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“The International Standards Organization’s Records Management Standard, ISO 15489, is achieving worldwide importance and acceptance. Most English-speaking nations have adopted it or its tenets and around the world it is being or has been translated into upwards of a dozen other languages. ...”

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## Events

### July 2004

14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> “Reading the trace: memory, information and archives” A short course by the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. Course instructor Verne Harris, email [sahav@library.wits.ac.za](mailto:sahav@library.wits.ac.za) For registration contact Lesley Stephenson Phone: (27) 117177031 Fax: (27) 113397835 Email: [stephensonl@ebe.wits.ac.za](mailto:stephensonl@ebe.wits.ac.za) Course website <http://www.wits.ac.za/qshass/archives>

15<sup>th</sup> **Information Management Compliance Master Class** The Forest Group Johannesburg, South Africa. Contact Tel +27116222312 Fax +27115075284. Email: [joburg@forestgroup.info](mailto:joburg@forestgroup.info) Website <http://www.forestgroup.info/imclasclass.htm>

19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> “**Records management for registries**” **AIMS cc workshop** Western Cape, South Africa. Contact: Ms R. Mathale tel. +27835914717, or Ms L. Calitz +27832911459, Fax +27123439896 <http://www.aims-access.co.za>

22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> **Electronic Records Management workshop** Knowledge Upgrade, Johannesburg, South Africa Contact Vanessa Tel: +27117840888

28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> **E-mail management – managing e-mail as a business critical messaging and information tool** Marcus Evans conference, Cape Town. Contact: Paul Egberink Tel. +2711516100 Fax +27115161004 <http://www.marcusevans.com/events/CFEventinfo.asp?EventID=8681>

### Aug 2004

5<sup>th</sup> **Information Management Compliance Master Class** The Forest Group Johannesburg, South Africa. Contact Tel +27116222312 Fax +27115075284. Email: [joburg@forestgroup.info](mailto:joburg@forestgroup.info) Website <http://www.forestgroup.info/imclasclass.htm>

9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> “**Records management for registries**” **AIMS cc workshop** North West, South Africa. Contact: Ms R. Mathale tel. +27835914717, or Ms L. Calitz +27832911459, Fax +27123439896 <http://www.aims-access.co.za>

18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> “**Records management in health institutions**” **AIMS cc workshop** Gauteng, South Africa. Contact: Ms R. Mathale tel. +27835914717, or Ms L. Calitz +27832911459, Fax +27123439896 <http://www.aims-access.co.za>

23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> “**Records management for registries**” **AIMS cc workshop** Eastern Cape, South Africa. Contact: Ms R. Mathale tel. +27835914717, or Ms L. Calitz +27832911459, Fax +27123439896 <http://www.aims-access.co.za>

23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> “**Archives, memory, and knowledge**” **15th International Congress on Archives** Vienna, Austria <http://www.wien2004.ica.org>

### Sept 2004

13<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> “**Records management for registries**” **AIMS cc workshop** Free State, South Africa. Contact: Ms R. Mathale tel. +27835914717, or Ms L. Calitz +27832911459, Fax +27123439896 <http://www.aims-access.co.za>

27<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> Oct “**Records management for registries**” **AIMS cc workshop** Mpumalanga, South Africa. Contact: Ms R. Mathale tel. +27835914717, or Ms L. Calitz +27832911459, Fax +27123439896 <http://www.aims-access.co.za>

[access.co.za](http://www.aims-access.co.za)

## Oct 2004

11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> “**Records management for registries**” AIMS cc workshop  
Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa. Contact: Ms R. Mathale tel. +27835914717, or  
Ms L. Calitz +27832911459, Fax +27123439896 [http://www.aims-](http://www.aims-access.co.za)

[access.co.za](http://www.aims-access.co.za)

14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> “**Justice, unfinished business and access to information**”  
Conference convened by SAHA and Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, University  
of Witwatersrand, South Africa Contact Lesley Stephenson Phone:

+27117177031 Fax: +27113397835 Email: [stephensonl@ebe.wits.ac.za](mailto:stephensonl@ebe.wits.ac.za)

website: <http://www.wits.ac.za/saha>

25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> “**Records management for registries**” AIMS cc workshop  
Northern Cape, South Africa. Contact: Ms R. Mathale tel. +27835914717, or  
Ms L. Calitz +27832911459, Fax +27123439896 [http://www.aims-](http://www.aims-access.co.za)

[access.co.za](http://www.aims-access.co.za)

## Nov 2004

15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> “**Records management for registries**” AIMS cc workshop  
Gauteng, South Africa. Contact: Ms R. Mathale tel. +27835914717, or Ms L.  
Calitz +27832911459, Fax +27123439896 <http://www.aims-access.co.za>

## RM Standard going worldwide as ISO begins first review

Towards the end of 2003, the Americans and the Arabs were discussing and agreeing about something, for a change. It had nothing or perhaps everything to do with their political differences. The subject was the international records management standard, ISO 15489, the world's guide to saving, caring for and using the information that every organization, business, urban authority or national government relies on to carry out its functions.

The two nations were not, actually, talking with each other about the Standard but towards the end of the year, they both declared its colossal importance.

In the U.S.A., after lengthy, some would say tortuous examination, the National Archives and Records Administration was nailing the ISO 15489 standard to its mast. In his *Strategic Directions: Guidance and Regulations*, John W. Carlin, the Archivist of the United States, boldly went where the American National Standards Institute was still unwilling to go and announced:

*"We will base our approach to records management on the ISO Records Management Standard 15489."*

At the same time, a critical symposium was being prepared in the United Arab Emirates port of Dubai. It was, said the President of the Arab Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives, Dr Abdulla El Reyes, to "show our full commitment towards upgrading the level of expertise in the area of archiving, traditional and electronic in the Arab world". The first concern of the symposium was:

*"International standards (ISO 15489) attached to the organization of archives in governmental and private establishments."*

The juxtaposition of these events, a coincidence I am sure, was a striking illustration of the escalating worldwide up-take of the standard. Still less than three years old, this global standard for records management, the organisation's 15,489<sup>th</sup> work of standard setting, has swept the world. It is one of the International Standards Organization's (ISO) most successful publications since its 9000 series of quality codes in the 1990's.

Written originally in English, it has been translated into several languages and more and more nations are coming on line. Interest has been so intense that the standard's authoring sub-committee, ISO TC46/SC11, has already begun a review process aiming to provide an up-dated version in time for its fifth birthday in 2006. And, later this year, the sub-committee will complete its *ISO 23081 Metadata for Records Standard*, early drafts for which are in circulation for comment.

Last month (May 2004), SC11 launched the worldwide review consultation process and survey of opinion to update ISO 15489. It approaches the task without pre-conceptions of what world record keeping communities will seek. One of the biggest differences it will have to consider is the world's widening awareness and acceptance of records management itself, a change significantly advanced by the creation and existence of the international standard itself.

When preparing the standard, SC11 sought to avoid offending existing national archival and information management protocols and sensitivities. Some delegations wanted to make the standard prescriptive ... more “must” and less “may” directives ... but, quite correctly, the committee agreed a more delicate approach offering guidance and advice towards records management best practice. Now, though, the “mays” and “coulds” might well become “musts” and “shoulds” as the standard is given more teeth.

It will be a big leap from those last months of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when SC11 was putting final touches to the original document. Immediately after the Standard’s October 2001 launch at the ARMA International Montreal, Canada, conference, Australia<sup>1</sup> adopted it as its national standard, AS ISO 15489, replacing its original 1996 ground-breaking guide, AS4390, on which the international code was founded. Then, the British Standards Institution (BSI)<sup>2</sup> issued it as BS ISO 15489 and created workbooks to help organisations fit it to the British way ... a three-part “public document” (PD) guide to the standard, *PD 0025 Effective records management*.

The French national standards authority Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR) published it as *NF ISO 15489 Information et documentation - "Records management"*<sup>3</sup>. In Germany, the Deutsches Institut für Normung (DIN) called it *DIN ISO 15489. Information und Dokumentation – Schriftgutverwaltung*<sup>4</sup>, and the Nederlands Normalisatie-instituut created *NEN-ISO 15489-1:2001 nl -- Informatie en documentatie; Informatie- en archiefmanagement; Deel 1: Algemeen*<sup>5</sup>.

Standards and archiving journals all over Europe have published articles about the standard, many written by members of SC11 in German, French, Dutch and Croatian.

The Nordic nations have picked up the work. The Swedish standards institution and records managers from its Civil Aviation Authority were foundation members of SC11. As a result, the country’s Agency for Public Management, the *Statskontoret*, which guides government agency administration practice, includes it in its procedures. The little North Atlantic island nation, Iceland, is translating the work.

Federal Spanish standards authorities have been slower to react, but in Barcelona, the government of the province of Catalonia last year held a seminar on the standard and has translated into the Catalan language. The Catalonian Research and Information Society Department (DURSI) is developing and implementing public sector record management procedures based on the international code.

The former USSR satellite Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, have all worked on the standard. The National Archives of Estonia<sup>6</sup>, having already translated an early draft, last month completed work on an Estonian language version that has

<sup>1</sup> Standards Australia. URL: [www.standards.com.au](http://www.standards.com.au)

<sup>2</sup> British Standards Institution (BSI). URL: [www.bsi-global.com/](http://www.bsi-global.com/)

<sup>3</sup> Association Française de Normalisation (AFNOR). URL: [www.afnor.fr/Portail/portail.asp](http://www.afnor.fr/Portail/portail.asp)

<sup>4</sup> Deutsches Institut für Normung (DIN). URL: [www2.din.de/](http://www2.din.de/).

<sup>5</sup> Nederlands Normalisatie-instituut, URL: [www.nni.nl/](http://www.nni.nl/)

<sup>6</sup> National Archives of Estonia, URL: [www.ra.ee/](http://www.ra.ee/)

been adopted as the national standard.

The Lithuanian Standardisation Department expects to approve ISO 15489 as its official standard this year and has already created regulations in accordance with the international principles.

Latvian Standards' (*Latvijas standarts*) Museums, Archives and Libraries Standardisation committee made the decision on February 28 to finish its work on translating the standard. The committee hopes to report the job done to the second International Conference on the History of Records and Archives (I-CHORA 2), *Archival Affinities: Adapting and Adopting Archival Cultures*, at Amsterdam in September 2005.

The National Archives of Croatia has translated the standard and distributed it around the other countries of the former state of Yugoslavia. The Czech Republic has issued its own guide to the standard, e-CH-0002<sup>7</sup>.

China has an unofficial but important translation created by the dynamic staff and students of the School of Information Resources Management (until earlier this year called the Archives College) of Beijing's Renmin University<sup>8</sup>. That change of name, incidentally, is a perfect example of how global attitudes towards recordkeeping are changing.

The Irish consultancy, Eneclann<sup>9</sup>, a campus company of the republic's big tertiary institution, Trinity College, recommends the standard. The Irish National Archives supports it. New Zealand's the national archives, Archives New Zealand, uses the Standard as the basis for its Government recordkeeping programme, *Continuum, create and maintain*<sup>10</sup>.

In Africa, the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa has endorsed the Standard. The Kenyan National Archives is showing its sub-Saharan neighbours the way with its own Records and Archives Management Standard based on ISO 15489 and the ICA's standard for archives description.

In the Caribbean, the University of the West Indies has introduced the Standard to its administration.

A number of Canadian provincial legislatures, notably the western prairie province of Alberta, have absorbed ISO 15489 into their information management regulation and the Canadian National Archives *Information Management Capacity Check* tool and the Canadian General Standards Board's standard *CGSB 72.34 Electronic Records as Documentary Evidence*, to be published this year, have the international standard as their bases.

The International Council on Archives plans ISO 15489 implementation guidance

<sup>7</sup> Czech Guide to ISO 15489, e-CH-0002, URL: [www.ech.ch/](http://www.ech.ch/)

<sup>8</sup> Renmin University of China, Beijing. URL: [www.ruc.edu.cn/](http://www.ruc.edu.cn/)

<sup>9</sup> Eneclann, URL: [www.eneclann.ie/](http://www.eneclann.ie/)

<sup>10</sup> Archives New Zealand Recordkeeping Framework *Continuum – create and maintain*. URL: [www.archives.govt.nz/continuum/index.html](http://www.archives.govt.nz/continuum/index.html)

sessions at its annual congress<sup>11</sup> in Vienna, Austria, next August. The congress will see, for the first time, the ICA's *Workbook on Electronic Records*, a document produced by its Committee on Current Records in an *Electronic Environment* comprising 25 members from around the world. The workbook's principle reference point is ISO 15489.

The list of participating nations grows day by day. ISO 15489 is a weapon of mass instruction in the armoury of information managers. It adds power to the elbows of recordkeepers fighting their corner for greater support and recognition for both their systems and themselves.

With ISO 15489 in hand, recordkeepers may encourage employers with promises like: "This is how the world does records management. We can learn from the world."

### **Additional Information**

1. A fuller version of this paper is on-line on the website of the author's company, The Caldeson Consultancy, at <http://www.caldeson.com/1548904.html>.
2. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) <http://www.iso.ch>
3. International Council on Archives <http://www.ica.org>

### **The author**

Michael Steemson heads the New Zealand-based Caldeson Consultancy in business information management after 35 years in London journalism. In the 1990's, he was for two years chairman of the Records Management Society of Great Britain and chaired a London-based consortium of IT consultants, vendors and academics that created the British Standards Institution's 1996 code of practice for the legal admissibility of electronic documents, PD0008. In New Zealand, he helped form and was appointed chairman of a committee creating a *New Zealand Guide to Records Management*. Michael was a member of the Australia delegation on the authoring sub-committee of I.S.O's Records Management Standard, ISO15489. He is a member of the New Zealand Branch Council of the Records Management Association of Australasia. In 2002, he was appointed technical writer to the DigiCULT Forum of the European Commissions' Information Society directorate. He has spoken at information conferences in London, Edinburgh, Vienna, Istanbul, China, Singapore, Sweden, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand.

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<sup>11</sup> ICA Congress, Vienna, URL: [www.wien2004.ica.org/](http://www.wien2004.ica.org/)

## Electronic records research report – an introduction to InterPARES

There are numerous articles in professional and industry publications that have highlighted the dilemma the world faces in dealing with challenges of electronic age. However, there's not as much limelight on the efforts being made to meet these challenges. There are numerous research projects around that world that, while taking certain disciplinary perspectives are getting scholars to address issues such as media longevity, technological obsolescence, and inter-operability. One such project is the **International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems (InterPARES)** which aims at developing the theoretical and methodological knowledge essential to the long-term preservation of authentic records created and/or maintained in digital form.

What makes this project unique is among other things the fact that, to use the words of a recent project report, it is "highly interdisciplinary". The project has endeavoured to engage active participation of record creators (scientists, artists, government bodies, corporations and industry), the information technology sector, as well as the archival and information science and the conservation professions. The scholars involved in the formulation and selection of case studies, gathering of empirical evidence and analysis include those from Archival Science, Chemistry, Computer Engineering, Computer Science, Dance, Diplomats, Film, Geography, History, Information Studies, Law, Library Science, Linguistics, Media Studies, Music, Performance Art, Photography, and Theatre. With participation from different countries including Canada, the US, Australia, Singapore, China, Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, the UK and to a limited extent Spain and Portugal, this project can claim to be "somewhat international".

Often the question is asked, what about the participation of developing countries and Africa to be more specific? There was, at some point, an African team that was subsequently disbanded. However, this does not preclude anyone from exploring the wealth of information on the project from the website <http://www.interpares.org> While some have argued that Africa is often not given a respectable position on the table of global discussions, an engagement with projects like this is important at the very least to increase our awareness about the on-goings at global hubs and hopefully spark our imagination towards symbiotic interaction.

Shadrack Katuu  
Member of the Advisory Board of InterPARES 2