

# Butlletí 99

Informatiu de l'Associació d'Arxivers-Gestors de Documents de Catalunya

## **Archivists, should we reinvent ourselves?**

For a few years now, the challenge posed to our profession by new technologies has been increasing. The new tools and resources offered us by technology have brought about new stimuli and concerns, but for professionals in archival science, the management of information and records has generated a certain level of uneasiness when it comes to being up to the mark, in the face of the important change in organisational culture that this digital tsunami we're living through signifies.

We ask ourselves, which responsibilities can a machine take on, and which remain to us? On what sort of professional team should an archive service rely? An archivist, an IT specialist, an engineer, a marketing and communications expert, a process guru? What is the limit of our responsibilities? Should we seek out new accomplices in the other agents involved in this change? What is becoming increasingly evident is the archivists-records managers cannot do it alone, in part due to the training we have and in part due to the workload involved. We must find a balance between who we are and what is expected of us. How can we readapt ourselves professionally to today's society, to the world of work? What must we change or improve on? Identifying the needs of our users; knowing, for example, why social networks can provide us with support in archive centres; typifying users and their information needs and search profiles; knowing how to relate the information, without forgetting the principles of archival science.

Without a doubt, the new information technologies offer us a great many information tools and languages, and we have to get to know them and incorporate them into archival science and records management, with the objective of meeting the current challenges and providing an answer for potential users of our services.

On another point of discussion, if we take into account our professional sector's lack of presence in private enterprise and the situation of heavy economic restriction in government agencies, the job perspectives of archivists-records managers must be redirected towards private enterprise. Therefore, a field to be explored is that populated by a large number of external services and consultancy firms that work in the public and private sector, providing support to the tasks of archive circuits, records management, process implementation, etc. Why don't they



have any archivists on the staff? What can we offer them from our professional sector? If we have not already done so, perhaps we should begin to reflect on these possible job outlets and others, to adapt ourselves to this situation of profound economic recession.

With this objective in mind, we must be able to transmit a message of efficiency and effectiveness that carries with it the introduction of records management systems in private businesses and be prepared to take on the challenge implied in entering the private sector.

In this latest edition, the 13th Congress of Catalan Archivists, held this year in Lloret de Mar, the programme includes a series of presentations from different experts to help us get to know, first hand, these new tools and models, as well as the resources and contents available to move our profession forward, in both the public and the private arena.

