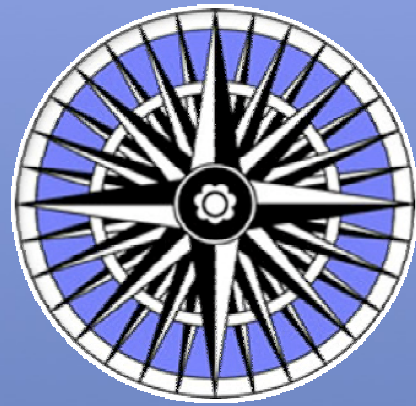


INTERNATIONAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT TRUST



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Training in Electronic Records Management

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General Editor, Laura Millar

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TRAINING IN ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Glossary of Terms

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4th Floor
7 Hatton Garden
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UK

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International Records Management Trust

4th Floor
7 Hatton Garden
London EC1N 8AD
UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7831 4101
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7831 6303
Email: info@irmt.org
Website: <http://www.irmt.org>

TERM Project Personnel

Project Director

Dr Anne Thurston, founder of the Trust, is a pioneer in defining international solutions for the management of public sector records. Both as an academic and as a programme director, she has extensive experience of working with many different governments to provide practical solutions for strengthening record-keeping systems. Her groundbreaking survey of record-keeping systems across the Commonwealth resulted in the establishment of pilot projects to restructure records systems in The Gambia and Ghana, and she established the Trust in 1989 to develop and extend this work. She joined the staff of the School of Library, Archive and Information Studies at University College London in 1980 to develop the Masters' in Records and Archives Management (International); she was also a Reader in International Records Studies. In 2000 she was awarded an OBE for services to public administration in Africa; she received a lifetime achievement award from the UK Records Management Society in 2006. She was awarded the Emmett Leahy award for Outstanding Contributions to the Information and Records Management Profession in 2007.

General Editor

Laura Millar divides her time among three careers: in archives as an archival and information management consultant and educator; in publishing as a writer, editor, and instructor; and in distance education as a curriculum developer, instructional designer, and course author. She received her MAS degree in archival studies from the University of British Columbia, Canada, in 1984 and her PhD in archival studies from the University of London in 1996. From 1994 to 1999, as Managing Editor of the Management of Public Sector Records Study Programme for the International Records Management Trust and the International Council on Archives, she was responsible for the development, testing, and delivery of 18 distance education training modules and 15 associated publications in archives, records and information management. She is the author of a number of books and articles on various topics in archives, publishing, and distance education.

Project Manager

A New Zealand born Australian based in Seattle, Washington, Michael Hoyle has a Masters degree in Information Management and Systems from Monash University in Australia. Prior to moving to Seattle in 2005, he was the Group Manager, Government Recordkeeping at Archives New Zealand. He has also worked in various information management and other roles in several government agencies in Australasia, including ten years at Archives New Zealand and six years at the National Archives of Australia. Michael has been a council member of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (1996 to 1999) and served the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM) as Deputy Chair (2000 to 2002) and as Chair (2002 to 2004). He also served the Pacific Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) as Secretary General (2002 to 2003) and President (2003 to 2004).

Glossary

Authors

Andrew Griffin
Segomotso Keakopa
Walter Mansfield
Laura Millar
Lori Podolksy Nordland

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Contents

Preface	ix
Introduction	1
Glossary	5

ABOUT THE *TERM* PROJECT

This module is part of an educational initiative called *Training in Electronic Records Management* or *TERM*, developed by the International Records Management Trust as part of a wider project to investigate issues associated with establishing integrity in public sector information systems. Begun in 2006, *Fostering Trust and Transparency in Governance: Investigating and Addressing the Requirements for Building Integrity in Public Sector Information Systems in the ICT Environment* was a project designed to address the crucial importance of managing records in the information technology environment. The focus of the study was pay and personnel records, since payroll control and procurement are the two major areas of government expenditure most vulnerable to misappropriation, and payroll control is, therefore, a highly significant issue for all governments.

The project provided an opportunity to explore the management of paper records as inputs to financial and human resource management information systems, the management of electronic records as digital outputs and the links between them. It also involved examining the degree to which the controls and authorisations that operated in paper-based systems in the past have been translated into the electronic working environment.

The primary geographical focus of the study was eastern and southern Africa, and two significant regional bodies participated: the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) and the Eastern and Southern African Association of Accountants General (ESAAG). Four countries from the region (Zambia, Botswana, Lesotho and Tanzania) hosted case studies, and comparative studies were carried out in West Africa (Ghana) and Asia (India).

The products of this project, which will be available without charge, include

- route maps for moving from a paper-based to an electronic information environment
- good practice indicators to measure records management integration in ICT control systems
- these training modules on the management of records in electronic form.

The project deliverables also include case studies conducted in Botswana, Ghana, India, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia. The studies focused primarily on issues related to the management of human resources and payroll functions in governments and involved research into paper-based and computerised personnel management systems. However, they provided an opportunity also to examine records and information management in the public sector in these countries. The case studies are

most relevant to those readers focusing on personnel and payroll management. However, the findings also offer valuable insights into the challenges of automation and electronic government, and the issues involved with making the transition from paper-based to electronic records and information management. The final case studies are being made available on the Trust website at www.irmt.org.

The case studies all point to the general need for greater integration of records management in the design and implementation of electronic information and communications (ICT) systems. The good practice indicators produced by this project are intended to help governments determine whether or not records management requirements have been integrated in ICT systems and to provide a high-level guide to records management integration. The indicators are particularly relevant to Modules 2 and 3. The good practice statements that underpin the indicators are derived from generally accepted international standards but are also informed by the findings of the case studies.

It is hoped that the research conducted as part of this project will offer governments the resources they can use to increase their capacity to manage paper and electronic records as accurate and reliable evidence in electronic environments. Their ability to measure progress toward accountability will be enhanced, and there should be a higher success rate of e-governance applications.

Project Steering Team

An international steering team oversees the work of the project, consisting of the following members.

Stephen Sharples, Chair of the Steering Committee, Senior Governance Adviser, Africa Policy Department, UK Department for International Development

Anne Thurston, Project Director and International Director, International Records Management Trust

Michael Hoyle, Project Manager, International Records Management Trust

Andrew Griffin, Research Officer and UK Director, International Records Management Trust

Jerry Gutu, Chief Executive Officer, East and Southern African Association of Accountants General (ESAAG) (2006)

Cosmas Lamosai, Chief Executive Officer, ESAAG (2007 and 2008)

Kelebogile Kgabi, Chair, Eastern and Southern African Branch, International Council on Archives (ESARBICA), and Director, Botswana National Archives and Records Services (2006)

Gert Van der Linde, Lead Financial Management Specialist, Africa Division, World Bank

Peter Mlyansi, Director, Tanzania Records and National Archives Department and Chair of ESARBICA (2007 and 2008)

Nicola Smithers, Public Sector Specialist, Africa Region, World Bank

David Sawe, Director of Management Information Systems, Government of Tanzania

Ranjana Mukherjee, Senior Public Sector Specialist, Asia Region, World Bank.

More information about the project and the other deliverables can be found on the International Records Management Trust website at http://www.irmt.org/building_integrity.html.

About the Modules

The following modules have been produced as part of this project:

- Module 1 *Understanding the Context of Electronic Records Management*
- Module 2 *Planning and Managing an Electronic Records Management Programme*
- Module 3 *Managing the Creation, Use and Disposal of Electronic Records*
- Module 4 *Preserving Electronic Records*
- Module 5 *Managing Personnel Records in an Electronic Environment.*

As well, the following two resources have been produced:

Additional Resources a bibliography of key resources related to the management of electronic records.

Glossary of Terms a consolidated glossary of relevant records management, electronic records management, information technology and computer terms.

These materials are primarily intended for use by records management practitioners in developing countries. The focus is on providing both a conceptual framework and practical guidance about important issues related to electronic records management. The goal is to produce a series of resources that can be used in a variety of ways, such as

- for self study
- for in-house training
- for management training institutes
- as a resource for university or college courses
- as supporting information for distance education courses.

A series of self-study questions has been included at the end of each module. These questions can be used by readers to assess their own understanding of the content provided in the module. The questions may also be used by trainers or educators to develop activities, assignments or other assessments to evaluate the success of any training offered. In order to facilitate the widest possible use of these questions by both learners and educators, they have been gathered together in one place at the end of the module rather than interspersed throughout the text. Readers interested in

developing educational or training initiatives using these modules are also directed to the MPSR training resources developed in 1999, and listed below, which offer guidance on how to adapt and use educational tools such as these.

Contributors

A number of records and information professionals were asked to contribute to the modules, including representatives from such countries as Australia, Botswana, Canada, Kenya, Singapore, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. The following people have contributed to the project as contributors, editors, reviewers and production assistants.

Keith Bastin, United Kingdom, reviewer
Adrian Brown, United Kingdom, contributor
Luis Carvalho, United Kingdom, administrative coordinator
Donald Force, United States, editor
Elaine Goh, Singapore, contributor
Andrew Griffin, United Kingdom, contributor
Greg Holoboff, Canada, graphic artist
Michael Hoyle, United States, contributor
Shadrack Katuu, South Africa, contributor
Segomotso Keakopa, Botswana, contributor
Lekoko Kenosi, Kenya, contributor
Charles Kinyeki, Kenya, reviewer
Barbara Lange, Canada, desktop publisher
Helena Leonce, Trinidad and Tobago, reviewer
Mphalane Makhura, South Africa, reviewer
Walter Mansfield, United Kingdom, contributor, editor
Peter Mazikana, Zimbabwe, contributor
John McDonald, Canada, contributor
Laura Millar, Canada, contributor, editor
April Miller, United States, contributor
Patrick Ngulumbe, South Africa, reviewer
Greg O'Shea, Australia, contributor
Lori Podolsky Nordland, Canada, contributor
Peter Sebina, Botswana, contributor
Anthea Seles, Canada, contributor
Elizabeth Shepherd, United Kingdom, reviewer
Kelvin Smith, United Kingdom, contributor
Jim Suderman, Canada, contributor, reviewer
Setareki Tale, Fiji, reviewer
Louisa Venter, South Africa, reviewer

Justus Wamukoya, Kenya, reviewer
Richard Wato, Kenya, reviewer
Geoffrey Yeo, United Kingdom, reviewer
Zawiyah Mohammad Yusef, Malaysia, reviewer.

Relationship with the *MPSR* Training Programme

The modules are designed to build on and support the *Management of Public Sector Records* training programme, developed by the International Records Management Trust in 1999. The MPSR training resources consist of over thirty separate training tools that address basic records management issues for developing countries. While some information found in those earlier modules may also be found in this new training programme, the concept behind this new set of modules is that they build upon but do not replace those earlier fundamental records management training tools. However, this new TERM programme focuses on the electronic record-keeping environment that is becoming so prevalent in the early years of the 21st century.

Readers wishing to orient themselves to basic records management principles will want to refer back to those MPSR resources, which are available free of charge from the International Records Management Trust website at www.irmt.org. Those training resources are identified below.

Training Modules

- 1 The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context
- 2 Organising and Controlling Current Records
- 3 Building Records Appraisal Systems
- 4 Managing Records in Records Centres
- 5 Managing Archives
- 6 Preserving Records
- 7 Emergency Planning for Records and Archives Services
- 8 Developing the Infrastructure for Records and Archives Services
- 9 Managing Resources for Records and Archives Services
- 10 Strategic Planning for Records and Archives Services
- 11 Analysing Business Systems
- 12 Understanding Computer Systems: An Overview for Records and Archives Staff
- 13 Automating Records Services
- 14 Managing Electronic Records
- 15 Managing Financial Records
- 16 Managing Hospital Records
- 17 Managing Legal Records
- 18 Managing Personnel Records

Procedures Manuals

- 19 Managing Current Records: A Procedures Manual
- 20 Restructuring Current Records Systems: A Procedures Manual
- 21 Managing Records Centres: A Procedures Manual
- 22 Managing Archives: A Procedures Manual
- 23 Planning for Emergencies: A Procedures Manual
- 24 Model Records and Archives Law
- 25 Model Scheme of Service

Educators' Resources

- 26 Educators' Resources
 - Introduction to the Study Programme
 - Glossary of Terms
 - Additional Resources for Records and Archives Management
 - Educators' Resource Kit
 - Writing Case Studies: A Manual.

Case Studies

- 27 Case Studies Volume 1
- 28 Case Studies Volume 2
- 29 Case Studies Volume 3

The introduction to each module in the TERM programme includes more specific information about relevant MPSR resources that readers may wish to review in association with the TERM module in question.

A Note on Terminology

As with any material related to computer technologies, these modules contain a great deal of specialised terminology. Every attempt has been made to define key terms the first time they are used. When important concepts are discussed cross-references are included as appropriate to earlier references or to the glossary of terms. Readers are also directed to the *Additional Resources* tool for more information on various topics, and web addresses are included whenever detailed information is provided about particular organisations or specific resource materials.

The modules are written using British English (programme, organisation) though of course many computer terms use American English: thus an organisation may run a records management 'programme' but it uses a particular software 'program.' Abbreviations and acronyms are defined the first time they are used in each module and are used as sparingly as possible.

One exception is ERM for 'electronic records management': this acronym is used regularly throughout all the resources as appropriate when referring to the general concept of managing computer-generated records. When referring to an electronic

records management system – that is, to specific software programs designed to manage electronic records – the term ERMS is used. It is recognised, however, that ERMS software may also offer document management features: supporting the creation, use and maintenance of both documents (such as works in progress) and records (official, final documents). When referring specifically to software that manages both documents and records, the acronym EDRMS is used, but the acronym ERMS is used more often, particularly when the concept of electronic records management systems is discussed more generally.

For More Information

For more information or to download a copy of these resource materials free of charge, go to the International Records Management Trust website at www.irmt.org. The Trust can be reached as follows:

International Records Management Trust
4th Floor
7 Hatton Garden
London EC1N 8AD UK

phone +44 (0) 20 7831 4101
fax +44 (0) 20 7831 6303
email info@irmt.org
website www.irmt.org

INTRODUCTION TO THE *GLOSSARY OF TERMS*

The *Glossary of Terms* defines terms relevant to records management, electronic records management, information technology and information systems, as relevant within the specific context of the TERM study programme. The glossary also includes terms related to business and government operations, as they relate to the task of records and archives management. This *Glossary* incorporates the terms defined in the *Glossary* developed as part of the MPSR Study Programme, originally published in 1999, and replaces that tool.

Definitions are in alphabetical order in ***bold, italic*** type. Other terms shown in italics are defined in the glossary, and cross references are included for non-preferred terms to help direct people to the terms used in this study programme. Additional phrases or terms may be mentioned but not defined in order to help readers recognise different possible variations on usage.

This glossary is not a complete and authoritative dictionary of professional terminology. Terms defined here may be defined differently in other environments, even in other professional situations. To help clarify the use of terms that have different meanings in other contexts, clarification has been added at the beginning of some definitions to identify the environment in which the term is defined here, such as: computer environments, legal environments, business and government environments or records and archives environments.

The *Glossary* draws upon and incorporates definitions and components of definitions from a wide range of resources, from general dictionaries and online resources such as *Wikipedia* or *About.com* to specific technical dictionaries and glossaries specific to such subjects as records and archives management, business, the law and computerisation and electronic information management. Interested readers will want to review some of the valuable resources available, including those listed below, which are presented in alphabetical order.

Glossaries and Related Resources

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Walne, Peter, ed. *Dictionary of Archival Terminology*. ICA Handbooks Series 7. Munich, Germany: KG Saur Verlag, 1988.

GLOSSARY

A

Acceptance test: See *User acceptance test*.

Access: The right, opportunity or means of finding, using or retrieving information.

Access point: An element of a description made searchable with a view to its retrieval.

Access role: A specified role of a person or group in being able to access system functions and facilities. This includes the means of finding, using, adding, changing or retrieving information.

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

Accountability: The requirement to perform duties, including financial and operational responsibilities, in a manner that complies with legislation, policies, objectives and expected standards of conduct.

Accounting officer: The senior officer, such as the permanent secretary of a public agency or the chief operating officer of a corporation, who has responsibility and authority for the management and expenditure of the monies and other assets of the organisation.

Accretion. See *Accrual*.

Accrual: An accession of records added to a series already held by an archival institution. Also known as an accretion.

Action date: The date when records are scheduled to be removed from a record-keeping system and either destroyed, sent to an archival institution or reviewed for future action.

Action officer: An official engaged in the administration of a specific set of tasks and duties within an agency or in the execution of the organisation's business functions and activities. Also known as a desk officer.

Active records. See *Current records*.

Activity: The major tasks performed by an organisation to accomplish each of its business functions. An activity can encompass a wide range of different transactions that take place in relation to or in support of that activity. Depending on the nature of the transactions involved, an activity may be performed in relation to one function, or it may be performed in relation to many functions. Similarly, several activities may be associated with each function.

Administrative records: Records relating to those general tasks or activities performed within an organisation that are common to all businesses or organisations, such as maintenance of resources, care of the physical plant or other routine office matters. Also known as housekeeping records.

Administrative value. See *Operational value*.

Admissibility: In a legal environment, the quality of a piece of evidence that makes it relevant and acceptable to an issue before the court and does not infringe any exclusionary rule (a matter of law).

Affinity diagram: A tool used to represent pictorially the relationships between elements of a business system.

Agency: A generic title for any private or public sector institution that undertakes specific functions and activities and generates and maintains records as a result of its work. In the public sector, an equivalent term may be public office.

Agent: In a computer environment, a person, organisation or software program associated with preservation events in the life of an object.

Aims: Statements of the ongoing purposes of an organisation arising from its mandate.

Analogue signal: A continuous electrical signal that varies in amplitude or frequency in response to changes in sound, heat, light or other factors. Examples of record formats that contain analogue signals include photographs, older magnetic sound recordings or celluloid film.

Application: Software that automates and manages a range of tasks supporting a work activity and, therefore, a business function. Examples of software applications include software programs designed to assist with human resource management, financial management, licensing or registration. Also referred to as business application.

Appointing authority: In a public-sector environment, the person or body authorised by the constitution or a statute or regulation to make the formal appointment of a person to a post of a particular grade within the public service.

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 referred to as evaluation, review or selection. See also *Functional appraisal*.

Appraisal interview. See *Job appraisal interview*.

Appraisal review. See *Job appraisal interview*.

Architecture: In a computer environment, an enterprise-wide architecture is a logically consistent set of principles that guide the design and development of an organisation's information systems and technology infrastructure.

Archival administration. See *Archives management*.

Archival agency. See *Archival institution*.

Archival authority / programme: See *Archival institution*.

Archival institution: The agency responsible for selecting, acquiring, preserving, and making available archives. Also known as an archival agency, archives or archival authority / programme.

Archival reference code: The combination of letters and numbers allocated to groups or series of archival materials, or to individual archival items, in order to identify and control the materials.

Archival repository. See *Repository*.

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, which is managed by an archival institution. See also *Archival institution* and *Repository*.

Archives group. See *Group*.

Archives management: The professional area of expertise concerned with the maintenance and use of archives. Also known as archival administration.

Archivist: A person professionally engaged in the management and preservation of archives.

Arrangement: The process of analysing the nature and scope of groups of archival materials, whereby their provenance and original order are understood and the archives are organised into groups, series and items according to a structure that preserves and reflects their provenance and original order.

ASCII: In a computer environment, the acronym for American Standard Code for Information Interchange, a term referring to the process in which English characters are represented as numbers with each letter assigned a number from 0 to 127. ASCII is an ISO standard that allows computers to exchange data by encoding information according to standard character representations.

Attribute: In a computer environment, a specific property inherent in a database entity or an object. Attributes usually consist of a name and a value, and they are often considered important metadata elements.

Audit: The process of reviewing, verifying, evaluating and reporting on an organisation, system, process, project or product.

Audit trail: In a records and archives environment, a record showing the transactions within an information management system providing evidence of activities, such as who has accessed a computer system and when, what operations he or she has performed during a given time and the resulting changes to records or information.

Authenticity: In a records and archives environment, the quality of being genuine and not corrupted or altered. The authenticity of a record is typically inferred from internal and external evidence, including the physical characteristics, structure, content and context of that record.

Authority control: The process of verifying and authorising the choice of unique access points for describing records; access points may include names, subjects and forms of record. The purpose of authority control is to ensure that access points are consistently applied and maintained in an information retrieval system.

Authority file. See *Authority list*.

Authority list: A list of standardised keywords, including personal, corporate and geographic names or terms, which are to be used as access points in retrieving information. Also referred to as authority file.

Automation: The use of machines or systems to perform tasks that might otherwise be performed or controlled manually.

B

Backup: The process of copying a computer file or collection of files to a second medium, usually on a diskette or magnetic tape, so that the data are safe in case the original file is damaged or lost. The resulting copy is also called a backup. Backup copies are usually stored on devices that can be removed from the computer and kept separately from the originals.

Backward compatible: The ability of a software program or piece of hardware to access, read and use data files created using previous versions of the software or hardware.

Bar code: A type of code used on labels to be read by an electronic scanner. Each bar code is unique and identifies a specific item, file or box.

Batch: In a computer environment, a group of jobs, data or software programs treated as a unit for computer processing.

Binary code: In a computer environment, a system of encoding data that uses binary digits: 0 and 1.

Binary digit: In a computer environment, a single number or unit within a binary number system. A binary digit, also called a "bit," is the smallest unit of information held in a computer.

Binary number system: In a computer environment, a numerical system wherein each digit stands for one of two possible values. The binary system uses only two symbols, 0 and 1, to represent values.

Bit. See *Binary digit*.

Born digital: In a computer environment, a phrase referring to a record or document originally created and stored in electronic format. See also *Digital record* and *Electronic record*.

Browser. See *Web browser*.

Budget: In a business or government environment, a statement of an organisation's financial position over a specified period of time, based on estimates of expenditure and proposals for financing those expenditures.

Bus: In a computer environment, a channel, path or other subsystem of a computer that allows different parts of the computer to communicate with each other or that transfers data between computer components.

Business: The core functions of an organisation, intended to contribute to the achievement of the organisation's mission.

Business application: See *Application*.

Business classification scheme: See *Classification scheme*.

Business manager: Within an organisation, the officer in charge of securing funds for and overseeing the delivery of a specific project or a set of business functions and activities. Also known as project sponsor.

Business process: A task or a set of coordinated tasks and activities that exist to accomplish a specific purpose. For example, the task of recruiting a new staff member to an organisation can be broken down into specific business processes such as advertising the position, interviewing candidates, selecting and appointing the successful candidate, adding him / her to the payroll and so on.

Business process re-engineering (BPR): The task of reviewing and revising business processes to achieve improvements in operations, as measured by improvements in areas of performance such as cost, quality, service and speed. See also *Business systems analysis*.

Business resumption plan: See *Emergency plan*.

Business systems analysis (BSA): The process of systematically analysing organisations as systems. This includes identifying broad organisational goals and supporting business areas and processes, and business process definition and decomposition. See also *Business process re-engineering*.

Byte: A combination of bits that represent one character. A byte is composed of eight consecutive bits of digital data. Computer data measures are taken in bytes: for example, one kilobyte is equal to 1,024 bytes; one megabyte is equal to 1,024 kilobytes; one gigabyte is equal to 1,024 kilobyte; and one terabyte is equal to 1,024 gigabytes.

C

Capture: In a computer environment, the deliberate actions that results in the storage of a record in a record-keeping system, including the registration and classification of the record and the addition of metadata about the record. For certain business activities, these actions may be designed into electronic systems so that the capture of records into record-keeping systems takes place when those records are created.

Case papers / files: Papers or files relating to a specific action, event, person, place, project or other subject. Also known as dossiers, dockets, particular instance papers, project files or transactional files.

Causal loop diagram: The graphical representation of the cyclical nature of cause and effect relationships.

Central processing unit (CPU): The chip or chips at the heart of a computer that enable it to process data. Also known as a processor.

Checksum: In a computer environment, the count of the number of bits in a unit of information that is calculated before and after the data has been transmitted, so that the sender and receiver of the data can confirm that the number of bits that were sent is the same as the number that arrived. If the counts match, then one can assume that the complete transmission was received.

Chip: In a computer environment, a small piece of semi-conducting material (such as silicon) about one centimetre (¼ inch) square on which an integrated circuit is embedded. An integrated circuit consists of a number of electronic components joined together to form a path for electricity. Central processing unit chips contain the circuits representing the CPU.

Class. See *Series*.

Classification: In a records and archives environment, the process of identifying and arranging business activities and the resulting records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods and procedural rules. See also *Functional classification* and *Subject classification*.

Classification scheme: A full representation of the business of an organisation, which systematically identifies and documents the organisation's activities and resulting records according to logically structured conventions, methods and procedural rules. Sometimes also referred to as a business classification scheme or file classification system. See also *Retention and disposal schedule*.

Classified records: Records that have been restricted in their circulation and access because they contain information that needs to be protected from unauthorised access. Classified records may bear security markings such as 'confidential,' 'secret' or 'top secret.' Sometimes also referred to as confidential or secret records.

Coding system: In a classification scheme, a representation of information through the use of letters and / or numbers, in accordance with a pre-established set of rules, in order to establish a logical framework for accessing and retrieving information and records.

Competencies: In a business or government environment, the levels of knowledge, skills and experience required by an individual or group in relation to the range of jobs he, she or they may be called upon to perform.

Competitor: In a business or government environment, anyone outside an organisation, project or business process that competes for the same resources (inputs) or provides the same or similar products or services (outputs). Competitors may be external or internal.

Compression: In a computer environment, the process of reducing the size (number of bytes) of a given electronic file. Compression is usually achieved through the use of special software and is intended to aid the transmission of files across networks. The process of compression may result in the loss of data. See also *Lossless compression* and *Lossy compression*.

Computer: Any programmable machine or other device that can process information to produce a result.

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

Computer program: A sequence of instructions that can be executed by a computer to carry out a specific process. Also referred to as a program.

Confidential records. See *Classified records*.

Conservation: In a records and archives environment, the intrusive protection of archival material, by the minimal physical and chemical treatments necessary to resist further deterioration, that will not adversely affect the integrity of the original. See also *Preservation*.

Content management: The process of establishing policies, systems and procedures in an organisation in order to oversee the systematic creation, organisation, access and use of large quantities of information, especially in different formats and applications. The process of content management may include, but is not limited to, records management, web management and the creation of collaborative workspaces. Electronic content management, sometimes also referred to as electronic information management, also refers more specifically to the software program and supporting hardware used to automate and integrate the information management process, which may include the management of electronic documents.

Continuation file: In a records and archives environment, a new file opened when the old file on the subject has reached its cut-off date within a file cycle.

Continuing utility: The value of records for the continuation of business activities, or as evidence of actions or transactions. Not to be confused with enduring value, which refers to the ongoing value of records for research or other purposes.

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

Contract: In a business or government environment, a legally binding agreement entered into between two parties generally for one or more to receive payment or other benefits in exchange for the supply to the other(s) of goods or services.

Control documentation: In a records and archives environment, recorded information that monitors and governs the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records. Also known as control records.

Control records. See *Control documentation*.

Conversion: In a computer environment, the process of changing from an existing computer or software system to another, or changing records from one medium or format to another. For example, an office may convert its word processing software from Word Perfect to Microsoft Word, and it may convert its word processed records from Word Perfect to Microsoft Word.

Copyright: A right by law that allows the creator or author of a work of authorship, such as a piece of writing, music, picture or photograph, to determine who may publish, copy and distribute that work. Copyright usually remains with the creator of a work for a legally established time, after which the work moves into the public domain and can be freely used by other people.

Cost benefit analysis: The analysis of financial or organisational benefits, in comparison with disadvantages, of a particular project, proposal or system. An organisation carries out a cost benefit analysis to help appraise the value of carrying out a particular project or acquiring a particular system.

Cost effectiveness: The optimum balance between efficiency, economy and effectiveness. Also referred to as value for money or return on investment.

CPU. See *Central processing unit*.

Creation of records: The first phase of a record's life cycle in which a record is made or received and then captured in a record-keeping system for action or for its evidentiary value. Also referred to as generation of records.

Current records: Records regularly used for the conduct of the current business of an organisation or individual. Also known as active records.

Current system: In a computer environment, an information systems application that is actively being used by an organisation.

Customer: Anyone who needs, uses or benefits from the output of a process. Sometimes also known as a consumer.

D

Data (pl.): Electronic representations of information suitable for communication, interpretation and processing, generally by a computer system. Note: the term 'raw data' is used to refer to unprocessed information.

Data dictionary: In a computer environment, a collection of information about data such as meaning, relationships to other data, origin, usage, structure and format. Also referred to as a logical data model.

Data field: In a computer environment, a specific area within a database allocated to capture a particular item of information. Also referred to as a field.

Data file. See *Data set*.

Data set: In a computer environment, a group of related electronic records that are organised and treated as a unit. The term is often used interchangeably with data file.

Data structure: A scheme for organising related pieces of information. The basic types of data structures include files, lists, arrays, records, trees and tables. Each of these basic structures has many variations and allows different operations to be performed on the data.

Database: A structured assembly of logically related data designed to be used in various software applications.

Database record: A complete set of information in a database; records are composed of fields, each of which contains one item of information.

Delegation: In a business or government environment, the action of granting staff the authority and freedom to perform tasks normally carried out by the manager, while the manager retains accountability for the successful completion of the tasks.

Deposit: The process of placing records in the custody of an archival institution without transfer of legal title. The term 'deposit' also refers to the records included in any one such placement.

Description: In a records and archives environment, the process of capturing, analysing, organising and recording information that serves to identify, manage, locate and explain records and the contexts and records systems that produced them.

Desk officer. See *Action officer*.

Destruction: The disposal of records through incineration, pulping, shredding, deletion or another method, so that it is impossible to reconstruct the records.

Development environment: Within a computer environment, the establishment, testing, customisation and modification of software. Once a software system has been developed, the system is moved into a production environment, where it goes live and is made available for use. See also *Production environment*.

Development planning. See *Strategic planning*.

Digital preservation: A series of managed activities undertaken to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary, including in the event of technological change or the failure of digital storage media.

Digital record: A record maintained in a coded numeric format that can only be accessed using a computer system that converts the numbers into text or images that can be

comprehended by the human eye. Digital records include records stored in electronic and non-electronic formats such as optical disk. See also *Born digital*.

Digital signal: Digital representations of information transmitted as binary code through the presence or absence of electronic currents at different frequencies. Digital signals are also referred to as automated, computerised or electronic signals.

Digital signature: A cryptographic transformation of a message in which the receiver's public electronic key must correspond with the sender's electronic private key in order for the message to be decrypted. A digital signature serves as a means of authentication, by ensuring that the initial message was unaltered during transmission. Also referred to as an electronic signature.

Digitisation: In a records and archives environment, the conversion of analogue materials (such as paper documents) into digital form so that they can be stored and accessed electronically. The process of digitisation involves converting characters or images into binary digits to create digital files. A record that has been converted from hard copy or manual form to digital form is referred to as a digitised record.

Directory. See *Folder*.

Discovery: In the legal environment, the process whereby parties to court proceedings identify and disclose to each other documents relevant to the issues in the proceedings.

Diskette: A small, removable, flexible mylar plastic disk covered with a thin layer of a magnetisable substance, onto which digital data can be recorded and stored. Also known as a floppy disk.

Disposal: In a records and archives environment, the actions taken to fulfil the requirements outlined in appraisal reports and retention and disposal schedules to retain, destroy or transfer records. Note that disposal is not synonymous with destruction, though destruction may be one disposal option. Also known as disposition.

Disposal date: In a records and archives environment, the date on which actions specified in a retention and disposal schedule should be performed. Actions may include destruction, review, archival retention or transfer to storage.

Disposal schedule. See *Retention and disposal schedule*.

Disposition. See *Disposal*.

Dockets. See *Case papers / files*.

Document: Information or data fixed in some medium, which may or may not be considered in whole or in part an official record.

Document management: The systematic control of documents by predetermined rules, principles and techniques.

Documentary evidence: In a legal environment, documents admitted as evidence under special rules of law.

Documentation: In a computer environment, the information or instructions needed to develop, use or maintain computer hardware and software systems and to permit access to and retrieval of the data contained in those systems.

Dossiers. See *Case papers / files*.

Dublin Core: In a computer environment, an officially recognised international metadata standard (NISO Standard Z39.85; ISO Standard 15836) with fifteen elements, designed principally by the library and archives community, to manage the description of information resources, particularly web content.

Dummy: In a records and archives environment, a card, sheet or other indicator placed on or near the place where a record is normally stored to denote its removal and indicate its present location.

E

E-government: The use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks or WANs, the Internet and mobile computing) to provide services, including: better delivery of government services to citizens; improved interactions with business and industry; citizen empowerment through access to information; or more efficient government operations.

Electronic document: Information recorded in a manner that requires a computer or other electronic device to display, interpret and process it. Electronic documents can include text, graphics or spreadsheets, electronic mail and documents transmitted using electronic data interchange (EDI).

Electronic document management system (EDMS): An electronic system or process – managed with the aid of computers and software – implemented in order to manage different kinds of documents in an organisation. Electronic document management systems may have limited records management functionality and may be combined with electronic records management systems. See also *Electronic records management system* and *Electronic document and records management system*.

Electronic document and records management system (EDRMS): An electronic system or process – managed with the aid of computers and software – implemented in order to manage both electronic documents and electronic records within an organisation. Electronic document and records management systems combine the functions of document and records management. See also *Electronic records management system* and *Electronic document management system*.

Electronic mail: Also called email, a system for sending and receiving messages electronically over a computer network, such as between personal computers. The term also refers to the message or messages sent or received by such a system.

Electronic record: A digital record that can be stored, transmitted or processed by a computer. See also *Born digital*.

Electronic records management system (ERMS): An electronic system or process – managed with the aid of computers and software – implemented in order to manage different kinds of records in an organisation. Electronic records management systems may also operate as electronic document management systems (EDMS). Note that electronic records management systems are not the same as electronic document management systems. See also *Electronic document management system* and *Electronic document and records management system*.

Electronic signature. See *Digital signature*.

Email. See *Electronic mail*.

Emergency plan: A set of 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. Also known as business resumption plan.

Emulation: In a computer environment, a means of overcoming the technological obsolescence of hardware and software by developing techniques for imitating obsolete systems on future generations of computers. See also *Encapsulation (2)*.

Encapsulation (1): In a records and archives environment, the process of creating a protective enclosure for flat materials by placing an object between two sheets of polyester film and then sealing it on at least one, but often all four edges using double-sided tape, heat or ultrasonic energy.

Encapsulation (2): In a computer environment, the technique of grouping together a digital object with its associated metadata to provide the necessary access to that object. Encapsulation is considered a key element of emulation. See also *Emulation*.

Enclosures (1): Storage containers, specifically archival-quality containers such as acid-free envelopes, folders or boxes, used to hold records or archives and protect them from hazardous elements.

Enclosures (2): Supporting documents enclosed with a letter or other communication.

Enduring value: In a records and archives environment, the value that records may have for any purpose and that justifies their preservation as archives. Not to be confused with continuing utility, which refers to the continuation of business activities, or as evidence of actions or transactions.

Enterprise 2.0: In a computer environment, the use of emergent social software platforms within companies or between companies and their partners or customers. Social software is designed to enable people to communicate and collaborate through computer-mediated communication and online communities. See also *Web 2.0*.

Ephemera: Documents of transitory use and value, such as advertisements and brochures.

Essential record. See *Vital record*.

Estimates: In a business or government environment, a statement of how an agency proposes to spend the funds that it seeks for the next financial year or other specific time.

Ethernet: In a computer environment, a term used to refer to a group of computer networking technologies designed to support Local Area Networks (LANs); the name comes from the physical concept of ether and the word defines a variety of wiring and signaling standards for the technologies to connect computers. See also *Local area network*.

Evaluation. See *Appraisal*.

Evidence: In a legal environment, information or proof admitted into judicial proceedings and relevant to a specific case to establish an alleged or disputed fact.

Evidential value: In a records and archives environment, the value of records or archives in providing authentic and reliable information on decisions, actions, transactions and communications made by the organisation that created the records. Also see *Intrinsic value*.

Export: In a computer environment, the process of producing a copy of electronic records, along with their metadata, for another system.

Extensible mark-up language (XML): In a computer environment, a general purpose specification for creating custom mark-up languages, or artificial languages, that provides a computer with instructions for how to display text. XML is an ISO standard that serves to help information systems share structured data, particularly via the Internet.

F

Field. See *Data field.*

File (1): In a records and archives environment, an organised physical assembly of documents, usually held within a folder, that have been grouped together for current use or because they relate to the same subject, activity or transaction. A file is usually the basic unit within a record series. A file can be found in any format, but the term folder is more commonly used in digital record-keeping environments.

File (2): In a computer environment, a logical assembly of data stored within a computer system. The term file is loosely used to describe a very wide range of assemblies of data from a single document to an entire database.

File classification system: See *Classification scheme.*

File plan: In a records and archives environment, a detailed list or inventory of the individual files or file categories within a classification scheme. A file plan allows for the systematic identification, filing and retrieval of records.

File series. See *Series.*

File server: In a computer environment, a computer that serves or distributes application programs and data files to work stations within a computer network. The hard drive of the file server is shared by the work stations on the network.

File transfer protocol (FTP): In a computer environment, a type of Uniform Resource Locator or URL that is commonly used to store and exchange large files.

Financial management: In a business or government environment, the planning, controlling, implementation and monitoring of fiscal policies and activities, including the accounting and audit of revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities.

Financial value: In a records and archives environment, the primary value of records for the continuation of the financial of fiscal business of the creating agency, or as evidence of the work of that agency. Also referred to as fiscal value.

Finding aid: A document that lists and describes a body of records or archives.

Fishbone diagram: The graphical representation of the relationship between an effect and all possible causes of that effect.

Floppy disk: See *Diskette.*

Folder: In the desktop environment, an assembly of one or more documents grouped together because they relate to the same subject, activity or transaction. Also known as a 'directory.' See also *File (1).*

Fonds. See *Group.*

Format: In a computer environment, a structured means of encoding and storing digital information so that it can be interpreted by a software application.

Forward compatible: In a computer environment, the ability of a software program to create files that can be read by later versions of the software.

Forward job plan. See *Job plan.*

Function: A unit of business activity in an organisation or jurisdiction. Functions represent the major responsibilities that are managed by the organisation in order to fulfil its goals. Functions are high-level aggregates of the organisation's activities. Functions may be derived through legislation, policy or programme development, or they may represent a set of tasks or activities that result in goods or services that the organisation is expected to provide. Also referred to as a business function.

Functional appraisal: In a records and archives environment, the process of assessing the enduring value of records by determining the functions of the body to be documented, identifying which offices or individuals created records in carrying out those functions and selecting the records that provide the most complete and concise documentation of the functions. See also *Appraisal*.

Functional classification: A system for organising materials on the basis of the function, activity or task performed by an organisation to fulfil its mandate, instead of by department, name or subject. See also *Classification* and *Subject classification*.

Functional records. See *Operational records*.

Functional requirements: In a computer environment, the tasks a computer application must perform to carry out a process satisfactorily, or the conditions or performance standards that a computer system should meet in order to support the business of the organisation. See also *Requirements*, *Technical requirements*, *Management / user requirements* and *Requirements analysis*.

G

Gantt chart: A type of bar chart that graphically portrays the type and duration of activities and tasks that must be performed in order to complete a project.

General disposal schedule: In a records and archives environment, a retention and disposal schedule that applies to the management of all the administrative or housekeeping records throughout an organisation, rather than to specific operational records created by different functional units within the organisation.

Generation of records: See *Creation of records*.

Governance structure: In the public sector, a term referring to formal arrangements established to oversee corporate-level decisions about such issues as how the organisation will function, its decision-making processes, how it will expend resources, what policies it will establish and what projects it will undertake.

Grading: In a business or government environment, the classification of different jobs in an organisation on the basis of the nature of the work performed and the level of responsibility held by the staff member.

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

Groupware: In a computer environment, applications software that supports collaborative work between a group of users by managing schedules, sharing documents and facilitating communications.

Guide: In a records and archives environment, a finding aid giving a general account of all or part of the holdings of one or several archival institutions, including administrative or other background history, usually arranged by groups and series. Some guides identify all holdings, while others may focus on a particular subject, period, geographical area or specific type of document.

H

Hard disk. See *Hard drive.*

Hard drive: In a computer environment, the storage area within the computer itself, where megabytes of space are available to store bits of information. Also known as a hard disk.

Hardware: In a computer environment, the physical equipment required to create, use, manipulate, store and output electronic data.

Home page: In a computer environment, the main page of a website. Typically, the home page serves as an index or table of contents to other information provided by the site.

Housekeeping records. See *Administrative records.*

HTML. See *Hypertext mark-up language.*

Hypertext mark-up language (HTML): In a computer environment, a coding standard that allows information to be exchanged on the World Wide Web by defining how web pages are formatted and displayed.

I

ICT system: A coherent collection of processes, people and technologies brought together to serve one or multiple business purposes. ICT stands for information and communications technology; the acronym is used more often than the phrase itself.

Inactive records. See *Non-current records*.

Indexing: In a records and archives environment, the process of establishing terms to describe and provide access to records and archives.

Information: Data or knowledge that is communicated.

Information and Communications Technology: See *ICT system*.

Information management: The overall process of planning, controlling and exploiting the information resources of an organisation in order to support its operations. Also known as information resources management.

Information manager: A person professionally engaged in the task of information management.

Information system: The combination of information, technology, processes and people brought together to support a given business objective.

Informational value: In a records and archives environment, the secondary value of records or archives for reference and research; the informational value of records derives from the information contained in them and may be incidental to their original purpose.

Ingest: In a computer environment, the process by which a digital file is accepted and loaded into a digital storage facility, such as a trusted digital repository, together with the descriptive information required to allow it to be retrieved and used at a later time.

Input: In a computer environment, any resource required in order to allow a process to take place; the result of the input and the process will be one or more outputs.

Integration: The process of combining separate parts into a whole that works together.

Integrity: The quality of being whole and unaltered through loss, tampering or corruption.

Internet: A worldwide collection of computer networks that are linked together to exchange data and distribute processing tasks.

Interoperability: In a computer environment, the ability of one application, system or metadata scheme to communicate, work or interface with another.

Intranet: An internal computer network that belongs to a particular organisation and is accessible only by that organisation's members.

Intrinsic value: In a records and archives environment, 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. See also *Evidential value*.

Inventory: In a records and archives environment, a finding aid that describes the records in an organisation, business unit or archival collection. Inventories range in detail. Inventories of records may be an itemised list. Archival inventories may include an introduction; a history or biography of the creator of the archives; a scope note detailing the size, contents, media, and arrangement of the collection; descriptions of the series within the collection; more

specific lists of the materials in each series; and an index or list of subjects represented in the collection.

Item: In a records and archives environment, the basic physical unit of arrangement and description within a series. Examples of an item include a document, a photograph or a map. Also known as a piece.

Item number: In a records and archives environment, a code number allocated to a single archival item, such as a document, photograph or map, in order to identify and control it. See also *Reference number*.

J

Job appraisal interview: A structured interview between a line manager and a member of his or her staff to discuss the latter's performance over a previous period and to agree a job plan for the next one. Also known as a job appraisal interview or appraisal review.

Job appraisal review. See *Job appraisal interview*.

Job plan: In a business or government environment, a document agreed between a manager and a member of staff specifying the content of the job to be done and establishing criteria for judging the staff member's performance in that job. Also known as a forward job plan.

K

Keyword: A term or combination of terms taken from the title or text of a document or file; the keyword helps to characterise the content or subject of the material and establish an access point for its retrieval.

Keyword list: A controlled vocabulary that limits the choice of keywords when classifying or indexing files or documents.

Keyword search engine. See *Search engine*.

L

LAN. See *Local area network*.

Laser disk. See *Optical disk*.

Legacy application: In a computer environment, an older software program, such as a database management system, which may or may not be supported by new software products.

Legacy system: In a computer environment, an old application that an organisation continues to maintain, perhaps because the cost of replacement or redesign is high.

Legal value: In a records and archives environment, the primary value of records for the continuation of the legal business of the creating organisation or its successor, or as evidence of the legal rights or obligations of the organisation, its employees or third parties.

Life cycle concept: In a records and archives environment, a concept or record keeping 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. See also *Continuum*.

Link: In a computer environment, a reference from one document or source to another document or source in an online environment such as the World Wide Web. Users can go directly from one item to another by selecting the on-screen reference.

Local area network (LAN): In a computer environment, a group of computers and associated devices within a limited geographic area, such as an office building, which share a common communications line or wireless link. The connected devices generally share a single processor or server and allow people in the organisation to share resources such as files, printers or applications. See also *Ethernet*.

Logical data model: See *Data dictionary*.

Lossless compression: In a computer environment, the process of compressing electronic data without losing any of the data in the process. See also *Lossy compression* and *Compression*

Lossy compression: In a computer environment, the process of compressing electronic data and losing some of the data in the process. Lossy compression technologies attempt to eliminate redundant or unnecessary information. See also *Lossless compression* and *Compression*.

M

Magnetic tape: An electronic storage device consisting of a continuous strip of plastic covered with magnetic oxide; the tape is divided into parallel tracks onto which data may be recorded by selectively magnetising parts of the surface, or spots, in each of the tracks. The data can then be stored and reused. Also referred to as tape.

Maintenance: In a records and archives environment, the daily care of records and archives, particularly current and semi-current records housed in records offices or records centres, in order to protect those records from environmental hazards or other physical dangers.

Management / user requirements: In a computer environment, the organisational or business conditions or standards a computer application must meet in order to support the needs of the users of that system. See also *Requirements*, *Functional requirements*, *Technical requirements* and *Requirements analysis*.

Mandate: In a business or government environment, the source of authority for an organisation's activities.

Memory: In a computer environment, an area within a computer system that holds data; the data may be waiting to be processed or may be stored for future use.

Menu: In a computer environment, a collection of onscreen choices that help the user interact with a computer system.

Metadata: Data describing the context, content and structure of records and their management through time. The preservation of the record with its associated metadata is necessary to maintain the integrity of the record. Types of metadata include technical / structural, administrative, descriptive, preservation and use.

Metadata encoding and transmission standard (METS): A metadata standard for encoding descriptive, administrative and structural metadata about objects within a digital library; the metadata is expressed using XML language, so that it can be accessed and used consistently through the World Wide Web.

Metadata profile: A collection of metadata associated with a specific record, allowing the identification, description and retrieval of that record.

Microfilm: A process for photographing records and storing the images in miniaturised form on high-resolution film. Also refers to the product of the photographic process.

Migration: In a computer environment, the act of moving data or records in electronic form from one hardware or software system or configuration to another so that they may continue to be understandable and usable for as long as they are needed.

Mission: In a business or government environment, the purpose for which an organisation exists.

Mission statement: In a business or government environment, a written articulation of an organisation's purpose.

Mould: A woolly or furry growth consisting of minute fungi that forms on substances found in moist, warm air.

Multi-level rule: In a records and archives environment, an internationally accepted rule, set out in international descriptive standards such as the *General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G))*, that supports the description of records and archives at different levels of arrangement so that the descriptions may be linked together later.

N

Network server: In a computer environment, a computer system that serves as a central repository of data and software programs shared by users who can access those resources through a computer network.

Network. See *Computer network*.

Node: In a computer environment, a processing location in a computer network.

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

Normalising: In a computer environment, the process of converting records from their original formats into preservation formats that are not controlled by proprietary or commercial software programs. Also referred to as ‘normalizing’ in North America.

O

Objective: In a business or government environment, a specific goal identified to support an organisation's mission or functions; the objective is intended to be accomplished within a specified time.

Office systems: In a computer environment, software applications that are used in a business or organisation to support such tasks as creating and managing word processed documents, spreadsheets and email.

Open Archival Information System (OAIS): An electronic archive, consisting of both computer systems and a management framework, that preserves digital information and makes it available for use. The users of the resources in an OAIS are referred to as a designated user community.

Open Archives Initiative (OAI): An attempt to develop and promote an accessible framework for archives containing digital content by creating a technological framework and establishing standards in order to support the dissemination of electronic information.

Open format: In a computer environment, a data format that is not considered proprietary and is free of commercial ownership or patents. Typically the technical specifications for the format are also publically available, allowing users to alter and develop the format to suit their specific needs.

Operating system: In a computer environment, a collection of software that allows a computer to function.

Operational records: In a records and archives environment, records created for the purpose of carrying out the core functions of an organisation. Also known as functional records.

Operational value: In a records and archives environment, the primary value of records for the continuation of the administration or operations of the creating agency or as evidence of the actions and transactions of that agency. Also referred to as administrative value. Note: the phrase 'operational value' is preferred over 'administrative value' in order not to create confusion with administrative or housekeeping records, which are those records related to routine – not core or operational – duties within the organisation.

Optical character recognition: In a computer environment, the ability of a computer to read printed or written text characters and save them electronically as bits or bytes of data, so that they may be manipulated, searched and stored, even though the original source document may have been created manually (such as by handwriting, typewriter or printing press). See also *Scanning*.

Optical disk: In a computer environment, a storage device that uses reflecting surfaces and laser technology to read and write data on a disk. Also known as a laser disk.

Organisational chart: In a business or government environment, the diagrammatic representation of the structure of an organisation or organisational unit.

Original order: In a records and archives environment, the order in which documents were initially created, arranged and maintained by the office of origin. See also *Provenance* and *Respect des fonds*.

Output: In a computer environment, the product of the transformation of inputs by a process.

Oxidation: The combination of oxygen with another element to promote deterioration. Examples of oxidation include rusting metal or disintegrating paper.

P

Part: In a records and archives environment, one of a number of physical units to which a file has been subdivided, usually chronologically, as it has increased in size. Also known as a volume or part file.

Part file. See *Part*.

Particular instance papers. See *Case papers / files*.

Peer-to-peer network: In a computer environment, a type of network in which each computer workstation has the same responsibilities and capabilities, so that users at each workstation can perform the same functions as users at other workstations.

Performance indicator: In a business or government environment, a measure or a standard to determine the effectiveness of a process, system, output, action or result. Also known as a performance measure, performance target or target.

Performance measure: See *Performance indicator*.

Performance target: See *Performance indicator*.

Peripheral device: In a computer environment, any piece of equipment in a computer system that is not actually housed inside the computer itself.

Permission: In a computer environment, the authority of a user to access, view or make changes to a computer system or the data it contains.

Persistent (unique) identifier: In a computer environment, a unique name for a resource, object or record that remains consistent regardless of where the resource is stored. The use of a persistent identifier allows users to find the resource through links or pointers, even if the resource has been moved. See also *Unique identifier*.

Persistent object preservation: In a computer environment, a technique to ensure electronic records remain accessible no matter what specific hardware and software is used. This preservation method uses the XML Document Type Definition standard and encapsulates metadata so that the records and metadata can be accessed over the long term regardless of the technology used.

Piece. See *Item*.

Pilot: A test or small-scale version of a full system. Pilots are used to provide feedback before implementation proceeds. It is common to conduct pilot tests during the implementation of computer systems such as human resource management systems or electronic document management systems.

Pixel: In a computer environment, a 'dot' or mark of colour in the electronic representation of an image: the greater the number of pixels in a given space the higher the resolution or quality of the image produced.

Platform: In a computer environment, the type of computer or operating system on which a software application runs. Some common platforms are PC (Windows), Macintosh and Unix.

Pointer: In a computer environment, a type of programming language that refers directly to or 'points to' another resource, such as a document or web page.

Policy files: In a records and archives environment, operational files relating specifically to the creation of policies and procedures.

Preservation: In a records and archives environment, the act of protecting records against damage or deterioration. The term is most often used to refer to the passive protection of archival material in which the item is not subject to any physical or chemical treatment. See also *Conservation*.

Primary value: In a records and archives environment, the continuing utility of records or archives to document the actions and transactions of the organisation and as evidence of the business functions and activities that gave rise to their creation.

Private records: In a records and archives environment, records created, received and maintained by non-governmental organisations, families or individuals as evidence of their private and personal affairs. See also *Public records*.

Privilege: In a legal environment, exclusionary rules, such as professional privilege, which allow a party to refuse to reveal certain confidential communication to a court or other person.

Process (1): In a computer environment, a systematic series of actions a computer uses to manipulate data.

Process (2): In a business or government environment, the means whereby an organisation carries out any part its business.

Process map: A pictorial representation of the inputs, activities, tasks and outputs of a given process. While a process map may be developed for business functions and activities, it is better known as a technique for documenting computer processes.

Processor. See *Central processing unit*.

Production environment: In a computer environment, the phase of software or system development when all testing and modifications are complete and the system is implemented and used for formal business operations. See also *Development environment*.

Program. See *Computer program*.

Programming language: In a computer environment, a set of rules, vocabulary and syntax used to instruct a computer to execute certain tasks.

Project: A formally established work effort intended to achieve a specific outcome. A project has a well-defined beginning, clear scope and objectives and a specific end product.

Project charter: A statement of the scope and objectives of a project and a description of the participants and their terms of reference and responsibilities.

Project files. See *Case papers / files*.

Project manager: A person given day-to-day responsibility for planning, organising, and managing a project and managing all associated resources.

Project sponsor: See *Business manager*.

Proprietary: In a computer environment, a computer format that is privately owned and controlled. Examples of proprietary formats include Microsoft software and Kodak photographic software and storage devices.

Provenance: In a records and archives environment, the organisation or individual that created or received, maintained and used records while they were still current. See also *Original order* and *Respect des fonds*.

Public office. See *Agency*.

Public records: In a records and archives environment, records created or received and maintained in any public sector agency such as a government, quasi-government agency or state corporation. See also *Private records*.

Q

Quality assurance: The act of monitoring, controlling and tracking the quality of a system, project or product in order to ensure it meets acceptable standards.

Query language: In a computer environment, a set of command words that can be used to direct a computer to create databases, locate information, sort database records or change the data held in those records.

R

RAM. See *Random access memory*.

Random access memory (RAM): In a computer environment, an area within the computer system that temporarily holds a user's data, operating system instructions and program instructions while the computer processes the data and generates the desired results. The word 'random' refers to the fact that any piece of data can be moved or stored anywhere in the system but still can be retrieved as needed.

Reading room. See *Search room*.

Record (1): In a records and archives environment, documentary evidence, 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.

Record (2): In a computer environment, a complete set of information in a database. Database records are composed of fields, each of which contains one item of information. Note: the term 'database record' is generally used in this study programme to refer to database records, to distinguish the term from record (1), which refers to documentary evidence.

Record group. See *Group*.

Record keeping: The act of documenting an activity by creating, collecting or receiving records and ensuring that they are available, understandable and usable for as long as they are needed. See also *Records management*.

Record-keeping system: An information system that captures, manages and provides access to records through time.

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

Records disposal schedule. See *Retention and disposal schedule*.

Records life cycle. See *Life cycle concept*.

Records management: A field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records. Records management includes processes for capturing and maintaining records as evidence of and information about business activities and transactions. See also *Record keeping*.

Records management unit: The administrative unit of an agency responsible for the day to day management of that agency's records.

Records manager: The person in charge of a records management unit or engaged in the records management profession.

Records office: A unit responsible for the receipt, control and maintenance of current records. Also known as a registry.

Records retention schedule. See *Retention and disposal schedule*.

Records schedule. See *Retention and disposal schedule*.

Records series. See *Series*.

Records survey: The application of business systems analysis techniques to the process of gathering information about records, including, for example: quantity, physical form and type, location, physical condition, storage facilities, rate of accumulation or use.

Reference number: In a records and archives environment, a number or combination of letters and numbers assigned to an item. See also *Item number*.

Refreshment: In a computer environment, the process of copying data from an existing storage media or computer system onto a newer media or system.

Register: A document, often a bound volume, in which standard data is captured about documents or records. See also *Registration*.

Registration: The process of recording standard information about, and assigning a unique identifier to, a document or record. See also *Register*.

Registry. See *Records office*.

Relational database: In a computer environment, a database that organises, structures and stores information into tables of rows and columns (flat files) so that related data elements from different tables can be manipulated and extracted for various purposes.

Relative humidity: The ratio of the amount of water vapour in the air to the amount that would be present at the same temperature if the atmosphere were to be fully saturated. Relative humidity is expressed as a percentage.

Reliability: In a records and archives environment, the quality of being trustworthy; in reference to records, reliability is confirmed by ensuring that a record was created by a competent authority according to established processes and that the record contains all the necessary elements of an official record.

Repository: A storage facility, physical or electronic, where records are held for safekeeping. With reference to paper-based records, a repository is a building or part of a building in which records or archives are preserved and made available for consultation. Also known as an archival repository or archives. Note: To avoid confusion with the use of the term ‘archives’ to refer to records with ongoing value, the term ‘archives’ is not used to refer to a repository.

Requirements: In a computer environment, the conditions or performance standards that a new or altered computer system should meet. See also *Functional requirements*, *Management / user requirements* and *Technical requirements*.

Requirements analysis: In a computer environment, the task of determining the conditions or performance standards that a new or altered computer system should meet. See also *Functional requirements*, *Management / user requirements* and *Technical requirements*.

Respect des fonds: In a records and archives environment, the concept of respect for the creator of the records or archives. The principle of *respect des fonds* is achieved by maintaining the provenance and original order of records and archives from a single creating agency. See also *Provenance* and *Original order*.

Restoration: The repair of an item, such as an archival document or artefact, to return that item to its original condition or reproduce its original appearance. Restoration is not generally viewed as an archival activity; it is undertaken when aesthetics and reproduction of the original appearance are more important than the preservation of the integrity of the item.

Retention: The function of preserving and maintaining records for continuing use. Records may be retained in the system of origin, or transferred to a separate repository such as an offline system, records centre or archival institution.

Retention and disposal schedule: A document identifying the records of an organisation or administrative unit and specifying which records should be preserved permanently as archives and which can be destroyed after a certain period as obsolete or superseded. The retention and disposal schedule provides ongoing authorisation for the transfer of records from offices to records centres, along with the destruction of obsolete records and the preservation of archival materials. Also known as a disposal list, disposition schedule, records schedule, retention schedule or transfer schedule. See also *Classification scheme*.

Retention period: In a records and archives environment, the length of time that records should be retained in an office or records centre before they are transferred to an archival institution or destroyed as obsolete. The retention periods chosen for different records should be based on legislative or regulatory requirements as well as on administrative and operational requirements.

Retention schedule. See *Retention and disposal schedule*.

Review. See *Appraisal*.

S

Sampling: In a records and archives environment, the selection of items from a body of records in order to provide a representation of the whole body while not retaining every document.

Scanning: In a computer environment, the process of converting an image into a form that a computer can use. See also *Optical character recognition*.

Scheme of service: In a business or government environment, a framework document that sets out the specific details of a particular occupational class or type of job.

Search engine: In a computer environment, a software program that allows a user to search a database, the Internet or other electronic information resource by an index entry in order to identify references to the search term. Also referred to as keyword search engine.

Search room: The area in an archival institution open to users so that they may consult archival materials, finding aids and associated reference sources. Also known as a reading room.

Secondary value: In a records and archives environment, 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.

Secondment: In a business or government environment, an arrangement whereby an individual from one organisation is loaned to another with the intention that he or she will return to the parent organisation at the end of the period of secondment. In some organisations a distinction is made between 'secondment,' in which the lending organisation pays the salary of the person loaned, and 'loan,' in which the borrowing organisation pays the salary.

Secret records. See *Classified records*.

Selection. See *Appraisal*.

Selective preservation: The process of choosing and maintaining a specific portion of records or archives for continuing use. Also known as selective retention.

Selective retention. See *Selective preservation*.

Semi-active records. See *Semi-current records*.

Semi-current records: In a records and archives environment, records that are likely to be required only infrequently in the conduct of current business. Semi-current records will normally be maintained in a records centre or other offsite storage location pending their ultimate disposal. Also known as semi-active records.

Series: In a records and archives environment, the level of arrangement of the files (1) and other records of an organisation or individual that brings together those documents 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.

Series number: In a records and archives environment, the number allocated to a series of records or archives in order to identify and control those materials.

Software: In a computer environment, the automated instructions that allow a computer to manipulate data and execute particular functions or tasks.

Specimens: In a records and archives environment, representative examples of records kept to illustrate particular forms, styles or processes rather than because their information content is necessarily worthy of preservation.

Stakeholder: In a business or government environment, any person, group or other organisation that has a claim on an organisation's attention, resources or output or is affected by that output.

Standard: A definition, format, specification, procedure or methodology that has been approved by a recognised standards organisation or is accepted as a *de facto* standard by an industry. Even if not formally recognised, a standard is normally considered an established or acknowledged model of authority or good practice.

Standardised general mark-up language (SGML): In a computer environment, a computer language or code that can be applied to documents in order to maintain their structure and context; the use of SGML coding for documents allows them to be shared across computer systems.

Storage area network (SAN): In a computer environment, a network of connections designed to attach remote computer storage devices (such as hard disks, magnetic tapes or CDs) to servers in such a way that, to the computer's operating system, the devices appear to be locally attached.

Storage: In a computer environment, the area within a computer system where data can be left on a longer term basis while it is not needed for processing.

Strategic planning: In a business or government environment, 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. Also referred to as development planning.

Stripping: In a records and archives environment, the removal of obsolete or superseded individual documents from a file (1). Note: The term 'stripping' is preferred to the term 'weeding.'

Subfile: In a records and archives environment, a separate file (1) dealing with a discrete aspect of the subject contained in a larger, more general file.

Subgroup: In a records and archives environment, a discrete subdivision in the arrangement of archives below the level of the group. A subgroup usually contains the archives of a subordinate administrative unit with its own record-keeping system.

Subject classification: The organisation of materials into categories according to a scheme that identifies, distinguishes and relates the concepts or topics of the materials. Subject classification is different from functional classification, which organises materials on the basis of the activities or tasks performed by the organisation. See also *Classification* and *Functional classification*.

SWOT analysis: In a business or government environment, the systematic assessment of an organisation's strengths (S), weaknesses (W), external opportunities (O) and threats (T).

System: An arrangement of people, materials, organisations, procedures or other elements associated with a particular function or outcome. A system is made up of inputs, processes and outputs.

System administrator: In a computer environment, the person responsible for the maintenance of the computer system and the use of that system by others within or outside the organisation.

Systems development life cycle (SDLC): A formal planning model used to describe the stages involved in developing or upgrading any system, particularly but not exclusively ICT systems. The steps in a systems development life cycle include conducting an initial feasibility study, planning and designing the system, implementing the system and reviewing and testing the completed result.

T

Tape. See *Magnetic tape*.

Target. See *Performance indicator*.

Taxonomy: The classification of information according to a pre-determined system providing a conceptual framework for retrieval. Typically, taxonomies consist of groups of similar entities organised in a hierarchical structure, related by presumed relationships amongst the different entities.

TCP / IP. See *Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol*.

Technical requirements: In a computer environment, the programming specifications or technological capacity that a computer must have to carry out the functional and management / user requirements identified for the successful implementation of the system. See also *Functional requirements, Management / user requirements* and *Requirements analysis*.

Tender: In a business or government environment, an offer by a potential supplier to supply a specified product or service at a specified cost.

Thesaurus: A controlled and structured vocabulary of keywords showing synonymous, hierarchical and other relationships and dependencies.

Total quality management: A management philosophy that focuses on customer satisfaction, commitment to quality, continuous process improvement, employee involvement and statistical process control to address and resolve organisational problems.

Tracking: In a records and archives environment, the process of documenting the movements and uses of records so that their whereabouts are known at all times.

Transactional files. See *Case papers / files*.

Transfer: In a records and archives environment, the act of changing the location or ownership of, and / or responsibility for, records.

Transfer schedule. See *Retention and disposal schedule*.

Transmission control protocol / internet protocol (TCP / IP): In a computer environment, the *de facto* standard used by the Internet to allow data to be transmitted over networks.

Trusted digital repository: An archival repository designed to provide reliable, long-term access to managed digital resources to its designated user community, now and in the future.

Trustworthy: Worthy of confidence.

U

Uniform resource locator (URL): In a computer environment, the global address of documents and other resources on the World Wide Web. URLs can point to executable files that can be retrieved using a network protocol called FTP or file transfer protocol; URLs can also point to web pages that can be retrieved using a network protocol called HTTP or hypertext transfer protocol. See also *World Wide Web*.

Unique identifier: In a records and archives environment, a reference number assigned to a record so that it can be distinguished from all other records. Also known as unique reference number. See also *Persistent (unique) identifier*.

URL. See *Uniform resource locator*.

User acceptance test: In a computer environment, the process of having users test and evaluate a new or upgraded system to determine whether or not it meets requirements or whether further changes are needed before it can be accepted. Also known as acceptance test.

User friendly: In a computer environment, a computer software program or piece of hardware that is simple to set up, run and use.

User requirements: See *Management / user requirements*.

V

Value for money. See *Cost effectiveness*.

Values-based appraisal: In a records and archives environment, the assessment of the worth of records based on specific criteria, such as the historical evidence they contain; the information they convey about events, trends, activities or functions; or their potential use.

Version control: In a records and archives environment, the management of documents or records in order to keep track of changes and revisions and ensure the most current version remains available for use.

Virus: In a computer environment, a software program that is installed in one computer and then hidden in order to allow it to be transferred to other computers without detection. The purpose of a virus is to corrupt or destroy the information on the recipient computer.

Vital record: A record that is essential to the organisation's operation or to the resumption of the organisation's operations after a disaster. Also known as an essential record.

Vital records programme: A systematic approach to identifying, protecting and making available the vital records of an organisation, especially in the aftermath of an emergency or disaster.

Volume. See *Part*.

W

WAN. See *Wide area network*.

Web 2.0: In a computer environment, a term used to refer to changes in the way that World Wide Web technology is used, in order to enhance creativity, information sharing and functionality in a web-based environment. Computer tools created to support Web 2.0 information sharing include social networking sites, wikis, blogs, social bookmarking, collaborative editing tools, media sharing services and syndication and notification technologies. See also *Enterprise 2.0*.

Web browser: In a computer environment, a software application that enables a user to locate and view pages on a Web site. Also known as a browser.

Website: A specific location on the World Wide Web.

Weeding. See *Stripping*.

Wide area network (WAN): A computer network that covers a large geographical area, crossing city, regional or national boundaries.

Workflow software: Software that automates the process of electronically sending documents and / or tasks from one person to another in a specified sequence and time and tracking the progress of the development and management of those documents and tasks.

World Wide Web: A computer network system consisting of interlinked hypertext documents accessible through the Internet; the system allows users to find and use information available on computers round the world by searching for information with a web browser. Also referred to as WWW. See also *Uniform resource locator*.

International Records Management Trust

4th Floor
7 Hatton Garden
London EC1N 8AD UK

Phone +44 (0) 20 7831 4101
Fax +44 (0) 20 7831 6303
email info@irmt.org
www.irmt.org

Registered Charity Number 1068975
VAT Registration Number 564 4173 37
Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in England Number 3477376