ESARBICA NEWSLETTER

In this issue:

"UNISA has an ambitious plan to review it record keeping practices and has established a Records Management Centre (RMC) with an initial budget of 35 Million Rand to run this initiative over the first 5 years. This paper briefly outlines the motivation for this initiative as well as the project management steps to be taken to ensure success, being fully cognisant of the challenges that await the institution."

Events

May 2006

2nd – 4th **E health across all health sectors** Conference to be convened by HISA (Health Informatics for Southern Africa) in Mafikeng, North West Province in South Africa. For more information see http://www.nwhealth.gov.za/hisa/index.htm

4th – 5th **Exploring the essence of records management: engaging with the experts** Conference convened by Northumbria University in Newcastle, UK. For more information see www.records.visitNewcastleGateshead.com

8th – 12th **Advanced archives and records management** Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **28th April 2006.** Contact Mr. Mathews Kokong Tel: (+2711) 471 3896 Fax: (+2711) 471 3906 Email: mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website: http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563

21st -26th **Managing Agricultural Information for Sustainable Food Security and Improved Livelihoods in Africa** Conference convened by the International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists (IAAIS) in Nairobi Kenya. Contact; Dr Joseph Kiplangat, Moi University. Email: jkngetich@yahoo.co.uk Website: http://www.asareca.org/iaald-africa/

23rd – 24th **Managing your EDRMS** Conference convened by IQPC at the Indaba Hotel in Johannesburg, South Africa. Contact: (11) 669 5000 or email info@iqpc.co.za http://www.iqpc.com/cgi-bin/templates/singlecell.html?topic=233&event=9781

29th – 6th July **Records and information management** course convened by the Institute of Development Management in Lesotho. Contact: Matthias Chida Email: mchida@idmbls.com website: http://www.idmbls.com/crs/crsrec.html

July 2006

10th – 14th **Intermediate archives and records management** Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **30th June 2006.** Contact Mr. Mathews Kokong Tel: (+2711) 471 3896 Fax: (+2711) 471 3906 Email: mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website: http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563

10th – 14th **Libraries as a bridge to information and knowledge society** Conference convened by the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Library and Information Professionals (SCECSAL XVII) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Contact Dr Alli Mcharazo, P O Box 33433, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Tel:

+255 744 296134 Emails: tla_tanzania@yahoo.com or amcharazo@muchs.ac.tz
Website: http://www.tlatz.org/scecsal2006/

12th – 14th **Information Lifecycle Management** Conference to be convened by Longsight Communication**.** Contact Saimon Chirume, Tel: (012) 320 6770, Fax: (012) 326 5080, Cell: 072 661 0714

E-mail: saimon@longsight.co.za

Aug

21st – 1st September **Records and information management** course convened by the Institute of Development Management in Lesotho. Contact: Matthias Chida Email: mchida@idmbls.com website: http://www.idmbls.com/crs/crsrec.html

28th – 15th September **Advanced international records management training program** (phase 1) Conducted by the Swedish National Archives. Deadline for application 1st March 2006 Contact: Riksarkivet C/o Hanna Eriksson Box 12541 SE-102 29 Stockholm, Sweden Fax +4687376474 Phone +4687376350 Website: http://www.ra.se/ra/recordsmanagement/index_eng.asp

Sept 2006

11th – 15th **Advanced archives and records management** Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **1st September 2006.** Contact Mr. Mathews Kokong Tel: (+2711) 471 3896 Fax: (+2711) 471 3906 Email: mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website: http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563

25th – 29th **Libraries: partners in learning, nation building and development** Conference convened by Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) Ninth Annual Conference. Contact: Ms Naomi Haasbroek Tel: +(27)0218431259 Fax: +(27)218433525 Email: naomi@tlabs.ac.za Website: http://www.liasa.org.za/conferences/conference2006/cfp.php

Oct 2006

23rd – 27th **10th AHILA (Association for Health Information and Libraries in Africa) conference.** Conference to be convened in Mombasa, Kenya. Contact: Nancy Kamau (Kenya Medical Research Institute) P.O.BOX 54840, Nairobi Tel.: (254)-713678 Fax: (254)-720030 E-mail: kemrilib@healthnet.or.ke Website http://www.ahila.org/events.php

Nov 2006

13th – 17th **Intermediate archives and records management** Training course to be convened by the Centre of Applied Communication at UNISA. Deadline for registration **3rd November 2006.** Contact Mr. Mathews Kokong Tel: (+2711) 471 3896 Fax: (+2711) 471 3906 Email: mkokong@unisa.ac.za Website: http://www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=17563

23rd – 24th **East African Government Technology conference** To be convened in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Website: http://new.aitecafrica.com/node/133

26th – 29th **11th ISfTeH International Conference : e-Health for all. Developed and Developing countries. Common issues – Universal solutions?** To be convened by hosted by the South African Department of Health and to be held in Cape Town, South Africa. Website: http://www.mrc.ac.za/conference/satelemedicine/index.htm

March 2007

Advanced international records management training program (phase 2) Conducted by the Swedish National Archives. Deadline for application 1st March 2006 Contact: Riksarkivet C/o Hanna Eriksson Box 12541 SE-102 29 Stockholm, Sweden Fax +4687376474 Phone +4687376350 Website: http://www.ra.se/ra/recordsmanagement/index_eng.asp

July 2007

XIV Bi-Annual ESARBICA Conference to be convened in Tanzania, hosted by the National Archives of Tanzania.

July 2008

XVIth International Congress on Archives to be convened in Kuala Lumpur, hosted by the International Council on Archives Website: http://www.ica.org/calendrier.php?pcalendrierid=237&plangue=eng

October 2007

Advanced international records management training program (phase 3) Conducted by the Swedish National Archives. Deadline for application 1st March 2006 Contact: Riksarkivet C/o Hanna Eriksson Box 12541 SE-102 29 Stockholm, Sweden Fax +4687376474 Phone +4687376350 Website: http://www.ra.se/ra/recordsmanagement/index_eng.asp

Establishing a centralised records management centre at the University of South Africa (UNISA)

By Margaret N More

Abstract

UNISA has an ambitious plan to review it record keeping practices and has established a Records Management Centre (RMC) with an initial budget of 35 Million Rand to run this initiative over the first 5 years. This paper briefly outlines the motivation for this initiative as well as the project management steps to be taken to ensure success, being fully cognisant of the challenges that await the institution.

BACKGROUND

The University of South Africa (UNISA) is one of the largest distance education institutions in the world, with a total student body of about 250,000. With a history that goes back over 130 years, tracing its history from when it was the University of the Cape changing to an examination body, through the period of transformation in the 1940s when it changed to a distance education institution. The institution has also had to transform internally inline with the national political changes of the 1990s, and over the last few years, has also complied with the South African government's National Plan for Higher Education. This rationalisation process resulted in a merger process that took place on the 1st of January 2004 between three institutions, UNISA, Technikon Southern Africa, and Vista University's distance learning arm (Vudec).

With UNISA considering itself as Africa's premier distance learning institution, it is evident that over the last few years, the challenge of managing such a large institution has increased exponentially. At the core of these challenges has been the effective management of information resource, which forms a corner stone to effective governance.

For UNISA, effective records management systems should govern the recordkeeping habits of record creators and users (which includes any administrative or academic staff member that creates or uses records in the course of executing their daily business activities) as well as the records management staff

Records management in any organization includes issues such as:

- Development of policies and setting standards
- Assigning responsibilities and authorities
- Establishing and promulgating procedures and guidelines
- Providing a range of services relating to the management, access and use of records
- Designing, implementing and administering specialized systems for managing records
- Integrating records management into business systems and processes.

UNISA being a distance learning institution, it relies on the records created and received regardless of whether it is active and inactive. With the challenge of systematising the recordkeeping processes in the light of all the changes, it became apparent that UNISA had to review the overall management of their records regardless of the format. The rest of this paper outlines some of the current developments in this review process.

INITIATIVE

UNISA Top Management authorised an investigation requiring recommendations on how to ensure that the records are properly managed in the new UNISA.

A collective decision was taken by all stakeholders within UNISA to establish a centralised Records Management Centre at the workshop was held in March 2005, where all stakeholders (Business Units) were represented.

A SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was conducted at this workshop hence the collective decision above-mentioned. All Stakeholders developed the high-level functions and responsibilities of such Records Management Centre at that workshop with the assistance of an Independent Facilitator specialising in Records and Information Management. A proposal was submitted to the Management of UNISA and was approved and allocated a budget of R35 million to support this initiative.

BENEFITS

During these deliberations, it was noted that sound Records Management would enable UNISA 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 throughout an institution
- Provide continuity in the event of disaster
- Meet legislative and regulatory requirements including archival, audit and oversight activities
- Provide protection and support in litigations and associated risks
- Provide evidence of business, personal and cultural activity
- Support and document current and future research, development activities, achievements as well as historical research
- Establish business, personal and cultural identity
- Maintain corporate, personal and collective memory.

The UNISA RMC Project

The establishment of an institution-wide Records Management Centre project has since been registered (2005) and is envisaged to be completed in five years. In this regard, an RMC Project Board was established to ensure proper management, leadership and success of the project.

The RMC Board is constituted mostly by the Executive Management of UNISA.

The Objectives of the Project are as follows:

- Develop policy and procedures regarding records keeping (All paper-based, electronic, Microform etc) according to relevant legislation, national and international standards (ISO 15489).
- Design and implement a standard records classification system and ensure that all business units comply.
- Design, develop and implement a fully integrated records management system with clear processes and guidelines in accordance with the relevant legislation, acceptable standards and international best practice.
- Provide a user-friendly service to all stakeholders and clients (students) in a cost effective, technologically efficient and readily accessible manner.

- Ensure that all business records (note: these will include records such as Human Resource, Finance, Student, Management Committee, Internal Audit, non-formal Centres, Regional Offices (Hubs) and all other records pertaining to the merger and legal succession) are maintained according to acceptable standards in a secure and sustainable environment (Good Practice)
- Ensure that all aspects of good governance are considered during this process of developing and establishing a Comprehensive Records Management Centre.
- Ensure that adequate resources are allocated towards achieving these goals.
- Ensure that sufficient training is provided to enable staff members to be effective and efficient.

The table below outlines the high level project management states of the RMC

STAGE	ACTION	OUTCOME	DATE
Initiation	Workshop held on Records Management	Recommendation for an establishment of a Records Management Centre. All stakeholders involved.	March 2005
Analysis	Closed tender send out to undertake Records Keeping Audit for UNISA	Appointment of an external Specialist Consultant	November 2005 (allocated 3 months)
Design	Possible solutions to be explored by Different Task Teams formulated and approved by RMC Board	Selection of suitable solution. RMC Board in place and RMC Project Charter signed off. 9 Task Teams formulated to deal with: 1. Policy & Procedures 2. Retention Schedules 3. File Plan (Taxonomy) 4. Restructuring (HR) 5. Facilities 6. Technology 7. Scanning 8. Communication (Intranet	Final records keeping audit was presented by an Independent Specialist in March 2006. Each Task Team has been assigned tasks (Scope) linked to budgets, time frames and deliverables, which were extracted from the Records Keeping Audit Report. All Task Teams were allocated 2 months to come up with recommendations.

STAGE	ACTION	OUTCOME	DATE
		Website developed) Change Management	
Development	Recommendation from different Task Teams approved by RMC Board before implementation.	• Business process scoping & mapping • All Stakeholders/Business Units involved	June 2006 (Incomplete)
Implementation	Develop training manuals & maintenance procedures	• Highly skilled records specialists • Fully functional institution-wide records management programme	Dependent on the successful development of suitable solutions Staggered approach of implementation (Incomplete)
Operation	Full operation and testing of solution	• Fully integrated & functional institution-wide Records Management Programme	Dependent on the successful implementation of the selected solutions, training and budget (Incomplete)
Evaluation	Feedback from users and making minor adjustments	Successful establishment of RMC	Dependent on the user's acceptance of change. Review Records Management Programme sustainability.

The figure below shows a high level diagrammatic representation of the project plan
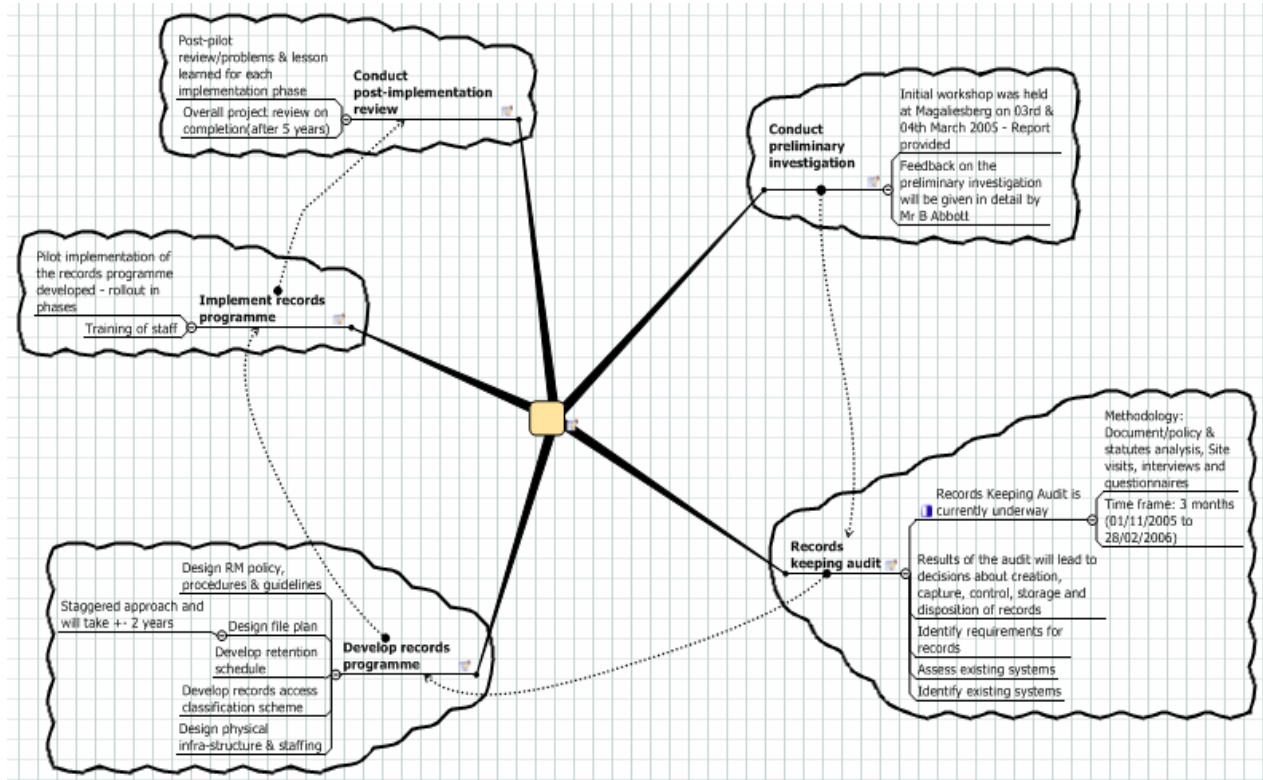
Conclusion

UNISA has taken a wise decision to invest in their records as a distance learning institution, a journey that is not only new to UNISA but has a lot of challenges ahead including that of resistance to change by staff, which is normal in any introduction of new product or service.

The planning phase of this project was full of turbulence but the situation is envisaged to improve once the project starts taking shape. After all, the end result is for the benefit of all.

Although the allocated budget of R35 million sounds a lot and five years sounds like a long time, the project is in its 3rd year and it's only a matter of time before we can determine whether the project was worth it or not.

We are enthusiastic about the possibilities that lie ahead and are preparing ourselves for the challenges. However, we would be happy to receive suggestions especially from colleagues who have walked this path before us.

About the author

Margaret N More is the Project Manager of the UNISA RMC Project. She has an honours

degree in archival studies from UNISA and is currently registered for a masters degree in archival science also at UNISA. For more information she can be contacted at morenm@unisa.ac.za or via telephone +27 12 429 2903 or fax +27 12 429 3221.

Additional information

1. Higher education institutions FAM (function activity model) and RSS (record retention schedule) – an introduction http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=srl_intro
2. Managing records at the Lancaster University (UK) http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/recman/
3. Managing records at the University of Toronto (Canada) http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utarms/rm/managing.html
4. Managing records at the University of Western Washington (US) http://www.wwu.edu/depts/recmgmt/definition.shtml
5. Senior management briefing document on managing records of higher education institutions http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=smbp_rm