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**10TH SYMPOSIUM OF RECORDKEEPING OF CATALONIA:
Communication**

The context

The start of 2005 is an appropriate time to mention the 10th Symposium of Recordkeeping of Catalonia that will be held in Terrassa on 19, 20 and 21 of May this year. This year is also the 20th anniversary of the AAC, a fact we do not want to ignore and something that is not unconnected with research into and the choice of the Symposium's theme.

Twenty years of the AAC and ten Symposia on Recordkeeping are enough periods to take stock of and recapitulate on the most important events that have affected the recordkeeping profession. They also give us a good position from which to try and discern the way forward.

Perhaps the most immediate matter to be dealt with is the implementation of electronic document management systems (EDMS). How have we responded to challenges such as the implementation of electronic document management systems in organisations? Many authorities and companies have already set out along this path (and have become models). However, it should not be forgotten that the Law 10/2001 on archives and documents requires such a system for all towns with populations of over 10,000 inhabitants. How can we deal with this new challenge on the basis of our responsibilities and with our potential?

We live in the society of information, knowledge and mass communication. In twenty years, new technologies have invaded our private and professional world. At home, as private citizens, we can do transactions and business with the authorities and with our suppliers. At work, as professionals, we must be aware of new documentary formats and must know how to organise them as they are becoming increasingly important. How have we incorporated new technologies in our place or work and how have we introduced organisational principles in the new technological environments?

These are two very clear issues upon which to reflect on both the past and future. However, there are also others, which are equally as important, that we might also take stock of. These include the design of information access systems, the educational and social function of archives and active policies of diffusion of the archives to make them visible within society. Mention should also be made to the main issue of training and the constant work that has been performed for over twenty years to fill the training void in our system of official studies.

These are some of the issues that we would like to review and take stock of. They have been presented with the haste and sketchiness that format and space allow.

Some of them have already been dealt with at symposia and on specific courses. How may we take a fresh look at them so that we get something new from reflection? This was the basic criterion used to choose the core discussion theme of the 10th Symposium. It was necessary to find a thread that would enable us to take stock, reflect on the past and the future and meanwhile provide fresh items. The core theme **Communication** was therefore chosen.

The theme

It involves reflection on communication as just another resource for our profession and as a strategic resource. Communication is a strategic resource because much of the success in applying methods of organisation, of management, of preservation and of diffusion of documents depends on finding the right channels and receivers, at the right time and in the right way.

We have methodological tools: electronic document management systems, which include systems of classification, description and evaluation. We have regulations on all documentary processing procedures: general instructions, procedure manuals, regulations on transfer, and on evaluation of access. We have designed reference services, educational services, and diffusion activities to bring archives to the public.

Perhaps virtually all the work performed by archivists is ultimately aimed at communicability:

- to spread awareness of the basic functions and responsibilities of archives and archivists;
- to give proof of the usefulness of recordkeeping methodology in improving the way organisations operate;
- to attain the necessary support in implementing systems of management of the documentation;
- to encourage campaigns to diffuse the archives; to consolidate the image of archives as a service;
- to secure the presence of archives in society, as centres for the knowledge of history.

We need to know how to communicate all enormous and complex methodological structure that we have been building over the last twenty years. Do we know how to communicate our working methods properly to the managers of organisations and to users who must put them into practice? How have we communicated from the archives themselves, how are we communicating, how could we communicate to make the most of the potential of technologies and the media?

The Symposia

Communication is a transversal issue that should enable us to make the assessment or review mentioned at the start. However, this should be done from a different perspective, with transversality as its basis, in order to provide the reflection with fresh impetus.

We have called this 10th Symposium **Archivists, how do we communicate?** How we communicate our working system within organisations (internal communication); how we communicate information and the content of archives to society (external communication) and how we communicate among professionals. These are the three lines of reflection that will define different communication strategies.

Internal communication or the strategies for the implementation and communication of EDMS within organisations. This should provide knowledge of internal marketing strategies: How should the archive's role and function be communicated within the organisation itself? What resources do we have (information programmes, training programmes, management manuals)? Can the impact of archive function on the operations and objectives of organisations be evaluated and/or quantified? Identifying an organisation's problems that can be resolved by EDMS and meanwhile identifying the benefits to be gained.

External communication or the development and improvement of the programmes and instruments for external communication: the production of access tools and reference services, user training, the incorporation of new, powerful means for communication such as Internet that provide for access to a great number of online resources that create new relational environments for and new users with diverse interests.

Communication among archivists or a definition of communication strategies for theoretical and methodological standardisation. Objectives, principles and methodology have been established in recordkeeping discipline. Nevertheless, there are still difficulties in agreeing upon common regulations. This session is aimed at reflection on these difficulties and on their causes, on the validity of the channels that archivists have available for sharing initiatives, experiences and ideas. Are specialised publications, professional meetings, distribution lists, and Arxiforum useful media? Should they be updated?

Many of us undoubtedly have an intuitive feeling about the value of communication as a tool for attaining objectives, but very rarely have we made it an object of reflection. We trust that this thread will help us to take stock and meanwhile expand our knowledge. We modestly hope, in this presentation, to arouse curiosity and encourage everyone to take an active part at the 10th Symposium.