

ARMAil

Central New York

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Digitizing the dust: Archives in the information age

It sounds like a paradox: archives and archivists are beginning to move on in the information age. In fact, they have always been on the move while responding to changes in society, in organizational behavior and new technologies. However, the speed of movement has increased dramatically and must increase for archivists to keep pace with the world outside dusty filing cabinets, writes Peter Horsman.

Society is changing, and we are still in the midst (or perhaps even at the beginning) of the information revolution, driven by information technology. Archives consist of documents, and information technology has come to play an increasingly vital role in capturing recorded information. That is why archives and archivists are moving, and why they have to adapt to new technology so quickly, whether they like it or not. The question is: where are they going to?

Archives are affected by technology from two perspectives. Firstly, information technology changes the form of documents as an information resource. E-mail messages have ousted both traditional paper memos and telephone calls, databases have replaced card trays and, more recently, multimedia documents have made their debut on the

market. Secondly, archivists and records managers (henceforth I use the term archivist to refer to both professions) have discovered the potential of information technology for archives

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and records management, as well as for improving access to the documents they manage. Of course, both aspects are closely related.

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Message from the President

by Martha Westbrook

Two Years of Growth

I am very conscious that I am writing my last President's Message as the almost past president of the Central New York ARMA Chapter! Thank you to everyone who has helped me carry out the responsibilities, and I have enjoyed the chance to help make our chapter a positive and informative resource for our members. Over the past two years we have tried very hard to make sure that we presented topics that were on the cutting edge of records management, and could be of use to our members. I sincerely believe that we have been successful. I only hope that in the next years, our members will be able to continue their commitment to furthering the networking and educational opportunities for ourselves. As we see the changes in the workplace, we will figure out what we have to work with regarding the support of our companies, and the changes in our profession.

I would like especially to recognize the great Boards with which I have worked, particularly the board of the 1999-2000 season. Although both boards worked very hard to put together the programs for our members, this past year has been extraordinary. Due to my personal circumstance, I asked board members to take a more

active role in planning and presenting our meetings, and the board, virtually without exception, stepped up to the plate. I saw cooperation and teamwork that I think any business would commend. Through this exemplary commitment on the part of the board, the Central New York Chapter put on presentations which equaled or surpassed those of chapters in much more metropolitan areas and their broader range of resources and members. We boasted nationally recognized speakers, and topics which drew more non-members than the previous year. I cast my vote for the entire board as "Chapter Members of the Year."

I will treasure my two years as President, and hope that everyone who comes into contact with the Central New York Chapter has as positive an experience as I. As a final thought, allow me to reiterate my mantra: If you get involved in the chapter and work toward making it the best it can be for the members, you will be rewarded with both professional and personal growth. If you are not currently involved on the board level, please attend a meeting and see if you can contribute. It doesn't take much time, and you will see that *you* can make a difference.

Thank you everyone.

A message from the CNY ARMA Board

In the current job market, it is not uncommon for our colleagues to face unemployment due to downsizing, mergers, or other business-related changes. CNY ARMA wants to ensure that when a member needs our support the most, we will be there for them. One more benefit of your CNY ARMA membership will include an opportunity for any unemployed member to attend a limited number of CNY ARMA

Chapter meetings at no charge and to continue to receive the newsletter. We hope any member finding him or herself out of work will turn to CNY ARMA for support and use it as a networking tool.

For more information, contact any CNY ARMA Boardmember or call Carol at (315) 432-2842 for additional details.

Officers & Board elected for 2000-2001

Congratulations to our 2000-2001 Officers and Board of Directors!

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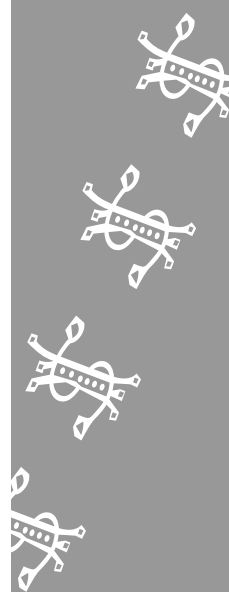
Who will be Chapter Member of the Year for 1999-2000 ??????
Come to the June meeting to find out!

Treasurer's Report

May 8, 2000

Submitted by Linda M. Humphries, Treasurer

Balance forward from 2/28/2000	\$2,677.75
INCOME	
Bank Interest	3.66
Meeting Sponsor	300.00
Meeting revenue	940.00
Escrow	140.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,383.66
EXPENSES	
Newsletter/mailings	660.99
Bank Service Charge	21.39
Meeting expense	1,076.20
TOTAL EXPENSES	(\$1,872.58)
New Balance	\$2,188.83



Meeting in Review



Corning Inc.

submitted by Laura Davidson

What a fascinating place Corning is! This quaint town, nestled between fragrant grape vineyards and crystal clear lake waters, is where Corning Glass Works calls home.

We arrived at Corning headquarters and settled in for a day of interesting presentations and a great visit to the museum. Our first speaker, Stuart Sammis, was Project Leader and Manager of Knowledge Management at Corning. Corning is a specialty materials manufacturer of glass and ceramics. It is also the world's largest producer of fiber optic wire. Founded in 1851 by Amory Houghton Sr., Corning produced products that changed the world, like light bulbs and TV bulbs. This company is in a tremendous growth mode with a great amount of capital devoted to research, development, patents, and its people.

Tony Miday, Records Manager for Archives and Records Management, highlighted some RM issues that he deals with such as: Should we outsource? In 1987, a records center was built, but was filled in fifteen months as opposed to the five years projected. In 1989 they outsourced, with benefits that included a 50% staff reduction, better service, increased security, and cost savings. Downsides included new cash outflow and the initial complexity of the system.

Following a quick review of Iron Mountain with our own J.D. Albro, Stuart Sammis closed the meeting with a talk on the subject of Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning. This concept involves learning from past mistakes and controlling the 'reinvention of the wheel' and re-using existing knowledge to create new knowledge. They see a move from 'knowledge is power' to 'sharing knowledge is power.' This concept is a natural extension of TQM or Total Quality Management.

We had a great day!

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	Strategy/Case Studies	Information Mgt.
8:00	Registration	Registration
8:30	Keynote Address Bruce Taylor Founder & Pres., KM World Magazine	Keynote Address Bruce Taylor Founder & Pres., KM World Magazine
9:30	Set Your Strategy by Taking a Practical Approach to KM Stephen F. Goodfellow, Access Systems, Inc.	C-Business: The New Mandate for the New Economy Tom Gruber Chief Technology Officer, Intraspect
10:30	Break & Networking Session	Break & Networking Session
11:00	Case Study: Making Knowledge Sharing Work for Xerox Sales People Glenn Alexander, Mgr Knowledge Sharing Programs; Dr. Susan Anderson, Ph.D, Principle Anthropologist, Xerox	Data Capture Portals—Bringing Paper, Data & Online Forms into the Enterprise Tony McKinley, Director Captiva Software
12:00	Lunch Served & Networking	Lunch Served & Networking
1:00	Case Study: Eureka Project Regina Estes Xerox Worldwide Customer Services Group	Enhancing Customer Relationships with Enterprise Work Mgt. Mike Anthony Eastman Software
2:00	Using KM to Enhance the Application & Business Impact of Competitive Intelligence Chad Weinstein, Teltech Resource Network	Benchmarking the Strategies & Tools You Need to Build Your Enterprise Information Portals John Balla, Senior Analyst Doculabs
3:00	Panel Discussion—Roles & Experiences in a KM Initiative Stuart Sammis, Corning Inc. Wendy Tarby, Crouse Hospital Dr. Michael J. Willis, Polaris Associates	Web Enabling Imaging & Document Management Ken Guy OTG Software
4:00	Technology Showcase and wine & cheese reception for attendees	Technology Showcase and wine & cheese reception for attendees

Digitizing the Dust

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Changing forms of documents

What is it that might worry archivists who witness changes to records management? Does it change their job, position, theories and methodologies? Not too long ago it was the technology that worried them, in particular the fast deterioration of information carriers. Much of the early discussions on archival centered around tape conversions, rewinding, protection against magnetic fields and so on. Archivists felt responsible for the long-term preservation of data files that had relevance for either the creating organization or society, or even for both. Over the last decade, however, the thinking on the preservation of computer-generated documents

has changed. Today, archivists are much more concerned about the preservation of authenticity of documents, and safeguarding access to them. No longer do they focus on data files, but their main interest is now in electronic records, specific kinds of documents that are created in the course of a business transaction, as well as in the ability to provide evidence of the business transactions that created and used documents. Indeed, traditional definitions of records had to be adapted in order to distinguish records from other documents. In other words, a record is a document, but a document is not necessarily a record. The link with business processes is essential; they are records because of the administrative functions they fulfil, rather than because of the information they may contain. Conse-

quently, the current perspective of archivists is no longer focused on technology, but on how they can meet their organizations' quality requirements for records, and the subsequent functional requirements for record keeping systems.

Electronic record-keeping research

Quality requirements for records include authenticity. To be able to fulfil its function as evidence of a business transaction, a record must be authentic and be kept in such a way that it preserves its authenticity. This is why archival science research is seeking answers to questions like:

- How do organizations render accountability?
- What evidence do they need?

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EIGHT DOs AND DON'Ts FOR RECORDS MANAGERS

1 Don't think you can deal with electronic records just by reading a set of dos and don'ts. Don't even think that you can gain a full understanding just by browsing a few articles, a book or a Web site. Today's technology is changing too rapidly to find an easy solution, for example, by choosing a particular standard or software package. Spend a considerable part of your time in upgrading your professional knowledge.

2 Don't think it is about technology, or even about information. It's all about records. Your job of managing these records is a critical function to the organization you work for.

3 Do recognize that the records contained in your archives represent high quality information. They are authentic documents about your organization's activities, assets, legal position and so on. They can demonstrate your organization's rights, justify its behavior and provide you with knowledge and memory.

4 Don't think records management is a simple problem, as it was in the past, but this time only a bit different with computers and the like. Even though it is much the same, and your function might be the same, your job will never be what it was before.

5 Do realize that records management is not your problem, but your organization's problem, whatever your responsibility may be. Don't try to solve the problem by yourself - you will certainly fail. Seek partners and look together for commitment from senior management and project sponsors. Make your record keeping system a killer application, and you will get, at least, support from IT people.

6 Don't rely upon other people's opinions, however smart they may be. Don't let yourself be confused by IT 'gurus' who say that full-text retrieval solves all your problems and makes indexing obsolete. Keep your professional brains working. The standard solution doesn't exist since your organization's problem is not a standard problem.

7 Don't complain! Criers never win a battle, and don't fight a battle you will lose. Save your energies for battles you are more likely to win instead. Climb onto the technology bandwagon — it is simply great, and be aware of the opportunities technologies can bring to you and your organization.

8 Do start simple - not with complex information systems such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or multi-media applications. You may find yourself back in a battle with the owner of those applications, who is very likely more powerful than you. A good place to start is e-mail: a widespread application, it is owned by nobody in particular, and it's not too complex. Apply your upgraded professional knowledge to it.

Further information? Guidelines on Best Practices for Using Electronic Information. How to Deal with Machine-readable Data and Electronic Documents, published by The Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1997 (ISBN 92-828-2285-0)

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- What constitutes the authenticity of electronic records?
- What are the legal, fiscal, political or historical requirements?

Besides academic research, various archival institutions, associations and public and private companies undertake research projects. These projects apply the generic principles of records management within national and/or organizational frameworks, looking specifically at local, legal, administrative and political systems. It is expected the results of such research will define the requirements of record keeping systems and the software that companies and organizations can purchase to manage their records. Preliminary results indicate that none of the existing packages for document and records management meet all requirements.

Archivists have recognized the global and multi-disciplinary nature of the issues concerning electronic record keeping. Much of the research is therefore conducted in international teams, initiated by universities or sponsored by international organizations such as the International Council on Archives. In 1996 the latter organization published the Guide for Managing Electronic Records from an Archival Perspective (www.archives.ca/ica).

Under auspices of the European Commission the DLM-Forum brings together archivists, records managers, scholars, software developers and representatives of the (public) administration. The Proceedings of the first conference, held in Brussels in December 1996, contain a rich variety of subjects and perspectives. Best practice guidelines for managing electronic documents were published within the same framework. As a follow-up the European Commission is in the process of developing standard functional requirements for electronic record keeping that software developers should comply with.

Preservation and Selection

Of course technology is the aspect that worries archivists the most since they deal with the preservation of records over long periods of time. The increasing complexity of the documentary materials requires an equally complex series of measures to keep the records authentic. However, a bigger concern perhaps is the enormous increase in recorded information. Information technology is on everybody's desks, and people make intensive use of it. As long as people communicate by talking there is nothing to archive. But this has changed dramatically with the introduction of e-mail. Given its exponential growth as an increasingly popular medium for delivering information, archivists have to decide what they need to archive or capture into their record keeping systems, how to classify it and how long to preserve it. Many emerging applications do support document capture, albeit often in a primitive and paper-based form, but they support neither appraisal nor the selection and accountable destruction of records.

Another conclusion from current research is that capture and appraisal of records should be re-invented and redesigned. Old methodologies and criteria no longer fit the bill, or at least not sufficiently. The reasons are obvious: it is impossible to deal with a daily production of 1,000 to 2,000 e-mail messages. What's more, information technology makes people work and communicate in a different way than they did before. Consequently, the very nature of the documentation has changed. E-mail is a substitute for informal and direct conversation and discussion, but as often as not it contains mission-critical information that is worth keeping.

Access to archives

Does information technology only cause problems? No, it doesn't. Records are made up of information, often high quality information, which may benefit from the many blessings that information technology has brought us. Thanks to information technology access to records can be improved. Whereas pre-

viously a file in use by one person was at that moment inaccessible to other users, today it is possible to provide concurrent multi-user access. Even protection can be implemented in a more secure way than in the past. Information technology crosses borders of time and space. Archivists should be happy with the technology and, I can assure you, most of them are. Both archivists who serve their organization as records managers, and archivists who serve the public at large in archival institutions, make intensive use of information technology. Even paper records are converted into digital format to enhance their retrieval and access.

In the area of gaining access to archival materials too, archivists have begun to co-operate on an international level. Without a doubt, one of the more important developments is the publication by the International Council on Archives of international standards for archival description (www.archives.ca/ica). The standards will soon be implemented in software for archival description, and should be applied to record keeping systems as well. Academic research — in particular the work undertaken by the University of British Columbia in Vancouver — has demonstrated the need to capture descriptive information about records (sometimes called meta-data), as a means of establishing authenticity. This meta-data should then comply with the standards to facilitate description across electronic and paper records alike.

The Archivist's Role

Information technology does not only call for international co-operation of archivists and globalization of archival science, it also brings together archive professionals independent of their place in the records' life cycle (or rather, records' continuum). The traditional borders between records managers and archivists are fading. Archivists are information professionals, specialized in keeping records as potential evidence of organizational activities, and in preserving them as long as they may be

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needed for administrative or historical purposes. As long as somebody is willing to pay the bill for preservation, they will continue preserving them in such a way that the records keep their original authenticity, and make them available to those who need or are authorized to access them. The archivist's main concern is not just to preserve the document, in whatever format, but to safeguard the record's contextual information, in its original documentary form, together with other relevant records.

Despite many emerging difficulties the information age should be a paradise for archivists, but they need the co-operation of administrators, legal specialists, auditors and software developers to fulfil the requirements of their mission.

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Editor's Message

by Carol A. Compton

Serving is an Opportunity

Wow, is it really the end of May? Our last meeting for the 1999–2000 season will be here in just a couple of weeks. As we prepare for our final meeting of the season, I would like to take this opportunity to share with my fellow CNY ARMA members what a great experience my first year serving on the Board of Directors has been. When I was first approached (I should have come up with that thought on my own) about serving on the Board, I was VERY, VERY reluctant. I didn't feel I was "board" material; I didn't have time; I didn't have the experience; I was afraid of what I would be expected to do — you know all the typical excuses. I decided to give the idea some serious thought.

I realized what a valuable resource CNY ARMA has been for me and how much I have benefited from my membership. I thought what a shame it

would be if everyone were reluctant to get involved. While serving on the Board I learned that a few chapters have dissolved, in part, due to poor leadership and lack of membership involvement. What if that resource was no longer available in the Central New York region? After considering all these things, I decided to throw caution to the wind and take advantage of the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors. Well, believe it or not, I survived the year. In fact, not only did I survive, I feel I have grown professionally while having some fun and making new friends in the process.

I just want to take this opportunity to say 'thank you' to all the past, present, and future Board members. If it weren't for you, we wouldn't have such a strong chapter!

Have a great summer and see you in the fall!

Disclaimer Notice

ARMAil is published at least five times during the fiscal year. Readership includes members of the Central New York Chapter of ARMA International, as well as interested records and information management professionals in the central New York area. The information contained in this newsletter does not necessarily reflect the views of the membership or the editor, nor is there any endorsement of advertisements or published seminar information. This newsletter is offered only as a source of information.

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