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ESARBICA NEWSLETTER

2007 Issue No: 20

May

For more information, contact the
editors Mr. S. Katuu skatuu@yahoo.com or
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Events

May 2007

May 7th **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website: <http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

May 14th **Records and information management level 2** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website: <http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

May 14th – 18th **Intermediate archives and records management**. Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **4th May 2007**. Contact Ms T Manganyi Tel: (+27) 114713896 Fax: (+27) 114713906 Email: mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563>

May 29th – 31st **South African Museum Association** National Conference and Annual General Meeting to be held at Cradle of Humankind, in Krugersdorp, South Africa. Contact Website: <http://www.samaweb.org.za/conf.htm>

June 2007

June 4th **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website: <http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

June 5th **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website: <http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

June 5th – 6th **Registry management workshop**. Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **25th May 2007**. Contact Ms T Manganyi Tel: (+27) 114713896 Fax: (+27) 114713906 Email: mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563>

June 11th **Records and information management level 2** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel:

(+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

June 11th – 12th **Paperless data and records management** Conference convened by Marcus Evans in Johannesburg. Contact Hennie Potgieter Tel: (+27)115161073

Fax: (+27)115161004 Email: henniep@marcusevanssa.com

June 18th **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel:

(+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

June 20th -22nd **XIV Bi-Annual ESARBICA Conference** to be convened in Tanzania, hosted by the National Archives of Tanzania. For more information

<http://www.geocities.com/esarbica/conf.html>

June 25th **Records and information management level 2** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel:

(+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

July 2007

Jul 10-12th **Knowledge, archives and records management** convened by PDE in Cape Town. Contact Tel: (+27) 842500257 Fax (+27)866084250 or (+27)866151332 Email: pde@webmail.co.za

July 16th **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel:

(+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

July 17 – 19th **Practically implementing an effective electronic documents and records management system** Workshop convened by IQPC. Contact: (+27)11 669

5000 Email: info@iqpc.co.za Website: <http://tinyurl.com/32w357>

July 23rd **Records and information management level 2** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel:

(+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

July 30th **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel:

(+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

August 2007

August 1st – 3rd **Proper records management as a driver for improved service delivery and good governance** workshop convened by Longsight Communication in Kruger National Park. Contact Saimon Chirume, Tel: (+27) 123206770, Fax: (+27) 123265080, Cell: (+27) 726610714 E-mail: saimon@longsight.co.za Website: <http://longsight.co.za/>

August 7th – 8th **Registry management workshop**. Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **26th July 2007**. Contact Ms T Manganyi Tel: (+27) 114713896 Fax: (+27) 114713906 Email mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563>

August 13th **Records and information management level 2** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website: <http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

August 20th **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website: <http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

August 27th **Records and information management level 2** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website: <http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

August 28th – 31st **Basic archives and records management**. Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **17th August 2007**. Contact Ms T Manganyi Tel: (+27) 114713896 Fax: (+27) 114713906 Email mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563>

September 2007

September 10th **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website: <http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

September 10th-13th **Influence with Integrity** recordkeeping conference convened by the Records Management Association of Australasia in Wellington, New Zealand.

Contact RMAA Marketing and Event Manager, Ms Kristen Keley email: marketing@maa.com.au website <http://www.maa.com.au>

October 2007

Advanced international records management training program (phase 3)

Conducted by the Swedish National Archives. Deadline for application was 1st March 2006 Contact: Riksarkivet C/o Hanna Eriksson Box 12541 SE-102 29 Stockholm, Sweden Fax +4687376474 Phone +4687376350 Website:

http://www.ra.se/ra/recordsmanagement/index_eng.asp

October 1st **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

October 2nd – 3rd **Registry management workshop**. Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **21st**

September 2007. Contact Ms T Manganyi Tel: (+27) 114713896 Fax: (+27) 114713906 Email mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website:

<http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563>

October 8th **Records and information management level 2** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

October 15th **Records and information management level 1** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

October 22nd **Records and information management level 2** Workshop convened by Document Warehouse in Johannesburg. Contact Virginia Hendricks Tel: (+27)112980700 Email: virginia@documentwarehouse Website:

<http://www.documentwarehouse.co.za/>

November 2007

November 19th – 23rd **Intermediate archives and records management**. Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **9th November 2007**. Contact Ms T Manganyi Tel: (+27) 114713896 Fax: (+27) 114713906 Email: mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website:

<http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563>

November 29th – 30th **Records management – Managers' workshop**. Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **19th November 2007**. Contact Ms T Manganyi Tel: (+27) 114713896 Fax: (+27) 114713906 Email mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website:

<http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563>

July 2008

XVIth International Congress on Archives to be convened in Kuala Lumpur, hosted by the International Council on Archives Website:

<http://www.ica.org/calendrier.php?pcalendrierid=237&plangue=eng>

A South African call for an integrated perspective!

By Brad Abbott

The last two years have been a boom period for Records and Information Management consultants in South Africa. Numerous government tenders have been issued requiring the services of consultants to design and implement file plans, records management programmes and to advise on the management of electronic records at National, Provincial and Local levels. For vendors of electronic document and records management systems, government has become the proverbial “cash cow” as departments and municipalities rush to procure and implement systems to address the management of their electronic records. A multitude of conferencing and training companies have sprung up all vying for their slice of the lucrative records management training market, conservatively estimated at least 10 million rand a year in turnover.

Why is this boom taking place? Based on my experience two main drivers have come to the fore in terms of the renewed focus on records management from departments and municipalities. These are the desire to be legally compliant and the operational necessity to be able to access accurate information timeously for decision making and accountability purposes. It is precisely because of these two drivers that I believe this records management “boom” will be short lived. Not because the public sector will end up having well established and mature records management programmes in place, but rather because the very programmes and systems that are presently being implemented will inevitably collapse. They will collapse because in the South African context, I believe that these two drivers are presently mutually exclusive. One can either have a “compliant” records management programme or one that effectively supports decision making and accountability, not both.

My reason for this is that there is a fundamental difference in the way in which records are viewed by the respective role players in the public sector records management domain. These role players being the National and Provincial Archives on the one side, and the government departments and municipalities on the other. The former represents what I will call the recordkeeping perspective and the latter the Records and Information Management (RIM) perspective.

The recordkeeping perspective draws heavily upon the archival tradition and views the record and the information it contains as an artefact that constitutes the memory of a government body; and thus seeks to collect, preserve and control it as part of the national archival

heritage of the South Africa. From this perspective the value of the record is in terms of its future usage

The RIM perspective views the record as a container of information to be used to facilitate operational decision making and accountability. This perspective seeks to manage the record predominantly in terms of ensuring its availability and accessibility as required to support operational necessities. The value of the record is in terms of its present usage.

On the surface these two approaches can appear to be complementarily, with the RIM perspective addressing certain phases of the records lifecycle and the recordkeeping perspective addressing others. But in practice in the South African context this is not possible. (For the theorists and academics out there this is your cue to start arguing about the life cycle versus continuum debate). It is not possible because all records management activities in the South African public sector are constrained to occur within the legislative and regulatory framework of the National Archives and Records Service Act of South Africa.

This piece of legislation was written from the recordkeeping perspective and serves to ensure that the National and Provincial Archives services are able to take custody of the records they require. The Act, its regulations and various directives are all aimed at imposing a recordkeeping framework on government bodies which at the end of the day serves the interest of the National and Provincial Archives and not the requirements and necessities of other government bodies. This framework with its “hierarchical functional subject file plans”, registry systems and restrictions on electronic records management aim at ensuring one thing only, that the various archival authorities receive the records they require. In providing their “records service” to government bodies these authorities become their own clients providing a “service” to meet their own needs.

The file plan is a case in point. Legislation requires that all government bodies have an approved file plan. The required file plan must strictly conform to the requirements of the National and Provincial Archives. The principal function of this file plan is not to facilitate access to records by the government body that is required to use it, but rather to facilitate the appraisal of records by the respective archival authorities. In this way the National and Provincial Archives are able to identify those records of enduring value that should be housed within their archival facilities for possible future use. When challenged on the effectiveness of the file plans from a retrieval and access perspective, the standard archival response is that these tools are best practice, yes certainly best practice from an appraisal perspective, but definitely not from the perspective of an administrative officer desperately trying to find a

record for their Director on a ten minute deadline.

And then there is the registry system which operates on the outdated notion that control equals availability. This panders to the notion that by requiring all government records (hardcopy) to be housed in a centralized location, only to be accessed through an intermediary (the registry clerk), one will be able to control records, thus ensuring that should they be required, they will be available and accessible. I have yet to meet a government official that will vouch to the effectiveness of this approach or a registry clerk that will claim that the majority of their government body's records are to be found in the registry. They are more likely to be found in personal filing systems in officials' offices where they are immediately accessible to those who need them.

Finally there is the issue of electronic records and their management. The recordkeeping perspective would have us believe that technology and its use to create, manage and store records poses a grave danger to the management of records. What they really mean by this is their ability to manage records from an archival perspective, for technology correctly used certainly enables government bodies to effectively manage records for decision making and accountability purposes. The recordkeeping solution is to place onerous requirements on government bodies that require massive financial expenditure on "approved system" and the duplication of records in hard and soft copy. Once again archival authorities seem to be acting as their own client, ensuring that their own needs are met given their limitations and resources, rather than those of their "client" bodies.

In closing, two weeks ago I came across one of the most convincing pieces of evidence that I have recently encountered, that supports my contention that government archival and records service authorities in South Africa are firmly seated within the recordkeeping perspective and completely misunderstand the requirements for effective records and information management. Two records management positions were advertised in a National Newspaper within a Provincial Archives and Records Service. The minimum requirements were an undergraduate degree in History or Public Administration. While I have no quarrels with the "Public Administration" requirement, my mind boggled at the "History" option. Surely there are at least half a dozen far more suitable undergraduate options for a records management position than "History"

While it may appear to the reader that I am anti-archives or even history, I am in fact not. What I am is an "anti one perspective approach" that favours the recordkeeping perspective over the RIM perspective, at the expense of all government bodies. I believe that what we

need is an integrated approach that pragmatically addresses that RIM imperatives of government bodies, but that still allows archival institutions to fulfil their mandate. I believe this is possible and my hope is that this article starts to stimulate a debate that will lead us to possible solutions.

About the author

Brad Abbott has a BA Honours degree and a Masters in Information Studies degree from Natal University in South Africa as well as a Diploma in Project Management. He is one of the leading records management experts in Africa where he has facilitated the development of an information management strategy for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; was involved in the computerization of records management for the Public Management Service Division of the Zambian government; developed a records management system for COSATU and developed and implemented a comprehensive information management program for the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Brad is chair of the South African Standards Generating Body for records management and archival studies, chair of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) Technical Committee 46 for information and document management as well as a member of SABS Technical Committee 171.

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Additional information

1. Eric Keteelar (2000) "Archivistics research saving the profession" **American Archivist Vol 20** pg. 322-340
<http://www.archivists.org/conference/neworleans2005/readings/609-ketelaar.pdf>
2. Frank Upward (2001) "Modelling the continuum as paradigm shift in recordkeeping and archiving processes, and beyond – personal reflections"
<http://www.sims.monash.edu/research/rcrg/publications/Frank%20U%20RMJ%202001.pdf>
3. Jay Atherton (1985-86) "From lifecycle to continuum: some thoughts on the records management – archives relationship" **Archivaria 21**
<http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/article/viewFile/11233/12172>
4. Terry Eastwood (1996) "Reforming the archival curriculum to meet contemporary needs" **Archivaria 42** pg. 80-88
<http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/article/viewFile/12156/13163>