Issue **Two**
April 2013

in this issue >>>

Records Management at the University of Melbourne

on the record

Steps to better records management

1. Undertake records awareness training to ensure all staff have a base level understanding of records management responsibilities
2. Appoint a Local Records Coordinator and ensure they have training and support to fulfil the role
3. Undertake a records management maturity assessment to gain an understanding of current capability and areas requiring attention
4. Based on the assessment, identify priority areas for attention and implement an action plan to address risks
5. If planning to undertake a records management improvement project, contact Records Services to discuss your needs.

Getting better all the time

The University, as a public agency in Victoria, is obliged to comply with mandatory standards for records management issued by the Public Record Office Victoria. Records Services has developed a toolkit to support self-assessment for compliance and to guide your steps to improvement.

The tool kit – known as the Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) – is a series of self completed worksheets that allow a business area to assess their records management maturity.

Each worksheet links to a different Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) Standard. Completion of them will identify the maturity of the business unit on a scale from ad-hoc to optimised.

This information is then scored and transferred to a simple grid, giving a pictorial overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the business unit against each Standard.

From this, a business unit can determine which areas need to be included in work planning to ensure improvement in records management. However, the tool doesn't end there. As part of the supporting resources, a next steps grid has been created to support business units to identify key actions that are both simple achievable. While some require resourcing, many can be achieved by working with Records Services on training and simple processes and procedures.

> The CIP assists you to determine areas of weakness in your Records Management and gives you achievable actions to improve your practices.

The CIP is available from Records Services, and training is available to support its implementation.

ask the experts >>>

Q: *What does 'format neutral'mean?*

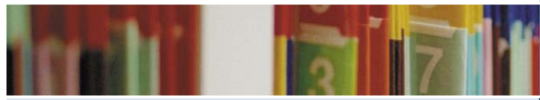
A: *Whatever format a record is in – electronic or paper – it should be treated the same way*

The Public Records Act says that a record is 'anything made or received by an officer in the course of their duties.' This means that it doesn't matter whether it's electronic or hardcopy – it still has to be managed according to the same rules around access, control, disposal and storage.
If you are looking at your records management practices, it's important to make sure that you include all records in your assessment - shared drives, any business systems, email and other electronic records as well as hardcopy files in your

Any questions?

Records Services staff can provide advice about records management

Contact us on ext. **43534** or **records-services@unimelb.edu.au**

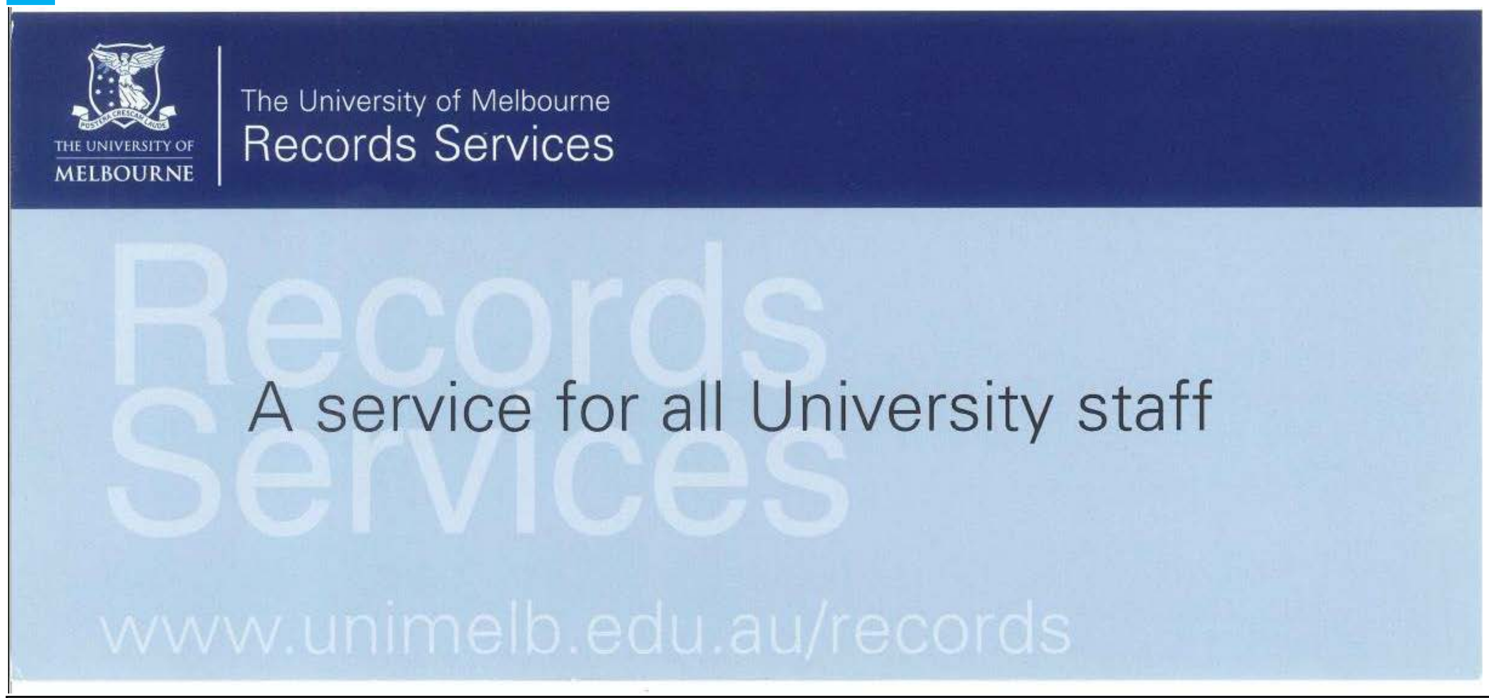


In the next issue

Digitisation

Scanning records can be an excellent method of dealing with hardcopy records – but there are rules around what and how. This issue will examine the benefits and constraints for using this kind of technology when working with records

University records – well managed, accessible, utilised and digital



The records lifecycle >>>

Records capture

Records should be captured to ensure that they are:

- accessible to all who require them, subject to any restrictions that may apply
- controlled and managed in accordance with policy and procedures
- secured against tampering, unauthorised access or unlawful deletion and
- disposed of promptly in accordance with legal authority.

The capture of records should be a routine part of doing business and integrated into standard business processes

A recordkeeping system may include, but not be limited to, dedicated records management software (such as TRIM, Themis, ISIS or Advance) where the systems capture records automatically.

If you do not have access to a recordkeeping system, a well organised shared drive will enable you to capture and access your records.

There are tools to help you apply records management best practice to shared drives such as the Enterprise Classification Scheme. An organised shared drive becomes a highly effective information management tool, providing a central location where employees can access important business and operational documents.

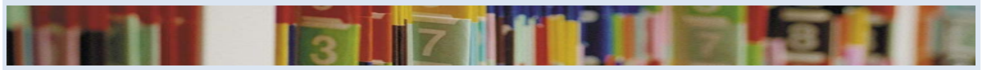
Email is important too! Often you can only fully understand a sequence of events from a combination of email and other documents. To manage emails better, in context, they can be converted to pdf (ensuring all details are preserved) and captured on a shared drive with related documents or, even better, kept on a file in HP TRIM

Legacy Records?

The University changes every day, amalgamating departments, faculties and even whole institutions. In the midst of all this change, it's important to remember that records created by predecessor institutions, department or faculties are still the responsibility of the University.

If you have legacy records in your area, you need to ensure that they are managed just like your current records. Undertake disposal on them, store them correctly and transfer permanent records to Records Services so that they can become part of the University's archives.

terminology corner



What is disposal?

Most people think disposal means destruction of records, but this is only partially correct. Disposal can also mean the permanent retention and transfer of records.

The University Records Retention and Disposal Authority (RDA) is used to determine whether a record is permanent or temporary – and if temporary, how long it must be retained. The value of the record governs how it should be stored and preserved.

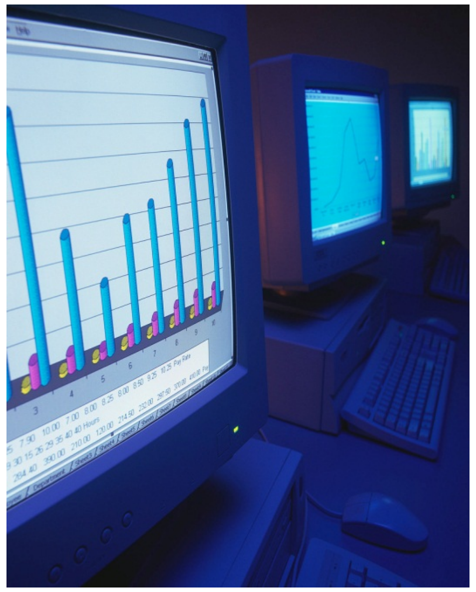
The University retains permanent records forever in the University Archives so that they can be a research resource in the future. If permanent records are no longer being used, they can be transferred to Records Services. These records need special care as to how they are boxed and listed.

Temporary records that are not due for destruction yet are stored by the business unit until they are able to be destroyed. Proper procedures for destruction methods and final sign off should be followed.

You can find the RDA and information about procedures on the Records Services website.

Shared Drives

Shared drives are one of the main ways in which the University shares information across teams, units, departments and faculties. While they are fantastic for doing this, unless they are very carefully managed, they can become dumping grounds for information that no one knows about.



We all know the scenario – you open up the shared drive, and aren't too sure where your colleague has stored the document they've just emailed you – so you save it again in the folder that you've created so you know where it is. Perhaps you've called the folder something that describes what's in it – but maybe, because it's yours, you've just called it 'My Stuff'. That means you can find it amongst all the other 'My Stuff' folders that your colleagues have saved.

If this sounds like you, then there is hope – organising the shared drive is not as bad as it might at first seem.

The first thing is to identify what is current and what is legacy – and move the current records into a system that will allow them to be easily accessed by all. The University's Enterprise Classification Scheme (ECS) has been specially created for this, and gives a consistent structure to managing records.

This consistency means that if you are looking for something, it should be easy to find it, because it will have been filed in accordance with the agreed conventions in your team. This eliminates duplication and loss of records when someone leaves – after all, who's going to know what you have in your 'My Stuff' folder?

The other advantage of this kind of organisation is that if you need to move your shared drive from server to server, a clear and logical structure allows for a simple transition, possibly without staff noticing the difference.

Key concepts

Records management consists of…

Create and Capture

- know the high risk areas of business
- ensure records are created or kept
- use appropriate systems and processes

Control

- register records at source, preferably in digital form
- have a well understood way of organising records

Storage

- make storage secure, for hard copy and digital
- use storage methods that preserve the record in usable form for its entire life

Access

- administer security and access with full understanding of privacy and related requirements

Disposal

- only destroy records when it is legally permitted
- destroy records securely
- ensure permanent records are kept

Procedures and Systems

- ensure training, procedures and systems are adequate and fit for purpose

Each of these six areas of records management activity needs to be covered to manage records adequately.