

ICA/SUV Meeting 3rd-7th September 2001 Imperial College

***Exploring Electronic Records: Sharing Problems and Solutions Across the
Archival and Scientific Worlds***

Conference Statement

The necessity for the long term preservation of records is becoming increasingly important to the research community. The proliferation of electronic records exacerbates the issue and emphasises the need for archivists to raise awareness within the wider research community.

Accordingly, a corporate records management policy that will ensure long term preservation of records created by institutions and individuals, including electronic records, is vital for the effective operation and management of an organisation. This requires support from senior management, data generators, Information Communication Technologies (ICT), and other agencies. Appropriate funding is essential. The institution must be active in promulgating the policy.

There is an onus on information generators to create records that are comprehensible, accessible, conform to standards and can, in the future, be interpreted in the context in which they were created.

Best practice should be instilled in records creators and researchers as early as practicable such that record keeping becomes a natural practice.

Responsibility for electronic records management and especially for long term preservation, is a joint concern of archivists, records creators, researchers, historians and ICT practitioners.

Archivists and researchers need to work together in determining information that should be retained and the methods and standards for doing this.

Historians and other researchers will need to provide guidance on their requirements for retention policies.

Best practice guidelines must regularly be updated to take into account technological developments.

ICT practitioners will need to be involved from the first with these matters and be proactive in advising the organisation about changes in technology that could affect this area.

Due attention must be paid, by all involved, to existing and developing standards in the field of record keeping.

Due attention must be paid, by all involved, to the overarching legislative requirements of respective countries.

International co-operation is essential in providing solutions to the problems of electronic records.