

In his preface to the book, John Newman writes, “it says something about the nature of the members of our profession, at least of those who are tasked to manage large moves, that everyone agreed we should emphasize practical matters and avoid much attempt to articulate theory.” Fair enough; I’m not sure what a theory of moving would look like, but I appreciate the emphasis on the practical nature of the task to be done. However, where the editors let the readers down is in not teasing out the commonalities of moving archives, bringing together in a more coherent fashion the similarities in the move process and experience. A move process is well enough articulated throughout the book by the contributors but editorially it lacks any contextual perspective, one that would have added significantly to both the reader’s understanding of the specific moves recounted in the book, and to the more practical objectives of the editors, especially for those of us who may one day be tasked with moving archives.

Finally, what are the similarities of the movement of archives and graves? “Both are jobs,” writes Monte Kniffen in his essay “The Redemptorists: Denver Province,” “that take months of planning and careful coordination of many people, and both are tasks that should not be undertaken by people who are afraid of physical activity and getting dirty.” To be sure, some of the same things could be said when it come to editing books.

Wayne Murdoch
Provincial Archives of Alberta

Managing Records: A Handbook of Principles and Practice. ELIZABETH SHEPHERD and GEOFFREY YEO. London: Facet Publishing, 2003. 318 p. ISBN 1-85604-370-3.

In *Managing Records: A Handbook of Principles and Practice*, Elizabeth Shepherd and Geoffrey Yeo set out to provide guidelines for “establishing, maintaining or restructuring a records management programme” (p. xiii). Their hope is that the book will “be of value to experienced practitioners as well as newcomers to the field” (p. ix), and although *Managing Records* will definitely prove more useful to novices than it will to veterans, the authors are largely successful in achieving their overall aims.

Managing Records may be most impressive for its broad scope: in addition to covering basic principles, Shepherd and Yeo introduce virtually all areas of practice that readers might expect to be covered in a guidebook of this type, including appraisal and retention of records, access and retrieval, storage and preservation, and a range of other topics. In many cases this broad coverage prevents in-depth discussion of important issues, as the authors are careful to disclaim at the outset. However, the extensive, topically-organized bibliogra-

phy should be helpful for readers seeking further information on specific subjects.

In addition, the general theoretical basis of this book is sound, as Shepherd and Yeo are advocates of the functional-analysis approach, and particularly the version of it espoused in the International Standards Organization (ISO) records management standard (ISO 15489-1: 2001). In fact, it is probably fair to say that their central recommendation is for all records managers to perform a detailed functional analysis of their organization, because doing so is a valuable first step toward building classification schemes, retention schedules, records-capturing systems, and all the other tools and instruments that comprise a records management programme. Furthermore, while adopting this widely accepted functional framework, the authors are also to be commended for advocating an additional set of viewpoints that are equally sound, but which have come under criticism in recent years. Specifically, *Managing Records* warns against uncritical acceptance of popular misapprehensions about, for example, the ability of electronic records to “manage themselves” (p. 247); the capacity of technological tools for replacing traditional foundations of the discipline, such as staff training and organizational procedures (pp. 22-27; 247); and the growing redundancy of records management as a specialization with the rise of information management and knowledge management in the 1990s (pp. 17-18). In all cases, Shepherd and Yeo assess such ideas judiciously, but ultimately they identify logical flaws and expose them with support of sound arguments.

If all these elements of *Managing Records* are praiseworthy, there are also aspects of the book that could stand improvement. For one, Shepherd and Yeo’s portrayal of archivists and their work is limited, and perhaps somewhat unflattering. They oversimplify both archival principles and practices, for instance, by reducing the concept of original order to a matter of physical control (p. 11), and by referring to archival description as merely a process of “retrospective cataloguing [for] older records” (p. 244). More generally, they also concentrate their coverage of archival theory and methods in passages dealing with such topics as access, storage, and preservation (pp. 183-84; 243-45), which tends to suggest that archivists lack expertise in other important areas, like accountability theory and legal aspects of record-keeping. To be fair, it does not appear that Shepherd and Yeo intended any slight, and in fact archivists are quite well represented in the sections of their bibliography on such topics as electronic records management, accountability, and records classification and metadata. However, the authors might have been a little more careful, if not inclusive, in the wording of certain passages.

More fundamentally, the major flaw of *Managing Records* is that its treatment of electronic records is constrained at the outset by the authors’ decision to focus primarily on “the management of documentary records” (p. 18). The distinction Shepherd and Yeo draw between documentary and non-documentary

records is based on their suggestion that “in an electronic environment records need not be in the form of documents. Computer technology allows a transaction to be recorded using data alone” (p. 15). To illustrate this point, they cite several examples including electronic data interchange (EDI) systems, automatic teller machines, and Web-based electronic forms, concluding ultimately that records are created through these technologies even if documents are not: “it is the set of data that a customer enters that will be used to process a transaction and will constitute the record” (p. 16).

There are two main problems with this interpretation. First, it is not fully developed, and there appear to be gaps in the theory as a result. This is evident in the conclusion of Shepherd and Yeo’s treatment of transaction systems, where they argue that “although there is no documentary structure [inherent in a set of raw transactional data], it is nevertheless essential to have a structure” in order for the data “to function effectively as a record” (p. 16). From these comments, it might seem the authors are making the sensible recommendation that records managers must determine which transactional systems *should be* creating records, and have them specially configured to generate outputs in documentary form so that the resulting documents can be filed as records. However, this does not appear to be the point Shepherd and Yeo are driving at, because it assumes that a set of raw data is not a record in itself – which would undermine their original proposition. Instead, since Shepherd and Yeo do not elaborate further, readers are left wondering how it is possible to consider a set of raw data to be a record if it still needs to be configured into a structure before it can function as a record.

The second problem is that Shepherd and Yeo’s limited coverage of electronic records is a direct result of this distinction between documentary and non-documentary records. At one level, this self-imposed constraint is a disappointment: capturing records from data in transactional systems is a vexing problem for many archivists and records managers, and we could all benefit from new ideas on methods and approaches for doing so. This is not to suggest that Shepherd and Yeo should have answers to every outstanding difficulty in the records management field, but that any new insights they could impart (beyond their suggestion of capturing entire databases, which is an appropriate solution but only in certain circumstances) would have been welcome. At another level, though, the authors have a certain obligation to state outright that transactional systems present significant difficulties with a limited range of solutions at present. This is especially the case in light of the fact that the intended audience of *Managing Records* includes newcomers to the field, and these readers may infer from the brief treatment of non-documentary records that this area is less problematic than it actually is.

Notwithstanding all this, *Managing Records* is definitely to be recommended for several different audiences. In their avowed aim of providing guidance for non-specialists assigned to establish a records management pro-

gramme, Shepherd and Yeo succeed without question; this work will make a valuable primer for information managers, information technology personnel, librarians, and others who are not versed in records management, before attempting to implement a more prescriptive set of guidelines, such as the ISO records management standard. Additionally, this book should be read by all those who see records management principles as an anachronism in the age of electronic technology, and it could be valuable as a basic textbook in certain training courses, or even introductory graduate level courses on records management. For readers outside these audiences, on the other hand, *Managing Records* may or may not be a worthwhile purchase. As a clearly written, well structured book with comprehensive coverage, it will definitely have value for all readers; however, experienced records managers and archivists already knowledgeable in basic principles and practices of the discipline will likely find it to be a useful, but not essential desk reference.

Ian McAndrew
World Bank Group Archives

Effective Approaches for Managing Electronic Records and Archives.
BRUCE W. DEARSTYNE, ed. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2002.
167 p. ISBN 0-8108-4200-9.

This slim volume of eight essays addresses core aspects of one of the most pressing issues for archivists and records managers: effective management of electronic records. It is replete with prominent authors, most of whom concocted suitably intriguing titles for their contributions. The authors leverage a vast array of experience and expertise to present an accumulation of informative and illustrative examples, lessons learned, and case studies. This essay collection might be best suited to an archives and records management education audience, as the case studies are from the mid- to late-1990s and provide interesting historical context, and to managers and practitioners at organizations who are surveying the landscape for their own developing programs.

Rick Barry provides one pertinent and evocative example from his repertoire for each of the past four decades. This is both an entertaining and educational approach that works well. The examples may be somewhat more context specific than his explanations might suggest, but his experiences reflect both the steady progression of technology and the entwined themes of organizational and technological development inherent in that progression. Roy Turnbaugh's essay, which editor Bruce Dearstyne refers to as provocative, continues the seemingly eternal pursuit of a good definition or more appropriate term for "electronic record." Timothy Slavin and Robert Horton provide organizational insights on what are otherwise fairly well known