Why am I a Records Manager?

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Overview
- records management
  - what, why, how
- players
  - stakeholders; roles & responsibilities
- challenges
  - key ones & how being addressed
- conclusions
  - moving forward

A little piece of research…

Records management

“What, if anything, is records management?”
Chris Hurley, 2004

a very short history ….
…from Sumeria to cyberspace

ISO 15489

Why manage records?

“Am I bovvered?”
Zoe Smyth, 2007 (after Catherine Tate)

records contain information that is a valuable resource and an important business asset... [an RM system] can support subsequent activities and business decisions, as well as ensuring accountability to present and future stakeholders
ISO 15489, 2001

No business case required!

How?

- principles
  - authenticity, reliability, integrity, usability
- theory & models
  - lifecycle, continuum
  - appraisal, classification
  - functional requirements for e-RM
- tools/best practice
  - ISO 15489, DIRKS, LC’s Code of Practice under FoI

manage web sites
manage systems & infrastructure
manage corporate memory

Audit/Legal
Records Managers
Archivists
Creators & users
Executives
Knowledge Managers
Information Managers
IT
others.....
If everyone is a records manager…

... why am I a Records Manager?

“responsible for all aspects of records management, including the design, implementation and maintenance of records systems and their operations, and for training users on records management and records systems operations as they affect individual practices.”

ISO 15489-1 (2001, 6.3)

If everyone is a records manager…

... why am I a Records Manager?

Today’s & tomorrow’s world

- connected
- complex
- constant change
- (de) centralised
- (non) custodial
- (un) controlled?

Today’s & tomorrow’s world

Web 2.0

“the most ‘awesomely’ democratic consequence of the digital revolution”

Andrew Keen

The cult of the amateur 2007
Other consequences…

- volume of information


Other consequences…

“careless clicks can – and do – sink corporate ships”

Nancy Flynn, 2003

Some scenarios

- global business
- nuclear power industry
- electronic patient information
- personal/family context

Challenge #1

- The virtual record
  - “The record, not the remix, is the anomaly today. The remix is the very nature of the digital.” Keen (2007)
  - the “liquid version” of the record? after Kelly (2006)
- What is the record? Where is it?
- blurred lines
Challenge #2

To keep or not to keep… that is the question

Challenge #3

A digital dark age?

‘oceans of information get ‘saved’ on file servers, on personal hard drives, CD-ROMs and DVDs but none of these are true archives. We have no guarantee that these will be readable or even usable in 50 years time.’

Bruce Sterling, The Telegraph 14/3/05

“digital information lasts forever - or five years, whichever comes first”

Jeff Rothenberg, 1995

“we do not have the first email message, and no knowledge of its contents other than it was in upper case. Contrast this with how much we know about the first telegram (now digitised and on the web) or telephone message…”

Lloyd Grossman, 2002
Challenge #3

“Digital Domesday book lasts 15 years not 1000”
The Observer, 3 March 2002

In search of solutions

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply.
Being willing is not enough; we must do."
Leonardo da Vinci

Preservation & curation

- Conversion
  - move to another medium
- Migration
  - transfer from one hardware/software generation to the next
- Encapsulation
  - group record with whatever need to maintain access
- Emulation
  - ‘mimic’ original hardware and software environment
Retention management
- review
- granular retention schedules
- keep everything?
- big buckets
- risk assessment

Exploit technology
- for better records creation & capture
  - embed requirements
  - capture metadata
  - make systems work for us
  - hidden but not forgotten
- PhD – ‘continued communication’

Engage & educate people
- about records creation & capture
  - locating RMs with employees
- what will we pass on to the next generation?
  - “evidence of me” (McKemmish, 1996)
  - evidence of us
- The Nations’ Memorybank
  - Nick Barrett [www.nationsmemorybank.com](http://www.nationsmemorybank.com)
AC*erm

- accelerating positive change in ERM
- explore issues & practical strategies
- designing the architecture
- people, processes, technology
- approach
- PhD - risk & erm

www.northumbria.ac.uk/acerm
Funded by AHRC

Conclusions

"the autonomy of the individual reigns supreme"
McDonald, 1995

“that genie is out of the bottle”
AC*erm project participant, 2008

Moving forward

• "what is past is prologue"
  Cook, 1997
  - new mindset, models & methods
  - new partnerships & relationships
  - evolution or revolution?
• “Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication”
  Leonardo da Vinci

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Why I am a records manager

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In memory of my father
5 Aug 1933 - 3 Jul 1985