Standardised Recordkeeping: Reality or Illusion?

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Presently recordkeepers in Queensland Government face the challenge of achieving the dual outcomes of improved performance through cost-efficient and effective operations and compliance with a raft of legal and regulatory requirements. In facing this challenge Queensland Government organisations have sought guidance from 'AS ISO 15489 Information and documentation – records management' and 'AS 5090 Work process analysis for recordkeeping'. These standards are valuable foundations for addressing compliance issues and seeking a more systematic approach to recordkeeping within an organisation. However, these standards do not provide sufficient guidance for recordkeepers seeking to standardise and integrate records processes to achieve more performance-based outcomes such as cost-efficiency and improved service delivery.

Using David Bearman's tactics as an analytical framework it is proposed that the design and implementation tactics are central to achieving business performance outcomes from recordkeeping. An analysis of the relationship between the standards (AS ISO 15489 and AS 5090) and business process methods demonstrates the synergistic value of these tools in seeking performance

and compliance outcomes via design and implementation tactics. In analysing the application of these tools this paper considers whether recordkeeping can be standardised and integrated across government and the role standards play in achieving business outcomes. The lens from which this paper is presented is that of a professional recordkeeper engaged in developing and deploying the tactics at both a government-wide and agency-wide level. The views presented in this paper are personal and not necessarily representative of the author's previous and current employers within Queensland Government.

Introduction

Over the past decade the recordkeeping profession has worked tirelessly to codify recordkeeping practice nationally and internationally. The centrepiece of these codes is AS ISO 15489 *Information and documentation – Records management.*[1] AS ISO 15489 provides a clear and credible framework for establishing systematic, comprehensive and compliant recordkeeping in any organisation and is the foundation from which the Queensland Government Recordkeeping Framework was developed.[2]

Both AS ISO 15489 and the Queensland Government Recordkeeping Framework recognise that all organisations operate within a complex web of legal and regulatory requirements. In this environment records provide the evidence and documented memory of what an organisation has done or what it intends to do. Consequently, organisations need to ensure that records are made and kept for as long as those records have value to the organisation and broader community.

The recordkeeping dilemma in Queensland Government

It is the role of records as evidence that distinguishes records from other forms of information, including documents. In the dynamic business environment satisfying this simple requirement has become a major challenge. As organisations move from fragmented manual operations to integrated electronic business operations they increasingly rely on electronic information and evidence to manage and operate their businesses. Integrated electronic business activities such as the Shared Services Initiative within the Queensland Government aim to enhance service delivery and improve efficiency.[3] However, unless information

systems are designed for recordkeeping,[4] such initiatives may also introduce new risks in meeting legal and accountability requirements and in sustaining the corporate and societal memory.

> Electronic information systems do not necessarily create or fix evidence of acts and are designed to be efficient by revising the information content of the system many times without leaving a trace of its prior state, unless systems were designed to document records transactions.[5]

This challenge is well understood by recordkeepers but not necessarily by our stakeholders and is an area that Queensland Government is seeking to address via a mix of tactics and methodologies.

Most stakeholders acknowledge that compliance, accountability and evidence do matter. Few acknowledge the wider societal role records and recordkeeping play, particularly in the longer-term, rather they seek first and foremost performance outcomes such as improved efficiency, effectiveness, service delivery and reduced cost margins.

Many stakeholders believe that performance and conformance outcomes may be achieved by establishing recordkeeping as an invisible back-end activity that 'just happens' without any conscious effort from the agent(s) participating in the business transaction. From this perspective recordkeeping is simply a routine transaction that may be readily automated and relegated to the virtual sewers of the organisation's technological infrastructure — an unpleasant but necessary part of life that people should never have to experience beyond the sanitised front-end access points.

While other stakeholders may accept and pursue business transformation through the integration of recordkeeping with other business activities, the breadth and depth of such transformation tends to fall short of achieving full integration. Again this approach is largely fuelled by the widely held perception of recordkeeping as a routine business activity that can be made to fit into other business activities, rather than a business activity of strategic and operational importance that can improve other business processes and generate business value.

In the midst of all these varying expectations and demands how does the professional recordkeeper capture, manage and preserve records as evidence and memory across the records continuum in an

environment that accepts compliance requirements, expects performance benefits but does not want business agents to be consciously involved in the records process?

Faced with this dilemma many recordkeeping professionals refer to the suite of standards in search of answers. In doing so they seek guidance on how to ensure memory and evidence are preserved; while simultaneously establishing recordkeeping as an efficient and unobtrusive (but not necessarily invisible) business activity that facilitates performance outcomes such as improved service delivery, and more cost-efficient processes.

The suite of standards available within Queensland Government and beyond provide hints on how such outcomes may be achieved, but the emphasis is on compliance and retrofitting recordkeeping into existing business processes. Unfortunately, this approach has limited application for those under pressure to reduce costs and improve the speed and quality of outputs from the records process.[6]

In confronting this challenge the Queensland Government has established a framework for simultaneously achieving performance and compliance outcomes. Bearman's tactics are applied in this paper as an analytical framework for exploring this approach. It is proposed that the design and implementation tactics are central to achieving performance outcomes from recordkeeping. An analysis of the relationship between two key industry codes of best practice, AS ISO 15489 and AS 5090 *Work process analysis for recordkeeping*, and business process methods[7] demonstrates the value and compatibility of these tools in seeking performance and compliance outcomes. Within this framework, standardisation and integration are recognised as means to improved business performance outcomes. However, given the dynamic nature of contemporary government and the diversity of recordkeeping requirements and contexts is this really achievable?

The mix of tactics in Queensland Government

The four tactics (policy, design, implementation and standards)[8] provide a framework of approaches for managing records, irrespective of form, within an organisation and across Queensland Government. The successful deployment of the tactics is contingent on the culture, strategy

and level of recordkeeping maturity within each organisation and across the sector as a whole.

The **policy tactic** refers to the overarching mandates, principles and directives established within legislation and policies. It is encompasses the *Public Records Act 2002* and Queensland Government Information Standards such as *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* and other laws and policies that impact and impose recordkeeping obligations on Queensland Government.[9]

The policy tactic provides the foundations from which the other tactics are developed and applied. It sets the governance and management framework for recordkeeping within Queensland Government together with a performance and conformance review mechanism to ensure policies are relevant and appropriate. The *Public Records Act 2002* mandates the State Archives as the lead agency for recordkeeping in Queensland Government.

The **design tactic** is the means by which overarching policies and strategies are translated into practice. It encompasses the review and design of recordkeeping systems to meet the compliance (policy and law) and performance (eg strategy) requirements of an organisation.[10] In Queensland Government this tactic has included: the design of generic requirements for a common electronic document and records management system (EDRMS); the procurement of an EDRMS; and the redesign of records processes and other business processes to integrate systems and processes across organisational boundaries.

Within the context of the Queensland Government Shared Service Initiative, the design tactic is the focus of current efforts. Until recently the design tactic was the least used tactic by Queensland Government. The leadership of a project team within Queensland Treasury in deploying this tactic has provided the advantage of 'central agency' clout in achieving outputs, as well as agreement and acceptance across government within a short period of time, while simultaneously enabling Queensland State Archives to focus on exercising its important role of regulator and strategic advisor.

The **implementation tactic** is concerned with establishing the design within business operations. Within Queensland Government the implementation tactic has supported the practical deployment of all other tactics. Responsibility for implementation activities is shared

across a number of organisations. Specifically this tactic has involved developing guidelines, manuals and providing (or facilitating) training to support the implementation of recordkeeping systems. In support of the Queensland Government EDRMS, the development and release of a comprehensive set of implementation guidelines are central to the change management framework, the sustainability of the EDRMS and redesigned business processes across government.

The **standards tactic** includes technical standards dealing with information and communications technologies and recordkeeping. These are specific requirements that are measurable and facilitate the standardisation of business systems and processes. Such standards include key recordkeeping tools and authorities that support records processes such as classification, resource discovery, security management and records disposal. In contrast to the Queensland Government Information Standards, these standards are aimed at the day-to-day operations of business systems and processes.

Although Queensland State Archives has developed and approved many disposal authorities over the past forty years, beyond these efforts this tactic is probably the least applied at the government-wide level. This tactic tends to be utilised by agency personnel in the implementation of government and organisational policy and strategy. As systems and processes become increasingly integrated across government, the application of this tactic will probably need to be utilised more extensively at the government-wide level by Queensland State Archives and central agencies. For example, the current federated approach to the interoperability of business processes and ICT across Queensland Government has established a framework of principles and activities. However, to automate or integrate business, processes and technology specific parameters must be established and accepted across government and other business boundaries. Such parameters may include the sector-wide adoption of specific authentication protocols and specific digital preservation formats for conducting business transactions.

Key components of the recordkeeping tactics at the government-wide level are summarised in Table 1. Leadership is shared across several Queensland Government agencies responsible for the management of records, information technology and shared services. Further, with recordkeeping responsibilities and accountabilities being legislated

along functional and structural lines, each state government organisation has a critical role in the deployment of all tactics.[11]

Table 1. Recordkeeping tactic mix in Queensland Government

Tactic	*Elements*	*Lead responsibility*
Policy		
Public Records Act 2002		Queensland State Archives
Information Standards		Queensland State Archives and Department of Public Works (Government ICT Program)
Recordkeeping Framework		Queensland State Archives
Design		
Queensland Government EDRMS		Queensland Treasury
Document and Records Management Business Process Model		Queensland Treasury
Implementation		
EDRMS implementation training		Queensland Treasury
Recordkeeping training		Queensland State Archives
EDRMS implementation guidelines		Queensland Treasury
EDRMS integration guidelines		Queensland Treasury
Best practice guidelines and manuals		Queensland State Archives and Department of Public Works (Government ICT Program)
Recordkeepers' Forums		Queensland State Archives
Strategic and operational record-keeping plan templates and workbooks		Queensland State Archives
Glossary of Archival and Recordkeeping Terms		Queensland State Archives
Standards		
Disposal Authorities, including general disposal authorities		Queensland State Archives
Qkey — the Queensland State Government Business Classification Scheme and Thesaurus of Administrative Terms[12]		Queensland Treasury and Queensland State Archives

The current emphasis on the design and implementation tactics within Queensland Government reflects the broader Queensland Government objective to streamline administrative processes and to enhance service delivery through the integrated business information systems and processes. The key driver is to gain improved cost-efficiencies in internal government support processes to enable more resources to be committed to external services (primary processes) provided to the Queensland community. Establishing standardised systems and processes provides a means for reducing the duplication, unnecessary bureaucracy, process fragmentation and other process blockers that typically plague large conglomerates such as a state government.

Queensland Government is also seeking a stronger return on its significant and growing investment in information and communications technologies (ICTs). However there is also a wariness of the dangers of the 'silver bullet' thinking that often accompanies ICT enabled initiatives. Such perceptions regard ICTs as *the* solution to a range of business problems that in practice require other interventions such as process review or cultural change. Given the interdependence of processes and business information systems, Queensland Government has adopted a business process methodology as a lever for realising positive change. The approach taken by Queensland Government reflects the thinking of Thomas H Davenport in *Process Innovation*:

> Managers seeking returns on IT investment must strive to ensure that process changes are realised. If nothing changes about the way work is done and the role of IT is simply to automate an existing process, economic benefits are likely to be minimal.[13]

Recordkeeping and business processes

Business processes transform inputs from suppliers into outputs to be consumed by clients or customers. Processes are transformed into outputs by mechanisms such as people, technology, equipment and facilities. The transformation process is bounded by various controls such as legislation, budgets, business strategy, policies and jurisdictional boundaries.

In contrast to the hierarchical or vertical 'function-activity-transaction' model used in ISO 15489, process models present a horizontal view of an organisation. Processes flow across an organisation. They may be:

1.   'primary processes' — these are core business processes that directly service clients such as sales management processes

2.   'supporting processes' these processes facilitate the primary processes, for example human resource management and financial management)[14] or

3.   'connecting processes' — these processes connect business processes and enable the interaction of a core process with other core processes, supporting processes and support processes with other processes.[15]

Document and records management processes are 'connecting processes' because they enable interaction between primary business processes and other processes across space and time. Document and records management are integral to all business activities because they ensure there is a documentary trace of a particular transaction and establish the current and future relationships between that transaction and other transactions. Such relationships transcend the time and space of the originating transaction. Importantly, these relationships transcend the vertical or hierarchical structures and horizontal boundaries or processes of an organisation.

Business process methods encompass a range of structured approaches to redesigning how an organisation operates to achieve improvements in business performance and compliance outcomes. They seek to address the process problems caused by 'structural silos' or 'system silos' by taking a client-focused, cross-functional process view and modifying or removing activities, transactions or systems that do not contribute to creating client value. Opportunity costs[16] associated with the resources and related processes are also considered in business process methods.

Business processes have been a central component of recordkeeping theory and practice for many years. In his seminal work *Modern Archives* TR Schellenberg in 1956 encouraged records managers to not only understand business processes but also to improve and simplify those processes:

The problem then is one of analysing the steps involved in a particular administrative operation for the purpose of *improving procedures and simplifying methods.* Each step should contribute positively to the accomplishment of a particular operation, and each step in the administrative sequence should be analysed. [17]

In 1994 Terry Cook also urged a more proactive process-oriented approach to recordkeeping:

... records managers must shift their emphasis from the physical 'records' to the conceptual 'management', from providing a warehouse of services to integrating all the business processes of their sponsors with redesigned recordkeeping systems.[18]

The connection between records and business processes (or activities) was codified in Australia in 1996 with the release of *AS4390 Records Management* and internationally in 2001 with the release of AS ISO 15489. The latter defines records and records management as follows:

[A record is] information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.[19]

[Records management is the] field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records. [20]

Within AS ISO 15489.1 the integration of records management into business systems and processes is included in the scope of records management activities. The list of benefits identified in ISO 15489.1 includes several business outcomes such as consistent and equitable service delivery, 'effective performance of activities throughout an organisation' and the efficient conduct of business.[21]

In explaining the characteristics of a comprehensive records management program the standard includes (as the last of eleven points) 'identifying and evaluating opportunities for improving effectiveness,

efficiency or quality of its processes, decisions and actions that could result from better records creation and management'.[22] The standard explains that: 'Rules for creating and capturing records and metadata about records should be incorporated into the procedures for governing all business processes for which there is a requirement for evidence of activity'.[23]

In passing AS ISO 15489.1 acknowledges that 'Information systems, business applications and communication systems, and the business processes which they support, should be designed, modified, or redesigned so that adequate records can be created and captured as a routine part of undertaking business activities'.[24] But in explaining the essential characteristics of records systems and the application of the designing and implementing records systems (DIRS) method the tone is passive and concerned with fitting records processes within existing business processes. It does not consider or encourage recordkeepers to actively review, redesign and manage records processes to improve either records processes themselves or other business processes.

The DIRS methodology does not explicitly discuss the application of business process methods to achieve process improvement or innovation. In 'Step A: Preliminary investigation', and 'Step B: Analysis of business activity', the emphasis is on documenting and understanding the current state of play. While this is a necessary foundation for understanding organisational requirements, the opportunity to analyse, evaluate and improve or contribute to the improvement of business processes, including records processes is not considered.

In 'Step C: Identification of requirements for records' the emphasis is on understanding the regulatory environment and the risk of 'not creating and maintaining records' and considering how compliance and risk may be 'satisfied through records management processes'. Business improvement and innovation while central to achieving more commercially oriented outcomes from recordkeeping, is not given any consideration.[25]

In 'Step F: Design of a records system' there is a hint of the relevance of process improvement or innovation to recordkeeping. Again, the tone is reactive and passive. In implementing the records requirements the standard advises that it is important to 'ensure that the records system supports, and does not hinder, business processes; assess and, if

necessary, redesign business processes and operational business and communication systems to incorporate records management'.[26]

In addressing the implementation of a records system (Step G) it is explained that this should be done 'with a view to integrating the operation of records system with business processes and related systems'.[27] No guidance on how this may be achieved is provided. Likewise, the standard omits detail on the benefits of not only aligning systems and processes but also identifying opportunities to review and improve processes and systems to achieve a range of business outcomes.

Some general guidance on reviewing and monitoring records systems to support process conformance and control objectives is provided in 'Step H: Post-implementation review'. Process improvement and innovation, however, are not considered.

The supporting guidelines for AS ISO 15489.1 also hint at the possibility of process redesign for performance and capability improvements of records processes.[28] However, AS ISO 15489.2 does not really explain how to improve records processes to achieve wider business process improvement or innovation.

AS ISO 15489 refers to the term 'records system' as a broad concept that encompasses 'people and processes as well as tools and technology'.[29] Nonetheless professional discussion and application of the standard within and beyond Queensland tends to place technology as the leading component and become increasingly prone to 'silver bullet' thinking.

AS 5090 aims to support the application of the AS ISO 15489 series by providing 'guidance on undertaking work process analysis for recordkeeping purposes'.[30] Within AS 5090 the terms 'work process' and business processes are synonymous and defined as 'one or more sequences of action undertaken to provide a specific business outcome which complies with governing rules'.[31] From a recordkeeping perspective work process analysis 'describes and analyses what happens in a specific activity in a specific business context'.[32] This statement highlights an important point about applying the four tactics, particularly design and implementation — that recordkeeping is contingent on the business, regulatory, legal and societal context in which it occurs. This fundamental characteristic of recordkeeping is a key conceptual barrier between recordkeepers and other business professionals.

The latter typically regard recordkeeping as a routine transaction that may be readily automated via the appropriate technology: but recordkeeping is not always that simple. For example, although the administrative aspects of a ministerial briefing request or media release may be standardised to a certain extent (eg approval points, quality checks and process cycle time), the activities involved in preparing the content vary according to the purpose of the request, intended audience and subject matter. This may require the input from multiple internal as well as external sources over varying periods of time. In contrast an invoice payment process for standard office supplies is very much a routine process that is well suited to standardisation because the inputs, controls, mechanisms and outputs involved in the process may be readily defined and largely handled by a business information system.

In tackling integration there is also a tendency for non-recordkeeping professionals to regard recordkeeping as something that happens after the event rather than an activity that occurs concurrently and as an integral part of that activity. While records are the documentary trace of a specific transaction; records management and the attribution of recordkeeping metadata are activities that are more efficiently and effectively handled within the business actions that surround the specific transaction, rather than retrospectively.

AS 5090 promotes the 'standardisation of processes and the codification of variations' and 'integration of work processes with and automation of recordkeeping'.[33] However, it is silent on how to extend these applications to encompass process improvement and innovation to achieve wider business benefits and, like AS ISO 15489.1, it tends to favour compliance outcomes over other business outcomes. A comparison of the business-centric approach to the concept of a business process as advocated by Davenport, Becker and Kahn with the more compliance driven approach in AS 5090 illustrates the breadth of this conceptual gap.

Business-centric approaches:

> [A business process] implies a relatively heavy emphasis on improving how work is done, in contrast to a focus on which specific products and services are delivered to customers.[34]

> Processes are the structure by which an organization does
> what is necessary to produce value for its customers.
> Consequently, an important measure of a process is
> customer satisfaction with the output of the process.[35]

> A business process is a special process that is directed by
> the business objectives of a company and by the business
> environment.[36]

The AS 5090 approach:

> [A business process is] one or more sequences of action
> undertaken to provide a specific business outcome which
> complies with governing rules.[37]

AS 5090 refers to two models for work process analysis (WPA) as
described in AS 5090 — functional analysis (hierarchical decomposition
of functions and activities) and sequential analysis (mapping of the flow
of activities across the organisation). Business process methods applied
within Queensland Government have involved a combination of the
two models using the IDEF0 notation standard to review and improve
the horizontal and vertical relationships between the document and
records management process and other processes.

AS 5090 does not explicitly consider the opportunities for improvement
and innovation that are available in applying work process analysis for
recordkeeping. Yet by posing a framework of questions to consider
when undertaking process analysis there is potential for critical thinkers
to consider why or why doesn't something happen or to extend the
framework to consider whether the present way of doing business could
be improved? And if so how? And so on.

AS ISO 15489 and AS 5090 provide the foundations for establishing
best practice recordkeeping within the contemporary business
environment. However, both are passive and reactive. Although the
intent of the term 'system' within the method is in the broadest sense,
practical interpretation and application is typically in the procurement
and implementation of an 'off-the shelf' EDRMS.

In applying AS ISO 15489 and AS 5090 to business processes and systems
beyond traditional records systems and processes, individual and
professional perceptual filters present the most formidable barrier to
achieving both performance and compliance outcomes via

recordkeeping. Applying business process methods in these situations provides a common analytical framework for these issues.

Business process methods are complementary to the approaches advanced in the standards and assist with adopting a post-custodial approach that aligns more closely with the records continuum than the traditional records life cycle. Applying business process methods in tandem with the standards assists recordkeepers in moving 'from being passive custodians to active documenters, from managing the archival record to understanding the conceptual context, business processes and functional purposes behind its creation'.[38]

Business process methods and the EDRMS

> Recordkeeping solutions do not come out of a box, they, must be customised to the requirements of the organisation. Recordkeeping must be tailored to the requirements of specific business functions and activities, linked to related social and legal requirements, incorporated into particular business processes, and maintained through each change to the process.[39]

Business processes should be reviewed and redesigned prior to implementing the Queensland Government EDRMS. By giving full consideration of business processes and associated improvement opportunities organisations are better positioned to realise the business benefits of improved business processes.

Within Queensland Government business process methods may also be used by individual Queensland Government organisations as an analytical framework for building on the whole-of-Government recordkeeping tools and developing organisation-specific recordkeeping tools identified in AS ISO 15489. Such tools include core business disposal schedules, core business classification schemes to support a range of records processes as well as recordkeeping metadata implementation sets.

In applying business process methods within Queensland Government process maps were developed to document and communicate business processes. A process map is a structured and standardised graphical representation of what happens within a process.

IDEF0[40] was used at the organisational and government-wide level as a notation standard for reviewing document and records management processes because it is simple to develop and communicate to stakeholders without needing to purchase complex (and expensive) mapping tools or undertake extensive training. It provides a logical and simple framework for decomposing business functions and activities. It shows the inputs, outputs, controls and mechanisms (or non-financial resources) associated with each component of a process. In using IDEF0 it is not necessary to present the components sequentially. Consequently, IDEF0 is suitable for mapping processes where the records continuum is used as a reference framework.[41]

The successful review of any business process depends on a combination of the quality of the design of the improved business process and the acceptance of the change to the business process. The business process methods and EDRMS implementation activities across Queensland Government have adopted the change management techniques of John Kotter.[42] This has involved establishing a comprehensive stakeholder consultation and communication program throughout the Shared Services Initiative EDRMS project, undertaking a business readiness analysis at the outset of the project and developing a comprehensive set of guidelines and a training package to support the implementation of both the EDRMS and the redesigned business processes.

Business Process Methods, AS ISO 15489 and AS 5090

As argued above the standards do not provide recordkeepers with sufficient guidance for achieving business performance outcomes. Within Queensland Government the application of business process methods has potentially filled that gap and provided a means for achieving performance and compliance outcomes.

Business process methods are about proactively integrating recordkeeping into business activities and improving business processes. These methods are customer-driven and seek to improve and integrate internal business information systems and business processes. Applying business process methods provides a rational framework for challenging the 'sacred cows' and unveiling the blind spots and trouble spots in business processes.

Within AS ISO 15489 the DIRS method provides a framework for integrating recordkeeping into existing business activities and the current compliance framework. Nonetheless it is reactive and aligns recordkeeping with the status quo.

As suggested by the title of AS 5090, this standard provides a framework for analysing business processes to support the application of AS ISO 15489, but is limited in its scope, particularly in the implementation and review of processes.

The combination of these business and recordkeeping methods has the potential to empower recordkeepers to both participate in the organisational business dialogue and achieve performance and compliance outcomes via process improvement and standards.   The relationship between the methods is represented in Table 2. While there are many different business process methods available, the method presented in Table 2 is largely drawn from Harrington and Davenport.[43] DIRS and business process methods, although presented in a linear sequence are iterative methods with review mechanisms and feedback loops featuring at all points.

Table 2. The relationship between business process methods, DIRS (AS ISO 15489) and Work Process Analysis (AS 5090).

Business Process Methods	*DIRS*	*WPA*
Stage 1: Project Initiation	Step A: Preliminary Investigation	
Stage 2: 'As-is' model-ling and analysis	Step B: Analysis of Business Activity	Work Process Analysis
	Step C: Identify Requirements for Records	Work Process Analysis
	Step D: Assessment of Existing Systems	

Business Process Methods	DIRS	WPA
Stage 3: Establishing a vision and strategic alignment	Step E: Identify Strategies for Satisfying Records Requirements (Bearman's tactics)	
Stage 4: 'To-be' modelling and design & Stage 5: Implementation planning.	Step F: Design of a Records System	
Stage 6: Implementing the 'To-be' model. This stage includes activities such as the development, procurement, testing and roll-out of information systems, training and organisational redesign.	Step G: Implementation of a Records Systems	
Stage 7: Implementing continuous process improvement and monitoring mechanisms	Step H: Post-Implementation Review	

Conclusion

Recordkeepers face many strategic and operational dilemmas in their workplaces. These dilemmas include the challenge of communicating the dual roles of records as memory and evidence, the need to consciously design recordkeeping into ICTs and processes, the difficulty of aligning recordkeeping with both performance and conformance

needs, the narrow perception of and low regard for recordkeeping within organisations and competing interests of various stakeholders.

In addressing these challenges a suite of recordkeeping standards have been crafted by the recordkeeping profession over the past decade. These standards have established a solid foundation for establishing systematic, comprehensive and compliant recordkeeping in any organisation.

This article demonstrates that these standards alone do not fully address the challenges faced by contemporary recordkeeping professionals. However, applying business process methods in conjunction with these standards provides a means for understanding the complexities of a connecting process such as recordkeeping and identifying tactics for establishing standardised and integrated recordkeeping within organisations.

Although applying business process thinking is not new to recordkeeping it is an approach that has been weakened by the perceptual, conceptual and structural compartmentalisation of recordkeeping within organisations and the standards framework and a disproportionate emphasis on recordkeeping for compliance at the expense of recordkeeping for performance.

Implementing the standards within Queensland Government has also revealed some gaps and deficiencies in the DIRS method. The most significant gaps appear to be the lack of dynamic connection between recordkeeping processes and business processes and a preoccupation with recordkeeping to achieve compliance. This has the effect of reinforcing the isolation of recordkeeping from other business activities and the view that recordkeeping generates costs rather than value.

By adopting a business process method in conjunction with DIRS and WPA organisations may strengthen the effectiveness of their recordkeeping programs in achieving both business performance and conformance outcomes. Business process methods challenge existing structural-functional ways of organising and documenting business activities and relationships. They also represent the organisation in a way that differs from but is complementary to the 'function-activity-transaction' approach of the DIRS method.

While business process methods provide greater insights into recordkeeping and greater opportunities for standardising and integrating is this really achievable? Given our current standards, tools and knowledge, probably not. The reason why standardisation and integration is not something that can be readily achieved is because it is a contingent connecting process. As explained by Barbara Reed:

> Recordkeeping is a contingent activity. It depends on the context of its creation, management and use over time and it is contingent on the value of that record. Because it is contingent and contextual recordkeeping is not conducive to establishing a full set of hard and fast rules.[44]

At present the contingent nature of recordkeeping renders full standardisation and integration of recordkeeping with other business processes within an organisation an elusive goal. Further professional thinking and action are needed to establish recordkeeping as a truly connected process across time and space. Presently, a great deal of energy is being spent on filling out the practical detail of ISO 15489 through the development of more specific standards relating to records classification, recordkeeping metadata and so on. While there is significant value in developing these standards, given the changing business environment and experience gained in applying.AS 4390, and more recently ISO 15489, there is also much to be gained from a critical review of the suite of standards and the concepts, methods and goals underpinning them. Without such a fundamental review, recordkeeping will remain disconnected from other business activities.

Endnotes

[1] References to 'AS ISO 15489'and 'the standard' in this paper encompass the series comprising of the standard and its supporting guidelines — *AS ISO 15489.1 Information and documentation — records management — Part 1: general* and *AS ISO 15489.2 Information and documentation — records management — Part 2: guidelines.*

[2] Based on a similar model developed by State Records Authority of New South Wales, the Queensland Government Recordkeeping Framework provides a coherent and comprehensive model for establishing efficient, effective and

compliant recordkeeping within Queensland's State and Local Government organisations. Further information on the framework is available at <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/government/framework.asp >.

[3] The Shared Services Initiative in Queensland Government was established to standardise common administrative processes such as human resources management, financial management and document and records management; and consolidate and streamline related technology, resources and expertise for the purpose of delivering seamless cost-effective and client-focused service. Further information on this initiative may be found at: <http://www.sharedservices.qld.gov.au >.

[4] This point was clearly made by David Bearman in 'Archival Data Management to Achieve Organisational Accountability for Electronic Records', *Archives and Manuscripts,* vol. 21, no.1, May 1993, p. 26. More recently it was codified by Standards Australia in *HB 171- 2003 Guidelines for the Management of IT Evidence.* This handbook was prepared by Committee IT/012, Information Systems, Security and Identification Technology. Interestingly, although this handbook is clearly about records and recordkeeping, the recordkeeping profession was not included in the membership of the drafting committee.

[5] David Bearman, 'Archival Data Management to Achieve Organisational Accountability for Electronic records, *Archives and Manuscripts,* vol. 21, no.1, May 1993, p. 26.

[6] It is possibly even more limited in addressing the wider societal values. The presentism that prevails in the contemporary organisation and apparent lack of understanding of the broader social and historical context within which organisations operate means that recordkeeping beyond the first and second dimensions of the continuum is rare. This is an area that is only given passing reference within the standards and a serious deficiency requiring exploration and discussion beyond the scope of this paper.

[7] The term 'business process methods' is used in this paper to encompass the range of structured approaches for reviewing, changing and managing organisational business activities that flow across an organisation with a view to improving, re-engineering or transforming those processes to achieve business performance and conformance outcomes. Business process methods seek to address the process problems caused by 'structural silos' by taking a client-focused cross-functional process view and modifying or removing activities and transactions that do not contribute to creating client value.

[8] David Bearman, *Electronic Evidence: Strategies for Managing Records in Contemporary Organisations,* Archives & Information Informatics, Pittsburgh, 1994, pp. 22-23; and *AS ISO 15489-2,* p. 5.

[9] Further information on the elements of the policy tactic in Queensland Government is available at <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au> .

[10] The definition of the term 'recordkeeping system' used in this paper is derived from *AS ISO 15489* and *Information Standard 40: Recordkeeping* and refers to 'the interaction of the technology, people, principles, methods, processes and information systems that capture, maintain and provide access to records over time'.

[11] The focus of discussion in this article is Queensland State Government. Although Queensland State Archives' mandate covers local government, universities, courts, etc., only the activities and tactics undertaken by Queensland State Archives in relation to State Government agencies are discussed here.

[12] *Qkey* is a customised version of *Keyword AAA* (produced by the State Records Authority of New South Wales) for use within Queensland State Government organisations.

[13] Thomas H Davenport, *Process Innovation: Re-engineering Work through Information Technology*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, 1993.

[14] For further information on primary and supporting processes and the value chain refer to Michael Porter, *Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Performance*, Free Press, New York, 1985.

[15] From the lens of business process literature and practice, recordkeeping is regarded as a 'support process'. This understanding of recordkeeping may derive from the narrow view that recordkeeping is concerned with the management of physical and/or post transaction objects, rather than an understanding of the strategic value of the integral relationship of recordkeeping with other business processes. In a discussion with Glenda Acland in October 2004 on this issue she suggested that recordkeeping processes are more appropriately viewed as 'connecting processes'. In this article the term 'connecting process' has been used to describe recordkeeping processes.

[16] Opportunity costs are the cost of the next best opportunity forgone as a result of accepting one of a range of options.

[17] TR Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, F W Cheshire, Melbourne, 1956, p. 45. Emphasis added.

[18] Terry Cook, 'Electronic Records, Paper Minds: the revolution in information management and archives in the post-custodian and post-modernist era', *Archives and Manuscripts,* vol. 22 no. 2, November 1994, p. 314.

[19] These definitions are also applied in *AS 5090 work process analysis for recordkeeping.*

[20] International Standards Organisation, *AS ISO 15489-1 Information and documentation — records management- part 1: general,* p. 3.

[21] ibid., p. 4.

[22] ibid., p. 6.

[23] ibid.

[24] ibid., p. 8.

[25] ibid., p. 10.

[26] ibid., p. 11.

[27] ibid.

[28] International Standards Organisation, *AS ISO 15489-2 Information and documentation – records management – part 2: guidelines*, pp. 4-5.

[29] ibid., p. 2.

[30] Standards Australia, *AS 5090: Work process analysis for recordkeeping*, p. 2.

[31] ibid., p. 6.

[32] ibid., p. 4.

[33] ibid., p. 4.

[34] Davenport, p. 6.

[35] ibid., p. 7.

[36] Jorg Becker and Dieter Kahn, 'The Process in Focus' p. 4 in Jorg Becker, Martin Kuegler and Michael Rosemann (Eds*), Process Management: A Guide for the Design of Business Processes*, Springer-Verlage, Berlin, 2003.

[37] Standards Australia, p. 6.

[38] Cook, p. 314.

[39] Barbara Reed, 'Metadata: Core Record or Core Business', *Archives and Manuscripts,* vol. 25, no. 2, November 1997, p. 221.

[40] 'IDEF' is an acronym for 'Integrated DEFinition for functional modelling'. For further information on IDEF0 and related modelling methods refer to <http://www.idef.org >.

[41] IDEF0 has also been applied by the University of British Columbia for the InterPARES project and the National Archives and Records Authority (NARA). The methods and models developed by these initiatives provided a useful basis for the business process method applied within Queensland Government. For further information refer to <http://www.interpares. org/UBCProject/a-0.htm> and <http://www.archives.gov/electronic_ records_archives/lifecycle_bpr.html>

[42] John P Kotter and Dan S Cohen, *The Heart of Change: Real Stories of How People Change Their Organisations*, Harvard Business Review Press, Boston, 2002.

[43] Thomas H Davenport op.cit and H James Harrington, Business *Process Improvement: the breakthrough strategy for total quality, productivity and competitiveness*, McGraw-Hill Inc., New York, 1991.

[44] Reed p. 221.