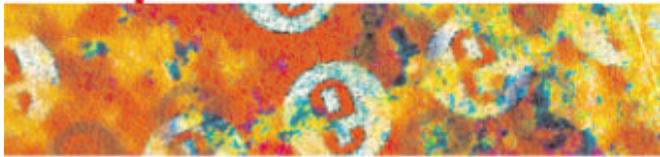




e^opermanence



DIRKS – A Strategic Approach
to Managing Business Information

PART 1 – THE DIRKS METHODOLOGY: A USERS GUIDE

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1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

1.1 Why recordkeeping?

Good government requires good recordkeeping. Good recordkeeping supports efficiency and accountability through the creation, management and retention of meaningful, accurate, reliable, accessible and durable evidence of government activities and decisions. Good records are necessary for government to keep track of what it has done, so that its future activities can be pursued on the basis of a full and accurate knowledge of what has occurred and what has been decided in the past. Retention of the corporate memory of government, in the form of records, helps public servants perform their duties efficiently and ensures that audit trails necessary for democratic accountability and transparency are maintained. Good recordkeeping also helps to protect the legal, financial and other interests of government. Ultimately, good recordkeeping saves the government, and hence the community, money. Good records are vital corporate and national assets and good recordkeeping is essential for a reliable and durable long-term historical record.

In the past good recordkeeping was, by and large, second nature to public servants. The public service of the past, with its emphasis on process, hierarchy, and employment of filing clerks and other administrative assistants, ensured that good records were created and maintained. As we move into the twenty-first century such certainties can no longer be relied upon. Now governments emphasise outcomes and outputs over processes and hierarchies. Public service recruitment patterns, staff induction and training procedures, and career paths are now very different from those of 20 or 30 years ago. We cannot assume that public servants appreciate the importance of good recordkeeping or know how to keep good records. The trend towards semi-autonomous work groups and flatter organisational structures has contributed to this situation.

In recent years the spread of electronic systems has exacerbated the drift towards ad hoc or substandard recordkeeping practices. The adoption of word processing, email and multi-media applications has led to a situation where the essential evidence of government decisions and transactions is often kept in the hard drives, email in-boxes and shared folders of individual public servants or work groups. This form of recordkeeping does not meet the requirements for full, accurate, reliable, accessible and durable evidence of government activity. Moreover, such practices pose unacceptable risks to the capture and management of essential evidence. Not only may individual public servants delete records without giving adequate thought to whether those records need to be retained, but there is also the distinct possibility of large numbers of records being lost each time an organisation's computer software or hardware platform is upgraded.

Fortunately, while technology has contributed to the problem, it also provides the means for a solution. The solution lies in designing and

implementing systems that ensure full and accurate records are created and then retained for as long as they are required to support business, accountability or wider community interests. The emergence of electronic records has forced recordkeeping professionals to articulate the basic principles and components of good recordkeeping in ways that can be satisfied in the electronic environment. Within this professional community a consensus has emerged on the essential elements of a theoretical and practical framework for best practice modern recordkeeping.

1.2 The importance of DIRKS

The DIRKS manual provides the foundation for good recordkeeping. It is the cornerstone document in the comprehensive suite of best practice recordkeeping standards and guidelines published by the National Archives on its *e-permanence* website at www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/. The DIRKS methodology is an 8-step process designed to assist organisations to improve their management of records and information. It is based on and expands the best-practice approach outlined in Australian Standard AS 4390–1996, *Records Management* and International Standard ISO 15489, *Records Management* and the accompanying technical report. The methodology is a structured and rigorous approach designed to ensure that records and information management is firmly based in the business needs of the organisation.

The methodology consists of the following eight steps:

- preliminary investigation (Step A);
- analysis of business activity (Step B);
- identification of recordkeeping requirements (Step C);
- assessment of existing systems (Step D);
- identification of strategies for recordkeeping (Step E);
- design of a recordkeeping system (Step F);
- implementation of a recordkeeping system (Step G); and
- post-implementation review (Step H).

Steps A to C ensure that the systems development process is focused on ‘the right things’ while the remaining Steps D to H focus on making sure that things are ‘done right’. [1] Organisations will find the methodology particularly useful for identifying the gap between their existing practices and contemporary best practice, regardless of whether they operate in an electronic, paper-based or hybrid business environment.

Due to its rigour, the methodology requires every organisation to make a significant commitment in terms of staff, time and money. However, this investment will pay ongoing dividends to the organisation, government and wider community through improved efficiency and greater accountability.

The manual is primarily aimed at project teams established to develop or review records and information management practices within organisations. These teams may include organisational staff as well as external consultants. Depending on the nature of the project, these teams will ideally include the following:

- a senior project manager;
- recordkeeping professionals, including archivists and records managers;
- information managers;
- information technology (IT) and telecommunications professionals, including systems analysts, application developers, data managers and network administrators;
- corporate governance specialists, including Freedom of Information (FOI) officers, privacy and data protection administrators, auditors, legal professionals and quality assurance personnel;
- business area experts; and
- staff representatives.

The DIRKS manual provides a comprehensive approach to good recordkeeping and information management. The National Archives has developed other specialised products and tools that complement DIRKS. These include:

- [Recordkeeping metadata standard](#): defines metadata elements necessary to manage records over time;
- [AGLS metadata standard](#): online resource discovery metadata that supports the National Office of the Information Economy government online initiative;
- [Policy and guidelines on capturing web-based records](#): advice on how to manage websites and other online resources as records;
- [Why Records Are Kept](#): outlining the National Archives appraisal regime and the criteria for keeping records as national archives;
- [Keyword AAA](#): a controlled language thesaurus for the classification of common administrative records;
- [Administrative functions disposal authority](#): authorises the retention or disposal of administrative records, linked to Keyword AAA;
- [Overview of classification tools for records management](#) : advice on developing classification tools for managing records and other information in an organisation;
- [Developing a functions thesaurus guidelines](#): advice on developing a functions-based thesaurus for your organisation; and
- [Storage standard](#): information on how to manage the storage of records.

Additional products and tools, such as guidelines to support the storage standard and generic specifications for recordkeeping systems, are under development.

2 RECORDS AND INFORMATION

The International Standard on records management defines records as ‘information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business’. [2] Records are traditionally regarded as documents in paper files or bound volumes. In fact, records can exist in any physical format, such as photographic prints, video cassettes, microfilm and a multitude of electronic formats.

Records are a subset of information. Information includes published and unpublished documents, such as monographs, journals, newspapers and technical literature and data collections. Information contributes to an organisation’s knowledge base and helps it to achieve its goals. Such information may be collected in relation to business activity and support such activity, but does not, itself, provide evidence of that activity.

Records possess certain characteristics that distinguish them from other kinds of recorded information. Records are ‘fixed’, that is, they are the product of particular actions that occur at particular times. To retain their value as authentic and reliable evidence of particular actions, they must not be altered or tampered with. Records derive much of their meaning, and therefore their usefulness and value as evidence, from the context in which they are created, maintained and used, and how they are managed over time.

Organisations are increasingly managing corporate information resources of all kinds through integrated strategies and common tools. Often records management, library services and computer systems are administered within the same business unit. This approach can facilitate close cooperation between information professionals, promote a common understanding of the organisation’s business functions, and enable the best use of technology to support the organisation’s information needs. Organisations must ensure, however, that integrated strategies and tools for the management of all types of information do not compromise the characteristics that give records their evidential value.

In other organisations, responsibility for records and information lie with the relevant business unit. In these circumstances the evidentiary nature of records is often poorly understood and records may be managed inappropriately, if they are created at all.

The broad principles of records management – creation, management, access and disposal – apply equally to information. In practice it can be difficult to draw a clear distinction between records and information. The DIRKS methodology, particularly Step C – Identification of recordkeeping requirements, will help your organisation decide what information you need to capture as evidence of business activities, that is, what records you need.

Steps C and D may reveal that what is currently regarded as ‘just information’ in your organisation may be evidence of business, and therefore a record.

For these reasons, it is important not to rely on a preconceived notion of a record, such as a registry file, when using the DIRKS methodology. It will limit your project and, potentially, leave problems undiscovered.

3 BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES OF RECORDKEEPING AND DIRKS

The DIRKS methodology can help organisations to:

- understand the business, regulatory and social context in which they operate, and establish a business case for reviewing their recordkeeping practices (Step A);
- analyse business activities and environmental factors to identify their recordkeeping requirements (Steps B and C);
- assess the extent to which existing organisational strategies (for example, policies, standards, technology) satisfy these requirements (Step D);
- redesign existing strategies or design new strategies to address unmet or poorly satisfied requirements (Steps E and F); and
- implement, maintain and review these strategies (Steps G and H).

The methodology will enable the development of recordkeeping systems and practices that are based on a sound understanding of an organisation’s recordkeeping requirements. Such systems and practices enable organisations to:

- conduct business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner;
- deliver services in a consistent and equitable manner;
- support and document policy formation and managerial decision-making;
- provide consistency, continuity and productivity in management and administration;
- facilitate the effective performance of activities through an organisation;
- provide continuity in the event of a disaster;
- meet legislative and regulatory requirements including archival, audit and oversight activities;
- provide protection and support in litigation, including the management of risks associated with the existence of or lack of evidence of organisational activity;

- protect the interests of the organisation and the rights of employees, clients, and present and future stakeholders;
- support and document current and future research and development activities, developments and achievements, as well as historical research, provide evidence of business, personal and cultural activity;
- establish business, personal and cultural identity; and
- maintain corporate, personal or collective memory. [3]

The DIRKS approach will also result in the development of products and tools to support good recordkeeping. These include:

- a business classification scheme and functional thesaurus;
- documented recordkeeping requirements; and
- records disposal authority.

It also provides guidance on the development of appropriate policies and procedures to support records and information management.

4 CHARACTERISTICS OF SYSTEMS THAT KEEP RECORDS

Many business systems in your organisation may currently keep information as records. These systems include your organisation's registry or main correspondence system, personnel system and financial management system. Other systems may contain evidence of business activities that are not being managed as records, such as workflow programs, database applications, shared drives and web applications.

All business systems used by an organisation must be capable of capturing, maintaining and providing evidence of its business activities over time to satisfy the organisation's recordkeeping needs. Every organisation should undertake DIRKS to identify what evidence of its unique business activities it needs to keep and what particular form or content such records should have. While the purpose and content of records will vary between organisations, much of the system capability or 'functionality' required to capture, maintain and access such records is common to all agencies. All agencies, irrespective of their unique business activities, require systems that can capture full and accurate records and perform processes for managing those records over time.

4.1 Recordkeeping aims

In order to be full and accurate, records must be authentic, reliable, complete, unaltered and useable and the systems that support them must be able to protect their integrity over time. These terms have particular meanings for system design purposes. [4]

- *Authentic* – it must be possible to prove that a record is what it purports to be and that it has been created or sent by the alleged person and at the time purported. Records need to be protected against

unauthorised addition, deletion, alteration, use or concealment and the creation, receipt, transmission of records needs to be controlled to ensure that records creators are authorised and identified.

- *Reliable* – it must be possible to trust the content of a record as an accurate representation of the transaction to which it attests. It should be created and captured in a timely manner by an individual who has direct knowledge of the event or generated automatically by processes routinely used by the organisation to conduct the transaction.
- *Complete and unaltered* – it must be possible to protect a record against unauthorised alteration and to monitor and track any authorised annotation, addition or deletion.
- *Useable* – it must be possible to locate, retrieve, render and interpret a record and understand the sequence of activities in which it was created and used for as long as such evidence is required.
- *System integrity* – it must be possible to implement control measures, such as access monitoring, user verification, authorised destruction, security and disaster mitigation to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal of records and to protect them from accidental damage or loss.

Such characteristics are influenced by the *type* of structural and contextual information, or metadata, that is built into an organisation's business systems, and the *way* in which that metadata is applied.

The National Archives has developed a standard that organisations can use to assess the capacity of their business systems to make and keep full and accurate records. The [Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for Commonwealth Agencies](#) defines 20 metadata elements that will help organisations identify, authenticate, describe, manage and retrieve their records in a systematic and consistent way. Eight of these elements are mandatory and should be applied to every record created in a business system. The remaining twelve elements are optional, and may be applied depending on the significance of the record or the operational needs of the organisation. The standard should be applied to both electronic and paper-based business systems. Recordkeeping metadata ensures that the records captured in business systems possess the necessary qualities to serve as *evidence* of an organisation's activities.

4.2 Recordkeeping processes

In order to capture, maintain and provide evidence over time, systems must also be capable of performing various fundamental recordkeeping processes. [5] These processes govern the following operations:

- *Capture* – formally determine that a record should be made and kept;
- *Registration* – formalise the capture of a record into a designated system by assigning a unique identifier and brief descriptive information about it (such as date, time and title);

- *Classification and indexing* – identify the business activities to which a record relates and then link it to other records to facilitate description, control, retrieval, disposal and access;
- *Access and security* – assign rights or restrictions to use or manage particular records;
- *Appraisal* – identify and link the retention period of a record to a functions-based disposal authority at the point of capture and registration;
- *Storage* – maintain, handle and store records in accordance with their form, use and value for as long as they are legally required;
- *Use and tracking* – ensure that only those employees with appropriate permissions are able to use or manage records and that such access can be tracked as a security measure; and
- *Disposal* – identify records with similar disposal dates and triggering actions, review any history of use to confirm or amend the disposal status, and maintain a record of disposal action that can be audited.

All of these processes generate metadata that plays an essential role in the accountable management of records. The Archives [recordkeeping metadata standard](#) can be used as a benchmark to assess the capacity of organisational business systems to capture this information.

4.3 Recordkeeping systems

All of the business systems that an organisation relies on should be capable of creating full and accurate records and routinely performing these fundamental recordkeeping processes on a continuous basis – either individually or through linked operations – so that the full range of the organisation’s business activities are properly documented. These systems do not have to be dedicated recordkeeping systems. They can be business systems (such as database applications or web content managers) that incorporate the functionality required to keep records. They do not need to be large or centralised or accessible by everyone in the organisation, but their recordkeeping role must be identified and administered appropriately.

The amount of metadata about the records and the records management processes that an organisation captures in its business systems will be determined by its operational and accountability requirements. The DIRKS methodology will help each organisation to determine such requirements and put in place procedures to reassess these needs over time.

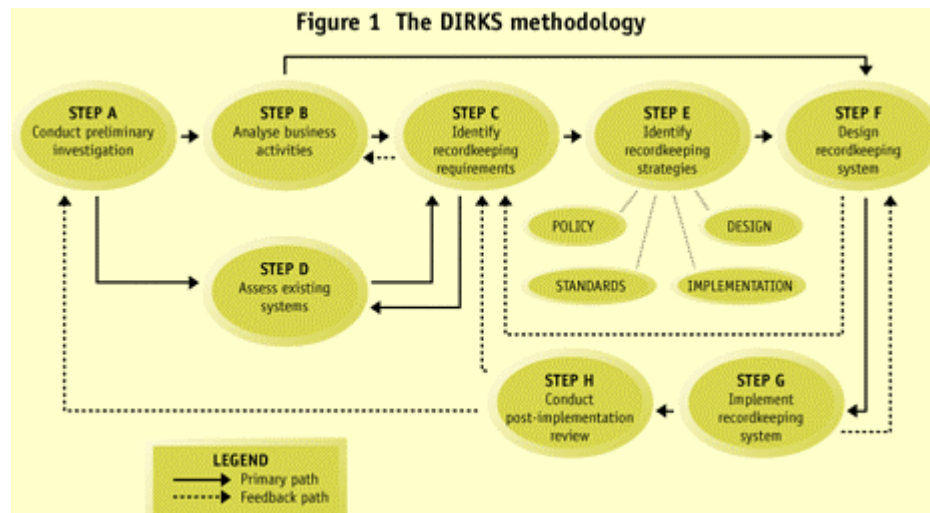
The National Archives is developing detailed generic specifications to help Commonwealth agencies assess the recordkeeping functionality of their existing business systems or design new systems. These specifications will be published in 2002. [6]

The business systems that an organisation adopts to manage its records cannot function effectively in isolation. They must be supported by

appropriate policies and procedures, assigned responsibilities, user training and ongoing maintenance and quality assurance programs. The DIRKS methodology will also help determine these complementary components of an organisation's recordkeeping framework.

5 UNDERSTANDING DIRKS

The methodology for designing and implementing recordkeeping systems outlined in Australian Standard AS 4390-1996, *Records Management*, is frequently referred to by the acronym 'DIRKS'. The same approach is used in International Standard ISO 15489 and the accompanying Technical Report. It is not surprising, therefore, that the methodology plays an important part in the recordkeeping regime promoted by the National Archives of Australia. This regime is introduced in *e-permanence Made E-asy: A Manager's Guide to the Strategic Management of Records and Information*.



DIRKS is based on the systems development life cycle or 'waterfall' model, the traditional methodology used to develop, maintain and replace systems that support the business of an organisation. In common with such models, the methodology has a number of characteristics. It is:

- *Generic* – it provides guidance on why and how an organisation should approach a systems development project, but does not prescribe what those systems should look like.
- *Multi-phased* – it features several identifiable steps that mark the progress of the systems development process. Each of these steps can be regarded as an individual project with its own activities, products and milestones. Steps may assume greater or lesser significance depending on the nature of the project.
- *Systematic* – it provides a structured set of activities that minimises the risk that any important issues are overlooked during the systems development project.

- *Flexible* – specific steps and their sequence can be adapted to suit particular projects. For example, steps may be undertaken sequentially, concurrently, at different levels of detail, or repeated in order to develop acceptable systems. Projects may address the needs of the whole organisation, discrete business units or individual work groups.
- *Cyclical* – it accommodates a continuous process of change, evolution and redevelopment, with the degradation of one system providing the impetus for a new project that may lead to modifications of the existing system or its replacement (hence the ‘life cycle’ concept).
- *Iterative* – each step has specific products and ‘deliverables’ that contribute to the system’s documentation and provide input to subsequent steps. In some cases, the same activities are conducted in different steps for different purposes.
- *Transparent* – the systems development process recommends that certain activities are undertaken and that each of these activities is documented. This documentation serves a variety of purposes. It:
 - is a means of managing the developmental process;
 - provides the basis for subsequent steps;
 - provides backup for the system in its operational phase;
 - enables comparison between the anticipated and actual performance of the system;
 - forms the basis of user training;
 - provides a means of communication with stakeholders during the course of the project; and
 - provides a reference source for subsequent projects.

The format and content of the documentation will vary.

- *Multi-disciplinary* – the size and skills of the project team may vary depending on the systems development project and the specific nature of each step. Members may include recordkeeping professionals, IT specialists, corporate government specialists, information managers, business specialists and representative users. Whether the project is conducted in-house or by external consultants, the participation of business area experts and system users is vital to the design process.
- *User-centric* – the process emphasises the participation of users to help identify and analyse business activities, processes and needs, and to develop solutions to improve business practices. Users should include staff who create, store and retrieve data directly from the system, as well as staff who rely on information generated from the system by others. User involvement increases the likelihood that the system will be successfully implemented.
- *Project-based* – systems development projects require careful attention to project planning, resource management (finance, personnel, time), risk management, and change management. Milestones provide frequent opportunities to review or terminate the project. Further

information on the importance of project management is provided in Section 7 – Before starting DIRKS.

The DIRKS methodology has strong links to other guidelines produced by the National Archives of Australia. While DIRKS provides the framework for recordkeeping, other products address specific aspects, such as techniques for archiving web-based records. We encourage users of the DIRKS methodology to become familiar with complementary guidelines available on our website at www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping.

6 PATHWAYS FOR USING DIRKS

The DIRKS methodology can be used in a number of ways for different purposes. While a straightforward Step A to Step H approach is comprehensive and offers many benefits, it is also expensive, time consuming and may not fit with the immediate needs of your organisation. Users are encouraged to become familiar with the manual so they can use those elements, steps and approaches that are useful for more limited projects or that suit organisational needs. A number of possible scenarios are outlined below.

6.1 Developing a business case for recordkeeping

A case for recordkeeping can be developed using Appendix 9 – [Guide to developing a business case for a DIRKS project](#) and Appendix 10 – [Recordkeeping cost-benefit analysis](#). This can be supported by Step A and also parts of Step D. Step A enables you to develop an overview of your organisation and to position recordkeeping within an organisational context. Step D will help you to identify problems with current practice.

6.2 Assessing compliance with recordkeeping obligations

The DIRKS methodology provides a systematic process that organisations can use to identify their recordkeeping requirements and evaluate their existing compliance. Steps A to D provide the basis for such analysis. In particular, Step A provides you with an understanding of your organisational environment and Steps B and C enable you to identify your organisation's recordkeeping obligations. Step D involves a survey of your organisation's current systems and practices and an assessment of these against recordkeeping obligations.

6.3 Reviewing all information management needs

While devised for designing and implementing recordkeeping systems, the DIRKS methodology can be used for other strategic planning purposes. Steps A to C, in particular, provide organisations with a systematic approach to analysing documentary and other sources that can lead to a clearer understanding of the organisation's purpose, critical activities and related information needs.

For example, Step A helps identify the role and purpose of an organisation, its structure, and its legal, regulatory and sociopolitical environment. Step B helps identify the organisation's functions, activities, transactions and associated work flows. It results in the development of a business classification scheme that can provide the foundation for corporate-wide classification tools. These tools can be used to search, retrieve and control a variety of information including records, online databases, and intranet resources. Further information is available in [Overview of classification tools for records management](#) and [Developing a Functions Thesaurus: Guidelines for Commonwealth Agencies](#).

In addition to the early analytical steps, subsequent steps, including Step D – Assessment of existing systems and Step E – Strategies for recordkeeping, can be used to establish or review library collection development policies, the structure and content of corporate intranets, business work flows and organisational structures.

6.4 Preparing a functions-based records disposal authority

The initial steps of the DIRKS process (Steps A to C) provide the relevant framework for organisations to undertake appraisal projects. These steps involve preliminary investigation; analysis of business activity (including creating a business classification scheme), and identification of recordkeeping requirements.

Appendix 8 – [Procedures for developing a records disposal authority](#) in the Commonwealth provides clear advice on formulating disposal classes based on your organisation's functions, activities, transactions and recordkeeping requirements. It also outlines the National Archives of Australia's requirements for authorising disposal arrangements under the *Archives Act 1983*.

Commonwealth organisations intending to prepare disposal authorities should contact the Director, Recordkeeping Implementation, at the outset of the DIRKS process to be included on the National Archives of Australia's formal work plan. This will ensure that they benefit from the Archives' advice at appropriate points during the projects. (See [Contacting us](#) for contact details.)

6.5 Compiling a functions thesaurus to merge with Keyword AAA

[Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms](#) is a controlled language thesaurus of general terms that are common to the business functions and activities of most government organisations. Keyword AAA by itself cannot be used effectively to classify all records of an organisation. It is designed to be used in conjunction with a thesaurus of functional terms relating to the organisation's unique business functions. Bringing the general and organisation-specific terminology together into one merged thesaurus provides comprehensive, controlled vocabulary coverage tailored to the needs of each organisation.

Organisations will need to compile a business classification scheme as a precursor to developing a functions thesaurus. This involves undertaking a

preliminary investigation (Step A) and analysing business activity (Step B). Information on recordkeeping requirements (Step C) can also be useful in developing a thesaurus. Appendix 6 – Practical advice for using Keyword AAA and AGIFT terms will assist you. The [Guide to Developing a Functions Thesaurus](#) provides advice on the subsequent process of converting the BCS into a thesaurus, integrating it with Keyword AAA and implementing the merged thesaurus.

6.6 Using a mix of paper-based and electronic records

The DIRKS methodology provides for a systematic, business-driven approach to records management irrespective of the medium on which records are created. It can be used to develop new recordkeeping systems or to assess the effectiveness of existing systems, whether organisations use conventional paper-based systems, electronic document management systems or a combination of both.

However, Australian Standard AS 4390–1996, *Records Management* does acknowledge the vulnerability of records that exist solely in electronic form. It stresses that electronic recordkeeping systems must incorporate and maintain not only the content, but also structural and contextual information necessary to document transactions and enable them to function as evidence over time. Appropriate metadata standards are essential to support both paper and electronic systems (see Section 4 above).

6.7 When your agency already has a records management software package

Even if your organisation already has electronic recordkeeping systems, the DIRKS methodology is useful. Recordkeeping involves more than just systems. Human interaction and organisational behaviour are critical to their effectiveness. The adoption of records management software products contributes to a consistent level of best practice across the whole of government. Each product should be implemented as part of an integrated approach to organisation recordkeeping. The DIRKS methodology provides the framework for such a holistic approach.

Even if a software package is not selected and implemented as part of a comprehensive review of an organisation's recordkeeping needs using the DIRKS methodology, the methodology can be used to evaluate whether the application is being used to its optimum capacity to address the organisation's recordkeeping needs. The methodology may also identify other strategies that an organisation should adopt to fully satisfy its recordkeeping needs (for example, policies, procedures and training). An organisation also needs to be aware of its recordkeeping obligations. It is unlikely that a single recordkeeping system will manage all of your organisation's information needs. Step D will enable you to identify all systems in use in your organisation.

7 BEFORE STARTING DIRKS

The DIRKS methodology is a resource-intensive and time-consuming process. Before commencing a project the following preparation should be undertaken:

- define the scope, objectives and limits of the project;
- define the costs and benefits of the project;
- allocate human and other resources;
- determine requirements for professional assistance;
- identify opportunities for outsourcing aspects of the project;
- arrange for supervision, monitoring and reporting of progress;
- determine methodologies to be used in the project;
- develop a project plan;
- advise organisation staff about the project; and
- train personnel who will be involved in the project. [7]

Most importantly, management support is needed for the project. You may wish to do parts of this preparatory work in conjunction with Step A. Conducting the preliminary investigation (Step A) will give you a better perspective on the work involved in the project.

As stated previously, the project does not have to encompass all of Steps A to H. You may decide to do the preliminary investigation (Step A), develop a business classification scheme (Step B) and a functions thesaurus as an initial, stand-alone project. This work can later be used to assist in the identification of recordkeeping requirements (Step C) and the development of a disposal authority. You may later use this work to test your organisation's compliance with recordkeeping obligations, develop strategies to address problems revealed, and design, implement and monitor these solutions (Steps D-H).

7.1 Managing the project

It is vital that recordkeeping projects are properly managed. Careful preparation and ongoing monitoring will ensure that the project is completed on time, within budget, according to specifications and at a level of quality that meets professional standards and management expectations. For these reasons organisations are encouraged to appoint:

- a project sponsor who will assume overall responsibility for the project on behalf of senior management and other resource providers, and will ensure that the project manager and project team members have the appropriate level of skills and expertise;
- a steering committee that will serve as a review body during the course of the project, chaired by the project's sponsor and including senior

representatives from each of the business units affected by the project, the project's manager and a recordkeeping professional; and

- a project manager who will be responsible for day-to-day coordination and implementation of the project in consultation with the steering committee and who will set priorities, delegate responsibility, monitor performance, allocate resources, provide guidance and support, and act as a mentor for team members.

Most organisations should be familiar with such principles of project management. [8]

7.2 Change management

Many of the projects supported by the DIRKS methodology will inevitably result in changes to organisational work practices. To help ensure such changes are accepted it is vital that project managers or sponsors:

- keep management and staff informed about the project;
- ensure management actively and visibly supports both the design process and any subsequent changes to current practices, processes and systems;
- regularly inform users and other stakeholders about the nature of planned changes and their likely impact on processes and procedures; and
- market change by emphasising the key benefits and improvements that can be expected once particular changes have been implemented.

The importance of developing a 'change management' framework for each project, as well as for the specific activities in each step, cannot be overstated. Successfully managing and marketing change is a critical component of systems development projects. A broad framework for change management should be developed in the initial planning stage of the project. This should be used and revised as the project progresses, particularly in Steps E, F and G.

Organisations seeking further advice on this aspect of project management may wish to consult the NSW Office of Information Technology [Management of Change guideline](#).

7.3 Skill requirements

You will require a range of expertise for the project. The expertise required will depend on the scope of the project being undertaken by your organisation. Each step of the DIRKS methodology contains a section on resources and prerequisites that specifies the skills and knowledge required to undertake that particular phase. This expertise may be available in-house or obtained through the use of consultants.

During the systems development process, your project team is likely to include:

- an experienced project manager with financial management, change management, risk management and interpersonal skills (all steps);
- recordkeeping professionals such as archivists and records managers (all steps);
- IT specialists including systems analysts, database managers and network administrators (Steps A to D, F and G);
- corporate governance specialists including auditors, legal professionals, FOI officers, quality assurance personnel, and privacy and data protection administrators (Steps C, E, F and H); and
- individual staff who have a good knowledge of the organisation and can represent 'end users'.

Rather than dedicate people with these skills to the project, you may decide to have a core team that can draw on the skills of others. Organisations seeking further advice on the specific recordkeeping knowledge and skills required to carry out projects of this type are encouraged to consult the recordkeeping competency standards within the *Business Services Training Package* published by the Australian National Training Authority (2001).

7.4 Documentation methods and tools

Like any systems design project, the DIRKS methodology will generate significant amounts of documentation. This information can be reused throughout the project and for different projects. It is important to consider how you will manage the documentation to allow for the efficient re-use of information.

Each step in DIRKS provides information on what documentation will be generated. Templates are provided to assist in this. The National Archives has also developed the [DIRKS documentation database](#) to help organisations manage the information gathered for Steps A, B and C.

Regardless of the method you choose to record your findings, it is advisable to:

- record information as you obtain it;
- record the information in a systematic and consistent way (eg template, graphics, database);
- choose a style that can be understood by others (eg avoid jargon); and
- organise and store the information so that it remains meaningful and accessible over time.

While organisations can manage their information in any way considered appropriate, the National Archives requires certain information to assist in assessing and authorising business classification schemes and records disposal authorities. If you are developing either of these tools, please consider the documentation requirements outlined in Appendix 8 – [Procedures for developing a records disposal authority in the Commonwealth](#).

7.5 Technical options

If your project is likely to involve significant technical work, it is prudent to consider different options early in the project, though final decisions will not be made until the later steps. Technical options may include:

- developing, from scratch, a tailored recordkeeping system in-house (integrating records management software);
- tendering out the development of a tailored recordkeeping system (integrating records management software);
- incorporating recordkeeping functionality into existing organisational processes and products;
- adding recordkeeping functionality to the organisation's existing electronic document management system;
- selecting records management software 'off-the-shelf'; and
- combining the purchase of some elements with the building of others to meet specific organisational needs.

Given such options, organisations may choose to:

- establish an in-house multi-disciplinary project team;
- release a request for tender to obtain development assistance from external consultants and/or vendor firms;
- engage one or more consultants to do some or all of the developmental work; and/or
- select and purchase a suitable product.

8 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

DIRKS – A Strategic Approach to Managing Business Information, is based on the exposure draft, *Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems: A Manual for Commonwealth Agencies* released in February 2000. It also incorporates and replaces *Appraisal Guidelines for Commonwealth Records*. The review of the exposure draft drew on experience gained in the implementation of the methodology and feedback from professionals who have used the manual.

The National Archives encourages organisations, recordkeeping professionals, IT professionals and other interested parties to provide feedback on this version of the manual in the light of their own needs, and provide comments on its usefulness and useability. We will seek to continually improve the product and incorporate feedback into future versions. Comments should be sent to the Assistant Director, Recordkeeping Standards and Policy, email: recordkeeping@naa.gov.au.

9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND COPYRIGHT

The DIRKS manual was initiated by the then Archives Authority of New South Wales as part of its Electronic Recordkeeping Project shortly after the release of Australian Standard AS 4390–1996, *Records Management*. It became a joint partnership in early 1998 when the Archives Authority and the National Archives of Australia agreed to collaborate on its development and an exposure draft was released in February 2000. The National Archives of Australia carried out a review and revision of the exposure draft during 2001.

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ENDNOTES

1. E Turban, E McLean and J Wetherbe, *Information Technology for Management: Improving Quality and Productivity*, Wiley, New York, 1996, p. 408.
2. International Standard ISO 15489, *Records Management*, Part 3: Terms and definitions, Clause 3.15.
3. International Standard ISO 15489, *Records Management*, Part 4: Benefits of records management
4. These terms are drawn from clause 7.2 of ISO 15489, *Records Management*, published by the International Standards Organization. Agencies are encouraged to refer to the standard for more detailed information on the characteristics of records and recordkeeping systems. State Records NSW has also issued a [Standard on full and accurate records](#) (April 1998) that is based on AS4390 and designed for use in the NSW public sector.
5. The definitions of these processes are based on clause 4.3 of the Technical report to accompany ISO 15489, *Records Management*, published by the International Standards Organization. Agencies are encouraged to refer to the report for more detailed information on record processes.
6. Examples of functional specifications developed for other jurisdictions include the Public Record Office (UK) [Functional requirements for electronic](#)

[records management systems](#) (November 1999) and the NSW Department of Public Works and Services [Request for tender No. ITS2323 for the supply of records and information management systems](#) (March 2001).

7. Australian Standard AS 4390–1996, *Records Management*, Part 3: Strategies, Clause 5.3, see also DIRKS manual, Step B and Step C.
8. For an introduction to planning recordkeeping projects, see Bernadette Bean, 'A project plan', in Judith Ellis (ed.), *Selected Essays in Electronic Recordkeeping in Australia*, Australian Society of Archivists, Canberra, 2000.