

On the Record

October 2011

Update from the Manager Government Recordkeeping

Allegra Huxtable

The Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office is currently developing a short survey to collect information about agencies' paper and digital records. The survey will be in two parts, one for paper records and the other for digital records. This is because we recognise that different agency personnel i.e. Records Managers and IT staff will need to answer different questions.

It is really important for TAHO to gather information about how agencies' paper holdings are increasing so we can ensure we have sufficient space to accept paper records in the future.

The information we are seeking on digital holdings will assist us to understand your future information management requirements, the types of guidelines and advice you may need about how to manage your digital holdings into the future, what types of process we will need to put in place for the acceptance of digital records, and the capacity requirements for a future digital archive.

It is really important that all agencies participate in the survey so TAHO can accurately estimate your future digital and paper recordkeeping requirements.

Mass Digitisation Projects

TAHO have been approached to provide advice to agencies considering mass digitisation initiatives for all of their records. There are a number of aspects to these types of projects agencies need to consider:

1. Types of records and where they are in their lifecycle;

For inactive temporary records there would be no point in digitising a record with a retention of say 2 years as this record may already be due for destruction.

2. Business Efficiency gains;

Analysis of the types of records agencies hold, their value (temporary or permanent), their business use, how often are they called upon and used need to be considered prior to digitisation. Analyse which records are used frequently (daily) and where efficiency gains could be made by digitising them for staff.

The main drivers of mass digitisation projects are:

- if you work in a distributed network of offices (all around Tasmania) and many staff in different locations require access to the same documents;
- if you need to access information rapidly i.e. there is a customer at the desk and you need access to their file straight away;
- if you refer to the same information regularly i.e. it's retrieved daily;
- and for disaster recovery and business continuity reasons.

If these business drivers do not exist then agencies need to consider if they will make the efficiency gains required to effectively justify the cost of mass digitisation to executive management.

3. Migration of digitised documents into your Records System;

Process for migrating digitised documents into your records system needs to be considered. If this is going to be done manually by your records staff it will be quite an additional workload saving all of these documents into the system. If your IT staff are going to bulk load them into the system then you will need to consider the IT process and limitations around this and define these for the vendor.

4. Appropriate formats for digitisation;
TAHO recommends that permanent records be digitised in certain formats to ensure their longevity over time. See TAHO's Advice #21 regarding 'Digitisation of records' at http://www.archives.tas.gov.au/legislative/state_records/advices_list

5. Quality Review (QA) of digitised material by the vendor;
The vendor should undertake to QA at least 80% of your digitised content. For permanent records we would recommend QA be close to 100% and that you include an internal QA process as a part of your project. This is where the cost is for vendors so if the level of QA you are being offered is low and the costs are quite low then that means you risk receiving batches of digitised content that may have well over a 50% error rate.

6. Destruction of paper records (source records);
Once the records are digitised the digitised record becomes the original and you can destroy the paper as it becomes a copy according to DA No 2159 Source Records. However this only applies to records created after the year 2000 and for records created prior to this date you need permission from the State Archivist to destroy these records.

7. Documents with intrinsic cultural, artistic, heritage, or architectural value;
Paper copies of documents containing intrinsic artistic, cultural, heritage, or architectural value cannot be destroyed, for example old building plans for buildings that are on a councils' heritage register.

8. Document titling and metadata standards;
Define for the vendor the standards for titling the documents so that your staff have enough information about the file to effectively migrate it into your system.

9. Historical pre 1950s records;
Historical records or records created prior to 1950 are not covered by any Disposal Schedule and consequently cannot be destroyed without approval from the State Archivist. As there are so few historical records surviving, TAHO would appraise any pre 1950s records to see if we would be interested in accepting them into the state archive.

Current thinking around digitisation is that it should be undertaken on an "on demand" basis for inactive files. This is because the cost

of quality digitisation is so high and the management effort by the business to gain the efficiencies required to make it worthwhile are considerable.

There are several vendors in Tasmania offering these services and for any project of significant value it is worth seeking at least 3 quotes to ensure informed choice.

Retrieving of records in response to a subpoena

Recently we had an agency request a large quantity of records in response to a subpoena. They wanted to collect the records the next day. Large scale retrieval is very staff intensive our end and we cannot guarantee next day delivery. Please get subpoena requests to us as soon as possible, and no later than 5 working days before they need to be in court.

Management of CCTV records Cloud Services

Rhonda Cabalzar, Manager Information Management at Launceston City Council, contacted us recently regarding the retention status of CCTV records. We agreed that the Disposal Authority for Local Government, DA2200 Disposal Class 23.15.04 was the appropriate sentencing class.

However, as an aside Rhonda then shared with me her experience in advising a colleague as to the requirements of managing the recordkeeping risks associated with cloudcomputing – see our Guideline No 17 <http://www.archives.tas.gov.au/guidelines/Guideline-17.pdf>.

Launceston City Council was looking to engage a service provider for the supply of wireless CCTV which would allow for the installation of equipment in remote areas. The data would not be under the Council's control, and part of the data storage would reside overseas.

In this case, the need to produce specific data as possible legal evidence led to the Council conducting a risk assessment based on the requirements of Guideline No. 17. They used the outcome of this assessment to support their decision whether to proceed or not. With the continued emergence of 'cloud services' it's a timely reminder to categorise your information and operation by risk.



Spotlight

George Phillips **Disposal and Training Officer** **Records Management Unit UTAS**

What is your role at UTAS?

As the Disposal and Training Officer at the Records Management Unit, I am responsible for educating UTAS staff about their recordkeeping responsibilities and training them in how to manage, store and dispose of their records appropriately and effectively. I provide advice and guidance to staff on legal retention requirements, assist with major disposal projects, and quality assure Registers of Records Destroyed. I also liaise between UTAS business areas, TAHO and off-site storage providers, and maintain the RMU's website and online resources.

How did you become involved in Information Management?

About five years ago, I decided I wanted a change of career to do something that provided me with more intellectual stimulation (I was previously a pilot), and ended up deciding to become a librarian. While studying librarianship, I discovered that by adding an extra semester of records management classes, I could broaden my knowledge and job prospects significantly. At the time, the records management was mostly an insurance policy, but I've since found it more interesting than I expected, especially given the exciting changes being wrought upon the field by ICT.

What do you see for the future of Information Management?

We have already seen the profound effect advances in ICT have had upon Information Management and I think retaining our voice in the face of the convergence of IM and ICT will be the preeminent challenge for IM professionals over the next decade or so. ICT has not just altered the forms records take but has also shaped attitudes, practices and skill-sets relating to recordkeeping among non-IM professionals (largely for the worse), and although IM and ICT professionals increasingly share the same space, we have different priorities and attitudes.

In my experience, business efficiency arguments are far more persuasive than compliance arguments, but as document management systems such as SharePoint address more and more of the business efficiency issues, we are increasingly left to rely on the compliance angle. If we are to retain our influence, we will need to significantly improve our ICT skills and I think we will ultimately end up becoming a specialised subset of the ICT field, bridging the gap in attitudes between the two professions.

What's the thing you like best about your job?

I probably get the most satisfaction out of giving staff the answers, information and assistance they need to make their job easier or give them peace of mind. The variety and project-based nature of a lot of my work is also great and definitely helps keep the job interesting; I'm always learning new things, especially now that I've taken on the responsibility for managing the website and creating online tutorials.

What's the thing you like least about your job?

Having to tell staff the bad news when their recordkeeping is made more onerous by current gaps in our functional disposal schedule and information systems. It's frustrating when there's only so much I can do to help given these constraints. Thankfully, we have been working hard to address both these issues and the light at the end of the tunnel is now drawing tantalisingly close, especially with regard to unscheduled records now that the draft of our new functional disposal schedule is nearly ready for submission to TAHO.

What do you do for professional development?

I keep an eye out for workshops and training courses that might be relevant to my role, and subscribe to a number of mailing lists and blogs with an information management focus. I am currently looking into the possibility of taking on some part-time study next year at the University to improve my understanding of information systems and enhance my ability to communicate and collaborate with ICT professionals.

Share with us something about your life away from IM.

Before accepting my current job, I lived in Perth, where I worked at the UWA library. Soon after moving to Hobart, I started attending the Hobart Toastmasters club to improve my public speaking skills. At the time, it was driven by professional considerations, but I have since made a lot of friends at the club and now derive a great deal of enjoyment and satisfaction from attending, to the point that I am now serving as the secretary.



We are a Free Service!

Recently we received an inquiry from a law firm on behalf of an agency regarding how to use a disposal schedule. It crossed my mind that the advice he was then forwarding on to the agency cost a lot more than did mine to him. Don't hesitate to contact us directly.

Training for 2011

Using a Keyword Thesaurus

Hobart 16 Nov

Just one more course is scheduled for this year, so don't miss out. Please book through the Training Consortium. www.ttc.tas.gov.au
We are currently undergoing a review of our training courses to see how we might improve their content and the range of course topics in 2012.

Outsourcing

Outsourcing of government functions is a common practice nowadays and it is important that you are aware of the recordkeeping requirements imposed on the service provider.

If your agency is considering outsourcing please make sure that management are aware of Guideline no 10

http://www.archives.tas.gov.au/legislative/state_records/guidelines_list/guideline_10

Our staff are happy to meet with agency representatives and assist them with advice relating to the recordkeeping component of the service contract.

It is imperative that ownership of the records is clearly defined in the contract document. Agencies cannot transfer their own records to a third party entity without the authorisation of the State Archivist. It is important that an agreement is reached with the service provider for access to the records and that records disposal is carried out in accordance with the Archives Act.

If you are outsourcing and unsure of the process, please give us a call **BEFORE** the contract is written.

David Bloomfield

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Explore the possibilities