International News Notes

Edited by Evelyn Wareham

ISO develops new recordkeeping metadata standards

Hans Hofman (The Netherlands), ISO Technical Committee 46, Sub-Committee 11 (TC46/SC11)

As some of you may have noticed, the first international recordkeeping metadata standard – ISO/TS 23081 Part 1 – was published in 2004. It is a technical specification, that elaborates on one important aspect of the *International Standard on Records Management – ISO 15489:2001* – and discusses the principles of metadata for records. Since then this technical specification has been transformed into a 'real' international standard. In this process a new round of comments has taken place and, as a result, some changes have been included in the new standard, which better supports the records continuum model. It will be published by the International Standards Organisation (ISO) in early 2006.

The new standard provides a definition of recordkeeping metadata, explains the benefits for both business and records management processes of creating and maintaining metadata, positions recordkeeping metadata in relation to other metadata domains, identifies processes for managing it and finally discusses the different types of metadata needed to support ISO 15489-1:2001.

The work on recordkeeping metadata in the ISO sub-committee on records and archives management (ISO TC46/SC11) tries to reflect the common understanding at this moment and as such includes and synthesises developments elsewhere. The results of projects such as InterPares, Monash University's Recordkeeping Metadata Standard (RKMS) and Clever Metadata, and the work of the National Archives of Australia (NAA), University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), and the IT21-7

committee of Standards Australia feed into the ISO work. The latter group is working on an Australian recordkeeping metadata standard, based upon the different existing recordkeeping metadata sets.

Meanwhile, the working group of ISO TC46/SC11 responsible for this metadata standard has also been working on the next parts of ISO 23081. Part 2 will provide a more detailed explanation of the different aspects of recordkeeping metadata. These include a further explanation of business benefits and how to position recordkeeping metadata in business, policies and responsibilities related to metadata, and aspects like aggregation and scalability. At the core of this part will be a recordkeeping metadata model, a discussion of the generic metadata elements and a guide to how to develop a metadata schema. Finally, this technical report will go into some implementation issues. This is a very broad range of topics, which shows how important metadata are in relation to managing records. It also reflects, compared to practices with respect to paper-based records, a different and more fundamental approach in trying to address the requirements for reliable, authentic and usable records in a digital environment.

The third part of ISO 23081 will provide an evaluation instrument that will enable organisations to assess any recordkeeping metadata schema they have developed in relation to the principles laid out in Part 1. This work especially is being done together with the Description Cross Domain in the InterPares project, that is developing a metadata schema registry. Apart from a description of metadata schemas, ranging from Encoded Archival Description (EAD), the International Standard on Archival Description (ISAD/G) and the Australian RKMS to Dublin Core and the Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS), it includes an evaluation of these schemas against the benchmark and baseline requirements for authenticity as developed in the InterPares 1 project, and against ISO 23081-1:2001.

Together these three parts should provide not only recordkeeping professionals, but also any organisation, with a solid framework for the creation and management of records throughout their existence. Given the fact that metadata is a rather new phenomenon in the international recordkeeping domain, further developments will follow, especially in clever and innovative ways of implementing recordkeeping metadata.

This may have an impact on the production of Parts 2 and 3. All going well, however, Part 2 will be published in late 2006 and Part 3 in 2007.

ICA introduces new approach to its professional and technical program

Brian Corbett (Canada), Secretary, Programme Commission, International Council on Archives

Since the establishment of the International Council of Archives (ICA), its professional and technical program has been based on its various committees, sections and branches. For a variety of reasons, this seemed to be the best way to approach programming in an association with such a diversity of membership and geographical locations.

While this approach has yielded some considerable success, the rising cost of travel to face-to-face meetings and inadequate communications systems often inhibited the full use of the ICA's tremendous wealth of expertise and its spirit of volunteerism. Such costs often meant that the work of some committees became narrowly focused and that active membership was practically restricted to those professionals who could afford the cost of participation. While such factors did not prevent good work from being done, in many cases, it meant only limited achievements were made over several years. Many members felt that more could be accomplished with a different approach involving a broader section of ICA Membership.

However, before a new approach to ICA programming could be developed, it was first necessary to determine which priorities members felt ICA should pursue. Consequently before the 2004 Congress in Vienna, members were invited to identity their priorities and those of the international archival community.

Members indicated that ICA should develop four priority areas:

1.   Advocacy and Promotion

2.   Automation and Electronic Records

3.   Disaster Prevention and Preservation

4.   Education and Training.

Once the Priority Areas were defined, the next step was to determine what was the best way to organise ICA's limited financial, personnel and volunteer resources to meet those priorities.

While it was recognised that the existing committee structure had had many successes, it was most successful when the committees undertook well organised and planned projects. So the idea emerged that the ICA's professional and technical activities could be organised around a series of projects in each of the priority areas. Such projects would be member-driven and could come from many areas within ICA:

- Branches
- Sections
- Existing committees (which would have their mandates extended to 2006)
- Individual or institutional members
- Groups of individual or institutional members.

Projects could reflect best current practices or challenge existing processes with new thinking and approaches. They could be education or training sessions. They could be publications of bibliographies or research papers. They could involve the development of new standards of professional practice. Whatever the projects might be they could form the basis for sessions at ICA conferences (eg CITRA's) and International Congresses on Archives. The opportunities could be limitless and restricted only by the imagination, creativity and resources of the proposers.

In order for projects to be well coordinated within ICA, a new program structure was needed. Each Priority Area would have a Priority Team, headed by a prominent member of the international archival community. In addition, each team would have a secretary and one or more volunteers with extensive experience in a specific priority area. These people would act as liaisons to specific projects. In addition, each team, if it felt there was a need, could develop specific projects on its own or commission others to take on a specific project.

Finally, in order to ensure that all parts of ICA were working in a coordinated way, a new Programme Commission (PCOM) was established with a chair, a secretary, the four Team Leaders and four

specialists. These specialists would provide assistance to all parts of ICA in:

- capacity development and cooperation,
- developing ICA member services,
- organisation and individual networking, and
- standards and best practices development and communication.

In addition to coordinating professional and technical projects, the role of PCOM includes coordinating ICA publications and communications and providing input into ICA conferences and congresses from the professional projects and technical program. Information on the membership of PCOM is available on the ICA website at: <http://www.ica.org/>.

With the establishment of the Priority Teams and the PCOM, ICA members were invited to submit project ideas at the 2004 Vienna Congress. Members responded with enthusiasm as one hundred proposals were received during and immediately after the Congress.

These projects were reviewed by PCOM in February and March 2004. Proposers of projects endorsed by PCOM were notified to begin their work. Some seventy projects were endorsed and have been followed up by the respective Priority Team (41% in Priority Area One; 14% in Priority Area Two; 20% in Priority Area Three; and 8% in Priority Area Four; with 17% falling outside any Priority Area). The vast majority of the projects (67%) were seen as having benefit to the wider international community. Projects with an African focus constituted 15% of the total number of projects. The rest were fairly evenly distributed between South America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and the Caribbean. Additional projects were reviewed at the Abu Dhabi CITRA meeting of the Programme Commission. Information on the status of endorsed projects will be available on the ICA website shortly.

In order for this new approach to produce the maximum member benefits possible it is important to expand the number and variety of ICA projects. To that end, Mr Olafur Asgeirsson, PCOM Chair, recently sent letters and copies of project proposal forms to ICA branches, sections, individual members and national archivists inviting them to submit new project

proposals. To provide guidance to proposers of new projects, PCOM is finalising a *Project Proposal Manual* which will be available shortly on the ICA's website.

Readers might well ask: 'why should we participate in this new ICA approach to its professional and technical program?' Well because it can provide:

• Unparalleled international networking opportunities, putting you in touch with partners across the world.

• Access to peer review and comparison.

• Opportunities to test concepts in different environments.

• Access to world-class expertise on a range of archival subjects.

• Opportunities to work with the majority of archives and archivists in the world community for the benefit of all.

So how can you participate? You can do this in a number of ways:

• Propose an idea that you think is important for the archival profession.

• Get together with colleagues and make a joint proposal for work.

• Propose an existing project that you are already working on for ICA endorsement.

While projects may be submitted to PCOM at anytime, they are typically reviewed for endorsement by PCOM twice a year – in March and November. So let's hear from you before October 2006.

For further information and project forms go to the ICA website <http://www.ica.org/> or contact Olafur Asgiersson Chair of PCOM at <pcom@archives.is> or email <bryan.corbett@ualberta.ca>.

ICA Programme Commission meeting, Paris, February 2005.

Pacific Archives Update: Reports from PARBICA 11, Nadi, Fiji, 19-23 September 2005

Ewan Maidment (Australia), Executive Officer, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau

The eleventh Conference of the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) was titled *Recordkeeping for Good Governance*. The theme that archives and records are essential tools for good governance was established in the last PARBICA meeting and has been taken up by the International Council on Archives. The keynote speaker, Dr Anne Thurston OBE, of the International Records Management Trust, outlined IRMT projects supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund aimed at capacity building for records production and maintenance in the public sector.

Tukul Kaiku, lecturer in records and archives management at the University of PNG, summarised the conference resolutions in her, 'Viewpoint', *Post-Courier* (11 October 2005):

> With regard to good governance and the Pacific Plan, the archivists and records managers urged that record-keeping

be recognised by Pacific nations as a core component of good governance and [the conference] called on Pacific governments to establish national recordkeeping strategies in support of transparent, accountable and efficient governance.

For good governance, inter-governmental organisations and aid agencies should include records management in the terms of reference for governance projects and ensure that consultants involved in aid projects have the necessary competence in records management.

At the PARBICA annual general meeting, Setareki Tale (National Archives of Fiji) was re-elected PARBICA President, Hon. Albert Vaea (Tonga Traditions Committee) was elected the Vice-President, Evelyn Wareham (Archives NZ) was elected Secretary-General, and Adrian Cunningham (National Archives of Australia) was re-elected as Treasurer.

Several significant developments in Pacific archival infrastructure were reported at the PARBICA conference as follows.

Setareki Tale announced that the Fiji government has allocated F$4m for a new archives building to be constructed over the next three years; that the National Library of Fiji is to be separated from the National Archives of Fiji (NAF); that the Fiji archives legislation is to be reviewed; that the NAF is now developing its website and, with assistance of JICA, will undertake a digitisation project; and that the NAF had acquired new microfilming equipment, valued at F$500 000, courtesy of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

George Paniani reported that the Cook Islands National Archives (CINA) now occupies its new building and that the Cook Islands National Radio and Television has transferred its archives to CINA.

Kunei Etekira reported that the National Archives of Kiribati has completed an index to all land records and would now like to digitise all its old land records.

Nicolas Dubuisson reported that Archives Territoriales de Nouvelle-Calédonie has published its *Guide to Archives Sources for the History of the Kanak People*; that it has developed a search engine linked to the Archives' finding aids which will be accessible on the Internet soon; that, in

conjunction with the French Embassy in Port Vila, it is undertaking cooperative projects in Vanuatu; that it has acquired microfilms of the Port Vila Diocesan archives through the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PMB); and that it is undertaking a joint project with the PMB on French judicial archives at the Supreme Court of Vanuatu.

Joan Tahafa reported that the National Archives of Niue is still struggling to re-establish itself after Cyclone Heta in January 2004: it has no dedicated building, little space and needs more archives boxes. She appealed for help from PARBICA.

Naomi Ngirakamerang reported that the National Archives of Palau submitted a report to UNESCO in March 2004 which resulted in recognition by the UNESCO National Commission and the Palau Legislature. The Archives has tripled its budget and will move into a new repository; it had also received UNESCO and AusAID funding for shelving and a new microfilm reader.

Jacob Hevelawa reported that the National Archives and Records Service of PNG, which has been operating a project aimed at rescuing Provincial administration records, has identified 200 000 records in eight Provinces and supplied boxes for their retention. The National Archives is also running three-day records management workshops in order to encourage higher recordkeeping standards and practices in the administration. AusAID announced funding for renovation of the National Library of PNG just before the PARBICA conference. Jacob Hevelawa indicated that he hoped for some spin-off for the National Archives.

Ulrike Hertel Akuino reported that there is still no archives building in Samoa, however a Public Records Bill has been drafted. With assistance from Emma Murray, an Australian Business Volunteer, Ulrike has established a Records Task Force which has held two training courses for records managers in government departments. Many Samoan Ministries are struggling with systems development associated with institutional strengthening projects which have not included a records management training component.

The National Archives of the Solomon Islands (NASI) was represented at the conference for the first time after crisis. George Vari reported that although the Archives had been occupied by hardcore militants, he had kept the key to the strongroom. He appreciated the efforts of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) as it has brought law

and order back to the Solomon Islands. With assistance from Australia and New Zealand, the Archives restored a phone line three months ago. There are plans to appoint an advisor from the National Archives of Australia (NAA) to help build the Archives' government recordkeeping capacity. [Editor's note: Danielle Wickman of NAA is in the Solomon Islands for 2006 as advisor to the National Archives.]

Albert Vaea reported that a JICA volunteer is working with the Tongan Traditions Committee; that the New Zealand and British High Commissions had supplied extra shelving for archives; that the Archives had received copies of Western Pacific High Commission correspondence with Tonga; and funds had been allocated for the construction of a new National Museum in which Archives may be granted one floor.

Togiola Funafuti reported that the budget for the National Archives of Tuvalu had decreased and that it was very short of storage and work space. The Endangered Archives Programme and the PMB have commenced digitising and microfilming some key records.

Tom Sakias, the National Archivist of Vanuatu, reported that he would be going to Paris for training. There has been no change in the status of the repository which has been full for years and no improvement in the Archives' minimal staffing situation.

Cheryl Stanborough reported that the Yap State Archives has recovered from a severe cyclone in May 2004. The Archives has published a very useful disaster recovery booklet. Its budget is now stable and secure. There are positions for two trainees at the Archives, but one is vacant at present. A workshop on government recordkeeping has been held this year. The Endangered Archives Programme has awarded the Archives a major grant for digitising audio recordings associated with the proceedings of the Yap State Constitutional Convention.

Participants at PARBICA 11, Nadi, September 2005.

38th International Conference of the Round Table on Archives (CITRA), Abu Dhabi, 2005

Ross Gibbs, Director General, National Archives of Australia

The International Council on Archives (ICA) held its 38th International Conference of the Round Table on Archives (CITRA) entitled *Records and Archives in a Global Age* in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates from 27 November to 1 December 2005.

A short report of the CITRA conference is available on the ICA website <www.ica.org> and the conference proceedings will be available in ICA's journal *Comma* later in 2006. *Comma* will be produced electronically and will be available from the ICA website.

The Australasian archival delegation included Ross Gibbs, Director-General, National Archives of Australia, Catherine Robinson, President of the Australian Society of Archivists, Dr Karen Anderson as representative on the ICA Section for Education and Training, and Dianne Macaskill, Chief Executive and Chief Archivist, Archives New Zealand.

The other delegate from Australia was Mr Des Pearson, Auditor-General of Western Australia.

Ross Gibbs, Catherine Robinson and Karen Anderson attending the 38th CITRA Conference

Des Pearson and Ross Gibbs in front of the Centre for Documentation and Research of the United Arab Emirates

Australia featured with two papers at the conference. Ross Gibbs, delivered a paper on 'Preserving the Memory of the Web' which highlighted the progress made to date in preparing for the archiving of websites of Australian government agencies.

Mr Gibbs also presented a joint paper on 'Integrating Recordkeeping in Australian Performance Audits', with Mr Des Pearson, the Western Australian Auditor General, which provided an overview of the interaction of the roles of archives authorities and of auditors general in Australia. In addition to providing general insights on how they discharge their respective roles, it compared and contrasted the different approaches adopted across jurisdictions in the Australian federation.

It was gratifying, as always, to see how far we are leading internationally in so many areas. Our partnership with government auditors to undertake performance auditing of recordkeeping impressed everyone, especially the national archivists from Europe. The extent of the National Archives

of Australia's digitisation program – ten million records digitised and available online by early 2006 – impressed many countries that have not begun their own digitisation programs, or have only scanned a few iconic images.

Ross Gibbs also attended the meeting of the ICA Programme Commission to support, successfully, the National Archives of Australia proposal to develop records management software specifications, as well as the CITRA Bureau Meeting as the delegate for Asia and Oceania and the ICA Annual General Meeting on behalf of Australia.

During the visit Mr Gibbs also met with national archivists and representatives of many international organisations. The meetings have already resulted in a visit to the National Archives of Australia from a delegation from Indonesia and a proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the National Archives of Indonesia, a request to present a paper on archives and records standards for digitisation at an international seminar in China later next year and a request for the National Archives to speak about its education program, Vrroom (Virtual Reading Room) at a Conference of South East Asian branch of the ICA (SARBICA) in Brunei next year.

Catherine Robinson attended the Annual General Meeting of the Section of Records Management and Archival Professional Associations (SPA) and the ICA Annual General Meeting, in addition to the CITRA sessions. The SPA meeting discussed the SPA work program and status reports on various projects. Eighteen professional associations were represented at the meeting. Attending the meeting was a good opportunity for the ASA to build closer relationships with other professional associations and to discuss issues of common concern to professional associations. Mr Didier Grange, President of SPA, thanked the ASA for its continued support of SPA and for supporting members of the ASA to actively participate in the work of SPA. Mr Grange also warmly acknowledged the work of Kathryn Dan and Colleen McEwen on SPA Committees. An invitation for SPA to meet in Australia has been extended to the SPA Bureau.

After the Storms: A report on cultural damage assessment and response in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma

Thomas James Connors (USA), National Public Broadcasting Archives, University of Maryland

The 2005 Atlantic hurricane season broke all the records in terms of numbers of storms, both tropical and hurricane force, and in terms of deaths, displacements and damage to real and cultural property. There were twenty-seven named storms, fourteen of which were hurricanes. This exceeded the 1969 record of twelve hurricanes. Seven of the 2005 storms were major hurricanes and, of the seven, three reached category five status. Those three were Hurricane Katrina that hit Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama in August, Hurricane Rita that hit the Gulf Keys and eventually parts of Louisiana and Texas in September, and Hurricane Wilma that hit the Yucatan Peninsula in October, then moved northeast making landfall at Florida a category three hurricane. The unofficial death toll from all three hurricanes is between 1400 and 1500.

Even after six months it remains difficult to derive an accurate picture of the total damage sustained in the affected states. (RMS, a California risk management enterprise, estimated that the economic loss from Katrina alone would exceed US$100 billion.) This difficulty is compounded by the uneven quality of the response at the federal level, something that was noted in the international press in the days following Katrina's landfall and that persists to date.

The following then is a general and very tentative summary of what damage occurred to cultural heritage institutions – archives, libraries, museums and historical sites and societies – and how American cultural professional associations and heritage institutions have responded to this situation. Source data for this report have come from organisation websites, eyewitness accounts, telephone calls and newspaper stories.

Cultural responders came together as early as September 1 2005, under the aegis of the Heritage Emergency National Task Force. Established in 1995, the Task Force is an informal partnership of forty professional organisations, government agencies and cultural institutions, and is sponsored by Heritage Preservation and the Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA). Heritage Preservation is a non-profit organisation dedicated to preserving America's heritage in all its manifestations. FEMA is a US government agency whose charge is to respond to disasters of various kinds. The mission of the Heritage Emergency National Task Force is to assist cultural heritage institutions to protect their collections from natural disasters and other emergencies. Specifically, it promotes preparedness and mitigation measures and provides expert information on response and salvage to institutions and the public.

Since the first of September 2005, the Task Force has arranged weekly or bi-weekly conference calls where participants share information on the extent of hurricane damage to cultural institutions and efforts to repair that damage. Not long after Katrina subsided, the Society of American Archivists, the American Library Association, the American Association for State and Local History, and the American Association of Museums sent teams to the stricken areas and began to develop rough damage inventories. The American Association of Museums, in cooperation with the American Association for State and Local History, has produced the most comprehensive inventory so far, listing 123 institutions and noting whether they suffered damage or not. (This listing is available on the World Wide Web at <www.aamus.org/aamlatest/news/HurricaneFirstReports.cfm>.)

As noted by the American Association of Museums (AAM), damage ranged from water damage due to flooding, to structural damage to buildings. In some cases, such as that of the Pass Christian Historical Society in Pass Christian, Mississippi, the entire building and its contents were blown away. (The only thing left standing was a safe in which were stored some photographs and documents.) The pre-Civil War historic plantation sites of Tullis-Toledano Manor in Biloxi, Mississippi, and Grasslawn in Gulfport, Mississippi, were both obliterated.

Of the 123 institutions listed, thirty-three reported serious damage. This is a deceptive number in that it does not account for the collateral damage sustained to otherwise undamaged repositories due to community infrastructural loss, staff absences and loss of tourist revenues.

The American Library Association has reported regarding some public libraries and library systems affected by Hurricanes Wilma and Rita. The damage here ranges from minor water damage to serious structural

damage to complete destruction. Some 180 employees of the New Orleans Public Library were laid off due to that city's post-Katrina financial crisis, leaving only nineteen staff to undertake salvage operations.

Needless to say, the cataloguing of damage to area archives, libraries, museums and historical societies and sites will continue.

Numerous national and international cultural professional associations have responded in a variety of ways in the hurricanes' aftermath. Much of this response has been coordinated by the Heritage Emergency National Task Force. Most organisations immediately issued statements on hurricane relief and established relief funds. In September 2005, representatives of the Society of American Archivists, the Council of State Archivists and Heritage Preservation toured the Gulf Coast area of Mississippi to assess the impact of Hurricane Katrina on recordkeeping facilities in the region. Their purpose was to demonstrate professional solidarity and to learn firsthand how best to aid their fellow archivists. The group identified immediate, short term and long term action items. This report is available on the SAA website at <www.archivists.org>.

The American Library Association (ALA) has established an Adopt-a-Library Program which provides an opportunity for libraries of all types to assist libraries in need. To date ALA has matched up over 150 libraries with libraries in the Gulf Coast region. Over 450 have applied to adopt. In June 2006, ALA will hold its annual meeting in New Orleans. This will include two service days during which ALA conference attendees can work with Louisiana libraries in need of assistance.

The American Association for State and Local History is particularly active in hurricane response. It has hired a project director to work exclusively on hurricane recovery efforts. It developed an initial plan to match up the needs of historical organisations with volunteers and other contributions, then, in partnership with the American Institute of Conservation, established a History Emergency Assistance Recovery Team (HEART) which will visit hundreds of history museums, historic houses and sites in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama to assess the extent of damage to collections and survey the damage to historic artefacts and make recommendations to save the most threatened items. HEART consists of volunteer curators, conservators and archivists from around the United States.

The Association for Preservation Technology International sent two Hurricane Katrina Volunteer Teams to Mississippi to assist the Mississippi Department of Archives and History with structural assessment of heavily damaged early twentieth-century homes in the Gulfport area. The team assessed over seventy structures and met with individual homeowners to offer advice on how to undertake basic structural stabilisation and recovery. These teams consisted of architects, structural engineers, conservation consultants and architectural historians.

The US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the Library of Congress have also been involved in response efforts. NARA sent a senior conservator to assist the State of Louisiana Medical Examiner and the Orleans Parish Coroner in providing document recovery and support. Other NARA initiatives include expediting access to copies of military and civil service records of veterans and retired civil servants from the Gulf Coast region so they can establish or re-establish their personal information and obtain relief benefits, and offering advice and assistance to federal agencies with offices in the affected areas on records recovery, emergency disposal and other records management issues. The Library of Congress Preservation Directorate held a series of workshops on ' Salvage of Library Collections'. This was done in cooperation with the Preservation and Conservation North American Network of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

The National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, two federal granting agencies, have made emergency funds available to stabilise and restore damaged collections.

Well prior to the hurricanes of 2005, Heritage Preservation and the Heritage Emergency National Task Force launched an Alliance for Response which links first responders – police, fire and rescue, and medical assistance entities – with cultural responders for the purpose of bridging the communications gap that often occurs between the two groups in times of emergency. This work will be stepped up in preparation for the coming hurricane season.

Alongside salvage and recovery assistance, the Society of American Archivists has called on responder groups to ensure the appropriate documentation of their response efforts. Presumably FEMA, NARA and other agencies have records schedules in place that will capture response

documentation of archival value. However, teams and volunteers need to be reminded that their response activities are important and the appropriate documentation should be preserved. The University of Southern Mississippi established the Hurricane Katrina Research Center to serve as a repository that collects and preserves and provides both physical and virtual access to documentary evidence related to that hurricane. George Mason University in the State of Virginia has established the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank to preserve stories of the Gulf Coast storms of 2005. And the Historic New Orleans Collection has expressed interest in acquiring hurricane documentation.

David Carmicheal, president of the Council of State Archivists, and Richard Pearce-Moses, president of the Society of American Archivists, inspect inundated records at a museum archives in Mississippi on September 18, 2005. Photo by Debra Hess Norris.

This account is admittedly impressionistic. The relevant data to compose a comprehensive picture of damage and response is only in the process of being compiled. The Heritage Emergency National Task Force will meet in Washington DC in March 2006 to discuss, among other matters, composing a grand narrative of the 2005 hurricane season consisting of a detailed cultural damage inventory, a complete response registry, a lessons learned report and an updated response plan.

Habeas data and access to information in Uruguay

Alicia Casas de Barran (Uruguay), *Director, Archivo General de la Nacion*

The news that Uruguay will be opening its records and archives so that all citizens may have access to information has been welcomed both in the country and abroad. The latest figures from the National Institute of Statistics and Census show that around ten percent of the Uruguayan population lives abroad. Thus, the news of the opening of the records and archives that will arrive from the different consulates has become quite relevant. A dictatorship ruled in Uruguay from 1973 to 1985. During this period, many Uruguayans who were against this government were prosecuted and their human rights were violated. A large percentage of these emigrants left the country for political reasons and the possibility of reviewing various cases, which may eventually result in claims, is viewed as a favourable change of attitude by the new government.

In Uruguay, there are no specific laws regulating the right of access to information. The Constitution of the Republic, in contrast to other countries in Latin America, does state the right to information. This article gives an overview of the process that has been followed with the draft law entitled *Right to Information and Habeas Data* that has been approved by the Chamber of Representatives and is currently being considered by the Senate of the Republic of Uruguay. Considerations started in September 2002, ending with the most recent interviews in April 2005.

Draft law: Right to Information and Habeas Data

The reasons for the study and establishment of this draft law, in 1996, fall into two main areas. First, the existence of a gap in the law, because Uruguay is compelled to legislate regarding the right to information as a result of various international instruments and has not yet done this legally. An example of this gap is the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of United Nations on 10 December 1948. Uruguay participated in this assembly and adopted the declaration, but did not subsequently legislate concerning the right to information. Article 19 of the declaration states that: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'.

The second area that led to development of this draft law relates to developments in Uruguayan society at that time. For example, it was revealed that certain records of 'ideological' information on citizens were held in government institutions and some of these were passed to the media. These events led to thinking that this legal gap regarding the right of information could not be sustained any further and should be addressed in accordance with the country's international obligations. The two above mentioned situations led Dr Daniel Díaz Maynard, a Member of Parliament, and his assistant and collaborator Dr Niels Hillander to develop a draft law and present it to Parliament for consideration.

The draft law *Right to Information and Habeas Data* was presented in the middle of the previous legislative period (1995-2000) and was discussed by the Constitution Committee of the Chamber of Representatives, where it remained. At the beginning of the present legislative period, it was again presented and it then progressed more rapidly. The same text by Díaz Maynard was taken up again and passed to the Constitution Committee, which studied it thoroughly. Finally, once the corresponding analysis was concluded in June 2002, it was passed to the plenary session of the Chamber of Representatives for approval, and included in the Order of the Day. In October 2003, it was discussed and the resulting text approved, passing it to the Senate. Since then, it has been awaiting discussion in the Senate of the Republic.

Text of the draft law

Modifications were made to the text presented by Representative Díaz Maynard both by the Constitution Committee and by the plenary session of the Chamber of Representatives. These modifications, which were duly approved, include the different points of view put forward by the legislators during the discussion. When the text was sent from the

Constitution Committee to the plenary session, it had been approved by the unanimous vote of members from all political parties represented. When it was discussed in the plenary session, some resistance and differences appeared, due to which the Partido Colorado (Red Party) did not vote in favour of it. Some representatives from this Party agreed with the draft law but found that it required more discussion – this despite the fact that it had already been extensively discussed for more than three years.

Those who wrote the draft tried to establish a minimum program that would cover the right to information together with the right to respect for privacy. They aimed for an efficient tool to provide access to information, both that produced and stored by the public sector and also that generated and kept by public institutions governed by private law. It was understood that the right to information had not been appropriately included in the Uruguayan legal framework. Therefore, a mechanism was provided to introduce this right as well as to legislate for the guarantee of this right: what is called the action of Habeas Data.

Habeas Data means to have the information. In this draft law, it includes the possibility of appeal, if the required information is denied or is provided with mistakes. In cases when state organisations or public institutions governed by private law possess information against the right to privacy, it provides for the possibility of its destruction. In summary, the aim was to introduce in law the right to information with its correlative right to privacy, and to give Uruguayans a guarantee of this right through the legal action of Habeas Data, (ie the possibility of appealing when it is understood that the right to information has been denied). Based on Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but with a focus on information, Article 1 states that: 'All inhabitants of the Republic have the right to request and receive information; this right includes freedom to seek and receive information, to hold opinions, and to express and impart ideas'.

Differences among political parties

The main subject that gave rise to differences among the political parties in the Chamber of Representatives was that concerning state 'classified' or 'intelligence' information. A formula was established through which the State would be empowered to deny any information on the citizens which it wished to keep 'secret'. The text that was approved by the

majority of this chamber included a series of limitations on access to 'classified' information, enabling the State to withhold this information for security reasons. Article 3 states that:

> Any person may request from state institutions or public institutions governed by private law, national or departmental, without need of warrant, to be allowed to consult or obtain an authentic copy of any document containing information concerning the applicant.

The Ministries of Defence and Home Affairs, the National Customs Office and the National Tax Office may deny giving this information, at the specific decision of the corresponding officer, when the research topic refers to presumed illicit conduct, 'the distribution of information on which may constitute an alteration of public order, jeopardize the interests of the people or frustrate its results'. The reasoning to be used by these State bodies to deny information has thus been expressly established. However, if presented at a court of law, the exercise of the action of Habeas Data, foreseen in the draft law, may be reviewed. As a last resort, the judge will determine the right to information in these cases.

Thoughts of the co-author of the draft

The co-authors of the draft law were Dr Diaz Maynard (Member of Parliament) and Dr Niels Hillander. Alicia Casas de Barrán met with Dr Hillander, who explained the full process of development of the draft law. Dr Hillander stated that:

> If this draft, or a similar one, considering the right to habeas data, is approved, there will be a substantial advance in relation to the present situation in Uruguay. In any case, it is known that this draft, like all other human endeavours, may be improved, with additions and so on, but we believe that its approval will be an important step forward.

It should be noted that before approval of this draft by the Chamber of Representatives in October 2002, a request for information had been made by a reporter to the official prosecutor regarding the legal basis for denial of the extradition of Uruguayan military personnel as requested by the Argentine legal system. This information was denied to the reporter who then appealed to a judge, who finally agreed to this right, and the official prosecutor, after a long time, had to deliver this information to the reporter.

Analyzing this case, it could be said that the right of access to information is valid after all. However, this is not exactly the case as the requested information was finally obtained as the result of a 'protection act' (*Acción de amparo*, in Spanish), which is an exceptional proceeding. It was the criterion of a judge who understood that based on the general principles of law, and this was then confirmed. However, this is an isolated case, it is not the rule and specific exercise of the right to the action of Habeas Data, with its corresponding process will offer a guarantee. As Hillander has stated:

> Therefore, it seemed that a draft of such a nature was indispensable.
>
> Of course there are a series of related, equally important areas that also needed to be regulated. One of them is the specific case of the control of ' sensitive' data. The aim was to protect the right to privacy, which is one of the restrictions to the unrestricted exercise to the right of information, and it is believed that this draft achieves this aim.
>
> And of course there are further sensitive areas that would require legislation. For example, when referring to records and ordinary documentation, it is evident that our country needs a law for handling documents that will regulate their administration during their whole life cycle.

The draft of Habeas Data is a first step, an advance in this direction in which we have not previously gone in our legislation.

In several environments, there is a tension between the right and the reality, and for several reasons, reality often moves forward more rapidly than the dilapidated legislation or judicial apparatus, and this is a cause for concern. Thus this draft, until it arrived at the plenary session of the Chamber of Representatives, led to the expectation of something really novel or at least uncommon – the general consensus of all the political system with parliamentary representation around a law. 'However,' said Hillander, 'after parliamentary consideration, there are still some differences of view and it is doubtful that this draft will finally be considered and approved by the Senate, and thereafter enacted as law'.

The National Archives (Archivo General de la Nación) is working hard on this issue and on new archival legislation, which will allow citizens to exercise their rights.

NARA's progress in building the archives of the future

Kenneth Thibodeau (USA), Program Director, Electronic Records Archives Program, National Archives and Records Administration

Picture a future without a past, a tomorrow without a yesterday. Or a time when you can't access even the most routine records and documents. It is a future where government officials are unable to access records pertaining to national security. Where senior citizens are unable or find it difficult to use their own personnel records to secure government benefits. Where private institutions and businesses are unable to access everything from health and medical records to academic records at all levels. This is the future that the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) sees if there is no solution to the preservation challenge posed by the avalanche of electronic records being produced by the US government and by governments at lower levels and major private institutions in the United States.

NARA is searching for a digital link to the past – a way to preserve, for all time, the electronic records being created now and in the future by the US Government. To provide this link, NARA is building the Electronic Records Archives, or ERA. The role of ERA is clear and simple. Once it begins operating in 2007, it will be able to accept, preserve, and make accessible – far into the future – any type of electronic record, regardless of what hardware or software was used to create the record. ERA will also maintain the authenticity of these records by guarding against tampering, thus ensuring a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities, or facts in them.

Allen Weinstein, the Archivist of the United States and head of the National Archives, says that ERA is essential. 'With the government producing electronic records at such a rapid pace, ERA is absolutely necessary', he said in a speech to the US Association of Research Libraries in October 2005. However, he cautioned that ERA is not the answer to all the problems of preserving electronic records. 'It is not a panacea, but a major first step in addressing the management of electronic records', he said. He also struck a note of optimism. For years, software became obsolete almost as soon as it was installed in computers, but now, he said, 'the

technology for preserving electronic records is finally catching up with the technology for creating them'.

NARA is charged with preserving and making accessible indefinitely the records of the US government – no matter what form they are in – that document the rights of all citizens, the actions of government officials, and the national experience. In that role, it has taken the lead on finding a way to preserve these federal electronic records, which come in many forms: text documents, emails, webpages, maps, digital images, charts, drawings, satellite images, databases, spreadsheets, videotapes, and audio files. These records can be complex at times. Emails often have attachments, webpages can be interactive, and even electronic text documents often have other documents embedded in them or links to supporting documents. Within the US government, these records are being created at an astounding pace. For example, the eight-year administration of President Bill Clinton created forty million email messages alone, but the George W Bush administration is expected to leave more than twice that many.

The US National Archives began working on the ERA in 1998, when it began to clarify requirements for preserving authentic electronic records and to identify and evaluate emerging technologies that could be used to meet the challenges posed. From the beginning, it sought critical input from federal, state, and local governments, professional organisations, scientific communities, and private sector stakeholders in identifying critical system requirements.

In a parallel effort, the ERA program has established a number of research partnerships. These collaborations have provided an environment for testing and evaluating new technologies as they emerge. ERA research partnerships have included collaborations with the San Diego (California) Supercomputer Center, the University of Maryland Institute for Advanced Computer Studies, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois, the US Army Research Laboratory, Georgia Institute of Technology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the Stanford (University) Linear Accelerator Center. The ERA program has also partnered with a number of other US government agencies, as well as other organisations, including the InterPARES (International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems) Project, which is developing the theoretical and methodological knowledge for long-term preservation of authentic records in digital form, and the Global

Grid Forum, the community of users, developers, and vendors leading the global standardisation effort for grid computing.
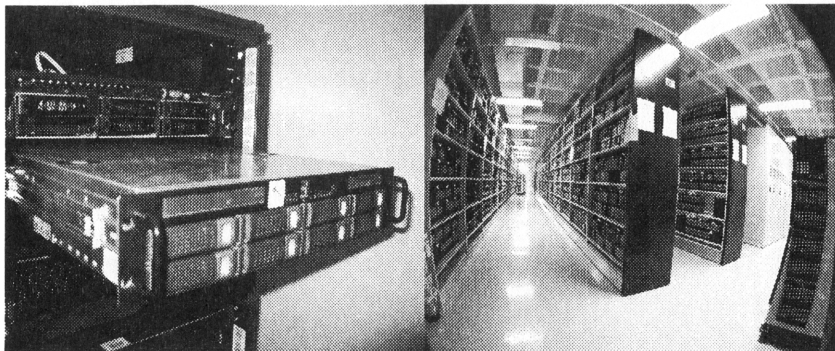
NARA's Research Prototype Persistent Archives

NARA's current, fully accessioned electronic records are stored on tapes on shelves (right). ERA Research Staff are testing grid bricks (left) as a component of the ERA Research Prototype Persistent Archives. A grid brick is a disk-based storage and management device made from commercially available (COTS) components and utilises the Storage Resource Broker middleware to manage the records it holds. The VCR sized grid brick on the left has the capacity to store all of the records stored on the tapes in the picture on the right.

During the past few years, while this research has continued, NARA held a competition among major US information technology firms for the contract to build ERA. The competition ended in September 2005 when NARA announced that the US$308 million contract would go to the Transportation and Security Solutions unit of Lockheed Martin Corporation, based in Bethesda, Maryland. Weinstein, in making the announcement said:

> We have been impressed with [Lockheed's] ability to design a system, which addresses in considerable depth NARA's business needs, on the one hand, and on the other hand, a system that entails a modern, service-oriented architecture.

At the same time it awarded the contract to Lockheed Martin, NARA formed the Advisory Committee on the Electronic Records Archives, made up of experts in computer science, information technology, archival

science, records management, information science, law, history, genealogy, and education. As ERA emerges from the drawing board, these experts will advise the National Archives on how well it meets the needs of its customers.

Well before the contract award to Lockheed, NARA was getting ready for a world of electronic records. NARA has been preserving electronic records since the 1970s, but over the past decade the agency's holdings of such records have grown one hundred times faster than its holdings of traditional paper records. Already NARA has started making electronic records available over the Internet at <www.archives.gov>. One way has been through Access to Archival Databases (AAD), the first publicly accessible application developed under the ERA Program released in 2003, available at <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/>. With AAD, researchers can access a selection of more than eighty-five million electronic records created by more than thirty federal agencies on a wide range of topics, from immigration records to prisoner of war lists.

Another way to access the holdings of the National Archives is by searching the Archival Research Catalog (ARC), also accessible at <www.archives.gov/research/arc/index.html>. ARC currently contains descriptions of more than forty percent of all of NARA's holdings nationwide and adds descriptions continuously. ARC's functions will be absorbed into ERA, providing a 'one-stop shopping' portal to NARA information and services.

 ERA will also help make the records accessible for other reasons than use by future researchers. The nation's national security – today and well into the future – depends on the deployment of ERA. Federal agencies, state and local governments, and the United States' overseas allies must be able to share information critical to the safety of their citizens, their governments, their infrastructures, and their social and economic fabric. The investment in research and development of ERA functionality will be critical to the creation of a platform for the secure sharing and short-term storage of this information. Imagine the potential positive impact during national emergencies like Hurricane Katrina, or during global relief efforts for famine or civil unrest.

ERA will need to free each record from dependence on the program or programs that were used to create it and allow it to be accessed with whatever programs are in use in the future. For that reason, ERA must be

able to evolve over time, a radically new concept in system design. This will allow new types of electronic records, not yet invented, to be brought into ERA and preserved, and will permit ERA to take advantage of improved technologies over the years.

ERA will be built to guarantee that the electronic records researchers get from the National Archives next year, in five years, or at any time in the future, are not corrupted or distorted by changes in technology. They will be authentic – as trustworthy as they were the day they were created.

In recent years, NARA has been working with other departments and agencies of the US Government on records management issues. NARA is not only helping them to manage their electronic records, long before these records are turned over to the Archives, but is also ensuring that these agencies can use and keep active electronic records for many years while taking advantage of advances in information technology. Improved records management in government today will make easier the future transfer to NARA of ever-increasing volumes of historically valuable electronic records.

The records of the US Government are not the only ones at risk without the technology that ERA will bring. Records of state and local governments, hospitals and health providers, insurance companies, small businesses and large corporations, courts and law enforcement agencies, public schools, colleges and universities, banks and financial institutions are equally imperilled. However, the ERA project is expected to create new technologies, just as the space program brought great technological advances. The new technology resulting from ERA can be scaled and adapted for archives and libraries throughout the non-Federal sector of the US economy.

For more information about the Electronic Records Archives Program, contact the ERA Communications Office in College Park, Maryland, at 301-837-0740, or send an email to <ERA.Program@nara.gov>. Additional information is also found at <www.archives.gov/era>.

News from the world's French-speaking archives community

Marcel Caya (Canada), Deputy Secretary General, International Council on Archives

Launch of the French-Speaking International Archival Portal (PIAF)

<http://www.piaf-archives.org/>

The World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis was the perfect setting for the official launching of the 'Portail International Archivistique Francophone' (PIAF) on 17 November 2005. This portal is both intended to provide basic training, especially for those living in areas without access to archival education, and to provide the archival community with a number of the essential tools for further study and documentation.

The homepage of PIAF

At the same time, as it becomes a clearing house for information, PIAF should play in important role as a communication forum within the community. Colleagues from other cultural communities might also find a helping hand in the portal.

The portal is currently divided into two parts. The part entitled 'Training' covers a large variety of subjects including records and archives management. This training is free and accessible to all. It will be of interest to all those archival employees, technicians and professionals who work

by themselves and, therefore do not have access to basic information including that on the newer standards and best practices in the French language. The 'Training'section allows the user to move through the fourteen modules at his or her own pace, and also offers a number of case studies, descriptions of various practices around the word and online exercises.

The fourteen training modules cover a wide range of areas: Fundamentals (2 modules), Legislation (1 module), Management and Processing (4 modules), Preservation (3 modules), Access and Public Programs (2 modules), Managing a Centre (1 module) and Partnership and Cooperation (1 module).

The 'Information Resource Centre' is a database offering information not only to the users of the training modules, but also to working archivists around the world. This part of the portal includes five modules. The Bibliography emphasises material available in French, as well as key titles in other languages. The 'Network' consists of a listing of institutions that are reachable by Internet. The 'Texts' section provides the texts of important documents or of articles that are not available elsewhere on the Internet. A 'Terminology' module offers a basic dictionary and also a forum for discussion on archival terms in French. Finally, the Bulletin Board provides news about archival activities such as seminars, meetings of groups and associations, and projects.

In addition to making training tools and information resources available on the Internet, the project to develop PIAF has also created a new level of cooperation within the French-speaking archives community. The development work for the Portal was supported by the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie (AIF, Intergovernment Agency of the French-Speaking World) through the Institut des Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information de la Francophonie (INTIF, Institute for New Information Technologies in the French-Speaking World), as well as by the Canadian, French, Quebec and Swiss National Archives.

Priorities for French-Speaking African archives

The 2003 International Conference of the Round Table on Archives (CITRA) in Cape Town marked the beginning of the 'African Agenda' initiative, which was the main topic for discussion at a meeting bringing together leaders of archives in Africa with a number of members of the

secretariat of ICA (International Council on Archives). Many national archives directors from French-speaking countries were in attendance and took notice of the movement to have 'Priorities for African Archives'decided upon by Africans.

The group of directors listening to the presentation of Mme Vatican, the Head of the Archives of the City of Bordeaux.

Since 2003, a group composed of archivists from a few countries of sub-saharian French-speaking Africa with the help of Moncef Fakhfakh, president of the Association Internationale des Archives Francophones (AIAF, International Association of French-Speaking Archives) was brought together to discuss the archival problems of Africa and initiate collaborative solutions involving cooperation between multiple countries.

With the financial assistance of INTIF, meetings were held during the Vienna Congress in 2004 and during the Abu Dhabi CITRA in 2005, as well as in Bordeaux in 2004. Several projects were prepared including the drafting of a common records management manual, the establishment of a microfilming policy, the digitisation of the records of French West

Africa (AOF, Afrique Occidentale Française). At this point, project descriptions are being prepared prior to seeking funding from all available sources for their implementation.

During the discussions, the members discussed the issue of setting priorities for Africa and came up with the following ranking:

1) Preservation, conservation, restoration, buildings.

2) Initial and ongoing education.

3) Archives/records, good governance and good public administration.

4) Computerisation, digital records and microfilming.

The group so far has worked informally. Because funding was limited, it was not possible to include national directors from every French-speaking country. During the 2005 CITRA meeting in Abu Dhabi, the members of the group discussed various means to further its work and suggested that the ICA regional branches would be an appropriate tool to continue the discussion and oversee the projects. In this context, it recommended that the two predominantly French-speaking African Branches (WARBICA for West Africa and CENARBICA for Central Africa) be merged into one that would bring together a larger number of countries.

Theory and Practice, Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists, Saskatoon (Saskatchewan), 8-11 June 2005.

Sonya Sherman, Cayman Islands National Archive

The papers at this conference considered theoretical developments and some radical changes to traditional archival principles and concepts. They addressed the impact of these changes in thinking, on the work of archives in practice. They also explored practical implementations of 'new' theory in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom – offering interesting reflections and guidance. Other papers considered changes in archival practice as a response to new legislation, organisational change and technology. They highlighted the influence of the 'real world' environment on the development of theory.

The keynote paper by Laura Millar was entitled 'The Tao of Archives'. It raised questions about seeking balance in a profession often defined by

polarities which 'battle for supremacy'. Laura noted that archives should be about acknowledgement, not interference.

The first morning consisted of three parallel sessions – one of which included papers presented by myself and Joanna Baker. My paper considered Australian continuum theory and how well it is reflected in the *International Standard for Records Management ISO 15489*. It then looked at the Australian Government implementation of ISO 15489 and discussed evidence of continuum thinking in practice. Joanna then spoke about current records management practice in Australian Government, and how this experience and related projects are feeding into the review of ISO 15489 and the development of continuum theory.

In the afternoon, I attended a session on new theories of appraisal. Rodney Carter spoke about the appraisal of photographs in personal records collections – and how macro-appraisal and other functions-based strategies might be applied to these records. He reminded us that functions-based appraisal requires a change in thinking – to consider what is valuable about the activity that produced the record; rather than what is valuable about the content of the record. He referred in particular to the work of Rodney Teakle (National Archives of Australia) and an extra 'layer' of criteria required to support the evaluation of audiovisual records. (Eg to identify the 'best' records, out of perhaps hundreds of photographs of a particular event.) Carter also noted the different relative importance of functions, as perceived by records creators and later records users. He stressed that the views of all stakeholders should influence the appraisal outcome.

Michael Piggott explored the role of the human actor in documenting society, and suggested this is a critical issue overlooked by modern appraisal theory. He described three case studies – (a) the recordkeeping behaviour of prisoners of war during World War II; (b) the 'hunter-gatherer' career of collecting archivist, Frank Strahan; and (c) the autobiographical archive created by musician Percy Grainger. Piggott suggested that an understanding of why people create or collect records is important when deciding the basis for our appraisal strategies. He asked, what drives a person to dedicate or risk their life, in order to document their experience – is it the significance of the event, or the nature of the person? What influence does this have on archival collections?

The final session I attended for the day discussed practical experiences with electronic records, and attempts to apply traditional archival methods. Cara Downey spoke about the transfer of a set of unevaluated electronic records from the Atomic Energy Control Board. The records were in the form of assorted diskettes, CD-ROMs, audio cassettes and other media – some of which were unreadable – and contained all kinds of (disorganised) documents. The processing was initially very labour-intensive, looking at each document in turn. After reviewing many of the records, a more high-level (risk-based) approach was applied to the remaining disks. In this case, most documents had been replicated in the (official) paper recordkeeping system. Downey also concluded that with viewer software, most records are accessible and obsolescence was not a big issue.

Jim Suderman described an experiment on the migration of email for long-term preservation – using two different conversion applications. Due to the problems discussed, Suderman did not name the applications that were tested. The experiment converted Outlook emails to HTML. It did not consider XML because researchers did not feel they could write a DTD without knowing the content of the emails (ie how do you know what you want to migrate without a close examination of the records). PDF did not meet requirements of the Disability Act.

Analysis of conversion effectiveness considered: the way attachments were handled and related to records; how French language text was handled; how accurately long texts and exchanges were converted; how repeated subject lines (for example, where many records might have the same title) were managed. No metadata about the conversion was applied to the record, though this could be entered into an administrative file. In general, conversion was most effective for smaller files, in courier font, containing only some types of attachments. For large transfers, some files were (randomly) not converted. Attachments contained within other attachments were not handled (such as a converted record contained a link reference, but with no object). Some types of attachments and some metadata fields were not migrated.

Suderman's conclusions: (a) assume nothing – and assume you *are* assuming something even when you are assuming nothing; (b) conversion is resource intensive; (c) know what you're looking for from the conversion, look for unanticipated results and document the effects of conversion on the records; (d) conversion is an appraisal activity which

has an impact on access and original order; (e) it is important to determine criteria for 'acceptable loss'. His questions were: (a) How can archivists deal with conversions that take place before records cross the archival threshold? (b) Should migrations be assessed by commonly accepted criteria?

The plenary paper on the next day was entitled 'Universal Access to All Knowledge' by Brewster Kahle. Kahle is one of the founders of the Internet Archive. He spoke enthusiastically about the World Wide Web as the world's library, and the goal of preserving as much of its content as possible – for access by anyone with access to a computer. He described a model based on the latest technology, building on the work of existing collecting institutions, to provide universal access to 'all knowledge', and ensuring adequate compensation for authors and copyright holders.

In the morning I attended a session on the concept of 'record' in the electronic environment. This session was presented by three members of the InterPARES team. Luciana Duranti described the concept of the record in archival theory and how this has become increasingly important in the electronic environment. She reviewed the definitions that resulted from the InterPARES 1 project – and explained how these are being challenged by the case studies of the InterPARES 2 project.

This project is looking at experiential, interactive and dynamic records. Jim Suderman and Evelyn Peters McLellan illustrated the issues with case studies of the Archives of Ontario website and the Vancouver VanMap GIS, respectively.

InterPARES work is based on the assumption that an archival bond to essential record context is created when the record is actively 'set aside' for the purposes of memory. It may not be possible to determine what constitutes the record when it is still 'live'.

Some conclusions: (a) a GIS does not contain records, but the whole system is a *potential* record; (b) instantiations of GIS data accessed by users are not set aside by the creator, therefore no record is created (even though there may be recordkeeping requirements for accountability); (c) the decision to 'set aside' must be driven by the creator, not by the preserver; (d) a website is a piece of technology, rather than content (akin to a filing cabinet); (e) the accuracy, authenticity and reliability of web exhibits may be impaired if they are not designed to display essential context in non-standard browsers; (f) in order to effectively manage electronic

records, it may be necessary to distinguish between multiple copies (eg Web exhibits on the development server versus those on the production server).

In the afternoon, I attended a session on records regulation, metadata and building bridges to other information professionals. Tony Caravella described the development and implementation of the State Records Act which regulates the management of government records in Western Australia. The legislation establishes a State Records Commission, empowered to set standards and policies for government records management. It mandates the development of a Recordkeeping Plan, using a disciplined methodology. Existing organisations have two years to implement the requirements of the Act, while new organisations must comply within six months of their establishment. Offences carry penalties of up to $10 000. Recommendations: avoid the use of jargon; build relationships and trust to encourage honest reports of the state of recordkeeping in organisations; promote both 'archives' and 'business benefits' of recordkeeping.

Joanne Evans reported on the Clever Recordkeeping Metadata Project.[1] The project is investigating the collection or attribution of recordkeeping metadata – to identify ways to streamline the process, and to reuse metadata for multiple purposes. Evans explained that we have not yet transformed our paper ways of thinking and working, hence the ongoing manual attribution of metadata and use of standalone systems. Clever Metadata is developing a scenario for metadata interoperability from recordkeeping to publishing to archiving. Initial findings: (a) metadata reuse is technically possible, but there are feasibility and sustainability issues; (b) systems integration is limited by technical design; (c) existing metadata standards are not as interoperable as assumed; (d) metadata reuse is more dynamic and complex than discussed in the literature.

Glenn Dingwall described his experience in developing an integrated classification scheme and retention schedule for the City of Vancouver. These have been modelled on the Canadian ARCS/ORCS[2] and STAR/STOR[3] methods. Glenn stressed the importance of developing relationships with other information professionals, to successfully integrate records classification and disposition tools.

On the final day, the plenary paper was entitled 'The Canadian Archival System After 25 Years' by Marian Beyea. She examined the development

of the Canadian system in light of the recommendations of the Symons Report (1975) and the Wilson Report (1980), and twenty years of the Canadian Council of Archives.

In the morning I attended a session on the application of macro-appraisal theory to case files. Tina Lloyd outlined the difficulties associated with this approach, and the challenges presented by case files – namely their sheer volume and the need to identify the significant records. Candace Loewen explained the development of Library and Archives Canada's approach to the appraisal of case files – turning the top-down functional pyramid on its head. The strategy evaluates case files first as a type of record, and leaving function as a criterion of archival value until the end of the process. Margaret Dixon described the practical application of the LAC approach, in the form of a Multi-Institutional Disposition Authority, a set of terms and conditions of use and an application guide. This work is still in its early stages and there are some questions about the ability of records managers to apply the appraisal criteria.

In the afternoon, I attended part of the session on evaluating performance and the impact of archives – and part of the session on experiences and evaluations of appraisal theory. Jean Dryden discussed various archival evaluation projects that are underway in Canada and internationally. She noted that archivists tend to 'count and report' (for example number of users, user satisfaction surveys) rather than determining outcomes and impacts, or areas for potential improvement. Dryden noted that archivists have not embraced a culture of assessment, but that there are many useful studies on 'evaluation' in library services literature.

Caroline Williams reported on a case study of the relationship between the theory and practice of appraisal in a range of UK archival institutions. The study found that most practitioners felt theory had little bearing on their work. There were many possible reasons for this, for example: lack of theoretical knowledge; perception that 'best practice' was too resource intensive; limited organisational support. The case study results raise questions about the profession's claim that part of 'professional' status is the knowledge and understanding of a body of theory that is useful and used in practice.

The closing plenary was titled 'Theory, Practice and the Future' by Brian Cantwell Smith. It provided some inspiring final thoughts on the interaction of theory, practice and the future of the information

professions. Powell noted that the term 'information professions' does not distinguish us or explain what we do, to people who also think they 'study information'. Unlike libraries, archives, museums, the 'information profession' has no traditions, body of theory etc. We're not technologists, so how do we define ourselves and our work in the modern age?

Smith suggested that the concept of 'collections' is what differentiates the work of 'information professionals' from that of the daily information worker. We should stop segmenting aspects of our key concepts (eg 'records' and 'electronic records'; 'collections' and 'digital collections'), recognising that in the modern world, records and collections include all these variations – and records and collections is what we do. He also suggested offering courses that include information management training for specific fields (eg Masters in Science and Informatics; Masters in Engineering and Informatics) as a way to improve the skills of records creators.

Endnotes

1 A joint research project involving the Records Continuum Research Group at Monash University, UCLA, the National Archives of Australia, State Records Authority of New South Wales, and the Australian Society of Archivists' Committee on Descriptive Standards.

2 Administrative Records Classification System/Operational Records Classification System – developed by Government of British Columbia.

3 Standards for Administrative/Operational Records – developed by Government of Novia Scotia.