Reviews

Edited by Adrian Cunningham

Bridging the Gap, 17th National Convention of the Records Management Association of Australia, Sydney, 3–6 December 2000.

The first *Bridging the Gap* conference was held in Sydney in 1985. It concentrated on automation of record management systems (or 'computer driven and assisted records management'), keyword classification, Keyword in Context (KWIC) and Keyword out of Context (KWOC), file titling, inactive records storage and file housing equipment. At that conference, Denis Comber delivered a paper entitled 'Current trends in government records management'. Some of the gaps he identified remain with us today – 'unofficial' recordkeeping systems, lack of coordination, lost or destroyed information, and unsatisfactory file 'naming'. So, how far has records management really progressed since that earlier conference?

The 2000 *Bridging the Gap* conference had a broad theme for each of the three days: the gap between technology and records management; the gap between management and records management; and the gap between traditional and modern records management.

Day one explored the gap between technology and records management. Knowledge management (KM) was presented as a potential solution to fill this gap. As a newcomer to the information profession, the concept of KM is not clear. This is partly due to the varying interpretations or emphases given to the concept. But, although it seems difficult to define, it appears that technological solutions to KM problems are available. Three presentations offered guidance through the KM maze. Cedric Israelsohn, explicit in his statement that knowledge is 'something that does not actually lend itself to being managed', explored how knowledge is shared and the spectrum of movement from tacit to explicit knowledge. He and Graham Cox observed that most corporate knowledge in repositories is unmanaged and both perceived KM solutions through a knowledge portal framework. Cox's KM strategy involved the synthesis of 'micro-documents', formed by categorising organisational knowledge. His model included external sources, such as 'web farms', with the knowledge portal as the single point of entry into the KM system. Therese Bendeich explored the role of records management within

the KM landscape, identifying knowledge chains, knowledge mapping and knowledge audits. She showed the relationship between capture, classification, retrieval and storage of corporate knowledge and a competitive business edge. All speakers identified the problems of decentralised work groups and the formation of information silos, and perceived technology-based KM solutions as a means to reconnect and make knowledge accessible to the whole organisation. A point to emphasise here is that while technology is a tool, an enabler, the focus needs to be on the practitioner. Controlling, developing and accessing knowledge still relies on well-developed communication skills and access to mentoring, training, networking, and leadership.

Hans Hofman delivered a wide-ranging paper on the management of records in the evolving e-commerce environment. Relating some of the findings of the Digital Longevity project at the National Archives of the Netherlands, he focused on the recordkeeping function, rather than the recordkeeping system, showing how the gap between theory and practice requires bridging. The information technology driven nature of the new 'e-conomy' – with government online initiatives, virtual records and virtual repositories – requires a multi-disciplinary approach. Senior management and policy makers need to understand the purpose and use of records within this new landscape in order to commit resources. The project utilises a three-tiered reference model: the current paper system, a hybrid system and a digital system with integrated recordkeeping. Although Hofman praised Australia's intellectual progress on this front, with the development of the Australian Standard on Recordkeeping (AS 4390) and DIRKS, he thought it unfortunate that our implementation appeared so resource-intensive.

The second day focused on the gap between management and records management. The strategies for bridging this gap are the creation of credible business cases for records management projects followed up by the successful implementation of those projects through change management.

Joy Siller gave an instructive guide to building a successful records management business case and the degree of sophistication required for it to be persuasive. Further presentations (by Conni Christensen and Kerry Feldman) confirmed the importance of the business case as a reference and justification tool. Kerry Nichols showcased a successful implementation of a document management project that was strongly proactive and inclusive. This presentation, and the papers on change management, emphasised the need to communicate with and involve staff to counter negative responses to cultural change. Pilot projects, stakeholder management, communication, support from management, training, control of the pace of change, and ascertaining and acting on feedback are important mechanisms to promote

success. The cultural shift was emphasised as more important than the technology. This was echoed by Terry Reilly's observation that 'people change for their own reasons not for yours' and Kerry Feldman's comment that 'cultural change is a mindset'.

Kerry Feldman described a 'change-ready organisation' as one that recognises what has underpinned its success to date, builds on existing organisational values and competencies, and assesses the conflicting needs of internal and external stakeholders. External environmental factors – societal, political and economic changes – also need to be monitored. Passionate sharing of the vision by the organisational architects, coupled with transformational leadership, were powerful change enablers. However, having said that, she also acknowledged the significant role of middle management as the main implementers. Terry Reilly presented a relationship-centred, 'bottom-up' change-management approach. It focused on loss of trust, depicted as the 'distrust dilemma', between staff and management. Rebuilding the trust factor involved a four-stage strategy, focusing on staff responses post-implementation. In this case study, a change management plan needed to be implemented post-organisational change.

While these concepts are not entirely new, applying them directly to the records management function shows the shift from the previous *Bridging the Gap* conference, which was inward-looking. Incorporating these strategies brings records management out the basement and shows it as an integral function of organisations.

The final day of the conference addressed the gap between traditional and modern records management or, in other words, common practice and best practice. The papers focused on state-of-the-art standards and competencies being developed in the records management community.

Despite acknowledging that record managers have a role in convincing organisations of their societal obligations and the need to comply with standards, Russ James focused on the financial aspects of compliance and suggested that, for most organisations, survival is more important than accountability. It was unclear if his representation of AS 4390 was intended to be provocative or was merely naive. AS 4390 *is* business-centred and adherence to its principles can minimise exposure to evidence-related risks. Accountability is the means of ensuring business survival. Knowing your legislative, and therefore recordkeeping, requirements and implementing procedures to meet those requirements reduces business vulnerability. In retrospect, perhaps he was describing prevailing practice, rather than best practice, which was presented in the joint panel session, by National Archives

of Australia and NSW State Records staff, recounting the development and implementation of AS 4390.

Adrian Cunningham and Chris Fripp seemed to emphasise the differences between the records management and archiving functions and the nature and structure of their two representative bodies. While they cited overlaps in skills, goals, and arenas of collaboration, we had to wait for David Roberts, at the close of the conference, to succinctly state the facts. That whatever the Records Management Association of Australia or the Australian Society of Archivists think of how similar or disparate they are, they have been merged for some time. David presented the legislative frameworks of various jurisdictions around Australia, which clearly show convergence of these functions. The overlap and integration is obvious, longstanding and necessary. The professions have been partners for some time as far as the wider community is concerned, with the electronic environment as the catalyst and the records continuum as the supporting model. Legally the gap has long been bridged, so is this gap a 'mindset' of the members, which requires some change-management treatment? To this observer, the prognosis is good: there is a common purpose and discourse, common aims and principles. Transition is always uncomfortable and confronting, but I think we have the potential for a creative and vibrant marriage.

The 2000 *Bridging the Gap* conference demonstrated that we have indeed come a long way.

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Michael Cook, *The Management of Information from Archives*, 2nd edition, Gower Publishing Limited, 1999. 271pp. ISBN 0 566 07993 3. $149.00. Available from Hemisphere Publication Services, New South Wales.

The key message of this book is to prepare archives for exploitation as an information resource. The ten chapters take us through the management processes that enable this, via intellectual, physical and administrative controls. Chapters 1–3 provide the framework, eg archival management in the broader information context; the general nature, structure and function of archival services; and records management. Chapters 4–8 cover in detail the disciplines of acquisition, appraisal, arrangement and description. The final two chapters look at computing for archival management, and the facilities and methods for access to, and use of archives.

'Information' and 'information management' are not defined, although much of the discussion links these concepts with archives, archives management and records management. Cook's definition of 'archives' is 'information media that have been generated from within the organisation, and the management of which has been delegated to a specialist service. The purpose of this delegation is the preservation of the materials and the exploitation of the information in them' (p. 11).

In defining 'archives' Cook makes the central point about the information value of archives, and suggests that the management practices of archives, libraries and documentation centres could be more closely integrated. Good ideas are presented in chapter 4 on bringing the information professionals together in a working relationship. He advocates that archives services should be incorporated into the framework of information services – for exploitation of information (chapter 1). This is particularly pertinent in the modern online environment, where the trend is, and will be for all types of information resources (old and new, formal and informal, structured and unstructured), to be accessible by web technology, rather than by visiting a search room, popping by the library, or making an appointment to do research at the corporate archives.

Cook draws useful parallels in practice between the library and archives professions, at the same time recognising that some methods are not interchangeable due to the unique and multi-linked nature of records. For example, he advocates value in archivists adopting library standards and systems to do their work, so that users can access primary source materials via the same catalogues and finding aids as secondary materials (p. 174).

Cook has attempted to provide detailed guidelines to cover all types of (quite disparate) archives, including the English County Records Offices, the business archives of a corporation, and a Public Record Office. However, the orientation and assumptions in the book do seem predominantly based in a public sector environment. This is probably because formal archives and records management tend mostly to occur in this sector.

This book purposely does not deal with the management and use of records and archives held in electronic form. This is a great pity, given that personal computers have been used since at least the mid-1980s and are now an intrinsic part of most people's business life. Cook feels that administrators are beginning to be aware of the problems caused by the computer revolution. In Australia certainly, administrators are more than aware as they attempt to access or restore core data sets and electronic documents from five years ago. Also, the central thrusts of the book, namely the need to make information

accessible and the need for a greater integration of information services, would seem to imply that the issues of electronic records and archives must be addressed.

Although the book was published in 1999, there appears to be minimal acknowledgement of the ubiquitous and predominant role of technology in the workplace, especially for record generation, manipulation, storage and sharing. For example:

- The integration of fax into email and office computing systems is not yet common (p. 51);

- Word processors are not yet being widely used for the storage of text after creation (p. 49); and

- It is perceived that there are many obstacles to the rapid and universal use of email (p. 51).

This may be a reflection of the British environment; it is not indicative of the Australian workplace.

From an Australian perspective the discussion of records management is traditional, for example:

- The focus is on records management, not recordkeeping.

- There is no discussion of workflow in the section on 'Office Automation' (p. 48) – this is intrinsic to automated business process.

- The model showing how records management services could be integrated within an organisation (fig. 3.3, p. 53) is very traditional, custodial and paper-based. It does not appear to cater for decentralised recordkeeping, development and monitoring of standards, system design, training, advice on compliance regimes for business practice and information systems, and application management (eg EDMS/RMS). All these are common in an Australian records management model. Cook's model is adapted from a 1981 UK model which has little relevance to the organisation of the 21st century.

- Further, a 1982 model is cited as an internationally accepted model for records management within government and business administrations. This model proposes that records management is responsible for the design and maintenance of mail (including filing system design), reports and forms.

- A records survey is advocated to establish what records are being produced, and to determine the production and retrieval processes

used. This is a traditional approach, which does not consider functional analysis, which in turn could provide a number of outcomes and uses, such as an indicator of information sharing, reuse or repurposing. The hardcopy survey focus relates to space planning and compiling a register of series. Alternatively, a function-based survey could be used for a business classification scheme and functional disposal schedule, such as those developed in Australia from the mid-1990s. Later (chapter 5), Cook does advocate modern methods of controlling archives through function-based classification schemes.

• There is perhaps an overemphasis given to the traditional techniques for the management and description of inactive records under the topic of 'Record Centres'.

• The section on 'Automation in Records Management' focuses on the part-automation of controls for the location, issue and measurement of records use. Databases are recommended for a register of series, retention schedule and transfer lists. The discussion also indicates that 'large-scale computerised management information systems' are just emerging.

Cook does briefly state that 'the responsibility of records managers is not to collect and conserve the records physically, but to manage the ways in which information is stored and provided for use' (p. 76). Perhaps this very accurate message is a little overwhelmed by the discussion of traditional infrastructures and methods?

The approach to disposal schedule development, scope and appraisal is similarly based in a traditional model (chapter 3). Cook acknowledges modern developments in the form of 'documentation strategies' arising from the 1980s and in his summary of appraisal from AS 4390.5. Later, in chapter 4, he advocates accountability as an important reason for keeping archives, suggesting that accountability criteria probably meets the 'evidential' and 'informational' values espoused by early archival writers. Cook also advocates a proactive, rather than reactive approach to appraisal, and recommends that appraisal be based on functional analysis.

The 'concept of permanence' emerges from a traditional framework, involving issues of conservation, storage costs and physical volume. An entirely different set of issues and analysis is required for defining, assessing and enabling permanence in an electronic environment.

In terms of making information findable and accessible, Cook identifies the difficulties of the traditional custodial model for hardcopy archives. This is of

course even less relevant in an electronic environment. The discussion of a 'national register of archives' coordinated by a central agency has value in a custodial and non-custodial environment, especially in the move towards electronic information provision.

Cook rightly points out that 'no description rules, or indeed any other form of authority control, will be successful unless they have been formally adopted as a result of some agreed procedure, and so recognised nationally' (p. 173). This will prove especially true as governments, corporations and countries move towards increased publication of archival resources and guides on the web. The development of government and resource locator systems attest to this.

Cook makes good use of, and reference to standards, eg ISAAR(CPF), ISAD(G), MAD2, and APPM. There are lots of examples discussed, although most are British and are based in the more traditional approach to archives and records management.

The book is well referenced, with useful endnotes for each chapter. The traditional focus of the discussion means many of these references are based in the 1970s and 1980s. However, there is also a useful bibliography of recent books and standards.

The issues relating to access are well described in chapter 10, including the commendable recommendation by the ICA (1997) for a common regime across Europe for access to archives. The thorny issues of confidentiality, data protection, privacy, copyright, intellectual property, and FOI are still with us today as countries attempt to design uniform or compatible legislation in these areas.

Cook recognises that the 'problems discussed in this book will not be solved in traditional terms...because the concepts of the archive and of archives services are in the process of changing rapidly' (pp. 249–50). Rather than passive collection of old documents, the main business of the archives service may now be 'setting out the subjects to be documented and applying resulting appraisal decisions' based on functional analysis (p. 250). This is especially valid for the electronic environment.

A strength of this book is the consistent and highly practical explanation of the rationale behind the principles of archival management. This is very useful for a student of archives and records management or a practitioner to understand why they are doing something, with the ultimate objective of making information available.

The central argument is that 'the future is with integrated information services rather than with specialist operations' (p. 251). This, plus Cook's recommendations for function-based analysis, the use of common standards, and reassessment of the theory and practice of archives and records management within information management, all form a strong direction to take practitioners into the next generation of archives management in the electronic world. That, however, must be the subject of another book.

Judith Ellis
Archival Systems

Judith A Ellis (ed.), *Selected Essays in Electronic Recordkeeping in Australia,* Australian Society of Archivists Inc., O'Connor, ACT, 2000. v + 187pp. Paperback. ISBN 0 947219 15 3. $30.00 + $5.00 postage.

A new publication can be added to the vast amount of literature on electronic recordkeeping. What makes this contribution different, if at all, from what has already been written, except that it is more up-to-date? In both the Foreword and Introduction it is emphasised that the book pretends to serve the practitioner's, ie the recordkeeping professional's, view where other publications are mostly theoretical. So the question is, have the writers achieved this objective? It is in this respect interesting to notice that this book is published by the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) and not the Records Management Association of Australia (RMAA). That is also reflected in the people who have contributed the essays. Of the eight writers four are working in an archival institution. Apparently it is archivists that seem to have practical experience. Is this continuum thinking in practice?

The articles in this book range from the relevance of recordkeeping in its context to the actual implementation of an electronic document management system. In between, the various essays discuss the changing environment of recordkeeping, its relevance in relation to accountability, the necessity of having a project plan when designing and implementing a recordkeeping system, the design and implementation of a system, and the preservation and accessibility of records over time. As such, the essays give an excellent bird's-eye view of the many issues that play a role in the development and implementation of an electronic recordkeeping system. Issues that are not addressed include, for instance, the complex issue of metadata, classification schemes, procedures and change management.

The whole book is based on a rather linear and logical approach of recordkeeping issues. This has its benefits, but may not be very practical. It might have had more effect and been more useful if the book could have started with a consideration of the user's needs or, more precise, from questions both of organisations and of records managers. Such questions might include: how to get from the current (paper-based or hybrid) situation to the desired one, where to start, how to reach and convince top management, how to integrate into business processes, and how to come to grips with the developments and the situation within their organisation. Possible answers to these questions, but not all, can be found more or less in the different essays, but they are not nicely clustered around these themes. Useful practical guidance might have included, for instance, an example of making a business case in order to get the commitment of top management.

The essays tell you how things should be approached and done, what different perspectives are possible, and give a lot of useful checklists of things to take into account, but do not really address the actual situation that will face most practitioners. No-one will start from scratch. So let us forget the ideal situation, if there is any. It also requires paying more attention to change management. Only chapter 9 in which Tom Hotchin tells the story about the implementation of a document management system (and not a recordkeeping system as suggested in the Introduction) goes further and shows what you may encounter during an implementation and what can go wrong. It shows also how difficult it is to know what the new situation will be, certainly if the project is innovative as is the case with electronic document or even more with electronic recordkeeping management. It is these lessons that are of most value for practitioners.

A source of confusion might be the use of the term *recordkeeping system*. Although it is said more than once that it should be seen as more than a software application (p. 41), it is treated in several chapters as if it is just that (eg chapter 6). It is also remarkable that there seems to be a tendency to consider document management systems as sufficient or compliant to meet recordkeeping requirements, as is done by Tom Hotchin. His view seems to be that files are not necessary, documents can be treated individually (p. 138).

There seems to be also a little bit of a paradox in saying that the business process should be the starting point for recordkeeping and even more that recordkeeping should be integrated into the business process. That is right, but if so, how should the records manager be involved and what role should he or she play in achieving this? They are not responsible for the business process. Responsibility for these initiatives would lie with program staff. Should

the records manager then wait or try to influence the program manager to do something? The book would have been more valuable if these issues had been explored further.

The chapter on project planning has as a message 'not to leap into action immediately' and offers a very useful framework of the whole process of developing and implementing a recordkeeping process. It suggests that there is one project, while that should have been one of the questions. The concept of what the recordkeeping function within an organisation could be is in itself an issue worth more attention than is given in chapter 5.

As already said, the big question is whether this book provides what a practitioner is waiting for. I would say the editor has succeeded to bring together some comprehensive, coherent and worth-reading content on this important issue. As such, that is indeed praiseworthy. The intended readers of this book, however, will be working within organisations and need to learn about best practices and about mistakes made elsewhere. More practical examples would therefore have contributed to the usefulness of the book.

In general, I think this book offers a good starting point for recordkeeping practitioners. Those 'beginning to address practical solutions', as Steve Stuckey articulates it in his foreword, is the right characterisation of the target audience. The glossary and the bibliography including websites, contribute to that, though the latter contains many references to some very theoretical publications (for want of something better?). This publication is a valuable addition to the DIRKS manual and represents more than is available in most other countries. It is also highly recommended for educational purposes and training courses.

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Judith A Ellis (ed.), *Selected Essays in Electronic Recordkeeping in Australia*, Australian Society of Archivists Inc., O'Connor, ACT, 2000. v + 187pp. Paperback. ISBN 0 947219 15 3. $30.00 + $5.00 postage.

The *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* defines an essay as 'a composition, usually short and in prose, on any subject'. On hearing of the publication of *Selected Essays*, I anticipated a collection of academic discourses on

recordkeeping issues. I did not suppose that behind the title would lurk such valuable practical assistance for recordkeeping professionals, particularly those new to the profession.

First impressions are important, and a quick glance at the contents page invites attention to the chapters which follow. Commencing with an introduction and description of the electronic recordkeeping environment, the book examines such topics as the imperatives for effective electronic recordkeeping, developing a project plan, designing and implementing an electronic recordkeeping system, managing electronic records through time, and ensuring the accessibility of the records. A case study concludes the collection, leaving the reader with a concise volume intended for practical application.

We must ensure that *Selected Essays* is afforded adequate exposure to the recordkeeping community currently in the workforce and the developing community emerging from our academic institutions. The book does not purport to be comprehensive, and its scope is limited by its size. As any author knows, adding extra chapters and pages has huge implications from a publishing and printing point of view. The book does, however, address those areas which practitioners will find enormously helpful – particularly those practitioners who have been charged with developing strategies and project plans for the management of electronic records in their organisations.

Helen Smith's 2-Act play in chapter 3 might have been better placed at the end of *Selected Essays.* Although totally believable to the experienced, other readers might have a greater appreciation of the issues after reading chapters 4–9. Further, the plot accentuates the need to secure significant commitment and buy-in by senior executives, the need to adopt risk-based approaches to recordkeeping, and the value of well-crafted business cases and well-developed change management strategies. Placed after the other chapters, Smith's play could have wrapped these issues around the core chapters.

Bernadette Bean's 'Project Planning' in chapter 4 provides a sequence of phases, each with checklists which will guide the records manager through the construction of a project plan, and refers to other chapters in *Selected Essays* which provide more detail for certain of the project phases. Practitioners will be able to pick up and run with this chapter. The next two chapters – Karen Skelton on design and Simon Davis on implementing – guide the reader through the elementary phases of system design, including testing, redesign and post-implementation review. These chapters reminded me of an offer I received to conduct a post-implementation review for an organisation that had embarked on a project months earlier, without any design

documented, requirements articulated or goals considered! They would have benefited from reading Skelton's and Davis' work. Davis has also included worksheets and checklists for system testing, and provides useful strategies for migration and conversion.

In chapter 7, Justine Heazlewood steps us through current preservation strategies – migration, encapsulation, formats, emulation – and the management of electronic records long-term. These components of recordkeeping link well with the next chapter on making the records accessible, contributed by David Roberts. Here, Roberts explains various tools that enable access including metadata and front-end browsers, and warns of the unsolved and potential liabilities that can result from poorly managed access regimes, including privacy breaches, copyright breaches and the loss of intellectual property.

Tom Hotchin's local government case study is a valuable reflection on the selection and implementation of an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS). Together with the guidance provided in chapters 4, 5 and 6, the reader is provided with a comprehensive approach to design, selection and implementation.

Selected Essays has a relatively short reference life because the technology with which we work rapidly advances. Even now in the sunset of its printing, readers may expect that there might have been some attention provided to the developing areas of portals, the uptake of the XML standard, and the impact of call centres, e-business transactions and business-to-business transactions in providing adequate business records. However, *Selected Essays* accurately reflects the Australian context. This is really where we are and the practical advice will encourage us to prepare well for the next generation of tools. I believe that this book will also be warmly received overseas.

The value of *Selected Essays* is greatly increased by Jenni Davidson's Glossary and Bibliography, both of which provide excellent up-to-date reading for students and practitioners. The online finding aids and directories also in the bibliography direct the reader further into the online community of recordkeeping professionals. It is also pleasing to have Geraldine Suter's index – one of the first components many look for in a book.

I particularly enjoyed the thread woven through the essays. Whilst each essay is separate in its own right and authorship, clear links among the essays are not only inferred, but referenced by a generous collaboration of the authors, so that one essay might supplement another. In his Foreword, Steve Stuckey says that *Selected Essays* is aimed at assisting recordkeeping and information

management practitioners with responsibility for, or interest in electronic recordkeeping. I believe this book has achieved that aim.

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Records & Archive Services

Pedro Gonzalez, *Computerization of the Archivo General de Indias: Strategies and Results,* Council on Library and Information Services, Washington, DC, September 1998. 57pp. including bibliography and appendixes. English version. ISBN 1 887334 61 0. US$20.00. Available from Council on Library and Information Services, 1755 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 500, Washington DC 20036, USA or online at *www.clir.org/pubs/abstract/pub76.html.*

This publication is a report of a pioneering project for the mass digitisation of archival resources. As such, it is part of a growing literature of formal reports from major institutions on their experiences and experiments with the digitisation of finding aids and original records. Given the project's starting date – 1986 – this report also becomes part of the historical documentation of the development of digitisation as a strategy for improving access to archives.

The project had its origins in the planning for the 500th anniversary of Spanish contact with the Americas. The Archivo General de Indias (AGI), which holds the records of the Spanish administration in the Americas and the Philippines, is one of several key national archival collections. It is located in Seville, where the 1992 World's Fair was also held. The Spanish Ministry of Culture used the celebrations to focus on making valuable archival resources better known. However, while the project had this aim in common with many other accessibility projects, the budget and scale of the project make it rather atypical. The total costs were around US$8.6 million between 1986 and 1994. The project's initial partners were the Ministry of Culture, IBM Spain and a private cultural institution, the Ramón Areces Foundation. The collaboration was mutually beneficial. While private support made the project feasible for the Ministry, the private partners gained from the increased visibility of a cultural resource of international significance.

The aims of the project were to use digital imaging to support the AGI's goals of preservation and access, to design and install a system which would have a substantial amount of data available for use by 1992 and to provide a pilot project for computerisation of other Spanish national historical archives. They were starting from scratch and were aware that, among other challenges,

was the need to manage system design and development while at the same time entering data on a large scale. By 1998, eleven million pages were available for on-screen use, all descriptive data was available electronically in an integrated system used through the reading room and over 30% of 'consultations' were done electronically at the AGI.

These achievements were significant, especially given that crucial developments in technology occurred during the life of the project. The objectives included broad statements of purpose (such as using the latest technology) and specific targets (10% of holdings or 8 million pages). Interspersed in the report are many comments about the practicalities of managing any project – such as training staff, looking for additional financial support, coping with changes in equipment and searching for standards. The issue of data exchange standards was especially important, as these were only emerging during the project's lifetime. Similarly, the project was hampered in that no suitable medium was found for several years to provide backups for the optical disks used to store data. Today, digitisation projects no longer face such problems as a lack of standards and choice of back-up media. Nevertheless, project planners still need to be mindful of questions of staff time. Appendix 4 of the Report gives a breakdown of a typical module within the project, showing that staff costs came to almost two-thirds of the total.

Has the project achieved its accessibility goals? The report is very positive on this point, noting that handling of original records has been greatly reduced while use has increased. More researchers are accessing more records more quickly at the workstations in the reading room. Researchers benefit from improved finding aids (produced in the massive retrospective conversion project in the first phase of the whole project) and from retrieving documents online. User satisfaction is taken as given. It would, however, have been useful to know how researcher responses to the changes have been measured, and indeed also whether they were involved in any stage of the project design or testing. By 1998, twelve per cent of all documents available were in digital form, but they accounted for one-third of all requests – raising a question about the extent to which patterns of use are influenced by ease of accessibility. However, the obvious question is not addressed: how might the digital resources of the AGI be made available to remote users? Here, the project remained captive to its time because use of the Internet has exploded since the project was conceived.

In short, this report is an interesting summary of the origins, development and results of a major national archival digitisation initiative. It discusses how and why particular decisions were made and supports its conclusions

with useful statistical data. While it may not assist archivists planning modest or even large-scale projects in 2001, it is an important document in the history of digitisation.

Information about the AGI is available (in Spanish) at *www.mcu.es/lab/archivos/AGI.html.*

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Lyn Gorman and Don Boadle (eds), *Rural Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2000, special issue on Australian Rural History, Charles Sturt University Centre for Rural Social Research, Wagga Wagga, NSW.

The growth of regional universities has produced an increasing interest in Australian rural history. This special issue of the journal *Rural Society* is devoted to historical analysis. It includes seven articles, six research commentaries and ten book reviews.

The articles discuss sectarianism, the National Catholic Rural Movement, the activities of an influential lobby group in the Riverina in the 1950s, agricultural extension in New South Wales in the 1890s, the Wagga Wagga branch of the Australian Labor Party, the Riverina press, and the Chinese in pre-Federation north-east Victoria. The editors have chosen to reveal the variety of work being done by historians of rural Australia rather than address a historiographical issue, a period or a problem. Their choice is a sensible one given that the journal normally focuses on contemporary rural society and rural social policy.

Richard Doig, in his revisionary piece on the National Catholic Rural Movement, argues persuasively that the NCRM derived its inspiration from the New Deal. It will now be considerably harder to sustain the charge that Santamaria *et al* wanted to establish a European peasantry in Australia. Warwick Eather's study of the Wagga Wagga branch of the ALP from 1890 onwards is also based on impressive scholarship. He explains how early support turned to disillusionment and then sustained hostility. It is a moot question, however, whether the disillusionment resulted from the changing views of the Wagga Wagga people themselves. In the 1890s many small rural entrepreneurs, or aspiring entrepreneurs, regarded themselves as workers and the ALP as their party. The perception that Labor would represent men striving to win independence, security and status, may not have had much substance

(although the ALP did press for the 'bursting up' of the big estates). Initially, however, it may have won greater support for the Wagga Wagga branch than 'socialism and industrial militancy'.

The other articles all have much to commend them. Don Boadle writes of the activists who worked to provide higher education and better water resource management in the Riverina. He shows how idealism and practical knowledge combined to generate an effective lobby and reform movement, albeit with social and political costs for the individuals involved. Through his concentration on the remarkable WA Merrylees, Boadle also offers a rebuke to those urban intellectuals who persist in the belief that there is no life of the mind outside big cities. Dirk Spennemann examines early attempts at agricultural extension in New South Wales in which another extraordinary polymath, Nathan Cobb, was the driving force. James Logan on sectarianism in Ganmain between 1912 and 1921 and Nancy Blacklow on the attitudes of Riverina newspapers towards health and education contribute to inquiries that have inspired research elsewhere. Similarly, Rod Lancashire adds to the growing literature on the Chinese in nineteenth-century Australia by demonstrating that the Chinese community in the north-eastern Victorian border town of Wahgunyah enjoyed a reasonably harmonious relationship with the white inhabitants and were fully engaged in the economic life of the region.

Several of the contributors to this special issue made use of Don Aitken's notion of 'countrymindedness', a set of ideas and attitudes which encourage country people to see themselves as different from, and superior to, urban Australians. While the concept has the capacity to explain much about rural and regional society, I wonder if it might have reached its use-by date. It implies unity, yet tension and conflict feature in this special issue. Indeed, in at least three articles we read of country people in conflict with their fellow citizens because they transgress or reject 'countrymindedness'. If 'countrymindedness' applies to some rural people but not to others how useful is it as an analytical tool? Does it inhibit analysis just at a point where things get complex and therefore interesting?

Perhaps this difficulty might be overcome if 'countrymindedness' were seen as volatile. It is most evident when rural communities oppose threats to living standards or common interests. When such threats are absent or reduced, social tensions and conflicts (class, gender and race, to name only the most obvious) have more scope to exert their influence. Allowing for ebbing and flowing in this manner could help, although more revisions may ultimately be needed. The persistence of internal friction and conflict in rural societies

is undeniable and needs attention from historians. 'Countrymindedness', however valuable it has been in the past, threatens this development.

John Merritt

Richard Gorrell and Stephen Foster, *Voices for Democracy: Teachers Resource Kit,* National Archives of Australia, 1998. ISBN 0 642 34400 0. $24.95.

This kit aims to introduce students to archival sources, promote the study of democracy, stimulate research for the National History Challenge and promote collaborative learning. These four aims are achieved very effectively using interesting documents and effective thinking processes.

The kit does a good job in clearly introducing students to archival sources. While each unit provides secondary materials as background, the activities depend on the archival sources. Students become involved in making their own decisions about the characters presented rather than just relying on the historian's perspective. In order to promote collaborative learning, the authors have employed such strategies as Consider All Factors (CAF); Plus, Minus, Interesting (PMI); and Examine Both Sides (EBA). These de Bono approaches can be used by individuals, but are particularly effective tools for teamwork.

Voices for Democracy integrates well with the 'Discovering Democracy' unit entitled 'Men and Women in Political Life' adding depth to that particular unit. As a stand-alone kit, it fulfils its aim of promoting the study of democracy by examining people who have contributed to our democracy and issues like leadership in a democracy, women's rights, the individual versus the national interest and the appropriateness of democracy for all people at all times.

For students entering the National History Challenge, *Voices for Democracy* provides invaluable suggestions to help direct them into really interesting research projects. This is a creative way to support the National History Challenge and therefore promote the study of democracy in Australia. Bibliographies on each person are provided for further research. However, users should be aware that they are no longer fully current. For instance several new works on John Curtin have since been published including David Day's *John Curtin: A Life* (1999) and *Backroom Briefings* (1997) by Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall.

The target readership is middle secondary school. The materials are suitable for the target group, but would also be very useful for studies at higher levels,

particularly for learning about evidence and reliability in history. However, the use of handwritten facsimile documents will present interpretation difficulties for some students, so the provision of transcripts would have been useful.

Richard Gorrell produced the National Archives kit *Exploring Citizenship* in 1997 and this production of *Voices for Democracy* echoes his earlier work, but with an improved format and more attractive presentation. Similar de Bono approaches are employed with the addition of an 'Investigator's Report'. This report is a very effective learning tool and an important improvement on the earlier kit.

Rosslyn Marshall and Lesley Carman-Brown
John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

Robert Lewis and Tim Gurry, *1901 and All That: A Federation Resource Kit,* National Archives of Australia, 2000. 150pp. ISBN 0 642 34415 9. $36.95.

Robert Lewis and Tim Gurry have been writing history materials for schools for at least two decades. Both men are recognised Australia-wide within the history teaching profession as excellent writers and leaders in the field of the use of primary resources as the basis for historical study.

1901 and All That has two aims. One is to provide students and teachers with resources and strategies to investigate Federation predominantly through primary resources from the National Archives collection. The second aim is to help students discover that the ideas and achievements of Federation have continuing relevance and significance for young Australians today.

This aim is clearly achieved by the kit, predominantly through the use of primary sources. Every unit engages students in using primary sources to reach conclusions. The activities are clearly set out and easy for the classroom teacher to follow with a minimum of preparation. The resource kit is very comprehensive in its coverage of Federation, but still provides information about additional resources. This is particularly helpful for inexperienced teachers and those with little background in Australian history.

The CD-ROM activity is excellent but, unfortunately, a full written version is not provided. This is a disadvantage in schools with little or no technology. It is a great activity that all students will benefit from, but it cannot be done properly without the CD.

The second aim of the kit – to help students understand that Federation is still relevant today – is achieved through the modelling process. Units 1, 3, 4 and 5 all begin with an activity set in the present and which act as models to discover what Federation was all about. In unit 1, for example, students construct an hypothesis about Australian society in 1901 and on completion of unit 5, consider their findings. The model can then be used to consider similarities and differences between then and now. Unit 5 raises issues such as the flag, immigration and indigenous rights. Students can use these issues as a springboard for examining the same controversial issues in the present.

The target readership for this kit is middle secondary school. The materials are appropriate to this level, although one criticism of the kit is the lack of transcripts to interpret the handwritten facsimile documents. Most senior students have difficulty reading handwritten documents, so students in years 9–10, especially those of only average ability, will really struggle with these documents.

In comparison with other work covering similar ground this kit stands up well. There are very few materials, apart from the parliamentary education packages, that deal with Federation in any depth. This kit certainly stands alone in its use of both primary sources and teamwork. An unintended outcome of the kit is that it develops leadership skills by teaching students about decision-making processes. Overall, it is a dynamic kit which should go well in the classroom and certainly deserved the *Australian* newspaper 2000 Award for Excellence in Educational Publishing.

Rosslyn Marshall and Lesley Carman-Brown
John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

Joseph Rosenblum, *Practice to Deceive: The Amazing Stories of Literary Forgery's Most Notorious Practitioners*, New Castle, Delaware, Oak Knoll Press, 1990. xix + 393pp. ISBN 1 58456 010 X. US$39.95.

George Psalmanazar was born in France and never left Europe, but he claimed to be a Japanese convert to Christianity. In 1704, when he was about 25, he published *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa*. Some readers suspected that it was largely a work of his imagination, but it earned him 22 guineas and a degree of fame in literary London. Mark Hofmann was also 25 when he first 'discovered' early documents on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. His remarkable skill as a forger and his acumen as a trader in Mormon documents soon made him a millionaire. However, his debts exceeded his income, dealers and collectors started to become suspicious,

and in desperation he resorted to murder. In 1988 he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Psalmanazar and Hofmann were both forgers, in the broad sense of the term, but between them there was a huge moral chasm. In fact, the nine forgers who are the subjects of *Practice to Deceive* are a disparate group and Joseph Rosenblum makes little attempt to compare them or identify the essential or changing features of literary forgery. Instead, he provides nine short biographies. His subjects were mostly young men when they committed their forgeries, but they had little else in common. James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton were outstanding poets, John Collier was a leading Shakespearean scholar, TJ Wise was an indefatigable collector and bibliographer, while George Byron, who claimed to be a son of the poet, was simply a forger who specialised in Romantic poets. Some forged manuscripts, others forged texts. Thomas Ireland added inscriptions and annotations to early editions of Shakespeare, while Wise fabricated new editions of rare pamphlets. Some were driven by greed alone, but others seemed more intent on demonstrating their remarkable literary talents and scholarship. Sooner or later they were all exposed, but some were still esteemed as writers while others died in disgrace or in obscurity. The gullibility of the public is a recurring theme. Vrain-Denis Lucas produced documents ostensibly written by Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Cleopatra and other classical figures. Curiously, they were in French and he hardly attempted to imitate ancient scripts, yet thousands were sold to eager collectors. Lucas was finally convicted of fraud in 1870.

Rosenblum is a bibliographer and his book is more likely to appeal to bibliographers and book collectors than to archivists. It would be difficult to write a really dull book on forgery, but he has allowed good stories to be submerged in a mass of bibliographical detail. In the chapters on Collier, Byron, Lucas and Hofmann there are brief references to their use of old paper, inks, seals, postmarks, scripts and language, but the skills of the forgers are not described in detail. With the possible exception of the chapters on Lucas and Hofmann, the book is based on secondary sources and provides little new information. The story of TJ Wise has been recounted in several books, while readers interested in the Rowley poems of Chatterton would do better to turn to Linda Kelly's *The Marvellous Boy* (1971).

Authenticity was a key concern of the old discipline of diplomatics but it tends to be neglected in modern archival writings. Rosenblum mentions the rapid rise of a market in single letters and documents in London in the 19th century, a market that was exploited by unscrupulous collectors like Byron. Today the autograph market thrives in the United States and is growing in Australia, especially in literary, theatrical and sporting memorabilia. There

are widespread concerns about forgeries and American legislators are currently looking at the possibility of making sales conditional on certificates of authenticity. Just as a librarian at the British Museum exposed the crimes of John Collier in 1859, there will continue to be an important role for archivists and manuscript curators in detecting literary forgeries.

Graeme Powell
National Library of Australia

State Records Authority of New South Wales, *Government Recordkeeping Manual, Volume 1: Requirements, Volume 2: Guidelines* and *Volume 3: Procedures,* Sydney, Australia, 1999. Volume 1, $120.00, Volume 2, $120.00 and Volume 3 $66.00. Available from the State Records Authority of New South Wales, PO Box R625, Royal Exchange NSW 1225, Australia. Also available at *www.records.nsw.gov.au.*

I looked forward to reviewing the State Records Authority of New South Wales (State Records) *Government Recordkeeping Manual,* as it is the latest in the line of many useful publications on records management produced by the New South Wales Government. I remember the Records Management Office of New South Wales publications from the late 1970s being for many years a useful source of technical and practical advice. The Manual presents a very coherent and lucid range of guidance and advice to managers, practitioners and others that is based on recent developments, such as the Australian Standard AS 4390 *Records Management.*

State Records has published its *Government Recordkeeping Manual* in hard copy and electronically. The hard-copy version being reviewed comprises three volumes, each volume being a two-ring binder to facilitate maintenance of the volumes over time. The electronic version is available on the State Records' website. Readers should note that a more recent (February 2001) hard-copy version listed for sale comprises four volumes, since the general disposal authorities are now a separate volume instead of being in Volume 1.

The Manual's release coincided with the commencement in January 1999 of the *State Records Act 1998*. To a large extent, the Manual brings together the guidelines, advice sheets, policies and other material that State Records has produced in recent years and will be the appropriate place for new material in the future. As such, the Manual is a work in progress and should be considered as such.

Volume 1: Requirements includes guidelines and other material under sections headed Conceptual framework, Policies, Legislation, Standards, Code of best practice, and General disposal authorities. It also includes the Table of Contents for all three volumes; volumes 2 and 3 do not have their own contents pages. The highlights of the Manual are found here, namely *The Recordkeeping Regime*, *What is Records Management?* and *Full and Accurate Records*. They provide succinct, well-considered and well-written information about the records environment that any manager responsible for records should read. But one thing puzzled me. *The Recordkeeping Regime* and the Introduction note the significance of the New South Wales Premier's Memorandum No. 98-16: 'The principal written statement of Government policy concerning records and recordkeeping in the New South Wales public sector is found in the Premier's Memorandum No. 98-16 relating to Records Management Standards and Policies'. Surprisingly, the memorandum is not reproduced, nor is it readily accessible, even via the Premier's website.

Volume 2: Guidelines brings together two existing series of State Records publications, *Guidelines* and *Recordkeeping in Brief*, and a selection of National Archives of Australia's *Archives Advices*. The *Guidelines* provide much detailed information on topics such as file creation and disaster management and are aimed at a number of levels of users. They contain the kind of help and guidance that any records manager, whether in the New South Wales Government or not, could well consult. *Recordkeeping in Brief*, as the name indicates, is a series of short, ready-reference guidelines, each being a page or two of useful advice. The one titled *Compiling a functional thesaurus to merge with Keyword AAA* (a thesaurus produced by State Records) is longer at seven pages although the review copy is missing pages three to six.

Volume 3: Procedures contains the *Procedures* series which is specific to the New South Wales Government and includes specific directions on matters such as transfer and access.

Having a hardcopy version of the Manual is useful for those without ready access to the electronic version and for those who prefer to have guidelines and procedures that they can annotate, flag and easily peruse. However, the days of a hard-copy version of this kind of publication are just about over. A user would be well advised to check the electronic version and not rely upon the hard-copy version whenever anything significant is sought. With publishing nowadays, electronic is up-to-date and authoritative whereas hard copy is comfortable, cumbersome and has uncertain reliability. State Records' policy is that it 'prefers to publish electronically... [however] in the short to

medium term it will still be necessary to publish some material in hard-copy form to accommodate the needs and preferences of our clients'.

Manuals are a key means of promulgating, disseminating and making useable a range of advice, policies and other key information for the benefit of those responsible for records. In terms of content, the *Government Recordkeeping Manual* is an excellent example of such, not only for those in the New South Wales Government but also records managers and archivists in other jurisdictions who seek inspiration and guidance on recordkeeping. But in terms of reliability and currency, the set of volumes comes second to the electronic version.

Rodney Teakle
National Archives of Australia

Kirsty Williamson (ed.), *Research Methods for Students and Professionals: Information Management and Systems,* Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW, 1999. Topics in Australasian Library and Information Studies, no. 16. xvii + 325pp. ISBN 0 949 06089 5. Available from the Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag 660, Wagga Wagga NSW 2678. $55.00.

While the stated audience for this book is information management professionals and the examples it contains are all relevant to this group, *Research Methods for Students and Professionals* is likely to be a useful reference tool and starting point for anyone who needs a good general introduction to and overview of research methods and techniques. Why do information professionals in particular need an introduction to research methods and techniques? Ross Harvey points out in his introduction that 'research and professional practice are inextricably linked... The most obvious uses of research in these information environments are for problem solving, for development, evaluation and improvement of services and systems, and to provide information before introducing new systems or services (perhaps through the assessment of user needs)' (p.xiii). Information professionals must be critical users of research and at some time in their careers will probably also need to be either active researchers themselves or participate in a practitioner-academic research partnership. Therefore an understanding of research methods and techniques is now essential for practising information managers, including recordkeepers and librarians.

The book is well structured. Each chapter commences with a set of objectives which provide a useful insight into chapter content for those using the book

as a reference, as well as for the standard textbook approach. Content of the book is divided into four sections: 1. Introduction to research methods, 2. Methods, 3. Techniques, and 4. Data analysis.

After an introductory discussion on why research is necessary in professional practice, the book explores the different approaches to research and the differences between inductive and deductive reasoning, positivism and interpretivism and the different types of research design that these approaches generate. Chapter three is devoted to the crucial issues of identifying a research problem, refining research questions from the research problem and developing hypotheses to see if these are appropriate to the research method. These processes are clearly and succinctly illustrated by examples of problem statements, specific questions for quantitative and qualitative research and of different types of hypotheses. The roles of theory and the literature review in developing research proposals are also briefly covered in this chapter. A brief and basic glossary of research terms is also included at the end of the book.

A comprehensive range of research methods is covered, including survey research, case study, experimental design, system development in information systems research, action research, ethnography, historical research, and the Delphi method. Each method is treated in a full chapter, giving clear discussion of the features of the method and its advantages and disadvantages. It is a pity that no professional biographical information about chapter contributors is included in the book. Most are well known among Australian information professionals, but this is nevertheless a noteworthy omission.

Research techniques are sensibly treated separately from research methods since a particular technique may be employed in more than one research method. This separation encourages a broader understanding of the uses of research techniques than is offered by many introductory works on research in which a particular technique is associated with one particular research method. Questionnaires, for example, are commonly associated with survey methods but are also useful tools for gathering supplementary information in case studies or as a technique in ethnographic studies. Sampling may be used in virtually all research methods and the explanations of the various types of probability and non-probability sampling are very clear and easy to understand. Sampling, questionnaires and interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic techniques are each treated in the four chapters on research techniques.

Techniques for both quantitative and qualitative data analysis are covered in the final section, including an example of a coding manual for part of a quantitative questionnaire example used in an earlier chapter and some advice on dealing with statistical and qualitative analysis packages. Williamson and

Bow, writers of this chapter, make it clear that the section on statistical analysis in particular is basic, since this subject is large and complex, but it does give a clear summary of important points. There is also a warning about the pitfalls of concentrating on data gathering to the detriment of data analysis, sometimes left until remaining project time and funds are low and consequently resulting in a sketchy and less than satisfactory result. The final chapter deals with reading and evaluating research reports, which will perhaps be the skill most frequently used by practitioners as 'informed consumers of research'. This chapter also provides a useful summary of the main points raised in foregoing chapters.

Graeme Johanson notes at the beginning of his chapter on historical research that 'This chapter does not amount to a comprehensive do-it-yourself manual. It is more in the style of a strategic plan' (p.178). Neither does this book provide comprehensive expertise in any one research method or technique – it does not claim to do that. It does provide an excellent introduction and overview and will help practitioners and beginning researchers to identify appropriate research methods and techniques for particular purposes. It also gives a sound and informed basis for the further reading suggested in each chapter, some providing greater depth in the method or technique under discussion and other suggestions being exemplar studies, many of which are Australian. This book would be a worthwhile addition to any information professional's or research student's reference shelf.

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