A Training Programme

The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context

THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR RECORDS: PRINCIPLES AND CONTEXT

MANAGING PUBLIC SECTOR RECORDS

A STUDY PROGRAMME

General Editor, Michael Roper; Managing Editor, Laura Millar

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The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context

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The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context

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INTRODUCTION TO *THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR RECORDS: PRINCIPLES AND CONTEXT*

The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context outlines the purpose of records and archives management and defines the key terminology, theories and principles underpinning records and archives care. The module examines the importance of good record keeping, particularly within the public sector, and discusses the need to manage information as a strategic resource. It also presents a rationale for developing an integrated records management programme. It discusses the work involved in restructuring existing information and records systems and then outlines the key activities undertaken in records and archives management. It concludes with a discussion of the importance of supporting and sustaining an integrated records management programme.

The information presented in this and the other modules can be used in government, corporate, organisational or personal settings; the principles apply equally whether the agency is public or private. Many examples, including the fictitious 'Erewhon National Archives', are based on government situations, but the concepts illustrated should be easily applied to non-government situations or local or regional government environments.

This module discusses records care in terms of 'best practice', offering information and proposing actions that would result in the 'ideal' information management programme. However, it is recognised that the development and implementation of new systems and procedures is a time-consuming process. You should learn from this module what actions could be taken; subsequent modules will discuss how to prioritise your programmes and improve your existing practices.

As you read through this module, remember that it offers an introduction to and overview of information described in more detail in other modules. In order to gain a clear overview of the steps involved in the 'ideal' information management programme, you are encouraged to complete this module in its entirety before progressing to the other modules in this study programme. But do not expect this module to address all issues in detail; you will need to move on to other modules for more information on specific topics such as managing current records, electronic records management, preservation and so on.

Remember, all topics introduced here are discussed in more detail in the other modules in this study programme.

The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context consists of seven lessons:

Lesson 1:	Theories and Principles of Records and Archives Management
Lesson 2:	Recognising Records as a Strategic Resource
Lesson 3:	Developing an Integrated Records Management Programme
Lesson 4:	Restructuring Existing Systems
Lesson 5:	Key Activities in Records and Archives Management
Lesson 6:	Supporting and Sustaining an Integrated Records Management Programme
Lesson 7:	What to Do Next?.

AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Aims

This module has seven primary aims. These are

1. to explain the purpose of records and archives management

2. to outline the theories and principles of records and archives management

3. to outline the importance of managing records for government accountability and the value of seeing records as a strategic resource

4. to outline the key organisational and administrative issues necessary to understanding and restructuring records and archives management within government

5. to outline the key activities in records care

6. to explain the steps that may be taken to support and sustain an integrated records management programme

7. to explain how to obtain more information on records issues.

Outcomes

When you have completed this module, you will be able to

1. explain the purpose of records and archives management

2. understand the theories and principles of records and archives management

3. understand the importance of managing records for government accountability

4. recognise the value of records as a strategic resource

5. understand organisational and administrative issues relating to records and archives management

6. explain the key activities in records care

7. understand the steps involved with developing an integrated records management programme

8. know how to find information on records issues.

METHOD OF STUDY AND ASSESSMENT

This module of seven lessons should occupy about 80 hours of your time. You should plan to spend about:

> 15 hours on Lesson 1
> 15 hours on Lesson 2
> 8 hours on Lesson 3
> 12 hours on Lesson 4
> 15 hours on Lesson 5
> 8 hours on Lesson 6
> 7 hours on Lesson 7.

This includes time spent doing the reading and considering the study questions.

At the end of each lesson there is a summary of the major points. Sources for additional information are provided in Lesson 7.

Throughout each lesson, activities have been included to help you think about the information provided. Each activity is a 'self-assessed' project; there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer. Rather, the activity is designed to encourage you to explore the ideas presented and relate them to the environment in which you are studying or working. If you are studying these modules independently and are not part of a records or archives management organisation, you should try to complete the activities with a hypothetical situation if possible. If the activity suggests writing something, you should keep this brief and to the point; this is not a marked or graded exercise and you should only spend as much time on the activity as you feel necessary to understand the information being taught. At the end of each lesson are comments on the activities that will help you assess your work.

Following the summary at the end of each lesson are a number of self-study questions. Note that these self-study questions are designed to help you review the material in this module. They are not intended to be graded or marked exercises. You should complete as many of the questions as you feel will help you to understand the concepts presented. External assessments, such as assignments or exams, will be included separately when this module becomes part of a graded educational programme.

WHAT RESOURCES WILL YOU NEED?

This is an introductory module and anyone working through this should not require any additional resources to understand the concepts and ideas expressed here. However, the module will assume that you have access to a records office, records centre or archival institution or that you have some involvement with the management of records; the various activities may ask you to draw on your own experiences and compare those with the information provided in the lessons. If you do not have access to such facilities, you may need to develop a fictitious scenario for your activities. Alternately, you may wish to discuss this module with friends or colleagues who work with records and archives so that you can discuss principles and concepts with them and compare your understanding with theirs.

Case Studies

The following case studies may be useful additions to this module:

27:     Terry Cook, Ed Dahl and Ann Pederson, Australia and Canada. 'Living with Your Conscience at the End of the Day: Ethical Issues and Archives/Records Managers.'

29:     Ann Pederson, Australia. 'Advocacy/Marketing for Record Keeping: A Case Study.'

THEORIES AND PRINCIPLES OF RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT

Lesson 1 examines the central theories of records and archives management, particularly within the context of the public sector. It defines records and archives and outlines the purpose and nature of managing them. It then explains the key principles governing records care and discusses their importance in an integrated records management system.

The lesson considers the following questions.

* What is information?

* What are records?

* Who uses records?

* What is the principle of *respect des fonds*?

* What are the principles of provenance and original order?

* What is the concept of the life cycle of the record?

* What is the concept of a continuum of care?

* What are the levels of arrangement and description of records?

WHAT IS INFORMATION?

Information is knowledge that human beings perceive through one or more of their senses. It remains intangible until it is represented in a formal manner as data. When represented as data in a document, information can then be stored, communicated and used.

Information: Knowledge that is communicated.

*Document***:** A unit of recorded information.

> **Data** *(pl.)***:** The representation of information in a formalised manner suitable for communication, interpretation and processing, generally by a computer system. *Note:* the term 'raw data' refers to unprocessed information.

Information is not tangible until it is represented as data or recorded in a document.

Activity 1

Think of three types of 'information' you receive every day. Then think of three types of information that are converted into data. Can any of the information be converted into documents? Write down your answers so that you can look back on them later if you wish.

WHAT ARE RECORDS?

Activity 2

Before reading further, write down in your words the meaning of the term 'records'. What do you think records are? Why are records different from information? List as many different types of records as you can think of.

The term 'records' includes all the documents that institutions or individuals create or receive in the course of administrative and executive transactions. The records themselves form a part of or provide evidence of such transactions. As evidence, they are subsequently maintained by or on behalf of those responsible for the transactions, who keep the records for their own future use or for the use of their successors or others with a legitimate interest in the records. Although records may ultimately have significant research value, they are not created in the interests of or for the information of archivists or future researchers.

> **_Record:_** A document regardless of form or medium created, received, maintained and used by an organisation (public or private) or an individual in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business, of which it forms a part or provides evidence.

Records come in a wide variety of forms. Most are still created on paper, in the form of correspondence, minutes, reports and memoranda, and they are normally filed systematically. In addition, information may be recorded on paper in ledgers, registers, notebooks, appointment diaries and other volumes, or they may be in the form of maps and plans (cartographic records), architectural and engineering drawings, pictures (iconographic records) or computer printouts. Such records may be handwritten (manuscript), hand-drawn, typed (typescript) or printed.

Records may also be created on media other than paper: in roll microfilm, microfiche or computer output microfiche (COM) formats (microforms); as photographs, including prints, negatives, transparencies and x-ray films; as sound recordings on disk or tape; as moving images on film or video (audiovisual records); as electronic text or images copied on magnetic tape or magnetic or optical disk or held in online databases (electronic records; formerly known as machine-readable records); as three-dimensional models, scientific specimens or other objects; or as combinations of any of the above formats in an electronic form (multimedia).

All of these items are records if they were created by individuals or agencies in the course of their business or activities.

> *Records are documents created or received by institutions or individuals in the course of administrative and executive transactions.*

The Nature of Records

While all records convey information, not all sources of information are necessarily records. For example, a published book or an externally provided database (on- or offline) will not be a record, although information selected from it and reused in a new context may itself become a record.

Records arise from actual happenings; they are a 'snapshot' of an action or event. They offer a picture of something that happened. Records have four important qualities or characteristics. They are static in form; they have authority; they are unique; and they are authentic.

Records are Static

During the process of creating a record, a document will go through a phase of development and change. For example, minutes of a meeting will be produced in draft form and reviewed by the members of the committee before being approved. Once this process of creation, or drafting, is finished and the document is considered complete, it may be regarded as a record. In order to provide evidence, the record must now be fixed and must not be susceptible to change. If a record is changed or manipulated in some way, it no longer provides evidence of the transaction it originally documented. If someone alters the minutes of a meeting after they have been approved, the minutes can no longer be considered an accurate record of the meeting.

However, drafts themselves, such as the draft minutes, may be considered 'records', since they can be considered completed documents at a certain stage of development; that is, as draft minutes.

Records should be static.

Records Have Authority

Records provide the 'official' evidence of the activity or transaction they document. Records must be reliable and trustworthy. The reliability of a record is linked to its creation. Who generated or issued the record? Under what authority? Can this authority be proved? Consider again the case of the draft and final minutes. The committee has the authority to confirm that the minutes represent accurately the events of the meeting. If someone changed the minutes after the committee had approved them, he or she perhaps did not have the authority; those revised minutes may be evidence of that person's view of the meeting but they are not the 'official' record of the meeting, as authorised by the committee.

Signatures, letterheads, seals and office stamps are obvious indicators of the official nature of records. However, not all records have official stamps or seals. The continuous safekeeping of records can also protect their reliability. If the official version of the minutes is filed by the records manager and thus protected from change, the unauthorised version will not form part of the official record. The authority of the official version will remain intact.

Records should have authority.

Records Are Unique

Records are unique in the sense that, maintained in their appropriate context, they are a component in a unique compilation or sequence of transactions. Records are not isolated bits of information. They have meaning because they were generated during a particular transaction or business process. The records make sense within the context of the overall functions and activities of the individual or organisation that created or used them. They have a relationship with other records that makes them unique.

The minutes may not be 'unique' in that there may be ten copies made available to all members of the committee. But the minutes are unique within the context of that organisation, because the official copy represents one event – the meeting – that only took place with those committee members on that day at that place.

Copies of a record may be unique within another context. For example, if one member of the committee gives his copy of the minutes to a colleague, with a cover note suggesting that the format used for minute-taking may be of value to the colleague's organisation, those minutes become a new record. They are part of a separate set of transactions between that one member and his colleague. For this reason, the context of the record (the activity and authority that gave rise to it) is vital and must be preserved. Only by knowing how and why a record was created and used can its contents be fully understood.

Records should be unique.

Records Are Authentic

It must be possible to prove that records are what they say they are. The authenticity of a record is derived from the record-keeping system in which it was created or received, maintained and used. A record is authentic if it can be verified that it is now exactly as it was when first transmitted or set aside for retention. For example, a letter received in an office may be date-stamped, registered and placed on a file. The file containing the letter is tracked throughout its use and stored when not in use in a records office.

Think again of the minutes. In order to prove that the 'official' minutes are in fact authentic, it is necessary to be able to show that they were produced, approved and then filed appropriately in the organisation's record-keeping system. Without this process for authenticating records, the 'unofficial' version produced by that one member after the fact could be mistaken for the official record.

Records today may be produced in a range of systems and stored in a range of media, including paper and electronic forms; different versions may be stored in different media in different locations. One of the dangers today, with the advent of sophisticated information technologies such as computers, is that information can be extracted from the record that originally conveyed it and taken out of its context.

An electronic version of the minutes can be altered and could replace the original version without anyone noticing the difference. Similarly, new versions of the minutes could be made using electronic technologies, just as in the examples earlier, and as a result no copy can be guaranteed to be authentic.

Consider another example. A government department may be responsible for buildings and physical plant maintenance; as part of its responsibilities, it might create architectural plans for a new building. It might also take photographs of that building as it is built and it might create minutes and reports of various stages of construction. Each type of material is a record. The architectural drawings, photographs, and minutes gain meaning as records by being retained as part of the entirety of records relating to the construction of that particular building. The materials would lose their meaning if they were removed from the whole body of records relating to the work of that government department and kept as single items, without information about their origins or context.

Records should be authentic.

Activity 3

Look at how two types of records – reports and correspondence – are created, used, maintained and stored in your organisation. Explain if you believe these types of records are static in form. Do they have authority and how is that authority provided? Are they unique? How? Are they authentic? How is that authenticity guaranteed? Be as descriptive as possible in your explanations.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RECORDS

Records are created by all sorts of people and institutions. Individuals, families, businesses, associations and groups, political parties and governments all create and use records every day. Records created by government agencies or other institutions within the public sector are usually specifically designated as 'public records'; their management is — or ought to be — governed by legislation, which determines how they are to be managed throughout their life.

> **Public records:** Records created or received and maintained in any public sector agency.
>
> **Private records:** Records created, received and maintained by non-governmental organisations, families or individuals relating to their private and public affairs.

It is a primary responsibility of government to care for its own public records, particularly when those records are needed for the administration of government services. However, it is often the case that central archival institutions, such as National Archives, Provincial or State Archives or University Archives, acquire and preserve private records for use by members of the public.

When acquiring privately created records, repositories may have to consider issues of confidentiality or privacy. In general, whether the repository cares only for its own government or corporate records or acquires a broader range of materials, the agency must adhere to principles of access and codes of ethics laid down in legislation or in corporate or professional guidelines.

> *It is a primary responsibility of government to care for its own records.*

Records and Archives

Many records are kept by an organisation for only a short time, to provide evidence or information for the creating agency. Other records have a longer value, as evidence of or information about the actions or functions of an agency over time. Those records worth preserving for their enduring value are called 'archives'. Archives are normally preserved in an archival institution.

> *Archives***:** Records, usually but not necessarily non-current records, of enduring value selected for permanent preservation. Archives will normally be preserved in an archival repository.
>
> *Archival institution***:** The agency responsible for selecting, acquiring, preserving, and making available archives. Also known as an archival agency, archival facility or archives; sometimes referred to as an archival repository.
>
> *Archival repository:* A building or part of a building in which archives are preserved and made available for consultation. Also known as an archives.

Records can be identified as archival at the time of their creation, indeed even before their creation, but they are usually not transferred to an archival repository for permanent preservation until they have ceased to be of immediate administrative use to the creating agency.

In this module, the terms 'archival repository' and 'archival institution' are used interchangeably to mean the organisation responsible for acquiring, preserving and making available archival materials. The term 'National Archives' has been used when referring specifically to a national archival institution. The term 'archives' refers to the materials themselves.

Activity 4

Imagine you are responsible for determining which records in your organisation have ongoing value and which do not. In your own words, explain in detail whether each of the following records should be considered archives and why.

> a draft report on procedures for parking at the office
>
> a final report on procedures for parking at the office
>
> extra copies of correspondence
>
> copies of correspondence with handwritten notes in the margin
>
> master copies of correspondence
>
> a draft report on revisions to legislation that defines the department's work
>
> a final report on revisions to legislation that defines the department's work
>
> original signed contracts for provision of janitorial services
>
> original signed contracts for a legislative consultant to assist with revisions to the legislation that defines the department's work.

WHO USES RECORDS?

Within both government and the private sector, records are created and used on a daily basis to document actions, confirm decisions, identify rights and responsibilities and communicate information. Without records, governments and businesses today could not operate. It is no longer possible to 'remember' vast quantities of information without creating an independent account: a record.

Governments use records for such wide-ranging purposes as

- documenting the work of employees

- confirming pensions, leave and health benefits

- confirming or reviewing policies and procedures

- confirming citizens' rights, such as benefits or land ownership

- providing information about past actions or decisions.

On behalf of the citizens of a country, government employees rely on records to provide core information for conducting their public business.

While many of those records do not need to be kept permanently, a small but significant portion have enduring value. It is this portion of a government's records that are preserved within public archival institutions. Together with a country's National Library, National Museum and other national institutions, the National Archives is one of the country's essential research resources. Users come to it from all sectors. Other government archival facilities, such as state or provincial archival institutions, or private-sector archival facilities in businesses or associations, are equally important research resources.

Activity 5

Before reading further, write down as many different types of users you can think of who might want to access information in an archival institution. Think as creatively as possible and identify as many types of people as possible.

Typical users in national and other archival institutions include

- government representatives requiring information about government activities

- professional or academic researchers from a wide range of disciplines

- journalists

- amateur researchers

- genealogists

- members of the public

- others wishing to have some contact with the primary sources of their national culture and tradition

- anyone with an urgent problem that can only be solved by referring to records.

Equally, corporate, organisational or local archival institutions hold records of research use to a wide variety of people.

An archival institution — national, local or corporate — is useful not just to the nation and its citizens. There is international interest in the health and efficiency of a country's archival repository and the records it protects. Many issues documented by public and private records are of international concern.

The following are examples of such issues that are documented by records that should be accessible, most likely in a National Archives:

- citizenship rights and responsibilities

- medical and health concerns

- environmental issues

- resource management

- intergovernmental politics

- economic planning.

A significant number of users of any national or other major archival institutions are researchers from other countries. This use of archival facilities will continue to grow in importance as international information networks develop and as the international community increasingly recognises its need to share information about culture and heritage.

> *Records can be used by anyone, from government officials and academic researchers to genealogists and members of the public.*

PRINCIPLES OF RECORDS AND ARCHIVES CARE

Records should be well managed in order to ensure they are protected for both administrative purposes and to serve as evidence of the organisation's work. The process of caring for records is known as records management.

> ***Records management:*** That area of general administrative management concerned with achieving economy and efficiency in the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of the records of an organisation throughout their entire life cycle and in making the information they contain available in support of the business of that organisation.

The care of records and archives is governed by four important concepts introduced here. These are (1) that records must be kept together according to the agency responsible for their creation or accumulation, in the original order established at the time of their creation; (2) that records follow a life cycle; (3) that the care of records should follow a continuum; and (4) that records can be organised according to hierarchical levels in order to reflect the nature of their creation.

These principles and concepts are known as

- the principle of *respect des fonds*

- the life-cycle concept

- the continuum concept

- the principle of levels of arrangement and description.

The Principle of *Respect des Fonds*

One of the longstanding principles of records and archives management is the concept of *respect des fonds*. Originally a French term, *respect des fonds* is often defined simply as 'respect for the creator of the records.' The principle of *respect des fonds* consists of two related concepts: *provenance* and *original order*. Provenance refers to the 'office of origin' of the records; original order refers to the order and organisation in which the documents were created or stored by that office of origin.

> ***Respect des fonds*:** Respect for the creator of the records or archives, involving the maintenance of provenance and original order.
>
> ***Provenance*:** The organisation or individual that created or received, maintained and used records while they were still current.
>
> ***Original order*:** The order in which documents were created, arranged and maintained by the office of origin.

The principal of provenance emphasises the conceptual rather than the physical characteristics of records. As we have seen, it is the 'evidential' nature of records, rather than their physical format, that distinguishes them from other kinds of information. Provenance also provides the basis for retrieving information from records. Knowing who created or used a record, and where, when and why, provides the key to retrieval rather than format, subject matter or content of the records. This is true for modern electronic records as well as the more common paper-based records. Fundamentally, there is no difference between understanding and preserving the provenance of electronic records – that is, the inter-connections between electronic records and their creators and users – and preserving the connections between a large sequence of nineteenth-century official letters and the registers and indexes that keep track of them.

> Respect des fonds *means respect for the creator of the records or archives.*

These principles require that archivists and records managers observe the following guidelines.

- The records of separate agencies or organisations must be managed separately, even if the agencies in question were involved with similar activities or were managed by the same people. Do not combine the records of two agencies or organisations. Similarly, the private records of individuals must not be integrated, even if the individuals were related or experienced the same events.

- Records must be maintained according to their 'original order': that is according to the filing, classification and retrieval methods established by the organisation as part of an efficient records management programme. Records offices and records centres must create, maintain and store records according to logical and well-structured records management procedures. Archival institutions must not change the original order in which records were received, as that order reflects the way in which the records were created and used.

Public archival repositories that receive government records through functioning registry systems often receive records in a clear and usable original order. The registry process ensures that the creating agency and the contents of the files are clearly identified. When records are received in an identifiable order, the archival institution should not reorganise records by subject, date or medium of material.

If registry systems cease to function adequately, there is a grave danger that, as records build up in storage rooms, cupboards or hallways, information about their creating agency and original order may be lost. This is one of the reasons records management is so important in ensuring the preservation of a valuable, identifiable record.

Organisations today are creating electronic and paper records in greater and greater quantities; record-keeping systems often do not manage this material as well as one would like. In order to ensure records are retain their administrative use and archival value, records and archives managers must be significantly involved with the record-creating process itself, rather than be passive recipients of records that may no longer be authentic or reliable.

Records and archives managers must also become more involved with and understand the processes that lead to the creation of records. It is not sufficient to study the record and its physical nature and characteristics. Records professionals must understand the business functions, activities and working practices that cause documents to be made, used and maintained.

Records and archives managers must be involved from the beginning. For example, it is no use designing a classification scheme that does not match the business processes that give rise to the records to be classified. Records and archives management must be concerned with all the processes relating to records throughout their existence.

> *Records and archives managers must be involved with records care from the beginning, when records are created, through all stages of the life cycle, in order to provide a continuum of care.*

These modules emphasise the importance of participating in the record-keeping process from the beginning, rather than wait and hope that records arrive in the archival institution in a meaningful order. Records follow a 'life cycle', which records managers and archivists must understand, and records and archives management must follow a 'continuum' of care. These concepts are discussed below.

Activity 6

In your own words, explain the concept of *respect des fonds*. Do you believe it is an appropriate way to manage records?

Write down your ideas about the benefits and drawbacks of organising and maintaining records according to the following methods:

> by the date the records were created
>
> by the subject of the records
>
> by the type of record (photograph, map, letter).

The Life Cycle of the Record

> *Life-cycle concept:* A concept that draws an analogy between the life of a biological organism, which is born, lives and dies, and that of a record, which is created, is used for so long as it has continuing value and is then disposed of by destruction or by transfer to an archival institution.

The life-cycle concept of the record is an analogy from the life of a biological organism, which is born, lives and dies. In the same way, a record is created, is used for so long as it has continuing value and is then disposed of by destruction or by transfer to an archival institution. Figure 1 illustrates the life-cycle concept of records.

The effective management of records throughout their life cycle is a key issue in civil service reform. Without it, vast quantities of inactive records clog up expensive office space, and it is virtually impossible to retrieve important administrative, financial and legal information. Such a situation undermines the accountability of the state and endangers the rights of the citizen.

Without a management programme that controls records through the earlier phases of their life cycle, those of archival value cannot readily be identified and safeguarded so that they can take their place in due course as part of the nation's historical and cultural heritage.

Phases of the Life Cycle of Records

In the simplest version of the life-cycle concept, three biological ages are seen as the equivalents of the three phases of the life of a record.

In the current phase, records are regularly used in the conduct of current business and are maintained in their place of origin or in the file store of an associated records office or registry.

> *Current records*: Records regularly used for the conduct of the current business of an organisation or individual. Also known as active records. Current records will normally be maintained in or near their place of origin or in a registry or records office.

In the semi-current phase, records are still used, but only infrequently, in the conduct of current business and are maintained in a records centre.

> *Semi-current records*: Records required only infrequently in the conduct of current business. Also known as semi-active records. Semi-current records will normally be maintained in a records centre or other offsite intermediate storage pending their ultimate disposal.

In the non-current phase, records are no longer used for the conduct of current business and are therefore destroyed unless they have a continuing value for other purposes, which merits their preservation as archives in an archival institution. (The definition of 'archives' was provided earlier in this lesson.)

> *Non-current records*: Records no longer needed for the conduct of current business. Also known as inactive records.

Some records management systems recognise only two phases: current and non-current. Figure 1 outlines the life-cycle concept of records.
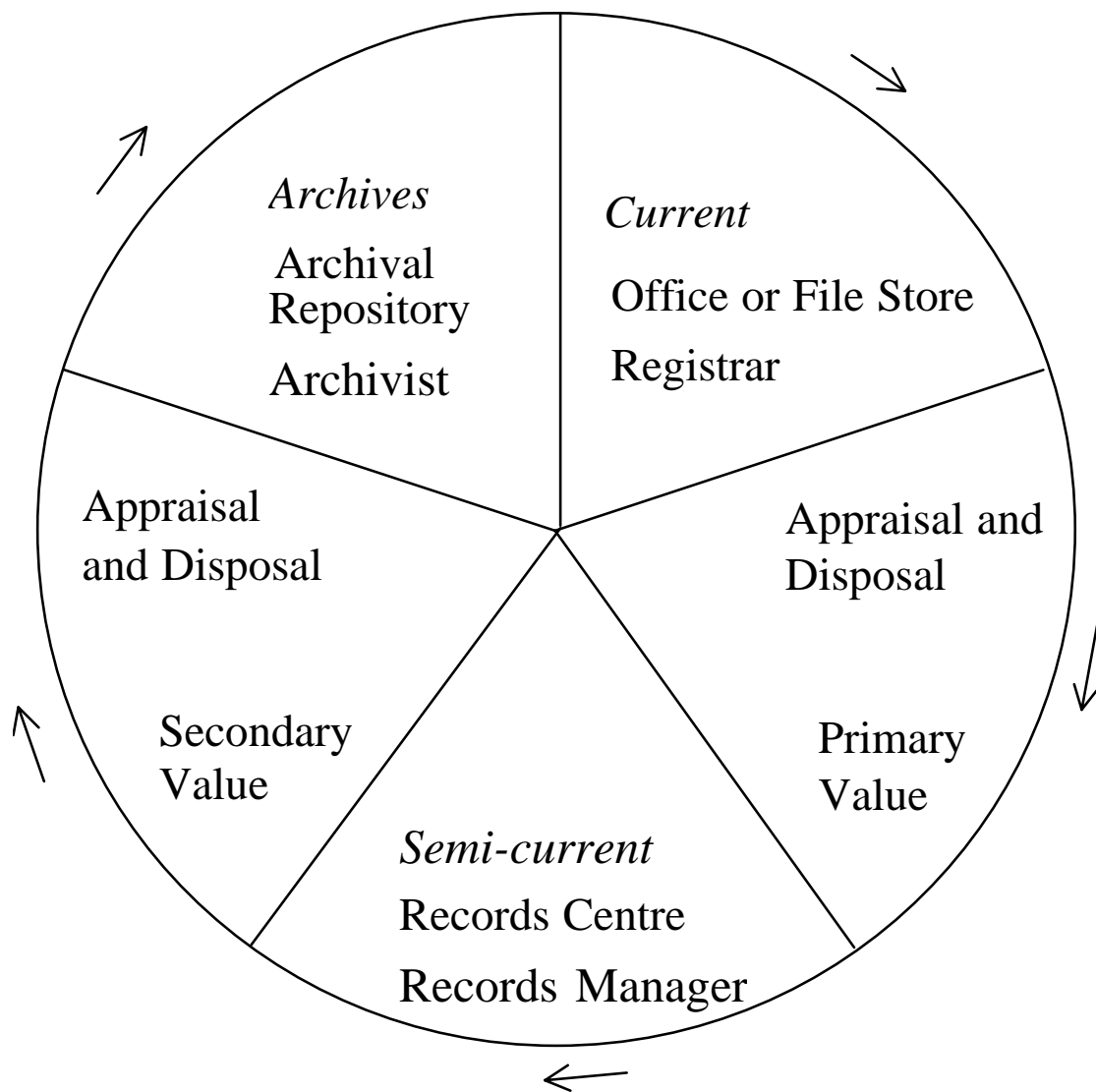
Figure 1: The Life Cycle Concept of Records

The Continuum Concept

The life-cycle principle recognises that records are created, used, maintained then disposed of, either by destruction as obsolete or by preservation as archives for their ongoing value. The continuum concept suggests that four actions continue or recur throughout the life of a record: identification of records; intellectual control of them; provision of access to them; and physical control of them.

> ***Continuum concept:*** A consistent and coherent process of records management throughout the life of records, from the development of record-keeping systems through the creation and preservation of records, to their retention and use as archives.

According to the continuum concept, the distinction between records management and archives management need not be rigidly maintained. These four actions are outlined in Figure 2.

	Process	*Records management actions*	*Archives management actions*
1	identification and acquisition	creation of receipt	selection or acquisition
2	intellectual control	classification within a logical system	arrangement and description
3	access	maintenance and use	reference and use
4	physical control	disposal by destruction or transfer as archives	preservation

Figure 2: Four Actions of Records Care

From this principle a unified model has been developed. The model reflects the pattern of a continuum. Four actions continue or recur throughout the life of a record and cut across the traditional boundary between records management and archival administration. These are

- the creation or acquisition of the record

- its placement within a logical, documented system that governs its arrangement and facilitates its retrieval throughout its life

- its appraisal for continuing value, recorded in a disposal schedule and given effect at the due time by appropriate disposal action

- its maintenance and use, that is, whether it is maintained in the creating office, a records office, a records centre or an archival repository, and whether the use is by its creator or a successor in function or by a third party, such as a researcher or other member of the public.

The continuum model is shown in Figure 3.

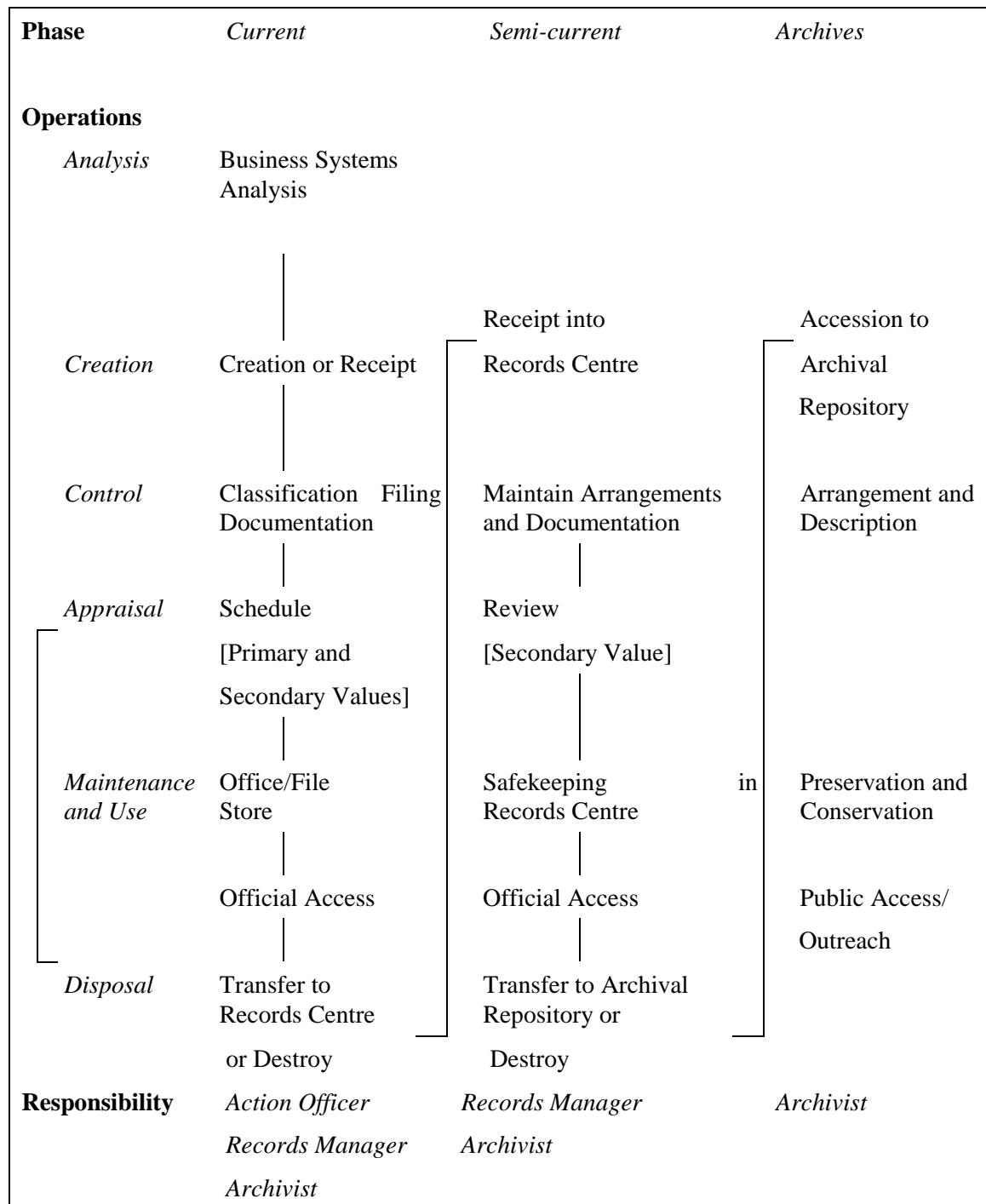| Phase	*Current*	*Semi-current*	*Archives*
Operations			
Analysis	Business Systems Analysis		
Creation	Creation or Receipt	Receipt into Records Centre	Accession to Archival Repository
Control	Classification Filing Documentation	Maintain Arrangements and Documentation	Arrangement and Description
Appraisal	Schedule [Primary and Secondary Values]	Review [Secondary Value]	
Maintenance and Use	Office/File Store	Safekeeping in Records Centre	Preservation and Conservation
	Official Access	Official Access	Public Access/ Outreach
Disposal	Transfer to Records Centre or Destroy	Transfer to Archival Repository or Destroy	
Responsibility	*Action Officer* *Records Manager* *Archivist*	*Records Manager* *Archivist*	*Archivist*

Figure 3: The Continuum Approach to Managing Records through the Life Cycle

This division of activities into records management and archival phases, with the consequent division of responsibility between the records manager (or registrar) and the archivist, is seen by some as artificial and restrictive. The several stages are not really seen as distinct and separate. Consider the following tasks, for example.

- Acquisition in the archives phase is the mirror image of disposal in the records management phase.

- Reference and use in the archives phase are essentially the same tasks as maintenance and use in the records management phase.

- Arrangement and description in the archives phase is vitally dependent on classification in the records management phase.

The continuum approach means the end of the traditional demarcation between the functions of the records manager (or registrar) and the archivist. A person responsible for care of records at a particular phase in their life cycle will certainly need specific knowledge and expertise. However, input will be needed from others who have been or will be responsible for records at other phases of the life cycle. The registrar, records manager, records centre manager and archivist will all still perform their own duties, but their work will be undertaken within an integrated structure, with no rigid boundaries to limit professional collaboration and development.

This collaboration between records and archives managers is most successful if the archival institution can be restructured to serve as a records and archives institution, responsible for all aspects of records care throughout the life cycle. A records and archives institution would establish a new records service for the whole of the government, corporation or organisation that would include staff working in records offices (registries), records centres and archival repositories. It would also develop an appropriate scheme of service and job descriptions for all records staff, and it would develop training schemes to prepare staff at all the necessary levels to provide efficient records services throughout the life cycle.

Where records management and archival activities are not integrated, records managers and archivists find that they are often duplicating each other's work or, worse, undoing or redoing tasks that could have been completed more efficiently had the two phases been considered part of a unified whole.

Throughout these modules, the term 'life cycle' is used when discussing the record; the term 'continuum' is used when discussing the management of the record according to the continuum concept.

Activity 7

Explain in your own words the concept of the life cycle of the records and the concept of the continuum of care. Next, examine how records are managed in your organisation. Do you think they are cared for according to a life cycle? Do you think there is a continuum of care? Explain how records are managed and how you think the process could be altered to ensure records are cared for throughout their life cycle.

Levels of Arrangement and Description

Another key principle to understand when dealing with records and archives is the concept of levels of arrangement and description.

Arrangement and description are two integrated practices designed to make records and archives physically and intellectually available for use. When arranging records or archives, the institution must recognise the internationally accepted principles of *respect des fonds,* or respect for provenance and original order, as discussed above.

Archival institutions in particular must be sure to respect the original arrangement of records and ensure their descriptions reflect that arrangement, because they have to make records available and understandable to people who were not involved with the creation or original use of the records. Archival institutions, therefore, must not only make the materials available; they must also provide information about the content and context of the archives in their care.

> *Records and archives can be arranged and described according to hierarchical levels.*

Central to the activities of arrangement and description is the understanding that records can be arranged and described according to levels. These levels place records into categories according to hierarchy, allowing records to be managed as groups rather than individual items. The terms used to distinguish the different levels of records and archives can be confusing. For example, in addition to 'item', terms that have been used to refer to an assembly of related documents include file, unit, piece, file unit or unit of handling. And 'item' may also be used to refer to the single documents that make up such an assembly. For the purpose of clarity, the following terms, with their definitions, will be used in this study programme.

> *Group***:** The primary division in the arrangement of records and archives at the level of the independent originating organisation. Also known as archives group, *fonds,* record group.

> *Subgroup:* A discrete subdivision in the arrangement of *archives* below the level of the *group,* usually the archives of a subordinate administrative unit with its own *record-keeping system.*
>
> *Series***:** The level of arrangement of the *files* and other *records* of an organisation or individual that brings together those relating to the same function or activity or having a common form or some other relationship arising from their creation, receipt or use. Also known as a file series, records series or class.
>
> *File (1):* An organized physical assembly (usually within a folder) of documents grouped together for current use or in the process of archival arrangement because they relate to the same subject, activity or transaction. *Note:* A file is usually the basic unit within a record series.
>
> *Item***:** The basic physical unit of arrangement and description within a series. Also known as a piece.

Note that the term 'file' is also used when discussing computerisation, as follows:

> *File (2):* A logical assembly of data stored within a computer system. *Note:* In word-processing systems it is the intellectual representation of a physical document.

The term 'institution' is used as a level of description to refer to the institution holding the records being described, such as the National Archives or the Corporate Archives. Figure 4 illustrates the concept of levels of arrangement. Note that Figure 4 identifies both the item and the file. The term 'item' is used most often in the archival environment, when discussing the physical units of arrangement. The term 'file' is often used in the records office or records centre, as that is the unit of management in those environments.

Activity 8

Using records in your own institution, try to identify the fonds, series, and item for at least four or five different bodies of records. Write each one down and then compare your answers with the information in this section to see if you have defined the various levels according to the definitions provided here.

Levels	Examples	
	government	*corporate*
institution	National Archives of Erewhon	Jimtech Corporation, Erewhon
group or fonds	Ministry of Education	Jimtech Corporation, Erewhon
subgroup	Primary Schools Division	
series	school assessments	financial records
file	Primary Schools District A assessments, 1967	annual financial statements, 1996
item	Primary Schools District A assessment, January 1967	balance sheet, 2 April 1996

Figure 4: Levels of Arrangement and Description

SUMMARY

Lesson 1 has provided definitions of the following types of records and information:

- information
- data
- document
- records
- public records
- private records
- archives
- current records
- semi-current records
- non-current records.

The difference between public and private records has been discussed, and so has the question of who uses records and archives.

Lesson 1 has also introduced the following principles and concepts of records and archives management:

- *respect des fonds*
- provenance
- original order
- the life cycle
- the continuum
- levels of arrangement and description.

In particular, this lesson has emphasised the importance of the life-cycle of records and the continuum concept of management, which ensures the management of recorded information through all stages of its life cycle.

This lesson is intended to introduce important concepts and ideas, and it was noted that many topics are discussed in more detail in other modules.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is information?

2. What is a document?

3. Define data.

4. Define records and archives.

5. What types of form or medium can records come in?

6. Explain the four important qualities of records.

7. What are public records?

8. What are private records?

9. Name five reasons people might use records.

10. Name three types of users of archives.

11. Explain the principle of respect des fonds.

12. Explain the concept of provenance.

13. Explain the concept of original order.

14. What guidelines must records and archives managers follow to respect the concepts of provenance and original order.

15. Explain why records and archives managers must be involved with records from their point of creation in order to respect the concepts of provenance and original order.

16. Explain the life cycle and continuum concepts of records care, and discuss why the life-cycle and continuum approaches mean the end of a demarcation between the records manager and the archivist.

17. What are the phases of the life cycle?

18. What four actions of records care take place throughout a records life?

19. Explain the concept of levels of arrangement, giving an example of each level.

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activity 1

We receive information all day long. When we share ideas in a meeting, we are giving and receiving information. If someone tells us that it is time to go to lunch, we are receiving information.

Information is converted into data when we record it so that it becomes widely accessible. When the results of the meeting are recorded, they become data; the facts have made available in a formalised manner; the information can be communicated, interpreted and processed.

A document is a unit of recorded information. The minutes of our staff meeting provide us with information about what happened in the meeting; the minutes 'record' the event and provide evidence that it took place.

Information is everywhere, but not all information is recorded. This point will be important later as we discuss the difference between records and information.

Activity 2

Read the definition provided in this lesson for an explanation of records. This section of the lesson also explains why records are different from information. Records can include such diverse materials as correspondence, photographs, minutes of meetings, receipts, invoices, reports, drawings, maps and so on.

Activity 3

The important lesson to learn in this activity is to recognise that records gain meaning from their relationship to other records, and that their value as records relates in large part to how they are created and maintained. How are reports generated? Who approves them or authorises their completion? How are they stored and protected? What about correspondence? Who is responsible for writing letters? Who types them? Who files them? Does any step in this process place the records at risk of loss or damage? Do the records still provide authentic and reliable evidence?

Activity 4

This activity is designed to how you (1) that not all records have ongoing value and (2) that determining which records are worth keeping as archives involves more than just identifying 'drafts' and 'final versions' and 'master copies'. The process of appraisal is complicated and is considered one of the most difficult and important tasks an archivist can do.

For the records identified in this lesson, the following issues will arise during appraisal; that is, when you are determining which records have ongoing value and which do not. This activity is not intended to provide you with answers but to show you some of the issues that must be considered during the appraisal process. Bear this in mind as you read through the rest of this module and proceed with the rest of this study programme.

a draft report on procedures for parking at the office	The fact that this is a draft report suggests it may not have long term value. The fact that it is about parking at the office suggests the subject is not part of the central business of the organisation but instead is an administrative issue. The draft report is likely not worth keeping permanently.
a final report on procedures for parking at the office	While a final report is usually more significant than a draft report, this report on parking procedures refers to administrative, not operational, issues and so is likely not worth keeping on an ongoing basis.
extra copies of correspondence	Extra copies are usually not worth keeping, if the originals are on hand, unless the copies are in another file because they relate specifically to an event or issue other than the one for which the correspondence was created. In that case, they have become 'new' records; they provide evidence of that new event or issue.
copies of correspondence with handwritten notes in the margin	When someone 'annotates' a copy; that is, writing additional information on it, the copy becomes a 'new' records; it is now unique and provides evidence of the ideas or actions of the person who wrote on it. However, even though the copy has now become a new record, it may not be worth keeping, as the subject or purpose of the record may not be significant. If it is a letter about parking, it may not be worth keeping; if it is a letter about legislation; it may indeed have ongoing value.
master copies of correspondence	master copies are usually the best evidence; they are the 'official' records. Again, the decision to retain master copies of correspondence will depend in large part on the subject or purpose of the letters.
a draft report on revision of legislation that defines the work of the department	Draft reports often do not have ongoing value, but on a topic such as revision to legislation, it may be worth keeping both drafts and final versions, since the topic relates fundamentally to the very purpose of the department.
a final report on revision of legislation that defines the work of the department	Again, the topic is significant and the report is the 'official' version, so it is very likely this is worth retaining.
original signed contracts for provision of janitorial services	Original contracts are 'official' records, but the service being contracted is an administrative service; once the service has been rendered and the terms of the contract have expired, it may not be worth keeping the document.
original signed contracts for a legislative consultant to assist with revisions to the legislation that defines the work of the department.	An original contract for such a significant service may well be worth keeping; it can provide evidence of a key activity within the department: an analysis of its purpose and work.

Activity 5

As noted in the module, typical users include government representatives, professional or academic researchers, amateur researchers, genealogists and members of the public. Other users may include journalists researching stories; school children learning about their history; lawyers conducting legal research; writers gathering background information for stories, novels or plays; actors studying characters by reading biographies or listening to oral histories or interviews on tape; and artists examining visual records for ideas for paintings. There are as many reasons to use archival material as there are people!

Activity 6

Many people have difficult at first accepting that it is best to keep records according to the agency that created them, rather than by some order more appealing to users. It can be difficult to see that, with good finding aids, it is easy to gain access to records that are managed according to the principle of *respect des fonds.*

This activity will help you see that the disadvantages of other methods far outweigh their advantages, and that *respect des fonds* is the most suitable method, because it allows the most flexibility for use.

If records were kept only by date, how would anyone make relationships between different records relating to the same topic? A letter that arrived on 22 September may be followed by a response written on 10 November and filed on 22 November; how will people know where to look to find the two 'halves' of that discussion? The only benefit to filing by date is for those people who remember precisely when an event took place; the secretary who did the filing might know where to look but fifty years from now no one will know.

Many people believe records should be kept by subject; after all, researchers arrive studying 'subjects' not government departments. But what subject should material be filed under? Imagine a letter that discusses a political rally, a government news briefing, and the weather on a particular day. Under what subject should that letter be filed? Politics? Media? Weather? Some people might suggest making copies and filing in each subject. Even if that were logical, and it is not!, people would still be confined to the subjects they thought were important.

What if a particular person was mentioned in the letter but it wasn't filed by his or her name? That person is then effectively 'lost', because no one thought to file the letter by that name. Identifying subjects is a very 'subjective' activity and can never be completely accurate or comprehensive. The best course of action is to organise records by who created them and then provide a history of the creators that explains enough about them that people will then begin to make relationships between the 'subjects' they are interested in and the 'functions' or 'activities' the creator of the records performed.

Filing by type of record, such as photograph, map or letter, may seem logical as it puts like materials together. Indeed, when it comes to storage, this method is very useful. However, storing records is not the same as organising them; organising is as much an intellectual activity as a physical one and the only way to reflect the meaning of records is to show who made them and why.

Activity 7

This activity is designed to help you compare the reality of your own environment with the principles and concepts outlined in this lesson. You may find that records are cared for in a way that reflects the concepts of the life cycle and the continuum, or you may find your organisation's operations are very different. As you work through the modules in this study programme, you will be introduced to a variety of methods for adjusting your institution's operations so that they better reflect the life cycle and continuum approaches to records care.

Activity 8

This activity will help you practice your understanding of the concepts and terminology relating to levels of arrangement. However, it is difficult to know if you have identified the various levels appropriately. If possible, discuss your answers with someone in your institution familiar with these terms and see if he or she agrees with your findings. This topic is discussed in more detail in later modules in this programme.

RECOGNISING RECORDS AS A STRATEGIC RESOURCE

Lesson 1 introduced basic concepts and principles of records and archives, including the important concept that records follow a life cycle and that their care ought to be part of a continuum process. The idea that records and archives managers must participate actively in the care of records throughout their life is a new idea to many people who have long accepted a traditional role for archivists: to acquire and preserve historical records only.

But it is not enough for records managers and archivists to wait for creating offices to finish with records and then send them on for storage or disposal. To wait for records is to endanger their authenticity and reliability and to risk not having any materials left to make available to the public as archives.

The Management of Public Sector Records Study Programme is premised on the belief that an integrated records management programme – one that offers a continuum of care for records throughout their life – is critical not only to the protection of records within an administration but also for their availability to the public now and in the future, as archives.

Lesson 2 examines the importance of good record keeping for accountability, not only in government but also within any organisation. This lesson also discusses some of the reasons for the changing perception about records, away from a traditional, historical perspective toward an orientation that recognises the importance of records as evidence.

One of the most important changes is the introduction of computerisation and the consequent emergence of greater quantities of electronic records. These issues are introduced in this lesson.

Finally, this lesson emphasises the need to consider records as a strategic resource and strengthen the relationship between records and archives management into a unified and integrated whole.

> *This key lesson examines how records and archives are a strategic resource and how their management must be part of a unified approach.*

RECORD KEEPING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Activity 9

Before reading further, write down your understanding of the concept of accountability. How do you think record keeping can affect the accountability of a government? Write down examples of situations where accountability and public administration can be affected by poor record keeping.

Record keeping is a fundamental activity of public administration. Without records there can be no rule of law and no accountability. Public servants must have information to carry out their work, and records represent a particular and crucial source of information. Records provide a reliable, legally verifiable source of evidence of decisions and actions. They document compliance or non-compliance with laws, rules, and procedures.

In many countries around the world, record-keeping systems are unable to cope with the growing mass of unmanaged papers. This is particularly true in countries with limited financial or administrative resources or unable to provide their records and archives managers with training or professional development opportunities. Administrators find it ever more difficult to retrieve the information they need to formulate, implement and monitor policy and to manage key personnel and financial resources. This situation impedes the capacity of these countries to carry out economic and administrative reform programmes aimed at achieving efficiency, accountability and enhanced services to citizens. Moreover, the decline, and in some cases total collapse, of record-keeping systems makes it virtually impossible to determine responsibility for actions and to hold individuals accountable.

The loss of control of records has consequences for all citizens, especially for the poorest who are least able to defend themselves. Relevant and accurate public records must exist if governments are to preserve the rule of law and to demonstrate fair, equal and consistent treatment of citizens. Without access to records, the public does not have the evidence needed to hold officials accountable or to insist on the prosecution of corruption and fraud. Moreover, the public suffers when inadequate information systems affect the delivery of programmes. All aspects of public service, including health, education, pensions, land and judicial rights, depend upon well-kept and well-managed records.

Records are vital to virtually every aspect of the governance process. The relationship between key governance objectives and the records required to support them is illustrated in Figure 5. The effectiveness and efficiency of the public service across the range of government functions depends upon the availability of and access to information held in records. Badly managed records adversely affect the broad scope of public service reforms. Consider the following brief descriptions of the importance of good record keeping.

GOVERNANCE OBJECTIVE	KEY RECORDS REQUIRED
rule of law	• legislative records • court records • police records • prisons records
accountability	• accounting records • procurement records • tax records • customs records • electoral registers • policy files • case files
management of state resources	• budget papers • policy files • accounting records • personnel records • payroll records • procurement records • fixed assets registers • property registers
protection of entitlements	• pension records • social security records • land registration records • birth/death records
services for citizens	• hospital records • school records • environmental monitoring records
foreign relations and international obligations	• treaties • correspondence with national and international bodies • loan agreements

Figure 5: Governance Objectives and Records

Human Rights

The ability of government to protect the rights of its citizens and to improve citizen-government interaction is a critical issue in an increasingly electronic environment. The rights and entitlements of citizens are based on records. The ability of a government to continue to respect these rights and entitlements is based on the quality of the policies, standards and practices employed for the care of those records.

Governance and Accountability

Governments are being asked to be transparent, open and engaged with their citizens. And citizens are becoming more concerned about their roles in the governance of the country. They want to be able to trust in their government and they expect their government to function in a manner that engenders this sense of trust. Records and the evidence they contain are the instruments by which governments can promote a climate of trust and demonstrate an overall commitment to good government.

Similarly, accountability is critical to a responsible government. The foundation for accountability is based on records. When managed in a way that ensures their integrity and authenticity through time, records allow employees to account to their managers, permit managers to account to the heads of government institutions and help the heads to account to elected officials and others who represent the interests of society. Without records there can be no accountability framework, and without an accountability framework there can be no responsible government.

Infrastructure and Sustainability

In an era of globalization, governments must position themselves to be competitive on the global marketplace even as they improve the delivery of their programmes and services to citizens. An infrastructure of polices, systems, standards and practices is required to meet the se goals, especially with the emergence of electronic commerce and electronic service delivery. Such an infrastructure will be without value, however, if it does not have the capacity to keep and maintain the authenticity of the records required to support the delivery of programmes and services and the transaction of government business, electronically or otherwise.

Knowledge Management

Public and private sector organisations are recognizing the benefits that can be derived from exploiting information in records and publications. At a broader level, nations are recognizing the value of the information held in records and archives as the basis for defining and nurturing a national identity and building knowledge based societies.

Records have tremendous power as the basis for society's understanding of itself. Consider the efforts by some societies to destroy the archives of other societies, such as in Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Kosovo, East Timor and other regions. The attempt to destroy people's evidence of themselves as a people is testament to the power of records as part of a nation's culture and identity.

Management of Human Resources

Improved human resource management is central to good policy management in government. Yet in many countries it can be difficult to find personnel files that are complete. Although public sector reform programmes typically include a significant reduction in the size of the public service, governments are unable to find the basic information needed to accomplish this task, such as accurate staff numbers or details of their grades and location.

Moreover, as governments focus attention on improving the incentive structure of the civil service, the need for accurate and complete records becomes more critical. For example, performance-related human resource management – designed to reward the most competent staff and penalise poor performers – is dependent upon information about the present and past performance of individuals. This information is not accessible of the relevant records cannot be located.

Financial Management

Good record keeping is essential to clear and accountable financial management. Without accurate records of actual expenditures, the process of preparing budgets can become almost meaningless. Poor record keeping affects the entire accounting function, with the result that reporting and auditing may become virtually impossible. Corruption and fraud become difficult to detect. Debt management also suffers because records of borrowing may be divided among different government offices or may be incomplete. Virtually all approaches to improved financial management rely upon more efficient use of information, but these approaches cannot succeed if financial records are badly managed.

Payroll Control

In many countries, government payrolls have been inflated with 'ghost workers': non-existent employees who draw a salary, taken by someone else. The personnel file should be the primary source of evidence that a person actually exists, that the grade is appropriate to the salary paid and that any additional benefits are appropriate and have been authorised.

In the absence of complete personnel files, the 'ghost workers' problem cannot be addressed. Entries on the payroll database cannot be checked against an authoritative source to ensure that the person actually exists and that payments have been authorised. Head counts and questionnaires do no more than provide a temporary solution, and payroll projects often fail because of a lack of reliable data.

Initiatives to computerise payroll and personnel information do not always work because insufficient attention has been paid to ensuring that personnel files are accurate and complete. Consequently, the integrated personnel and payroll database lacks accurate source data. The database cannot be used for personnel management functions because the data cannot be trusted.

Private Sector Investment

Chronic weaknesses in government record keeping can adversely affect private sector investment. For example, overseas firms may hesitate to invest in a country if they feel its courts do not handle civil cases (especially commercial cases) efficiently. Likewise, large-scale infrastructure investments, such as the construction of gas pipelines, may be delayed or may incur significant additional costs if government land registries cannot provide complete and definitive statements of titles to property.

More generally, poor record keeping can contribute to a lowering of the general standard of service offered to businesses. For example, there may be delays in replies to written inquires about the registration of businesses, the issue of licences and other matters necessary for companies to pursue their business.

Decentralisation of Administrative Functions

The decentralisation of central government functions to local authorities is increasingly recognised as a key factor in improving governance at all levels. However, the information systems currently in place have been structured to support centralised government. As yet, little thought has been given to the complicated task of decentralising centrally held but disorganised government records, while taking into account the information needs of both the central and local governments.

THE COLLAPSE OF RECORD-KEEPING SYSTEMS

In many countries of the world, public sector record-keeping systems are not just weak but have actually collapsed to the point where they do not function at all. This collapse has been particularly evident in countries that had once been part of European-dominated colonial regimes. In these countries, structured record-keeping systems were common, operating as part of a small, centralised civil service, often with a well-trained and experienced registry staff. Senior civil servants had an understanding of the importance of information management, having worked in the registries themselves early on in their careers.

> *In many countries of the world, public records are unmanaged and government information is inaccessible.*

In these countries in the years following independence, this situation deteriorated progressively as part of a general decline in public administration. Informal practices supplanted formal rules, and efficient public administration was of secondary importance to providing employment. While the civil service expanded steadily, bringing with it a corresponding increase in the flow of paper, more formal ways of working gradually collapsed, often replaced by ad hoc work methods. In many cases, the institution grew used to making decisions without referring to records. There was scant incentive to maintain effective record-keeping systems or to allocate adequate resources for records storage and staff. In some more extreme cases, the failure to create and maintain records systems was sometimes motivated by the desire to conceal financial and other irregularities.

Eventually, the registries stopped acting as the point of entry for able recruits. People working in registries had limited training or experience with record-keeping work. Consequently, less attention was paid to record keeping. File classification and indexing systems originally designed to meet the record-keeping requirements of the colonial period became unwieldy and ultimately unmanageable.

Paradoxically, in many countries, despite the low usage of records, there was an extreme reluctance to destroy records, even after they ceased to have any value to the institution. In the absence of rules and guidelines for what should be kept and for how long, staff were reluctant to authorise destruction. Over time, the registries became severely congested with older records. Ultimately, many records systems have collapsed under their own weight.

Even as record keeping has declined in many countries, there have been important advances in the field of records management in other countries, particularly in Europe, North America and Australia. For the most part these advances have made little impact on the countries that require them most. Professional literature has been almost impossible to acquire owing to poor communications and the lack of foreign exchange. Even when learning materials could be acquired, the principles were almost impossible to apply in the deteriorating conditions. As a result, in many of the neediest countries, records management has seldom been accorded the status of a profession.

> *Even though records management is a valued and honourable profession, it is not recognised as such in many parts of the world.*

Information users are well aware that there are severe problems in information retrieval, but they do not know what solutions are required. They do not appreciate the complexities of establishing and maintaining records systems, nor do they recognise the connection between the breakdown of record systems and the larger problem of public administration. As a result, record system reforms rarely feature in government priorities.

Donor support to governments has, in many cases, exacerbated the situation. Donors have seldom recognised the significance of records management in supporting public service reform objectives. Yet the expanding range of donor-supported government commitments depend on efficient record-keeping systems and place increasing demands on the existing ones.

Some of the symptoms of a failure to manage records effectively are

- the loss of control over the creation and use of records

- the loss of control over access

- the fragmentation of official records

- the existence of different versions of the same information and the absence of a definitive or authentic record

- the loss of contextual information, such as the originator and the date of creation

- the ease with which electronic records can be changed

- technology-related difficulties in retrieving records

- the misuse of records, such as unauthorised access to or alternation of records.

The breakdown of records control has prompted archivists and records managers to attempt to design national and international codes of practice and standards for records management. These codes provide guidance on implementing strategies and procedures in any organisation that needs to control and manage its records in order to meet its own business, legal and accountability requirements, as well as the needs of staff and clients and society at large.

> *Methods for handling collapsed systems are discussed later in this module.*

> *National and international codes of practice for records management are in place and should be followed by records professionals around the world.*

Activity 11

Think about the consequences for you as a citizen if your government's record-keeping system ceased to function. Think of at least three or four types of public records that you as a citizen would want to be able to access. Write down each type then write down the consequences of not being able to gain access to that information from your government.

WHY ARE RECORDS NEGLECTED?

Records and records management is a neglected area of public sector reform, despite the fact that many public servants and public sector advisers have first-hand experience of the problem of collapsed record-keeping systems. It seems that records have been taken for granted. Records are so fundamental to the concept of a democratic society that governments and donor organisations have tended to assume they will be available to underpin constitutional arrangements and provide an institutional memory. The deterioration in record keeping has been so gradual that it has gone largely unnoticed.

There is a widespread belief that the problem is so prevalent, ingrained and thankless that little can be done to improve the situation. This and other false assumptions about the scope of the problem and its causes are in themselves obstacles to the effective implementation of sustainable solutions. Some of the main assumptions and the realities of records care are described in the table shown in Figure 6.

The fact is, governments can no longer justify taking action with little or no reference to past performance or future goals. Nor can they justify parallel or duplicate services when they can combine services and reduce costs. Client service, quality performance of tasks and measurable outcomes are increasingly important responsibilities, and they are all services that depend on accessible and usable records. This is true not just in the public sector; the private sector is also concerned with increased productivity and reduced costs. Effective records management is critical to accountability, efficiency and effectiveness both in governments and in businesses.

Activity 12

Before looking at Figure 6, ask yourself what assumptions you make about the care of records in your organisation. Do you assume they are well kept? Do you see records care as a problem? Do you see people using records for decision making? Write down as many assumptions as you can, then consider whether the reality in your organisation matches your assumptions.

ASSUMPTION	REALITY
The necessary information will be available to support programmes and policies.	Records do exist, but frequently they are disorganised, lost or otherwise irretrievable.
The management of records is not a professional function.	Given the size of government and the volume of paper and electronic information generated, it is essential to have specialists to deal with controlling records.
Keeping records is not a significant problem because people will automatically want records to be kept that document their actions and decisions.	Those public servants involved in corruption and fraud or fear for the security of their jobs are unlikely to want to keep records. Furthermore, prevailing institutional cultures do not make use of records for reference purposes.
People know good record-keeping systems when they see them.	If the requirements and best practices for record keeping are not well defined, it is impossible to judge whether a record-keeping system is functioning appropriately or not. 'Model' record-keeping systems are virtually non-existent in the developing world and information on 'good' modern record-keeping practices is unevenly distributed to record keepers in many parts of the world. Current modes of practice are often based on 'how it has always been done.'
Public servants know what information they need.	Public servants may know to some extent what information they need but may not know the scope of information that ought to be available to them. As a result, they are unlikely to be using or be aware of all of the information that could and should be available to support their work.
People use records for decision making.	Many record systems in developing countries are chaotic or have collapsed. It is unlikely that the records required to support decisions made are readily available or are complete, up to date, and easy to use. Moreover, few public servants understand how to use records effectively.

Figure 6: Assumptions and Realities about Records Care

ASSUMPTION	REALITY
Computers do not create records and even if they do, information technology staff are able to manage them.	Computers do create records and whether they are printed out or maintained in an electronic environment, the need to manage their long-term preservation and access has not been addressed by IT professionals. These issues fall within the remit of records professionals.
Eventually there will be no need for paper records because offices will be completely computerised.	The fully electronic office is not a reality even in industrialised countries. Moreover, computers are the largest cause of the proliferation of paper work in an organisation.
A technological solution will solve the problems created by chaotic paper systems.	Currently the infrastructure and expertise required to support electronic record systems does not exist to adequately maintain computerised records with integrity over time. If manual systems are chaotic, electronic systems will only compound the problem. Moreover, paper records as source materials and output documents will continue to exist even in a computerised environment.
Paper-based and electronic systems will eventually become integrated somehow.	The existing computerised systems are generally operating completely apart from existing manual systems. Unless there is an interface between manual and electronic systems, it is likely that both will lack integrity.
Electronic record systems are secure, given the existence of backup procedures, disaster plans and trained personnel.	Regularised backup procedures are not always carried out, disaster plans (if they exist) are inadequate, and storage facilities (particularly offsite locations) are grossly inadequate.

Figure 6: Assumptions and Realities about Records Care (cont.)

COMPUTERS AND RECORD KEEPING

Another challenge to the management of records in many countries is the introduction of computer technologies. Both governments and private institutions around the world are reorganising their operational structures and systems to suit the needs of an increasingly global economy, by introducing ever more sophisticated information technologies.

> *Information technology*: The infrastructure needed to move large quantities of information from one place to another efficiently and securely.

Before the invention of electronic technologies, few records required more than the naked eye to be understandable. Handwritten or typed documents could be read easily, photographs and maps were usable without special equipment. For many years, archivists managed materials that could be boxed, stored and made available with little more effort than providing a desk and a place to read.

The first modern records that relied on technology to be usable were films and sound recordings. These materials required some form of equipment to make them accessible, such as projectors, turntables, or cassette decks. Access to these machines was often relatively easy, and the knowledge required to use them was minimal. Operating a turntable or an 8mm projector was did not necessarily require sophisticated technical expertise. Records and archives managers responsible for such records were often able to obtain the equipment necessary to 'read' the records: that is, listen to the sound recording or view the film. They were also able to rerecord the information on films or records relatively easily. Transferring film to videotape or copying 78 rpm records to audiocassette also required equipment and supplies but, once the equipment was in hand, the process of copying was not complicated.

Indeed, copying of films or sound recordings has become quite commonplace in many archival repositories with the technical resources. In reference rooms in some parts of the world, researchers can easily access video copies of films or cassette copies of oral interviews. These 'non-traditional' records are more accessible and the originals perhaps better protected because improvements in technology have increased the options available for storage, preservation and use.

Unlike paper records or even sound recordings or films, electronic records are not so easily accessible. The very nature of electronic records is that they are technology dependent, requiring some form of digital equipment in order to be readable. Without a computer, information in electronic form cannot be accessed or used, nor can it be transferred to another format, be it electronic or paper. Archivists and records managers wishing to preserve and use electronic information are faced with the difficulty of dealing with a technology-dependent medium.

The development of sophisticated communications technologies has changed the way governments and organisations work. Computers allow instant access to information. Theoretically, governments can use computers to create, store and share information, reducing the need for paper records and improving their services. Such technologies can affect more than just internal management. Internationally accessible technologies, such as computer networks and the Internet, can provide users with information from around the world, instantly and often at low cost.

> ***Computer network:*** A grouping of computers and peripherals connected together by telecommunications links to enable a group of users to share and exchange information.

Through these computer networks, users can access information, computer programmes and services without having to own anything more than a computer and a means of connecting to telephone lines (a modem).

> ***Internet:*** A collection of local, regional and national computer networks that are linked together to exchange data and distribute processing tasks.

The Internet allows for virtually instant communication through electronic mail systems, and it provides access to thousands of databases on any subject, from economics and politics to science, technology, literature, medicine and the fine arts.

While computer technologies offer great advantages in speed and efficiency, their use has not always been well planned. In many countries, this information technology has been perceived as the solution to public sector information problems. In particular, public sector reform programmes often include an assumption that information technology will enable a culture of open information.

There is also an expectation that installing new technologies, such as networks and Internet access, will allow for more innovative administrative and will enhance such functions as policy development and financial management. Ultimately the technology is expected to empower citizens to participate more fully in government. However, even in industrialised countries the economic gains have not been as great as expected.

Undoubtedly, computerisation can bring significant productivity gains where there is a need to manipulate or aggregate data. For example, computerised accounting systems for central government and databases of statistical information have been introduced successfully in most countries. However, there is a risk that computerisation may be adopted inappropriately, without sufficient regard for local capacity and without concern for the legal requirements for evidence.

> *While computerisation can bring many benefits, it introduces many technical and organisational challenges that must be addressed in order to protect records as evidence.*

In many countries with limited resources, and particularly in those regions outside major cities, it can be difficult if not impossible to provide trained staff, ensure adequate and continuous electricity supplies and guarantee sustainable technical support. Yet, computerisation is fashionable. It is regarded as the 'modern' solution and clients want to be seen to be using 'cutting edge' technologies. But many countries are simply not in a position to move rapidly from a currently disabled manual record system to an automated one.

Moreover, government officials, donors and information technology consultants rarely recognise the implications of managing and preserving information over time. Although the paperless office environment is not an immediate, practical proposition, a growing volume of government work is carried out electronically and may never appear on paper. The official record is increasingly in electronic form. Even the most technologically advanced governments are only just beginning to address the problems this raises. Consider the following difficulties associated with managing records generated with computer technologies.

The Nature of Electronic Media

The media upon which electronic records are stored is fragile compared to other media forms such as paper and microfilm. The life of a computer diskette is only about ten years and even optical disks are considered to be usable only about thirty years before degradation of the media begins to have an impact on the records.

The Fragility of Electronic Records

Electronic records stored in poor environmental conditions can be subject to loss and destruction. Even slight changes in humidity and temperature can disturb the magnetic properties of disks and tapes thus leading to the loss of some or all of the records. Power shortages, power surges or situations where the power is shut off suddenly can lead to a sudden loss of electronically recorded information, especially if there are no emergency back-up facilities in place.

The Manipulability of Electronic Records and Security Issues

Electronic records can be easily manipulated and overwritten. Unless strict security provisions are in place, electronic records can be altered or deleted without the organisation's knowledge simply because the storage media and the computer environment do not appear to have changed.

Technological Dependence

Electronic records are entirely dependent upon technology both for their creation and their storage. As a result, they must be managed over time in a computerised environment. Given the rapid obsolescence of computer hardware and software and the degradation of storage media, the mechanisms for the management of electronic records require a higher level of sophistication than is needed to manage paper records. For example, some countries have chosen to use digital audiotape to store electronic records. However, it is estimated that the tape is only a reliable storage medium for five years, by which time records will have to be transferred to fresh tapes. Optical disks are much more stable, but the software used to access and retrieve the data stored on disks is liable to become obsolete because there are no software standards in this area.

The Importance of Context

Electronic records are dependent upon the availability of the contextual information necessary to understand the records within the context of the administrative and operational activities that generated them in the first place. Remember that Lesson 1 introduced the idea that the context within which records are created is critical to understanding their purpose and nature. The gap between records management practices and information technology developments must be bridged.

Accountability and Electronic Records

The absence of assigned accountability and responsibility is probably one of the most serious threats to electronic records. In many organisations, accountability for the human resources and financial resources of an organisation are assigned very carefully and there are major penalties for mismanaging these valuable resources. Records are also a valuable resource, but they do not receive the same degree of attention. Electronic records may be lost because people within the organisation were not charged with the task of protecting them.

The last point underlines the fact that electronic records are more of a management issue than a technical issue. Records and archives managers need to build the tools and techniques necessary to ensure that electronic records are managed properly, and these tools are not just technical in nature but, more importantly, should address key management changes in the organisation.

Requirements for Computerisation

Computers are becoming an integral part of organisations around the world. In spite of the challenges posed by electronic technologies for records and archives managers, the question is not whether to computerise, but when and how. The benefits of computerisation can only be achieved if there is an appropriate infrastructure to support it. This includes

- appropriate legislation

- adequate management structures and assignment of responsibilities

- appropriate allowances for upgrading and supporting the computer system

- sufficient budget allocations to cover all costs

- realistic targets and project design

- well-organised, accurate, and easily accessible source data

- reliable power supplies

- realistic backup and storage procedures

- appropriate environmental conditions and physical security

- adequate number of information technology staff with appropriate skill levels

- information technology staff paid at market rates.

> *The benefits of computerisation can only be achieved if there is an appropriate infrastructure, including appropriate legislation, management structures and financial and technical support.*

Introducing technological solutions without meeting the necessary preconditions will only increase the vulnerability of public records. This is particularly true in countries with limited resources, which face huge obstacles in affording and obtaining access to the new technologies. Installing an electronic system on top of a collapsed paper-based one will seriously compromise existing and future record-keeping capabilities. In other words, automating a chaotic situation is likely to create yet more chaos.

RECOGNISING RECORDS AS A STRATEGIC RESOURCE

All of the factors listed above – the importance of record keeping for accountability; the deterioration or collapse of records systems; and the effect of computers on records – are forcing records managers and archivists to rethink their responsibilities and their relationships with each other.

Traditionally, records and archives management were considered separate disciplines. Records managers were responsible for the care of current records held in offices; archivists acquired, preserved and made available for research use historical records, whether from public or private sources. Records management, if recognised at all, was seen as an administrative function of a government or business. Archives management was identified as a cultural activity, closely aligned with the work of museums and libraries. Although the two groups were ultimately responsible for the same activity – preserving records and making them available – they often operated independently, sometimes duplicating each other's efforts and sometimes neglecting each other's concerns.

> *National archival repositories play a vital role in preserving society's documentary heritage.*

National archival repositories play a vital role in preserving society's documentary heritage, ensuring its integrity and making it available to a wide range of users, from scholars to ordinary citizens. This is an essential service to society.

But the capacity of archival repositories to provide this service is at risk. While archival institutions care for valuable historical records, they cannot guarantee their acquisition and preservation without closer links to the creators and managers of those records. Within the public sector, it is essential to bring records and archives management closer together, in part in order to ensure valuable materials are preserved. Good historical records are the outcome of well-kept current records.

Without effective records management there will be no useful historical material in the future.

The two fields come more closely together when each recognises that information is a strategic resource. Historical preservation is not the main reason to keep records and archives. As outlined in this lesson, records are a critical administrative resource for government as well as underpinning the culture and society of the country as a whole. Records and archives management is a key tool in the efficient operation of government and business.

Good records management helps organisations to manage their information more efficiently in the face of rapidly changing information technologies. Further, it helps governments to be transparent and accountable as they undertake government restructuring and civil service reform programmes. Records management is critical to effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

Recognising information as a strategic resource allows for the integration of records and archives management into a unified programme, one that focuses less on the medium in which information is stored and more on the information itself, regardless of the carrier. The distinction between archival and current records, between old and new information, becomes less and less obvious. This acknowledges the life-cycle principle of records management, outlined in the last lesson. It also recognises the need for a continuum of care, also discussed in the last lesson. Unified records care not only manages current and semi-current records for administrative use but also ensures that historically and culturally valuable materials are preserved for public use.

Activity 14

Write a brief description of the present perception senior managers in your organisation have of a records manager. What do they believe a records manager does? What do they think a records manager does not do?

Then write a brief description of the present perception senior managers in your organisation have of an archivist. What do they believe an archivist does? What do they think an archivist does not do?

How do these perceptions differ from those suggested so far in this module? What steps would you think should be taken to bridge the gap between the perceptions in your organisation and the approach outlined in the module?

SUMMARY

Lesson 2 has introduced the concept of information as a strategic resource. It has reinforced the ideas introduced in Lesson 1, that records follow a life cycle and that their care ought to be part of a continuum process. It discussed the importance of good record keeping for accountability, not only in government but within any organisation.

This lesson also discussed some of the reasons for this emphasis on records as strategic tools, including the importance of records for good administration and the effect of computerisation on record keeping. It looked at the problem of collapsed records systems in government and their effect on public services. It concluded by emphasising the need to consider records as a strategic resource and to strengthen the relationship between records and archives management into a unified and integrated whole.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is record keeping a fundamental activity of public administration?

2. Why have some countries lost control of their records systems?

3. Identify some key records required for the following key government objectives:

    *   rule of law
    *   accountability
    *   management of resources
    *   protection of entitlements
    *   services for citizens
    *   international obligations.

4. Explain the role of records in

    *   protecting human rights
    *   ensuring governance and accountability
    *   maintaining a sustainable government infrastructure
    *   knowledge management
    *   the management of human resources
    *   financial management
    *   the control of payroll
    *   private sector investment
    *   the decentralisation of administrative functions.

5. Why has records management been neglected in many countries?

6. How have computers changed the way governments and organisations work?

7. What is Internet and what does it allow organisations to do?

8. What is the effect of computerisation on record keeping?

9. Why have government officials, donors and information technology consultants been so supportive of the installation of computer technologies?

10. Name three problems computers can bring to the process of record keeping, and three requirements for successful computerisation.

11. Why should records be considered a strategic resource?

12. Explain the reasons for linking records and archives management functions more closely together.

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activity 9

The concept of accountability is discussed in this lesson. Compare your answers with the information provided in the module and see where you had similar or different ideas.

Activity 10

Again, look through the information in this module and compare it with your answers for this activity and the previous one.

Activity 11

Every citizen in a country relies on records. What about your birth certificate, your confirmation of employment or your land deeds or title documents. If the government did not ensure those records were protected, you might not be eligible for government or employee pensions or you might not be able to prove you owned your land. There are many other examples; every person relies on records every day to prove their rights and identify their responsibilities.

Activity 12

Compare your answers with the information provided in Figure 6. Did you identify many of the assumptions listed in the figure? How do you think you could change those assumptions, whether they are in yourself or in your organisation?

Activity 13

Computers can be used for a wide range of tasks, from word processing to more sophisticated database management work. It is often the case that record-keeping requirements have not been adequately considered during the installation of the computer systems. This activity helps you recognise potential problems; other modules in this study programme will discuss these issues and possible solutions in more detail.

Activity 14

As you work through the other lessons in this module and the other modules in this study programme, you should keep thinking about the roles of the records manager and archivist and how the functions overlap and intertwine. Consider steps your organisation could take to increase linkages and strengthen the role of record keeping for accountability and efficiency.

DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Lesson 3 provides an introduction to the actions that must be taken to develop an integrated records management (IRM) programme. The lesson begins with a discussion of the relationship between records, archives and information management. It then examines the goals and objectives of an 'ideal' integrated records management programme. Then it outlines the key stages in developing such a programme. These stages are discussed in detail in the various modules contained in this study programme and are only introduced here.

The information in this module is essential for comprehending the organisational and structural environment necessary for the development of a functioning records management programme.

It is important for you to understand the nature and scope of the process of implementing an IRM programme, so that you may comprehend the relationship between records and archives work. This is true regardless of whether you work with archives or records and whether or not you will be directly involved with implementing the programme. It is also important to understand the stages of an ideal IRM programme, even if such a programme can only be partially implemented in your organisation.

RECORDS, ARCHIVES AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

As discussed in Lesson 2, factors such as changing communications technologies, government restructuring and civil service reform have contributed to the redefinition of records and archives work. While each activity retains its unique qualities, together they form part of a larger, integrated system of information management. Records management, archives management, librarianship and data management used to be perceived as separate tasks. Now they can be seen as part of a hierarchy of activity, as shown in Figure 7.

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│              ││              ││              ││ (informations│
│(records      ││ (archivists) ││ (librarians) ││systems       │
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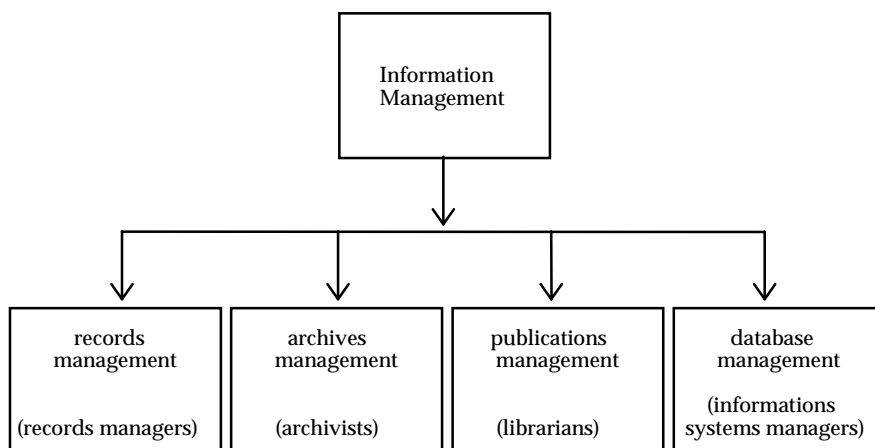
Figure 7: The Hierarchy of Information Management

The key activities discussed here are information management, records management and archives management.

> *Records management, archives management, librarianship*
> *and data management should be seen as part of a hierarchy*
> *of activity.*

What Is Information Management?

As mentioned already, although all records convey information, not all sources of information are records.   The process of planning, controlling and using the information resources of an organisation in support of its business is known as 'information management'.   The management of information is an important activity, and it affects the work of both records managers and archivists.

> **Information management:** The planning, control and
> exploitation of the information resources of an
> organisation in support of it business. Also known as
> information resources management.

It is often assumed that information management concerns only information and data created by computers.   However, as will be shown below, the most effective information management system manages all information, regardless of medium and format.   Records and archives are both vital information sources that should be managed within a wider information management programme.

What Is Records Management?

Records management is the task of ensuring that recorded information is managed economically and efficiently. Records management controls the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records so that the right records are provided to the right person at the right time. It is worth repeating the definition included earlier.

> ***Records management:*** That area of general administrative management concerned with achieving economy and efficiency in the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of the records of an organisation throughout their entire life cycle and in making the information they contain available in support of the business of that organisation.

When a records management system works well, the information contained in records can be readily retrieved, facilitating administration. As well, it is easier to manage the disposal of unneeded records and the retention of valuable information. Space, facilities and resources can be used efficiently and economically. Finally, because they are accessible and identifiable, records retain their value and utility both to government and to society as a whole.

What Is Archives Management?

> ***Archives management:*** The area of management concerned with the maintenance and use of archives.

A public archival institution, such as a National Archives, is one of the essential institutions of a modern state. It has a key role to play in the overall management of records and information created by the government administration.

An archival institution serves government by protecting public information and making it available for use. It also serves the public, ensuring that citizens' rights and responsibilities are documented clearly and accurately.

A public archival institution is a cornerstone of a democratic society. It is also one of the central cultural institutions in a nation, serving as a centre for research and as a guardian of the nation's memory.

The incorporation of archives management within an information management structure need not weaken the archival institution's cultural role. Indeed, it can strengthen the archives by showing senior administrators the importance of information throughout its life cycle, from creation to ultimate disposition.

Further, archives can have continuing value for the creating agency. Governments may need to refer to fifty-year-old building plans when planning renovations; business may wish to refer to old minutes of meetings to confirm actions or decisions. Archives have a value to creating agencies as well as to researchers and members of the public.

> *Records and archives are valuable both to the agencies that created them and to the general public.*

This study programme focuses largely on the management of public sector records, and much attention is paid to the care of current and semi-current records. However, the archival component, particularly the role of archives as part of society's culture, is not neglected.

Lesson 3 introduces the idea of developing an integrated records management (IRM) Programme, which ensures that all information, records and archives are managed as a strategic resource of government.

INTEGRATED RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The way to ensure that records are useful both to government and to citizens and researchers is to manage those records so that they are available and useful from their creation to their ultimate disposition. This is the reason an integrated approach to records management is essential. An integrated records management (IRM) programme recognises that records follow a life cycle and acknowledges the importance of caring for those records through a continuum of care.

The primary purposes of an integrated records management service is

- to preserve records and archives in an accessible, intelligible and usable form for as long as they have continuing utility or value

- to make information from records and archives available in the right format, to the right people, at the right time.

> *By caring for records throughout their life cycle, an integrated records management service preserve valuable records and makes them available for use.*

The archival institution is the permanent home for an agency's records with enduring value. But those records will not reach the archival institution if they are not well managed throughout their life. Provenance and original order must be respected, obsolete records must be destroyed in a timely fashion and valuable records must be

secured and preserved.

To protect valuable records, the archival institution must be recognised as an essential part of a wider records and archives institution. The function of records management is to make certain that records – and the information in them – are used to their best advantage from the moment of their creation.

Goals

The goals of an integrated records and archives management programme include

- the creation and maintenance of authoritative and reliable records in an accessible, intelligible and usable form for as long as they are required to support the business and accountability requirements of the organisation

- efficiency and economy in the management of records through eliminating duplication of effort, creating and maintaining only those records that are needed, systematising retention and disposal, and so on

- improved access to records and archives, enhancing sound decision making, the effective delivery of government programmes and services, accountability and transparency of government and the protection of citizens' rights

- the secure destruction of obsolete records

- the identification of archives of enduring historical and cultural value

- the transfer of such archives to an archival institution

- the preservation of those archives

- the arrangement of archives in accordance with archival principles so as to preserve their contextual information

- the description of archives so as to disclose their content to users.

To achieve those goals it is necessary to

- enact and implement comprehensive legislation to regulate the life-cycle management of records and archives, irrespective of medium and format, designating a single authority to oversee the process and assigning other authorities clear responsibility for their respective actions at each of its stages

- develop policies, procedures, systems and structures to ensure the maintenance of the integrated records and archives management programme

- prepare long-term strategic plans to determine priorities within the programme

- provide adequate resources, including staff, buildings, equipment and funding, to ensure the implementation of those strategic plans and the sustainability of the programme

- monitor and evaluate the programme to assess its efficiency and effectiveness ('value for money') and to make any necessary structural readjustments.

Priorities

Consequently, the priorities for records and archives management are

- establishing records and archives management systems that offer a continuum of care through the records' life cycle

- facilitating the automation of records and archives management systems

- extending integrated records and archives management systems to regional and local administrations, especially in the context of regionalisation and other decentralisation initiatives and where government programmes are delivered by a partnership of national, regional and local government

- introducing effective systems for the life-cycle management of electronic records and archives

- safeguarding and providing access to the archival heritage of the nation and contribute thereby to safeguarding the documentary memory of the nation and, thereby, the world.

Benefits

There are many benefits to the implementation of an IRM programme. These may include

- the development of co-ordinated information management programmes

- the elimination of duplication of services

- improved accessibility to and use of information and records

- reduced expenses for records management services

- the ultimate preservation of records of historical and research value through a planned records management process.

Drawbacks

There are also some dangers to an IRM programme, particularly if it is not implemented fully. These include

- the mishandling of information because the appropriate tools and techniques are not applied (for example, using library methods to manage records, or records management practices to manage computer programmes)

- reductions in resources if funders see extra staff or facilities as duplication rather than as separate activities (for example, while staff in records centres and archival repositories may form part of the same management structure, they are distinct professionals offering different services and need to be seen as such)

- the de-emphasis of one aspect of information management in favour of another (for example, the cultural value of archives management can be reduced as the administrative value of records management is increased).

Activity 15

Write down at least three benefits you think might come from implementing an integrated records management programme in your own organisation. Be as specific as possible. Can you think of any drawbacks? Write down as many as you can think of. How do you think these could be reduced or overcome?

KEY STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IRM PROGRAMME

Following is a brief description of the key stages in the development of an IRM programme. The stages and key activities are also illustrated in Figures 8 and 9. An overview of each of these stages is provided in Lessons 4, 5 and 6 of this module. They are then discussed in more detail in subsequent modules.

The six key stages in developing an IRM programme are

1. restructuring existing systems

2. organising and controlling records

3. providing physical protection for records

4. managing records in records centres

5. managing archives

6. supporting and sustaining the IRM programme.

1   Restructuring Existing Systems

- reviewing and revising legislation and policies

- reviewing and revising organisational policies and structures

- determining resource requirements, such as facilities and staffing

- developing strategic and business plans.

2   Organising and Controlling Records

- building sound record-keeping systems

- managing the creation, maintenance and use of files.

3   Providing Physical Protection for Records

- implementing and maintaining preservation measures

- developing emergency plans to protect records

- identifying and protecting vital records.

4   Managing Records in Records Centres

- developing and maintaining records centre facilities

- transferring, storing and retrieving records according to disposal schedules

- disposing of records as indicated by the schedules.

5   Managing Archives

- acquiring and receiving archives

- arranging and describing archives according to archival principles

- providing public access to the archives.

6   Supporting and Sustaining the IRM Programme

- promoting records services to the government and the public

- promoting education for records and archives personnel

- developing and expanding the records and archives professions.

Figure 8: Stages of an IRM Programme

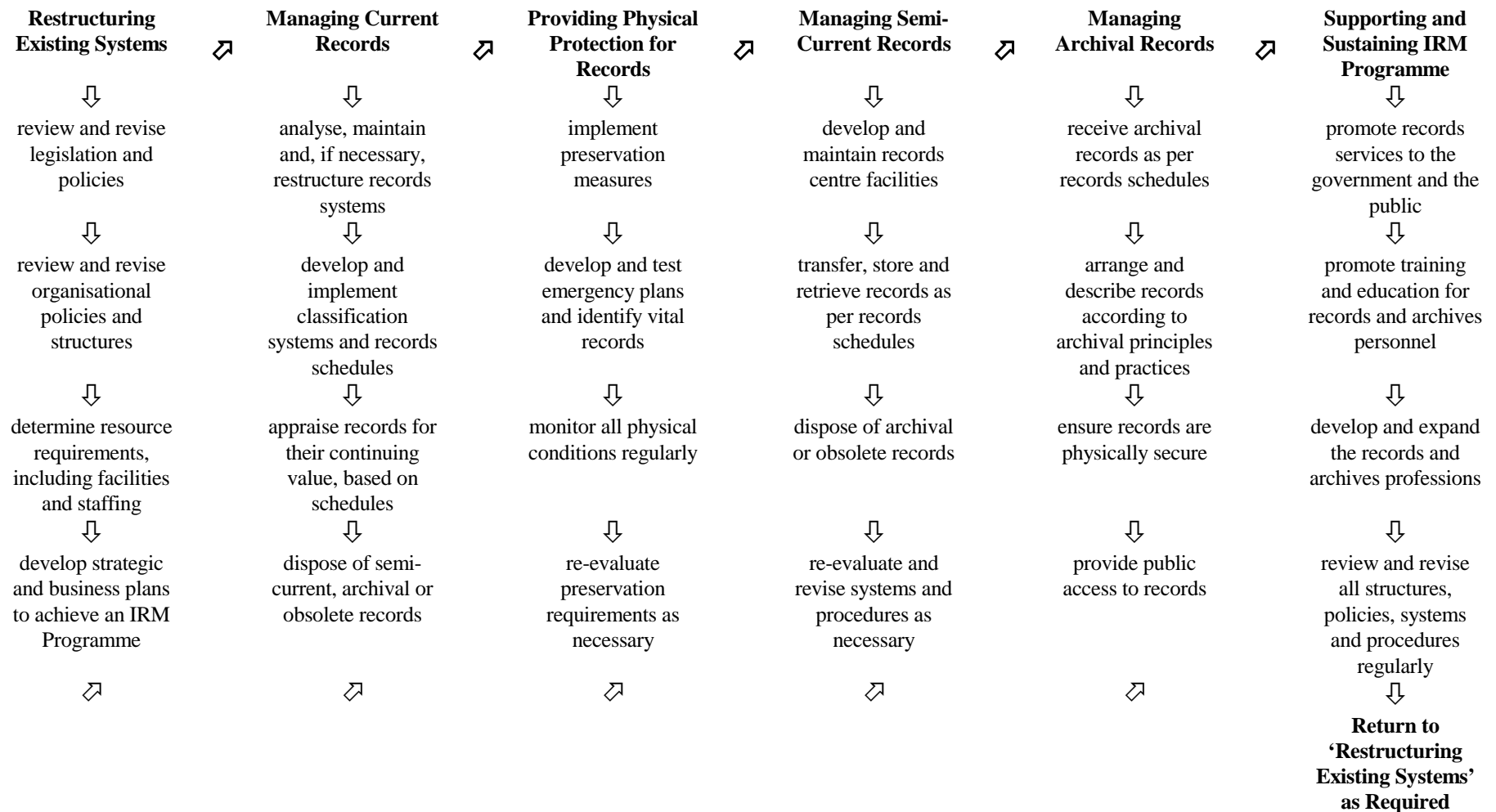| Restructuring Existing Systems ↗	Managing Current Records ↗	Providing Physical Protection for Records ↗	Managing Semi-Current Records ↗	Managing Archival Records ↗	Supporting and Sustaining IRM Programme
⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩
review and revise legislation and policies	analyse, maintain and, if necessary, restructure records systems	implement preservation measures	develop and maintain records centre facilities	receive archival records as per records schedules	promote records services to the government and the public
⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩
review and revise organisational policies and structures	develop and implement classification systems and records schedules	develop and test emergency plans and identify vital records	transfer, store and retrieve records as per records schedules	arrange and describe records according to archival principles and practices	promote training and education for records and archives personnel
⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩
determine resource requirements, including facilities and staffing	appraise records for their continuing value, based on schedules	monitor all physical conditions regularly	dispose of archival or obsolete records	ensure records are physically secure	develop and expand the records and archives professions
⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩	⇩
develop strategic and business plans to achieve an IRM Programme	dispose of semi-current, archival or obsolete records	re-evaluate preservation requirements as necessary	re-evaluate and revise systems and procedures as necessary	provide public access to records	review and revise all structures, policies, systems and procedures regularly
↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	⇩
					Return to 'Restructuring Existing Systems' as Required

Figure 9: Key Activities in the Development of an Integrated Records Management Programme

Care of Specialised Records

The MPSR Study Programme includes modules on the following specialised records topics:

*   *Managing Financial Records*

*   *Managing Hospital Records*

*   *Managing Legal Records*

*   *Managing Personnel Records.*

While the specific management issues relating to such records require that they be discussed independently, it is important to recognise that the basic principles of records and archives management apply, regardless of the origins or purpose of the records.

Thus, for example, if you are particularly interested in studying the care of hospital records, not only would you study *Managing Hospital Records,* but you would also need to understand the information provided in the core modules on records and archives management, including this introductory module.

Activity 16

Consider each of the stages of the integrated records management programme outlined above. Ask yourself the following questions about records in offices as well as records in records centres and materials in archival institutions:

Does your organisation's records legislation require review or revision?

Do your organisation's policies and structures need review?

How are records organised and controlled when they are created and used in offices?

Could those methods be improved?

How are records protected from physical danger or loss?

Is there a separate records centre? Is it well used, under used or over used?

Are records transferred to the archival institution on a regular basis?

Are those transfers documented fully?

How well known is the work of records and archives managers in your organisation?

What educational or professional development opportunities exist for records personnel?

SUMMARY

Lesson 3 has provided an introduction to the actions that must be taken to develop an integrated records management (IRM) programme. The lesson discussed the relationship between records, archives and information management. It then examined the goals and objectives of an 'ideal' integrated records management programme. Then it outlined the key stages in developing such a programme.

Lesson 4 outlines the key tasks involved in restructuring existing systems. Lesson 5 outlines the key activities in records and archives management. Lesson 6 discusses the work involved in sustaining and supporting an IRM programme. Lesson 7 explains where to go for more information on records and archives management issues.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Explain the concept of information management.

2. Does information management only involve information and data created by computers?

3. What is records management?

4. Name three benefits of a well-run records management system.

5. What is archives management?

6. Why is a public archival repository important to a democratic society?

7. Explain the concept of integrated records management.

8. Why must the archival institution be considered an essential part of a wider records and archives institution?

9. What are the goals of an IRM programme?

10. What are the priorities of an IRM programme?

11. What are the benefits of an IRM programme?

12. What are the drawbacks to an IRM programme?

13. Name the six key stages in the development of an IRM programme.

14. Name the steps involved in each of the stages of an IRM programme.

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activity 15

Each organisation will identify different benefits and drawbacks. Compare your list with the information in this module. It is important to seek solutions to potential drawbacks or problems, so that changes to any programme are implemented as smoothly as possible. The information in the other modules in this study programme offer advice on how to address senior management concerns and so reduce the chance that changes in organisational methods or structures result in problems.

Activity 16

Each of these questions is addressed in various modules in this study programme. The purpose of this activity is to help you start thinking about the current situation in your organisation. Whether or not you are in a position to make any changes yourself, it is extremely valuable not only to learn about principles and concepts but also to apply them to your own situation so that the theories are compared with your own realities.

RESTRUCTURING EXISTING SYSTEMS

Lesson 4 examines the actions required to restructure existing records systems in order to develop an integrated records management (IRM) programme.

To restructure operations, it is necessary first to identify the goals and objectives of an integrated records management programme. Then it is necessary to consider the restructuring of existing services in order to maintain such a programme.

This restructuring will include review and revision of records legislation and organisational policies, procedures and systems. Once that is completed, the implications for resource management, including staffing, must be considered. Finally, strategic plans need to be developed.

Topics discussed in this lesson include

- reviewing existing records services
- reviewing and revising records legislation
- reviewing and revising organisational policies and structures
- determining resource requirements
- developing strategic plans.

This lesson provides an overview to issues discussed in more detail in other modules in this study programme.

REVIEWING EXISTING RECORDS SERVICES

To achieve the integrated management of records, it is first necessary to review and, as possible, restructure existing records services in order to frame them within an integrated information management context.

The goal of reviewing existing services is to determine if it is possible to restructure the archival institution to make it a component part of a records and archives institution that serves the organisation as a whole, whether it is a national or regional government, business or association.

The Concept of a Records and Archives Institution

The purpose of records and archives institution, whether public or private, is not to manage the creation of an archival collection, important though this activity is. Instead, the purpose is to organise the efficient and economical exploitation of the information held in records. A records and archives institution cares for records throughout their life cycle, and so it is impossible to run such an institution unless it has an archival dimension. Archival records are key research resources, and the archival institution is the specialist agency in which this kind of research is concentrated. Therefore, there need to be strong links between the archival institution and all other aspects of the work of managing records and the information in them.

A records and archives programme will only function effectively if it is grounded within a general managerial environment that ensures that procedures will operate correctly, with the right activities being accomplished in the right way by the right persons at the right time. Such an environment will provide the appropriate authority and necessary resources, including trained staff, suitable accommodation, necessary equipment and materials and adequate funding.

Establishing a positive environment for records management is largely dependent on the actions of people outside the field of records management itself. In the public sector, these include senior government officials, politicians and legislators. In the private sector, senior corporate officers, business people and consultants are key players. However, it is possible for the records manager and archivist to make a significant contribution to the review and restructuring process, particularly if they are enthusiastic, well prepared and persistent.

REVIEWING AND REVISING RECORDS LEGISLATION

The first area to be reviewed and revised in the public sector is the archives-related legislation. (In the private sector, policies and directives would be examined; the discussion below focuses on the public sector environment.)

The basis of all records management authority is comprehensive and up-to-date legislation. Records legislation must ensure complete protection for all government and para-statal records and give the archival administration wide powers for securing and protecting records. The following points are particularly important when reviewing existing legislation or drafting a new law. In drafting new legislation, it is necessary also to review and revise any existing legislation affecting the care of records and information. While these points apply most directly to national governments, the ideas will be equally relevant to lower levels of government (and potentially also to the private sector).

A comprehensive records law should provide for

- the establishment of a records and archives institution with jurisdiction over records generated in the government service and responsibility for those records throughout their life cycle

- the establishment, within the records and archives institution, of the archival agency as a public institution, responsible not only for records generated in the government service but also for any other para-statal or private records of national or regional importance

- a public right of access to the holdings of the archival institution, including policies on the regular opening of government records under clear conditions and a workable procedure for appraisal and declassification

- protection for the rights of individuals and organisations that may have provided information held in records, under terms of confidentiality

- provision for public scrutiny of the programme of the records and archives institution and its success in achieving its targets.

> *A comprehensive records law should ensure the care of records throughout their life, to serve government and benefit the public.*

Within the records law itself, the following areas should be clearly delineated to ensure that the legislation is comprehensive and usable:

- definitions, responsibility and authority

- the life-cycle concept of records and the continuum concept of records care

- care of local government records and non-governmental records

- identification of places of deposit and provisions for public access

- financial management and related legal provisions.

These elements are detailed below.

Key Definitions

Any records legislation must define precisely all relevant terminology, including 'records', 'public records', 'archives' and 'National Archives'. The definitions should ensure that wide protection is offered to records

- in all media and formats

- created or received at all levels of government

- from all agencies of the executive, judiciary and legislature

- from regional and other local government organisations, para-statal institutions and private sources.

To ensure the law is interpreted correctly, it should include the definitions of technical terms in accordance with standard international terminology (such as the ICA's *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*). The three phases of the life cycle of records — 'current records', 'semi-current records' and 'archives' — should also be defined, as should any other terms subject to misinterpretation, such as 'retention schedule' or 'records centre'.

Responsibility for Records

In many countries, the existing national archival institution is regarded primarily as a cultural institution and is responsible to the Minister of Culture or equivalent. However, the centrality and significance of public records care to sound administration throughout government, and the security implications of that work, make it imperative that ultimate responsibility should rest with the highest authority.

Ideally, the records and archives institution should be made responsible specifically to whomever plays the central governing role within the country, such as the president or prime minister. If this is not possible, the most appropriate minister should be responsible, such as the minister responsible for the civil service in that jurisdiction.

> *Ideally, the records and archives institution should report to a central agency of government, such as the president, prime minister or minister responsible for civil service.*

The law should provide for the appointment of a director of the records and archives institution in accordance with the general legislation and other rules regulating appointments to the civil service. The law should also establish his or her responsibility for implementing general records policies, for the day-to-day management of the records and archives institution and for other matters specified elsewhere in the legislation.

As well, the director should be responsible for safeguarding and providing access to all public records selected for preservation ('archives') other than those still held in offices or other places of deposit as identified in the legislation.

The law should allow for the establishment of a records class (or cadre) within the civil service. It should have its own scheme of service (to be agreed with the Public Service Commission or its equivalent); responsibility for its management should be assigned to the director (in consultation with other appropriate bodies and officials). The administrative importance of records work makes it essential that the records class should incorporate not only the staff of the headquarters of the records and archives institution and of the archival agency but also registry staff throughout the government. This systematic classification will ensure the development of a uniform system of care for records throughout their life cycle.

It would be extremely useful to establish an advisory committee on records care. Its purpose would be to advise the president or responsible minister on public records matters generally; establish a general policy for the management of public records; advise and support the director in his or her work; and play a role in the issue of retention schedules and the appointment of places of deposit.

Life-cycle and Continuum Concepts

The records legislation must acknowledge that records follow a life cycle and that their care should follow a continuum. There should be continuous appraisal and appropriate disposal of all the records of an organisation. The law should establish this framework, to effect improvements in registry and records work in public offices. It must set rules for the orderly and timely transfer of semi-current records of continuing value to a records centre and of records of permanent value to an archival repository. This framework is crucial to the success of the whole records management reform initiative.

Care of Local Government Records

Where appropriate, the provisions of the law should also include the records of regions and districts (or their equivalents) by extending the responsibilities for public records of heads of national public offices to heads of local public offices and by establishing a structure of branch offices for the records and archives institution, including provision for local records centres and archival repositories.

In counties operating under a federal system of government, there may be parallel provincial or regional records and archives systems, independent of the national systems but relying on the national archives for professional leadership and guidance. National and regional acts and regulations should address these inter-relationships.

Care of Non-governmental Records

The law should identify the government's responsibility for the acquisition and care of non-governmental records. This responsibility may be extensive, with the archival institution serving as the country's key repository for private records of national significance. On the other hand, this responsibility may be less comprehensive if there are other institutions within the country better equipped to acquire and preserve private records. Such other institutions may include the country's national library, university libraries and special collections or other national or regional museum and archives repositories.

Regardless of whether the archival agency takes responsibility for the acquisition and preservation of private records — whether complete or partial — the law should also allow for and encourage communication and co-operation between the archival institution and other national and international archival agencies and associations to preserve a comprehensive body of private records of national, regional and local significance.

Identification of Places of Deposit

Where appropriate, the law should provide for the appointment of places of deposit outside the control of the director of the records and archives institution, subject to certain conditions and to inspection by the director. Such appointments would be made primarily in the para-statal sector, to ensure the preservation of those quasi-governmental records not directly under the management of the records and archives institution.

Public Access to and Admissibility of Records

Access regulations and controls (such as immediate access to records or the imposition of a rules limiting access for a certain time) need to be defined and described.

Whenever possible, a country should strive to reduce the period during which records are restricted, especially to make sure access rules are in accord with any freedom of information or privacy legislation. Extended closure of records should be limited to specified categories of records, such as those

- relating to national security

- relating to the maintenance of public order or safeguarding revenues

- containing third-party information received in confidence

- relating to the private affairs of living individuals.

Public records to which members of the public had access before transfer to the archival institution or to a place of deposit should continue to be open to public inspection irrespective of their age.

At the same time, the admissibility of records as evidence in a court of law needs to be addressed in the records law or related legislation. In particular, provision needs to be made for the inviolability of government records and for the legal admissibility of records in non-traditional formats, including microform and electronic formats. This is often covered by legislation relating to rules of evidence; it is important that the archival facility confirm that adequate provision is made somewhere in the government's legislation.

Financial Management

The legislation should establish the financial rules under which the records and archives institution will operate. The precise content and terminology will vary in accordance with the rules and conventions operating within each country. These rules include the fixing of fees for the provision of services, such as supplying photocopies.

Related Legal Provisions

The law should also address the following related concerns.

If there are no equivalent provisions in existing copyright legislation, the law should establish various provisions in respect of copyright in records held in the archival institution. These provisions should permit the director to make records available for inspection and to provide copies of them without breach of any private copyrights that may subsist in them and also confirm that the director's consent must be obtained before anyone publishes facsimiles, transcripts or translations of public records in which copyright belongs to the state.

If the archival institution is also the country's national library or legal deposit library, appropriate provision for the continuance or reassignment of this function should be restated in the legislation. Similarly, the law should confirm the obligation to deposit published or unpublished material in the institution.

If there is no existing legislation that protects the export of materials constituting the national cultural heritage, or if such legislation does not protect public records and other historical documents, appropriate provision should be made in the records law. This provision could also include the basic framework on which a national register of private archives might be established, if the archival institution is not a primary repository for such records. The law may also include penalties for wilful mutilation or destruction of public records.

REVIEWING AND REVISING NATIONAL POLICIES

Once the legal and legislative issues relating to records care have been considered, it is next necessary to examine the policies affected by and affecting records management.

Policies are basic guidelines that help government determine the overall course of action the government will take to ensure that the goals and objectives of an IRM programme are achieved. Policies provide more detailed guidelines than can be included in legislation, but they must relate directly to legislative guidelines.

> *Policies should be designed to ensure that the goals and objectives of an IRM programme are achieved.*

The issues to be addressed and the solutions chosen will naturally vary from nation to nation and, within national governments, from one organisation or agency to another.

The nature of the policies developed will depend on the level and nature of use of the government's records and the degree to which it recognises information as a strategic asset. As well, policies will be affected by the nature of available information and communications technologies.

Policies should allow the records and archives institution to do the following.

- Develop a programme for the co-ordination of information management and information technology programmes, ensuring compatibility across government between data and records and the technologies used to create and manage them.

- Create mechanisms for the care of

    information
    records in all media, including electronic records
    archival records.

- Determine centralised versus decentralised approaches to the physical management of information, records and archives.

- Establish the organisational accountability of government agencies for the management of information, records and archives.

- Define the roles of and relationships between
    - action officers
    - information managers
    - records managers
    - archivists
    - information technology managers.

- Establish priorities for the development and expansion of information systems and information technologies.

- Establish mechanisms for planning and budgeting for information management activities.

- Ensure appropriate staffing and training for personnel.

- Ensure appropriate resources for information management.

- Protect staff against physical dangers or health risks associated with their work.

For example, a nation's records legislation may require that public records must be preserved in order to be legally admissible as evidence in a court of law. A policy may be developed to ensure that all government departments recognise the role of the records and archives institution in the protection of records as evidence.

If a government department then wishes to microfilm records or replace them with electronic digitised images, for instance, it must do so in consultation with the records and archives institution, to ensure that the act of microfilming or digitising records does not affect the legal admissibility of the records.

Policy documents should be formally approved by the highest authorities and publicised or made available as widely as necessary to ensure that all people involved with information or records management are aware of the issues and actions in question.

Activity 18

What kind of policies does your organisation have relating to records and archives management? Write a brief description of the policies in each area, then write down two or three suggestions you would make to improve policies in each area. In particular, determine if your government has national policies about

   the coordination of information management

   the care of electronic records

   centralised versus decentralised records care

   the roles of and relationships between records managers and archivists.

ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND STRUCTURES

Once legislation is in place and policies have been developed, the organisational structures and more specific policies required to conform to those legislative and larger policy changes must be considered.

Just as national policies form the basis for national governmental action, organisational policies help the agencies and departments of government to fulfil the goals and objectives of an IRM programme. And just as national issues will vary from country to country, organisational issues will vary across government departments. Organisational policies should be established to do the following.

- Determine the placement of the records and archives institution.
- Determine the placement of the archival institution.
- Organise systems for the effective and efficient delivery of information and records management services.
- Ensure appropriate linkages between the creation and management of information and the execution of the agency's functions.
- Establish information management standards.
- Identify those information systems and information technologies that require improvement or restructuring.
- Create and maintain inventories of information resources, including records.
- Create and maintain inventories of available information technologies.
- Establish standards for the use of information technologies, including computers and communications systems.
- Establish systems to ensure the security and physical protection of information and records.
- Develop systems for the sustainability of the IRM programme.

In the example above about microfilming or digitising public records, the national policy might require that government departments consult with the records and archives institution before filming any records. An organisational policy would then be developed within each government department to manage the actual process of microfilming materials. The organisational policy may dictate the type of film to be used, the size of the copied images, the number of copies of each film to be made and how they will be stored and protected.

The organisational policy provides specific policy information and is usually accompanied by procedural information, explaining the specific steps involved in executing the process in question. The three documents – the national policy, organisational policy and procedural information – work together to guide the direction of the government with regard to records care.

The Organisational Placement and Structure of the Archival Institution

Information is the cornerstone of effective government operations and administration, and the placement of the records and archives institution should reflect its central role. The archival institution should be recognised as a core component of this centrally managed records and archives institution.

> *The archival institution is the place to which all government records with continuing research value will come and be used.*

In many countries — perhaps in most — the archival institution has also a role as the repository of valuable private records, that have originated outside government service but are of interest to the nation. These too are exploited in research or reference for the benefit of the nation and of the public interest. Similarly, regional and local archival agencies also acquire private records relevant to their jurisdictions.

The Placement of the Departmental Records Management Units

Within each agency or department of a government (or corporation), such as personnel, finance, transportation or education, there will be a records management unit. The head of this unit should have equivalent rank to the heads of other branches within that division, with clear lines of communication to the head of the division and the head of the agency. Ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of records work will then rest with the head of the agency. Figure 10 illustrates the best location for a records management unit.

When an agency operates an integrated information strategy, encompassing not only records but also internally and externally generated electronic data, library materials and other information sources, the respective professional branches should constitute a sub-division of the central management division. The head of that sub-division (the information manager) may be drawn from any of the professional specialities represented but that should not imply the primacy of any one of those specialities.

Activity 19

Where is your archival institution located within the administration of your government or organisation? Where is the function of records management placed? Describe how you might change the organisational structure to support an integrated records and archives management programme. What steps would be required? Who would need to be involved in such a restructuring process?
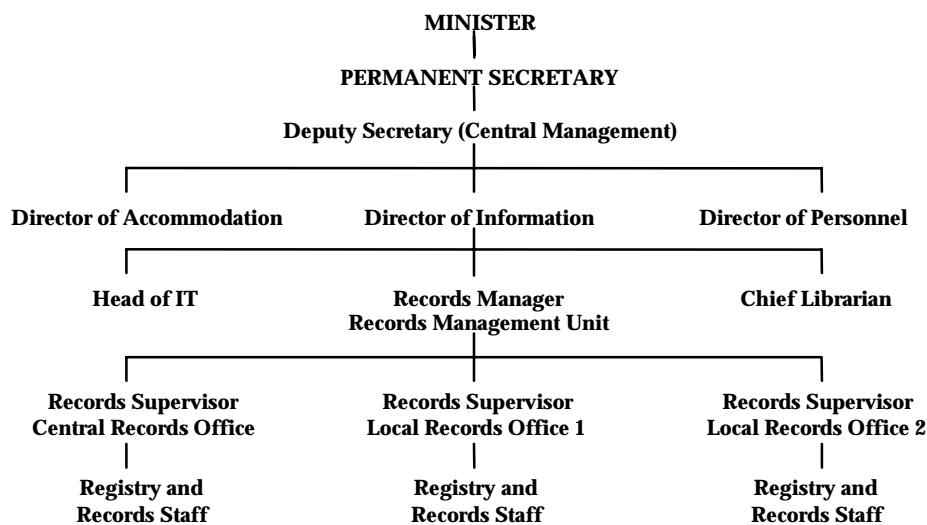

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                              MINISTER
                                 |
                        PERMANENT SECRETARY
                                 |
                    Deputy Secretary (Central Management)
        ┌────────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
Director of Accommodation    Director of Information    Director of Personnel
        │                        │                        │
    Head of IT              Records Manager           Chief Librarian
                         Records Management Unit
        ┌────────────────────────┼────────────────────────┐
Records Supervisor        Records Supervisor        Records Supervisor
Central Records Office    Local Records Office 1    Local Records Office 2
        │                        │                        │
  Registry and             Registry and             Registry and
  Records Staff            Records Staff            Records Staff
```

Figure 10: Location of the Records Management Unit within an Agency

DETERMINING RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Considering all of the issues discussed above will reveal the resources required to restructure and manage the organisation's records system.

> *Resources such as staff, accommodation, equipment and finances are essential to the success of an integrated records management programme.*

Staffing

The quality of any records management programme is directly related to the quality of the staff who operate it. Records work must be seen as a worthwhile career for those who are well educated, intelligent and industrious, not as the posting of last resort for those who are unqualified, incompetent and idle.

When planning a restructured records and archives institution, it is necessary to consider the number of staff needed, the tasks they will undertake, their particular qualifications and the requirements for their promotion through the civil service.

The director of the records and archives institution is ultimately responsible for ensuring all staff are adequately trained for their work. He or she must see that staff receive clear instructions and guidelines in the form of directives, manuals and handbooks.

Accommodation

Adequate accommodation is essential to the proper functioning of the records service. Three particular types of accommodation are required. These are

- records offices for the storage and use of current records

- records centres for the storage and retrieval of semi-current records

- archival repositories for the preservation and use of archival records.

Records offices must be located conveniently for the action officers whom they serve. They should be kept separate from other administrative units, such as the typing pool. They should be large enough to house the current files for which they are responsible and the records office staff who handle them. The accommodation must be secure and well maintained, and it must be of strong construction so that it can bear the weight of the files.

Records centres serve as intermediate storage facilities: they receive and administer all records, in whatever format, that are retired from current records systems; provide a reference service based upon the records; and dispose of records in accordance with disposal schedules and plans.

Records centres are temporary or intermediate storage facilities, in the sense that they hold records between the time they leave the records office and the time they are sent to the archival institution or destroyed. The records centre is a high-density, low-cost storage area, which must be equipped with a system for retrieving and consulting the records held. The records centre should be safe, secure, clean, efficient and economical.

Archival repositories must provide a controlled physical environment for the archives held within them. Environmental conditions must always be within acceptable limits, created by the use of adequate insulation and building materials in the construction of the facility. Where it is not possible to have a purpose-built repository, it is necessary either to provide an artificial environment by using air conditioning or to maximise the beneficial effects that can be obtained from natural means of ventilation.

The archival repository will provide solid shelving for the storage of archives and sufficient space for storage, retrieval, reference and administrative work. It will have environmental monitors, policies and procedures for the secure storage of materials and a programme for the regular cleaning of shelves, storage areas and work spaces. The archives should be protected as much as possible from insects, damp, mould, vermin and animals as well as from damage, theft and vandalism.

Archival repositories must allow room for expansion over time, because they will always continue to acquire records, even with the implementation of disposal schedules to ensure that unwanted records are destroyed before they reach the repository.

Equipment and Materials

Sufficient and appropriate equipment and materials should be provided for the handling, storage and preservation of records throughout their life cycle. These include

- file folders

- boxes

- shelving

- computer equipment and software programs

- office furniture.

One of the benefits of an integrated records management programme is that it encourages the efficient use of equipment and supplies, which reduces both costs and waste. When items such as file folders can be used for current and semi-current records and archives, for example, the savings can be used for other records activities.

Managing Financial Resources

A prerequisite of all the above resources is adequate funding. It is imperative that provision be made in the annual estimates of capital and running costs for sufficient funds to enable the records and archives institution and its departmental units to perform their functions properly. Ideally, each records management unit in an agency should have its own budget or, at least, an adequate allowance within the department of which it forms a part. Similarly, the archival institution should be able to manage its own budget.

Within government agencies (and businesses as well), financial resources should be managed prudently and in accordance with established priorities. Value for money should be achieved through a plan for expenditure on staff, accommodation, equipment and materials that matches the requirements for the delivery of an efficient and economical records management programme.

Within the archival facility, it should be recognised that basic services should be provided free of charge to all users. Income generation from peripheral or non-essential services should not compromise this central principle. But, like all other cultural institutions, the archival institution has a duty to maximise the generation of income from its programmes and activities, provided that doing so supports and does not interfere with its work towards the achievement of its stated mission.

> *Income generation is useful if it supports agreed goals and does not detract from the central principle of access to information.*

Income generation is good only if it furthers programmes directed towards the achievement of agreed aims. It is not appropriate for income generation to be regarded as an end in itself.

Activities that can legitimately be regarded as suitable for income generation include

- the provision of research services on behalf of the public

- the publication of texts of primary sources or facsimiles of attractive documents

- participating in marketing and publicity programmes

- the provision of specialist research under contract.

Activity 20

Describe or draw a floor plan of the archival institution, records centre or records office in your organisation, depending on where you presently work. (If you are not working in any of these offices, contact an appropriate archival institution, records centre or records office and use that as an example.) Is there adequate space for all necessary activities? What types of equipment are available? Is there adequate equipment?

Next, describe briefly at least three changes to the accommodation you would suggest in order to improve records care. Then suggest at least three type of equipment you might wish to acquire to enhance the work of the organisation. How might you fund the accommodation changes or the purchase of additional equipment?

DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC PLAN

Once the national and organisational policy requirements have been considered and the available resources assessed, it is necessary to restructure existing systems and plan for current and future activities. The best mechanism for implementing change is to create a strategic plan.

A strategic plan identifies the goals and objectives of the organisation and determines the best mechanisms for achieving those goals. Whatever the existing nature of the organisation, a strategic plan helps move the organisation toward its short- and long-term aims. It puts into action the information gleaned from the review of existing systems.

> ***Strategic planning:*** The process of identifying an organisation's mission, aims and objectives, determining its needs, capabilities and resources, and then developing strategies to achieve those goals.

This brief overview of the strategic planning process is intended to show how it can be a valuable tool in restructuring records services in a government. However, it does not offer a complete discussion of the process of strategic planning or strategic management; see the appropriate module in this study programme for more guidance.

The key steps in developing and implementing a strategic plan include

- identifying the organisation's mission, goals and objectives

- determining opportunities and threats in the external environment

- determining the organisation's needs, capabilities and resources

- determining the organisation's goals and objectives within the time frame provided.

Strategic plans are intended to be developed, executed and evaluated according to a specific time frame, be it two years, five years, longer or shorter. They are not intended to be permanent documents; they only work effectively if they are considered action documents, to be updated and extended regularly. Further, they are not business plans, which are detailed, short-term (one year) applications of the strategic plan.

> *Strategic plans are not intended to be permanent documents but should keep being revised as circumstances change;*

A sample strategic plan for a records and archives institution follows. This strategic plan could serve as the basis for changing the organisational placement and focus of the archival institution; it would be used in conjunction with other planning tools needed to establish the records and archives institution, such as revised legislation, policy statements and procedural documents.

Activity 21

The fictitious strategic plan includes two specific objectives, as follows.

1. Train two professional staff members per year for four years in records and archives management.

2. Develop a plan to expand the professional resources and library of archival and records management literature to support training.

Write a proposal for how you would accomplish these objectives. What resources would you need? Where would you begin? How would you evaluate your work?

Republic of Erewhon

Records and Archives Institution Strategic Plan, 1998–2002

Mission Statement

The Records and Archives Institution of the Republic of Erewhon endeavours to ensure the efficient and economical management of the records of the government of Erewhon throughout their life cycle and the preservation of those public records of archival value for current and future use by the government and citizens of Erewhon and others.

Environmental Analysis

The National Archives of Erewhon was established in 1959, and it has served as the nation's repository for archival records of the government since that time. In 1961 the University of Erewhon established a Special Collections Division, which has actively acquired private records relating to the history of the Republic of Erewhon both before and after independence.

In 1978 the government established the National Library of Erewhon, and the National Archives transferred its collection of publications to the National Library at that time. Since then the National Archives has been responsible for public records, with a small archival reference library for staff use.

In 1996 the government revised records legislation establishing a National Records and Archives Institution, encompassing comprehensive records management services and management of the National Archives of Erewhon.

The primary users of the National and Archives Institution and the National Archives of Erewhon are government officials, academic researchers, citizens conducting local, family or community research, and university students and school children for projects.

Civil Service Reform

As part of the implementation of civil service reforms, the National Records and Archives Institution has undertaken to restructure existing records services within government. This is a requirement of donor aid and time limits have been established.

Assessment of Resources

At present, the National Records and Archives Institution has the following resources.

Staff

- 20 full-time professional staff (6 with diplomas in records management, 4 with masters in archival studies
- 25 full-time support staff.

Buildings

- one central records repository and reference area, in a separate building near Government House
- three offsite storage areas for semi-current and archival records, none with environmental controls or monitors.

Equipment and supplies

- recently acquired microfilming equipment, to international standards
- three trucks and two cars
- no computer resources.

Financial resources

- sufficient budget to maintain existing operations but not to provide additional services, training or expansion.

Existing Holdings

The National Records and Archives Institution has custody of both semi-current and archival records and administrative responsibility for current records. Current holdings include:

• 5000 linear metres of semi-current records, 1000 of which are identified and accessible

• 500 linear metres of archival records, 300 of which are arranged, described and accessible.

The National Records and Archives Institution also has a small reference library, consisting of approximately 100 publications. These are generally for staff use only.

Goals and Objectives

Given the requirements of the National Records and Archives Institution to restructure government records systems, and given the high and increasing use of archival records by government personnel, the National Records and Archives Institution's goals and objectives for the years 1998–2002 are as follows.

Goals

Following are the overall goals to be achieved in the four years.

1   Retrain key staff in current records management practices, to ensure their ability to execute restructuring and processing appropriately.

2   Restructure records systems in key government departments.

3   Complete the processing of the 4000 unprocessed semi-current records, to ensure accessibility by government and ease of transfer to archives.

Objectives

Specifically, the following steps will be taken to achieve these goals.

1   Train two professional staff members per year for four years in records and archives management.

2   Develop a plan to expand the professional resources and library of archival and records management literature to support training.

3   Restructure the records systems in two government departments per year, beginning with the key policy-making departments.

4   Review and report on the restructuring process monthly to ensure compliance with the restructuring programme.

5   Hold monthly meeting between newly trained staff, restructuring staff and processing staff to ensure conformity of policies and procedures.

6   Assign three professional and five support staff exclusively to clearing the backlog of unprocessed semi-current records.

7   Acquire space within an appropriate government building to undertake the processing work.

8   Replace the shelving systems used for semi-current records storage with stable metal shelving to allow for the return of records once processed.

9   Review all administrative and descriptive systems and improve as required prior to completing the description of processed semi-current records.

10 Prepare a report on the acquisition of computer systems for managing information about holdings.

Resources required: 100,000 Erewhon currency   *Review date:*   Dec. 1999.

Figure 11: Sample Strategic Plan for the 'Republic of Erewhon'

SUMMARY

Lesson 4 has examined the work involved in developing an integrated records management (IRM) programme. The lesson has considered the goals and objectives of such a programme and the need to restructure existing services.

It has outlined the issues involved in reviewing and revising records legislation, in determining national and organisational policies and in determining resource requirements. It has also examined the role of strategic planning in achieving the changes required to create an IRM programme.

Specific topics discussed include

- reviewing existing records services

- reviewing and revising records legislation

- reviewing and revising national policies

- reviewing and revising organisational policies and structures

- the organisational placement and structure of the archival institution

- the placement of the departmental records management units

- determining resource requirements

- developing a strategic plan for the records and archives institution.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of reviewing existing records services?

2. What is the concept of a records and archives institution?

3. Why must records-related legislation be reviewed and revised?

4. Name five areas a comprehensive records law should address.

5. What nine records-related issues should be addressed in any records legislation? For each issue, explain its meaning and describe why its inclusion in records legislation is important to good records care.

6. Why must national policies be reviewed once legal and legislative issues have been considered?

7. Name at least five things good records policies should do.

8. Why must organisational policies and structures be reviewed?

9. Name at least seven things that organisational policies should do to protect records.

10. Where are a records and archives institution and archival facility best placed in the organisational structure?

11. Where should a records management unit be placed within the organisation?

12. What resources are needed for a functioning records and archives institution?

13. How might archival institutions generate income?

14. What is a strategic plan?

15. Why should an organisation develop a strategic plan for its records and archives institution?

16. Describe the four key steps involved in developing a strategic plan.

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activities 17-20

These activities are designed to allow you to compare the information provided in this lesson with the reality of records care in your organisation. You may not be in a position to affect the development or revision of legislation, the establishment of policies, the administrative structure or the physical layout or resources. However, it is valuable to work through these activities in as much detail as possible. The questions will help you start thinking about the current situation in your organisation. Whether or not you are in a position to make any changes yourself, it is extremely valuable not only to learn about principles and concepts but also to apply them to your own situation.

All the issues addressed are discussed in more detail in various modules in this study programme. You are encouraged to take careful notes and to refer back to your work in this introductory module as you proceed with your studies.

Activity 21

Many questions arise when determining how to achieve objectives such as these. For example, if you were developing a training programme, you would need to consider the following.

- Who will do the training?

- Where will the training take place?

- Will students receive credit once the training is completed?

- Who will do staff work when various members are off on training leave?

- How much will the training cost?

If you were to expand your institution's library, you would need to think about

- the cost of publications

- which ones to choose first

- where they will be kept

- who will have access to them

- whether the publications will link directly to the training programme

- how many copies will be needed.

The development of a resource library is discussed in some more detail in Lesson 7.

KEY ACTIVITIES IN RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT

Once the organisation's policies, structures and procedures have been reviewed and, as required, revised, it then becomes possible to consider the actual activities involved in records and archives management. Lesson 5 examines the key activities involved with this work.

As discussed in earlier lessons, the records and archives practices outlined here are based on the idea that records follow a life cycle and that their care should be part of a continuum. Good records management should not be a fragmented approach whereby records are perhaps not cared for until long after they have been created, used and stored – perhaps inadequately – in offices or storage areas. This module provides an overview of the key activities of an integrated records and archives programme.

Each issue discussed below is outlined in more detail in the other modules in this study programme.

For each activity described in this lesson, the following information is provided:

- a definition of the key activity and any related functions or tasks

- a statement of the purpose of the activity

- an outline of the stages involved in executing the activity

- a definition of each stage and a statement of its purpose

- any further discussion necessary to illustrate the activity in question

- cross-references to those modules that provide more detailed information about the activity.

Refer back to Figures 8 and 9 to review the different stages and key activities in records and archives management. The first activity, restructuring existing systems, was discussed in Lesson 4. This lesson discusses subsequent activities involved in maintaining the existing system, specifically

- organising and controlling records in the office environment

- providing physical protection for records

- managing records in records centres

- managing archives.

ORGANISING AND CONTROLLING RECORDS

The first step in managing records throughout their life cycle is to organise and control records at the point of creation and use: as current records. The purpose of managing current records is to ensure efficiency and economy in office operations, to control the creation and use of information and to protect valuable information against loss or damage.

Current records are normally maintained in their office of origin or in an associated records office or registry. They are primarily used by officers of the creating office, but other agencies (such as the Auditor General's Department or its equivalent) may have right of access in certain circumstances. Except in countries where there is freedom of information legislation, current government records are not normally available for public research, although some, such as registers of companies, may be open by law to public inspection.

The steps involved in organising and controlling current records include

- analysing and restructuring records systems

- maintaining records systems

- developing and implementing classification systems

- developing and implementing records schedules

- appraising records and retaining those with continuing value while disposing of non-current records.

Each of these steps is outlined on the following pages.

Analysing and Restructuring Records Systems

The first task in developing a functioning records management programme is learning how the government's records are created and used. This task is ideally completed through what is called 'business systems analysis', also known as 'business process analysis'.

> ***Business systems analysis (BSA):*** An analytical framework that involves analysing organisations as systems or the process of systematically and objectively gathering information about business systems and subjecting that information to formal analysis. This includes identifying broad organisational goals and supporting business areas and processes, and business process definition and decomposition.

Business systems analysis becomes business process re-engineering if the aim is not just to examine the organisation's information systems and processes but also to

reorganise those systems in order to make them operate more efficiently.

> ***Business process re-engineering (BPR):*** The fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical, contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service and speed.

Business systems analysis involves examining a system, reviewing how tasks or functions within that system are executed and considering whether they may be done more efficiently.

> ***System:*** A perceived whole whose elements 'hang together' because they continually affect each other over time and operate toward a common purpose. Systems consist of sub-systems or functions, processes, activities and tasks.

For example, correspondence management can be a system. The system may include several elements, such as

- receiving the incoming correspondence

- directing the correspondence to the appropriate respondent (which may involve communicating with various departments to confirm the best agency to answer the letter)

- preparing the response (which may involve consultation with various people)

- typing or word processing the response (known as the outgoing correspondence)

- sending the outgoing correspondence

- filing the incoming and outgoing correspondence.

In a small organisation, the entire system of correspondence management may be done by one person. However, in a larger organisation, such as a national government, correspondence management can be a complex activity. The six steps identified above may be undertaken by many different people or administrative units. This is shown below.

Step 1:   Receiving incoming correspondence
Responsibility: Mail room

Step 2:   Directing correspondence
Responsibility: Mail room, departmental staff

Step 3:   Preparing a response
Responsibility: Departmental staff, other departments

Step 4:	Typing or word processing the response
Responsibility:	Departmental staff, typing pool

Step 5:	Sending outgoing correspondence
Responsibility:	Departmental staff, mail room

Step 6:	Filing incoming and outgoing correspondence
Responsibility:	Departmental staff, registry staff.

A business systems analysis would examine those six steps and answer the following questions.

- How long does it take for the task to be completed? Is that an adequate amount of time, or does it take too long?

- How many people are involved? Too many people? Not enough?

- How often are there errors, misunderstandings or problems in the execution of the task? Do people think others are responsible for tasks when they are not? Do people undertake work that is not within their own area of responsibility?

- Does the final outgoing correspondence answer the question raised by the incoming letter? How often is a follow-up letter or clarification required?

- Are the documents filed appropriately? Can they be easily found again if needed?

Depending on the answers to these and similar questions, the agency might choose to change its procedures in order to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Business Systems Analysis and Records Management

> *Business systems analysis does not just examine and improve day-to-day office systems; rather, it serves to enhance the entire operations of an organisation, clarifying goals and determining responsibilities.*

Business systems analysis is not just conducted in order to improve day-to-day office systems, such as filing or classification. Business systems analysis should be closely linked to records management. Records systems — how information is created, filed, retrieved and disposed of — can be significantly affected by changes in systems and processes.

The records manager in an organisation can offer significant input to business systems analysis. He or she can comment on the effect of systems re-engineering on records keeping, ensuring that records are managed efficiently and according to legislative or policy requirements.

The records and archives institution may choose to undertake its own systems analysis of the functions of its own agency. For example, the archival institution may revise

processes such as receiving records from creating agencies, documenting transfers, assessing records for conservation requirements or providing reference services.

Conducting a Records Survey

One of the ways to introduce records management care into the process of business systems analysis may be to conduct a survey of the state of current records in government offices. This survey may only examine and document existing records or it may offer recommendations for alterations to systems, depending on the level of involvement of the records manager or archivist.

> ***Records survey*:** The application of the techniques of business systems analysis to the gathering of basic information regarding the quantity, physical form and type, location, physical condition, storage facilities, rate of accumulation, uses and similar data about the records of an organisation.

The objectives of a records survey include

- establishing the provenance of records and their original purpose and arrangement

- identifying those records ready for disposal

- identifying those records that still need to be retained within the organisation

- determining the procedures, costs and facilities required to eliminate the backlog of unneeded records and managing those to be kept.

Maintaining Records Systems

Regardless of whether existing records programmes are simply analysed for information or business systems are re-engineered, a key activity in the management of current records is maintaining the systems. Doing so includes the following steps:

- maintaining control over the documentation used to record the creation, use and disposal of current records, such as registers and logs

- systematically managing the creation and handling of records, such as correspondence, mail and forms

- managing the creation and use of files

- ensuring the regular transfer of records from current to semi-current storage and the destruction of obsolete records.

Following is a chart outlining the requirements of a filing system.

Requirements of a Filing System

- A filing system should support business or organisational requirements.

    It should suit the organisation it serves and support decision making.

    It should matches users' needs.

    It should provide the best, easiest and simplest solution.

    It should be cost effective.

    It should match resources, with adequate equipment, funds or staff.

    It should not be dependent on outside resources for operational requirements.

- A filing system should be easy to understand, use and maintain.

    It should be based on logic or common sense.

    It should be understood by operators (records staff) and users.

    It should be independent of human memory.

    It should use simple processes.

    It should inspire confidence in operators and users.

- A filing system should be precise.

    It should minimise doubt about where to file papers.

    It should allow the quick identification and retrieval of files.

- A filing system should be complete and comprehensive.

    It should cover all the files that need to be included.

    It should be capable of including files that may be created in future.

    It should be flexible and allow for expansion, contraction or reorganisation.

- A filing system should be backed up by a procedures manual and training materials.

    It should be clearly and comprehensively documented.

    All procedures should be explained in easy-to-follow steps.

    It should provide master copies of all forms, with completed examples.

    It should be supported by training programmes.

    It should be supported by professional advice or guidance.

- A filing system should be easily automated.

    A filing system should be capable of being adapted to an automated system, such as word processing, computerised indexing, database management or a computerised record-keeping system.

Figure 12: Requirements of a Filing System

Activity 22

Examine the filing practices in your organisation. Ask yourself the following questions:

> Is the filing system precise? In other words, is there only one logical place to file papers or are there several places where papers could be filed?

> Is the filing system based on logical, common-sense structures? For example, is the coding system understandable or could it be improved?

> Does the filing system allow for expansion or is it less flexible?

Developing and Implementing Classification Systems

Once the records created by the organisation have been identified and, if necessary, restructured, the next step is to place them into logical groupings. This is known as classification. Classification is based on the levels of arrangement outlined in Lesson 1. Classification allows the records manager to develop systems for handling the records without examining each file or item.

> *Classification***:** The process of identifying and arranging records and archives in categories according to logically structured conventions, methods and procedural rules represented in a classification system.

> *File classification system:* A predetermined logical scheme for the physical and intellectual arrangement, storage and retrieval of files.

> *File:* An organized physical assembly (usually within a folder) of documents grouped together for current use or in the process of archival arrangement because they relate to the same subject, activity or transaction. *Note:* A file is usually the basic unit within a record series.

Classification organises records into categories, based on the functions and activities the records represent, so that decisions about their organisation, storage, transfer and disposal may be made on a category-wide basis, not file by file or item by item.

There are four main types of classification systems used for the arrangement of series of files within government. These four are not mutually exclusive; they may be used

at different levels within the same system. The preferred system is one based on the functions or activities. The four types are

1. function or activity, reflecting the work of the agency

2. hierarchical, reflecting administrative structures

3. keyword or theme, reflecting functions or subjects within a hierarchy

4. alphabetical.

> *Classification organises records and information so that they are easily retrieved.*

Coding is used to represent any classification system, by replacing file titles with numerical or alphanumerical codes. Figure 13 illustrates an excerpt from a classification and coding scheme.

ADM/P&E/APP	=	Administration: Productivity and Efficiency: Staff Appraisal
ADM/P&E/COM	=	Administration: Productivity and Efficiency: Computerisation
ADM/P&E/EFR	=	Administration: Productivity and Efficiency: Efficiency Reviews
ADM/P&E/ORG	=	Administration: Productivity and Efficiency: Organisation and Methods
ADM/P&S/ELM	=	Administration: Office Procedures and Services: Electronic Mail
ADM/P&S/MES	=	Administration: Office Procedures and Services: Messengers
ADM/P&S/REP	=	Administration: Office Procedures and Services: Reprographics
ADM/P&S/TEL	=	Administration: Office Procedures and Services: Telephones

Figure 13: Classification and Coding Scheme

Developing and Implementing Disposal Schedules

The next step in managing current records is to develop a disposal schedule, sometimes called a retention and disposition schedule or list. A sample schedule is shown in Figure 14.

> ***Disposal schedule:*** The control document recording appraisal decisions and prescribing disposal action. Also known as disposal list, disposition schedule, records schedule, retention schedule, retention and disposal (or disposition) schedule or transfer schedule.
>
> ***Retention period:*** The length of time, as provided for by legislation, regulation or administrative procedure or based upon an estimate of the frequency of continuing use, that records should be retained in an office or records centre before they are transferred to an archival institution or otherwise disposed of.
>
> ***Disposal date:*** The date on which actions specified in a disposal schedule should be initiated.
>
> ***Destruction:*** The disposal of documents of no further value by incineration, maceration, pulping, shredding or another secure method.

Once records have been classified and scheduled, their care should become a matter of routine. Procedures should then be developed for managing the records in the office, transferring them out or destroying them on the disposal date and receiving records in the records centre or archival repository.

> *Once records have been classified and scheduled, their care should become a matter of routine.*

> *For more information on current records care, see* Organising and Controlling Current Records *and* Analysing Business Systems. *See also the associated manuals,* Managing Current Records: A Procedures Manual *and* Restructuring Current Records Systems: A Procedures Manual.

CLASSES OF DOCUMENTS		PERIOD AFTER WHICH DOCUMENTS MAY BE DESTROYED
2 – Finance		*(FY = Fiscal Year)*
1. Public Expenditure Surveys including Departmental Reports		FY + 9 years
2.Public Expenditure Survey Committee papers		FY + 4 years
3. Supply Estimates documentation		FY + 9 years
4. Appropriation Accounts documentation		FY + 9 years
5. Running Tally forms		FY + 1 year
6. APEX documentation		FY + 2 years
7. Accounts Ledgers		
– Purchase Ledger 1: paper records		FY + 1 year
tape records		FY + 6 years
– Purchase Ledger 2: paper records		FY + 1 year
tape records		FY + 6 years
– Purchase Ledger (prior year): paper records		FY + 1 year
tape records		FY + 6 years
– Sales Ledgers: paper records		FY + 1 year
tape records		FY + 2 years
– Journal Transfer documentation		FY + 2 years
8. Payments vouchers		FY + 6 years
9. Cash Account vouchers		FY + 2 years
10. VAT returns		FY + 6 months
11. Provisional Payments List		FY + 6 months
12. Revoked Payable Orders		FY + 6 months
13. Bank Statements	FIN (B) 7	FY + 6 months
	FIN (B) 13	FY + 2 years
	L 42	FY + 2 years
14. Lodgement Records	J 644	FY + 6 months
	Fee receipts tally rolls	FY + 6 months
1. Refund of overpaid fees including Forms 105A:		
	batches of input documents	FY + 2 years
	all other records:	FY + 6 years
16. Receivable Order documentation		FY + 2 years

Figure 14: Sample Records Retention and Disposal Schedule

Source: *Public Record Office, UK.* PRO Manual of Records Administration, *annex to s. 3.2.*

APPRAISING AND DISPOSING OF RECORDS

As systems are established for the management of current records, the archivist and records manager must next consider how to determine which records should be retained for their ongoing value and which may be destroyed as obsolete. This is the task of appraisal.

Appraisal for retention or disposal is a key part of a systematic process that ensures that the destruction of records or their transfer for archival preservation takes place at the right time. Appraisal requires the systematic implementation of decisions based on an assessment of the continuing value of the records for administrative, operational or other uses.

Appraisal, retention and disposal are defined as follows.

> ***Appraisal:*** The process of determining the value of records for further use, for whatever purpose, and the length of time for which that value will continue. Also known as evaluation, review or selection.
>
> ***Retention***: The function of preserving and maintaining records for continuing use. This may be done in the agency of origin, in a records centre or in an archival institution.
>
> ***Disposal:*** The actions taken with regard to records as a consequence of their appraisal and the expiration if their retention periods. *Note:* Disposal is not synonymous with destruction, though that may be an option. Also known, especially in North America, as disposition.

Appraisal involves analysing records at the macro level (that is, in their series rather than file by file or item by item) to determine which categories are to be retained for how long and which will be transferred to archival storage and which will be destroyed. Disposal is the outcome of appraisal: records are disposed of (by transfer to records centre or archival repository or by destruction) or they are retained in the office of origin until their administrative or legal value has diminished or altered.

> *Appraisal and disposal must be undertaken with an awareness of the functions the records served and their context in relation to other records.*

The appraisal and disposal of records cannot be undertaken in a piecemeal fashion. Whether appraisal is undertaken as part of a formalised records management programme or as a special exercise to eliminate a backlog of unappraised records, it

must be conducted with an awareness of the functions that the records were intended to serve and of their context in relation to other records.

Appraisal and disposal are distinct but linked activities. They need not be taken in immediate conjunction with one another; indeed, the different actions involved often take place over an extended period. However, appraisal that is not eventually followed by disposal is pointless, and disposal without prior appraisal is injudicious if not unlawful.

To achieve successful appraisal and disposal, managers must

- maintain the principle of *respect des fonds,* which preserves the administrative context of the records and their organic relationship with each other

- ensure that records are controlled in a systematic fashion throughout the life cycle

- use functional analysis to chart the flow of records and information through administration and to determine the nature and value of records

- control records to ensure that duplicate or routine materials are managed separately from originals or more valuable documents, so that there is no need to strip or review individual files.

The purpose of any records or archives management programme is to make sure records are available for use at any stage of the life cycle. Thus, in the process of appraisal, consideration must be given to the records' value for a variety of continuing and potential uses, both internal to the organisation and external, to the wider public and society.

In the practice of appraisal, two general types of value are recognised: primary and secondary. These are defined as follows:

> *Primary value:* The continuing utility of records or archives, by virtue of their contents, for the transaction of the business that gave rise to their creation.

> *Secondary value:* The enduring value that records or archives possess, by virtue of their contents, for purposes other than the transaction of the business for which they were created.

The primary value of records can be further subdivided into three categories.

> *Operational value*: The primary value of records for the continuance of the administration or operations of the creating agency or a successor in function or as evidence thereof. Also known as administrative value. *Note:* the term 'administrative' in this context refers not to 'housekeeping' records but to those records with operational or core value to the organisation; to avoid confusion in these modules, the term 'operational value' is used.

> *Financial (or fiscal) value:* The primary value of records for the continuance of the financial of fiscal business of the creating agency or a successor in function or as evidence thereof (such as for audit).
>
> *Legal value:* The primary value of records for the continuance of the legal business of the creating organisation or a successor in function or the protection of its legal rights or those of its employees or third parties.

The secondary value of records can also be divided into categories.

> *Evidential value:* The secondary value of records or archives in providing information on the origins, structure, functions, procedures and significant transactions of the organisation that created them.

Note that the evidential value does not refer to probative value or legal admissibility of the records but rather to their value as evidence that the organisation existed and carried out functions over time.

> *Informational value:* The secondary value of records or archives for reference and research deriving from the information contained in them and often incidental to their original purpose.

Informational value may be judged by a variety of factors, including the uniqueness of the information, the form of its creation and preservation or the importance of the information to demonstrate functions, activities or practices.

> *Intrinsic value:* The secondary value of *records* or *archives* by reason of their age, historical associations, physical form or features, aesthetic or artistic quality or monetary value.

Disposing of Records

Once records have been classified and scheduled and appraisal guidelines have been established, they may be disposed of. Current records will become semi-current, archival or obsolete. Disposal involves sending records from the office to the records centre or the archival repository or destroying them under secure conditions if they are obsolete.

> *For more information on appraisal, see* Building Records Appraisal Systems.

PROVIDING PHYSICAL PROTECTION FOR RECORDS

Preservation is a crucial element in an Integrated Records Management Programme. If records are not well protected physically throughout their life cycle, they will not survive long enough to serve their administrative and cultural purposes, as evidence and information of present and past activities.

Good physical care of records and archives is critical to their survival.

The good and orderly management of records and archives, especially the efficient management of all records storage areas, is an efficient method of ensuring the survival of the material.

> ***Preservation:*** A term referring to the passive protection of archival material in which no physical or chemical treatment to the item occurs.
>
> ***Conservation:*** The intrusive protection of archival material, by the minimal physical and chemical treatments necessary to resist further deterioration, which will not adversely affect the integrity of the original.

The key steps in providing physical protection for records include

• implementing and maintaining preservation measures

• developing and testing emergency plans to protect records.

Preservation conditions will naturally vary depending on the stage of the record's life cycle. Records in current use will not necessarily be held in climate-controlled environments of the standard required for archives. Semi-current records kept in records centres will be safely stored, but minimal preservation work may be done until the records have been deemed archival.

Archival repositories should be maintained to the highest environmental and physical standards possible in order to protect valuable records. These requirements include

- controlled temperature and humidity

- controlled lighting

- adequate shelving for all records

- adequate storage containers, such as boxes and file folders

- secure access to storage areas to prevent loss or damage to records.

Implementing and Maintaining Preservation Measures

Good management of records storage areas is the first and fundamental requirement for a preservation programme.

If records are not protected from the beginning of the life cycle, it is unlikely any defects can be remedied later.

The best modern archives buildings are purpose-designed and built. They provide a physical environment for the documents held within them by using the principle of thermal inertia: that is, the environmental conditions within them are always within acceptable limits because of the insulation and building materials used.

In successful buildings of this kind, the basics of environmental control occur naturally. The main duty of the archives staff in this situation is to monitor the building to see that no defects develop and that there are no areas that do not conform to the general standard.

If the programme of environmental control is working and the staff are accustomed to looking after the materials they are responsible for, there will be relatively little need for remedial conservation. However, there must be some way of guaranteeing that documents that have suffered damage from damp, mould, insects, vermin or misuse can be restored according to good modern methods.

In archival repositories where paper archives are stored, the ideal is to maintain the following conditions with no rapid changes or significant variations:

- *temperature:* within the range 16 – 20 degrees celsius (60 – 68 fahrenheit)

- *relative humidity:* within the range 55% – 65%.

Temperature and relative humidity outside these ranges, and fluctuations in particular, lead to deterioration of the paper archives.

Management of Special Formats and Media

The records and archives institution is responsible for all records produced by the creating agency. It is therefore likely that it will be responsible for records in special formats: maps or plans; audio tapes and cassettes; still photographs, films and videotapes; and electronic records. Each medium requires specialist treatment in storage and use.

> *Guidelines for the care of materials in various media are included in* Preserving Records.

Activity 24

How are records stored in your organisation? Describe the physical conditions and indicate at least three actions you would recommend to improve the physical protection of records.

Developing and Testing an Emergency Plan

An emergency plan ensures the protection of records in the event of a disaster or emergency, such as a flood, fire or earthquake.

> *Emergency plan:* Policies and procedures developed by an organisation to be used during an emergency or disaster to prevent or minimise damage to an organisation, its people and its resources.

Both creating agencies and the archival institution should develop emergency plans to protect the records or archives in their care. Decentralised or regional offices should have their own plans.

> *Emergency planning and the protection of vital records are essential to the care of records throughout their life cycle.*

As part of emergency planning, the organisation needs to identify vital records: those records essential to the operations of the organisation.

> *Vital records***:** Records considered critical to the ongoing operations of an organisation or the re-establishment of operations after an emergency or disaster. Also known as essential records.

The essential elements of an emergency plan include the following.

- It should be centrally co-ordinated, with one staff member or team responsible for its development.

- It should be approved by the governing authority.

- Sufficient funds should be available to supply the necessary equipment and ensure that staff are paid for time spent out of hours either on practices or on real emergencies.

- The equipment and supplies needed to cope with emergencies should be readily available.

- The plan should identify vital records and include information on how to protect them.

- There should be agreed procedures for dealing with each category of material and each category of disaster.

- There should be an active training programme for all staff.

- The archival institution's plan should protect both archival holdings and its own operational records.

> *For more information on preservation issues, see* Preserving Records *and* Emergency Planning for Records and Archives Services. *See also the associated manual,* Planning for Emergencies: A Procedures Manual.

Activity 25

Does your organisation have a mechanism in place to protect records in an emergency? How recently was the plan developed? Has it ever been tested or revised? Describe the plan and indicate at least two suggestions you would make to improve the plan or its implementation.

If your organisation does not have such a plan, write a brief description of three steps you would take, in priority order, to establish such a plan.

MANAGING RECORDS IN RECORDS CENTRES

The next key step in the management of records throughout their life is the management of semi-current records, which are usually cared for in separate records centres.

When records become semi-current, some of them can be destroyed according to disposal schedules. However, the majority will be transferred from the records offices to a central offsite location where they can be kept securely, used as sources of information and disposed of systematically.

The steps involved in managing records in records centres include

- developing and maintaining offsite facilities

- transferring, storing and retrieving records according to disposal schedules

- disposing of archival or obsolete records.

Developing and Maintaining Records Centre Facilities

Semi-current records are usually managed in a records centre.

> ***Records centre:*** A building or part of a building designed or adapted for the low-cost storage, maintenance and communication of semi-current records pending their ultimate disposal.

The functions of the records centre are to

- receive and administer all records, in whatever format, that are retired from current records systems

- provide a reference service based upon the records

- dispose of all records held in accordance with disposal schedules.

> *A functional records centre is safe, secure, clean, efficient and economical.*

The records centre must be capable of holding all the records that are eligible for it (including records in specialised media) and providing a dependable retrieval service for them.

Activity 26

Does your organisation have a separate records centre? If so, describe the physical conditions of the centre. Is it safe, secure and clean? If your organisation does not have a separate records centre, write a brief description of how semi-current records are presently managed.

Transferring, Storing and Retrieving Records according to Disposal Schedules

The records centre is not the place for permanent retention of records. No records should be transferred to the records centre unless appraisal has taken place and there is a disposal date attached to the records. The appropriate action may be to destroy them, review them or transfer them to the archival institution. These actions are indicated in the disposal schedule, which is the authoritative official record.

Once the records centre receives records, it provides high-density, low-cost storage, retrieving records on the request of creating agencies and providing access to those records. As a rule, records in records centres are not available to the general public.

Disposing of Archival or Obsolete Records

It is the job of the records centre staff to identify and dispose of records ready for destruction or transfer to the archival institution. No records are destroyed without written and specific authority, based upon procedures laid down in the ruling legislation.

In the case of scheduled records, authority for destruction or transfer to the archival institution comes from the disposal schedule. Responsibility for carrying out disposal procedures lies with the records centre staff.

For more information on caring for records in records centres, see Managing Records in Records Centres. *See also the associated manual,* Managing Records Centres: A Procedures Manual.

MANAGING ARCHIVES

The management of archives takes place in the last phase of the records life. Archives management is concerned with the care, custody, description and retrieval of records once they have been transferred to the archival agency. Once records are selected and transferred to the archival repository, they become archives in the formal sense and are covered by specific legislative provisions, policies or guidelines.

The steps involved in managing archives include

* acquiring and receiving archives

* arranging and describing archives according to archival principles and practices

* providing public access to archives.

Acquiring and Receiving Archives

The archival institution should have a plan for acquiring archives from its sponsor agency. It should be able to determine the quantity and nature of materials to be transferred each year so that it can allocate appropriate space and resources to their receipt and management. Archives must be transferred according to disposal schedules.

Preparing archival materials for transfer and accessioning involves a series of procedures, which are performed either by the archives staff or by the records office or records centre staff, as appropriate.

These procedures include

* appraising records according to the appropriate disposal schedule

* cleaning and tidying records to be transferred to archival care

* inserting dummies to replace missing or withheld items

* labelling items with dates and reference numbers

* boxing records

* listing records

* completing an accession form.

Archives must be acquired according to documented procedures, arranged and described following established principles and then made available for public use.

Acquiring Archives from External Sources

The archival institution may also have authority to acquire archives from sources other than its creating agency. The plan for acquiring such materials should be drawn up as part of the overall programmes of the archival institution. The plan should specify what materials are covered, and it should include a time frame for surveying and appraising this material.

Archive legislation often requires a government institution such as a National Archives to seek and acquire privately generated archival materials that are judged to be of value to the nation. Consignments from non-government sources are likely to constitute whole groups or *fonds,* though any particular group may be received in more than one consignment.

The treatment of archives received from non-government bodies is dictated by the provisions of the relevant legislation (or the mission statement of the service) and its associated regulations. The aim of this legislation is to ensure that all archives of value to the nation are preserved together with the official archives and that suitable research facilities are granted to them. It should be remembered that the original creators or owners of this material also have an interest in it and do not necessarily have to relinquish all legal rights over its disposal and use. They should be consulted about its transfer to the archival institution and its treatment thereafter.

While the archives of the creating agency will be identified as part of the records management process, private records will have to be appraised separately for their value and suitability as part of the nation's documentary heritage. It is the task of the National Archives to develop criteria for the appraisal of such materials and to determine when they are suitable for acquisition.

When acquiring materials from external sources, there are two additional phases in the accession process:

- identifying the nature and whereabouts of the materials

- preparing the materials for transfer out of the custody of the creator.

Whether archives are accessioned internally or from external sources, the following conditions must apply to ensure that the appraisal and accessioning processes are managed efficiently.

- There must be good co-ordination between the records office or records centre and the archival institution.

- Appropriate staff at the archival institution must keep constantly in touch with the creation, care and use of records in the organisation as a whole.

- Each accession should have a file in which relevant correspondence and notes on its progress are recorded.

Receiving Archives

> *All transfers of materials to the archival institution must be recorded.*

Receiving archives is known as accessioning.

> *Accession***:** The primary unit of records formally received by an archival institution from a particular source on a particular occasion.

All transfers of materials to the archival institution must be recorded. This is done by completing an accession form (shown in Figure 15).

The most essential parts of this record (the accession forms and the accessions register) should be treated as permanent. As soon as materials arrive at the archival institution, the appropriate staff should follow the steps outlined below.

- Place the archives in a secure temporary storage area.

- Check the materials against the accompanying documentation to ensure the paperwork really does refer to these materials and that all items have been included.

- If there is no accession documentation with the archives, complete one, giving sufficient information to identify the materials, and obtain a signature from a representative of the body sending the materials.

- Check the archives for signs of insect infestation or mould, and notify the preservation department if they need treatment before they come into contact with other, unaffected, accessions.

- Make an entry in the accessions register.

- Acknowledge receipt of the accession, so that the transferring agency has a record of what has happened to the materials.

- Conduct a preliminary arrangement and listing of the archives to provide minimal control prior to arrangement and description.

- Store the archives adequately.

Archives Accession Form

Accession Number (to be completed by archival institution):

Transferring Ministry/Depositor:

Is this a transfer from the records centre?   Yes   ☐   No   ☐

Covering Dates:

Will more items be added to this series?   Yes   ☐   No   ☐

Quantity (number of items or boxes):

Physical Type (files, volumes etc..):

Physical Condition (note any problems):

Can Records be Opened After 30 Years? (specify items to be opened earlier or later)

Further Information (note any items missing or retained, or containing special materials such as photographs, maps, coins and so on)

Proposed for transfer to Archives by

Name: *Date:*

Position (of representative of ministry/depositor/records centre):

Accepted for transfer to Archives by

Name: *Position:*

Signature: *Date:*

Figure 15: Archives Accession Form

Arranging and Describing Archives According to Archival Principles and Practices

Arrangement and description are two integrated practices designed to prepare archival materials physically and intellectually for research use.

> ***Arrangement*:** The whole process of analysing the organisation of sets of archives, whereby their provenance and original order are understood and the archives are set into groups, series and items in an order that preserves and reflects that understanding.
>
> *Description:* The process of capturing, analyzing, organizing, and recording information that serves to identify, manage, locate and explain archives and the contexts and records systems that produced them.

Arrangement of Archives

When arranging archival materials, the archival repository must follow the internationally accepted principle of *respect des fonds*, which encompasses respect for the provenance and original order of archives. When describing archives, the institution aims to provide information about the content and context of archives that will meet the following two objectives.

- *Administrative control* ensures that all series and items are accounted for in the repository and can be found and used.

- *Intellectual control* identifies for users what materials are held, what subjects they deal with, and how they can be found.

Materials received in the archival institution may already be in good order, or they may be a confused mass of individual items. Normally, when consignments of archives are transferred from the records centre or from functioning administrative agencies, the materials are already arranged in series that reflects their original order and use. In other cases, items may have been rescued from unsuitable storage or from private sources.

As soon as possible after receiving materials, the archival repository will place the materials into a chosen order, following the universal principles of archival arrangement.

Before any arrangement is decided on it is essential that the responsible archivists should investigate the archives and their originating agencies thoroughly, including doing background reading, to be sure that they understand the materials and their legislative, administrative and historical background.

Once the origins of the archives have been reviewed, the materials are then sorted into groups and series. These groups and series are intended to (and do usually) reflect the systems used when the records were originally created and kept while in active use.

The terminology and the procedures that follow are in accord with international standards and practice.

Arrangement comes before description, but it is part of the same process. It is usually done by sorting the materials in a suitable workshop area. If the materials have been received in good order, the process should be straightforward. Where the materials have been received in disorder, sorting and arrangement may require some research in order to establish the original system and order.

> *Arrangement and description are two parts of the same process.*

The main levels of arrangement, as described in Lesson 1, are the group, the subgroup, the series and the item.

Description of Archives

As archives are arranged they will also be described. There are various types of descriptive tools that the archival repository may create. One of the most valuable is the archival guide. The guide to holdings consists of a sequence of descriptions of all the series held and links these descriptions to other related groups and series. The guide does not give details of items within a series. The guide is the overall initial finding aid to the contents of the archival institution.

> *Finding aid:* A document, published or unpublished, listing or describing a body of records or archives.

Before describing the groups and series, the guide should outline the administrative history of the organisation that created the records, explain the processes from which the materials resulted and outline the subsequent custodial history of the materials.

Any relevant legislation or policies should be cited, and any administrative and organisational changes should also be mentioned. If further information can be found in other sources, such as published books, articles and theses, these should be mentioned. However, the administrative history is included to help readers understand and interpret the archives; anything not relevant should be excluded.

Another type of finding aid is the list. Once archives have been arranged into groups and series and put into order within them, they should be listed, normally by the item.

Descriptions of groups and series consist mainly of administrative and custodial histories. Lists generally concentrate on describing the content of the records. They describe only the files or items belonging to one series.

The guide and the lists provide the basic finding aids of the archival institution. By using these, most users should be able to identify which records they need to consult.

However, many readers who come to the archival institution in pursuit of a specific enquiry do not know which group or series may contain the information that they seek. To direct these users, and to exploit the archival holdings fully, it may be necessary to construct an index highlighting names, places, dates and subjects occurring in the guide and lists.

> *Guides, lists and indexes are created to provide access to information in archives.*

Archives services that have limited resources may find that providing indexes cannot have a high priority. However, they may also find that users then rely on staff to help them identify relevant information. Indexing may save staff time and allow greater access to the material. A good index will allow users to make quick and accurate searches, thus saving everybody's time. With computer technologies, indexing can become an automatic part of the descriptive process. However, developing a comprehensive index to the finding aids system is a considerable task, regardless of the technology available, and it should be developed as part of a well-planned description strategy.

Developing Standards and Guidelines

Any description or indexing work requires strict control, or its usefulness will be much reduced by inconsistencies. Rules and standards must be enforced at all times. The construction of a set of authority files, to be used by everyone involved with description or indexing, will ensure that standards are maintained.

> *Descriptions should be produced according to standards that ensure their consistency and accuracy.*

Archival descriptions should conform to national and international norms and standards. A key international standard is the *General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G)),* published by the International Council on Archives in 1993. Following are some internal rules and standards that must apply.

Standard spelling and style. The rules should establish specified reference books as authoritative, such as a specific English dictionary or handbook of style and language use.

Alphabetical order. An established system should be followed.

Authority lists of corporate, personal and place names. Specified reference documents may be used, such as government gazettes or gazetteers. Many of the names may be drawn from archivists' analytical work on administrative histories and group descriptions.

A thesaurus of subject terms. The thesaurus will probably have to be built up by archivists in the archival institution on the basis of their experience in description.

Rules for the use of cross-references. Creating these rules will require that decisions be made on the use of preferred terms where words of similar meaning are in question. The rules will be closely linked with the thesaurus.

Providing Public Access to Archives

The archival institution may be sustained by public funds so that archival materials shall be preserved and used by a wide variety of researchers. The next step in managing archives is to ensure they are available for public use, either by members of the government or corporation or by citizens or others wishing to do research.

The reference room of an archival institution is the contact point for anyone who wishes to find out about holdings, by correspondence, by telephone or in person.

The standing and reputation of the archival institution will, to a very great extent, depend on the service that researchers receive. Reference staff should reply to correspondence and telephone enquiries accurately, promptly and politely and make researchers feel welcome.

While satisfying the legitimate needs of the researchers, reference staff should always remember that the safety of the documents remains their paramount duty, and that documents are especially vulnerable when they are in the search room and being handled by inexpert people. They must therefore be prepared to enforce the search room rules even if this means refusing access to certain archives or correcting the behaviour of researchers.

> **Search room:** The area in an archival repository open to users for the consultation of archives and the finding aids that relate to them. Also known as a reading room.

Strict enforcement of the rules and protecting the archives by correct handling deters people from misusing documents and even from potential criminal action. Sloppy enforcement has the opposite effect. It is important therefore that the director of the archival institution has a strict, clear, legally enforceable and consistent policy over the implementation of the rules.

> *The search room should be a controlled environment where users can consult materials in an atmosphere suited to study.*

Professional archival practice around the world is that all users identify themselves when they attend the search room and that a permanent record of that identity, and of the materials consulted, is kept. It is a widespread practice to issue tickets or passes to users of archival materials and record who has these passes.

The conduct of everyone in the reference area is controlled by a set of rules agreed by relevant authorities, based upon current legislation, and clearly displayed and explained. The rules are based upon the powers and duties of the staff (and users) as determined by law. The nature and extent of the legal authority the rules possess should be indicated at the head of the rules.

It is essential that archival materials requested by users should be tracked when they are not in their permanent location in the repository. The tracking procedure allows them to be controlled at all times when they are out of place, facilitates their replacement in the correct location and provides a record of which documents have been seen.

It is particularly important that archival materials produced for users be checked back into the direct control of the archives staff and replaced accurately.

Many archival sources are held in the form of microfilm. In general, it is best to have procedures that will allow users to do as much of the work of selecting the material they want and setting up the microfilm themselves as possible. However, there may be circumstances in which the archives staff find it desirable to do this work themselves.

For more information on archives, see Managing Archives. *See also the associated manual,* Managing Archives: A Procedures Manual.

Activity 27

What are the processes used in your organisation to accession, arrange and describe archival materials? If possible, obtain copies of any forms or processing instructions used and compare them against the information in this lesson. Can you identify three or four actions you might take to improve the processes?

SUMMARY

This lesson has provided an overview of the actual activities involved in records and archives management, in order to protect records through their life cycle and offer a continuum of care. These activities include the following steps.

* Organising and controlling current records

    analysing and restructuring records systems

    maintaining records systems

    developing and implementing classification systems

    developing and implementing disposal schedules

    appraising and disposing of records.

* Providing physical protection for records

    implementing and maintaining preservation measures

    developing and testing a business resumption plan to protect vital records.

* Managing records in records centres

    developing and maintaining records centre facilities

    transferring, storing and retrieving records according to disposal schedules

    disposing of archival or obsolete records.

* Managing archives

    acquiring and receiving archives

    arranging and describing archives according to archival principles and practices

    providing public access to archives.

The final lesson in this module will discuss supporting and sustaining an Integrated Records Management (IRM) Programme.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define the following terms

    current records

    business systems re-engineering

    disposal

    retention

    appraisal

    primary valve

    secondary value

    administrative value

    fiscal value

    legal value

    evidential value

    informational value

    intrinsic value

    preservation

    conservation

    arrangement

    description.

2. What is the purpose of managing current records?

3. Where are current records normally maintained?

4. Explain each of the five steps involved with organising and controlling current records. Be as detailed and specific as possible to ensure you understand each step clearly.

5. Explain the main requirements of a filing system.

6. Explain the concept and purpose of appraisal and disposal.

7. What four actions must records and archives managers undertake to achieve successful appraisal and disposal?

8. Why do records need to be protected physically?

9. What environmental and physical standards should be in place to protect valuable records?

10. What is the concept and purpose of an emergency plan?

11. Describe the two stages involved in developing an emergency plan.

12. Describe at least five essential elements of an emergency plan.

13. What is the purpose of a records centre?

14. What steps are involved in managing records in records centres?

15. What is the purpose of transferring records out of the records centre?

16. Explain each of the five steps involved with managing archives. Be as detailed and specific as possible to ensure you understand each step clearly.

17. Why might an archival institution acquire records from an external source?

18. What steps should staff follow when materials arrive in the archival institution?

19. What are two objectives of description?

20. Why are standards and guidelines important to adequate descriptive work?

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activities 22-27

These activities are designed to allow you to compare the information provided in this lesson with the systems used to manage records in your organisation. It is valuable to work through these activities in as much detail as possible. The questions will help you start thinking about the current situation in your organisation. Whether or not you are in a position to make any changes yourself, it is extremely valuable not only to learn about principles and concepts but also to apply them to your own situation.

All the issues addressed are discussed in more detail in various modules in this study programme. You are encouraged to take careful notes and to refer back to your work in this introductory module as you proceed with your studies.

SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING AN INTEGRATED RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Lesson 6 discusses how to support and sustain an Integrated Records Management programme. The steps involved include

- promoting records services to the government and the public

- promoting training and education for records and archives personnel

- developing and expanding the records and archives professions.

An Integrated Records Management programme will only succeed if it is well maintained and periodically reviewed and revised. It is not sufficient to develop new systems or structures without plans to monitor or maintain them.

Equally, it is important to develop systems that will promote the work of the records and archives institution and its professional staff in order to raise the profile of the agency and ensure it receives the support necessary to continue providing its important records and archives management services.

> *Note that these issues are discussed in more detail in other modules in this study programme.*

PROMOTING RECORDS SERVICES

As outlined earlier in this module, a functioning records and archives institution is critical to the management of an organisation's business. Good record keeping is even more essential in the public sector, since records form the cornerstones of the rule of law and are vital to all aspects of the management of the modern state.

Well-managed records are essential to help governments function effectively, develop and implement policies, provide public services and introduce meaningful reform programmes. Records are also critical to ensuring government accountability; records provide the proof that senior managers, auditors and concerned citizens need when

enquiring into the performance of an organisation or an individual. And ultimately, records with permanent value – archives – constitute the collective national memory; they are the essential link in a chain of human history. Each generation's records contribute to the growing archival heritage, providing a continuous trail of evidence over time.

> *Well-managed records are essential to help governments function effectively.*

Consequently, it is critical that an organisation pay close attention to the administration of its records. However, many organisations – and many countries – have not focused sufficient attention on record keeping. In order to ensure records serve governments and the public as they should, it is incumbent on records and archives managers to promote the value of record keeping and encourage the use of records and archives.

The best means of promoting service to the government or corporation that created the records is to remain in close contact with creating offices, assisting them with their records management policies and procedures. Valuable services provided by the records and archives institution may include the following tasks:

- publishing a regular newsletter or bulletin about records management

- holding training and awareness sessions to inform employees of records issues

- ensuring records staff participate in meetings, committees or groups involved with any aspect of information management.

There are various ways the archival institution may promote the use of its resources to the wider public. Activities include

- publishing historical documents or texts

- designing exhibits and displays

- participating in radio or television broadcasts

- offering or participating in public lectures, seminars or conferences about relevant historical or cultural topics.

Before embarking on any particular project, the officer responsible for promotion and outreach should carry out research to discover whether the proposed programme would be appreciated or effective. Once it has been established that it would, detailed research should be carried out on the best way to present the project. For example, if it is a programme aimed at school children, it will need to be presented differently from one aimed at government officials or the general public. It may be decided that expertise from outside the archival institution should be called in.

Detailed costings should be carried out before the archival institution commits to any major project. Outreach projects can provide publicity and revenue, but they can also incur considerable financial loss. As well as including any material costs, calculations

should also calculate the cost of staff time. Exhibitions and publications can absorb a large amount of time and, unless the staff complement is increased, will take staff away from their routine duties. The value of any project will need to be assessed in the light of the detrimental effect it may have on the normal running of the records and archives institution, as well as in the light of expected benefits.

The consequences of any outreach programme also need to be considered. Any large publicity programme could result in a dramatic increase in readers or written enquiries. Such an increase would be in accord with the fundamental mission of the service, but if the archival institution is unable to cope with the demands, the overall effect may be detrimental.

Activity 28

How do records and archives managers in your organisation encourage the use of records and archives and promote the importance of good record keeping? Can you identify three or four activities you might undertake to encourage a greater appreciation for records care?

Promoting Training and Education for Records and Archives Personnel

Like all employers, the organisation is responsible, within civil service or corporate regulations, for recruiting and training staff members. All people appointed to posts involving records care, whether or not they already possess a professional, paraprofessional or specialist qualification, must be trained in the specific policies and procedures of the institution. Such training programmes should be part of the overall management strategy, and they should contain elements to support professional or career development.

A training element should form part of every programme adopted within the organisation.

All new members of staff must be given all necessary information concerning appointment, pay, promotion, leave, pension, discipline and so forth. They should also be given training on

- security

- handling of records

- procedures and systems.

The training should emphasise the uniqueness and importance of the records and archives in their charge.

As well as providing training, it is essential to document all policies and procedures governing the work of records care. All procedures should be set out in a clearly worded procedures manual, available to all affected staff and regularly updated.

Similarly, the design of all forms should be controlled, and copies of forms should be included with the procedures manual, with instructions on how to complete them.

Activity 29

How are records and archives staff in your organisation trained? What procedures or training manuals are available? Can you identify three or four activities you might undertake to improve training opportunities?

Developing and Expanding the Records and Archives Professions

Essential to the success of any Integrated Records Management Programme is the recognition of the professional qualifications and status of the staff responsible for records and archives management.

As outlined in Lesson 1, the care of records as part of a continuum calls for an end to the traditional demarcation between the functions of the records manager (or registrar) and the archivist. Although the management process at any phase of the life cycle of the records may call for specific knowledge and expertise on the part of those who are primarily responsible for the records at that phase, it will also require the input of knowledge and expertise from those who have been or will be primarily responsible for them at other phases of that life cycle.

Hence, while the functions of registrar, records manager, records centre manager and archivist will still exist as separate activities, they should be performed within an integrated structure, with no rigid boundaries that limit professional collaboration and development.

Records and archives management are now recognised as specific disciplines within the field of information management. Those people working with recorded information should be well qualified by virtue of education and training in records and archives care. In the other information management fields, practitioners should be trained in areas such as library science, computer science and image management. Figure 7, shown in Lesson 2, emphasises the relationship of the various disciplines of information management.

The quality of any records management system is directly related to the quality of the staff who operate it. Hence, as mentioned earlier, records work should be seen as a

worthwhile career for those who are well educated, intelligent and industrious, not as the posting of last resort for those who are unqualified, incompetent and idle.

The head of any records and archives institution is ultimately responsible for ensuring that records staff throughout the organisation are adequately trained for the work they are expected to undertake. As well, the head must ensure that staff receive adequate instruction in the tasks they are required to perform, as well as receiving appropriate standards, manuals and guidelines to assist their work. Agency records managers will also be involved in the selection and training of their departmental staff.

The work of all components of the records and archives institution is facilitated if there is a clear organisational structure. This structure must be aligned to the work that is to be done, and it is the means whereby responsibility for the various duties is delegated to members of staff.

All records-related work should be subject to evaluation. It is essential that the investment made in it should be rewarded by effective performance and the provision of an excellent service. Criteria by which performance could be measured should be established by consultation at the planning stage.

All records managers and archivists should have a set of defined duties clearly delegated to them. They should have opportunities to contribute to the day-to-day management and strategic planning of the service. This is usually done by holding regular meetings of all professional and paraprofessional members of staff. These meetings should be formal, with minutes taken of decisions made. This structure helps the agency establish procedures for accountability.

The chief resource of any records and archives institution is its staff. These people are generally well motivated and willing. To translate these assets into achievements, it is necessary to have a management structure that allocates clear tasks to each, with responsibility and a share in the development of policy; it is also necessary to have a reporting and reviewing programme that recognises good work done, and sets out attractive and realistic programmes for the future.

A clear management structure is needed to link the various parts of records care together, to allow for a continuum of care through the records' life cycle. For example, the heads of the records offices, records centres and archival agency will report to the head of the records and archives institution; the people responsible for regional records offices, records centres or archival agencies will report to the heads of the appropriate agencies; the managers within each regional office will report to the head of that regional office; and the rest of the staff will report to the managers, unless there are further established lines of command.

> *A clear management structure is critical to the effective management of the records and archives institution.*

The overall strategy for the archival institution will be drawn up by the head of the records and archives institution with advice from his or her staff. The head of the archival agency and the people responsible for regional archives will interpret this strategy and develop programmes and projects for their own staff.

The posts identified here are offered as a general model that may be adapted to particular cases.

- Head of the records and archives institution: the head of the whole service, including the records offices, records centre and archival agency.

- Heads of the records offices, records centres and archival institutions: the officers responsible for the management and direction of the records offices, records centres or archival agency.

- Head of regional archival agencies or records centre operations: the officer responsible for the management and direction of a particular regional archives or records centre.

- Department heads in the archival agency, such as head of preservation (the officer responsible for all preservation and conservation services); head of reference (the officer responsible for reference and outreach services); head of records services (the officer responsible for supervising and co-ordinating records work with creating agencies).

- Staff in records offices, such as: officers responsible for supervising and co-ordinating records work within the agency and liaising with others within the overall records and archives institution.

The Service Ethic

Regardless of the scope of his or her responsibilities, the records manager or archivist, particularly in the public sector, has an obligation to serve the public. He or she is a public servant, responsible to the citizenry. Good information management is essential in a knowledge-based society. The records manager and the archivist each has a public obligation to conduct his or her job to the best of his or her abilities. Accountability, ethics, stewardship and commitment are essential qualities.

> *As well as being public servants, records and archives staff should be considered professionals.*

Both records managers and archivists belong to professional groups with an international identity and with internationally recognised professional guidelines. Many countries have adopted codes of ethics for archival and records management practice.

These codes are intended to ensure that the professionals involved care for records in the best manner possible to ensure their preservation for current and future use by as wide a range of people as possible.

Following are the key principles found in many codes of ethics adopted by records and archives professionals around the world.

- Records professionals manage, appraise, select, acquire, preserve and make available for use records and archives, ensuring their intellectual integrity and physical protection for the benefit of users both in the present and future.

- Records professionals perform their tasks without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, age or national or ethnic origin.

- Records professionals encourage and promote the greatest possible use of the records in their care, giving due attention to confidentiality, personal privacy, physical preservation and legislative or policy requirements.

- Records professionals carry out their duties according to accepted records and archives principles and practices, to the highest standard of conduct.

- Records professionals contribute to the advancement of records and archives knowledge and skills by sharing their knowledge with other professionals and with the public in general, using their knowledge for the benefit of society as a whole.

Activity 30

Do many records and archives staff belong to national or international records or archives associations? Does your institution adhere to a specific code of ethics or similar document guiding professional practice by record keepers? If so, explain the documents used and the process for following an established code of conduct.

If your organisation does not adhere to such specific codes, can you identify three or four steps you might take to encourage adoption of international professional standards for records and archives work?

SUMMARY

Lesson 6 has discussed the steps involved in supporting and sustaining an IRM programme. These include

- promoting records services to the government and the public

- promoting training and education for records and archives personnel

- developing and expanding the records and archives professions.

Lesson 6 has outlined some of the requirements of the professional class of records and archives managers, and it has discussed key principles that must guide professional records work in order to maintain a public service ethic. These principles include the following.

- Managing, appraising, selecting, acquiring, preserving and making available for use records and archives, ensuring their intellectual integrity and physical protection, for the benefit of users both in the present and in the future.

- Performing tasks without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex, age or national or ethnic origin.

- Encouraging and promoting the greatest possible use of the records in their care, giving due attention to confidentiality, personal privacy, physical preservation and legislative or policy requirements.

- Carrying out duties according to accepted records and archives principles and practices, to the highest standard of conduct.

- Contributing to the advancement of records and archives knowledge and skills by sharing their knowledge with other professionals and with the public in general, using their knowledge for the benefit of society as a whole.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Identify three ways records and archives managers can promote good records care to the sponsor agency.

2. Identify five professional principles that should govern an archivist's or records manager's work with records and archives.

3. Why is good record keeping critical to an organisation?

4. What should a records and archives institution do before embarking on any promotion or outreach project?

5. Why is staff training important to good records care?

6. What is the role of professional associations in the promotion of good record keeping?

7. Explain the importance of a clear management structure for records care.

8. Describe the scope of work of the various positions identified below:

   - head of the records and archives institution

   - heads of the records offices, records centres or archival institution

   - head of regional archival or records centre operations

   - department heads in the archival agency

   - staff in records offices.

9. Describe five key principles found in many codes of ethics adopted by records and archives professionals around the world.

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activity 28

The idea of promoting records and archives work is discussed in various modules in this study programme, including *Managing Archives* and *Strategic Planning for Records and Archives Services.*

Activity 29

Training can include such diverse activities as overseas degree programmes and in-house one-day workshops. It is important to recognise that many different types of training are available and can be valuable; it is not always necessary for people to leave their positions in order to attend graduate schools, for example, in order to study records and archives management. This study programme is one way of providing training to people without requiring them to leave their jobs.

Activity 30

Lesson 7 discusses various resources, including records or archives associations, available to people around the world. It is worth investigating both national and international associations and determining if their codes of conduct and guidelines for professional practice can be adopted within your institution. Such guidelines are extremely helpful in establishing criteria for work and developing objective standards for practice.

WHAT TO DO NEXT?

The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context has outlined the purpose of records and archives management. It has defined the key terminology, theories and principles underpinning records and archives care. This module has provided an introduction to the Management of Public Sector Records Study Programme. Other modules explore records and archives issues in more detail.

ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

This module has introduced key activities in records and archives management. But which tasks should you undertake first? Which are high priority and which are low? Once you understand these principles, concepts and practices, the next step is for you to consider what to do next. As this is the first module in a series, you need to determine the best course of action for you as a student and for you as a representative of your organisation. Should you continue with further reading? Should you attempt to implement any of the recommendations in this module? It is possible to offer some recommendations for action, to help the institution manage its vital records in a planned fashion.

Activity 31

Based on the work you have done for this module, what priorities would you establish for yourself in order to study more about records and archives management and implement various recommendations found in this module? What would you do first? What next? Why?

You might consider the following suggested priorities.

Priority 1: Complete other Modules

This module has only introduced you to key ideas and has only provided an overview of main issues. There is a saying: 'a little knowledge is a dangerous thing!' Be sure to remember that you have only just begin this study programme; it is wise to finish at least the core modules and then review your understanding of the principles and actions outlined before implementing any specific suggestions.

The core modules in the Management of Public Sector Records Study Programme include

* *The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context*

* *Organising and Controlling Current Records*

* *Building Records Appraisal Systems*

* *Managing Records in a Records Centre*

* *Managing Archives*

* *Preserving Records*

* *Emergency Planning for Records and Archives Services.*

Priority 2: Discuss the Topic with Colleagues

Take every opportunity to discuss records and archives management issues with your colleagues, with friends or with others in the field. You can only benefit from reviewing topics with others, even though their opinions might leave you confused from time to time! Everyone will have an opinion on records issues; it is important to consider as many perspectives as possible as you work through this programme.

Priority 3: Read Other Literature

If you have access to other publications on records and archives topics, try to read at least the introductory information. Expose yourself to as much information as possible. Again, bear in mind that you could soon suffer from 'information overload' so be sure to balance your reading of the modules with reading other material. Do not try to read too much other literature before you have completed at least the core modules in the MPSR Programme, so that you have a firm understanding of key principles and practices before studying some of the complexities presented by other authors.

Priority 4: Join Professional Associations

If you can, try to join and participate in the work of various records and archives associations. Is your organisation a member of the International Council on Archives? If so, read the various publications, bulletins and news announcements produced by the ICA to keep up to date on current records and archives issues around the world. You may also be able to join a regional or national archival association or a state or local group if there is one. Such groups can introduce you to new friends and colleagues and allow you to learn more about the subject and participate more in the work of the profession.

GETTING HELP

Many institutions, particularly in countries with limited resources, have little access to resources for archival and records work. However, there are places you can go to get more information or to obtain assistance. Following are names and addresses of some of the major records and archives organisations or agencies around the world; these groups can offer advice and assistance. Note that the organisations listed here are also identified in the *Additional Resources* tool and are included here as an introduction only.

> *See the* Additional Resources *document for information on other organisations and associations involved with records and archives management generally.*

Professional Associations and Organisations

American Society for Information Science (ASIS)

8720 Georgia Avenue, Suite 501
Silver Spring, MD
20910, US
Tel: +1 301 495 0900
Fax: +1 301495 0810
Email: asis@asis.org
Web site: http://www.asis.org/

ASIS brings together diverse streams of knowledge, focusing what might be disparate approaches into novel solutions to common problems. ASIS bridges the gaps not only between disciplines but also between the research that drives and the practices that sustain new developments. ASIS counts among its membership some 4,000 information specialists from such fields as computer science, linguistics, management, librarianship, engineering, law, medicine, chemistry and education; individuals who

share a common interest in improving the ways society stores, retrieves, analyses, manages, archives and disseminates information.

Association of Canadian Archivists

PO Box 2596, Station D
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 5W6
Tel: +1 613 445 4564
Fax: +1 613 445 4565
Email: aca@magmacom.com

Website: http://www.archives.ca/aca/

The Association of Canadian Archivists is the national archival organisation in Canada. The Association publishes a journal and newsletter, organises annual conference and participates in a variety of educational opportunities for archivists in Canada.

Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM)

12 John Street
London WC1N 2EB, UK
Tel: +44 171 831 4101
Fax: +44 171 831 7404

ACARM provides a network of professional information and advice for records managers and archivists in countries of the Commonwealth.

Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM)

1100 Wayne Ave., Suite 1100
Silver Spring, MD 20910-5603 US
Tel (toll free in US): +1 888 839 3165
Tel: +1 301 587 8202
Fax: +1 301 587 2711

or

2 Crown Walk
Winchester Hampshire
SO23 8BB UK
Phone: +44 1962 868333
Fax: +44 1962 868111
Website: www.aiim.org

The Association for Information and Image Management was organised to bring together the users and providers of document and information management technologies, such as document management, knowledge management, workflow and imaging. This organisation has a mail order bookstore that offers publications, standards and tools that apply to every facet of Records Management from hard copy filing to electronic imaging.

The Association for Information Management (ASLIB)

Staple Hall
Stone House Court
London EC3A 7PB UK
Tel: +44 0 20 7903 0000
Fax: +44 0 20 7903 0011
Email: membership@aslib.co.uk
Website: http://www.aslib.co.uk/aslib/

Founded in 1924, ASLIB is a corporate membership organisation with over 2,000 members in some seventy countries. ASLIB actively promotes best practice in the management of information resources, represents its members and lobbies on all aspects of the management of and legislation concerning information at local, national and international levels.

Association of Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA International)

4200 Somerset Dr., Suite 215
Prairie Village, KS
66208-0540 US
Tel: +1 800 422-2762 / +1 913 341 3808
Fax: +1 913 341 3742
Email: hq@arma.org
Website: http://www.arma.org/

The Association of Record Managers and Administrators (ARMA International) is a not-for-profit association of over 10,000 information professionals in the United states, Canada and over 30 other nations. Among other positions, ARMA International members are employed as records and information managers, Managing Information Systems and Automated Data Processing professionals, imaging specialists, archivists, hospital administrators, legal administrators, librarians and educators.

The ARMA website also includes links to other professional associations involved with record keeping and includes an extensive 'bookstore' with a wide range of advice and information, from introductory to expert. Prices for publications vary and there are significant discounts for ARMA members. The bookshop lists are accessible at http://commerce.shreve.net/armahqstorem/

Australian Society of Archivists Inc.

PO Box 83
O'Connor ACT
Australia 2601
Website: http://www.archivenet.gov.au/asa

The Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) is the professional body for archivists in Australia. It was formed in 1975 in response to the growing number of archivists in Australia and to the increasing demand for archival skills. The Society is administered on a national basis by an elected Council, Branches and Special Interest Groups are active in the states and territories.

The Australian Society of Archivists aims to

- promote a professional identity amongst archivists
- promote the keeping care and use of archives and encourage research and development in all areas of archival practice
- establish and maintain standards of archival practice and professional conduct amongst archivists, including standards of archival qualifications and professional training
- encourage the responsible use of archives including cooperating with other organisations and groups with common interests and concerns
- encourage communication and cooperation amongst archivists, their institutions and the users of archives
- publish and disseminate information relevant to the archival profession.

Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM)

Suite 402-1075 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M5S 2B1, Canada
Tel: +1 416 920 3337
Fax: +1 416 920 6574
Email: capam@compuserve.com
Website: http://www.comnet.mt/capam/

The aim of CAPAM is to enhance Commonwealth co-operation in improving managerial competence and achieving organisational excellence in government. CAPAM exchanges experiences on new developments and innovations in management in governments by building networks among elected and senior officials, academics and non-governmental organisations. CAPAM provides rapid access to information on best practices in government administration.

Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)

1755 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036 US
Tel: +1 202 939 4750
Fax: +1 202 939 4765
Website: www.clir.org

The Council on Library and Information Resources is an organisation that fosters collaboration between educational institutions and other non-profit organisations in order to meet the challenges, identify roles and responsibilities and make recommendations relating to the preservation of digital information, covering many types of 'digital objects'. CLIR's six areas of interest are preservation awareness, digital libraries, leadership, economics of information, resources for scholarship and international developments.

European Commission on Preservation and Access (ECPA)

PO Box 19121

1000 GC Amsterdam

The Netherlands

Tel: +31 20 551 08 39

Fax: +31 20 620 49 41

Email: ecpa@bureau.knaw.nl

Website: http://www.knaw.nl/ecpa

The European Commission on Preservation and Access was established in 1994 to 'foster, develop and support in Europe collaboration among libraries, archives and allied organisations, in order to ensure the preservation of the published and documentary record in all formats and to provide enhanced access to the cultural and intellectual heritage.' One of the ECPA's main objectives is to 'collect, record and disseminate specialised information relating to new developments in access and preservation.' The ECPA has an active publications programme and produces catalogues regularly, which can be obtained through the address above.

The Institute of Health Record Information and Management (IHRIM)

115 Willoughby Road

Boston, Lincolnshire

PE21 9HR, UK

IHRIM is the professional association in the United Kingdom for medical records managers, clinical coding managers and medical archivists. IHRIM provides certified training courses and guidance materials, and also issues a quarterly journal.

International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS)

The International Committee of the Blue Shield was established in 1996 by four non-governmental organisations: the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). The International Committee of the Blue Shield aims to advise on the protection of endangered heritage, to facilitate international response to emergencies, to encourage the protection f cultural property, to offer training at the national and regional level to manage and protect against disasters and to consult with other agencies on issues of preservation and protection. As a cooperative programme of several agencies, the ICBS can be contacted through agencies such as the International Council on Archives.

International Council on Archives (ICA)

60, rue des Francs-Bourgeois

75003 Paris, France

Tel: +33 0 1 40 27 63 06

Fax: +33 0 1 42 72 20 65

Email: 100640@compuserve.com

Website: http://www.archives.ca/ICA/

The ICA is the professional organisation for the world archival community, dedicated to the preservation, development and use of the world's archival heritage. The International Council on Archives brings together national archival institutions, professional associations of archivists, regional, local and other archival facilities and individual archivists. The ICA has more than 1,450 members in 170 countries and territories. It is a non-governmental organisation, and it works in close co-operation with inter-governmental organisations like UNESCO and the Council of Europe. It also maintains close links with other non-governmental organisations.

ICA's wide-ranging international activities include

- a general programme of publications and conferences

- a development programme, promoting co-operation within and between regional branches

- a European programme promoting archival co-operation in Europe

- a professional programme carried out by the sections and committees

- a series of special projects, many in conjunction with UNESCO and other international organisations.

The ICA has a full-time Secretariat of five people, based in the Paris headquarters, which undertakes the general administration of the organisation. The professional output of the ICA comes from its network of members and contacts throughout the world who give their time and their professional expertise on a voluntary basis. The ICA publishes a number of valuable works including *Janus, Archivum* and the *ICA Bulletin* as well as proceedings of various conferences and a regularly updated *ICA Directory*. The ICA includes regional branches, sections, committees and project groups involved with a range of records and archives issues. These various groups are listed below.

The International Council on Archives is the professional, international, non-governmental organisation representing the interests of archives and archivists world wide. Is aims are to promote the preservation, development and use of the world's archival heritage. The ICA brings together national archive administrations, professional associations of archivists, regional, local and other archives and individual archivists.

REGIONAL BRANCHES

- ALA: Asociacion latinoamericana de archivos
- ARBICA: Arab Regional Branch
- CARBICA: Caribbean Regional Branch
- CENARBICA: Regional Branch for Central Africa
- EASTICA: East Asian Regional Branch
- ESARBICA: Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch
- PARBICA: Pacific Regional Branch
- SARBICA: Southeast Asian Regional Branch
- SWARBICA: South and West Asian Regional Branch
- WARBICA: West African Regional Branch

SECTIONS

- ICA/SAE: Section for Archival Education and Training
- ICA/SBL: Section of Business and Labour Archives
- ICA/SIO: Section of Archivists of International Organizations
- ICA/SKR: Section of Archives of Churches and Religious Denominations
- ICA/SMA: Section of Municipal Archives
- ICA/SML: Provisional Section on Military Archives
- ICA/SPA: Section of Professional Archival Associations
- ICA/SPP: Section of Archives of Parliaments and Political Parties
- ICA/SUV: Section of University and Research Institution Archives

Instructors in records and archives management are specifically directed to information about the ICA Section on Archival Education and Training (ICA/SAE). This ICA/SAE is involved in records and archives education and training around the world; it hosts a website that includes a bibliography of readings used by teachers of records and archives management courses. The website developers plan to host databases with lists of educators, educational programmes, research and publication projects. For information on the ICA/SAE, see http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~issa/.

COMMITTEES

- Committee on Archival Buildings and Equipment
- Committee on Descriptive Standards
- Committee on Electronic and Other Current Records

- Committee on Information Technology

- Committee on Archival Legal Matters

- Committee on Preservation of Archival Materials

- Committee on Sigillography

PROJECT GROUPS

- Project Group on Terminology

- Project Group on Architectural Records

- Project Group on Audio-Visual Records

- Project Group on Protection of Archives in the Event of Armed Conflict or Other Disasters

- Project Group on Literature and Art Archives.

International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)

Via de San Michele 13
00153 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 585 531
Fax: +39 06 5855 3349
Email: iccrom@iccrom.org
Website: http://www.iccrom.org

ICCROM is an intergovernmental organisation with ninety member states concerned with conserving all types of heritage, whether movable or immovable. ICCROM serves as a clearinghouse for information and a forum for discussion. It seeks to integrate the conservation of cultural heritage by collecting, studying and disseminating information, coordinating research, offering consultancy assistance, providing training opportunities and promoting awareness of cultural heritage issues.

International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID)

FID Secretariat
PO Box 90402 - 2509 LK
The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel.: +31 70 314 0671
Fax: +31 70 314 0667
Email: fid@python.konbib.nl
Website: http://fid.conicyt.cl:8000/

Since 1895 FID Members, representing organisations and individuals in over 90 nations, have promoted best management practice of information as the critical resource for all society.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

Case postale 56
CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 749 01 11
Fax: +44 22 733 34

Website: http://www.iso.ch

The International Standards Organisation (ISO) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies from some 130 countries, one from each country. The ISO promotes the development of standardisation in order to help facilitate the international exchange of goods and services as well as to help develop cooperation in intellectual, scientific, economic and technical activities.

The ISO has established many standards that affect records and archives work, particularly with regard to quality of microfilm, photographic equipment, paper quality and so on. ISO standards are identified by the term 'ISO' and a number, such as ISO 9000, the standard for quality management and quality assurance, or the ISO 14000 series of standards for environmental management. Of particular note is ISO/TC46/SC11: Information and Documentation: Archives and Records Management, which is drawing up an international standard for records management. Details of SC11 secretariat should be in ISO literature at www.iso.ch.

International Records Management Trust (IRMT)

12 John Street
London WC1N 2EB, UK
Tel: +44 20 7831 4101
Fax: +44 20 7831 7404
Email: info@irmt.btinternet.com
Website: http://www.irmt.org

The Trust was established in 1989 in order to support developing country requirements for managing official government records. As technology began to have a rapidly escalating impact on the way records were created, used and stored, it became clear that there was a pressing need for innovative and strategic solutions. The Trust was established to support this need. As a charity dedicated to education, research and practical technical assistance, it set out to undertake a range of project work. Projects evolved and grew in three areas, as summarised below:

- *Country Projects* were introduced to support local officials and professionals in managing official records. This includes defining legal and regulatory frameworks; developing organisational structures, including strengthening the national archives' capacity to regulate the continuum of records management functions and developing and introducing new systems and procedures for managing records and developing professional capacity.

- *Education Projects* were conceived as a vehicle for introducing greater awareness of the importance of records and for developing educational modules and materials which could be shared between English speaking countries. It was intended that where desirable, these materials could be adapted to meet the

requirements of developing countries with different administrative traditions. The aim in all cases was to ensure that the material was in line with global theory and best practice but relevant to local realities where there were severe constraints on funding and a limited technical and institutional infrastructure.

- *Research Projects* were introduced to study the requirements for well-managed records in key areas, such as financial and personnel management, particularly in an environment of rapid technological change. The Trust's research projects have focussed on real problems and the practical solutions required to solve them.

The range and complexity of Trust's programme areas and project work has expanded in parallel with the growth and spread of technological applications and with global development concerns, such as good governance, accountability, human rights, economic reform, transparency and accountability and cultural heritage for sustainable development. Its work has demonstrated repeatedly that neither technology nor global development agendas can be successfully addressed in the absence of effective control of official records. The Trust is therefore committed to providing an expanded level of services and support for developing countries as they make the transition to the electronic age.

Records Management Society (RMS)

Woodside, Coleheath Bottom, Speen
Princes Risborough
Bucks HP27 0SZ, UK
Tel: +44 1494 488599
Fax: +44 1494 488590
Email: bulletin@rms-gb.org.uk
Website: http://www.rms-gb.org.uk

The Records Management Society is open to all those concerned with records and information, regardless of their professional or organisational status or qualifications. Organisations wishing to develop records or information systems and those that provide such services are also welcome. The RMS is developing its own training programmes and extending its range of technical and information publications.

Society of Archivists

40 Northampton Road
London EC1R 0HB, UK
Tel: +44 20 7278 8630
Fax: +44 20 7278 2107
Website: http://www.archives.org.uk

The Society of Archivists is a professional society for archivists, archive conservators and records managers in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It aims to promote the care and preservation of archives, the better administration of record repositories, and to advance the training of its members. Membership, which consists of registered members, members, student members and institutional affiliates, is open to all those involved or qualified in archive administration, conservation and records management or in related areas, as well as full time students. Membership in the society carries

with it a mandatory adhesion to a professional code of conduct.

Society of American Archivists

527 S. Wells Street 5th Floor
Chicago, IL
60607-3922 US
Tel: +1 312 922 0140
Fax: +1 312 347 1452
Email: info@archivists.org
Website: http://www.archivists.org

The Society of American Archivists is the oldest and largest national archival professional association in North America, established in 1936. The Society provides communication services through scholarly journals and newsletters; it also offers continuing education courses and career opportunities, particularly for archivists in the United States.

The website has useful contacts and links and especially an extensive list of publications which can be ordered by mail or electronically.

Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET)

1438 West Peachtree Street NW
Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia
30309-2955, US
Tel: +1 404 892 0943
Website: http://athena.solinet.net/solinet

SOLINET is a non-for-profit library cooperative providing resource sharing for educational, cultural and economic advancement of the southeastern United States and the Caribbean. Founded in 1973, SOLINET has a membership of over 800 libraries of all types, making it the largest regional library network in the United States. SOLINET's Preservation Services division offers information to institutions to help them improve the physical care of their information resources.

United Nations Educational. Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

7 place de Fontenoy
75700 Paris, France
Tel: +33 1 45 68 10 00

Website http://www.unesco.org/webworld

The Division of the General Information Programme (PGI) of publishes RAMP studies on records and archives management issues; some of these studies are available online at the website listed above. The website also contains information about other UNESCO initiatives in information, library and archival issues, including announcements about forthcoming conferences, new activities around the world and information about community and cultural activities in developing countries.

ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS

Many national and state or provincial archives in the metropolitan English-speaking countries have excellent leaflets and publications that can be adapted to smaller or different contexts. Many of the institutions also provide useful information on their websites. This list only highlights some key institutions; note that many of their websites include links to other national or state repositories and related agencies.

Library of Congress

110 First Street, SE
Washington, DC
20540, US
Tel: +1 202 426 5213
Email: lcweb@loc.gov
Website: http://lcweb.loc.gov

The Library of Congress is involved with extensive research into the management and preservation of records and archives. Much information is available online and publications can be ordered.

National Archives of Australia

PO Box 34
Dickson
Canberra, A.C.T. 2602 Australia
Fax: +61 6 257 7564
Website: http://www.naa.gov.au

The National Archives of Australia offers a number of publications free, including information about various archival issues. The NAA also participates in international activities and makes many of its resources available on its website.

National Archives of Canada

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0N3, Canada
Tel: +1 613 996 7430 (Library)
Fax: +1 613 995 6274 (Library)
Website: http://www.archives.ca

The National Archives of Canada is an active partner in international archival projects, including hosting the International Council on Archives website and participating in a range of ICA activities. The National Archives' website includes valuable information about archival policies and procedures, examples of on-line research tools and finding aids and information about exhibitions and publications.

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC
20408, US
Fax: +1 202 208 5248
Website: http://www.nara.gov/

The National Archives and Records Administration is an independent federal agency of the United States government, responsible for preserving the nation's history and managing its federal records. NARA has a wide range of publications available on archives management issues; the website provides details. People can also view NARA's general disposal schedules online through the website.

Public Record Office (PRO)

Kew, Richmond
Surrey TW9 4DU, UK
Tel: +44 208 876 3444
Fax: +44 208 878 8905
Website: http://www.pro.gov/uk

The Public Record Office in the United Kingdom seeks to ensure that public records are preserved for present and future access and to raise awareness of the importance of caring for records and archives.

The PRO conducts a variety of preservation-related activities, including preservation coordination and training, preservation copying, preservation cataloguing, and conservation and restoration work.

State Records Authority of New South Wales

Level 3, 66 Harrington Street
The Rocks
Sidney, NSW 2000
Australia
Tel: +61 2 9237 0200
Fax: +61 2 9237 0142
Email: srecords@records.nsw.gov.au
Website: http://www.records.nsw.gov.au

The State Records Authority of New South Wales was previously known as the Archives Authority of New South Wales. The State Records' website offers valuable information on record keeping, including on-line finding aids to holdings, updates on programmes and services, and online versions of various publications including the *Government Recordkeeping Manual.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are many publications available about records and archives management. The *Additional Resources* tool lists many more publications than are listed here; this bibliography includes key works that might be of value, particularly in your institution's resource centre or library. Some are more easily obtained than others, and some more up-to-date than others. However, older publications also contain valuable information and may be more easily found in libraries in your particular country or region than very new publications that have not yet circulated around the world. Core publications are identified with an asterisk (*).

> *Core publications are also identified in the* Additional Resources *document; refer to that document for information on more general publications on records and archives management.*

Textbooks

The following books on records and archives management are valuable resources.

* Bradsher, JG, ed. *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions.* Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 1991

   Cook, Michael. *Information Management and Archival Data.* London, UK: Library Association Publishing, 1993.

   Cook, Michael. *The Management of Information from Archives*. 2d ed. Aldershot, UK: Gower, 1999.

* Couture, Carol and Jean-Yves Rousseau. *The Life of a Document: A Global Approach to Archives and Records Management.* Montreal, PQ: Vehicule Press, 1982.

   Craig, Barbara, ed. *The Archival Imagination: Essays in Honour of Hugh A. Taylor.* Ottawa, ON: Association of Canadian Archivists, 1992.

* Cox, RJ. *Managing Institutional Archives: Foundational Principles.* New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1992.

* Daniels, Maygene F and Timothy Walch, eds. *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on Archival Theory and Practice.* Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Service, 1984.

Eastwood Terry, ed. *The Archival Fonds: from Theory to Practice.* Ottawa, ON: Bureau of Canadian Archivists, 1992.

* Ellis, Judith, ed. *Keeping Archives.* 2d ed. Port Melbourne, AUS: DW Thorpe in association with the Australian Society of Archivists, 1993.

Jenkinson, Sir Hilary. *A Manual of Archive Administration.* 2d ed (rev). London, UK: Humphries, 1965. (2d ed. first published in 1937).

This publication is long out of print but copies may be available to examine in larger archival institutions.

McKemmish, Sue and Michael Piggott. *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years.* Clayton, Vic, AUS: Ancora Press, 1994.

McKemmish, Sue and Frank Upward. *The Archival Document.* Clayton, Vic, AUS: Ancora Press, 1993.

* Maedke, W, et al. *Information and Records Management.* 3d ed., Encino, CA: Glencoe Publishing, 1989.

Nesmith, Tom, ed. *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press in association with the Association of Canadian Archivists and the Society of American Archivists, 1993.

* Pederson, Ann E and Mark Brogan. *Documenting Society.* Perth, AUS: Edith Cowan University, 1998. Available on CD-ROM.

* Pederson, Ann E, ed. *Keeping Archives.* Sydney, AUS: Australian Society of Archivists, 1987.

Roper, Michael and Carol Couture. *Impact Evaluation of the Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP) of the General Information Programme (PGI).* (RAMP Study PGI-93/WS/10). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1993.

* Schellenberg, Theodore H. *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques.* SAA Classic Reprint. Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 1996.

Walne, Peter, comp. *Modern Archives Administration and Records Management: A RAMP Reader.* (RAMP Study PGI-85/WS/32). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1985. Available electronically through the UNESCO website.

Walne, Peter, ed. *Selected Guidelines for the Management of Records and Archives: A RAMP Reader.* (RAMP Study PGI-90/WS/6). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1990. Available electronically through the UNESCO website.

Manuals

The Society of American Archivists publishes and distributes a number of manuals on basic archival practice. A full list of publications is available from the Society of American Archivists, Publications Department, 600 S. Federal, Suite 504, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 60605, Telephone: +1 312 922 0140, or on the Internet at http://www.archivists.org.

Activity 33

Check your institution's library or resource centre. What books or other resources do you have about emergency planning issues? Are any of the publications listed above available in your institution? If so, examine two or three of them and assess their currency and value to your institution. If not, identify two or three publications you think would be most useful to help develop or expand your preservation library. Devise a plan outlining how you could realistically obtain copies of these.

SUMMARY

This lesson has provided an overview of the entire module, *The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context.* This lesson has then discussed how to establish priorities for action and suggested that the main priorities for action are often as follows:

- Priority 1: Complete other modules in the MPSR study programme

- Priority 2: Discuss the topic with colleagues

- Priority 3: Read other literature on the topic

- Priority 4: Join and participate in professional associations.

The lesson then outlined ways to find out more information or get help with records and archives issues. The lesson concluded with a discussion of valuable information resources relevant to records and archives management.

STUDY QUESTIONS

- In your own words, explain the reason why the priorities proposed in this lesson are offered in the order they are in.

- Indicate two of the organisations listed in this lesson that you would choose to contact first and explain why.

- Indicate two of the publications listed in this lesson that you would choose to purchase first and explain why.

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activity 31

Every institution will find itself at a different stage of development in terms of records and archives management. Similarly, every person will have a different level of knowledge of records and archives issues. It is important to study core materials first and become comfortable with key principles and concepts before exploring those with colleagues or reading into more complex literature. However, contact with colleagues and access to other literature is valuable, and joining and participating in professional associations is one way to expand your horizons and those of your institution.

Activity 32

If resources are limited, it is wise to communicate with international organisations first, as they often obtain and filter information from national or regional associations. Thus valuable information is passed on to your organisation through the international group, which can save resources for all. It is also advisable to focus on records and archives management information before obtaining specialised publications or information.

Activity 33

As mentioned in relation to the earlier activity, it is important to begin with general information and ensure you have a good resource library of introductory and overview publications before developing a more specialised library.