RECORDS MANAGEMENT 2.0, 3.0, 4.0? WHERE ARE WE?

The 16th Congress of Catalan Archivists and Records Managers draws nigh. We look forward to seeing you all in Reus on 4, 5 and 6 May. The congress is promising. Very promising. You'll be hearing about what's new this year in the coming weeks. Both on the programme and the social activities. Lleida set the bar very high. Beating it is a goal we have set ourselves as an obligation. You'll no doubt be surprised by the proposal. The most noteworthy thing about this congress is the high level of innovation we'll be presenting. Many of us may well leave some of the sessions feeling very far behind, or that we have much work to do, or that we simply haven't understood a word. Don't worry, that's the idea. We think that going to a congress and hearing the same old things that we already know doesn't do much for learning. There are plenty of other get-togethers for that. What we need to push is the innovative, stimulating proposition. Not because we feel out of place or helpless, but so we can compare what we're doing with what we could do to improve our position. Our congress aims not to put people off, but to motivate them. The programme, with a large number of international speakers, will not leave you cold.

The (records management) of electronic (records). That could have been the title of the congress. Putting brackets around records is all the rage these days, words are liquid. There's a real battle to control the tale. In this respect we often find people who talk about records, others about information and, increasingly, others who talk about data. Some appear to want to exclude the others. Sometimes they all say the same thing, but in their own language to impose it. So there will be those who talk about records, datasets, digital objects, content units of documentary significance, information packages, and so on. And the same thing happens with records management. Records management, information management, information governance, document management, data management... What are we really managing? The Reus congress will focus on records management, in keeping with tradition and the law. That's what we've always called it, and besides, it's a job description. But things have all sorts of names in the market and we must be aware of that. Will we ever agree? 'Record', and 'records management' always require justification, but we are protected by law. The law talks about records management, whether we like it or not, so we have to adapt our vocabulary accordingly. That's what many call compliance. Records management.

What scientific level of records management have we reached in Catalonia? It's hard to say in a few words. But we could say that records management learned with physical documents lives alongside another that we've attempted to implement in hybrid environments (analogue and digital), and a third that is struggling to manage completely digital environments. In most cases, the weakness of the records management we put into practice lies in the fact that we interpret the digital world while still thinking of paper. It's a constant criticism, but which information and technology-related profession hasn't had the same problem? We are going through a digital transition, not a transformation. And we all need to make an effort to understand what's coming with an open mind. The Reus congress is based on that premise. We can't go on doing things the way we've always done

them. This approach, put forward in the session we attended at the last Digital Government Congress, was accepted by a large audience. An audience full of professionals who love disruption and change, it must be said, going on about digital transformation. We repeat, it's a transition. Basically because the last link in our chain of obligations is documentary heritage and its preservation, and we're used to switching between media of all kinds and complex realities, so we know how it's done. Digital transition.

Have there been any strong cases in Catalonia that could be a point of reference abroad? That's very hard to answer. To do so, and to do away with useless debate, we have opted to put them on the couch. The proposals we bring from outside Catalonia must validate what we're doing. To assess whether we're doing it right. Whether we receive the proper training. Whether the measures we take in our public organisations should be used in private ones. Whether a records manager is the same as a document controller. We must also be able to own to our mistakes and unfinished projects. There will be room for successful and failed projects at the congress. We shouldn't fear failure. We can learn a lot from it. The answer will be more honest and sincere afterwards. Willingness to change should be constant, along with to assess oneself and improve. Continually improve.

How can we define our records management? Is it records management that has merely been designed or has it been implemented? Has it been implemented throughout the organisation or only in parts? Are all management instruments in use or are they still being drawn up? Do we have a records management system that's more or less organised with tangible results and, therefore, that we can start to present in debates and symposia, showing the advantages they bring? Have we arrived at records management 2.0, then?

Does our records management operate naturally in entirely digital environments or, at least, fairly comfortably in hybrid environments? Do we work in interdisciplinary teams with technologists, jurists and heads of organisation? Are our opinions preceptive and are they heeded? Are we starting to become competitive in digital environments and do we provide tangible solutions given the needs of the new digital administration? Are we acting and making improvements in database management in organisations? Are we providing a concept and solutions to data structuring? Are we taking part in the linking of data from open data or active advertising portals with original documents or sources? Do we know code? Have we arrived at records management 3.0, then?

Is our records management useful in big data management and can we apply assessment measures to make it more efficient? Are our metadata schemas well established and used throughout the organisation? Do they help to find information again and make AI tools more effective? Do we have the type of tools that learn from the systematic incorporation of metadata as we classify and describe it? Does our records management system have a contingency plans for risk management? Does it allow for enrichment of the quality of the data managed, the information produced and the summary documents? Would these on-demand documents be ready for distribution of their essential characteristics and properties in different repositories that allowed a blockchain to be configured that

strengthened their authenticity? Does the records management system have a digital preservation strategy independent of the exploitation system that automates the migration of obsolete formats, notifies us of its presence and enables us to conserve all its necessary essential properties? Is this records management 4.0?

In many cases the answer is no, or not really. Let's do an exercise in self-assessment. Let's take a look at our systems, make an executive summary that we can take to the Reus congress and a checklist of what we do and what we don't. Then let's make a list of everything records management is to be in next few years. Let us also be competitive and not always feeling that it's only the other fields that aim high. Why can't we do it too? What's stopping us? Let's make sure we never have to say we didn't try. Don't miss the chance to come to Reus and share your experiences. See you there. You'll be glad you came.