



**JISC Circular 09/02  
Supporting Institutional Records Management  
Theme 3  
Electronic Records Management Training Package**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Catherine Hare**

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## 1. Context

Today, in organizations, the management of records in different formats, but increasingly in electronic form, is growing in importance. This fact applies equally to higher education institutions (HEIs) and to further education institutions (FEIs). Both need to make provision for effective and efficient management of their records, irrespective of their format, because records are the inputs to and the outputs of business processes and thus provide evidence of institutional activity. This is especially true in the case of electronic records because of digital preservation requirements, discovery issues and the potential for being out of control, all creating a time bomb unless action is taken.

As confirmed by ISO 15489 (ISO, 2001) the first ever international standard on records management, records management (RM) is "the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence and information of business activities and transactions in the form of records." RM thus **embraces all of the activities of an institution**, from the point at which the records come into existence or are received by an institution, to their destruction or transfer to the archive for permanent **preservation**. It ensures that they are accessible and preserved to meet business needs for as long as they are needed but no longer. In order to fulfill these business requirements they need to be **good records**. This means that they need to be fit for purpose, by being accurate, complete, authentic and reliable. It also means that the relative importance of records, i.e. their **value**, needs to be determined so that the most valuable can be given special protection. Those records requiring additional attention will include **vital records** (i.e. those records which will ensure the continuing operation of the institution in the event of a disaster) and records of historical importance which need to be retained permanently.

There is also the issue of making records and keeping them in order to meet the **legal requirements** which apply in the sector. These requirements range from the types of legislation which relate to all organizations (e.g. fiscal requirements and data protection) to those which apply particularly to FEIs and HEIs as public bodies, such as the Freedom of Information Act (FoI) 2000.

Within HEIs and FEIs, the electronic environment is in crucial ways more problematic than the paper environment. The dual issues of creating and capturing good electronic records and making them available and preserving them over time are particularly challenging because of the highly distributed and de-centralised networked environment in HEIs and FEIs, where every user has a PC on their desk, which they use to create, use, manage and communicate information. Much of this information constitutes records but may not be recognized as such and may be amended without any trace of the changes. The culture of 'academic freedom' adds a further dimension to the challenge because of the high level of individual activity and direction in supporting and achieving institutional goals and objectives.

In addition to the human element of capturing and preserving records within the electronic environment in HEIs and FEIs, there is also the issue of ensuring availability of records across periods of technological change. Electronic information is not bound to the physical medium on which it is captured in the same way as paper records and in fact the medium may change over time as the records are converted or migrated to new systems (JISC, 2002).

Records management therefore needs to involve **all staff across all levels** and in all areas of the institution, particularly in the electronic environment. Records management has strategic, tactical and operational dimensions which encompass not only policies, but also procedures based on examples of good practice. It needs to be part of the routine control-and-review systems of the institution to ensure quality assurance and improvement. It requires also that **new working partnerships** be formed to cover not only expertise in records management but also in administration and in IT.

The universal involvement and responsibility of all staff is stated again in the ISO standard (ISO, 2001), which spells out the range of roles and responsibilities that need to be "defined and assigned, and promulgated throughout the organisation so that, where a specific need to create and capture records is identified, it should be clear who is responsible for taking the necessary action". So, in addition to everyone in the institution as individuals having to take responsibility for records management, the groups identified as having particular roles and responsibilities include records management professionals, senior management/executives and systems specialists/administrators. Each of these has a different combination of responsibilities but some are shared.

Making staff aware of their responsibilities is essential and requires the establishment of "an ongoing programme of records training" which covers "the roles and responsibilities of, and ...[is] addressed to, all members of management, employees, contractors, volunteers and any other individuals responsible for the whole or part of a business activity of an organisation in making records during their work and capturing those records into records systems" (ISO, 2001).

## 2. Aim & Objectives

### 2.1 Aim

In order to support HEIs and FEIs in establishing an effective institutional records management programme in today's electronic environment, the aim of the project was to develop a training package which:

- addresses and engages all relevant stakeholders at all levels and across all areas of the institutions
- covers, in terms of content, the whole process of records management from creation to disposition
- matches content to the needs of the different stakeholder groups as defined by their roles and responsibilities, and
- takes into account their different learning needs and requirements in terms of mode, timing/length and format of delivery.

### 2.2 Objectives

Given this context and these requirements the principal objectives of this project were to design and develop an electronic records management training package which:

- creates a self-instructional and modular training programme for electronic records management in FEIs and HEIs based on ISO 15489 the international records management standard which provides a best practice framework
- provides a range of pathways to meet the diverse needs of the different groups in terms of their responsibilities and levels of activity within the institution

- establishes a training module for staff in institutions with no professional records management staff to take on responsibilities as records specialists
- provides sample training scenarios and sample training materials, in the form of PowerPoint presentation slides, worksheets, video clips and other support material to be used by records professionals in their institutions with different audiences
- acts as a dissemination medium for good practice across all of the stakeholder groups and in all areas within HEIs and FEIs
- provides links to existing and planned JISC resources and other external guidance services to serve as practical guidelines and examples of good practice.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1 The project focused on Northumbria University as a generic example of an HEI, with additional input from Newcastle University and FEIs in the North East of England to assess the pilot materials.

### 4. Methodology and staffing

- 4.1 The project methodology was based on principles of instructional design using the Race model of wanting, doing, feedback and reflection (Race, 1984) and involved the stakeholder community at all stages of the project.

- 4.2 The Project team comprised:

- **Project Director:** Catherine Hare, Senior Lecturer, School of Informatics, Northumbria University
- **Project Advisor:** Dr Julie McLeod, Senior Lecturer, School of Informatics, Northumbria University
- **Researcher 1:** Dr Geoffrey Hare, Senior Research Associate, Information Management Research Institute, School of Informatics, Northumbria University
- **Researcher 2:** Susan Ferguson, Research Associate, Information Management Research Institute, School of Informatics, Northumbria University
- **Web Developer:** Ian Ferguson, Senior Learning Materials Developer, Learning Resources, Northumbria University

- 4.3 An Advisory Group supported the project team throughout and comprised:

- **Carole Moreland**, Data Protection Officer and lead on Freedom of Information implementation, Assistant Director Learning Resources (Information Services), Northumbria University
- **Ken Etherington**, Assistant Director Learning Resources (Learning Support), Northumbria University
- **Debbie Figgis**, Customer Services Manager, IT Department, Northumbria University.

- 4.4 Project methods comprised:

- desk-based research to identify and locate JISC and other external guidance and materials to be part of a gateway to relevant electronic resources
- consultation with the stakeholder community via the Advisory Group for
  - confirmation of the stakeholder groups

- identification of their roles and responsibilities in relation to records management
- confirmation of their learning requirements for effective management of electronic records
- design of the content structure and instructional model:
  - preparation of the learning materials based on and drawn from existing materials designed and developed by members of the core project team
  - evaluation and selection of a web-based e-learning environment in consultation with the JISC
  - population of the content structure
- development of training scenarios for stakeholder groups
- pilot and evaluation of training materials by different stakeholder groups, in a group workshop for staff from HEIs and FEIs. (See Appendices 1 to 4 for a copy of the programme, a list of attendees, a records management and e-learning profile and an ERMTP evaluation.)

## 5. Training materials

### 5.1 Philosophy

The underlying philosophy of the package is learning by doing and makes provision for

- different levels of learners
- different learning styles
- different forms of learning
- different learning requirements in terms of subject content,

and which

- incorporates a variety of learning opportunities to add interest and aid the enjoyment of the learner, and
- provides facilities for the learners to assess their progress.

To add variety to the materials and so enrich the learning experience, the materials are fully **web-enabled** and include

- graphics, photographs and cartoons. The project has paid for copyright permission for three years from 2004 for HEIs and FEIs to use the cartoons.
- scenarios of good and bad practice
- quizzes and self assessment activities, and
- a personalised tracking system for each individual to monitor their progress.

### 5.2 Structure

The materials are divided into the following sections:

- Introduction
- Electronic Records Management topics, including exercises and self-assessment activities with feedback on:
  - Records Management awareness
  - Organising electronic records
  - Managing email
  - Legal requirements in managing records
  - Risk assessment in managing records
  - Retention and disposal
  - Long-term preservation
- Your user profile
- Gateway of links to other useful resources

- Glossary
- Trainers' pages

The structure is designed to accommodate a range of different approaches, starting from the **Introduction**. The end-user can begin by:

- selecting the working group to which they belong, which indicates the sections relevant to their role and responsibilities,
- choosing a section relevant to their immediate need, or
- completing the **Orientation Questionnaire**, which helps them to assess their current knowledge and point out where to go if their knowledge needs developing.

In order to set up the **tracking** facility, the end user needs to log on to the system, which will generate a username for future access and monitoring of progress. The progress monitoring information is accessed from the **Your User Profile** section and indicates which sections of the materials have already been consulted or completed. The progress report can be printed and kept as a record of training completed.

The **Gateway** provides a classified list of web-based resources, arranged according to the records management topics and with links to other related JISC projects. The **Glossary** of terms provides a list of key records management terms. In the **Trainers' pages** are case studies, checklists and tips, sample materials for training sections and some cartoons as visual prompts to some key records management challenges.

## 6. Lessons learned and conclusions

The project has successfully developed an electronic training programme which provides a variety of learning pathways to address the varying needs of the different staff groups in HEIs and FEIs, with regard to managing records in the electronic environment. Based as it is on a content management structure, it will be hospitable to further additions and amendments in the future

Although the number and range of resources on managing electronic records is growing, for example with material from JISC, the National Archives of the UK and other government bodies across the world, it was necessary for the project team to create the learning examples and case studies and write the learning materials.

The intention was to include video and sound material to add further to the variety of learning media but issues of bandwidth and ensuring access for all made this impossible.

The evaluation of the pilot materials was only possible at a late stage in the project because of the complexity of the overall structure and the large size of the training programme, which required that a significant amount of material needed to be available before a valid test could be undertaken.

Overall the evaluators were positive about the navigation, finding it logical and accessible. They said that they would use it, finding it an enabling tool, allowing people to work at their own pace and gain confidence without pressure. They underlined the importance of the interactive facilities.

There was concern about the amount of text and, while the materials are tailored to the individual groups, they felt that there was need for more targeted modules to

meet the specific needs of individual groups, for example developing a filing system for administrative staff. They would have preferred more photographs and video but liked the idea of cartoons, which were not available at the time of the workshop.

The project team were very aware of the difficulties of trying to develop learning materials for such wide ranging groups and such an extensive subject area. However the materials should provide a starting point, a baseline resource on which to build more focused and perhaps more detailed materials, topic by topic.

The launch of the materials has been delayed through a combination of adverse circumstances. One major problem was the uncertainty about where the materials would be hosted and then once the decision was taken it was difficult to establish good communication links between JISC technical staff and the project team.

## 7. Recommendations

There are a number of key issues to be addressed as follows:

- **Publicity and marketing**  
The materials are now ready and the JISC website is being used as the host. It is essential that every opportunity is taken to notify the HEI and FEI community of their availability and to promote the materials through demonstration sessions at relevant conferences and workshops.
- **Tailoring for use in institutional context**  
Given the feedback about the need for more targeted materials we would recommend exploring the feasibility and implications of individual institutions adding to and tailoring the materials for use in their own context. Perhaps JISC could fund one pilot in an FEI and one in an HEI.
- **Maintaining currency over next three years**  
Under the conditions of the project the materials are required to be available for three years. The materials are to be hosted by JISC for the period and copyright for the cartoons has been paid for the three year period. However, given the nature of the materials, in particular the gateway to resources and links to other electronic information, provision needs to be made to check for dead links as well as to add new materials as they become available.

## 8. References

- ISO 15489:1. (2001). *Information and documentation: records management*. ISO.
- JISC (2002) *Digital Preservation Strategy 2002-2005*. JISC
- Race, P. (1984) *Open learning handbook 2<sup>nd</sup> ed*. Kogan Page.



## **Electronic Records Management Training Package**

### **Programme for Workshop at Northumbria University 18 December 2003**

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>10.00 – 10.30</b> | <b>Coffee and introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Workshop</li><li>- People</li><li>- Project</li></ul>                        |
| <b>10.30 – 10.45</b> | <b>Why your organisation needs to manage electronic records?</b>   |
| <b>10.45 – 11.45</b> | <b>Testing and evaluating the training materials</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Design</li><li>- Content</li><li>- Navigation</li></ul> |
| <b>11.45 – 12.15</b> | <b>Feedback on materials</b>   |
| <b>12.15 – 12.30</b> | <b>Your views and round up</b>   |



**Electronic Records Management Training Package**

**Workshop at Northumbria University  
18 December 2003**

**Participants**

Ian Brand, South Tyneside College

Gerry Dane, Newcastle University

Mick Hickey, Northumberland College

Liz Morrow, Northumbria University

Michael Stewart, Northumbria University

Shan Williams, Northumbria University

## Appendix 3 – Records management and e-learning profile

### Records Management and e-learning profile

This is a brief survey to allow us to gain knowledge of your understanding and involvement with records management and your use of e-learning materials.

- **Q1. Please tell us what your job title is and what your role entails**  
(Please use the place provided for your response)

- **Q2. What do you understand by the term records management?**  
(Please use the place provided for your response)

- **Q3. Have you ever used e-learning materials before?**  
(Please circle your choice below)  
Yes  
No     If no, please go to question 5 (overleaf)

- **Q4. If you answered yes to Question 3, please state the type of e-learning materials that you have used and in what context e.g. part of on-the-job training, part of an education programme etc.**  
(Please use the place provided for your response)

- **Q5. Before you begin to investigate Electronic Records Management Training package (ERMTP), please take the time to consider your expectations of this resource a) for you and b) for your colleagues – please specify**

**THANK YOU  
YOUR VIEWS ARE VITAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ERMTP.  
WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THE WORKSHOP.**

#### Appendix 4: ERMTP Evaluation Checklist

|  |            |           |                 |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Please tick in the appropriate box that reflects your opinion concerning the design and content of ERMTP. Please use the Comments section to give additional comments where appropriate. |            |           |                 |
| <b>NAVIGATION</b>  | <b>YES</b> | <b>NO</b> | <b>COMMENTS</b> |
| <b>All major parts of the site are accessible from the home page</b>   |            |           |                 |
| <b>It is clear to the user where they are within the site at a given time</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>Site structure is simple and easy to navigate</b>   |            |           |                 |
| <b>There is a clearly identifiable link of where to go next page on every page</b>   |            |           |                 |
| <b>Links to pages are easily identifiable</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>Within the site there are broken links (Please state where)</b>   |            |           |                 |
| <b>VISUAL CLARITY</b>  | <b>YES</b> | <b>NO</b> | <b>COMMENTS</b> |
| The layout of the website is clear   |            |           |                 |
| The colour scheme is attractive  |            |           |                 |
| There is too much text on some of the web pages – please indicate where  |            |           |                 |
| <b>All images are appropriate to the theme of the website</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>Images do not distract the users attention</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>LANGUAGE</b>  | <b>YES</b> | <b>NO</b> | <b>COMMENTS</b> |
| <b>The language used is clear and concise</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>The level of detail of the description of the materials is appropriate</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>The introduction section is easy to follow</b>  |            |           |                 |

Please tick in the appropriate box that reflects your opinion concerning the design and content of ERMTP. Please use the Comments section to give additional comments where appropriate.

| <b>SEARCH AND RETRIEVAL INTERFACE</b>   | <b>YES</b> | <b>NO</b> | <b>COMMENTS</b> |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| <b>Clear instructions on how to use the navigate the materials were given.</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>There are sufficient and appropriate types of search facility included in ERMTP to cater for the user who may be a novice searcher or an expert searcher</b> |            |           |                 |
| <b>I liked the format and design of the browse search facility</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>CONTENT</b>  | <b>YES</b> | <b>NO</b> | <b>COMMENTS</b> |
| <b>There was sufficient information describing the ERMTP Project</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>The sample of materials contained within ERMTP were relevant to my area of work</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>The content of the website is organised in a logical fashion</b>   |            |           |                 |
| <b>The Gateway section includes relevant links to information about records management in general</b>   |            |           |                 |
| <b>The Trainers' pages section includes materials that I could use to train my staff</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>The Glossary provides a helpful list of definitions</b>  |            |           |                 |
| <b>The possibility of tracking my progress via Profiles is a useful facility</b>  |            |           |                 |

Please use this page for additional comment you would like to make about ERMTP. It would be very helpful if you could comment on the things you liked best and the things that could work better. Thank you

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for users to provide additional comments or feedback about ERMTP. The box occupies most of the lower half of the page.