ORGANISING PUBLIC RECORDS TO ACHIEVE SERVICE DELIVERY: THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S FUNCTIONAL SUBJECT FILE PLAN IN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

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Things can only be found in a known order. There is a growing consciousness that a mass of unorganised Information is, after all, of little value, and that there is more value in less information well organised (Herbert Spencer 1889).

Abstract

Systems used to arrange or classify government records play a key role in a government department's ability to conduct and manage its business information over time. In recent years, there has been growing interest within the public sector records management community in using function-based classification systems as a means to link business context, instead of classifying it into groupings reflecting ever-changing organisational structures. Function-based records classification systems are in line with the principle of levels of arrangement and description as records are organised according to hierarchical levels in order to reflect the nature of their creation. The development in South Africa with regard to records classification systems resulted in the National Archives and Records Service propagating the use of functional subject file plan by governmental bodies. Therefore, this article presents a perspective on the approach being taken by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa in assisting government departments to classify their business information to achieve accountability and service delivery. The article

sets out the background to; and the factors affecting the development of government departments' records classification systems and the benefits thereof. It then evaluate the effectiveness of NARS functional subject file plan in meeting service delivery by government departments. In trying to arrive at the bottom of the story, a survey was conducted on existing national government departments in South Africa.

Key words: Records classification system, National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, Functional subject file plan, Government department

Introduction: putting things into perspective

Almost 120 years ago when Herbert Spencer coined the above words, he could hardly have foreseen how relevant they would be to the situation most organisations are facing today. Today an ever-increasing flood of records is generated by an ever-growing variety of media such as computers, tape, video and (DVD) recorders in different formats. Considering the speed at which records are created, their management becomes a huge challenge for organisations (Makhura and Ngoepe 2006:97). For example, there can be a delay in information retrieval if records are not arranged in order as outlined by Herbert Spencer. For organisations to be able to retrieve information quickly, they need to have proper records management in place (Milne 2007:8). Proper records management according to Chinyemba and Ngulube (2005:3) involves establishing systematic controls at every stage of a record's life cycle, in accordance with established principles and accepted models of records management. De Wet and Du Toit (1998:78) further indicate that proper records management practices should include the use of approved records classification system and systematic disposal authority.

According to NARS (2006:1), a major problem for efficient service delivery in South Africa is that relevant information is often not time-ously available to enable government departments to make informed decisions, because records are not organised properly. In this light, it is essential that government departments should implement and maintain proper records classification systems to manage records from their point of creation to their ultimate disposal. Flowing from the

above, the quality of services which government departments deliver to the public and other stakeholders depends on how well they can create, store, retrieve, use and manage their records to make decisions to act in pursuit of their business objectives. For example, the Department of Land Affairs relies on how well records that are generated by the department are organised in order to process land claims. Otherwise, land rights may be denied or compromised as a result of failure to retrieve records and therefore, service delivery will be hampered.

In South Africa, government departments are required by law to develop, implement and maintain records classification systems approved by the National Archivist. For example, in accordance with section 13 (2) (b) (i) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, 1996, the National Archivist shall determine records classification systems to be applied by governmental bodies. In spite of statutory requirements indicating the importance of records classification systems in governmental bodies, this is not reflected in practice. According to Makhura and Ngoepe (2006:97) government departments in South Africa continue to manage public records without relevant policies and approved records classification systems. For example, in the qualified audit opinion given to the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Justice by the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) in 2006, it is revealed that these departments did not have approved filing systems in place. This point is also stressed by Louisa Venter (2004:1) who argues that surveys conducted on records management by the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) during the 2003/2004 financial year revealed that most provincial government departments did not have an approved records classification system in place.

Public servants place too much emphasis on other aspects of administration and thereby neglect the real problem, namely that of the way they organise their records (Linton 1993:53). The problem of lack of proper control of records according to the Auditor-General of South Africa (2006), transcends all other considerations. Without effective retrieval of records all else is sheer futility. In the example given above, AGSA found that the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Justice received a disclaimer or qualified reports not because the officials have misappropriated the funds, but due to

the fact that these departments were unable to retrieve records of their expenditure. As a result, these departments are unable to account to parliament and the public because they have no records on how they spent public funds. It is against the above background that this article will:

- present a perspective on the approach being taken by the NARS in assisting government departments to classify public records;
- set out the background to; and the factors affecting the development of government departments' records classification systems and the benefits thereof; and
- evaluate the effectiveness of NARS' functional subject file plan in meeting service delivery needs through a survey of national government departments.

The article concludes by arguing that effective decision-making, service delivery and access to government information can be greatly facilitated by the development, implementation and maintenance of functional records classification systems in government departments. For the purpose of this article the words *file plan* and *records classification system* will be used interchangeably.

Records classification system for public records in South Africa: a mandate from the NARS Act

For any organisation to function effectively and carry on with its services there must be one form of record or another (Bedford and Morelli 2006:170; Iwhiwhu 2007:345). South African government departments generate an immense quantity and bewildering variety of records every day for the purpose of carrying out their activities. Therefore, the importance of keeping track of events and activities of a government department, particularly to enhance service delivery, cannot be overemphasised. Hence, the need to create accurate records, using and maintaining these records through the life-cycle concept of records management in government departments is imperative. Records management, therefore aims at controlling the rapid acceleration of accumulated records within an organisation from the cradle to the grave (Iwhiwhu 2007:346; Makhura and Ngoepe 2006:97). Records management creates order to voluminous records that have been created without any organised plan. In the absence of

records, management is incapacitated in its decision-making process (Kennedy and Schauder 1994:6). Taking the right decision at the point of records creation with regards to classification facilitates the management of the records throughout their life. (Iwhiwhu 2007:248; Linton 1993:15). Therefore, records classification systems play an important role in the life-cycle of a record. It serves as a control tool for records in government departments.

A records classification system is a key foundational element of records management within an organisation. It is a roadmap that provides the rules and definitions used to store and retrieve records (McCleod 2002:29; Milne 2007:13). Records classification systems that embody the reasons why records are created and used improve all stages of the record life-cycle as they enhance and facilitate people's understanding of the records these systems contain (Milne 2007:13; NARS 2006:15). Government departments must be able to retrieve the right information at the right time and retrieve all records that are related in order to provide better service delivery to the public (Kirkwood 2000:6; NARS 2006:15; Olmo 2006:160). With a function based classification system, all records on the same activity are put on one file. In this regard, a user can retrieve records on the same activity from one file without having to go to several files.

It is within the above background that the South African government found it necessary to regulate the manner in which public records are organised. As a result, NARS was charged with primary statutory responsibility to provide effective management of public records to support evidence-based governance and service delivery. In terms of section 13 of the National Archives and Records Service Act, 1996 (No 43 of 1996), the National Archivist shall be charged with proper management and care of all records in the custody of governmental bodies. This core function entails creating an environment in which NARS promotes efficient, accountable and transparent public records through the proper control of records that are still in possession of governmental bodies (Kirkwood 1996:15; Kirkwood 2000:6). To this end, NARS takes responsibility for the design and approval of records classification systems of governmental bodies (which is a focus for this article), the identification of records with archival value, training of public servants in records management and finally the inspection of records management practices of governmental bodies. The primary

intention of translating this function into the activities described above is to ensure that the management of current records of governmental bodies promotes an efficient, accountable and transparent public service (Kirkwood 2000:7). In a word, NARS lays the foundation for good governance. Governmental bodies in this regard refer to all four spheres of government, that is, national departments, provincial departments, statutory bodies and municipalities. However, the focus for this article shall only be on one sphere of government, that is, national government departments.

As outlined above, the NARS Act requires governmental bodies to utilise and maintain classification systems approved by the National Archivist. NARS has recognised the growing interest within the inter-national records management community in using function-based classification as a means to more readily respond to accountability obligations, and to manage business records efficiently and effective-ly. Consequently, the records classification system in general use in governmental bodies in South Africa is the functional subject file plan. By a functional subject file plan, it is meant that the division of the functions and activities of the particular government department into a number of main functions until the sub-division has been taken far enough to justify a file for that aspect of the particular matter (NARS 2003:6). For example, one of the functions of the Auditor-General is to perform regularity audits and report on the financial statements of governmental bodies. Therefore, the division of such a function in the functional subject file plan propagated by NARS will be as follows: -

1.	**<u>Regularity Auditing</u>**
1/1	<u>Financial Management</u>
1/1/R	Routine Enquiries
1/1/1	<u>National Departments</u>
	(Open a file for each national department for the under-mentioned subjects and number according to Annexure B)
1/1/1/1	Pre-engagement Activities
1/1/1/2	Planning
1/1/1/3	Execution
1/1/1/4	<u>Reporting</u>
1/1/1/4/1	Modified Reports
1/1/1/4/2	Qualified Reports

As indicated above, the functional subject file plan is based on business functions that are used to determine subject groups according to which records are filed and/or electronically indexed. Its purpose is to:

- Facilitate easy retrieval and disposal of records
- Link the records back to the functions; activities and transactions that generated them.

A records classification system according to NARS should facilitate that records on a subject are placed together, so that retrieval can be efficient and complete and it should facilitate the separation of records that need to be kept for different periods (Kirkwood 2000:6). A specific classification system must therefore be designed for each governmental body taking its functions into account. Given this fact, it is the responsibility of the governmental body rather than NARS to design the file plan, but NARS does provide guidance on the principles to be used. In this regard, NARS has made available various directives containing guidelines and prototype file plans (See Annexure A for the list of prototype file plans), holds discussions with records managers and comments verbally and in writing on draft records classification systems (Kirkwood 2000:6; NARS 2006:). NARS also offers a week-long Records Management Course which provides training in the principles of records classification systems. Once designed, a file plan needs to be formally approved by the National Archivist, properly implemented in the governmental body as a whole, and maintained by the records manager of that particular organisation, who reports amendments and additions to the National Archivist. The purpose of investigating a file plan before implementation is to ensure that there is no overlapping in file descriptions, that each record can only be placed on one file, and that the file plan reflects the functions of the governmental body sufficiently (Kirkwood 2000:6; NARS 2006:16).

Undoubtedly, the records management function of NARS is very important because it is a key to effective records retrieval systems in governmental bodies. According to Ngulube (2003:158) the records management role of NARS is to assist governmental bodies to meet the internal and external demands for the information they keep. The orderly and efficient flow of relevant information will enable government departments to perform their functions successfully and

efficiently. Without an effective records management system, governmental bodies will not be able to discharge their duties effectively. Effective public records management facilitates public accountability which is an essential component of a democratic society. Classification structures create order and understanding about what an institution does and how it does it, and provides the basis of sound internal decision-making and optimal external service delivery (NARS 2006:103; Ngulube 2003:158).

Background to the development of a functional records classification system

The development of a functional records classification system according to SANS 15489-2 (2004:8) involves identifying and analysing:
- the goals and strategy of the organisation,
- the functions of the organisation that support the pursuit of these goals and strategies,
- the activities of the organisation that constitute the functions,
- the work processes performed to carry out specific activities and transactions,
- all constituent steps that make up the activity,
- all the transactions that make up each constituent step,
- the groups of recurring transactions within each activity, and
- existing records of the organisation.

The findings from the analysis of the functions of a governmental body can be presented as a hierarchy of business activities, supplemented as required by sequential representations of business processes. The intent of the functional records classification approach is to classify records within a three-tier hierarchy of business context, that is, function, sub-function and activity. For example, government departments produce records in response to direction received from parliament. This direction takes the form of legislation, regulations and expressions of government policy. Responding to this direction is accomplished by undertaking functions; business processes (sub-functions) and activities that will achieve the desired goals and objectives. It follows, then, that by incorporating functions, sub-functions and activities into records classification systems, government departments position themselves to achieve government goals

and objectives, and to more easily account for their actions. (Annexure B is an example of the hierarchy for the human resource function as reflected in the prototype file plan of one governmental body in SA).

The functional subject file plan which is advocated for use by governmental bodies in SA is based on three fundamental principles, that is, organisational, functional and one subject one file principles. The organisation principle determines which part(s) of a governmental body qualify for their own file plan, for example, human resource (NARS 2006:104). The functional principle determines how a specific file plan should be grouped into main series, so that it is in accordance with the functions performed by that governmental body. In this regard, the functions performed by a governmental body are divided into two groups, that is, support functions (those tasks that assist a body to accomplish its line functions, for example, financial control, human resource etc.) and line functions (those tasks that derive from a governmental body's purpose or mission, in other words those unique functions for which that specific body was created to perform, for example, the line function of the Auditor-General is to audit the financial statements of government entities. The third principle breaks down the activities under each main series into smaller tasks, operations and transactions.

This principle implies that ideally each record should only have one home, that is, there should not be overlapping and duplication of files (NARS 2006:105). Over and above these principles, the file plan according to NARS (2006:101) must be in compliance with the following requirements:
- The file plan must be logical and consistent. This means that the file plan should rest on the principles outlined and not be patched together without reason or purpose.
- The file plan must be flexible/elastic, which means that any new subject that has to be added to the file plan can be included without disturbing the original design pattern.
- The file plan must be as simple as possible.

The benefits of classifying public records by function

Current best practices of experts around the world base classification on a rigorous analysis of business functions and activities, for example, the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and National Archives of Australia (NAA) classify government records according to functions. A function-based approach anchors records classification firmly in business processes and activities (SANS 15489-2:2004:8). Classifying records by functions and activities moves away from traditional classification based on organisational structure. It is NARS' and other national archives around the globe's opinion that function-based classification systems will prove more effective and enduring because they are based on analyses of the actual business activities and processes of the organisation rather than organisational structures that frequently change, or other characteristics upon which records classification systems were traditionally constructed (ISO b15489-1:2001:14; LAC 2004:5; NAA 2003:7; NARS 2006:15).

Functions and activities provide a more stable framework for classification than organisational structures that are often subject to change through amalgamation, devolution and decentralisation. For example, the division of Human Resource can change within an organisation to become Human Capital. However, its function will still remain the same. Therefore, the records classification system will not be affected by the change of the name of the business unit. The structure of an organisation may change many times, but the functions an organisation carries out usually remain much the same over time. Within the public sector, administrative change may periodically result in the loss or gain of functions between departments. In these instances, functional classification makes it much easier for government departments to identify records that have to follow functions (ISO b15489-1:2001:13; McCleod 2002:30).

Classification by function is based on the context of a record's creation and use, rather than the content of the record itself. This means the record will be classified according to why it exists, that is, its function rather than what it is about, that is, its subject. Linking records to their business context is a key requirement for making and capturing full and accurate records (NAA 2003:7; SANS 15489-2: 2004:8). A classification system that is related to business functions,

processes and activities may provide a systematic framework for records management (Milne 2007:11; SANS 15489-2: 2004:8; Shepherd and Yeo 2003:74). According to Shepherd and Yeo (2003:73) the primary uses of a records classification system that is based on functions are that it provides links between records that originate from the same activity or from related activities; and it determines where a record should be placed in a larger aggregation of records.

Functional analysis is also the cornerstone which NARS uses to appraise the archival value of public records. Through the functional subject file plan, the ephemeral records can be separated from records of enduring value (NARS 2003:3). An approved file plan provides the instrument on which disposal authority can be issued and efficiently implemented. A disposal authority on an approved records classification system is of a standing nature, that is, it holds good for as long as the system is in use. It provides the means of maintaining a systematic disposal programme, which is a good housekeeping practice (Kirkwood 2000:7). It is essential to destroy all records that do not warrant permanent preservation as soon as possible since they fill storage space unnecessarily when kept longer than need be.

Without a proper functional subject file plan in place, a governmental body will not be able to obtain a disposal authority from the National Archivist. This will prevent the timeous disposal of records, which will in the long run have financial implications for the specific governmental body. This could be a costly exercise. Furthermore, the unnecessary accumulation of records no longer needed for operational purposes can seriously hinder functional efficiency. Time, human resources and money spent on the care of these records could be used more effectively.

A functional subject file plan also ensures standardisation to the final products that are sent to an archives repository for permanent preservation. If a file plan is poor, the product which eventually is transferred to archives repository will also be poor because archives repositories in South Africa have adopted the principle of *respect des fonds*, that is, they maintain records according to their 'original order' (according to the filing methods established by the office of origin). According to this principle, archives repositories must not change the original order in which records were received, as that order reflects

the way in which the records were created and used. So if the file plan is poor, this will cause considerable work for the staff of the archives repository and makes the task of the researchers more difficult as records will not be easily retrieved (NARS 2003:3).

In short, classifying activities through a function-based classification system is a powerful means of supporting each government department 's business, as it:

- enables the government department to demonstrate the relationships between the business activities and the evidence of those activities in an open and accountable manner;
- establishes links between individual records that combine to provide a continuous record of institutional activity;
- enables identification of records over time by ensuring that records are mapped consistently to business activities;
- assists retrieval of records relating to a particular business activity;
- determines security protection and access levels, or 'use' permissions, appropriate for particular sets of records;
- assists in managing retention periods and disposal activities for records; and
- reduces costs related to unnecessary duplication and storage of records.

Scope and methodology

This article relied on the quantitative research approach and used questionnaires directed to the records managers of national government departments as the key source of data. The study covered all the national government departments in South Africa (Annexure C is the detailed list of the population). The study did not cover the statutory bodies, provincial departments and municipalities even though they also fall under the stipulations of the National Archives and Records Service Act.

Participants were drawn from the government website and 37 records managers from all government departments were sent an electronic copy of the questionnaire (Annexure D is the prototype questionnaire used to collect data). All the participants were given seven days or less to return completed questionnaires.

Response rate

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:226), the response rate is the percentage of respondents in the sample who returned completed questionnaires. The response rate is of great significance when making generalisations and conclusions. In this study, out of 37 national government departments that were sent questionnaires, only 29 (78%) questionnaires were returned. Three of those questionnaires were incomplete as respondents stated that they could not help with answering the questionnaire because nobody in their departments has been assigned reponsibilities for records management. Twenty-six completed questionnaires (70%) were analysed through a Microsoft Access database.

Survey results and findings

The aim of the survey was to evaluate the effectiveness of the functional subject file plan in government departments as to whether it enhances retrieval and disposal of records. The responses from the questionnaire show that 18 (69%) departments have a records management policy in place while eight (31%) do not have a policy. Ten out of the 18 respondents with a records management policy further indicated that the policy has been endorsed by their HODs and it has been communicated to all staff members.

Figure 1.1 shows that 17 (65%) departments have a records classification system / file plan in place which is derived from an analysis of their business activities. The file plans have been approved by the National Archivist and cover the entire department. Two (8%) departments are in the process of developing a file plan. A further two (8%) departments indicated that their file plan is based on the departmental structure and therefore not approved by the National Archivist. The file plans for another three (11%) departments were approved more than five years ago but they were never implemented. As a result, the file plans are outdated and no longer reflect the activities of the departments. Two (8%) departments indicated that they don't have file plans in place, and as a result each directorate within the departments file records according to their needs.
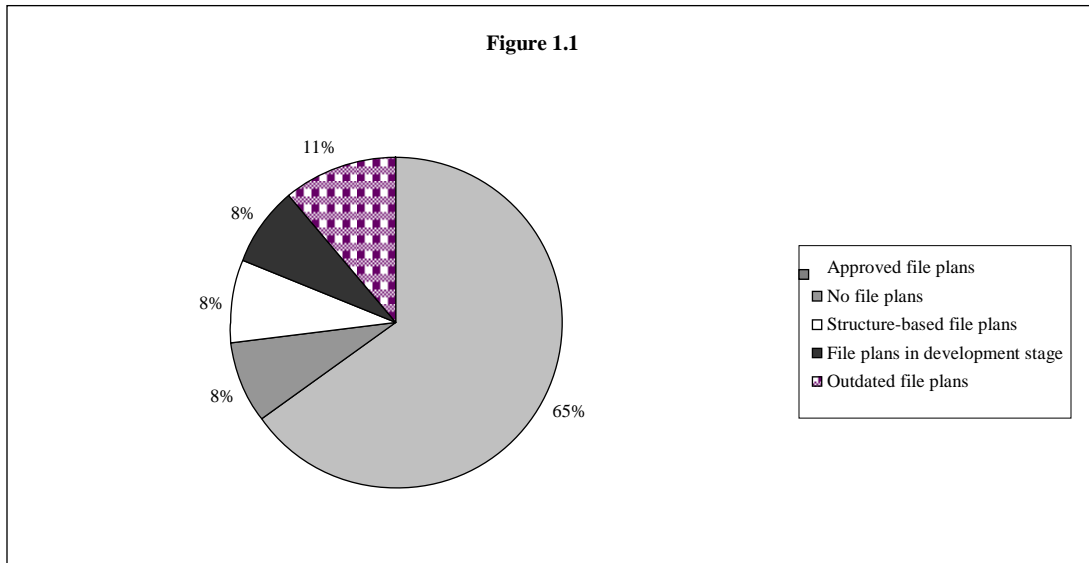
Figure 1.1

Figure 1.2 shows that file plans from eight (31%) departments are effective as compared to seven (27%) whose file plans are ineffective. Only two (8%) departments indicated that their file plan is still at the implementation phase and therefore cannot be able to tell if it is effective. Only 11 (42%) departments indicated that their file plan is known by all staff members because they were trained on how to use it. Nine departments indicated that not all staff members received training on the use of the file plan and therefore many officials within those departments are not aware of the existence of the file plan.

Figure 1.2
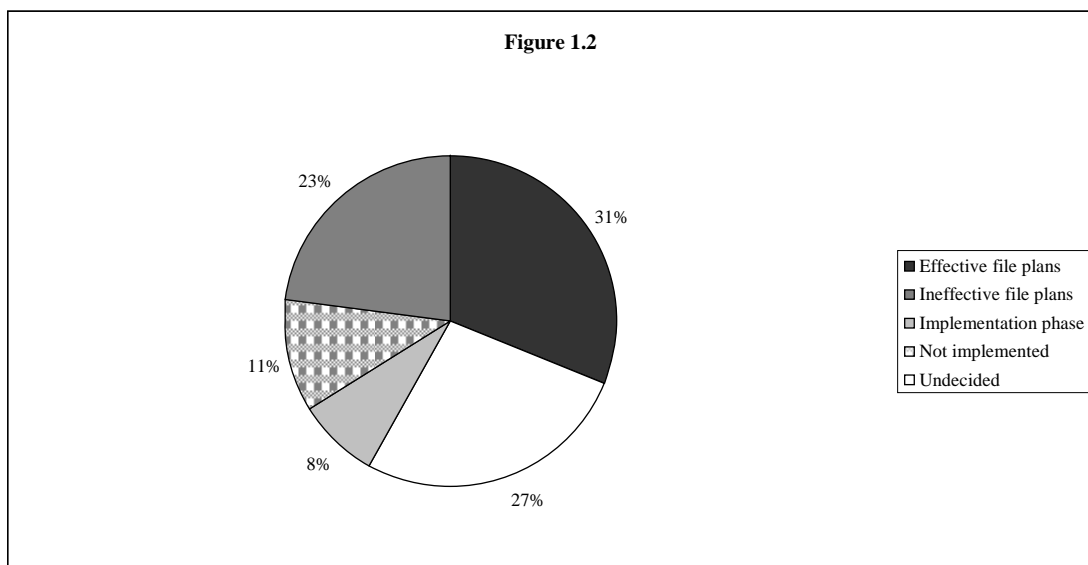
Ten (38%) respondents indicated that some directorates within their departments do not use the approved file plan, but instead they have

their own unapproved file plans and keep records in their own offices. This results in information not being readily available at a central point and therefore, preventing sound management decisions to be made based on authentic and reliable information.

Twenty-three (88%) respondents indicated that files do get lost in their departments and registry is very often blamed for the missing files. The following were cited as causes of missing files: poor access control for the movement of files; officials keeping files in their offices for too long and forgetting about them or transferring records to colleagues without completing a file movement slip or notifying registry. As a result, officials do not entrust the registry to safeguard their records once the registry cannot trace missing files. Figure 1.3 indicates that 20 (77%) departments are using control cards to trace files, two (8%) use transfer slips, only one (4%) department uses a bar coding system to track files. Three (11%) departments do not have a file tracking system in place.

Figure 1.3
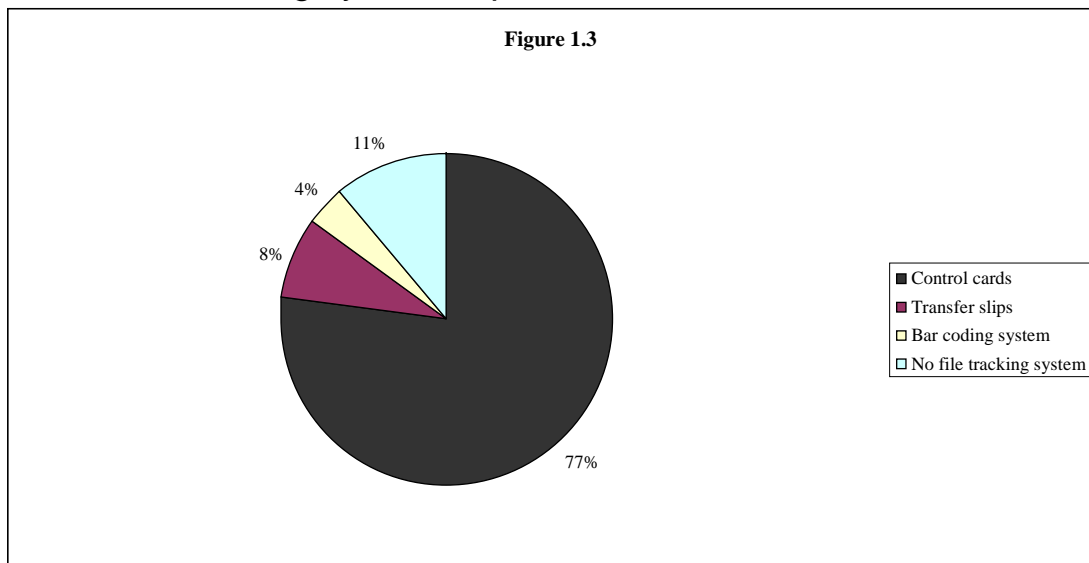
Eighteen (69%) respondents indicated that they often receive complaints from users regarding the file plan. Some of the complaints listed are: file plan is too complicated; allocation of file reference numbers is time consuming and that they were never consulted when the file plan was developed and as a result the file plan does not cater for their needs.

Twelve (46%) departments have obtained a disposal authority from NARS on their current file plan. Five (19%) departments have applied for a disposal authority from NARS more than two years ago but have only received an acknowledgement letter. They indicated that NARS takes a long time to issue standing disposal authority.

Twenty-four (92%) departments have received requests in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No 2 of 2000) as compared to two (8%) which did not receive a request. Fourteen (54%) departments were unable to deal with the requests successfully due to a number of reasons, for example, difficulty in retrieving records; responsibility not clear with regard to who should provide the information; not knowing where to find the information; obtaining information from regional offices and that prolongs the process. In one instance, a record was created in order for a department to deal with the request successfully.

Fifteen (58%) departments have an Electronic Records and Document Management System (EDRMS) in place. All their electronic records are managed through the system even though the usage is very low. Eleven (42%) departments do not have EDRMS and they make print-outs of electronic records and file them in hardcopy. However, they indicated that there is no control over e-mails as officials keep them in their inbox and delete e-mail as they wish.

Some of the challenges encountered by departments include: lack of top management support in records management; users want to file in their own way and not use the official file plan; getting the National Archives to inspect the implementation; obtaining disposal authority from the National Archives; incorrect allocation of file reference numbers resulting in misplaced documents; use of different file plans within the department which results in dissimilar systems, records management practices as well as duplication of files.

Conclusion and recommendations

Undoubtedly, it has been established in the findings that lack of a NARS approved file plan in government departments results in poor service delivery, for example, some departments were unable to deal with PAIA requests due to lack of control of records. If records are not managed according to a classification system that complies with archivally-determined principles, and there is difficulty in locating information, the Promotion of Access to Information Act will be a dead letter. The constitutional rights it seeks to uphold will therefore not be guaranteed. Proper implementation of a NARS approved file plan makes government programmes and service delivery more efficient, supports transparency, collaboration across organisations, and informed decision-making in government operations, and preserves historically valuable information. Therefore, it can be concluded that effective decision-making, service delivery and access to government information can be greatly facilitated by the development, implementation and maintenance of records classification systems in government departments.

It is clear from the discussion that most government departments are still struggling with training users on how to use the file plan, let alone develop policies and file plans according to NARS' requirements. There is general lack of awareness with regard to file plans in most government departments. The lack of training on how to use the file plan undoubtedly has implications on the implementation phase. There is an urgent need for a culture of records management in most government departments. This objective can be met through awareness campaigns and training of staff members. File plans that have been implemented also need to be reviewed regularly. The purpose of such reviews is to monitor progress and measure success, so that senior management can be informed of results, and revisions to the file plan can be made as necessary. The file plan should be examined regularly to ensure that it still meets the department's requirements.

Records managers have a delicate task to perform in working with staff who are often very possessive about their records. The starting point is usually promoting an awareness of records as a corporate resource and an understanding that, whether on paper or in

electronic form, records are not merely for personal use. Culture change often includes motivating staff to recognise the importance of good records management, as well as building confidence in the new system. A government department's file plan should be notified to all staff, together with a directive for its implementation. By itself, however, this will not be sufficient. Records managers have to develop a corporate culture in which employees take the documentation of their activities seriously. Staff must feel ownership of the records classification system and it is essential that they participate as fully as possible in the change process. A communications strategy should be adopted, with workshops, demonstrations, meetings and interviews held as necessary. The records management policy should also compel officials to file according to the approved file plan, for example, the policy can states that all line managers should only approve documents with file plan reference numbers. Heads of departments should assign responsibilities for records management within their departments by appointing records managers as required by section 13 (5) (a) of the NARS Act. However, it should be noted that records management is a collective responsibility between users, records managers and managers. Therefore, all creators of records should be equipped with the necessary skills to capture and manage records.

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ANNEXURE A: LIST OF PROTOTYPE FILE PLANS

R3.   General instructions to the file plan.
R4.   Prototype classification of main series for support functions of all governmental bodies.
R5.   Prototype file plan for local authorities.
R6.   Prototype file plan for Commissions and Committees of Inquiry.
R7.   Prototype file plan for offices of ministers and deputy ministers.
R11. Prototype file plan for Human Resource Management.

ANNEXURE B: EXAMPLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE FILE PLAN

6.	HUMAN CAPITAL
6/1	Organisation Development
6/1/P	Policy
6/1/R	Routine Enquiries
6/1/1	Job Profiling
6/1/1/P	Policy
6/1/1/R	Routine Enquiries
6/1/1/1	Individual Job Profiles
	(Open a file per occupational category and number consecutively)
6/2	Human Resource Management
6/2/P	Policy
6/2/R	Routine Enquiries
6/2/1	Conditions of Service
6/2/1/P	Policy
6/2/1/1	Basic Conditions of Employment Act
6/2/1/2	Salary Adjustment, Scale Increases and Deduction
6/2/1/3	Leave
6/2/1/3/1	Holiday
6/2/1/3/2	Sick
6/2/1/3/3	Special

ANNEXURE C: LIST OF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SURVEYED

Arts and Culture
Communications
Correctional Services
Defence
Education
Environmental Affairs and Tourism
Foreign Affairs
Government Communications
Health
Home Affairs
Housing
Independent Complaints Directorate
Justice and Constitutional Development
Labour
Land Affairs
Minerals and Energy
National Intelligence Agency
National Treasury
Provincial and local Government
Public Enterprises
Public Service and Administration
Public Service Commission
Public Works
Science and Technology
Secretary for Safety and Security
SA Management Development Institute
SA Police Service
SA Revenue Service
SA Secret Service
Social Development
Sport and Recreation South Africa
Statistics South Africa
The Presidency
Trade and Industry
Transport
Water Affairs and Forestry

ANNEXURE D: PROTOTYPE OUESTIONNAIRE

Kindly complete the following short questionnaire regarding the records classification system/file plan in your department. Please do not enter your name on the questionnaire as all replies will be treated strictly confidentially. Data will be presented only in the aggregate and responses will not be attributed to a particular respondent (department). It should not take you more than 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Completed questionnaire should be e-mailed back to the researcher at MphoN@agsa.co.za within seven days or less. For any enquiries relating to this questionnaire, please feel free to contact the researcher Mr Mpho Ngoepe at 0834184688.

Mark with (X) the option relevant to you.

1. Gender?

Male	
Female	

2. Your highest qualifications?

Below Matric	
Matric certificate	
Post-matric certificate	
Diploma	
Degree	
Other: Specify	

3. Your position within the department?

Records Manager	
Registry Clerk	
Admin Officer	
Information Officer	
Other: Specify	

4. Does your department have a records management policy in place?

Yes	
No	

If yes, is the policy communicated to all staff members?

Yes	
No	

5. Does the department have a records classification system/ file plan that   is derived from analysis of business activity?

Yes	
No	

If no, how are records arranged in the department?

6. Is the file plan approved by the National Archivist?

Yes	
No	

7. Does the file plan cover the entire department?

Yes	
No	

8. Are there any other records classification system/file plans in use within the department, for example, within a Directorate or regional office?

Yes	
No	

If yes, are these file plans approved by the National Archivist?

Yes	
No	

9. How would you rate the effectiveness of the file plan within your department e.g. in terms of retrieval of records; accessibility; missing of files etc?

Very effective	
Ineffective	
Other, specify	

10. Do files often get lost in the department?

Yes	
No	

What procedures are used to monitor the movement of paper-based files within the department?

Control cards	
Transfer slip	
Bar coding	
Workflow software	
Other, specify	

11. Do you receive any complaints from users within your department regarding the file plan?

Yes	

No	

If yes, please specify the complaints.

12. Is the file plan known to all staff members in the department?

Yes	
No	

13. Did staff members receive training on how to use the file plan?

Yes	
No	

Are they capable of allocating file reference numbers?

Yes	
No	

Are they using the approved file plan to allocate reference numbers?

Yes	
No	

If no, why are they not using the file plan?

14. Is the disposal authority issued for the approved file plan?

Yes	
No	

15. Does the file plan form part of the Promotion of Access to Information Act Manual?

Yes	
No	

If no, what is used in the manual to indicate records held by the department?

16. Has the body received any requests for information in terms of the PAIA?

Yes	
No	

17. Was the body able to provide the requested information within the prescribed time frame?

Yes	
No	

If not, why was the department unable to provide the requested information?

18. Do members of staff know what records the department generates and how these records are to be identified, kept and used?

Yes	

No	

19. Is the e-mail which forms part of the official records filed according to the file plan?

Yes	
No	

If no, how are e-mails filed?

20. Is there an electronic document/records management system in place to control the management of electronic records?

Yes	
No	

If no, how are electronic records managed?

21. Is there any challenges associated with recordkeeping within your department?

Yes	
No	

If yes, please specify.

Thank you for your time in answering the questionnaire.