-20 years of the project however, greater efforts were made to locate and film records outside of the PRO. Approximately 3,000 reels of film were produced in what has been called the AJCP Miscellaneous (M) Series. The records filmed for the M Series were sourced from regional repositories such as county record offices, museums, learned societies, religious archives, university archives and business archives. In addition, many of the records were sourced from collections such as the British Library, the National Libraries of Wales, Scotland and Ireland and from such non-institutional sources as private homes. In contrast to the official records filmed at the PRO, the great majority of records filmed for the M Series are private records. Most of the material dates from the nineteenth century, but a significant proportion of the records also date from the twentieth century.

This handbook provides a convenient and very user friendly way into the riches of the M Series. It comprises 512 collection or repository level descriptions of record groupings. Each description contains a biographical note or brief administrative history for the records creators in addition to brief descriptions of the records themselves. In many cases the description notes the availability of more detailed inventories and descriptive lists for the records in question. Most importantly, there is a detailed 53 page index

of names, places and some subjects.

   The records described in this handbook are nothing if not diverse. They include the personal papers of politicians and officials, maritime and exploration records, emigrant diaries and letters, scientific records, missionary records and records relating to imperial relations, trade, business, public finance and military history. Their utility is exemplified by the fact that the A.C. Haddon and London Missionary Society records were used to support the land tenure claims argued by the plaintiffs in the Mabo native title case – a classic case of historical records being used to change the course of history.

   The handbook is a utilitarian, yet nevertheless well designed and presented publication which testifies to a most successful exercise in international archival accessibility. The National Library is to be congratulated for supporting such a useful endeavour for so many decades and for making the results of the project so accessible with the publication of this excellent handbook.

Adrian Cunningham
National Archives of Australia

National Archives of Australia Guides to Commonwealth Records:
Guide No. 1 *Chinese Immigrants and Chinese-Australians in NSW*, written and compiled by Julie Stacker and Peri Stewart, revised 1997, 80pp.
Guide No. 2 *Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: A Guide to the Records of the Royal Commission, 1987-1991*, written and compiled by Peter Nagle and Richard Summerrell, revised 1997, 92pp.
Guide No. 3 *The Sinking of HMAS Sydney: A Guide to Commonwealth Government Records*, written and compiled by Richard Summerrell, new edition 1997, 190pp.
Guide No. 4 *Papua New Guinea Records 1883-1942: Microfilm Collections*, compiled by Peter Nagle, 1998, 136pp.

Guide No. 6 *Parliament House Canberra, 1927: Records Relating to the Design, Construction and Opening of the Provisional Parliament House*, written and compiled by Gay Hogan, 1997, 74pp.

Guide No. 8 *Record Collections in the Victorian Office: A Concise Guide*, compiled by Celia Blake, 1998, 76pp.

Although published before the change of name from Australian Archives to National Archives of Australia, this suite of guides is published in consistent style and format reflecting a new approach to guides from the national archival institution.

   The thematic guides are both a reflection of the growing community use of archival records and a response to meet changing expectations of archives users. No longer is a guide to a particular record set or series sufficient to meet the needs of users.

   Each guide brings together related record sets to direct users to various sources relating to the specific topic, irrespective of what the record set is or where the record set is located. This is particularly illustrated in *The Sinking of HMAS Sydney* guide that details Australian War Memorial holdings on this topic as well as NAA material. This Guide has been recognised by the Australian Society of Archivists, which awarded it one of its 1997 Mander Jones publications awards for excellence. *Record Collections in the Victorian Office* gives an overview of the records held in a particular location. *Papua New Guinea Records 1883-1942: Microfilm Collections* combines both the topic of New Guinea and the format of microform. *Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: A Guide to the Records of the Royal Commission, 1987-1991* also indicates a timely response to community needs, in the light of the Royal Commission having been conducted so recently, at least in terms of the archival record.

   In general, the guides contain all the features that should be in a good guide. In each guide there is: an administrative history or information about the agency or agencies that created the records; descriptive information as to what records will be found in the series; their arrangement and sub-arrangement; how the records came into archival custody; and how to research into the particular record sets. The administrative histories are

well researched and referenced with sources cited in footnotes.

In addition, each guide contains general information about the repositories where the records are available, access provisions both general and specific to the particular records sets and appendices which greatly increase the value of each guide. The appendices include a glossary of archival terms, other guides to the collection or related to the topic and more generally, NAA addresses and opening times including Internet references. There are also well-chosen illustrations detailing examples of records or significant items within the series.

Publishing in this format combines high-quality content with usefulness. Each guide with its appendices can stand alone and does not need any other user guide or repository information. The format provides the ability to be updated quickly and reproduced at less cost than fully published guides. However, this does not cheapen the content in any way. Indeed, these guides are very valuable for the information they contain and the context they provide to the records and Australian historic events. They are good examples of the NAA adding value to traditional finding aids to showcase the intellectual capital that resides in archives. They are a good example for others to follow.

Louise Burmester
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Gerald K. Haines and David A. Langbart, *Unlocking the Files of the FBI: A Guide to its Records and Classification System,* Scholarly Resources, Wilmington, DE, USA, 1993. xviii+348 pp., including index. ISBN 0 8420 2338 0. $US60.00. Available from Scholarly Resources, 104 Greenhill Avenue, Wilmington, DE 19805-1897, USA. Telephone 1 800 772 8937.

Any monograph title that incorporates the initials 'FBI', immediately attracts

a predictable readership. One that promises access to the presumed secrecy of that agency's files, widens the scope immeasurably. However, the expectations engendered by the title proper are only maintained for the serious researcher when the implications of the subtitle are appreciated. Although designed for researchers, there is nevertheless, an intrinsic fascination for any reader interested in the history of the complex development of American society, its internal problems and international imperatives.

The principal author has already published a similar Guide, *A Reference Guide to United States Department of State Special Files,* for which he was awarded the 1988 Thomas Jefferson Prize from the Society for History in Federal Government. With this background, and a discerning choice of an archivist as co-author in David Langbart, Gerald Haines has given the international community not only a significant finding aid, but a fascinating insight into the workings of a previously secretive organisation.

The authors' stated intentions were, in part, to provide researchers with an overview of the FBI's recordkeeping organisation and procedures, then to list numerically each class of records by topic, defined in the FBI recordkeeping system as 'classifications'. These 278 classifications encompass all subjects contemplated by or committed to the FBI in its Department of Justice operations and range from missing persons to perjury, and from foreign counter-intelligence and sabotage to cattle rustling.

Each classification description is structured using a Central Records System Number and Title, giving a historical background to the initiation of the classification and elaborating on changes that have affected the specific issue over time. The descriptive element also includes representative case information and offers advice on research potential, annotating areas that have already been the subject of Freedom of Information action. The volume of records maintained, together with their location is noted, as are date ranges and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) disposal recommendations. (It is interesting to note that NARA proposed an FBI Retention Schedule for FBI approval!) The classification description concludes with an advisory statement on how access may be achieved, and

a list of related records directing researchers to additional or peripheral information.

In order to ensure completeness in their coverage, Haines and Langbart list and describe what the FBI refers to as the unclassified specialised indexes. These comprise lists, photograph albums, collections of 'WANTED' circulars and posters, and some administrative files. The subjects range from the General Index of some 65,500,000 cards arranged alphabetically, which is the Agency's primary finding aid to its records, to the controversial *Security Index* which monitored 'subversives' considered dangerous to national security, or who presented a threat to the President. The photographic collections include such fascinating titles as *False Identity Photo Albums* and the *Rabble-Rouser Index* of 'extremist subjects'. Again the researcher is provided with a description of each index, its location, and the NARA disposition recommendation.

A series of FBI Special Files is also listed with an accompanying commentary, most of which serves more to whet the appetite for greater detail. Hoover's Official and Confidential (O&C) File, the Nichols File and the Electronic Surveillance (ELSUR) Files provide examples. The twelve appendices amplify, clarify, assist and interpret the text and identify for researchers those records that have been subjected to *Freedom of Information Act* processes.

Jennifer Edgecombe, in her chapter in the Ellis edition of *Keeping Archives,* defines finding aids as 'the descriptive media [...] that establish physical and intellectual control over the holdings of an archives and make it possible to retrieve particular records or information from these archives' (ed. Ellis 1993, p. 248). Haines and Langbart have provided us with all this, and more. *Unlocking the Files of the FBI* is also, in itself, a reference source which leads one through the FBI functional ethos, the American societal mores which gave direction to the Agency's operational priorities, and an insight into the realities and dangers that can pervade law enforcement authorities.

Anthony Eccleston

Catherine Thomas, *Alphabetical Listing of the University of New England Archives,* 1993. Revised and updated by Dr E.M. Bridle, 1995.

This is a straight out listing of all deposits held by the Archives, arranged in alphabetical order by title, and using cross-referencing. In manuscript form, it includes a brief history of the Archives, and service details. The collection includes records of the New England region, as well as records relating to the university. This would prove useful to researchers with these specific interests.

Concise Guide to State Archives from the Riverina and Murray Regions, Charles Sturt University Regional Archives, 1997. 110pp.

This A4 red covered volume lists the series and access conditions for relevant state records. It is well arranged, with sections on Agriculture, Ambulance service, Business and regional development, coroners and morgue, Courts of Petty sessions, Court of Review, District court, Education, Electricity Commission of NSW, Health, Lands, Licensing courts, Main roads, Mines, Police, Prosecutions, Public Trust office, Public Works, Quarter sessions, Rent control Board, Supreme court, Technical and Further Education, Valuer general, and Water Resources. The courts and education are the largest areas listed.

   This is an invaluable research tool, very useful for local historians, involving such a great range of activities.

Steve Howell (Compiler), *Dead Reckoning: How to Find Your Way Through the Genealogical Jungle of Western Australia,* The Library and Information Service of WA, 1997. 126pp.

This is a very useful guide, with great allegories of the jungle and ancestors theme, well organised and using good examples of documents and photographs. It is easy to use, and a novice would learn a lot, with a fairly comprehensive coverage of material besides records, including books, serials, ephemera, film and video, maps, newspapers, oral history and photographs, catalogues and indexes. There is good coverage of the Public Record Office and State Reference Collection, obviously the biggest, as well as other non-government archives, such as churches, and a useful list of addresses. A fascinating area of research!

Guide to the Sources of Asian History: India, Volume 3.3, States/Union Territories, National Archives of India, New Delhi, 1995. 183pp.

This is part of a UNESCO project on the history of the nations. Previous volumes contained information on records of nineteen Ministries of the Government of India. Volume 3.3 is the first of three volumes of 'Guides' of record holdings of repositories of States/Union Territory Administrations. It covers record holdings in State Archives of Assam, Delhi, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Descriptions of these form the six chapters. The green covered volume is well presented. The Indian Archives appear to be professional and well organised.

  The administrative histories and descriptions of records make very interesting reading of India's long and eventful history. Private records are also covered. A useful index is included, useful tables and diagrams, as well as service rules and details. I am glad to read 'spitting and smoking are strictly prohibited' in Bengali Research rooms, and no one is permitted to light a fire or 'chew pan'!

A Guide to the Contents of the Kenya National Archives and Document Service: Part 1, Republic of Kenya, March 1995. 217pp.

This is an administrative history only, but makes fascinating reading, and is a significant development for Kenya. It is easy to imagine the difficulties in compilation, as outlined, and we certainly look forward to the completion of the administrative history post 1963 and the Records' listing. We wish them well in their mammoth task!

The Government structure and organisation is complex, being a developing country, with colonial history as well as that of post independence covered. The 34 areas or departments of government include: Secretariat; Membership System; Judicial Department; Medical; Treasury and Finance Department; Education; Meteorological; Game Department; Chief Native Commissioner; Weights and Measures; East African Currency Board; Mining and Geological; Public Works; Survey; Agricultural Boards; Posts and Telegraphs; Printing and Stationery; Audit; East African Railways and Harbours; Public Service Commission; Information; Customs and Excise; Inland Revenue; Income Tax; Fisheries; Agriculture; Veterinary; Lands; Social Services; Kenya Police; Co-operatives; Prisons; Immigration and Local government.

As useful appendices, firstly the Administrative structure 1905-1963 and secondly the Provincial Administration 1905-1963, of the East African Protectorate, and Colony and Protectorate of Kenya are covered.

It all makes very interesting reading.

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